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Using Affective Reading Strategies in Teaching German Language as a Foreign Language at a Primary School Level

Extended summary

The representation of affective strategies in the scientific discourse and teaching practice of foreign languages is an insufficiently researched field. Studies on this strategic category are mostly oriented towards oral production, while the number of publications on their use in receptive activities is significantly smaller. Bearing this in mind, the aim of the paper was to arouse interest in examining the prevalence of affective strategies in primary school reading in German as a foreign language. The choice of this receptive language activity as the subject of the research was conditioned by the fact that reading is often limited to cognitive processes, although it is considered a self-regulatory procedure of an active reader the success of which largely depends on the psycholinguistic dimension and affective factors. Krashen's hypothesis of the affective filter inhibiting the path of the language input to the part of the brain responsible for learning the language content, served as a theoretical basis of the research. In order to enable successful learning, it is necessary to create an atmosphere in which the affective filter is lowered, which is achieved precisely by using affective strategies. The descriptive method was used for processing and interpretation of the results, while the correlation method was used in the part of the paper in which we deal with the relationship between the predictor variables and the cumulative score on the scale. At the same time, the aim of the research was to examine the contribution of the implicit strategic input as an independent variable in the frequency of affective procedures. In this part, the method of an experiment with one group was used. A survey was our data collection technique, with a questionnaire as its instrument. The results show a low frequency of using affective strategies. After exposing the respondents to the strategic in-

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put, the statistically significant differences caused by the application of the experimental factor were determined by repeated measurements. (1) self-motivation and self-confidence were singled out as relevant factors; (2) talking about feelings; (3) overcoming unpleasant emotions; (4) reward and (5) (self) relaxation and concentration. The motivation to read plays an important role and has a positive effect on reading habits. In the conducted research, two forms of motivation were singled out - intrinsic and extrinsic, and the results showed that external motivation is more pronounced than self-motivation ($M = 3.50$; $M = 2.55$). In addition to motivation, actions that encourage self-confidence are important affective strategies. Success in reading also depends on external factors, such as students' mood. In such situations, the dominant role is played by a symmetrical interaction, which contributes to overcoming negative emotions, suppressing language anxiety, and self-encouragement in teaching reading in a foreign language. Anxiety was singled out as a special factor. The results of the research indicating the existence of a cause-and-effect relationship between anxiety and failure to learn a foreign language were confirmed in this paper because the correlation between the mentioned psychological state and the achievement of strong intensity ($\rho = .46$, $N = 238$, $p = .01$). The next factor of affective strategies is self-reward, which is considered a means of strengthening the faith in one's own abilities and self-esteem. The last factor is self-relaxation and concentration, and by applying appropriate strategies, attention is directed to the text being read. The frequency of application of the affective strategies was measured against independent variables - biological (gender and age) and external factors (grades for reading activities in German). The examined phenomenon is more pronounced in female students ($M = 9.05$, $N = 130$, $p = .01$) than in male students ($M = 6.74$, $N = 108$, $p = .01$), while with age the tendency of the lower levels of the frequency of using affective strategies becomes obvious ($\rho = -.57$, $N = 238$, $p = .01$). The students with better achievement are more likely to use affective strategies to manage their attitudes and emotions in the foreign language reading activities. This paper offers teachers professional support and methodological guidance on how to apply affective reading strategies in their teaching work. Bearing in mind that teachers should first be familiar with the contribution of affective strategies to the process of the receptive language reading activity and trained to integrate them into the teaching process, it would be useful to conduct pre-service teacher training at tertiary level education and professional development programs in the institutions of the formal primary and secondary education.

Keywords: German as a foreign language, reading activities in a foreign language, reading strategies, affective strategies.

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