

The Relevance of the U-Shaped Learning Model to the Acquisition of the Difference between C'est and Il Est in the English Learners of French Context

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Abstract : A U-shaped learning curve entails a three-step process: a good performance followed by a bad performance followed by a good performance again. U-shaped curves have been observed not only in language acquisition but also in various fields such as temperature face recognition object permanence to name a few. Building on previous studies of the curve child language acquisition and Second Language Acquisition this empirical study seeks to investigate the relevance of the U-shaped learning model to the acquisition of the difference between cest and il est in the English Learners of French context. The present study was developed to assess whether older learners of French in the ELF context follow the same acquisition pattern. The empirical study was conducted on 15 English learners of French which lasted six weeks. Compositions and questionnaires were collected from each subject at three time intervals (after one week after three weeks after six weeks) after which students work were graded as being either correct or incorrect. The data indicates that there is evidence of a U-shaped learning curve in the acquisition of cest and il est and students did follow the same acquisition pattern as children in regards to rote-learned terms and subject clitics. This paper also discusses the need to introduce modules on U-shaped learning curve in teaching curriculum as many teachers are unaware of the trajectory learners undertake while acquiring core components in grammar. In addition this study also addresses the need to conduct more research on the acquisition of rote-learned terms and subject clitics in SLA.

Keywords : child language acquisition, rote-learning, subject clitics, u-shaped learning model

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