GangNam TESOL 128

Ilhye Jeong

**My experience of second language acquisition**

We all start learning our first language by listening and absorbing the sounds around us as soon as we were born, such as the voices of parents. We can acquire a second language the same way. According to Krashen, acquisition is differ from learning. Acquisition involves the subconscious acceptance of knowledge through the use of communication. Whereas Learning is the conscious acceptance of knowledge about language. The more target language we hear, the more we learn. I would say my experience of second language acquisition was a success because I was surrounded by English speakers for over 10 years. However, this is not the only reason why my experience was successful.

First of all, I had not only an external but also an internal motivation to learn English. I had a strong desire to get close to this one particular person who I met in my first ESL class in United States. Unfortunately, it didn’t work well at first because I had some difficulty with Listening and speaking English. He told me later he thought I didn’t want to have conversations with him because I took too long to answer or didn’t respond at all when he asked me some friendly questions. It was only because I simply didn’t understand him or didn’t know how to say in English. I would say my English level was between high beginner and lower intermediate at that time. However, this internal motivation, which I want to talk to this friend fluently without making any mistakes, gave me a strength to keep practicing and to accomplish my goal.

Secondly, I was given an opportunity to develop all of three learner mode; visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic. Living in English environment was a huge advantage as a learner. Before I move to United States, English was a just foreign language that I learned in school and never used outside of classroom, on the other hand, it became a second language that I actually use in everyday life after I move to United States. For first few years in United States I didn’t have many native friends. I wanted to learn English not from the books but from the real life. So, I started spending a lot of time to watch TV shows and movies at first. After few months, my listening skill definitely had improved. Then, I joined some small study group with native speakers and often hung out with them outside of school. I highly recommend this to anyone who wants to enhance their four language skills at once because the experiential learning is one of most effective techniques besides teaching others.

Finally, my ESL class teacher was a key to a success. My teacher developed very good rapport with students. She sometimes had lunch with us and gave an advice on personal stuff after class. I personally felt very close to her and safe. I wasn’t nervous or afraid of making mistakes in the classroom and also gained little self-confidence. Additionally, she let us choose discussion topics that we were interested in. It could be a headline of the today’s news or scandals and gossips of celebrities. It is very effective and useful ways to attract the students’ attention immediately and to encourage the students’ participation in class. I was one of intrapersonal learners before I met this teacher. The characteristics of this kind of learner are that they possess strong personalities, with a deep awareness of inner feelings and ideas, tend to shy away from team activities, and live in a private world. However, lots of discussion activities in her class helped me to communicate with others more freely. Moreover, I acquired an ability to sense a number of more intangible and intuitive impressions based on an interpretation of eye contact and gestures.

In conclusion, my experience of second language acquisition was very successful because I was internally motivated and I was given the opportunities to develop three learner modes and to practice with native speakers. Moreover, I had a most contemporary teacher who managed a very modern classroom by using Communicative approach, the silent way, and so on. One of my TESOL goals is figure out my own methods to be a better teacher based on my personal experience.

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