 A second language environment

that I have experienced

TESOL Class #137 WD

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This essay is about my experiences of learning a second language, English, in an unsuccessful learning environment. I will discuss reasons  
for this and will also explore ways in which methods could be improved, using concepts that I have learnt from the TESOL course.  
  
     If someone has learnt some words from a dictionary and has understood the meanings and how to spell them correctly but cannot say or use them in proper context, can we say she or he knows those words in reality? Perhaps some people think so, but a lot of others maybe not think so. Because even if they did not learn about language systems, they already knew language is not only the letters but also sound and having contexts.  
  
     Almost all Korean people are taught English as a compulsorily subject from middle school to university. However, most Koreans including myself lack listening and speaking skills when trying to communicate in English. Why does this happen?  
  
  
     Usually we did not learn how to make English sound and practice it enough. English classes in Korea tended to be highly focused on grammar rules, vocabulary for reading and tests, and not enough focus was given to pronunciation and speaking. Teachers did not care about it as much as memorizing spellings and even in class when they read English so students also did like that. For example, in my experience, when I was a middle school student, my class had English words tests in every morning and if someone had answered wrong, she had had to stayed more after school and clean the class room. in addition, it influenced the grade. Of course I and almost students did not want to clean the class room and get bad grade, we just memorized them by any ways we could regardless of their own sound and usage. Even back then, we also knew it was not the way to learn real English. Because we sometimes intentionally spoke some words wrong. For example, "exhaust" even though we all knew "h" is soundless in this word but for only memorizing immediately we pronounced it [ekshaoost], And we thought we did not have any choice. Further, even there was atmosphere to make fun of someone who tried to speak English as English.

     Is like this environment helpful for learning English? I do not think so. If someone remembered the word "exhaust" in this way, as time goes by, it could be hard to understand when it would be told for real and even in tests of listening. Moreover, if a student could be made fun of just that reason she tries to sound English like itself, who tries to do it? But unfortunately, it has been happening that way a lot in Korea for some reasons like preparing immediate tests, avoiding to be hated. In my opinion, it would be some of reasons also why a lot of Koreans have not been confident from in pronunciations talking in English.  
  
  
  
     So, what can we call the successful learning second language? And how can we make it for effective learning?  
I think if someone is good at a language, he or she can communicate with well in the language by speaking, listening, writing, and reading. In my opinion, for it, balanced improvement of 5 sections of the language is needed. Traditionally, in Korea we have been taught lexis, grammar, function of English a lot but not phonology so many Koreans can easily get afraid when they have to make sound in English. In addition, for traditional teaching way in which usually teachers spend a lot of time for explaining and transmitting knowledge to the class they did not have many chances to practice to speak English. of course, each way has its own strength and depending on cases many ways can be changed, but in average Korean situation, I think it would be better, for example modern teaching way and enabler teacher type, to give students more free and time for practicing and being used to English enough to reduce their being nervous of it and be confident with interests for a success environment as a learning second language.

**References**

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