

A CASE STUDY OF IMPLEMENTING HYPOTHESIS OF AFFECTIVE FILTER IN LEARNING ENGLISH TO REDUCE ANXIETY AND RAISE STUDENT'S SELF-CONFIDENCE

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Abstract. *In this article, we would like to investigate the language acquisition process of a young student and his learning process using S. Krashen's "Affective Filter Hypothesis". We will see how this hypothesis helps us to increase his efficiency and self-confidence.*

Keywords: *"Affective Filter Hypothesis", "Simple Past Tense", strategy and method, learning process, language acquisition*

ПРИМЕР РЕАЛИЗАЦИИ ГИПОТЕЗЫ АФФЕКТИВНОГО ФИЛЬТРА В ИЗУЧЕНИИ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА ДЛЯ СНИЖЕНИЯ ТРЕВОГИ И ПОВЫШЕНИЯ УВЕРЕННОСТИ СТУДЕНТОВ В СЕБЕ

Аннотация. *В этой статье мы хотели бы исследовать процесс овладения языком юным студентом и процесс его обучения с помощью «гипотезы аффективного фильтра» С. Крашена. Мы увидим, как эта гипотеза поможет нам повысить его эффективность и уверенность в себе.*

Ключевые слова: *«гипотеза аффективного фильтра», «простое прошедшее время», стратегия и метод, процесс обучения, овладение языком.*

INTRODUCTION

This case study aims to observe the language acquisition process of young learner, particularly, the progress of his learning in acquiring "Simple Past Tense" during two weeks.

As the subject of my research is concerned about his self-confidence, I have chosen to examine his learning progress using the linguist S.Krashen's theory about Affective Filter Hypothesis. I believe this hypothesis helps me to reduce his anxiety and raise his self-confidence.

S.Krashen (1982) claims: "Acquisition requires meaningful interactions in the target language – natural communication – in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding." In order to create meaningful interaction between me and my student I am going to devise a strategy and method. In my opinion, in this case study "in class" and "out of class" activities will work. These two activities consist of following components: listening to music and singing songs, reading and writing for pleasure, as well as playing games. Especially, I would like to focus on reading skill more to teach the "Simple Past Tense".

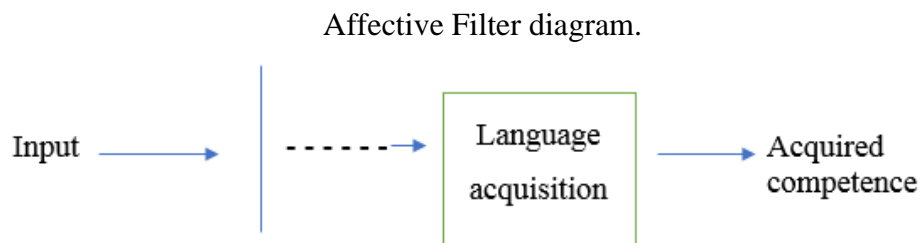
According to linguist Noam Chomsky (2014), we are all born with innate ability to acquire the language; the only thing we have to do is to activate LAD (Language Acquisition Device) in our brains. Then the linguist S.Krashen (1982) complemented Noam Chomsky's theory with the following idea: "LAD could be activated in natural way while we communicate, listen to and especially, when we read". This approach provides the learner the opportunity to implicitly learn the target language and eliminate "mental block" while doing activities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Affective Filter Hypothesis was first raised by Dulay and Burt in 1977. As S.Krashen reports in his book (1982) Dulay defined the affective filter as an innate processing system which subconsciously impedes the learner’s absorption of the target language. Then S.Krashen (1982) developed this idea in his 5 hypothesis in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory, which had a large impact in all areas of second language research and teaching since the 1980s. The Affective Filter Hypothesis has great influence on foreign language learning. In order to develop learning of foreign language, a low affective filter is desirable. The ‘affective filter’ is a metaphorical barrier that prevents learners from acquiring language even when appropriate input is available (Patsy M.Lightbrown &Nina Spada, 2013).

According to S.Krashen’s hypothesis learners with a low affective filter will not only be efficient language acquirers of the comprehensible input they receive. They are also more likely to interact with others, unembarrassed by making mistakes for example, and thus increase the amount of that input. The following figure from S.Krashen’s work (1982)illustrates this concept:

Filter Input Figure 1.



According to this diagram, it can be clearly seen that if learner’s filter is too strong, then it is hard to reach LAD (Language Acquisition Device), otherwise if the filter is weak, then the learner can get desired competence. In other words, if the affective filter is strong the learner will not get language input, and in turn, not to be open for language acquisition.

S. Krashen (1981) claims: “Research over the last decade has confirmed that a variety of effective variables relate to success in second language acquisition.”

What makes this filter weakened to expose the language easily? S. Krashen (1982) suggests that three main features such as low-anxiety, self-confidence and motivation help the learner to acquire the language. Most researchers and educators would agree that “motivation is very important, if not the most important factor in language learning, without which even gifted individuals cannot accomplish long-term goals, whatever the curricula and whoever the teacher” (Xiaoyan Du, 2009).

We can say the same about lowering anxiety and rising self-confidence. In order to weaken the filter, in my opinion, the teacher needs to provide relaxed and pleasant learning atmosphere for students; by eliminating anxiety and encouraging students to acquire the language better.

According to Olga De Jesus’s research (2015), more than 80% of students believed that their relaxed and positive attitudes and teacher’s interesting ways of teaching and frequent encouragement did enable them to achieve a greater knowledge of English much more effectively.

I also completely share this view and I would like to observe how weakening filter of my participant will facilitate to his learning process of grammar.

My study is based on home–life context. For this case study, I chose to work with a student of the fifth grade who is a ten-year-old boy. He goes to a public school where English subject is taught 3 times a week. Despite the fact that he is learning English at school he takes extra lessons (tutoring) from me twice a week since September of the current year. The English language is the third language he learns. At home he speaks only Uzbek, but since he goes to Russian language school his second language is Russian. As I talked to his parents, it was clear that his family values and follows only Uzbek traditions.

He is little bit shy by nature, but he likes to read and to listen to songs. I think his self-confidence needs to be boosted, because when he answers the questions and speaks in English, he does it with certain level of hesitation. It seems like he knows more than he speaks. When I asked his English teacher about his learning process at school, she also confirmed this view.

Although his English proficiency level is close to intermediate, he has some difficulties using regular and irregular verbs. Based on the test result (www.whatismylearningstyle.com), I realized that he belongs to the category of an auditory learner. Therefore, in my research I focused on listening skills more.

Taking into consideration his traits, ability of learning and his learning style, I made a check list and put as a target for him to learn 80 irregular verbs per two weeks and to use them correctly in his speech.

I conducted my research with some strategies and methods that will make him to be active and raise his self-confidence during the lesson while learning grammar. For this purpose, the “out of class” and “in class” activities were chosen that encompassed the task-based methodology. Based on the result from the test a lot of activities were designed for auditory learner. Thus, we started the process from reading out the books in English language and identifying in the text the regular and irregular verbs in the past tense. A part of participant’s “in-class” activities was to remember these verbs by writing them down to his copy book and doing some exercises. Beside that he listened to and sang songs about irregular verbs (“Adorable cat” video tells a story while teaching the verbs), read the texts and acted out the verbs. For “out of class” activity I suggested him to listen to songs, read more books in English at home and made flashcards with the verbs.

Games were involved in the learning process in order for him to become more active. For instance, “Tossing a ball game” was played (teacher tosses the ball to the learner saying the verb in the present tense, learner throws it back saying this verb in the past tense).

In order to stimulate the better understanding and to boost his interest to the learning process I decided to read out for him the book “The New Adventures of Curious George” written by Margaret and H.A.Rey. My strategy was to make him to identify the past tense structure, find out verbs in the past tense and to write them down in his notebook. Then taking some examples from these verbs he put them in interrogative and negative forms. He found this story very interesting and was curious about its development and the fate of the hero of this book.

One of the most enjoyable parts of our communication was the story make-ups. The task was to give the sentences in the past tense one by one and make up interesting stories based on these expressions.

The suggestopedia style was also experimented during the lesson. He read the text and simultaneously acted it out. But this style made him feel awkward while repeating the actions

after me. However, while singing songs about irregular verbs and playing games he began to open up.

DISCUSSION

In order to evaluate the participant's knowledge and find out the strategies to teach the language two kinds of tests were conducted. Firstly, he was tested in order to know his learning style that was revealed he had an auditory style of learning. Then the participant was given the grammar test that covered the "Simple Past Tense". I adapted the test module based on the design of the linguist Marcia Linebarger. The test was composed of 18 questions which had two options for the answers with correct and incorrect sentences. For instance, in this sentence the participant should find the correct form in the simple past tense:

1. a) Did Nancy watched television?
- b) Did Nancy watch television?

The time of the test was limited to 20 minutes. As a result, he scored 9 out 18. At the end of the study the same test was given to check the progress of the participant. The results demonstrated that he got 17 out of 18. As a matter of fact, his scores within two weeks period significantly went up. Concerning the initial target for remembering irregular verbs, the participant was able to use around 60 out of 80 of them during the oral examination.

His progress in this area was also noticeable and advanced that showed me his covert great potential for learning English. At the same time, while the test results clearly demonstrated the learning progress of my participant, I cannot say that his self-confidence has changed dramatically. In my opinion, implementation of comprehensible input strategy by using different approaches and methods made the student to achieve the goal and obviously improve his results. The other visible change happened in behavior of my participant who becomes more open and relaxed during the educational games.

CONCLUSIONS

This case study was conducted to observe the learning progress of the participant through different games and English songs which lead to enhancement of his self-confidence. The participant has achieved the progress in learning English, particularly, he has deep and thorough understanding of "Simple Past Tense". I think that in order to further facilitate the gained progress it is necessary to continue to implement this hypothesis for at least 5-6 months. In my view, it will allow us to better evaluate the progress of participant and to identify next steps to help him acquire English language. At the same time, I strongly believe that the participant needs to work hard in the future on improving his self-confidence. For this purpose, I am planning to put him in a group with students who are approximately of his level of knowledge. I will try to encourage even the little advancement in front of others that will solidify his assurance and competence.

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