Instructed Second Language Learning

A Model for the Study of Classroom Teaching

Presage Variables

Process Variables

Context Variables

Product Variables

A Model for the Study of Classroom Teaching: Presage Variables

- Teacher’s formative experiences
  - Social class
  - Age
  - Gender

- Teacher training experiences
  - College attended
  - Features of program
  - Practice teaching experiences
A Model for the Study of Classroom Teaching: Presage Variables

- Teaching skills
- Intelligence
- Motivation
- Personality

A Model for the Study of Classroom Teaching: Context Variables

- Student formative experiences
  - Social class
  - Age
  - Gender
- Student properties
  - Ability
  - Knowledge
  - Attitudes

A Model for the Study of Classroom Teaching: Process Variables

- School and community contexts
  - Climate
  - Ethic composition of the community
  - Bussing
  - School size
- Classroom contexts
  - Class size
  - Textbooks
  - Instructional technology

A Model for the Study of Classroom Teaching: Product Variables

- Immediate student growth
  - Learning subject matter
  - Attitudes toward the subject
  - Growth of other skills
- Long term effects on students
  - Adult personality
  - Professional or occupational skills
Inside the Black Box

Presage Variables

Process Variables

Product Variables

Context Variables

Classroom Discourse

Does Classroom Instruction Make a Difference?

This complex question can be broken into 4 simpler questions.

1. Accuracy orders or developmental sequences?
2. Acquisition processes?
3. The rate of acquisition?
4. The level of ultimate L2 attainment?

Instructed Second Language Learning

DOES CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Classroom Instruction and Developmental Sequences

- Krashen argues that classroom learning shows up only on certain “monitorable” tasks.
- Classroom learning is not useful for communicative tasks.
- Common developmental sequences are a reflection of language universals.

Classroom Instruction and Developmental Sequences

- Krashen’s conclusion is ...

- Most of a second language cannot be taught in a form-focused classroom. It must be acquired.
Classroom Instruction and Developmental Sequences

- Manfred Pienemann studied the acquisition of German as a second language (GSL) by Gastarbeiter from Italy, Spain, and Turkey.
- He found a developmental sequence in the acquisition of GSL word order rules.

Developmental Sequence of GSL Word Order Rules

- Stage X: Canonical word order (SVO)
  - *die kinder spielen mit ball*
  - *the children play with the ball*
  - S V O

- Stage X + 1: Adverb pre-posing
  - *da kinder spielen*
  - *there children play*
  - ADV S V

- Stage X + 2: Verb separation
  - *alle kinder muss die pause machen*
  - *all children must the break have*
  - S MOD O V

- Stage X + 3: Inversion
  - *dann hat sie wieder die knoch gebringt*
  - *then has she again the bone brought*
  - ADV AUX S O V

- Stage X + 4: Verb → End
  - *er sagte dass er nach hause kommt*
  - *he said that he home came*
  - S V [COMP S ADV V]
Developmental Sequence of GSL Word Order Rules

- Stage X: Canonical word order
- Stage X + 1: Adverb pre-posing
- Stage X + 2: Verb separation
- Stage X + 3: Inversion
- Stage X + 4: Verb → End

Pienemann’s Teachability/Learnability Hypothesis

- Learners can only learn the next stage in the developmental sequence.
- If they are at stage N, they can only learn N + 1.
- If they are taught an N + 3 structure, they cannot learn it.
- They can only learn N + 1.
- This is a testable version of Krashen’s i + 1 hypothesis.

Classroom Instruction and Acquisition Processes

- Teresa Pica compared the acquisition of English morphemes by three groups of Spanish ESL learners.
  - Adults at EFL schools in Mexico City
  - Immigrants in Philadelphia with very little or no ESL instruction
  - ESL students at the University of Pennsylvania’s EPFS

Classroom Instruction and Acquisition Processes

- Instruction only
  - Adults at EFL schools in Mexico City
- Naturalistic learners
  - Immigrants in Philadelphia with very little or no ESL instruction
- Mixed learning group
  - ESL students at the University of Pennsylvania’s English Program for Foreign Students

Classroom Instruction and Acquisition Processes

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<th>Natural</th>
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Classroom Instruction and Acquisition Processes

- Accuracy was calculated by the percentage of suppliance of a morpheme in an obligatory context.
- Pica found a high degree of correlation among the accuracy orders of the 8 morphemes in all three groups.
- But different groups made different types of errors. This was revealed by a target-like use analysis.
Error Types for Progressive -ing

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Error Types for Plural -s

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Classroom Instruction and Acquisition Processes

Pica found different groups made different types of errors.
- The naturalistic group tended to omit -s and -ing.
- The instructed group oversupplied -s and -ing.
- The mixed group pidginized early but shook it off later.

Pica concluded ...
- Differing conditions of exposure to the L2 appear to affect the hypotheses that learners create about the target language, and also learners’ strategies for using the target language.

Pica concluded ...
- Similarities across the three learner types support the idea that a great deal of second language acquisition depends on the learner, and not on environmental or contextual factors.

Pica concluded ...
- Instruction affects the production and performance of second language learners by ...
  - Triggering oversupply of grammatical morphology, and
  - Inhibiting (but not preventing altogether) the use of ungrammatical constructions found in pidgins, even if these forms are communicatively effective.
Second language instruction does make a difference

- Doughty (1991) used a computer to teach English relative clauses to three groups of ESL learners.
  - MOG (a meaning-oriented group, which received help on the meaning of relative clauses)
  - ROG (a rule-oriented group, which received help on the grammar of relative clauses)
  - A control group

SKIM

- Students are instructed to skim for overall content. Computer guidance is provided by highlighting.

READ

- Students are instructed to read the entire passage and to attempt to understand most of it. The two experimental groups are given assistance in comprehension. The control group is just given time to read.

SCAN

- Students are instructed to study some scanning questions. The passage is then presented again, and the students must answer the questions.
RECALL

- Students are instructed to write a summary of the passage in their L1.

How was learning measured?

- Pre-test and post-test of English relative clauses:
  - The people who live in Philadelphia are busy.
  - The people who we know live in Philadelphia.
  - The people who I gave the tickets to live in Philadelphia.
  - The people who you talked with live in Philadelphia.
  - I know the people whose name is Taylor.

Second language instruction does make a difference

- Doughty demonstrated the importance of drawing learners’ attention to the target of instruction.
- Both types of instruction (meaning oriented and rule-oriented) were effective, and were more effective than exposure only.

Il nuovo vicino

- **Giacomo:** Mi scusi, signora. Sono un suo nuovo vicino. Sono appena arrivato in questo quartiere. Mi chiamo Giacomo.
- **Signora:** Si, che cosa vuole?
Il nuovo vicino

○ Giacomo:
Mi dica, c'è un supermercato vicino?

○ Signora:
Sì, ce n'è uno in via delle pine.

○ Giacomo:
Va bene. E c'è una lavanderia?

○ Signora:
E poi là c'è anche un barbiere.

○ Mi scusi, signora. Ho appena arrivato in questo quartiere. Mi dispiace di averla disturbata.

○ Signora:
Beh ... credo che ce ne sia una davanti al supermercato.

○ Giacomo:
Grazie, signora.

○ Sì, che cosa vuole?

○ Signora:
E poi là c'è anche un barbiere.

Ristorante Rigoletto

○ Zuppe e Minestre
- Zuppe di Verdure
- Zuppa di Cipolle

○ Pasta
- Spaghetti alla Bolognese
- Spaghetti al pomodoro

○ Pietanze
- Pollo ai Ferri
- Pizza alla Margherita

○ Pesce
- Gamberoni ai Ferri
- Garupa alla Griglia
So getting learners to focus on forms is good, but …

Williams and Evans (1998) asked …

- Which forms should learners focus on?
- How best to focus learners’ attention?

Which forms should learners focus on?

- Similar forms that learners are likely to misinterpret, for example present and past participles used as adjectives:
  - This club is interesting.
  - I am interested in that guy.

Which forms should learners focus on?

- Forms that are infrequent in the input, for example the passive:
  - The semester ends on May 15. All grades must be sent to students within two weeks of the end of the semester.
How best to focus learners' attention?

I Explicit Instruction and feedback on grammatical rules

F A Flood of positive evidence but no explicit rules

Gain for adjectives

Gain for passives

Cathy Doughty & Jessica Williams