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APPLYING KRASHEN'S HYPOTHESES TO DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION: A TESOL CASE STUDY BASED ON LEARNER PROFILES

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Abstract: This article examines the application of Krashen's Second Language Acquisition hypotheses to differentiated instruction in a TESOL context. The study is based on the analysis of two learner profiles representing contrasting linguistic backgrounds, affective factors, and learning preferences. Using the Input Hypothesis, Affective Filter Hypothesis, and Monitor Hypothesis as an analytical framework, the paper demonstrates how theoretical principles can inform practical classroom decisions. The findings suggest that contextualized input, emotionally supportive learning environments, and fluency-oriented tasks play a crucial role in facilitating effective language acquisition. The study contributes to practice-oriented TESOL research by illustrating how SLA theory can be operationalized through learner-centered instructional design.

Keywords: TESOL, second language acquisition, Krashen's hypotheses, learner profiles, affective filter, differentiated instruction

Introduction

Second language classrooms are characterized by learner diversity in terms of age, linguistic background, exposure to the target language, and affective variables. These differences significantly influence how learners process input and develop communicative competence. In TESOL contexts, instructors increasingly face the challenge of designing instruction that accommodates varied learner needs while maintaining pedagogical coherence. Krashen's (1985) theory of second language acquisition remains influential in explaining how learners acquire language through exposure, emotional readiness, and self-monitoring. Although widely debated, the hypotheses provide a useful pedagogical framework for reflective teaching. This article applies Krashen's hypotheses to two learner profiles in order to demonstrate how SLA theory can guide differentiated instructional practices.

Literature Review

Krashen's model of second language acquisition emphasizes the primacy of comprehensible input in language development (Krashen, 1985). The Input Hypothesis proposes that learners progress when exposed to language slightly above their current proficiency level. Complementing this view, the Affective Filter Hypothesis highlights the role of emotional factors such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence in facilitating or inhibiting acquisition. Research by Ioup et al. (1994) underscores the impact of age and exposure on language learning outcomes, suggesting that naturalistic input and meaningful interaction are essential for developing fluency. Kinginger (2009) further argues that input alone is insufficient without attention to learners' social and emotional contexts. These perspectives support a learner-centered and differentiated approach to instruction.

Methodology

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Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative, reflective case-study approach. Two fictionalized learner profiles were developed based on common classroom experiences in ESL contexts. The profiles serve as analytical tools for examining how SLA theory can inform instructional decisions.

Learner Profiles

Learner A (Alex) is a 16-year-old bilingual learner with early exposure to English through schooling and media. While Alex demonstrates intermediate proficiency in reading and writing, he experiences difficulty with listening comprehension and spontaneous spoken interaction.

Learner B (Sam) is a 16-year-old learner who began learning English later in adolescence after relocating to an English-speaking environment. Sam exhibits elementary proficiency and experiences anxiety during oral communication tasks.

Application of Krashen's Hypotheses

Input Hypothesis

For Alex, instruction should incorporate authentic listening materials with moderate linguistic complexity, supported by scaffolding such as subtitles or guiding questions. This approach aligns with the principle of i+1 input and promotes listening fluency.

For Sam, simplified input supported by visual cues and repetition is essential. Contextualized language use enables gradual comprehension without overwhelming cognitive demands.

Affective Filter Hypothesis

Alex benefits from collaborative speaking activities that emphasize fluency over accuracy, reducing performance pressure and increasing confidence. Sam requires a supportive classroom environment with predictable routines and low-stakes speaking opportunities. Minimizing anxiety helps lower the affective filter and encourages participation.

Monitor Hypothesis

Alex's tendency toward excessive self-correction can be addressed through timed speaking tasks that promote spontaneous language use. For Sam, limited use of the monitor during structured tasks supports accuracy development while avoiding overreliance on conscious grammar monitoring.

Discussion

The analysis demonstrates that Krashen's hypotheses remain pedagogically relevant when applied flexibly and contextually. Learner profiling enables instructors to align theoretical principles with instructional strategies that address both linguistic and affective needs. The findings reinforce the importance of reflective practice and differentiation in TESOL classrooms.

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Conclusion

This study highlights the value of applying SLA theory to learner-centered instructional design. By considering individual learner profiles, TESOL practitioners can create more inclusive and effective learning environments. Krashen's hypotheses, when interpreted critically, provide a practical framework for addressing learner diversity and supporting language development. Future research may explore the longitudinal impact of differentiated instruction on learner outcomes.

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