Stephen Krashen'in Duygusal Filtre ve Girdi Hipotezleri ve Öğrencilerin İçsel Güdüleri ile İngilizce Derslerinde Dijital Oyunların Kullanımı Arasındaki İlişkinin Araştırılması

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Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, İngilizce Dil Öğretimi sınıflarında dijital oyunların anlaşılabilir bir girdi olarak öğrencileri duyuşsal filtresini azaltıp azaltmadığını bulmak, dijital oyunların içsel güdüye etkisini araştırmaktır. Bu çalışma İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi İngilizce Hazırlık Okulu'nda okuyan 59 öğrenci ile yapılmıştır. Elde edilen veriler niceliksel ve niteliksel analizler yapılarak öğrencilerin dijital oyun oynaması ve başarı notları arasındaki ilişki araştırılmış, dijital oyunların onların duyuşsal filtresini azaltıp azaltmadığı saptanmaya çalışılmıştır. Ayrıca dijital oyunlarla içsel güdü arasında bir ilişki olup olmadığı araştırılmıştır. Çalışmanın sonucu, kontrol ve deney grubunun ELAT testi puanları arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılık olduğunu, oyun oynamanın duygusal filtresini düşürüp azaltmadığının öğrenciler arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olmadığını ve kontrol ile deney grubu arasında dijital oyunlar oynarken içsel olarak motivasyonu arttıran anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmadığını ortaya koymuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Dijital Oyunlar, Duyusal Etki, İçsel Güdü, Duyuşsal Filtre Hipotezi*

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An Investigation of the Relationship Between Stephen Krashen's Affective Filter and Input Hypotheses and Students' Intrinsic Motivation With Special Emphasis on the Use of Digital Games in Efl Classes

Abstract

The present study aims to investigate the relationship between students' achievement scores before and after they play digital games in the classroom. It also focuses on the question whether digital games lower their affective filter or not. Lastly, the effect of digital games on students' intrinsic motivation is clarified with the help of questionnaires. The study was carried out with 65 participants studying at English preparatory school of Istanbul Aydın University. The obtained data was analyzed by utilizing both qualitative and quantitative analyses to investigate whether there is a relationship between students' achievement scores and playing digital games in the classroom, if playing games lower their affective filter or not and if students are motivated intrinsically while playing digital games. The results of the study have revealed that there is significant difference between the scores of the control and experimental groups in ELAT tests, there is not a significant relationship between students playing games and their affective filter lowering and there is not a significant relationship between the opinions of the control and experimental groups with respect to playing games increasing intrinsic motivation.

Keywords: Digital Games, Affective Filter, Intrinsic Motivation

Introduction

English has become a universal language leading to many opportunities in many countries and markets as well as opening new doors in science, technology and communication and education. This increasing importance of English has led to developing new techniques and methods to encourage teaching and learning the language in a more motivating and effective way. Considering both learners and teachers, there have been found many opportunities and advantages in ESL. On the other hand, there are some drawbacks of learning and teaching English too. One of the most important drawbacks is the affective filter as it is believed to affect one's learning directly. Therefore, many theories and techniques have been developed

to enhance second language acquisition by lowering the affective barriers and providing comprehensible input in a low anxiety situation in English Language Teaching classes.

This study aims to investigate the issue of the implementation of games in the classes of English as a Foreign Language and observe students' motivation and success with regard to Krashen's Affective Filter and Input Hypothesis. By creating an academically and physically appropriate and low anxiety environment and providing comprehensible input, digital games can be used in EFL classes as a powerful language tool to help students lower affective barriers creating low anxiety situations. In this study following research questions are investigated:

1) Is there a significant difference between the achievement scores of the second language learners who play digital games and who do not play digital games?

2) Are digital games important examples of comprehensible input for students who are learning the second language?

3) Do digital games play an important role in increasing intrinsic motivation in second language learning?

4) Do digital games facilitate second language learning creating a low affective filter in learners?

5) Do affective states affect students' English language learning?

Literature Review

Second language education is very important starting from the early years of students. Language learning is a challenging task as people do it consciously whereas Krashen (1982:25) says that language acquisition is a subconscious process and people go through it easily.

Numerous studies are conducted on language learning from different perspectives but not all of them are enough due to the fact that language learning is a complex process. As language learning is a process which is very difficult to understand, there should be many factors to be considered in language learning. Researchers of second language learners relate emotions of the learner to their success.

According to Pivec and Dziabenko (2004:111), many researchers think that learning is a multidimensional construct of language skills, cognitive learning outcomes, such as procedural, declarative and strategic knowledge and attitudes. In military, medicine and physical training, the game-based learning is used successfully in formal education.

Learners show unique reactions in the foreign language classroom setting such as trying to avoid difficult linguistic structures, being reluctant to participate in learning activities and thus getting nervous, not studying before lessons, not speaking the target language in the class and not willing to participate in communication (MacIntyre, et al,1997:265).

Dulay and Burt (1977:95) firstly suggested Affective Filter Hypothesis but then it was developed by Stephen Krashen in 1985. According to Krashen, students' participation in the class and encouragements from the teachers are factors that are related to the success of the students who are learning a second language. When students feel confident, their learning process is influenced positively. Language acquisition is affected by lots of factors like atmosphere, emotions, material and teacher's behavior.

This study focuses on Krashen's Input and Affective Filter Hypotheses. Input Hypothesis suggests that language acquisition occurs when learners receive messages that they can understand, which is also known as comprehensible input. However, Krashen (1985:10) also suggests that this comprehensible input should be one step beyond the learners' current language ability, represented as i+1, in order to allow learners to continue to progress with their language development.

Second language learners have a desire to learn a new language, so if learners are volunteered to learn a language and if they have sufficient motivation, they will believe in learning and not worry about the process. According to Dörnyei (1998:117), if individuals do not have sufficient motivation, they cannot be successful in long-term goals even if they have remarkable abilities, appropriate curricula, and good teaching.

Affective variables play an important role in second language acquisition and these variables are motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. Understanding the importance of affective filter is very crucial in terms of developing a strategy for teaching. According to Xiaoyan Du (2009:165), in second language learning, we use affective filter hypothesis to analyze students' learning motivation, motivate them and help them possess a positive attitude and to boost up students' learning confidence and lower their language anxiety.

Xiaoyan Du (2009:164) also says that 'The affective filter acts as a barrier to acquisition. The filter is up when the acquirer is unmotivated, lacking in confidence or concerned with failure. The filter is down when the acquirer is not anxious and is trying to become a member of the group speaking.'

As Dörnyei and Otto (1998:43) state that motivation is changing dramatically from person to person and it initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates motor and cognitive processes via initial wishes and desires that are selected and acts out successfully.

According to Ryan and Deci (2000:54) "Intrinsic motivation is defined as the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than for some separable consequence. When intrinsically motivated, a person is moved to act for the fun or challenge entailed rather than because of external products, pressures or reward."

In English language instruction, researchers have developed the learning variables in psychological aspects which are motivation and anxiety. Some studies show that both motivation and anxiety have important roles in second language acquisition. It is important to study these variables to understand the affective filters and eliminate the problems caused by them.

As Zeidner (1998:130) suggests, anxiety occurs because of focus and hesitation. If a second language learner has high anxiety, fear might dominate classroom atmosphere and prevent learning. Past experiences of learners about language learning, negative thoughts about the target language, poor relationships between the learners and the teacher are crucial factors for anxiety.

With the beginning of 2000, there is an increasing interest in using games in learning and teaching activities because of rapid interest in digital games and advanced technological developments. Thus, using games, especially digital games, have gained importance in addition to the traditional learning environment and numerous schools are using games to encourage their students through entertainment.

As Fisher (2005:55) has indicated, educational games have to offer the following:

*They must have clear goals and objectives
*They must include an opportunity to apply what is being learned
*They must provide clear and immediate feedback and the feedback must be supporting and scaffolding
*They must be relatively challenging
*They must be visually and aurally attractive to draw learner's attention

In addition to being entertaining, using games in the classroom atmosphere can be competitive, challenging, interactive, motivational, cooperative, and trigger problem-solving and decision making skills. If learning is game-based, it increases the learners' interest and also motivates them in the learning environment.

As Lewis (1999:8) mentioned, games are fun and learners like to play games; using games make learners experiment, discover and interact with their environment. Games increase the motivation of learners to use the language, which means that they can provide stimulus. Games can bring second language to life, therefore it can be useful to learners.

Method

Participants

The participants in this study were 59 students from Istanbul Aydin University Prep School. The study was based in the students' end of track exam ELAT. The experimental group consisted of 30 students who played games during their English classes, and the control group consisted of 29 students with some conditions who did not play games.

Data Analysis

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analyses were utilized in order to find if there is a relationship between students' achievement scores and playing digital games in the classroom; if playing games lower their affective filter or not and if students are motivated intrinsically while playing digital games.

To evaluate the questionnaire, the main descriptive statistics have been calculated and for comparisons Independent Samples t-test, Chi-Square Independence Test and Correlation analysis have been used. All are obtained by SPSS.

Conclusion

As it is expected, the students are affected by the affected states while learning English, so this points out that there is a role of affective states in their English language learning. The teacher and students did not differ in their perceptions regarding motivation; they both learn English to become a part of the English speaking global community.

More than two-thirds of the teachers and students learn English to earn money and get status. What lies behind is that both the teachers and students perceive the importance of English in their lives. About half of the students believed that they should have the motivation to learn English even before coming to the class. On the other hand, more than two-thirds of the teachers believed that their students should have motivation to learn even before coming to the class.

As for students, this may have something to do with lack of understanding the importance of motivation in language learning. Majority of the teachers and students believed that the class environtment is important for motivation in learning. They may be under the influence of widely shared belief that students need to be motivated in the classroom.

As many as two-thirds of the respondents maintained that high marks and positive feedback lead to motivated learning. What lies behind, motivation in language learning influence their grades in a positive way.

About half of the teachers and students confirmed the statement that self-image of the students depends on whether or not they were in English teaching schools. This may suggest that there is nearly no link between their self-image and attending English and English-medium schools.

About half of the students and more than half of the teachers appeared to believe that better-performing classmates of the students make them anxious about their self-image. This may be because of the fact that the students are not influenced by better-performing students in the classroom.

A little more than half of the teachers and students supported the proposition that their self-image as a second language learner relates to the grades or external evaluation from teachers and classmates. What lies behind this may be the fact that external factors are not major keys relating to self-image.

A vast majority of the respondents appeared to be in favor of the idea that being happy in their personal life and their family and friends are important for them while doing their best. They may be under the influence of widely shared belief that background of the students is a highly important issue.

As many as two-thirds of the respondents confirmed the statement that being anxious sometimes prevents their learning. This may result from the fact that there is a link between learning and character.

About half of the students and two-thirds of the teachers believed that at times particular teachers' presence while doing presentation cause students to get nervous and hinders learning. This suggests that the students do not care about the presence of extreme factors like teachers and exams.

More than two-thirds of the respondents supported the idea that in general, examination causes them anxiety and prevents their best performance. This may be because of the fact that some students have the fear of exam.

More than two-thirds of the teachers and students thought that public speaking or formal presentations cause them anxiety and so they cannot give their best. What lies behind this may be the fact that anxiety has a great influence on their attitudes.

A little less than half of the students and more than half of the teachers stated that classroom participation can be difficult due to making silly mistakes in the classroom. This suggests that while the students do not take notice of doing silly mistakes, the teachers think that the students feel anxious about doing silly mistakes in the classroom.

A vast majority of the students and teachers appeared to believe that speaking is a skill that is related to the affected states. They seem to be aware of the fact that speaking is one of the most important issues in language learning and it is a subject that should be considered.

Majority of the respondents thought that listening is another skill by affected states. This may suggest that affective states like motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence have roles in listening.

More than two-thirds of the respondents confirmed the statement that reading and writing are relatively less affected by affected states. This may result from the fact that speaking and listening are more difficult than reading and writing while the language is being learned.

A vast majority of the respondents supported the proposition that teachers play an important role while creating positive classroom environment.

This may be attributable to the inclination that supportive, positive and motivational classroom environment may create higher education rates. In addition to this, teacher's role in the class is an irrefutable truth.

More than two-thirds of the students and teachers believed that no tolerance for mistakes and evaluation in a positive way can hinder their learner's learning. What lied behind this is that the students do not want to be corrected when they make a mistake and they can be negatively affected.

As many as two-thirds of the respondents maintained that teacher's lack of individual attention and welcoming manner can hinder their learning. This may be because of the fact that students are expecting special attention from their teachers in order to learn something.

A vast majority of the teachers and about two-thirds of the students stated that students should be aware of their self-images and should not take their

own mistakes into consideration. This may suggest that if the student has motivation about learning, s/he will be more successful. Mistakes which are done by students should not be paid attention in a learning environment.

The majority of the students and teachers confirmed the statement that if students want to be confident, they should communicate in the target language in the classroom. This may result from the tendency that students should use their target language both in and outside of the class. The target language should be sustainable out of classes.

The respondents appeared to be certain that there is no perfect classroom environment and they should create intrinsic motivation to learn. This may lead one to believe that intrinsic motivation has a great influence on their attitudes about learning.

Almost all of the teachers and students gave the answer YES to the question 'Do you feel much better and learn more when playing games in the class?' This may be because of the fact that playing games in the classroom has very good effects in their foreign language education. They may feel confident while playing games.

Almost all of the teachers and students gave the answer YES to the question 'Do you feel your motivation of learning English is stimulated through games?' It is easily understood that learning a foreign language is unthinkable without games.

Half of the teachers and students gave the answer YES to the question 'Do you feel free to communicate because your teacher does not make corrections?' and half of the respondents gave the answer NO. This may mean that correcting mistakes is not a highly controversial issue in a learning environment.

Almost all of the respondents gave the answer YES to the question 'Do you learn much more and feel more relaxed and confident because of songs, games and movies and teacher's encouragement? This suggests that materials that are enjoyable like songs, games, and movies promote foreign language learning in a positive way. Teacher's encouragement having a positive effect on students can be easily seen here.

R1): There is a significant difference between the achievement scores of second language learners who play digital games and who do not play digital games. Data analysis of the questionnaire has revealed that there is not a statistically significant difference between the scores of the control and experimental group placement test. On the other hand, there is a significant difference between the scores of the control and experimental group ELAT test.

R2) Digital games play an important role in increasing intrinsic motivation in second language learning. There is not a significant relationship between control and experimental group's opinion about increasing intrinsic motivation since their answers are similar.

R3): Digital games are important examples of comprehensible input for students who are learning the second language. The answers of the control group and experimental group for the question "Do you feel much better and learn more when playing games in the class?" showed that there is not a significant relationship between them.

R4) Digital games facilitate second language learning creating a low affective filter in learners. After analyzing the relationship between the control group and experimental group's answers for the question "Do you learn much more and feel more relaxed and confident because of songs, games, movies and teacher's encouragement?" it is seen that there is not a significant relationship between them.

R5): "Do affective states affect students' English language learning?" The responses to the 5 questions regarding motivation were analyzed, the findings revealed that the motivation of learning English was getting a good job and status. The responses to the 4 questions related with self-confidence were analyzed and the findings showed that the most important elements are upbringing, support from their parents, friends, and satisfaction while doing their best in learning the second language. When it comes to the questions about anxiety, the findings revealed that being anxious all the time keeps them from learning.

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