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: Process Variables

- Teaching skills
- Intelligence
- Motivation
- Personality

A Model for the Study of Classroom Teaching: Product Variables

- A model for the study of classroom teaching
- Classroom discourse
- Does classroom instruction make a difference?
- Focus on form
A Model for the Study of Classroom Teaching

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

**Context Variables**
- School and community contexts
  - Climate
  - Ethnic composition of the community
  - Bussing
  - School size
- Classroom contexts
  - Class size
  - Textbooks
  - Instructional technology

**Process Variables**

**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
Inside the Black Box

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?

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 mim 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]
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

- 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.

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.

Classroom Instruction and Acquisition Processes

- 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.

Classroom Instruction and Acquisition Processes

- 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.

Classroom Instruction and Acquisition Processes

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