



The Effect of Affective Filter Hypothesis on College Students' English Writing Teaching and Its Enlightenment

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How to cite this paper: Liu, X.K. (2023) The Effect of Affective Filter Hypothesis on College Students' English Writing Teaching and Its Enlightenment. *Open Access Library Journal*, 10: e10671.
<https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1110671>

Received: August 31, 2023

Accepted: September 22, 2023

Published: September 25, 2023

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Abstract

In English learning, writing is undoubtedly an important part and task of English teaching, as well as a weak link in college students' language learning. On the basis of analyzing the current situation of contemporary college students' English writing, this study discusses the effect of affective factors on college students' English writing, and discusses how to apply the three affective factors proposed in Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, namely, motivation, self-confidence and anxiety, to the teaching of college students' English writing, stimulate students' internal driving force for learning English writing, help students establish appropriate self-confidence, adjust their anxiety, and improve their English writing ability.

Subject Areas

Pedagogy

Keywords

The Affective Filter Hypothesis, English Writing, Writing Teaching

1. Introduction

In the late 1980s, a large number of researches on foreign language classroom teaching methods emerged. Among them, Krashen's second language acquisition theory, the "five hypotheses", is the most prominent. The affective filtering hypothesis is one of the five hypotheses, which means that learners' language acquisition is based on the filtering of affective factors. That is to say, emotion is like a filter screen, which filters learners' language input, thus forming learners' truly acquired language knowledge and abilities. Proper and appropriate emo-

tion filtering is beneficial to learners' language acquisition, otherwise, it will hinder learners' language acquisition. Based on the analysis of the current situation of contemporary college students' English writing, this study discusses how to apply the three emotional factors of motivation, confidence and anxiety proposed in Krashen's affective filtering hypothesis to the teaching of college students' English writing, so as to stimulate students' intrinsic motivation of learning English writing, help students establish appropriate self-confidence, adjust anxiety and improve their English writing ability.

2. An Analysis of the Present Situation of College Students' English Writing Teaching

Contemporary college students have experienced the college entrance examination and have mastered certain English grammar and vocabulary when they enter the university. Therefore, the purpose of college English teaching is mainly to help students lay a solid foundation and successfully pass the CET-4 and CET-6 examinations. On the basis of this, students' humanistic quality, language ability and cross-cultural ability are cultivated. However, freshmen are weak in the comprehensive use of language. It is difficult for them to express their thoughts and opinions freely in English.

Writing is one of the basic skills in English learning. As it tests the comprehensive situation of students' learning, it is common in all kinds of examinations at all levels, and the score takes a large proportion, so in English teaching, English teachers need to pay more attention to students' English writing ability. However, after reviewing the relevant literature in recent years, we have to admit that there are still many problems in the current English writing teaching in China. Some teachers in the teaching of writing mainly rely on their personal teaching experience, but despise the newly developed educational theories and teaching methods. This subjective and experiential teaching method is often not systematic. Based on her teaching experience, Wan Xiaomei (2017) points out that the current teaching of writing with pure Diary and pure Summary is insufficient. For pure Diary, students' daily narrations are much the same, and their vocabulary and sentence patterns are similar. As a result, the writing level obviously cannot be improved. Not only that, students will become bored with repetition day after day, and then their interest in learning English will decrease; For pure summary, it requires students to summarize the main idea of the article in clear words, which is difficult for students with low ability, so they will quit. For students with high ability, it is not difficult, but it is boring, so pure summary will also reduce students' enthusiasm for learning [1]. Chen Xiuchun (2005) pointed out that there are the following problems in college students' English writing: the structure of the text is disordered and the thinking is disorganized; Students have Chinese thinking in English writing; the basic language ability is low. Moreover, there are also problems in the teaching of college students' writing. For example, in the traditional teaching of English writing, teachers care about students' compositions themselves. Teachers correct and comment on stu-

dents' compositions, ignoring the whole process of students' writing [2]. Liang Shujun (2013) believes that at present, college students' English writing classes are all traditional teaching methods, which are unified textbooks, teachers speak, students memorize, then leave composition topics, students complete, and teachers correct. Such traditional teaching methods cannot effectively improve students' learning initiative, and should adopt different teaching methods based on students' cognitive individual differences [3].

Therefore, it is not difficult to see that most of the current college students' English writing teaching has the problems of mechanization, poor systematicness, and single and boring writing methods, but there is also a major problem, that is, teachers pay less attention to learners' emotional attitudes in writing teaching. Wang Chuming (2001) once emphasized the importance of emotion. He compared emotion to an engine, and learners are machines. Only the machines that are started can be useful [4]. That is, if students' emotions are stimulated well, teachers can mobilize their enthusiasm for learning, make them release their learning potential, and help them solve their psychological problems in the learning process.

3. The Affective Filter Hypothesis

In the early 1980s, Krashen's Monitor Model was one of the most famous second language acquisition theories. The theory includes five main hypotheses, namely, the acquisition learning hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitoring hypothesis, the input hypothesis and the affective filtering hypothesis. The thesis will mainly introduce the affective filtering hypothesis. In Krashen's view, although learners can access a large amount of comprehensible input, the comprehensible input received by learners cannot completely transform the effective input. In short, the amount of input is not equal to the amount absorbed by learners. The reason is that affective factors act as a "barrier" to filter language acquisition. The affective factors that determine the filtering strength include learners' motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Therefore, the process of language acquisition is a process from language input to affective filtering and then to absorption. Krashen believes that learners with high motivation level and self-confidence and low anxiety level have low filtering strength, which helps to transform language input into internal language ability. The learners with low motivation, low self-confidence and high anxiety will block the transformation of language input.

4. An Analysis of Affective Factors Affecting English Writing

4.1. The Effect of Motivation on English Writing

Motivation refers to the subjective desire or intention to urge people to engage in certain activities. Learning motivation is formed and developed based on students' needs for learning. Because of individual differences among individuals, there are diversity and complexity in learning motivation among individuals.

In terms of learning motivation, Lambert and Gardner distinguish two tendencies: integration and instrumentality. Learners with integration tend to be interested in the target language culture, are more willing to contact the target language, and have a strong desire to integrate into the target language culture. However, learners with instrumentality tend to learn the target language in a utilitarian way, in order to pass a certain exam and expand employment opportunities. The expression of these two motivational tendencies in English writing is: the former refers to being interested in a specific writing topic and having a strong desire to write, while the latter refers to writing in order to complete a specific writing task or achieve a certain writing goal.

Deci and Ryan divide motivation into internal motivation and external motivation. Internal motivation refers to that learners attach importance to learning activities and have full interest in learning; external motivation means that learners are affected by external forces and environments [5]. For example, learners will be affected by expected external rewards, which generally include money, prizes, scores and positive feedback. In addition, avoiding punishment is also considered as an external motivation. In English writing, the former usually shows that learners are interested in English writing itself, which stimulates them to write, while the latter shows that learners write in order to get a material reward or verbal reward.

According to Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, high motivation level will promote language learning, while low motivation level will hinder language learning; this means that high motivation, strong interest and high enthusiasm in English writing are conducive to writing.

Psychologists Yerkes and Dodson have confirmed through research that there is an inverted u-shaped curve between motivation intensity and work efficiency, that is, when motivation is at the appropriate intensity, work efficiency is the best; when the intensity of motivation is too low, they lack the enthusiasm to participate in activities, so the work efficiency will not be improved; when the intensity of motivation exceeds the peak, the work efficiency will decline with the enhancement of the intensity of motivation, because excessive motivation will make individuals excessively anxious and nervous, which will have a negative impact on normal activities. This shows that in English writing, for learners, appropriate motivation intensity is conducive to writing.

4.2. The Effect of Self-Confidence on English Writing

Self-confidence refers to the degree of trust that individuals have in their ability to successfully complete an activity. Krashen believes that confidence in second language acquisition is beneficial to learners' language acquisition. This view is reflected in English writing that self-confidence will affect English writing, and a high degree of self-confidence will be conducive to students' writing. However, self-confidence is an abstract concept after all. What factors do learners' self-confidence have to do with?

Many scholars at home and abroad have done relevant research. From the re-

levant reviews made by Che Liping, we can see that Reddy's research in 1983 showed that learners' ranking was related to their self-confidence; in 1984, Carro, Depreeuw and Demota also made such research, explored the factors affecting learning, and finally proposed that self-confidence is related to the change of factors such as fear of success, test anxiety and general anxiety; in 1985, Deb proposed through research that there was a positive correlation between individual learners' psychological adaptation and self-confidence; in 1995, James H. McMillan and others proposed that self-confidence comes from the influence of self-analysis, individual interests and goals on self. Chinese scholars have also done relevant research. Shen Jianping and Li Zhongsheng showed through research that self-confidence was cultivated in certain practical activities; Xu Fangming's relevant research shows that students' self-confidence is closely related to teachers' attitudes. In a word, there are subjective factors and objective factors that affect self-confidence. The subjective factors mainly include individual success or failure experience, self-cognition level, self-evaluation, attribution style, etc.; Objective factors mainly include others' successful experiences or role models, family and social influences, etc [6].

That is to say, in English writing, the level of learners' self-confidence is affected by subjective and objective factors, which requires teachers to pay attention to observing and analyzing relevant factors that affect learners' self-confidence in writing teaching [7].

4.3. The Effect of Anxiety on English Writing

Anxiety refers to the fear, panic, nervousness, irritability and other emotions caused by students' excessive worry about something in the learning process. According to Krashen's affective filtering hypothesis, the higher the anxiety level of learners, the greater the intensity of affective filtering, and the less input; on the contrary, if the level of anxiety is low, the intensity of emotion filtering is low, and the input is more. However, we have to admit that there is a need for tension and anxiety in language learning. Appropriate anxiety can give learners motivation to continue learning and promote their language acquisition. On the contrary, excessive anxiety will not only bring heavy learning and psychological burden to learners, but also hinder their language acquisition. If there is no anxiety, learners will lack motivation to learn.

This view is manifested in English writing as follows: if the level of anxiety is high, learners will lack interest in writing and panic about writing, which will lead to poor writing results; absence of anxiety will lead to a lack of motivation for learners to write, and appropriate tension and anxiety will promote students to write in English. However, like self-confidence, anxiety is also abstract. What factors cause anxiety?

In this regard, some researchers have done the research. Li Ping's relevant review mentioned some studies. For example, Rinner and Kobayashi's research results show that teachers' feedback and evaluation of students' learning will lead to students' anxiety. Sparks and Ganschow believe that poor performance of for-

foreign language learners has a greater impact on their foreign language learning anxiety. Bailey proposed that competition is also one of the factors that cause students' anxiety in the process of second language learning. Young summarized previous studies, it puts forward six factors that cause learners' anxiety: learners' own reasons and the influence of others on learners, learners' language learning outlook, teachers' beliefs in language teaching, teacher-student relationship, types and difficulty of classroom activities, and foreign language testing. From the above research, we can know that the factors that affect anxiety are learners' performance, feedback and evaluation, competition, teacher-student relationship, learners' language learning outlook and classroom activities. Therefore, these factors will have an impact on English writing.

5. The Enlightenment of the Affective Filter Hypothesis on the Teaching of English Writing

According to the affective filtering hypothesis and its impact on English writing teaching analyzed above, teachers should help students improve their English writing skills by helping them establish appropriate learning motivation, establish and enhance self-confidence, and reduce anxiety levels in English writing teaching, so as to reduce the intensity of affective filtering among students.

5.1. Motivation and English Writing Teaching

In order to improve students' writing motivation, teachers can try to use a variety of presentation methods to explain knowledge in the teaching process. They can use flipped classroom, online and offline hybrid teaching and other methods to stimulate students to explore independently and improve their ability to learn independently. They can also use some small games or scenarios to set up classroom activities to help students better experience the creative process. At the same time, when setting up writing tasks, teachers should also take full account of students' reality and English foundation, and should set up writing tasks with certain difficulties. If the task is too simple and not challenging, students will disdain to do it. If the task is too difficult, students will easily give up. For example, in the discussion about advantages and disadvantages of online teaching during winter vacation, students can be grouped in class to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of online teaching. Group discussion can help students broaden their thinking. At the same time, because students have just experienced online teaching, it is more attractive for students to discuss topics related to life, but related vocabulary and expressions may be difficult for students, Therefore, it can stimulate students to explore relevant expressions independently, and then they can better complete the writing task [8].

5.2. Self-Confidence and English Writing Teaching

Teachers should be fully aware of the importance of self-confidence for students and help students establish self-confidence in teaching. Firstly, teachers can teach

students in accordance with their own characteristics during the teaching process. For some students with weak basic English skills, introverted personality and lack of self-confidence, teachers should encourage them more and give them enough patience. They can properly understand their small mistakes in the writing process, make eye contact with them more in class, give positive eyes, or talk with them more after class to narrow the distance between them and help them build confidence; for students with good foundation, we can set some relatively difficult questions to encourage them to be brave in challenges, and then experience a sense of achievement, so as to be more confident.

Secondly, teachers' attitudes and feedback. In the process of teaching English writing, teachers should actively evaluate students' writing from many aspects. Teachers should observe the development of students' English writing level and update their expectations for students of different levels in a timely manner. Teachers should give timely and positive feedback on the progress of different learners in all aspects of writing.

5.3. Anxiety and English Writing Teaching

In the process of college students' writing, there may be many reasons for anxiety. Writing is actually a language skill that requires patience. It requires a clear logic and solid basic skills. However, if students fail to reach the expected level, anxiety will be triggered. For example, many students will be eager to succeed, but they do not have a good writing foundation, so they cannot achieve good results. This will lead to anxiety and they do not know how to write. Therefore, some students' English writing state is to write whatever they think, and complete the task when they gather enough words. College English writing requires students to have a vocabulary of CET-4 or above. When writing, they should pay attention to the diversity of vocabulary and sentence patterns, and at the same time, they should be able to express their ideas clearly. Students should have a certain ability of logical thinking, which can only be developed by slowly accumulating. Therefore, to overcome students' excessive anxiety in the process of English writing, teachers should cultivate students' patience in learning, when setting up writing tasks or teaching writing methods, we should give full consideration to the students' English level and mood and guide them correctly.

In class, students can complete tasks through group cooperation or pairing, so that students can find each other's mistakes and point them out. It can not only consolidate their English foundation and help their peers to correct errors that they did not realize, but also point out errors between students. It is easier for students to accept psychologically, so as to reduce anxiety. In addition, teachers should also maintain enough affinity in the teaching process, go into the hearts of students after class, turn the classroom into a kind of enjoyment, so that students can experience the joy of learning.

On the contrary, if students have no anxiety in the process of learning and writing, they will not achieve good learning results. Some non-English major

students have already passed CET-4, and they will feel that their English level is enough, and they do not need to study English hard, or there is no need to learn English again. These students often do not pay attention to learning English writing; some students may have difficulty learning other subjects. In order not to fail, they tend to spend more time on other subjects that are difficult, and they do not pay enough attention to English writing. In these two cases, students have no anxiety about learning at all, and they also lose the motivation to learn. For these students, if teachers want to improve their attention to English writing and cause them appropriate anxiety, teachers can carry out appropriate cultural infiltration in writing teaching, and can use experiential teaching to let students truly integrate into writing, so as to realize their own needs for writing and improve the writing effect [9].

The last point I want to emphasize is that dealing with the relationship between teachers and students is also conducive to reducing anxiety. Teachers should strive to establish a harmonious and friendly teacher-student relationship with students. For this reason, teachers should not only constantly improve their personality charm and affinity, but also protect students' self-esteem and carefully choose error correction methods and words while ensuring the quality of teaching in the classroom. When asking students to answer questions or discuss with students, they should respect each individual, encourage them to express their views, and make more eye contact with them to affirm.

6. Conclusion

College English writing ability is a basic and necessary language skill for college students. Therefore, teachers should pay attention to improving students' writing ability. They can help stimulate students' motivation to learn and practice English writing from the perspective of emotional filtering, improve students' self-confidence in English writing, properly adjust their anxiety, make students realize the importance of improving their English writing ability, and feel the joy of writing, and then more effectively improve students' English acquisition and writing ability.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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