**How we should learn a language**

Learning a second language can be painful. We learn to speak our native languages as we grow up and are not aware of how we learned it until we get exposed to a foreign language. Once you get conscious of learning language skills, it can have either positive or negative effects depending on how you are taught. There are a variety of language approaching strategies for both teachers and learners. For the past few decades, teachers tend to focus mostly on listening and reading skills. They have dominated classrooms and students were passive. It could have been useful for those who prefer to study with visual aids or written form of learning materials. However, modern classrooms are more student-centered and include more group works. Teachers are trying to use various teaching methods to make students involved. Some skills can be effective or ineffective with certain targets in certain circumstances. Here are several examples of appropriate and inappropriate guidance from my personal experiences.

For some students, experience-based learning is the best way to learn a language. Rather than studying in a classic way, I preferred moving actively and doing diverse activities during class. I could focus on my work better that way. Back in high school, my English class had all sorts of activities throughout the semester. However, doing a mono drama was the most impressive class. I learned not only to rewrite textbook using my own words but to deliver a speech efficiently. My teacher only acted as a guide. He never gave class one answer but gave advice when needed. I felt secure to express my opinions anytime. Therefore, I could focus more on ‘What’ I was learning, not on ‘How’ I should learn it. It eventually improved my English skills dramatically. I believe being conscious of language acquiring method is not always helping. One of the most effective ways to learn a foreign language is to enjoy what you are learning. There is a Korean saying, “**A man who only tries hard cannot beat a jolly fellow.” I strongly believe classes should be student-centered and learning a language has to be fun most of all.**

**Being taught by an explainer type is the least effective way to learn, especially when it comes to a language. All the four basic language skills are important; Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing. However, the importance among four basic skills may vary according to the purpose of learning. It would not matter when your teacher has the knowledge of teaching methodology and people skills. It matters when your teacher relies only on lecture when delivering information. I had an experience of meeting a teacher who never looked up once she came into the classroom. The only thing she did was reading the textbook. There was no communication, explanation or entertainment. Students never got a chance to use the vocabulary that we learned during class. If teachers do not give chances for students to use what they learn, they will have hard time remembering it. Notes and handouts can be useful when having a test, but not in real-life situations.**

**It seems clear to me that effective ways of learning emphasize student-centered classrooms. Teachers should act more as managers than lecturers. It enables students to participate in class and learn more in their preferred ways of learning. Some may be familiar with visual or auditory aids. Others may react more to tactile-kinesthetic materials. No matter what their preferences are, teachers have to communicate with students and try to foster leadership among them. Furthermore, students should be more autonomous when learning a language. Teaching and Learning cannot be successful when there is only one-way communication.**