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TESOL 153 WD / Tim

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All of my English learning experience consists of my entire life. I am confident to say that I was my own English teacher because I never took any of specific English learning course of some sort except for the public school requirements from middle school back in the days. Which they do not count as extra language courses. I don’t remember anything from them. They are just another classes in school. The first time I encountered the English language was when I was four years old. My family moved to the United States. I can barely remember any of the life style I had there except for the mean and racist pre-school teacher who got angry at me for not being able to ask if I could use the Elmer’s glue on top of the counter. I was just a little four years old toddler girl.

After years, already having been living in Korea for a decade, my mother always told me I was always able to ace all of my English tests in middle school because I was exposed to the language early at my age. That one specific moment when we were talking about Noam Chomsky and his Language Acquisition theory in our TESOL class reminded me of how being exposed to English at young age made it possible. In fact, that entire class was an opportunity to analyze all of my struggles as a language learner into theories and how some things were effective and some things weren’t. I can come up with corresponding situations for every single theory we talked about in class.

The theory was still applicable when my family moved to the United States again. I was still very young to acquire a new language. Again, but this time, I was put into “a similar environment” to acquire a language like Stephen Krashen’s theory. I had to attend Public High School which put me into many embarrassing situations where I went through the “Silent Phase” and not making any sense to fellow Americans. So after school, I would come home and watch “Friends” with captions on for rest of the day and many others. I sat there and listened until I could finally say, “Can I use dictionary during tests?” to my Science teacher. After few years, thanks to the “Natural Order Hypothesis”, I was still making mistakes here and there but was quickly able to fix them with practice. I remember numerous situations where I made mistakes. I should have said “This is not usual for me.” Instead of “This is not usually for me”. Or that one time I said, “Can I join us?” meaning, if I could join them. All those nice people understood what I meant and smiled at me but it took me days, or even weeks, to realize that I have made grammatical mistakes. These situations are both applicable to “The Monitor Hypothesis.”

I have always preferred traditional way of learning. It is probably because I am a visual person when it comes to learning but when language learning, I was different. I became all kinds of learner. Many circumstances, mentioned above, whether it was intentional or not, would always put me to become visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learner if it was necessary. I would say most kinds of methods were effective for me along with many of theories. They come sequentially to be made a course of learning a language. And learning was more effective when I made myself an agent to actively participate in learning process. In this way, I was a kinesthetic learner and it worked for me.

I am very thankful for the opportunity to learn about these methods and theories because otherwise, I would have just assumed that I just naturally acquired English without even knowing there was certain theories behind every situation. This will be helpful in the future when I will have chances to teach others. I will be confident enough to help them recognize that they are going through a process of learning a language. And will have evidences regarding whether they are on the right track of the process.