Date: 22/May/2015

114th WK

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From the date two TESOL classe, I found myself to be an “Auditory” type of learner. I tend to learn from verbal instruction from others and it works best for me to talk or speak out loud when I need to memorize what I’ve learned. Before this TESOL class, I thought I would be a visual learner as I usually read texts when I study.

I went Middle school and High school in late 1980’s and early 90’s and that was the time I started studying English. At that time, most of English teachers at school were using grammar translation method as well as Audio lingual method.

All English teachers were teaching grammar for most of their lectures. I also learned how to translate English content to Korean. I memorized words, sentences by following and repeating what teachers read. I spent many hours in studying English at middle school and high school for 6 years, but, I do not think that I actually learned how to speak and write my ideas in English.

Then, did I and teachers waste of time? Well, I hate to say this, but, I think it was wasting of time somehow. The purpose to learning English was getting good records from the test when entering university back then. Therefore, grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension are the most important areas in studying English. I think the teaching methods that time was working well for that specific purpose. But what happens after entering university? What is the real purpose of learning language? Communication is the main purpose of learning Language, I believe. You should be able to expressing yourself to other people in the language you studied. Was I able to express myself in English after 6 year study? No I wasn’t. I could read and write a little bit, but, I was not able to speak because I was not taught that way. I was even a good student who liked learning languages. So, I decided to spend some time in learning practical English. I went to Australia to learn English when I became a sophomore year in university.

The way Native English teachers were obviously different from my middle and high schoolteachers. I guess it was different because the objective was different most importantly. Native English teachers in language school were able to teach students in Communicative methods as their object of teaching was “communication” rather than getting good scores in specific tests. Of course, there were some classes for the student to prepare some big test, but, there was still difference from Korean English teachers at school. Native teachers let students think firsts and reach to the conclusion. H/e, Korean students did have chances to think creatively and conclude by themselves. There was no creativity or brainstorming at Korean school in my time.

I guess class sizes were the one of the reason the Korean teachers has chosen grammar translation method as well as Audio lingual method. My classes were usually consisted of 60 students then and I think it’s pretty big group. Teaching big groups of students with different interest and abilities should not have been very easy to manage for the teachers. They did not have much choice but to use same old traditional way of teaching.

Nowadays, it seems numbers of student are smaller than before and there seems to be some changes in teaching methods. Also, Native English teachers are hired in many of public schools. I think it is great improvement.

Again, I believe the reason of learning language is “communication”. To be able to let your students communicate with you and others, you should be” communicative” teacher. From the first paragraph of this essay, I said I was “Auditory” type of learner, but, I did not know before I took this TESOL class. The first big message of two TESOL class was to know your student type and know their abilities/ intelligence. You listen to them who they are and what they are interested in. Then, you will be able to lead them participate and communicate with you and other students. Of course, I will need to learn more methods and skills of teaching and this is why I look forward to TESOL class tomorrow and micro teaching later on. Thank you.

Words counts: 725