**Tesol 191th WD**

**Rosa**

**Topic**

**Was my experience of second language acquisition a success or failure?**

Acquisition is different from learning. Acquisition is a subconscious process as we accept the first language naturally. Many Korean students learn English as a second language and spend much time and money. But I’m sure most of them haven’t experienced L2 acquisition. They consciously learn and memorize for many tests.

My first experience of acquiring second language was not acquisition but learning just like them.

My first environment of learning English was very traditional. Teachers were strict and conservative explainers. They didn’t care about students’ individual differences and classrooms dynamic. They wanted to keep classroom quiet and students had to listen their lectures. Their goal was to get high scores and English was the means not to communicate with others but pass the entrance exam of university.

When I was 12, I started to learn English, specially grammar with the green book, “The base of Grammar”. My private English teacher was an old and strict explainer, too. In every class, I had to memorize almost 250-300 new words and 10-15 sentences. She tested them and evaluated me. If I fail the tests, she scolded me and called my mom. She was my worst teacher. I tried to pass the tests because I was afraid of her. Thanks to those tests, I became a good visual learner for the paper tests and auditory learner for the listening tests. My English scores went up and I became an excellent student who got a perfect score in Korea SAT, I disliked English. I hated to memorize too many words and take tests.

When I was a junior in university, I had a chance to meet two boys of Yale with my friend. My friend and boys chatted and chatted. I just smiled while they were having a good time. I could understand almost their conversation, but I couldn’t get in. When I made sentences in my head, their chatter passed quickly like an arrow.

At the end of the meeting, one of boys asked me very slowly “Are.. you.. a.. student?” Maybe he treated me with respect, but I thought he ignored me. I was so angry to myself. I thought “We were same age. Even one of boys was from German. But he could speak English very well. Why didn’t I speak just one sentence? My score was perfect!”

That happening motivated me to study English again. Internal motivation which was one of Malcom Knowles’ six principles was made. My internal motivation was very amazing. I searched many programs to improve my speaking and I chose American Language Camp Program which organized by Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. To match appropriate classes, I had to take a level test. I got the intermediate level. During the camp program, I had many classes such as grammar, lexis, reading, writing and debating. The classes were from 9 to 8 on weekdays. That was too long but wasn’t boring. The atmosphere of classrooms was enjoyable and positive. Teachers were respectful and empathized with my problems. They were involvers who gave me many chances to participate in classes and enablers who motivated me to encourage with modern teaching methods such as many activities, group tasks and presentation. I used multiple intelligences which Howard Gardener created theory of. Specially I enhanced not only interpersonal but kinesthetic intelligence such as playing musical, co-works, and role playing. The less teacher talked, the more I retained.

In addition, though I didn’t have any classes on weekend, I intentionally made a chance to talk with teachers and staffs. I naturally learned English and their cultures. I never talked in Korean with others. Even I talked in English in my sleep. Perhaps my affective filter which was one of Stephen Krashen’s hypotheses might be broken at that time. After the camp, English was no more subject which I had to study. It was a just language to communicate with others. I think I successfully experienced L2 acquisition.

In conclusion, my experience of L2 acquisition is that half was a failure but the other half was a success. From these my experience, I realize subconscious acquisition is more effective than conscious learning when acquiring a second language. Also, not only the environment but teachers are important. With Tesol program, I would like to learn how to give students experience of L2 acquisition and to be a rapport to my students.

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