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**My experience of L2 Acquisition – a Success or Failure?**

There are two ways to achieve a second language(L2), by acquisition or by studying. Acquisition is preferred by many English teachers and students today, because it is a natural and effective way of learning as Stephen Krashen developed in his theory. It is a subconscious acceptance of new language and learned through communication. I, as an English learner for a long time, think that my L2 acquisition was not very successful. In this essay I will share my experience in time I was in middle school and high school in Korea. Memories of my English classes, teachers, and classroom mood confirm that I learned English by studying.

When I was a middle school student, **Rapport** was not regarded as an important factor for the success of class. Since class size was too big with more than 50 students, the teacher could not even try to remember and use their names. To control the class, he used authority rather than empathy. Accordingly, **Classroom Dynamics** was very low. I did not experience any activities involving interaction between the students. English grammar textbook was the only material used in the class, and neither group discussion nor teamwork was asked. Dry atmosphere did not help me much to get interested in learning English.

Unlike **Modern Teaching** which is student-centered and preferred by many L2 educators today, **Traditional Teaching** was more common back then. Teacher stood in front of the classroom and gave lectures which required students to read several paragraphs and solve for the questions. Listening was taught by playing a cassette player, and students answered for the related quizzes after listening to the conversation. Learners were not allowed to discuss with each other. Such lack of communication in the class made me a passive learner, or **Rule-former**. Since I was a good student, my test scores were good enough, however, I got to have weakness in speaking English. I held fear when having conversation or when expressing my ideas in English for a long time in my life, and still have some. This is one reason why I think my L2 acquisition was a failure.

Definitely, English teachers in my adolescence were **Explainers** rather than **Involvers or Enablers**. Because the teacher focused on passing knowledge to the class, Teacher Talk Time(TTT) was high whereas Student Talk Time(STT) was low. Based on **Stephen Krashen’s Input Hypothesis**, he did not create much comprehensible input to make me acquire English. My language acquisition would have been better if I met involver type of teachers. As explained in **Stephen Krashen‘s Affective Filter Hypothesis**, he made me to have affective filter that hindered me from having high motivation, high self-esteem, and low anxiety.

Meanwhile, learning from explainer teachers negatively affected my **Learner Retention Rates**. During the class, none of any interesting techniques such as videos, experiments, or group activities were used. I recall my high school English class was quite boring. After I took lectures, I came home and opened the book to review, but only thing I could depend on in order to remind myself of what I had learned today was hand-written notes that I did not even remember whether I took them. This is the traditional way of studying a second language and it clearly is different from how you acquire your mother tongue.

Lastly, I would like to discuss how I was assessed in school. As mentioned above, my classes were mostly consisted of reading and listening, which are two receptive **Language Skills**. Productive skills such as speaking and writing had not been taught and evaluated. Such unbalance occurred in terms of **Language system** as well. Large part of the test was knowing vocabularies(**Lexis**) and understanding **Grammar**. As students did not have to care about communication and writing papers, the other factors of the language system such as phonology, function, and discourse were overlooked.

I conclude myself that I learned English through studying not through naturally acquiring it due to the limited second language education environment in Korea. Fortunately, Korea’s English teaching system and quality have changed, and many people are aware of the importance of SLA. I hope young L2 learners of today will not experience the same environment that I met in school and succeed in their second language acquisition.

※ Word count : 708