

INITIAL LANGUAGE LEARNER PROFILES AND KRASHEN'S HYPOTHESES

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Abstract

This paper presents the initial language learner profiles of two students, Anna and Alex, at a multilingual language center. The study reflects on teaching experiences with learners of A1 level, explores their learning challenges and progress, and connects their development to key second language acquisition theories such as Krashen's Input Hypothesis, the Natural Order Hypothesis, and the Affective Filter Hypothesis. The reflection also discusses practical classroom approaches to support learner motivation and engagement.

Keywords. Second language acquisition, Input Hypothesis, Natural Order Hypothesis, Affective Filter, learner profiles, multilingual education, CEFR.

Introduction

I work at a language-learning facility that offers courses in English, French, Russian, Turkish, Arabic, and Uzbek. As an English language instructor, I teach learners from beginner to IELTS levels. Initially, teaching non-Uzbek-speaking students was challenging due to language barriers. Among my students were Anna, a German native, and Alex, a Russian native. Both were 20 years old, single, and enthusiastic about learning English.

Our first lessons began with basic literacy (ABC), which they found easy. However, during subsequent lessons, I identified pronunciation and grammar difficulties, especially with articles and tenses. Anna, with her background in German, had a comparative advantage in understanding articles. Alex, motivated by his goal to study in the USA and obtain an IELTS certificate, focused on improving his listening and speaking through films. Both students quickly improved pronunciation but required structured guidance to progress from A1 to at least B2 level. This paper explores how different SLA (Second Language Acquisition) theories supported their learning journey.

Learner Profile 1: Anna

Typological Advantages in Article Usage

Anna's prior experience with German, a language with definite and indefinite articles, gave her an advantage in understanding English articles. The similarities between German and English grammatical structures (typology) enabled her to grasp these concepts more quickly than her peer.

Application of the Input Hypothesis

As Pennycook (1989) emphasized, involving students through visual and interactive content improves retention. Anna responded well to visuals such as images, videos, and color-coded materials. She performed better when tasks were accompanied by visual aids. Outside the classroom, she enhanced her understanding by watching topic-related videos, which contributed to her steady improvement.

Application of the Natural Order Hypothesis

Following Freeman (1967), grammar should be introduced progressively, and errors corrected systematically. Anna often made errors with tense usage but quickly improved through regular correction and reinforcement. Her ability to internalize correct patterns over time illustrated the effectiveness of this hypothesis in her learning process.

Learner Profile 2: Alex

Application of the Affective Filter Hypothesis

Flynn (1989) highlighted the importance of learner motivation and confidence. Alex was highly motivated but struggled with vocabulary and understanding spoken language. To lower his affective filter, I provided regular encouragement, praised his progress, and occasionally offered small rewards. These actions increased his motivation and engagement.

Addressing Vocabulary Gaps

Alex lacked peers with whom he could practice vocabulary. To address this, I engaged him in conversations during free time and suggested independent listening activities. Gradually, his ability to understand and use new words improved.

Application of the Natural Order Hypothesis

Alex's grammar foundation was weaker. He made common errors with prepositions, articles, and tenses, such as writing "in 12 October" instead of "on October 12th." Regular, timely correction of these mistakes helped him improve, aligning with the principles of the Natural Order Hypothesis.

Application of the Input Hypothesis

In line with Savignon (1983), authentic materials support effective learning. For Alex, music was the most engaging medium. Listening to English songs helped him acquire new vocabulary and natural phrasing. I selected simple, clear songs to match his level, which greatly aided his listening and speaking development.

Conclusion

The learning experiences of Anna and Alex demonstrate the value of applying second language acquisition theories in classroom practice. The Input Hypothesis highlighted the importance of using visuals and real-world materials to enhance comprehension. The Natural Order Hypothesis reminded me to provide timely corrections for grammar development. Finally, the Affective Filter Hypothesis showed that building learners' confidence greatly affects their motivation and performance.

Anna benefited from visual aids and repeated exposure to corrected grammar, while Alex responded well to music-based input and encouragement to build his vocabulary and confidence. These examples underscore that personalized, theory-informed teaching approaches can support effective language learning and progression from beginner levels to higher proficiency.

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