

Krashen's Affective Filter in Learning English as a Second Language among Primary School Students

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Abstract

Krashen's theory of second language acquisition focuses on the importance of affective filter that whether they are in primary or secondary classes, are get affected by some factors that become a barrier to acquire a language in addition to their mother tongue. One of the major affective factors is anxiety towards a new language which has an entirely different structure from their mother tongue. The main focus of the present study is to find out one of the affective filters that is "anxiety" to learn English as a second language among primary school students in Kerala. The normative survey method was used for the study. 152 primary school students were taken as a sample from the different schools of Kerala. The main variable is Anxiety towards learning English as a second language. Gender, medium of instruction and type of management are taken as categorical variables. Learning English Language Anxiety Inventory was administered to the 152 primary school students in Kerala. The result of the study revealed that medium of instruction influences the anxiety level of the students. The students who are enrolled in Government and Aided school have anxiety in learning English compared to Private school students. The reasons for these differences in the level of anxiety may be (i) due to the lack of input in the target language both from the teachers and from the surroundings, (ii) lack of infrastructure facility like language lab, technical support to familiarize the second Language. For overcoming such situations, they need to be provided a highly motivated and fearless learning environment.

Keywords: Affective filter, Anxiety and Second Language

Children from traditional Indian family background normally facing a kind of distraction while learning English as a second language. They have to overcome lots of hurdles to obtain the goal that is to attain proficiency in the English Language. One of the barriers which are dominating or pulling the children from the real acquisition is anxiety towards English. Anxiety means an internal fear to do or participate in an activity. There are so many reasons for developing anxiety among the children. An Anxiety isn't developed or caused by a single factor but a combination of things, such as personality factors, life experiences, and physical health. Anxiety towards the English Language is developed in a learner is mostly because of the insufficient learning experience in Language classroom. From the pre-primary class itself, both the teachers and parents are failed to inculcate affection among students towards the English language. Students have their own reason to keep an unfriendly attitude towards the second language such as the difference in culture, style, and structure. However, it is the duty of teachers to remove such an anxiety of the students at the very early stage of second language learning through introducing a fearless language classroom and make the availability of receiving the sufficient input in the particular language. The present study highlights the problem of affective filter, especially anxiety, which affects the learning of English as a second language in Kerala settings.

Need and Significance of the Study

According to Stephen D Krashen (1981), there are five basic hypotheses related to second language acquisition. They are acquisition-learning, natural order, monitor, input, and affective filter. Affective filter is only for second/foreign language acquisition/learning, it does not happen while the native language is acquired. Krashen has defined an affective filter as a mental block that prevents learners from the correct comprehension of the input that they receive for language acquisition. In the process of acquisition of second language, it affects some variables like low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety; these variables are incorporated by Krashen in his affective filter hypothesis. Affective factors that will directly influence the second language acquisition rather than learning. Krashen (1982), pointed out that Affective Filter Hypothesis can help to explain why a certain student of a second language who receives a great deal of comprehensible input still does not reach a native-like competence: it is due to the high Affective Filter that prevents the input from reaching the language acquisition device. The real acquisition is possible or not, it is particularly based on the high influence of affective factors.

In India, we are giving importance to English Language Learning as a second language from the primary class itself. But the problem is, the structure of English Language is entirely different from the regional languages or the mother tongue. So it definitely creates disequilibrium in the cognitive structure of a learner.

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For attaining an equilibrium state, the learner has to rearrange the structure. This rearrangement will be possible only by breaking the various blocks. Anxiety is a major affective filter or intervening variable that drag out the learner from the acquisition of English Language. Sadiq (2017), anxiety is one form of emotional problem that could highly affect the academic performance of EFL learner. Hashemi (2011), the language anxiety mainly results of learners self-related cognition, language learning difficulties, differences in learners and target language cultures, the difference in social status of the speakers and interlocutors, and fear of losing self-identity. Izadi & Atasheneh (2012), the findings of this study reveals that foreign language anxiety plays an important psychological role for language students. It is a matter which is directly related to the students' self-confidence & self-esteem. Joy (2013), it has to be noted that anxiety at any stage is detrimental to better performance. During exams, anxious students are affected by the inherent threat created by the test which distracts them from the effective performance. The basic purpose of a language is to perform in a real situation. But the better performance happens only in the less anxiety situation. The level of anxiety mostly affects the competence in speaking and reading skills. Rana & Gida (2017), they pointed out that speak in the English language generates lots of affecting factors among the learners. So the prime focus of an English language teacher is to eradicate the fear of speaking the target language by arranging a positive and friendly environment in the language class. Saranraj & Meenaksh (2016), the study emphasized the positive correlation of English class anxiety and English use anxiety; therefore the English as a second language learners are exposing their anxiety to use English inside and outside the classroom. The Affective filter that is anxiety towards the second language, we have to identify from the primary class itself, then only it can be wiped out from their early stage by providing a fearless classroom environment.

Objectives

The researcher set the following objectives of the study:

1. To find out the level of anxiety in Learning English language of Primary School Students in total sample and subsamples.
2. To find out the significant difference in anxiety in learning English Language of Primary School Students based on
 - a) Gender
 - b) Type of management
 - c) Medium of instruction

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the present study are following:

1. There exist a significant difference in the level of anxiety in learning English Language of Primary

School Students in the total sample and subsamples.

2. There is a significant difference in mean scores of anxiety in learning English Language of Primary School Students based on
 - a) Gender
 - b) Type of Management
 - c) Medium of Instruction

Method

Sample

The population of present study covers the Primary School Students of Palakkad district of Kerala. The sample of Present study consists of 152 primary school students in Palakkad District. The Random sampling technique was used for collecting the Data.

Tool

English Language Anxiety Questionnaire

English language Learning Anxiety Questionnaire was constructed by the Investigators. The Questionnaire consists of 30 test items. The questionnaire covers both negative and positive statements. For the correct option, the item score as '1' and for wrong option '0'. The questions are prepared on the Anxiety towards reception, production, participation and presentation of English Language.

Reception: The process of receiving the language through reading and listening.

Production: Language production consists of several interdependent processes which transform a nonlinguistic message into a spoken, signed, or written linguistic signal.

Participation: Participation is taking part in an activity. Here means, be a part of the language activities performed in the classroom environment.

Presentation: Produce or deliver an idea or a thought in front of the audience or exhibit the language activities that assign to the students.

Table 1: Dimensions of English Language Learning Anxiety Check List and Corresponding Questions

Dimensions	Question Number
Anxiety towards: Reception	1, 2, 6, 15,17, 18, 20,21, 23, 24, 25, 27,30
Production	3, 5, 8, 9, 19,26,29
Participation	7, 14, 22, 28
Presentation	4,10, 11, 12, 13,16

Reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results. The reliability of this tool was found as 0.770 by using Split-half Method. The obtained value is greater than 0.5, so the reliability of the tool was very high. Validity refers to the credibility or believability of the research. Predictive validity was found to be 0.877.

Results and Discussion

The results and finding of the present study are discussed below:

To find out the level of anxiety in Learning English language of Primary School Students in total sample and subsamples

Table 2: Data of Percentage Analysis on Total Sample and Subsamples

Total sample & subsamples	Percentage of students have high level of Anxiety	Percentage of students have moderate level of Anxiety	Percentage of students have low level of Anxiety
Total sample	19.08%	65.13%	15.79%
Boys	19.73%	67.11%	13.16%
Girls	23.68%	59.22%	17.10%
Malayalam medium	45.28%	52.84%	1.88%
English Medium	5.05%	71.71%	23.24%
Government schools	40.91%	50%	9.09%
Aided schools	23.28%	72.61%	4.11%
Unaided schools	5.3%	63.1%	31.6%

From the above table, it shows the 19.08 % of the students of the total sample have a high level of Anxiety in learning English language, the 65.13% of the students have a moderate level of anxiety and 15.79% of the students have a low level of anxiety. In the case of boys and girls, 19.73% of boys have a high level of anxiety in learning English language and 23.68% of girls have high level anxiety. 67.11% of boys have a moderate level of anxiety and 59.22% of girls have a moderate level of anxiety. 13.16% of boys have a low level of anxiety and 17.10% of girls have a low level of anxiety. While considering the anxiety level of students in Malayalam and English medium schools, 45.28% of the students in Malayalam medium have a high level of anxiety, 52.84% of the students in Malayalam medium have a moderate level of anxiety and only 1.88% of the students have a low level of anxiety. In English medium, only 5.05% of the students have a high level of anxiety, 71.71% of the students have a moderate level of anxiety and 23.24% of students have a low level of anxiety. In the case of anxiety level of government, aided and unaided schools students in learning English language, 40.91% of the government school students have high level of anxiety in learning English language. 50% of the students have a moderate level of anxiety and 9.09% students have a

low level of anxiety. In aided schools, 23.28% of the students have a high level of anxiety, 72.61% of the students have a moderate level of anxiety and 4.11% of the students have a low level of anxiety. In unaided schools, 5.3% of the students have a high level of anxiety, 63.1% of the students have a moderate level of anxiety and 31.6% of the students have a low level of anxiety.

The above table gives a clear idea about the level of anxiety among primary school students for the total and subsamples. The data reveals that most of the primary school students have anxiety in learning English as a second language. While taking consideration of subsamples, especially in gender, girls have a high level of anxiety than boys. The Medium of instruction also influences the anxiety level of the students. Those students who are receiving instruction in Malayalam (mother tongue) have high level of anxiety than the students who are receiving instruction in English (second language). Students who enrolled in government as well as aided schools have a high level of anxiety than the students who are receiving instructions from unaided school. The exhibition of anxiety among primary school students mainly because of the inappropriate style of the introduction of the second language among students.

To find out the significant difference in anxiety in learning English Language of Primary School Students based on gender.

Table 3: Data and Result of t-test based on Gender

Variable	Gender	N	M	SD	t	signifi cant
Anxiety in learning English Language	Boys	76	10.45	5.46	0.393	P>0.05
	Girls	76	10.11	5.25		

From the table 3, the mean score of the boys and girls are 10.45 and 10.11 and the standard deviation is 5.46 and 5.25 respectively. The obtained t value 0.393 is less than the table value 2.58. It shows that there is no significant difference in mean scores of anxiety in learning English Language of Primary School Students based on gender at 0.01 level of significance.

From the table 4, the mean score of the students of Malayalam medium and English medium are 14.36 and 8.09 and standard deviation are 4.43 and 4.44 respectively. The obtained t value 8.289 is greater than the table value 2.58. So, the null hypothesis is rejected and accepted the alternative hypothesis, this result shows that there is a significant difference in mean scores of anxiety in learning English Language of Primary School Students based on medium at 0.01 level of significance. From the mean score, the anxiety level of Malayalam medium students has a higher level of

anxiety than English medium students in learning English Language.

Table 4: Data and Result of t-test based on Medium of Instruction

variable	Medium	N	M	SD	t	Significant
Anxiety in learning English Language	Malayalam	53	14.36	4.43	8.289	P<0.01
	English	99	8.09	4.44		

Table 5: Data and Result Based on F -Test Based on Type of Management

Variable	Type of management	N	Mean	SD	F	Significant
Anxiety in Learning English Language	Government	22	13.36	5.06	24.396*	P<0.01
	Aided	73	11.97	4.85		
	Unaided	57	6.91	4.27		

*significant

From table5, it can be observed that the mean score and the standard deviation of Government, aided and unaided school students' anxiety in learning English language is 13.36 & 5.06, 11.97 & 4.85 and 6.91 & 4.27 respectively. The value of 'F' test is 24.396; it shows that there is a significant difference in anxiety in learning English of primary school students based on the type of management at 0.01 level.

Table 6: Data and Result of Post Hoc Test

Variables	Mean Differences	Standard Error	Significant
Government-Aided	1.39	1.14	P>0.05
Government - Unaided	6.45	1.17	P<0.01*
Aided - Unaided	5.06	0.83	P<0.01*

From the above table, the result shows that there is no significant difference in the anxiety of learning English language among students based on Government and aided school. There is significant difference in the anxiety of learning English language among students based on government and unaided at 0.01 level of significance. That is, the government school students have a high level of anxiety than unaided school students in learning English language. From the mean score, it is understood that government school students have anxiety than unaided school students. There is a significant difference in the anxiety of learning English language among students based on aided and unaided at 0.01 level of significance. From the mean scores, it is clear that the students of the government and aided school have a high level of anxiety than unaided school students in learning English language.

Conclusion

The result of the study revealed that the majority of school students have anxiety in learning English language and the students who have received the instruction in mother tongue have high level of anxiety than the students who have received the instruction in English. The students who are enrolled in Government and Aided school have anxiety in learning English compared to unaided school students. The reason for anxiety in learning English language among primary school students is mainly because of the wide gap between their mother tongue and the second language or the foreign language; the gap results because of difference in culture among these two languages. Other reasons are, firstly, students never receive the sufficient input in the target language both from the teachers and from the school environment. Secondly, lack of infrastructure facilities like language lab, language library and other technical supports like computer, smart classroom etc. that normally help to familiarize the second Language and that also act as effective English language learning tools. These reasons force the students to keep away from the English language with high level of anxiety.

The major recommendations are:

- Make the English language classroom more lively and interactive.
- Arrange the classroom as a source for receiving a high level of input in the target language.
- Reduce the use of mother tongue while introducing target language materials in the classroom.
- Use the supporting tools like language lab, library and smart classroom for making the class interesting and motivating.
- Encourage the students to learn the target language by using or giving the interesting activities in the classroom.
- Create a free space to interact the students with teachers as well as with peers in target language without focusing the errors that will help to reduce the level of anxiety among the students.

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