Second Language Acquisition

( 93기/WD)김소연(Gloria) – essay

Here we are going to examine the most effective English learning way.

In Korea traditionally, for English education both for adults and young kids, we used to teach in 'a chalk and talk' way and mostly the contents were English grammar and reading. So it has resulted most English learners to hate English and the retention rate of learned English was low as well. Students forget English too easily and have lots of difficulties when using it. They never enjoy talking in English, even get afraid to be asked by foreigners. And furthermore, the efficiency of reading and listening study was very low as well. What is the best English teaching way in Korea? In this essay, we will think about it.

In my case, even though I had studied English for over 10 years at school, English was always too difficult for me. Any English sentence didn’t come out from my memory naturally. It was because teachers taught me English by explaining on the board with chalk about English grammar and reading and I just listened to it. But as I became to chat online with people living abroad, I eventually felt English was very useful tool. I started to make many English sentences to talk with them and tried to speak in English as well. And then I enrolled an online class to practice English more with native English speakers. That made me understand English much better and I enjoyed it. Talking in English with my foreign friends became my new intrinsic motivation for English study. Thus making sentences and speaking English with fun were very helpful ways to improve my English ability.

The English learners are divided into several groups according to the age and the purpose of English study. So the ways of teaching for each group should be different. Adults are autonomous and goal-oriented in learning English. When they are respected and achieve a lot in the class, they can continue to study. So according to the purpose and their English abilities, the teaching plan should be established differently and printed out in advance. For effective and high retentive lesson, the traditional teaching style should be developed better. Traditionally, teachers taught students by explanation on the board, and students were just receiving knowledge passively. If students can be involved more in class autonomously, the retention rate of study will go high.

Teacher types can be categorized into three: ‘explainer’, ‘involver’ and ‘enabler’. ‘Explainer’ type is a traditional one widely spread. Teachers of “Involver” type try to involve the students in class actively and put a great deal of effort into finding appropriate and interesting activities for them. Teachers of ‘enabler’ type are confident enough to share control with the learners and sometimes become just a ‘guide’ when needed. In learning secondary language, explanation is definitely very important. But teaching only by ‘Jug and mug’ way is not a good one. It is too much restricted way to teach a lot for the limited time of lesson.

For the efficiency of English lesson, we should think about the importance of ‘rapport’ between teachers and students as well. Definitely bright and enjoyable lessons are better than frightening and anxious ones. Carl Roger suggested that there are three core teacher characteristics that help to create an effective learning environment. These are respect, empathy and authenticity. When a teacher has these three qualities, the relationship within the classroom are likely to be stronger and deeper, and communication between people much more open and honest. The educational climate becomes positive and supportive. But these three things are not temporary characteristics that we take on for the duration of our lesson. It is our attitude and intentions.

So I conclude that a mixed type of teacher with comfortable and enjoyable atmosphere in the classroom is the best for efficient English lesson. I hope I can be that kind of teacher in the future.