**Second Language Acquisition Essay Assignment**

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**Second Language Environments that I have experienced**

Since I was young, I have wanted to learn foreign languages and be friends with many people from different countries. It was natural that I became interested in English, which is most used all over the world. However, my experiences of learning English in middle and high schools could not satisfy my desire to speak English in real life. After graduating from high school, I had a chance to take ESL class in USA and I could experience different learning environments there. Different environments I have experienced helped me realize the importance of language environments and teacher’s roles in second language learning.

In Korea, I was used to learning English as a subject needing memorizing like social studies. English teachers explained grammar rules, made us practice the rules, and checked whether we memorized them or not. Since many teachers at that time were explainers who thought their knowledge in English should be passed on their students in direct ways, we became more passive and receptive by writing down their explanations and focusing on rote memorization. The main purpose of the classes was to make us get good grade on English exams. Even though I memorized lots of words and grammar rules, I was not able to use them naturally when I needed them. I still remember how nervous I was when I met my classmates and ESL teacher for the first time in USA. Many classmates in ESL class were from Europe, Latin America, and Mexico. They looked so confident and did not seem to care about their mistakes at all. On the other hand, I was reluctant to speak in front of them, worrying about making mistakes. Later, I could be more confident as my teacher provided me with positive feedback and said that making mistakes was a process of learning, which made me feel more comfortable in her class. The activities which she prepared for our class enabled us to communicate with other members in various real-life situations. Through pair works and group works, we could focus on more meaningful communication. One of the most memorable activities was learning about other cultures. Each student was required to give a presentation about his or her own culture. We used pictures, videos, and even brought typical snacks of our countries. At that time, my teacher was an enabler and this student-centered learning made all of us become the center of our learning and enjoy learning English. Moreover, she made us write a journal every day and commented her ideas on our journals. It was helpful because I could learn how native speakers write a journal by reviewing her comments in English. Also, I could feel that my teacher was putting in her effort to get to know her students better in that way. Now I think that her effort was to build rapport with her students.

All my experiences motivated me to become a good English teacher. I have taught English in private institutes for about three years. Still, English classes in Korea mostly focus on how to train students to get good grade on exams and many teachers cannot help forcing students to memorize vocabularies and practice grammar rules. Fortunately, when I worked as a substitute teacher in a high school, I could see many teachers in the school try to establish more student-centered learning environments. I also want to make my class more student-centered and TESOL class is helping me to learn how to make effective learning environment. With empathy and authenticity, I will respect my students and help them learn English as I did in ESL class.