Module 1 Essay

My experiences of studying second languages affected by teachers

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596 words

When I started to learn English as a second language, I was 13 years old. Thinking of the time, I had no idea why we had to study English and it was not as important as it is now. However, I have been studying English so far because I would like to work in the field that needs English. Since it has been pretty long time, I have met many different English teachers. I will write about my learning experiences affected by them and my thoughts learned from the personal experiences and the TESOL lesson.

There was no best or worst teacher through my schooldays. I guess, that’s because there might have been no teacher who impressed me in any ways. My language teachers, whether they had taught English or German, were all good people without any doubt, but they were all indifferent to language teaching methodology. They were definitely all explainers. They gave students lectures just focusing on grammars, sentence structures and translating sentences word by word. Students were sitting in rows just listening and taking notes and the teacher dominated the whole class emphasizing on examinations. It was the most important for the students to master all the content from the textbook in those typical traditional classrooms. Anyways, I became good at English grammar thanks to the teachers.

However, even after the full 10 years of learning English, I could not speak English except for simple greetings. Once I had a chance to go to India on business, I was so embarrassed to speak English at that time and I decided to study it in a different way in order to overcome the embarrassment. I tried to focus more on productive skills like speaking and writing and get used to native English speaker’s pronunciations and intonations. I took an English Tour Guide License course to improve my English skills and there I met Mr. Jang who affected me a lot.

At the first day of his class, I already hated him a lot. He seemed to be doing nothing but giving some instructions. His class was a series of presentations. Students had to research about attraction sites he suggested by themselves and make presentations in English in front of people every day. As we followed his teaching, we became autonomous learners. One day, I realized that we were getting used to be speaking English and using some useful expressions. After all, he turned out to be the “enabler” who involved students in explaining information we studied to each other. He knew that we were all goal-oriented as adult learners, so he stimulated our motivations. He also used visual and auditory materials a lot which helped our better understanding about the attraction sites. He was a good listener to our presentations and always corrected our mistakes at the end of the class. As a language learning experience, I can tell his teaching was successful because I could get the license anyway.

Mr. Jang kept saying “Practice will make you speak the language”. And it really worked. From his teaching and the TESOL class, I got the lesson that enabling students to do something by themselves is more effective than just giving lectures. However, while he was a good enabler, he didn’t treat students equally and also didn’t respect what we were thinking or feeling. I think his case can be applicable to the teaching methodology. To teach effectively, I need to improve not only my teaching skills, but also my people skills.