**My Experience of Second Language (L2) Acquisition**

Su Hyun Lee

I think my Second Language Acquisition was half successful. While studying second language in various environments, there were times when effective language acquisition was achieved and there were times when it led to language learning.

Since when I was 6 years old, my parents send me to English Kindergarten. I don't remember for sure, but in my memory the half of the class was lecture with books and half was consisted with fun activity in English. I used to play many games with my friends and foreign teacher by using English and singing English kid songs. And I remember those activity made us feel really fun at that time. I think this is one of the **logical/mathematical intelligence**, and **musical/rhythmic intelligence learning skills** from multiple intelligence theory. Based on my experience, I think it is better for children to use methods that stimulate the five senses of active, enjoyable children and induce them to acquire their own language, rather than sitting down for a long time and try to control the children. I'm considering teaching children after the TESOL course, and I've been actually taught by this method and knew how effective these methods are for children when they are learning their second language. The time when I was a kindergarten, it’s hard to say about the acquisition because I was such a young girl, but if I dare to say it’s half and half acquisition succeed. After that our family moved to Columbus Ohio, United States of America since I was 7 years old. At first, my parents considered to move to LA, but they wanted to us to learn English more naturally by staying with locals which is Native Speakers, rather than staying with a lot of Koreans in USA. In fact, there were far fewer Koreans than LA. But these environmental element really helped me experience my L2 acquisition. When I first entered an elementary school in the U.S., I remember that the first few weeks of school were not adjusted because I only talk to foreign friends in English and all the class, my whole life was made up of English. But at that time I was still seven years old and a great age to adapt and accept new things. Unlike my first day of school when I was crying on my desk during dictation exam, I soaked into the crowd in a few weeks and lived without any inconvenience. This was my great experience about **Acquisition Hypothesis**. At this point, I found out the idea of effective teaching for the students. But especially as a parents. It is something I felt in my childhood, if you want to achieve L2 acquisition, it seems to be a good way to go and face with native speakers and learn it vividly at that country. If I am in that country, I think I can get a lot of opportunities to use second language every day in real life. I personally think that the younger you are, the more advantageous about the second language acquisition, and the better. And the younger you are, the more likely you will be to have a pronunciation similar to a native speaker. So giving opportunity for children to speak and learn, with natives. For children, I think the experience of foreign life played a very important role in improving language skills. But I can also get some idea from here is that, if you can't bring your child to a foreign country, for example in Korea, I can make a class which children can have fun talking with foreigners, and they can enjoy English without thinking as studying, so we can expect the pronunciation, fluency, and conversation skills of children.

After I came back to Korea, I was 8 years old. And I moved to Korea elementary school, and when I first get in to the classroom I was a little embarrassed. Unlike the USA, where there are fewer students and groups of students sitting in a circle, the atmosphere in the classroom seemed kind of strict, there was a long row formed for students around the teacher's table in front of the classroom. In Korea, from elementary school to high school, English is a compulsory education for students. In English class, there was lack of speaking, and was never learning through discussion, debate, pair works between students and no learning through physical activities. The class was all lecture based, and students were all just sitting down at their table listening to the teacher with the book opened on their desk. I was taught **Traditional Teaching**. There was no connection and interaction between teachers and students, and teachers were generally strict with their students. Also, sometime I even felt bored because the school English class at the school was too easy for me. It was representative showing of neglecting **Establishing a Classroom Dynamic**. These days the population of Korea is decreasing, so the number of elementary school students is getting smaller, but when I was in elementary school, the number of students in my class was almost 40. There was definitely no level test, and it would have been difficult to consider the level of the large number of students at that time. And I went to Daechi-dong Gangnam, the center of education in Korea, from 4th grade in elementary school to 1st grade in middle school. And I remember it was very stressful study environment. First of all, to enter Daechi-dong English academy, a very high level of level test was conducted on elementary school students over several hours. I could enter academy only after crossing the cutline, but the system of academy was really difficult even when I entered academy. English classes with very advanced prior learning, a huge amount of homework, and fierce level-up exams were always waiting. There were tests in every class and I had to memorize dozens of difficult words, did a lot of homework to keep up with the class, and felt pressured to do some class level-ups. But if I think about it now, I think the education at Daechi-dong English Academy was teaching young elementary school students a lot of hard work with excessive prior learning. As I went up to the higher classes, I memorized English words of that I even don’t know in Korean, and took class long time, and it began to get harder and less interested for me. So, I remember that once in elementary school I quit my academy because I lost interest leaving only the highest level of albatross level up test. I think these experience is included in **Assessing Language Proficiency.** Of course, for academies, they would maybe say level tests are conducted every time, because it is an academy that focuses on advanced learning at a high level, if studying becomes more difficult as the level of class goes up, something needs to be done, such as increasing the period of level up or adjusting the standard of level test cutline. Just in case of students like me who have fun studying early and mid-term, and lose interest as their class gets higher and higher. Or maybe there is a way to adjust the level differences and gaps between classes.

This time, I will talk about my successful experience of L2 acquisition through studying musicals in the USA as an exchange student. As my major is musical, last year I went to USA for one semester as an exchange student to study musical. When I went to USA after a long time, my pronunciation was firm and I did not speak English for a long time. And I went to an American university where I did not have the same major among exchange students in musicals, plays and movies. But refer to my major specialty I couldn’t sit down and take classes quietly starting from the first day of the school. In acting class, I had to memorize long lines of several pages in each class, and in singing class, I had to memorize all the long lyrics of songs, and even in the make-up class I had to present 7minutes PPT. But after one semester, my English skill naturally increased. And especially in every acting class, I and other students act animals, bunch of creative creatures, fairies, and acting scenes etc. And these are **Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence**. And one other factor that affected my L2 acquisition was meeting a good professor, he’s name was Dennis, my Acting class teacher. He has an **Empathy, Authentic, Respect** as a teacher. When I had any questions, I went to meet Dennis after class and asked him questions, and I was moved by him when he explained in a great kindness and detail each time. He really listened carefully to all of his students, and was enthusiastic. Just meeting a good teacher made me motivated to work hard and be more passionate. Lastly, I’m going to talk about L2 acquisition experience about **Musical Intelligence (Music Smart).** From childhood to the present, I love to listen and sing Pop Songs and Broadway, West End Musicals numbers. When I sing along English lyrics I involuntarily imitate the singer’s voice, accent, and intonation. Later, I knew that they helped me with my English pronunciation and intonation. Through these experiences, I have realized from my experience that this method will at least be effective in the development of pronunciation and intonation for students who like singing and music like me or who have musical talent and sensibility.

Thinking about experience of L2 acquisition it allowed me to organize my learning experience of L2 effectively, and the effective ways I organize based on my experiences will be very important things for me my students as a teacher in the future.

1638 words

,