2017-05-17

153th WD class, Miji

Learning about second language is quiet interesting, especially my life totally changed because of English. I made a decision to stop studying computer engineering and going to USA for studying English in 2008. The decision was turning point in my life, as a result I got a job that I never thought about before. As soon as I decided, I left Korea and when I arrived in USA I got many troubles. I remember the day when I went to language school for the first time. I felt like I was a person who came from other planet, because I didn’t understand what people were saying at all. Since then I tried to study in many ways for improving my English ability, Especially listening and speaking.

Because I could hardly understand what people saying, I need to put in effort to listening skill. A teacher in language school recommended watching animation repeatedly. Generally, animation doesn’t use difficult words so I can understand easily he said. From the day he recommended, I started to watch “Mulan” over and over again. I watched every day, even before I felt a sleep. I guess I watched the “Mulan” over fifty times. Watching animation was really worked for me, and I realized that the reason why I liked that way so much was I am a visual student learner. On account of watching video helps you understand context, because even though I couldn’t understand dialog, I could understand by watching their movement. For me, the way I learned by watching animation goes with “The Natural Order Hypothesis” that one of 5 hypothesis Stephan Krashen made. Because first time I watched it, I just focus on comprehension no speaking just listening. And next I noticed 1~2 sentences, later 3~4 sentences. Furthermore, finally I made sentences using movie dialog.

Another effective way to study English was that used my musical intelligence. Since I was young, I’ve liked to sing a song. And I still remember lyrics of song that I used to sang a song when I was child. It’s easy to remember lyrics with rhythm, notes and sound. Whenever teacher played a song, we wrote lyrics that we heard. After that we compare to right lyrics, and then learn about grammar, vocabulary and sentence in the song. Through pop-song, I can improve of listening and speaking comprehension naturally. Even if I had to memorize the whole song, that’s not stressful for me at all. Because that’s more likely fun and exciting thing for me, I don’t feel like that was study.

So then, I ask to myself that what ineffective way to learning English for me was. In my opinion, the answer is “vocabulary test” which I’ve had since middle school student. If teacher said a word in English, then student wrote down a spelling in English or the meaning of the word in Korean on a note. Even TOEIC class that I had when I was University student, I took the test every time in the class. After the test like a few days later, I always forget almost of words even though I got a perfect score on the exam. Cause I never thought about the meaning or word, just memorized it for the test. I think vocabulary test can be used traditional classrooms more than modern classrooms. Since Students cannot think their own, I don’t think that’s good way to learn words. If I were a teacher, I would rather using sentence for understanding context and words than just saying word and meaning. I am going to be like a teacher who is involver or enabler not explainer.

Actually, I never thought about what kind of learner I am and what kind of intelligence I have before. The classes we had last week were really meaningful time to think about myself and think how to teach in the future. On the basis of my experience and knowledge I learned from TESOL class, I keep thinking about what’s good or effective way to teach second language from now on.