



**FINAL DEGREE PROJECT**  
**DEGREE IN PRIMARY EDUCATION (ENGLISH MENTION)**  
**4<sup>th</sup> YEAR**  
**JUNE CALL**

**Educational interventions to promote a positive affective filter through socio-emotional development.**

AUTHOR: Saavedra Massa, Jaime

**Designing and evaluating educational strategies aimed at improving the affective filter in school-aged children, with the objective of strengthening their socio-emotional skills and interpersonal relationships.**

Villaviciosa de Odón, 30 de mayo de 2024

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**Abstract**

This final degree project aims to expose, analyze, and understand the impact of socio-emotional development on learning capacity, as well as its influence on the affective filter and its conditioning of the ability to learn, focusing especially on the subject of English.

By gathering information on the most important pedagogical and psychological theories, the causes and effects of different situations in the classroom will be studied, taking into account the relevance of the aforementioned emotional development. Additionally, a series of practical interventions will be developed to combat the effects of the affective filter in Primary Education and to promote reinforcement in emotional development through various methodologies focused on improving students' educational experience and eliminating possible emotional limitations that may arise throughout their academic life.

As Albert Einstein said, “There is a driving force more powerful than steam, electricity, and atomic energy: motivation.

**Keywords:** Affective filter, socio-emotional development, English, pedagogical theories, Primary Education, intervention, motivation.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Final Degree Project presented below corresponds to the Degree in Primary Education with Mention in English, studied at the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, corresponding to the Faculty of Education and Sports Sciences.

The purpose of this work is to conduct an exhaustive analysis of the causes of the affective filter, which confirms that there is a set of affective variables related to success in second language acquisition (Krashen, 1981) and its effects on students, establishing connections with the emotional development of students.

The information and conclusions from the analysis will serve as a basis to develop sessions aimed at combating the affective filter, focusing on increasing motivation and providing students with social and educational tools to improve socio-emotional development.

Sometimes, schools focus solely on the theoretical aspect of education, aiming to teach the maximum amount of content in the shortest time possible. This is not the only aspect to consider, as students often do not feel comfortable in the classroom, seeing it as a hostile environment where they feel pressure, shyness, and anxiety. This work intends to study the most efficient ways to reduce these emotions, as they will improve the quality of life of the students and allow didactic information to be learned more effectively.

Thus, it aims to transform the classroom into a safe space that provides students with tools to develop skills such as creativity, leadership, camaraderie, cooperation, or empathy, among peers and teachers. It will also include the use of digital tools as a medium close to students to learn independently. For this, real examples of exercises and proposals carried out by Primary Education teachers will be used.

While it is true that the methodologies studied in this work are applicable to all subjects in the Primary Education curriculum, the interventions on the affective filter concerning socio-emotional development will be focused on the subject of English, since despite having intrinsic values for the entire curriculum, the Affective Filter Theory (Krashen, 1983) focuses on acquisition and production in L2.

## II. OBJECTIVES

The general objective proposed in this Final Degree Project is as follows: to analyze the causes of the Affective Filter and the benefits of proper socio-emotional development for the subsequent development of a practical proposal for Primary Education in which the emotional aspect in education is considered to improve motivation, reduce impediments, and improve the educational experience, determining how both factors mutually influence each other.

This Final Degree Project seeks to achieve specific theoretical and practical objectives, differentiating the characteristics of the components of the theoretical framework to apply the knowledge in real classroom cases.

- Understanding the affective filter, including its causes and implications in learning, as well as the most effective ways to combat it.
- Analyzing socio-emotional development, focusing on its effects on learning capacity, interpersonal relationships with students and teachers, and analyzing its manifestations.
- Establishing relationships between the affective filter and socio-emotional development, as well as the effect of one on the other and its impact on content learning, focusing mainly on the subject of English.
- Analyzing relevant pedagogical theories that consider the affective filter and socio-emotional development to study how to address them, as well as the causes and effects in the classroom.
- Promoting emotional well-being in the classroom, improving the emotional and educational quality of students, creating a much more motivating academic environment.
- Evaluating the impact of socio-emotional development on academic performance.
- Developing activities in which students perceive participation in learning.
- Seeking motivating themes to address the curriculum content.
- Proposing activities in which students can express their personal ideas, actively participating in opinion circles.

### III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Socio-Emotional Development

##### 3.1.1. Fundamentals of socio-emotional development

Social and emotional development are broadly linked and complementary aspects. Both study the expression and evolution of feelings both with parents and with friends, peers, teachers, or people in the environment, as well as the influence of external media such as social networks, television, or series on the individual's development.

The study of socio-emotional development is mainly based on two theories by ideologists Erik Erikson and Sigmund Freud. They analyzed the emotions and emotional bonds that occur when relating family influence with disciplinary control. Additionally, they categorized the different types of attachments that students can experience and the causes that originate them.

Analyzing emotional bonds is essential since a teacher not only has the objective of teaching the pertinent contents following the curriculum but also must teach it in such a way that students feel comfortable and safe, creating a favorable environment for students to enjoy learning rather than feeling forced to do so. However, it is relevant to know that, although the teacher has a notable impact, most of the influence will come from parents and home dynamics.

##### 3.1.2. Theories of socio-emotional development

The theories of Erik Erikson (1904-1994) and Sigmund Freud (1856 - 1939) have been the most relevant in the study of personality development in minors and have explained the rational and irrational behaviors and the different feelings that people can experience.

##### Psychoanalytic Theory of Sigmund Freud

During the 1950s and 1960s, Freud developed the theory of Psychoanalysis, countering Skinner's behavioral theory. The goal of this psychoanalysis is to restore balance in the patient's life through dialogued interviews (consultations) between the psychologist and the patient. In these consultations, the professional must interpret the information provided by the patient to understand the causes of the problem, identifying the conflict and the impediments to resolving it. The information obtained includes sources such as actions, dreams, thoughts, or opinions. Finally, if the psychoanalyst can get the patient to verbalize the problem, the improvement is much more noticeable.

One of the main bases of the theory is that, during the first five years of age, the impact of various events on the development and constitution of personality has a very significant influence. Therefore, it can be said that the early years of a student's development are crucial in the individual's overall development.

Freud argues that human behavior is motivated by three impulses: sexual, survival, and aggressive. These impulses are unconscious forces that drive behavior and can generate internal conflicts that the individual must manage to maintain psychological balance. To handle the

tension arising from these impulses, defense mechanisms are developed. These are defined as protections against external dangers that could destabilize the individual, resulting in emotional imbalance.

Expanding on her father's foundational ideas, Anna Freud, in 1936, described the primary defense mechanisms that individuals use to cope with these internal conflicts and maintain psychological stability:

- *Repression*: During repression, the individual suppresses and rejects awareness of all unwanted content. One of the most common manifestations of this form of self-defense is memory loss.
- *Regression*: This refers to behavior that manifests in a childish or immature manner in stressful or insecure situations. That is, in a destabilizing situation, we may act regressively and revert to behaviors we had in childhood.
- *Displacement*: This defense mechanism involves diverting attention or emotion from one object or person to another. For example, if a student is angry with their parents, they might vent that anger on the teacher instead of confronting the parents directly. It is a way to avoid conflict and confrontation.
- *Sublimation*: This occurs by channeling our emotions or impulses into a socially acceptable activity. For example, someone with violent impulses might channel them into practicing sports or physical activities such as martial arts or contact sports.
- *Denial*: This is defined as the child's negative response when dealing with a stressful situation.
- *Undoing*: This is the neutralization of an unacceptable act already committed by counteracting it with an opposite one. For example, if a child hits another, they might quickly give a kiss to undo the bad action and continue playing with the affected child.
- *Identification*: This occurs when the child imitates the behavior of the threatening model to reduce their stress.

By understanding and identifying these defense mechanisms, psychoanalysts can better assist patients in navigating their unconscious conflicts, ultimately striving for psychological equilibrium.

### Erik Erikson's Theory of Personality

Erik Erikson, influenced by Freud, argued that the development of personality, and therefore the study of social and emotional development, depends on overcoming crises at various stages throughout life.

Erikson's theory was designed based on Freud's but with certain nuances. The psychoanalyst developed his theory in eight stages, comparing it to a ladder. To advance to the next stage, you must have overcome the previous one. Erikson considers that each stage represents a challenge or conflict that must be overcome positively to obtain satisfactory results.



The eight stages of Erikson's theory are:

1. *Stage 1: Basic trust vs. mistrust (birth to 18 months)*: In this phase, if the caregiver, typically the parents, provides care, affection, and consistent attention, the child develops a sense of trust. If not, the child may develop mistrust.
2. *Stage 2: Autonomy vs. shame and doubt (18 months to 3 years)*: At this stage, children start to develop personal control and independence. Successfully managing physical skills and independence leads to a sense of autonomy, while failure results in feelings of shame and doubt.
3. *Stage 3: Initiative vs. guilt (3 to 6 years)*: Children begin to assert control and power over their environment. Success in this stage leads to a sense of initiative, while failure results in guilt.
4. *Stage 4: Industry vs. inferiority (6 to 12 years)*: In this stage, children need to cope with new social and academic demands. Success leads to a sense of competence, while failure results in feelings of inferiority.
5. *Stage 5: Identity vs. role confusion (12 to 18 years)*: Adolescents need to develop a sense of self and personal identity. Success leads to an ability to stay true to oneself, while failure results in role confusion and a weak sense of self.
6. *Stage 6: Intimacy vs. isolation (young adulthood)*: Young adults need to form intimate, loving relationships with other people. Success leads to strong relationships, while failure results in loneliness and isolation.
7. *Stage 7: Generativity vs. stagnation (middle adulthood)*: Adults need to create or nurture things that will outlast them, often by having children or contributing to positive changes that benefit others. Success leads to feelings of usefulness and accomplishment, while failure results in shallow involvement in the world.
8. *Stage 8: Ego integrity vs. despair (older adulthood)*: As older adults, people look back on their life and feel a sense of fulfillment. Success at this stage leads to feelings of wisdom, while failure results in regret, bitterness, and despair.

### **3.1.3. Development of emotions, temperament, and attachment**

The early years of a child's conscious social interaction significantly affect their long-term and short-term relationships.

#### Development of Emotions

According to numerous studies, humans share a variety of distinct emotions, and the frequency, intensity, and stimuli that generate these emotions differ. From birth, humans can produce reactions that are refined over time and within the social context.

According to research conducted by Vasta, Haith, and Miller in 1992, it has been shown that the social environment influences emotional refinement through the imitation of models. The external expression of emotions is known as "affect," if there is pleasure or attraction, or

"disaffect," if the stimulus has been unpleasant for the subject. According to Ekman, Friesen, and Ellsworth (1972), there are six facial expressions for basic emotions (happiness, sadness, anger, surprise, disgust, and fear), while for Izard (1977), there are only four basic emotions (fear, surprise, joy, and sadness). Both studies conclude that the most evident reactions in students will be crying, smiling, and fear. As children grow and develop, the manifestations of emotions evolve and acquire nuances that indicate a higher emotional versatility.

It is also important to highlight the significance of crying, as it is one of the most common and evident reactions for communicating needs. It has two main functions: a) to communicate and convey a message and b) to attract the caregiver's attention to receive care, thereby strengthening the bond with the mother. There are four types of crying (Wolff, 1969): hunger, anger, pain, and frustration. Each has a different cause, and as educators, it is essential to distinguish these to respond appropriately. Experienced caregivers can differentiate them perfectly and even interpret the cause of the emotional reaction (pain, a recognized person, hunger, sleep).

Laughter, however, is a reaction of well-being to an experience that significantly affects caregivers. As children grow, the number of stimuli that provoke laughter increases, influenced by factors such as the social context or age. Understanding this factor is important to promote interactions with students.

Fear is an emotion distinct from the previous ones, as its function is to preserve the child's well-being. Its origin can be very different, and it is challenging to know precisely the cause that generated it. Fear can be caused by a past experience, reading books, watching videos, or television programs.

Additionally, students may fear people who can cause them physical pain, such as tutors or parents, as well as classmates or others in their environment. Fear is defined as a feeling of discomfort that a child experiences towards something known, while anxiety is defined as a fear where the generating cause is unknown.

In some cases, students experience phobia (DuPont, 1983), which is an irrational fear of going to school. This fear disappears instantly when students are told they do not have to attend school. Years later, during adolescence, students develop a fear of social aspects that are continuously evolving (being rejected by the group, academic failure, loss of credibility).

### *Development of Temperament*

Due to the affective nature of an individual, determined by heredity and historical social experiences, temperament is the most peculiar and frequent way an individual presents themselves to others. Temperament is not defined as the cause of an act or the act itself, but rather the way the student performs it.

In conclusion, a child's temperament sets the tone or quality of interaction, the type of initial behavior, and the positive or negative reaction of observers to that emotional reaction (Buss and Plomin, 1984). Temperament is affected by factors such as social role performance at school, during play, peer groups, cultural environment, or the caregivers' temperament.

### Development of Attachment

Attachment is defined as an emotional bond that begins with the interaction between the infant and their caregiver. The origin of this attachment is due to operant conditioning, through which the baby associates the feeding process with the mother. Additionally, there are different theoretical perspectives. K. Lorenz asserts that the imprinting theory is a genetic and automatic mechanism whereby the hatchling, upon emerging from the egg, feels an attraction to the first living being it sees and associates it with protection.

Subsequent experiments with Harlow's monkeys (Harlow, 1958; Harlow and Harlow, 1966) establish the importance of physical contact for the proper establishment of an effective social relationship. According to Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980), the satisfaction of basic needs (care, attention, feeding) is not essential for the development of attachment.

The development of attachment is distinguished in three phases (Schaffer, 1971):

1. *Orienting Behavior (0 to 3 months)*: The infant feels more attracted to humans than to objects.
2. *Signaling Behavior (3 to 6 months)*: The infant differentiates known and unknown faces, showing more affinity towards those who are known (parents or relatives).
3. *Approaching Behavior (6 months to 3 years)*: Development of physical proximity, openness to meeting new people, and losing possible fear they may feel.

In an experiment conducted by Ainsworth in 1983, the aim was to determine the minimum amount of interaction between mother and child necessary to establish attachment. In this experiment, eight different situations were analyzed where the mother and her child were brought together and separated, in the same room or different ones, with the presence of strangers and with objects. From this experiment, Ainsworth concluded that there were three distinct types of attachment:

- *Insecure-Avoidant Attachment*: This type of attachment is characterized by the absence of anxiety when the child is separated from the mother. This attachment represents 25% of the sample.
- *Secure Attachment*: Children with this type of attachment explore the rooms freely, each at a different distance from the mother. When the mother left the room, they showed high anxiety that disappeared when the mother reappeared. This attachment represents 65% of the sample.
- *Insecure-Ambivalent Attachment*: Children who experienced this type of affection showed anxiety from the first moment they were separated from the mother. This feeling of anxiety increased as the mother moved away until she left the room. When the mother returned, the children displayed two behaviors: either they moved away from the mother or approached her.

Vasta and Colas (1992) established that children with secure attachments have greater social competence and problem-solving skills than children with insecure attachment. They also demonstrated that children with secure attachment find it easier to relate to peer groups, work cooperatively, and are less dependent. Additionally, the likelihood of developing behavioral or emotional problems is significantly reduced.

After analyzing these studies, it is important to highlight that students' attachment to their various caregivers (siblings, parents, grandparents, household employees), as well as with the teacher and peer group (friendship and partnership), will be maintained over the years, potentially lasting throughout their lives.

### **3.1.4. The Development of the Individual**

One of the most significant factors in fostering socioemotional and cognitive development is an individual's self-awareness. Each theory offers a different hypothesis on this topic.

According to Freud, this self-perception develops through the refinement of the Superego, through which students learn new skills. However, Erik Erikson argues in his theory of social learning that peer groups, family, and school become catalysts that can positively or negatively influence individual development.

According to Harter (1983), once the child has developed the self as an agent, the same child will develop a sense of self as an object, identifying themselves as an individual with recognizable and unique characteristics. This author establishes that socioemotional development is regulated by three major factors: self-awareness, self-assessment, and self-regulation.

#### *Self-awareness*

Self-awareness is defined as the ability of the student to recognize themselves. Lewis and Brooks-Gunn in 1979 developed one of the best-known experiments to analyze this ability. In this experiment, the noses of children of different ages were painted red to see if they were able to recognize themselves. The study concluded that those children over 15 months quickly recognized that it was their nose. The percentage of children who noticed decreased as age decreases, so it can be affirmed that self-awareness depends directly on age.

Likewise, it was discovered that children with insecure attachment recognized themselves more quickly than those with secure attachment of the same age. It is believed that this event is due to the children's need to fend for themselves in environments where they paid attention to themselves (Lewis, Brooks-Gunn, and Jaskir, 1985).

When children show greater symbolic capacity and greater language development, their self-awareness is studied through their own descriptions that change throughout their childhood (Harter, 1994).

Among the most respected works on social roles and their acquisition is that of Robert Selman (1980). The author describes five different stages to achieve effective acquisition of social roles.

1. *Undifferentiated egocentric stage (0 to 6 years)*: Children are unable to differentiate their opinion from that of others.
2. *Differentiated perspective acquisition stage (6 to 8 years)*: Children begin to recognize differences of opinion but are unable to understand the cause of them.
3. *Reciprocal perspective acquisition stage (8 to 10 years)*: The child recognizes that other individuals have a different point of view, although their opinion is acknowledged.
4. *Acquisition stage of three simultaneous perspectives (10 to 12 years)*: The child is able to acquire much greater knowledge by recognizing their own ideas, those of their opponent, and those of a third person who would have the role of referee.
5. *Acquisition stage of a deep perspective (adolescence-adulthood)*: The individual becomes aware of the social perspective and adapts their point of view to it.

Knowing these stages is of vital importance because it gives the teacher the ability to analyze in which phase the student is and thus be able to enhance in the students the ability to organize their own thoughts and learn from external opinions, exchanging ideas and values. This knowledge is useful for resolving conflicts or organizing activities such as debates.

### Self-assessment

Also known as self-esteem, it is defined as the perception that the student has of themselves. This is conditioned by cognitive ability and social burden, although it also has an important emotional burden, since the student evaluates their abilities and qualities positively or negatively. As teachers, it is very important to know the self-esteem of the students in order to work around it, distinguishing those areas in which the students may need more positive reinforcement, and those in which the students can solve complex challenges given their skills. The two bases of self-assessment are other people's opinion of the individual and the individual's ability to solve problems presented with their skills.

Coopersmith (1967) concluded that those learners who have high self-esteem have secure attachment, achieving good academic performance and developing autonomy and popularity much greater than those students with reduced self-esteem. This factor is very relevant because it will guide us when enhancing the abilities of those students with lower self-esteem while allowing more independence to those with higher self-esteem.

According to Harter (1988), there are four variables that determine self-esteem. Among them are: Relationships between peer groups, school, gender, and family disciplinary environment. Delving into the gender variable, girls perceive themselves as better in reading ability and artistic skills, while boys consider themselves more skilled in sports (Vasta et al., 1992). This factor is very relevant because we will need to adapt the way of teaching to the students since boys may feel less capable in the artistic field, so it would be necessary to provide more individualized reinforcement in these subjects, while in the female field it will be necessary to reinforce the perception of their physical abilities.

### Self-regulation

This variable is defined as the ability to learn to control one's own behavior. Although it is true that, during the first months, the baby does not have the ability to regulate and responds to external stimuli, over time the child becomes aware of their actions and reactions. At three years old, children begin an age of protest in which they oppose what is proposed. In these cases, it is shown that the infant has a need to socialize and begins to try to discover the limits in their initiatives and possibilities.

To study self-regulation (Vasta et al., 1992), a study was developed to test that development is not determined by a single variable. For this, two different tests were performed. During the forbidden toy technique, children were told that they could not play with a particular toy while they could with others. In this experiment, the time it took for children to disobey the order was measured. In the delay of gratification experiment, children were given a choice between a large reward for which they would have to wait a while, or a small reward. At the end of this study, it was confirmed that self-control to follow social rules is directly related to the child's morality.

#### **3.1.5. Empathy**

Empathy is defined as the ability to experience and understand the same feeling as the observed subject. This element is determined by the individual's environment and biology and is one of the most important factors in their development.

There are different approaches to this term. According to Zahn-Waxler, Wagner, Chapman, and Radke-Yarrow (1992), empathy is an emotional involvement that transforms the identification and affliction of observed sorrow into compassionate and active concern. Hoffman (1988) adds that it is not until the age of two that infants develop the ability to understand that people respond differently to the same circumstances. This fact is significant as it aids in the development of the capacity for empathy.

Other theories claim that the ability to have empathy is related to a facilitating temperament, meaning that they are not directly putting themselves in the place of the other individual. However, with a proper example in the family and school environment, it is possible to contribute to its development in those students who have more difficulty.

Despite being a skill of genetic origin, as teachers, it is necessary to contribute to the development of this ability, both in well-developed students and those who find it more challenging.

#### **3.1.6. The Family Environment**

Socio-emotional, cognitive, and physical development arises from simultaneous influences that contribute to comprehensive development. Within the family setting, according to Musitu and Cava (2001), values, beliefs, norms, and behaviors adjusted to society are acquired. Thus, the family introduces children to various cultural elements, determining, to

some extent, their social success. However, children do not act as passive subjects in this process; socialization is an interactive process through which cultural contents are transferred and incorporated into the personality as behaviors and beliefs.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) introduced a framework comprising various levels of influence on a child's development, ranging from the immediate to the broader societal context. The microsystem, the closest circle, includes influences like family, peers, teachers, and doctors, directly impacting the child's daily experiences and behaviors. Moving outward, the mesosystem encompasses interactions within the microsystem, such as how family issues might affect school performance. Meanwhile, the exosystem involves influences indirectly affecting the child, like parents' workplaces or community resources. Finally, the macrosystem encompasses cultural values, norms, and broader societal factors, shaping the child's worldview and opportunities.

Understanding these ecological influences is crucial for educators to tailor teaching approaches to individual students' needs. By acknowledging the diverse factors impacting a child's development, teachers can create a supportive learning environment that considers each student's unique circumstances.

These insights also highlight the importance of recognizing the dynamic nature of family relationships. By understanding how these relationships evolve over time, educators can better support both children and parents, fostering resilience and adaptability in the face of challenges.

In essence, Bronfenbrenner's framework emphasizes the interconnectedness of various ecological factors in shaping a child's development. This understanding underscores the need for collaborative efforts between schools, families, and communities to promote holistic child well-being and success.

### **3.1.7. Applications of Socio-Emotional Development in the Classroom**

After analyzing the foundations of socio-emotional development, it is necessary to use the basic concepts of this development to improve the quality of teaching, adapting the approach to each student, knowing the characteristics that make up their personality, their concerns and goals, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. In this way, not only will they understand the content more effectively, but they will also enjoy the teaching process more, establishing secure bonds with the teaching staff and classmates while acquiring various social and emotional skills.

To understand each student's situation, it will be necessary to establish links with parents and students, as well as identify the different relationships between the student and their close circle (friendships, enmities, conflicts, and reconciliations). This process can be facilitated through small activities carried out in the classroom. An example of these can be the illustration of the most relevant events in the students' lives, which can be both positive and negative, allowing the teacher to place each response in the corresponding niche or circle and compare the different responses.

Another activity could be writing a short piece in which students must list both positive and negative qualities. This activity is highly important as it allows a very accurate understanding of each individual's self-perception, enabling proper adaptation to their needs.

However, knowing these factors not only serves to improve the relationship with the student by reinforcing trust, but it also allows curricular content to be addressed with an emotional and individualized perspective. These activities can be of different types:

- *Dialogue Circles*: In this type of activity, students sit in a circle and discuss the topic they have been learning about in class. The teacher guides the conversation and corrects the students on incorrect points. The students exchange ideas on various topics (mammals, vacations, countries, rivers) while answering the teacher's questions. This method of review is much more enjoyable for them than answering questions individually at a desk while the rest listen, and since everyone participates, no student feels observed or afraid of making mistakes.
- *Role-Playing Games*: The teacher assigns students roles to act out different situations. These activities allow students to become part of what is being taught, representing historical figures, jobs, objects, etc. The main idea of this activity is to allow students to learn while expressing themselves, fostering interest, empathy, and helping them see different points of view.
- *Artistic and Creative Activities*: Although these activities are less focused on the curriculum, they are very beneficial for both parties. For students, artistic activities are a way to have fun and express themselves without the pressure of doing things right or wrong, greatly reducing the fear of failure. For the teacher, these exercises provide much information about the student's personality, situation, and interests.
- *Cooperative Games*: Activities like Kahoot, corners, or escape rooms not only greatly reduce the affective filter by being pressure-free and stress-free, motivating students through play, but they also promote camaraderie, cooperation, and empathy. Additionally, they allow students to develop their social skills and empathy.
- *Outdoor Activities*: Activities outside the classroom, such as excursions, urban gardens, sports days, etc., allow students to socialize with their peers, learn practically, and actively enjoy the language acquisition experience. For the teacher, it is a valuable tool to observe students' behavior outside the classroom, paying special attention to their interactions with activity leaders and their ability to follow rules even during games.

Using these activities, whether they cover curricular content or not, is extremely beneficial, not only for language acquisition but also for the motivation and well-being they bring to students. Perceiving education as something fun, in a pressure-free environment where they feel valued, is crucial to eliminating the aversion some students feel toward school and its implications.



## IV. LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORY

### 4.1 Language Acquisition Theory

Language acquisition theory is a set of principles and models that attempt to explain how humans acquire the ability to comprehend and produce language. These theories seek to understand the mental processes and mechanisms that enable individuals to learn to speak, read, write, and understand a language from infancy to adulthood. There are several prominent theories on language acquisition, each with its own perspectives and approaches. The following will explain Krashen's language acquisition theory, outlining the different hypotheses that comprise it. Additionally, the fifth hypothesis, which explains the affective filter, will be developed.

#### 4.1.1 Hypothesis of Language Acquisition

This first hypothesis establishes that there are two different ways of being competent in the use of second languages. The first is language acquisition through the use of language in real communication situations. These authors argue that language acquisition is the natural way to develop linguistic ability and assert that it is an unconscious process, as we are not concerned with the rules of the language we are acquiring. Therefore, it is implicit knowledge. The second way to develop competence in a second language is by learning that language. Language learning involves formal knowledge and is done consciously, thus constituting explicit knowledge.

While it is true that both types of competence must be developed, Krashen's theory (1983) establishes that, in the classroom, most activities should be designed to promote language acquisition implicitly.

The following table explains the main differences between acquisition and learning, emphasizing that acquisition should focus on the meaning of what is being said rather than on grammatical rules, as well as the use of auditory reinforcement to achieve unconscious learning.

	<b>ACQUISITION</b>	<b>LEARNING</b>
Approach	Unconscious language learning	Conscious study of language
Focus	Meaning-centered	Form-centered
Awareness	Implicit	Explicit
Input	Acoustic, they need to hear	Intellectual, they need to understand
Output	Spontaneous and meaningful	Forced output
Dimension	Social	Cognitive

*Table 1: Acquisition vs Learning*

### 4.1.2 Input Hypothesis

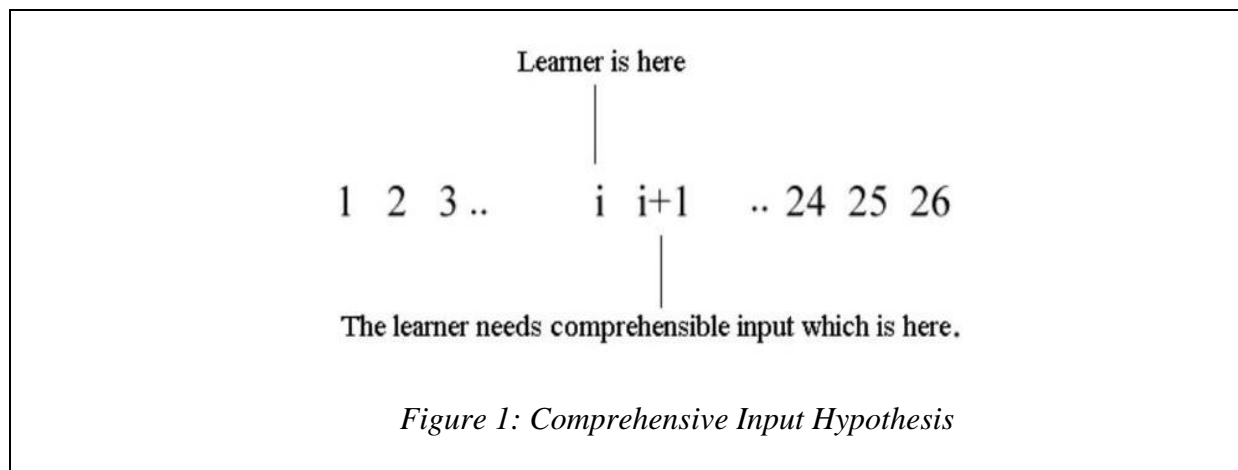
In this hypothesis, two types of input are studied: Fine-tuned input and Roughly-tuned input. In the former, the transmitter provides many examples that match the student's level of competence and are slightly more advanced ( $i+1$ ). On the other hand, Roughly-tuned input refers to exposure to language that is not specifically adjusted to the student's level. Fine-tuned input is a more effective method as it is an approach aimed at facilitating learning in the classroom.

The input hypothesis highlights the importance of using context for acquiring knowledge beyond our competencies. Krashen and Terrell (1983) illustrate the difference between the two in the following text:

*“In the case of finely tuned input, the speaker deliberately tries to include many examples of the student’s  $i+1$ . In roughly tuned input, the speaker only attempts to make himself or herself understood. When this is accomplished, the speaker will actually “cast a net” of structure that includes the acquirer’s  $i+1$ , the net hypothesis (p.33).”*

In the above quote, the authors explain that learning L2 is more effective with comprehensible input where language can be organically learned following the Natural Approach. Consequently, they establish that this input should be classroom-centered, as it would represent a place where finely-tuned input could be more efficiently established.

The following graphic illustrates the need for correct output to progress and implement new knowledge ( $i+1$ ) (Krashen, 1983).

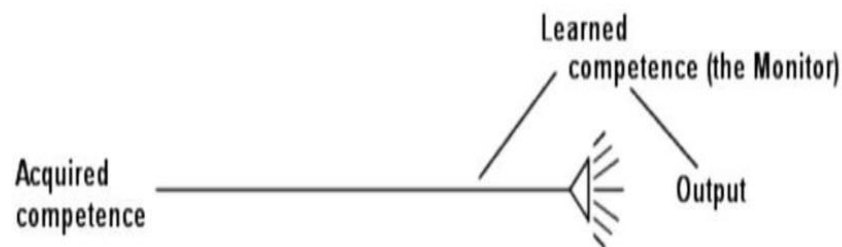


### 4.1.3 Monitor Hypothesis

This theory delves into the concept of a monitor's presence during language production. It suggests that language production initiates from competencies acquired through language acquisition, which are preceded by competencies developed via language learning. The monitor acts as an internal mechanism functioning as a corrector, intervening either before or after language is spoken or written. It relies on learned, rather than inherently acquired, knowledge to rectify potential grammatical errors during message delivery.

The monitor's application is contingent upon three specific conditions: time, emphasis, and knowledge of rules. Time is required to select and apply learned rules, with this process generally being simpler in writing compared to speaking due to the speed involved in speech. Emphasis is placed on both linguistic production and its form. Additionally, knowledge of rules is influenced by the complexity of the conveyed message and the individual's proficiency level. This suggests that attempting to communicate a message beyond one's known content may hinder the recognition of grammatical errors.

The usage of the monitor in communication is visualized in Figure 2, illustrating three main elements: acquired competence, learned competence (the Monitor), and output. These elements are interconnected to represent the relationship between them in the language production process. The acquired and learned competences feed into the monitor, which then influences the output, indicating how language production is affected by both internal cognitive processes and external linguistic performance.



*Figure 2: Monitor Hypothesis Representation*

In conclusion, second language learners sacrifice fluency and speed in language to correct the precision of their linguistic communication, and while it is true that Krashen advocates for the presence of this monitor, he emphasizes the importance of subconscious language acquisition to develop competencies in L2 over the learning of these.

#### **4.1.4 Natural Order Hypothesis**

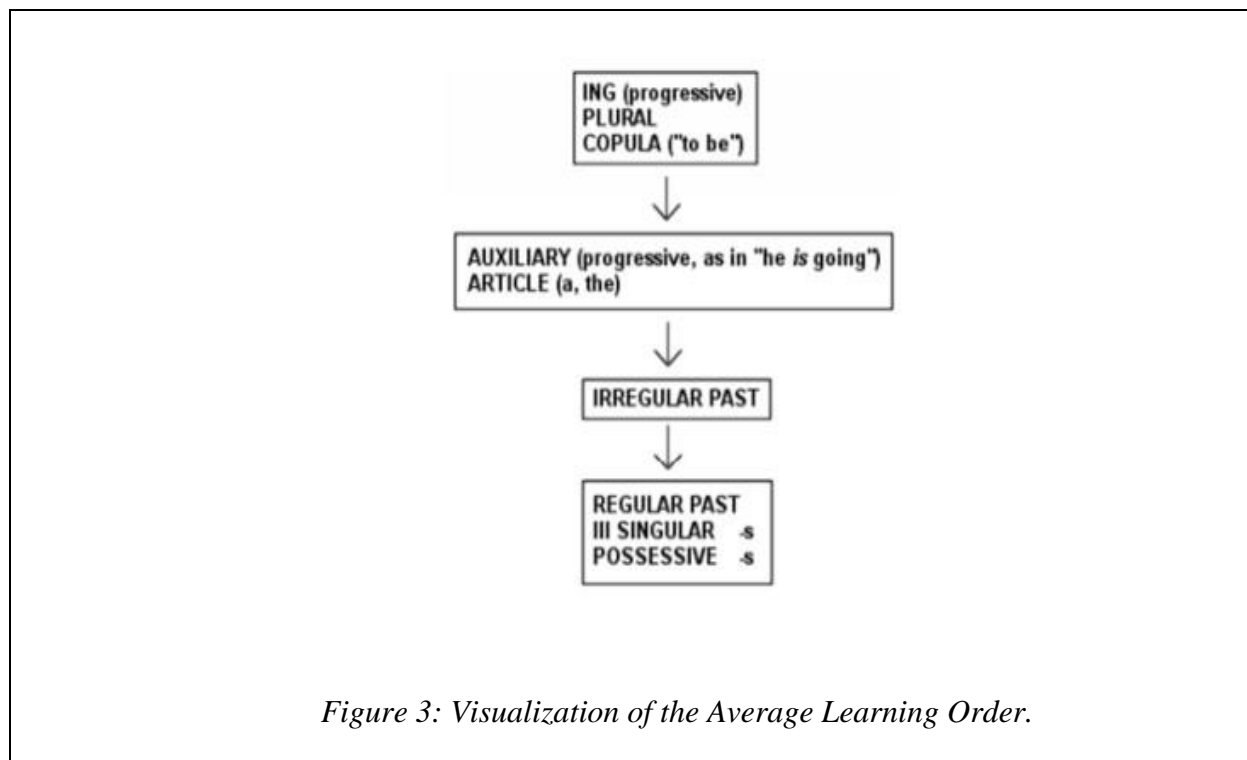
The Natural Order Hypothesis posits that language learners undergo distinct periods of time to assimilate grammatical structures effectively. According to this theory, learners tend to acquire grammatical rules in a sequence unique to each individual, suggesting that there is no fixed chronological order for the acquisition of language structures. Consequently, educators are advised not to adhere strictly to a predetermined sequence when teaching grammar but to adopt a more organic approach based on the principles of language acquisition.

In practice, this means that teachers should prioritize facilitating comprehension of language through contextual understanding rather than focusing solely on error correction. By immersing students in meaningful language contexts and communication activities, educators

can create an environment conducive to natural language acquisition. While the specific order of grammatical acquisition may vary among learners, there tends to be a common pattern observed in the average sequence of learning. This variability underscores the importance of adapting instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs and learning paces of individual students.

In addition to recognizing the variability in the order of language acquisition, it is crucial for educators to consider other factors that influence the learning process, such as individual learner characteristics, language input, and socio-cultural context. By acknowledging and addressing these factors, teachers can create more effective and inclusive learning environments that support the holistic development of language skills among learners.

Therefore, the focus should not be on correcting grammatical errors but on understanding the message with the help of context. While the learning order is unpredictable, there is an average order in which most students learn and internalize grammatical rules. This learning order of L2 is reflected in the following image (*Figure 3*).



#### 4.1.5 Affective Filter Hypothesis

The concept of the affective filter was postulated by various authors, with Dulay and Burt (1977) being the first to theorize about it. Years later, Stephen Krashen (1985) revisited the concept of the affective filter as one of the five hypotheses to consider in the theory of second language acquisition. Given its importance, the present hypothesis will be further developed in the following section.

## **V. AFFECTIVE FILTER**

In this section, an in-depth examination will be conducted on the affective filter hypothesis, originally formulated by Dulay and Burt (1977). This exploration stems from the need to understand the potential elements or factors that either inhibit or facilitate second language acquisition.

### **5.1 Origins of the Affective Filter**

Dulay and Burt introduced the term "affective filter" in 1977, and later, Stephen Krashen revisited this hypothesis in 1985. It suggests the existence of a set of affective variables correlated with success in second language acquisition. According to these scholars, the concept of the affective filter is grounded in theoretical research on affective variables and their impact on second language acquisition, as well as the hypotheses discussed previously.

These authors propose three ways in which attitudinal factors can relate to second language acquisition. Firstly, they may encourage learners to seek more language input actively. Secondly, they can boost learners' confidence in interacting with native speakers, facilitating participation in conversations. Lastly, a positive attitude makes learners more receptive to the input they receive, making them more open to understanding the language they are exposed to.

Dulay and Burt argue that students with a more positive and active attitude toward language learning will have a reduced affective filter, resulting in direct improvement in teaching quality and the speed at which students learn. According to Stevick (1976), input is received more deeply by such individuals. Thus, by promoting an environment in which students are more motivated to learn, input reception becomes much more positive. Kun-Huei Wu (2010) states that language learners who are free from pressure show more confidence and willingness to practice in the classroom. In other words, language should be acquired naturally, as a child learns their first language.

It wasn't until 1985 when Stephen Krashen formulated his Second Language Acquisition Theory. In this theory, the affective filter hypothesis would have a key relevance in emphasizing the importance of creating a less threatening classroom environment for anxious students, especially those with low competence and confidence.

According to this theory, the term affective filter is based on theoretical work on affective variables regarding second language acquisition and the four aforementioned hypotheses. Therefore, Krashen's affective filter hypothesis will study the importance of affect, i.e., the effect of psychological and/or emotional variables, in language learning.

### **5.2 Affective Filter Variables**

Depending on the type of variable to which the learner is exposed, the affective filter will either decrease or increase instantly and over time. In this hypothesis, three major variables are considered: motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence. All of them have a significant impact on student education and must be addressed equitably to ensure teaching optimization and provide students with a learning situation where language acquisition is a pleasant and unconscious process..

### 5.2.1 Variable 1: Motivation

The first type of variable is motivation. Generally, students with high levels of motivation acquire a second language better and faster. Atkinson's traditional concept (1957) determines that motivation arises from two main factors: need, as the organism's state that incites behavioral execution with a certain intensity, and incentive, as the goal or objective the organism aims to achieve or avoid.

The relationship between motivation and the variables "need" and "incentive" is reflected in the following formula:  $Motivation = f(Need \times Incentive)$ . Where these concepts are understood as:

$$Need = f(Biological\ variables \times Cognitive \times Situational \times Emotional \times Personality\ characteristics).$$

These variables include:

- Biological variables: activation, adaptation to the environment, and instinct.
- Cognitive variables: purposes, goals, plans, behavioral intention, or congruence between cognition and behavior.
- Situational variables: situational antecedents (signal, conditioned, and discriminative stimuli).
- Emotional variables: hedonism, sensation-seeking, helplessness, and learned laziness.

$$Incentive = f(Value\ of\ the\ incentive \times Subjective\ probability\ of\ obtaining\ the\ incentive).$$

The value of the incentive depends on the quantity and quality of the reward, changes in these, as well as the ease of obtaining it and the contiguity between motivated behavior and reward.

Four types of motivation are distinguished. Firstly, instrumental motivation is produced by professional interest, which drives an individual to see L2 learning as a tool to achieve their goals. According to Heidi C. Dulay and Marina K. Burt (1977), these motivations reduce the influence of the affective filter, acting as a screen that prevents understanding. Thus, the desire to use language practically can lead to greater success (Oller, Baca, & Vigil, 1977).

Secondly, integrative motivation is produced by the affinity an individual develops for learning and interacting with an L2-speaking community; consequently, students with high integrative motivations perform better in the second language in the long term (Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

Thirdly, intrinsic motivation is produced when the learner has an internal desire to perform the activity, i.e., "the mere act of carrying out something is rewarding in itself, such as an affinity or predilection for some particular intellectual task of the target language" (Al Shehri, 2014, p. 9).

Lastly, extrinsic motivation is produced when the learner engages in the activity for the benefit it brings and not out of affinity for it.

### 5.2.2 Variable 2: Anxiety

The second type of variable is anxiety since a low level of anxiety facilitates language acquisition. This variable is important because it not only improves learning ability but also, on a personal level, the student will have a more positive attitude, which will indirectly impact motivation to learn L2. Moreover, psychologically linking error or unsatisfactory responses to punishment creates a strong state of anxiety.

When anxiety is experienced repeatedly, *"it can block any human performance, including learning"* (Sánchez, 2013, p. 289). This state of anxiety can severely affect the affective filter, considerably increasing it.

Lightbown and Spada (1993) analyze this state as tension that causes the rejection of input by the student and renders the process of acquiring the foreign language unfeasible. They establish that "the filter will be activated when the student feels stressed, lacking in self-confidence and demotivated and will be reduced when relaxed and motivated" (p. 86).

Within this variable, Skinner's Behaviorism theory (1988) stands out, highlighting the importance of positive reinforcement and making corrections in language acquisition in such a way that the learner sees failure as an opportunity to learn and does not feel anxiety when making mistakes.

Similarly, studies by Pizarro & Josephy (2010) categorize three types of anxiety that can affect foreign language learning:

- *Fear of negative evaluation*: the fear of being evaluated or questioned causes the student to feel a high level of anxiety, hindering the learning process.
- *Exam anxiety*: students experience anxiety in the pre-exam phase, feeling that they are not adequately prepared to achieve a satisfactory result for them.
- *Communicative apprehension*: in this type of anxiety, students want to communicate, but due to their personality, they feel unable to do so due to factors such as social anxiety, shyness, or embarrassment.

Sánchez (2013) includes other anxiety triggers in classrooms. Among these, the tendency to avoid risks in their responses due to the possibility of making a mistake is included. Likewise, competitiveness, which for some students may be a stimulus, for others may become a barrier to learning due to the pressure they are under.

Finally, it is established that prohibiting the use of the mother tongue is a beneficial situation, considering that exposure to the second language is greater. However, it must be taken into account that students may experience anxiety because not only may they have difficulty understanding the teacher, but they may also be inhibited when asking questions since they cannot use the language they know to resolve their doubts.

### 5.2.3 Variable 3: Self-Confidence

The third variable to consider is self-confidence since learners with more self-confidence and higher self-esteem tend to acquire the foreign language more directly.

According to the Real Academia Española de la Lengua (2014), self-confidence is defined as "*the generally positive assessment of oneself*", considered in the educational context as "*the judgment that students have of themselves, which is linked to attitudes, feelings, knowledge about their physical appearance, social acceptability, and capacity. The level of self-esteem arises from learning, experiences, and influences of the environment*" (Montes de Oca, 2005, p. 62).

Numerous educators confirm that students with lower self-confidence tend to adopt a much more passive attitude during classes, participating less in both group activities and those developed individually. In this way, students with higher self-confidence will participate more frequently in the classroom, developing a lower affective filter. Consequently, it can be affirmed that the development of an effective class will greatly enhance students' self-confidence, creating a much more efficient learning environment and improving the quality of acquisition.

It is noteworthy to mention that despite the importance of the teacher in the student's self-esteem and self-confidence, these will be determined to a greater extent by situations and personal experiences outside the classroom. However, it is also possible to improve students' confidence when performing activities by explaining the development of the same activity beforehand and referring to the real benefits and applications of the content to be developed.

To achieve a positive transformation in students' self-esteem, Diaz, Quiroga, and Buadas (2014) emphasize the great importance of knowing students well, their tastes, weaknesses, and needs; so that they feel valued in the classroom. As they express it: "*Autonomy is a fundamental human right because it makes the student responsible*".

## 5.3 Age and Affective Filter

The last factor to consider is the age variable. While it is true that the affective filter affects all ages, it is subject to physical, social, and emotional changes. Children belonging to younger age groups tend to have a lower level of affective filter, which increases as they progress through grades and age.

This occurrence is caused by the emergence of feelings of shame or fear of making mistakes, which translate into avoiding becoming an object of ridicule by the rest of the class. When it comes to adolescents and adults, whose cognitive level is more developed, it is essential for them to become aware and incorporate attitudes such as responsibility and persistence to guide them in overcoming obstacles during this process (Rincón, 2014).

According to Krashen (1982), the affective filter hardens during puberty. In the early stages of individual formation, affective barriers change; however, once their development is complete, the permeability of the "input" to conscious (monitor) or unconscious (organizer) cognitive processes is reduced.



In 1983, Krashen and Terrell formulated a hypothesis based on the idea that the "eventual superiority" that children exhibit when acquiring a second language is due to affective factors. Both authors affirm that the strengthening of the affective filter during puberty will not affect learning but rather the acquisition of the second language. Finally, both authors affirm that learners who are younger will have more ease and opportunities to reach a level similar to that of native speakers of the language. However, adults learning a language may also achieve high levels.

#### 5.4 Language Acquisition Device (LAD)

Within language acquisition theories, Chomsky (1988) proposes the theory of the Language Acquisition Device (LAD). This term refers to the human capacity for acquiring language, common to all individuals and innate in nature. Through this device, the speaker accesses the knowledge and use of language thanks to a universal grammar developed in their mind. This capacity is responsible for producing outputs.

Similar to the LAD, in 1983 Krashen and Terrell suggest that the affective filter is present in all learners. According to this theory, there is an affective filter that prevents the input from reaching the LAD and thus the language from being acquired. The authors also emphasize the importance of the learner's intention to learn the language, meaning that speakers with optimal attitudes will have a reduced affective filter. This implies that the person is more "open" to the message. According to Stevick (1976), the input in these types of subjects is received more deeply.

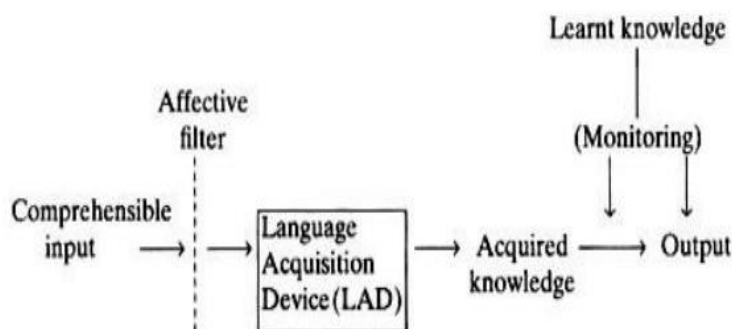
Similarly, Dulay and Burt (1977) affirm the following: *"Having the right attitudes may do two things for second language acquirers: it will encourage them to try to get more input, to interact with speakers of the target language with confidence, and also to be more receptive to the input they get."*

In other words, having the correct attitude not only means that the learner will be more receptive when receiving input, thus improving language acquisition, but also helps promote the intention to receive more input by interacting with people who communicate in the same language.

Establishing a relationship between input and affective filter hypotheses, it is established that exposure to understandable input sources is necessary for correct language acquisition. According to Krashen, if the affective filter is too large, meaning that the learner is not willing and attentive to receiving the output, this process will not take place, and the quality of teaching decreases considerably.

Considering that the affective filter is defined as "the mental block that prevents learners from fully using the understandable input received for language acquisition"; if the affective filter is high, "the learner may understand what he hears and reads, but the content will not reach the LAD" (Krashen, 1985).

The following image (*Figure 4*) illustrates how the innate mechanism of language acquisition (LAD) works.



*Figure 4: Operation of the LAD in Output Production*

This device is responsible for generating outputs, and according to this hypothesis, the affective filter prevents input from accessing the LAD, and consequently, the L2 is acquired, with the monitor being the last step for output production.

Krashen and Terrel (1983) specify that certain attitude-related variables are directly related to the unconscious acquisition of language. Therefore, they establish two judgments: the first is that learners who are more motivated and have a positive self-image will receive input more beneficially, resulting in a low affective filter.

The second judgment, which is especially important for learners who will acquire the second language in an educational environment (the classroom), states that pedagogical objectives should not only focus on providing optimal input but also promote situations, through activities and dynamics, that encourage a low affective filter. This is also affirmed by Stevick (1976), who presents the idea expressed in the following quote: *"Classrooms that encourage low filters are those that promote low anxiety among students that keep students off the defensive"*.

Therefore, classes that do not present a state of anxiety among students will be those in which the affective filter is reduced. To achieve this goal, classes will address topics interesting to students to develop their motivation to learn. Likewise, efforts will be made to encourage students to express their ideas and communicate their feelings rather than develop content lacking meaning, thus reducing the affective filter, fostering a classroom environment in which the student is heard, the relationship with peers and teachers is of quality, and above all, creating dynamics that facilitate language acquisition as the ma

### 5.5 Reducing the Affective Filter: Classroom Activities

Once the characteristics of the affective filter have been studied, it is easy to recognize that it is a real problem that needs to be acknowledged by teachers and schools to improve the quality of teaching of possible L2, L3, etc. However, it is necessary to understand the basic factors that can affect education in order to address them efficiently. Among them are the level of anxiety, motivation, the attitude of the participants, as well as the interaction between the teacher and the student.

In a study conducted by Ginneth Pizarro Chacón and Daniel Josephy from the University of Costa Rica, a questionnaire (see Annex 1) was used, which considers pedagogical aspects, the personality of the participants, their previous experiences, and the general environment of the process. The purpose of this study is to identify various factors such as motivation, attitude, anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, the teacher-student relationship, the influence of external factors, and how they influence the learning of a second language. Methodological strategies and learning processes, the environment in the teaching and learning process, as well as the gender of the student were considered as possible decisive factors in the success or failure of a foreign language student.

It was believed that learning processes were mainly influenced by factors external to the learner. Thus, the chosen topic, teaching methodology, constant practice, and learning processes are priority aspects when analyzing the success or failure of a student in learning a second language.

According to Pizarro and Josephy, with the benchmarks observed in this study, the aim was to analyze the impact of the affective filter on students. Thus, the higher the affective filter—reflected in a higher level of anxiety, low self-esteem, and low participation—the more likely the student is to fail in their learning process. Conversely, a low affective filter will allow for better levels of acquisition and learning of a second language.

Regarding the participants, the sample consists of 110 students, with 50 students belonging to the English subject and 60 to the French subject. The survey was conducted in the second, third, and fourth grades. The variables considered to select the students include age, grade, and gender. Each of the surveys was provided to the teacher in charge of the group; thus, they conducted it and provided a familiar and relaxed environment for the students to respond in a clear and honest manner. The summary of the participants is shown in the following table:

<b>Total Survey = 110</b>		
<b>Level</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>French</b>
<b>Total</b>	50	60
<b>II</b>	11	20
<b>II (2)</b>		21
<b>IV</b>	19	19
<b>III</b>	20	12

*Table 2: Survey Participation*

The questionnaire in question, shown in Annex 1, consists of six questions covering aspects such as teacher-student interaction, the environment in the teaching-learning process, methodological strategies, teacher personality, negative situations within the class experienced by the learner, and gender as a trigger for a negative environment. The questions asked were as follows:

1. *Why is teacher-student interaction so relevant in learning a foreign language?*
2. *Can the teaching and learning environment negatively affect the acquisition of knowledge of a foreign language?*
3. *How can methodological strategies or aspects of a teacher's personality affect my learning process, either negatively or positively?*
4. *Have you experienced a negative situation in class that has affected your learning process in which you or any of your classmates were involved? Mention it.*
5. *How can the environment in the teaching and learning process improve to allow for the development of learning skills and linguistic development of the student? List some factors that help with this.*
6. *Could the teacher's gender influence your learning process, either positively or negatively? Explain.*

The following graph reflects the responses to questions 2, 4, and 6 of the questionnaire. Questions 1, 3, and 5 were not included because the responses varied greatly.

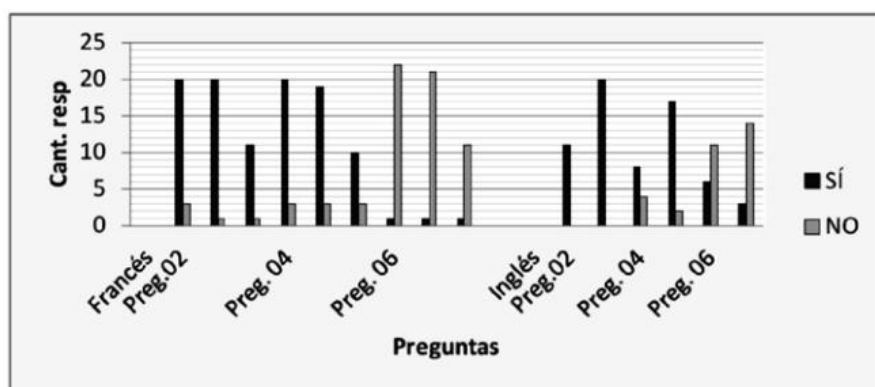


Figure 5: Survey Results

While it is true that the represented sample does not consist of primary school students, the strategies for reducing the affective filter are the same and correspond to a process-oriented model described by Dornyei and Ott. This model describes a taxonomy consisting of four aspects that must be fulfilled:

1. Creating the basic conditions for motivation requires an adequate environment so that motivation strategies can be implemented.
2. Generating student motivation, which implies creating a phase prior to the implementation of strategies.
3. Maintaining and protecting the state of motivation, which corresponds to the phase of implementing strategies.
4. Encouraging positive self-assessment, corresponding to a phase after the implementation of strategies.

### 5.5.1 Type of Activities

After analyzing the different causes of the affective filter, as well as the effects it has on students, it is necessary to know and study the methods that teachers must follow when creating a classroom in which the environment for language acquisition is optimal. That is, a classroom in which anxiety and fear are minimized, and in which the permeability of the affective filter is developed (Krashen, 1982).

To achieve this goal, the teacher must develop and teach classes that are attractive to students, reducing worry and fear while maximizing self-esteem, confidence, and motivation through didactic and entertaining content. The main objective is to optimize learning and language acquisition with the teacher as a helper who accompanies them in the learning process, rather than as an authoritative figure who punishes their mistakes.

In general terms, Rincón (2014) classifies into three categories the types of activities that can be carried out to mitigate negative affective variables (anxiety, low self-confidence, and low motivation) that hinder the acquisition of a foreign language.

#### Problem Solving

Problem solving, also known as PBL (Project Based Learning), consists of activities in which students must solve real problems using knowledge acquired in class. Since these are realistic situations, students see these activities as more interesting and feel much more comfortable and motivated because it involves meaningful learning. Excursions to countries where the target language is spoken would also fall into this category since students would have to face everyday situations in the language they are learning.

Discovery learning, experiential learning, and student-centered learning are educational concepts that emphasize the active role students must play to increase their motivation to learn, commitment, and meaning (De Graaff & Kolmos, 2007). When working on projects, in most cases, both the final product and the process are evaluated. This means that while students develop their tasks, the teacher should supervise the activity (plans, sources of information, drafts, first versions). In this way, students also learn that good work does not come on the first try and that it is in perpetual revision. For this, self-assessment and peer evaluation are used in addition to teacher evaluation.

### Games

Games are a key tool in the acquisition process as they represent an alternative form of teaching in which students have an intrinsic motivation to learn. So much so that Krashen and Terrell (1985) stated the following: *"Students are normally interested in the outcome of the game, and in most cases the focus of attention is on the game itself and not the language forms used to play the game"* (p.120).

In other words, students are more focused on the development and outcome of the game than on the rules of the language itself, resulting in a much more motivating language acquisition process as learning occurs unconsciously. It is worth noting the importance of the type of game since, although competitiveness motivates students to improve their performance in activities, it is important that this competitiveness is controlled within a cooperative context, where students compete against themselves and everyone participates in the activity.

According to Vygotsky (1978), *"Play is a changing reality and, above all, a driving force in the child's mental development"* (Soviet psychology .3). Concentrating attention, memorizing, and recalling are done in play consciously, amusingly, and without any difficulty.

In the following table (Table 3), the classification of types of games into competitive and cooperative is observed. In cooperative games, language acquisition is much more effective since the reduction of the affective filter is very considerable by greatly reducing possible anxiety and enhancing self-confidence by belonging to a team in which strengths help and weaknesses are compensated. Likewise, players relate to each other by establishing bonds, in addition to being constantly active since all students are participating at all times.

<b>Competitive Games</b>	<b>Cooperative Games</b>
Only a few children enjoy it	Everyone enjoys it
Only one team or player wins, the others lose	All players feel like winners
Some players are eliminated due to lack of skill	All players' skills are complementary, creating a high level
Distrust and selfishness	Sharing and developing trust in others
Players don't relate to each other and there is a negative opposition towards each other	Players understand there is a sense of unity and share success with others
Eliminated players stop playing and become passive observers	All students participate throughout the game

*Table 3: Classification of Games*

### Affective-humanistic activities

According to Rincón (2014), the objective of affective-humanistic activities is to address topics or ideas that are attractive to students in such a way that they are predisposed to learn naturally, meaning that they have an intrinsic motivation to learn.

In addition to the content, it is essential to adapt it to the age of the student, as this is a determining factor for the proper functioning of the activity.

Moreover, these activities include both activities where the theme is interesting for the student and those where learners express their ideas, feelings, or frustrations, significantly reducing the affective filter and fostering language acquisition.

Among these activities are role-playing games, dramatizations, cooperative projects, and artistic works (use of music, drawing, paintings).

According to Rogers (2003), learning will occur when it becomes meaningful, which happens when the person is involved as a whole, including their affective and cognitive processes. Learning is better promoted as participative, where the student decides, moves their own resources, and takes responsibility for what they will learn. It is also essential to promote an environment of respect, understanding, and support for students; therefore, the teacher should not use stereotypical recipes but act innovatively with authenticity.

Similarly, Segura (2005, p. 163) states that: Listening to the child, making them feel important; respecting their own rhythm without wanting to make them run when they can only walk (...); sharing some feelings with the child and accompanying them in this difficult process of growing up are the basic functions of an educator who wishes to promote the integral development proposed by person-centered education.

Finally, it is worth noting the importance and benefits of using TPR (Total Physical Response), which is characterized by the association between language and movement to create a relaxed atmosphere that facilitates learning. TPR is based on the psychological theory of trace, which implies that "*retention is all the greater the more intense and frequent is the trace or mark left in the mind by a given mnemonic association. Such a trace or mark can be of various natures: oral or even motor (association with a movement or action)*" (Sánchez, 1997: 224).

## **VI. INTERVENTION PROJECT ON SOCIOEMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND AFFECTIVE FILTER**

### **6.1 Context of the Intervention.**

In the following intervention project, a didactic unit is presented in which, through various methods, an attempt will be made to teach the curriculum content according to Royal Decree 157/2022, of March 1, which establishes the organization and minimum teachings of Primary Education. Throughout this unit, the characteristics of the school where it is intended to be developed will be explained. Additionally, the different parts of the project will be summarized, including scheduling, evaluation, contents, objectives, or the skills to be developed.

#### **6.1.1 Centre Information**

The school selected for the intervention project is located in the municipality of Boadilla del Monte, in the province of Madrid. The school consists of two large buildings. The first and smaller one houses the Preschool classes, on a single floor. The larger building, with two floors, contains the Primary Education classes, a library, a computer room equipped with various technological tools, and tables with computers available for student use. On the upper floor, there are two cabinets with tablets and laptops for various teaching activities. On the lower floor, there are two cabinets with tablets.

On this same floor, there is a psychomotor room adapted for all levels. Additionally, there is a Therapeutic Pedagogy classroom and a TEA (Autism Spectrum Disorder) classroom, complying with Order 3319-01/2007, of June 18, for the organization of attention to diversity in educational centers and specific support measures for students with special educational needs. Finally, the school has a gymnasium where, in addition to Physical Education classes, various extracurricular activities are carried out.

Regarding the socioeconomic situation of the families, it is quite homogeneous, with a medium-high purchasing power, and a percentage of foreign students lower than the average, with the vast majority belonging to Latin America, facilitating their integration by eliminating the language barrier.

All core and optional subjects are taught at this school, with classes in English for subjects such as English, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts & Crafts, and Physical Education. Additionally, the school has the assistance of native assistants for two hours a week, which allows for a greater variety of activities.



### 6.1.2 Course Context

The course in which this didactic unit will be carried out is 4th grade of Primary Education, which is the 2nd year of the 2nd cycle of Primary Education. This group is composed of 24 students, 11 boys and 13 girls. As mentioned earlier, they have a medium-high socioeconomic level. This information is relevant because these families will have more facilities to seek external reinforcement for their English level (private tutors, academies). Also, the likelihood that parents are more aware of the importance of English for job-related reasons is much higher. Due to the bilingualism of this school, students study all subjects in English except for Spanish Language, Mathematics, and Music, which gives them the ability to communicate in the second language.

It is worth noting that, in this group, there are two students who require adaptation (one person with hearing impairment and one person with ADHD). The students have a very participatory attitude in both written and oral activities, and except for those who have shyness above average, all students raise their hands to ask questions. Due to the family context and their attitude in class, the students have a high level of English, except for those with adaptations.

It must be highlighted that the high number of students who, despite having a high level in subjects taught in Spanish, have difficulty when the content is explained in English, showing a very large affective filter. The students know the basic vocabulary of the classroom (pencil case, whiteboard, chalks, etc.) as well as the basic vocabulary for informal conversations, asking questions, and talking about their daily lives.

Due to accessibility to listen to music and watch series, as well as the extra reinforcement of some students, the level of pronunciation is quite high; however, the vast majority have difficulty using verbs in the correct tense. Additionally, they have the habit of translating words and sentences when the teacher asks, instead of understanding the context of what is being said.

## 6.2 Didactic Justification

To address both socioemotional development and the affective filter, the theme of "*Climate Change: Causes and Consequences Responsible Consumption*" has been chosen from the 4th-grade curriculum content according to Royal Decree 126/2014, dated February 28, which establishes the basic curriculum of Primary Education. The choice of the topic is based on its current relevance, of which the students are informed and have carried out extracurricular activities at the school and at home through waste recycling or talks.

Likewise, the students will be more motivated to learn content that will allow them to help improve the situation of the planet, feeling proud of the work done in the classroom. This aspect gives the students confidence by knowing the theme of the unit, as well as the knowledge of the possible applications of the content they will learn throughout the didactic unit. The support of the family circle, being a familiar theme, also acts as external support for any doubts that may arise when participating in the projects mentioned below.

Throughout this didactic unit, the students will be organized into groups of four people, according to the methodology of cooperative learning, in which the students will have a specific role when performing the work. Likewise, the students will carry out PBL (project-based learning) activities to significantly reduce the affective filter and encourage participation in group work. Additionally, the proposal will address cross-curricular content with the ICT subject, as students will need to search for information using tablets and laptops, and with Arts & Crafts, as they will have to make crafts with recycled materials.

Finally, the teacher will use the *Scaffolding* technique for the explanation before each session, as well as for teaching the contents themselves. Scaffolding is defined as a teaching technique in the classroom in which instructors deliver lessons in different segments, providing less support as students master new concepts or material. Like scaffolding on a building, this technique is designed to provide students with a framework for learning as they build and strengthen their understanding. When students reach the intended level of understanding or mastery, the teacher can step back and gradually withdraw their support.

### **6.2.1 Competencies and Objectives**

#### Objectives

This didactic unit aims to understand the causes and effects of climate change, as well as to explain the influence of human behavior on the natural environment, identifying sustainable use of natural resources by proposing a series of measures necessary for humanity's sustainable development, specifying their positive effects. The specific objectives of this unit are:

- Understand the causes of climate change and its effects on society.
- Establish a relationship between the different causes and the possible effects depending on the situation and the environment.
- Develop the ability to synthesize texts to obtain necessary information.
- Use ICT correctly to search for information from different online sources and create explanatory slides.
- Evaluate the different information obtained regarding climate change to consider different perspectives and actions for the problem.
- Create flashcards or informative sheets through personalized illustrations.
- Create objects with utility for daily use from recycled materials.

#### Key Competencies

Key competencies are defined as essential performances for the student to progress in their education successfully, facing global and local challenges. These competencies are part of the curriculum:

- **Linguistic Communication Competence:** Students should be able to interact in written or oral form to express various concepts correctly.
- **Multilingual Competence:** This competence involves the ability to use different languages appropriately and effectively, expressing ideas, facts, and feelings while respecting language rules and using appropriate vocabulary.
- **Scientific Competence:** Students should understand and explain the natural and social environment, using their knowledge and necessary experimentation to obtain them.
- **Digital Competence:** This competence involves the safe, healthy, sustainable, critical, and responsible use of digital technologies for learning and for participation in society and is developed through different areas and subjects with a cross-cutting approach.
- **Social and Learning-to-Learn Competence:** This competence develops the ability to express empathy in an integrative context, working in groups to achieve a common goal while tolerating and expressing different points of view. Additionally, students are expected to be aware of the different didactic strategies they prefer.
- **Citizenship Competence:** This competence refers to a person's ability to participate effectively and constructively in society. This encompasses a variety of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that allow them to contribute to the common good and exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens.
- **Entrepreneurial Competence:** Entrepreneurial competence in primary education involves developing skills, attitudes, and knowledge that enable students to identify opportunities, take initiative, and carry out projects with creativity and responsibility.

### 6.2.2 Contents

The contents addressed in this didactic unit mainly focus on the concept of climate change and human pollution as stated in Royal Decree 126/2014, dated February 28, which establishes the basic curriculum of Primary Education. This unit belongs to Block 2 entitled: "The world we live in." The title of this unit is "Climate Change: Causes and Consequences Responsible Consumption." The contents covered in this unit are:

- Introduction to climate change and its causes.
- Understanding Earth's climate system (atmosphere, precipitation, CO<sub>2</sub>).
- Biodiversity and its relationship with climate.
- Renewable and non-renewable energies.
- Adaptations to climate change.

This unit offers a comprehensive approach to teaching climate change in primary education, integrating theory with practical activities. By fostering critical thinking and environmental awareness, it empowers students to become active participants in addressing climate challenges and promoting sustainability.

### 6.2.3 Timing

The sessions will be 50 minutes long. Activities 1, 2, 3, 4 will be developed over one session each, and each part of the activity will last 15 minutes to promote attention. Activity 5 will last for 5 sessions, with one dedicated to establishing roles in the team and choosing the topic. Activity 6 will last for 2 sessions, however, if the teacher deems it necessary.

## 6.3 Description of Activities

### Activity 1: Introduction and Brainstorming

Part 1 (15 minutes): The teacher will briefly explain the theme of the unit by asking students about their prior knowledge, correcting any incorrect statements.

Part 2 (15 minutes): The teacher will present the different problems caused by climate change, initiating a brainstorming discussion in which students contribute their ideas on how to solve them, respecting speaking turns and exchanging ideas.

Part 3 (10 minutes): Students will watch an explanatory video covering the main topics of the unit. It is advisable to find a video or documentary with subtitles, especially if there are any students with hearing impairments.

### Activity 2: Flashcards

Part 1 (15 minutes): In this part, the teacher will briefly explain renewable and non-renewable energies, emphasizing the benefits of renewables and the importance of their development, as well as the optimization of their operation (solar panels in sunny locations, wind energy in windy locations).

Part 2 (30 minutes): Students will create flashcards in pairs about a type of energy, including an illustration on one side and the name with a brief description on the other. The division of work will be done by the students themselves. Illustrations can be done through drawings or with digital programs (Canva, etc.). The flashcards will remain in the classroom for the teacher to use at the beginning of each class.

### Activity 3: Kahoot

This activity will occupy the entire session. During this activity, the teacher will create a Kahoot with 30-35 questions on the theme of renewable and non-renewable energies. The purpose of this activity is to review previous content dynamically and playfully. While students enjoy these activities and develop healthy competitiveness, it is important to emphasize that the scoring is individual to avoid interrupting classes to compare scores, as well as taking the necessary time to explain each answer in case of errors.

#### Activity 4: 3 Rs Debate

Part 1 (10 minutes): During the first part, the teacher will explain with illustrations the differences between the 3 Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). Subsequently, the class will be divided into groups of 4 people, maintaining cooperative method groups if any.

Part 2 (15 minutes): Students will draw three columns, one for each R, and begin to write examples of situations in which they are used, or the objects that will be used in each part.

Example: We reduce plastic by using metal bottles, recycle them by throwing them into the yellow container, and can reuse them to make a homemade pot.

Part 3 (20 minutes): During the final part, the different groups will present their ideas while the listening groups will write their personal feedback to provide constructive criticism after each group's presentation.

#### Activity 5: Energy and Pollution Project

This activity will last for 5 sessions in which students will form groups of 4 people. Each group will be given two tablets or laptops to search for information. In a draw in the first session, topics will be assigned to each group. These topics include renewable sources, non-renewable sources, and forms of pollution. The groups can choose the topic by internal vote, and in case two or more groups coincide, the teacher will draw lots.

The purpose of the project is to present all the information they find about their energy source, specifying its type, location, and usefulness, as well as any additional information they can find. Groups selecting pollution forms must establish measures to stop or eradicate them (car pollution and the use of electric cars). Although students have autonomy, the teacher will supervise all groups to ensure they progress appropriately. At the end of the sessions, the groups will present their work either in poster format or in a slideshow presentation.

#### Activity 6: Giving New Life to Objects

This activity will last for 2 sessions, with the option of using 3 if the teacher deems it necessary. In this activity, students will bring materials from their homes such as used plastic bottles, cardboard, or similar items to try to give them a new life. They can use digital media to search for ways to repurpose the item they have brought.

This activity offers more than just a lesson in repurposing household items to reduce carbon footprints. It's a creative project that gives students the freedom to express themselves without constraints. They can explore their ideas in any way they choose all while understanding the positive impact they're making on the planet. It's about empowering them to take ownership of their actions and encouraging them to think innovatively about sustainability. In doing so, they not only learn about environmental stewardship but also develop critical thinking skills and a deeper sense of resourcefulness. This activity fosters a holistic understanding of sustainability while nurturing students' creativity and self-awareness.

### 6.3.1 Evaluation

The assessment criteria outlined for this unit encompass several key areas:

- Articulating the impact of human actions on the natural environment, delineating the sustainable utilization of natural resources by proposing requisite measures for humanity's sustainable development, and elucidating their positive repercussions.
- Elaborating on the repercussions of human activities on climate and climate change.
- Demonstrating proficiency in information retrieval and synthesis, effectively extracting pertinent data.
- Assessing the creativity and utility of the materials generated.
- Facilitating debates, fostering active listening, and encouraging idea generation on pertinent topics.

The unit's evaluation will be segmented into the following components:

- Class assignments and participation (Activities 1, 2, 4): These activities will contribute 40% towards the overall grade, with ongoing adjustments made by the teacher as the unit progresses.
- Kahoot Quiz (Activity 3): While this activity will not be formally graded, the teacher will take note of results, particularly focusing on questions with higher error rates to reinforce understanding in subsequent sessions.
- Energy Project (Activity 5): This project will constitute 40% of the total grade, assessing the research process, quality of presentation materials such as slides and posters, and the effectiveness of their delivery.
- Repurposing Objects (Activity 6): Accounting for 20% of the grade, this activity evaluates students' creativity and the practicality of the objects they create from recycled materials.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Throughout this work, we have delved into the socioemotional development of students from infancy to the completion of Primary Education. Additionally, we have explored the various aspects of Krashen's Affective Filter, culminating in the development of a classroom intervention that integrates both concepts. The aim has been to understand the fundamental principles of these concepts and establish connections between them. From this exploration, several conclusions have emerged.

It is paramount to underscore the significance of socioemotional development in both the personal and academic spheres of students' lives. Understanding the origins of socioemotional development helps us grasp crucial aspects of students, including their self-perception, coping mechanisms, self-confidence, and social skills. This understanding empowers teachers to cultivate trusting relationships with students, bolstering their weaknesses and nurturing their cognitive growth. Consequently, this process significantly reduces the affective filter, breaking down emotional barriers and fostering an optimal environment for language acquisition.

Key highlights from this work include the necessity of comprehending students' social and emotional dimensions to not only enhance their academic performance, language acquisition, and content understanding, but also to elevate their cognitive development, adeptly address challenges, effectively motivate them, and ultimately establish a classroom where students feel confident, content, and motivated, viewing the teacher as a facilitator rather than an authoritarian figure.

The importance of mitigating the affective filter during lessons cannot be overstated, as fostering an anxiety-free atmosphere where students feel secure in their learning endeavors dispels feelings of apprehension, fear of failure, or embarrassment. To achieve this, teachers must carefully select engaging topics, deliver content in dynamic ways, emphasize the value of participation in resolving queries, and instill in students the confidence to engage in class activities without fear of making mistakes. Additionally, clear and concise session objectives aid students in understanding their tasks, boosting self-assurance and optimizing their reception of instructional input.

Furthermore, sustaining students' attention in second language acquisition through innovative methodologies, such as leveraging technology, gamification, and cooperative learning, is crucial. These approaches allow students to internalize language skills unconsciously within contextual frameworks. Fostering collaboration among students not only enhances their social skills and relationships but also instills a sense of responsibility and broadens their perspectives, enriching their social development and diminishing the affective filter while amplifying their interest in learning.

Lastly, it is crucial to emphasize the importance of delivering meaningful content to students, fostering intrinsic motivation and raising awareness of the practical applications of the language they are learning across academic, professional, and personal contexts. Particularly in the case of English, students should recognize its status as the global lingua franca and grasp its profound implications in diverse settings.

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## IX. ANEXO

### Anexo 1

#### **UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL ESCUELA DE LITERATURA Y CIENCIAS DEL LENGUAJE**

##### **Investigación. El filtro afectivo**

FECHA: \_\_\_\_\_ UNIVERSIDAD: \_\_\_\_\_

CARRERA: \_\_\_\_\_ NIVEL: \_\_\_\_\_

EDAD: \_\_\_\_\_ SEXO: \_\_\_\_\_

El siguiente cuestionario será aplicado a estudiantes del Bachillerato en la Enseñanza de una Segunda Lengua. Por lo tanto, las preguntas formuladas se relacionan con el entorno académico, las técnicas metodológicas y el desarrollo de una clase de idiomas. Le agradecemos que las respuestas sean claras y precisas.

1. ¿Por qué la interacción profesor y estudiante es tan relevante en el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera?
2. ¿Puede el entorno de enseñanza y aprendizaje afectar negativamente la adquisición de conocimiento de una lengua extranjera?
3. ¿Cómo las estrategias metodológicas o aspectos de la personalidad de un profesor pueden afectar mi proceso de aprendizaje, negativa o positivamente?
4. ¿Ha experimentado una situación negativa en la clase que haya afectado su proceso de aprendizaje en la cual usted haya sido participe u alguno de sus compañeros? Menciónela.
5. ¿Cómo puede el entorno en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje mejorar para permitir el desarrollo de las habilidades de aprendizaje y desarrollo lingüístico del estudiante? Enumere algunos factores que ayuden a esto.
6. ¿El género del profesor podría influir en su proceso de aprendizaje, positiva o negativamente? Explique.