My experience of second language acquisition

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Second language acquisition happens after a first language established. There are 5 hypothesis about L2(Second Language) by Krashen. One of them, acquisition involves the subconscious acceptance of knowledge where information is stored in the brain through the use of communication. So the earlier time is more effective to receive naturally that language as there’s a saying “The sooner, the better”. My mother tongue is of course Korean. And my second language is English. But it is more appropriate to call it a foreign language rather than a second language. Because I didn’t received it subconsciously. I’d like to explain the process and the way how I’ve learned a second language relative with 5 hypothesis of L2acquisition and language systems, skills if that is successful or failure.

First of all, I’ve grown up to have been exposing the limited circumstance only spoken Korean. And the moment when I kept in touch with English for the first time is at the age 14. So in my case, according to The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, I’ve learned L2 as a learning way not an acquisition like memorizing grammar, function and lexis. There are four important macro language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing. But in my school time, the part of speaking and listening is not so important. When I learned English in the middle school at first, my English teacher who was very strict and had been educated in the past, didn’t give any opportunities to speak English in the classroom. In addition I couldn’t even practice it at home. My parents also couldn’t help me to improve it fluently. Because they never know about English.

Based on the Affective Filter Hypothesis and Natural Order Hypothesis, affective filter can be prompted by learners having less anxiety, self-confidence, stress and motivation. Besides each foreign language has a predictable order and some grammar concepts are easier than others. However, when I was a high school student, my English teacher, Mr. Baek didn’t create an environment which was safe and welcoming for students. He always carried with him a rod (it was called “a rod of love”). Therefore I felt not comfortable and stressful in class even though I didn’t make any mistakes. The atmosphere of the class wasn’t interesting and so quiet. In addition, when I got a good grade in English test, my English teacher didn’t commend me sincerely. And I‘ve been taught from a basic structure to a very complicated grammar. That’s not so practical. I think that’s a dead language.

At last, In the Monitor Hypothesis and the Input Hypothesis, monitoring can make some contribution to the accuracy of an utterance but its use should be limited. And the comprehensible input has to be a little bit built up, not too much. The teacher should make a lot of chances for second language acquisition. After graduating high school, I went to the English institute to learn English more, the classes they opened were divided into several levels. So I had to take a simple level test and I came to enter a low intermediate class. I was disappointed my poor speaking ability. There is a teacher called Jennifer. She tried to let the students including me speak out loudly what we listened and correct the sentence if there is a wrong grammatical structure. A proper input was very helpful. If she instructed me it not gradually but radically, I would felt repulsion. Moreover, in class, she did many actives to suitable for fulfilling students’ fluency and confidence. Now that I think of it, she already recognized well which way is the best for pupils.

In conclusion, as I mentioned above, the 5 hypothesis of second language acquisition suggested by Krashen didn’t applied well for me. My experience was in general failure. The factor to be unsuccessful in second language acquisition can be summarized like below. First, I was surrounded with non-speaking English people. It means it’s not easy for me to be exposed a certain environment subconsciously. Second I started to learn second language too late and didn’t practice it outside of the classroom. Third, the way my teachers had taught me in my school time was not proper methods.