THE WAY OF CREATING AN INNOVATIVE CASE STUDY FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

Abduvoidov Hasan Ilkhom's son
The head of subjects department at Law school in Sirdarya region

Abstract. This article gives information about some possible and fruitful ways of designing a case study during English classes. Moreover, the article provides the outcomes of implemented case study and relevant feedback for teachers.

Keywords: linguists, second language acquisition, practical work, learning processes, affective factors, cognitive side, case study, self-esteem, motivation, empathy, literature review, self-efficacy.

СПОСОБ СОЗДАНИЯ ИННОВАЦИОННОГО КЕЙС СТАДИ ДЛЯ ИЗУЧАЮЩИХ АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ЯЗЫК

Аннотация. В этой статье дается информация о некоторых возможных и эффективных способах разработки тематического исследования на уроках английского языка. Кроме того, в статье представлены результаты реализованного тематического исследования и соответствующие отзывы для учителей.

Ключевые слова: лингвисты, овладение вторым языком, практическая работа, процессы обучения, аффективные факторы, когнитивная сторона, тематическое исследование, самооценка, мотивация, эмпатия, обзор литературы, самоэффективность.

A great number of researches have been done on second language acquisition by linguists so far. However, there is always a need for analyzing methods in a language in spite of much practical work. Even though every language has one thing in common, linguists believe that their work would be different and beneficial than others. Therefore, I also hope that my approach observing one of my students' learning processes would be solid experience for myself and may help other teacher candidates to use it as a handful sample of case study. For this case study, I chose one of my applicants who has been studying English language for 7 months. In order to analyze his language learning process I decided to utilize affective factors in second language acquisition. H. Douglas Brown describes affective factors as "the emotional side of human behavior and it may with some caution, be contrasted to the cognitive side" (p.142). In fact, there are more than ten affective factors mentioned in Brown's book (principle of language learning and teaching, pp.143-169) to work on a learner's language learning process. However, after reading some articles I decided to use and mention 5 main affective factors which may be quite useful to conduct my case study. They are: self-esteem, motivation, inhibition, anxiety and empathy. Perhaps, these five affective factors are not so popular among linguists who frequently carry out researches, but I firmly believe that they may help any teachers who are in the same situation as I have been to clarify this case study. Furthermore, in some cases, finding out and observing a number of articles related to the case study have played an important role to get useful information about affective factors.

In my case study, every section of the researches has been ordered thoroughly. In the beginning, there is a part called "literature review" in which more than five articles have been discussed and studied in order to acquire further information about affective factors. After this,

there is a section of participant profile in which backgrounds, experiences and culture of the language learner has been taken into consideration. In section research design I demonstrate data used to check the level and improvement of the learner, while in section data collection and findings the difficulties, learning trajectory and the learner's language acquisition have been analyzed. Finally, in the end of my case study I modify further implications of my findings in terms of language teaching methodology and make some recommendations to the improvement of my language learner's process.

During the process in which I had been trying to find out extra information by reading online articles I came across some handful part of articles related to my chosen topic. The first one is the definition of affective factors by Yolanda Reinoso Barzallo: "affective factors are the set of emotions and attitudes people have about themselves or the surrounding environment". In her article, named "Main affective factors", she divides affective factors into four main ones, namely, inhibition, attitudes, levels of anxiety and self-esteem. According to her, inhibition is the kind of mechanism a person uses to protect themselves from exposure to others which means inhibited learners usually feel vulnerable or even less capable than their peers. She tries to describe attitudes more coherently citing that a positive attitude towards anyone or anything that has to do with learning, can have a positive effect in second language acquisition and it includes the way a student feels about the teacher, which can positively influence on his or her learning. Moreover, feelings of anxiety are obviously uncomfortable and students in the process of second language acquisition can feel anxiety due to diverse factors, such as immigration situation, social pressure to academically perform, school test or assignments. Interestingly, her opinion about self-esteem has a close meaning to mine: "self-esteem is the self-confidence level and self-respect a person has and it can influence learning".

Another article which I found to be very handful for my case study would be Eshboeva Durdona's article named "The role of motivation in language learning". In the article motivation is regarded as an influential element in the success of any activity and it plays an important role in achieving the desired goals. The results of her correlational analyses indicated that students who had positive motivation and attitudes toward language study tend to do well on the module tests and to participate actively in learning English as the second language. According to her next research, a statistically significant correlation was not found between student's motivation and attitudes and other achievement measures such as final exam scores and final grades, the lack of correlation may have been due to students having acquired "test-taking skills" by the time of the final exam. Meanwhile, there is a remarkable point by her: "One thing that students, teachers, material developers and researchers all agree upon is that motivation is an essential part of mastering a second or foreign language". As she cites, the concept of motivation seems complex as it may take a respectable number of disciplines to arrive at a reasonable understanding of its facets. However, I have not learned many things about motivation in a learner's language learning process since I am accustomed to watching motivational films every day and studying them deeply in order to utilize in real life.

Because of having selected anxiety as one of main affective factors in second language acquisition I had a tendency to find a solid article with high level which then would contribute to give a peculiar sample and information to the case study. After looking through more than twenty articles, I came to conclusion that the article "Language stress and anxiety among the English language learners" by Masoud Hashemi would be more beneficial than others to learn

from. According to Hashemi, language learners usually express anxiety, apprehension and nervousness when learning a new language. I totally agree with his opinion since there can be witnessed enough difficulties in any kind of process to achieve progress and these problematic situations may negatively affect to a language learner's eagerness. The findings by Hashemi suggested that language anxiety can originate from learner's own sense of "self", their self-related cognitions, language learning difficulties, difference in learners' and target language cultures, differences in social status of the speakers and interlocutors, and form the fear of losing self-identity. Additionally, he also approves that considering the crucial role of teachers in second or foreign language pedagogy, a need was felt to investigate that beliefs and perceptions of language teachers about learning and teaching a second or a foreign language. I have also found some related articles about anxiety in language learning yet the information in them were nearly similar to each other.

The fourth article which had a significant impact on this case study is "Role of empathy in language learning" by Andrew Weiler. In his article the role of empathy has been simply described in the example of his power point: "If you give a person a fork to eat soup with, the conclusion they can reach is that they are no good at eating soup. Is it the case? No. They just were using the wrong tool". What about considering the results of logic versus imagination? I mean, if a teacher is too intellectual (lacking empathy, building skills etc.) can this harm the students? If the aim of teaching my students is to improve their skills needed to succeed in English, I understand empathy as being a crucial method of not only acquiring some of the skills needed today's workplace and culture, and it should also be a learning objective in itself. What I have learned from the articles about empathy in second language acquisition is that there are some initial thoughts that came to me after looking through thoroughly many articles about empathy, whether it can be taught or its value in teaching.

The last article that has been utilized to acquire some opinions about self-efficacy is "Self-efficacy and the success of language learning" by Michael Sturgeon. He describes self-efficacy as an important, valuable and very strong factor in the process of language learning. Self-efficacy is not self-esteem, it is specific to the task one believes or does not believe that they can accomplish. Literature from different research studies may show that a high self-efficacy increases the likelihood of one accomplishing a specific goal. Additionally, I have found another useful article about self-efficacy named "Self-efficacy in foreign language learning contexts". In the article, there can be found a considerable body of research on individual differences in the area of foreign language learning which encompass a wide scope of domains including, personality traits, learning styles, learners' beliefs, strategies, aptitude, age and motivation. The point is that self-efficacy, as a key element of social cognitive theory, refers to "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, p.3). According to Bandura there are four sources which would affect the development of self-efficacy beliefs: mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion and physiological states. People who have experienced successful performance in accomplishing a task, tend to have high self-efficacy, therefore past experiences play a vital role in developing self-efficacy beliefs. Moreover, according to my opinion, self-efficacy is something that more than important a language learner should be able to use it correctly since one cannot develop self-efficacy: it exists in every learner; they just need to switch it on.

During these two weeks I not only observed or analyzed the learning process of my subject, but also I was able to discover handful approaches and procedures in second language acquisition. More interestingly, I did not expect that my subject would own some of these affective factors since he started learning English just seven months ago. Every lesson I observed his input whether he was acquiring my teachings or not. Fortunately, the results were really good for two week's preparation and also affective factors significantly contributed to improve my subject's level in English.

It was obvious that my subject needed a strong motivation that can push him to move forward and learn the language without low enthusiasm. In this situation I decided to give an example of famous speeches by well-known people since words can either encourage or discourage totally. To be honest, in some peculiar situation I acted strictly by shouting or giving relevant examples from life in order to electrify his soul. Overall, any kinds of learners do long for even a bit motivation.

Moving on to the self-efficacy my learner should have, with one word I can cite that he has a high self-efficacy naturally since every exercise he received had been done on time. However, there were some mistakes and wrong approaches in his language learning process, yet self-efficacy is not a factor that must be smooth without mistakes but it is a type of sense with help of which a learner should go forward even he or she fails during the learning process.

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