

Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis: Possible Access to Grammar Proficiency in the Philippines

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the grammar proficiency of Grade 10 students based on Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis. It made use of descriptive-correlational method to determine the correlation of the grammar proficiency and the students' access to the natural order. The respondents of the study were the 30 Grade 10 students from Don Carlos National High School. Based on the findings of the study, majority of the students are proficient in terms of the morphemes and structures that are considered easy and early-acquired. However, students still find it difficult to master the structures considered late-acquired. The grammar proficiency of the students has a significant relationship with the natural order of acquisition. It implies that grammar proficiency can be influenced by the unconscious process of grammar learning.

Keywords: grammar proficiency, second language acquisition, Krashen, Natural Order Hypothesis

INTRODUCTION

Second language acquisition has been one of the central issues of both psycholinguistics and applied linguistics. It aims to describe the process and conditions in which a language other than the first language is learned. With the rise of theoretical perspectives, many second language acquisition hypotheses have been postulated. One of these is the Natural Order Hypothesis by Stephen Krashen.

The Natural Order Hypothesis is one of the five hypotheses of second language acquisition introduced by Krashen (1983). This hypothesis proposes that learners acquire grammar structures in a predictable or natural order regardless of their first language or learning environment. There are grammar rules that are considered "early-acquired" while others are "late-acquired". For instance, based on Krashen's study, morphemes such as present progressive (-ing), plural (-s), and copula (is, am, are) are learned earlier than morphemes such as third person singular (-s), possessive (-'s), and articles (a, an, the). This hierarchy or sequence of acquisition can help language teachers understand what grammar structures are easy or difficult for students.

This study aimed to determine the possible access of students to grammar proficiency through the lens of Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis. It primarily investigated the grammatical errors committed by the Grade 10 students of Don Carlos National High School. The study explored which grammar structures are easily learned and which are difficult to acquire. It also determined the grammatical structures that the students have already mastered and which ones are yet to be acquired.

METHODOLOGY

This study made use of the descriptive-correlational method of research. This method is used to describe and analyze the current grammar proficiency level of the students and to determine its relationship to the Natural Order Hypothesis.

The respondents of the study were the 30 Grade 10 students from Don Carlos National High School, Don Carlos, Bukidnon. These students were selected through simple random sampling. The researcher used a grammar test based on the natural order of morpheme acquisition. The instrument included 30 items that measure the early- and late-acquired structures according to Krashen's order.

The results of the grammar test were analyzed and interpreted using frequency, percentage, and Pearson r correlation. Frequency and percentage were used to determine the number of correct responses for each grammar structure. Pearson r correlation was used to determine the significant relationship between the grammar proficiency and the natural order of acquisition.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, the Grade 10 students performed well in morphemes and grammar structures that are considered early-acquired. These include the present progressive (-ing), plural (-s), and copula (is, am, are). However, the students had difficulties answering test items that are considered late-acquired. These include the possessive (-'s), articles (a, an, the), and third person singular (-s).

This implies that grammar acquisition among the respondents follow the natural order proposed by Krashen. It suggests that the unconscious process of acquiring grammatical structures may have played a role in their current grammar proficiency. Students may have had more exposure to early-acquired structures through listening and reading. On the other hand, the structures considered difficult may require more explicit instruction and repeated practice.

The Pearson r correlation showed that there is a significant relationship between the grammar proficiency of the students and the natural order of acquisition. This supports Krashen's hypothesis that grammar is acquired in a predictable order, and that language teaching should consider this natural sequence.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Grade 10 students from Don Carlos National High School generally acquire grammar structures in the natural order proposed by Krashen. Their grammar proficiency level is influenced by the ease or difficulty of the structures based on their place in the natural sequence. Early-acquired morphemes are more likely to be mastered than those considered late-acquired.

Based on the results of the study, it is recommended that English teachers consider the natural order of grammar acquisition in designing their instructional strategies. Emphasizing the difficult and late-acquired structures through targeted instruction may help students become more proficient. The use of meaningful and comprehensible input may also support natural acquisition.

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