TESOL 01: Second Language Acquisition Assignment

**My First Step for ESL Acquisition**

TESOL 97 WEEKDAY CLASS

Matt (Jaeyong Chung)

My first step to learn second language, English, was successful, luckily. My personal beliefs on ESL teaching was based on that good experience of the first step and bad ones after that.

My first experience for English learning started in an English conversation institutes in 1980, when I was 11 years old. The number of students in the class were 4 to 8 and there used text books and record tapes with the name of “New Horizons in English”. A text book was consisted of 10~12 units and each unit was composed with several conversation exercises or short dialogs related with the unit specific topic; e.g. Greeting and Introducing, Wearing and Colors, Playing Sports, Buying… etc. And there were interesting illustrations and some funny stories included also.

I remember that the class was considerably lead in the “Modern Teaching” way. Of course there were some slices of time for the teacher to explain meaning of key vocabularies or sentences, but more than half of time was given to the student for talking themselves. We spoke sentences following teacher or listening to the tape records and often talked each other as pair work. The STT was bigger than TTT and it was not teacher-centered class or one-way speaking lecture but was interactive class that brings students out. In such a class mood and environment, I felt that English class was funny time and it made me happy and gave confidence to see my English speaking capability’s improving.

Besides the way of teaching, the teacher created much positive learning atmosphere. Even though he was about 25 years older than us, he always polite and patient. He was not funny or humorous but we felt comfortable and being respected by him. At that time I and the classmates, including my brother, did like to make fun of many things, so we sometimes spoke English words changing into Korean bad words of similar sound at the class, but he did not punish or angry at us. He said clearly and firmly to us not to tell such a bad words but he kept smile on his face. He did error-corrections sometimes but he never shouted at us or was angry. There was no stress or worry in me if I make any mistake in the class. So I can say that there was no ‘Affective Filter’ to me in the class. I am sure that it was a successful language learning experience for me and I know that it was built on the good ‘Rapport’ between the teacher and the students.

As it is described above, the most part of the class was made up of listening and speaking. Supported by the audio tape records and text books guidelines, the teacher controls the class with appropriate method he has. Using audio-visual & live demonstration techniques and pair work activities… etc. he tried to elicit our actions to practice. So I can say that he was ‘Involver Teacher’. As we, students, were too young and had no basic skill of English, it might be not workable or ineffective to be the ‘Enabler Teacher’ to us.

As the teacher was not native speaker, he used Korean language also in the class but I can say that the teaching method adopted there was Direct Method. There was no explicit explanation or deductive application of grammar and the class focused on listening and speaking skill build-up through the practices and activities. In detail, I can say that ‘Audio-Lingual Method’ and ‘Communication Language Teaching’ method were used together.

The 6 months at that English class was only successful language learning experience I got from the external institute. During the middle school and high school years, I experienced totally different type of teaching; Explainer teacher poured linguistic knowledge and grammar to us using GTM method in the Traditional classroom environment. I found that it gives little help to improve practical English skill. It took fun and interest of English learning away from me and only way to get what I want is to do it myself separately. In short, most of the 6 years English classes in middle/high school years were ineffective for English learning.

Based on these my experiences, I believe that Modern Teaching is surely working better than Traditional Teaching because the leaning language is not the knowledge transfer but is being accustomed to use it; just as like being good at a sport or singing a song. Therefore, the teacher need to try to put his/her students to the field on which they can try and practice the language interactively and repeatedly with appropriate challenges (i+1). And to build such a class environment, it is essential to establish good rapport with students and with all around him.