



HF HANDONG
UNIT WIN
FELLOWSHIP

Second Language Acquisition

Lecture 10: Instructed Second Language Learning

Lecturer: Maria Dewi Rosari, M.Pd.
Jakarta International University

INTRODUCTION

AIM OF THE COURSE

- understand the underlying concepts of SLA
- explain the theory of SLA
- identify the roles of first, second, and third languages to one's language learning and development
- explain the various approaches to language teaching by considering diverse type of students
- analyze the differences method for SLA research
- formulate the roles of input, process, and output related to SLA
- distinguish the different influence of various factors to someone's language acquisition and or learning journey

WEEK 10 – LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Introduction
2. Classroom Language
3. Teachability/Learnability
4. Focus on Form
5. Uniqueness of Instruction
6. Effectiveness of Instruction

The background is a white canvas decorated with various blue watercolor elements. There are several large, soft-edged blue washes in shades of light and medium blue. Interspersed among these are numerous small, dark blue dots and splatters of varying sizes. A prominent feature is a series of parallel, slightly curved blue lines that resemble a brushstroke or a stylized object, located in the upper right quadrant. The overall aesthetic is clean, artistic, and modern.

01

Introduction

Introduction

- This is not to say that differences do not exist, for clearly they do.
- The most obvious being **differences** in the **quantity and quality of input**.
- **For learners in a foreign language setting**—that is, those learning another language in their home environment—there is not only **limited input**, but a large part of the input comes from **classmates** whose **knowledge** of the foreign language is **restricted**.
- Interactional opportunities are also severely restricted in a foreign language environment.
- In this lecture then, our concern is with those opportunities that can be and are shaped by the classroom context.

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02 Classroom Language

Classroom Language

- One of the main differentiating factors between classroom learning and so-called naturalistic learning is **the language available from which learners can come to understand the workings of the L2 and formulate hypotheses.**
- In **language classrooms**, the **language** addressed to learners may be somewhat **modified.**
- Gaies (1979) presented data from eight teacher trainees and their speech to (a) each other and (b) four groups of ESL students at four proficiency levels.

Classroom Language

Level	Words per T-unit	Ratio of clauses to T-units	Words per Clause
Beginner	4.30	1.02	4.20
Upper beginner	5.75	1.14	5.04
Intermediate	6.45	1.24	5.18
Advanced	8.26	1.38	5.98
Baseline	10.97	1.60	6.84

Source: From "Linguistic input in first and second language learning" by S. Gaies, 1979. In F. Eckman and A. Hastings (Eds.), *Studies in First and Second Language Acquisition* (p. 190).

- As can be seen, in all cases there is a progression from lesser to greater syntactic complexity as a function of proficiency level.
- In fact, the proficiency level is a statistically significant predictor of the syntactic complexity of these teachers' speech.

Classroom Language

- In foreign language instruction, very often the only language that learners are exposed to is the one in the classroom. There are three sources of input:



- We saw earlier that **teacher talk can be limited**.
- It is clear that learner talk to **other learners is also limited** and often **filled with errors**.
- To what extent these **errors are picked up or ignored in the classroom is unclear**.

- Perhaps surprisingly, there is evidence that **learners do not pick up errors from one another**.
- For example, Gass and Varonis (1989) reported data from 2 NNSs of English (different language backgrounds).



NNS1



NNS 2

Classroom Language



NNS1



NNS 2

- The learners were performing a classroom task in which they had to go out onto the **streets** of Ann Arbor, Michigan (**with a tape recorder**) and **ask people for directions** to the train station.
- The tape recorder was left on during the entire time they were engaged in the task, including the time between stopping passersby for directions.
- They alternated stopping strangers to ask for directions.
- Following is a list of the questions they asked:

Classroom Language



Can you tell me where is the train station?



Can you tell me where the train station is?



Can you tell me where is the train station?



Can you tell me where the train station is?



Can you tell me where is the train station?



Can you tell me where the train station is?



Can you tell me **where the train station is?**



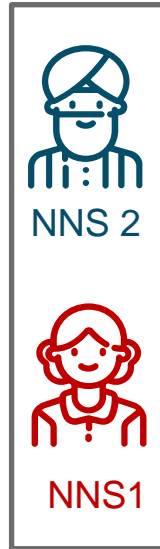
Can you tell me where the train station is?



Can you tell me **where the train station is?**

Classroom Language

- **Nowhere in the conversation** between requests for directions did the students **discuss the discrepancy** in their versions of indirect questions.
- NNS1 made an unprompted change in the form of her utterance from the incorrect **Can you tell me where is the train station?** to the correct **Can you tell me where the train station is?**, whereas **NNS2 made no change**.
- The change was **in the direction of the target language** and not from a correct form to an incorrect form.



- Learners may **know when they are right** and may also know **when they are wrong** or at least have a sense that they are not sure.
- When learners internalize a new form, **they may use the positive evidence** they hear/read to strengthen that knowledge.
- That is, they may receive confirmatory evidence for their correct hypotheses.
- When a hypothesis is not correct, there is no confirmatory evidence and the knowledge is loosely represented, resulting in uncertainty.

Classroom Language

- However, it is not always the case that learner forms can serve as “good” input for other learners.
- Two learners involved in the study of Swan and Lapkin (1998) shows how without teacher intervention, the two participants will either walk away uncertain about the correct form or will learn something incorrect in French;
- that is, they will practice and automatize the interlanguage, perhaps far from the TL norms.

Classroom Language



Kim



Rick

- Kim : [elle voit un] gars.
[She sees a] guy
- Rick :gars, qui s'en va a l'ecole.
...guy who is going to school.
- Kim : Qui marche vers l'ecole....marche.
Who is walking towards school,
walking.

- Both marcher (“walk”) and s’en aller (“walk”) exist in French, but in this context marcher is incorrect.
- The pair opts for the incorrect form probably because marcher more closely resembles English usage and it is suggested by Kim, the one who in general is seen as having greater expertise in French.
- Thus, even though the classroom is a place where conversational interaction can often provide opportunities for learning, **an important caveat is in order—teacher intervention is often essential.**

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03

Teachability / Learnability

Teachability / Learnability

- There has been an emphasis on acquisition orders → the idea that acquisition takes place in some sort of natural order.
- Krashen stated this as part of the entire Monitor Model as the Natural Order Hypothesis, which claims that elements of language (or language rules) are acquired in a predictable order.
- The order is the same regardless of whether or not instruction is involved.
- The “natural order” was determined by a synthesis of the results of the morpheme order studies and is a result of the acquired system, without interference from the learned system.
- The implication of acquisition order is that pedagogical intervention cannot alter (or can alter in only a trivial manner) natural acquisition orders.
- The most explicit statement of this comes from work originally involving German as a second language.

Teachability / Learnability

Pienemann (1984, 1989)

- Argued → stages in this developmental sequence cannot be skipped even as a result of instruction.
- Investigated → German word-order development among 10 Italian children ranging in age from 7 - 9.

- They all had two weeks of instruction on a particular stage.
- Some were at the immediately preceding stage and others were at a much earlier stage.
- Only the former group learned the instructional target, suggesting that the other children could not learn because they were not developmentally ready.

Teachability / Learnability

Mackey (1995, 1999)

- Studied → the extent to which conversational interaction could alter the developmental progression of the acquisition of questions.

- There was a positive relationship between interaction and development: *learners who were involved in structure-focused interaction moved along a developmental path more rapidly than learners who did not.*
- Interaction was *able to “step up the pace” of development*, but was *not able to push learners beyond a developmental stage.*
- In other words, developmental stages could not be skipped.

Teachability / Learnability

- Previously, we discussed that the acquisition of relative clauses show that there is a predictable order of acquisition.
- Considering the Accessibility Hierarchy (AH) from the point of view of learnability, *if difficulty is at the base of this universal, we would expect learners to learn to relativize according to the ordering of the AH positions.*

- Yet another prediction comes in the form of learners' capacities to generalize.
- What would happen if, let's say, through instruction, a learner were to come to learn a more difficult relative clause position before learning an easier one.
- Would knowledge of that more difficult relative clause construction generalize to knowledge of the easier relative clause positions?
- This would not be unexpected because, in some sense, knowledge of a more difficult structure should incorporate knowledge of a related easier structure.

Teachability / Learnability

Gass (1982) &
Eckman, Bell, and Nelson (1988)

- Supported the prediction on the previous slide.
- In the study → 2 groups of L2 learners were given specific instruction on relative clauses.
- **Group 1** → instructed on subject and direct object relatives (*higher*)
- **Group 2** → instructed on preposition relatives only. (*lower*)
- After the period of instruction, both groups were **tested on relative clause types**.

- The group that had received subject and direct object instruction only performed well on those two relative clause types, but not on others,
- whereas the second group performed well not only on their instructed relative clauses (object of preposition), but also on the relative clauses higher on the accessibility hierarchy—that is, subject and direct object relative clauses—but not lower.

Teachability / Learnability

- Those studies suggest that:
- *Learners' maximum generalization occurs from more marked (or difficult, in the terminology used here) structures to the less marked ones.*
- *Generalization from less difficult to more difficult does not appear to occur*

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04

Focus on Form

Focus on Form

Krashen's characterization of the Input Hypothesis:

- What learners needed (at least at the early stages): **INPUT**
- What learners find not necessary:

EMPHASIS (FOR EXAMPLE EXPLICIT RULE PRESENTATION, NEGATIVE FEEDBACK)

Focus on Form

- Then it becomes clear that **more input was needed**, such as interaction and output.
- Norris and Ortega (2000) → argued that **one needs an explicit focus on language** to facilitate acquisition.
- This has led researchers to consider directly **the effects of language focus in instruction**.

- Long (1991) distinguished between focus on *form* and focus on *forms*.

● **Focus on *form***
a need for meaning-focused activity into which an attention to form is embedded.

● **Focus on *forms***
the main organizing principle for language classrooms was the accumulation of individual language items (e.g., plural endings, passives).

Focus on Form

About focus on form:



Long (1991)

It overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication.



Smith (1991)

It refers to as enhanced input; that is, input that can be enhanced by an external source (e.g., a teacher) or an internal source (learners relying on their own resources).

Focus on Form



About focus on form: **William (1999)**

- investigated 8 classroom learners at different levels of proficiency.
 - found numerous examples of learner-generated attention to form, as well as considerable variation.
 - The results → learners at low levels of proficiency do not often spontaneously attend to language form.
-
- This is not surprising given the demands necessary just to maintain communication in an L2, particularly when knowledge of the L2 is scant.
 - Williams also found that when there is learner-generated attention to form, the attention is generally given to words rather than to other linguistic features.

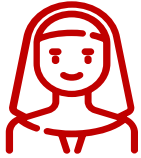
Focus on Form

- Learner-generated attention to form may not always come naturally and, clearly, may require some pedagogical training.
- Take a look at the example on the next page coming from a classroom context in which a teacher, as part of the curriculum, has assigned what she calls “interaction logs” to students.

Interaction log:

- train students to think about their language use
- notice the gap between their L2 language use and the language use of native or fluent speakers of the L2.
- provide a means for learners to be detectives in the sense that they are responsible for gathering their own language data, analyzing evidence, and making and testing hypotheses.
- The logs are language diaries in which students write down what fluent speakers say, how they say it, in what situations and with whom, and how NSs react when a learner says something.

Focus on Form



“to help you to notice how you are using language and how it may be different from how native speakers use language.”

She provides numerous examples of how students can interact, from the very simple task of asking for directions to making small talk with someone at the grocery store.

- An advantage of interaction logs is that they allow learners to analyze their own language in a format that goes beyond the ephemeral speech signal.
- Learners can record their own speech (in writing) and save it until a time when they can appropriately analyze it.

The following examples show how two learners used interaction logs to learn how to analyze their own interaction:

Focus on Form

Example 1 – Interaction Log

I was talking about the bicycle with a secretary woman in the computer lab. When she said she bought her son Trumpet the day before and being a mother need to spend some money on the children's item, I wanted to "share the responsibility in communication." So I asked whether he liked it or not. She said "yes right now at least, but I'm not sure one month later," then she talked about other instrument she'd already bought for her son. Then I replied "Yes, really. I bought a bicycle for my son a week ago. The bike is expensive than I thought, partly because it has Star Wars decoration on." Then she asked me, "Did you? What kind of bike? The one with tri... nee... ll?" I couldn't catch her. It's a perfect time to use "manner of asking," because I understood rest of her talk except the last part.

At that moment, I could guess it might be one part of bike, "I'm sorry, Deb, Did you say tranee... l? What's that?" I just imitated her sound. Then with some gesture she explained, training... eel! The wheels to train the for riding 2 big wheels." Actually I didn't catch her pronunciation at that point, because I have a difficult in listening "W" sound. However, I can understand what's it. "Oh, Training Wheel! O.K... I didn't know the name. It's training wheel. I thought it might be "assisting wheels" or "supporting wheels."

Focus on Form

Example 2 – Interaction Log

Last Friday, in the communication class, we talked about the interaction logs, one of the classmates mentioned when she went to the supermarket, the cashier asked her if she wanted to drive out or not. So I learned that phrase from her. Last Sunday, when I went to the supermarket, I was ready to hear that again and I was so excited about it. Because most of time, I was so nervous when the cashier asked me some questions and they all spoke quickly. But not this time, finally, after the cashier packed all my stuff into the plastic bag, he asked “Do you want to drive ?” “No, thanks.” I said. But I noticed he seemed to say some word instead of “out”. The last word sounded like “off” or “up” or I was wrong. But I checked it up in the dictionary, “drive out” has a different meaning.

Focus on Form

The carryover from the metalinguistic sensitization of the interaction logs into the classroom can be seen in the following example:

T = Teacher; S = Student

S: He finally success.

T: What?

S: He finally succeed.

T: Succeeds.

S: Yes.

Focus on Form

- Even though the student does not appreciate the full force of the teacher's indirect question, he understands that she is making a correction of form (rather than just indicating that she does not understand, which might yield merely a repetition of the early utterance), and he modifies his original utterance accordingly.

- Whether his yes indicates anything more than closure to the exchange is, of course, unclear.
- This example (as well as the examples from the interaction logs themselves) shows that metalinguistic training in focusing on form can result in sensitivity to grammatical form rather than just to lexical form, as occurs in most instances.

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05 Uniqueness of Instruction

Uniqueness of Instruction

- Instruction can have its unique repercussions.
- In this section, we present two instances where the instruction (or lack thereof) may have produced unique results.
- Pavesi (1986) specifically compared naturalistic versus instructed learners in terms of their acquisition of relative clauses.
- All learners were Italian speakers learning English.

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Instructed learners

- high-school students (aged 14-18)
- had studied English for four years on average.
- had had virtually no informal exposure to English.
- grammar-based instruction only
- had had substantial written input.

vs

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Naturalistic Learner

- living in Edinburgh with menial-type jobs (e.g. waiters)
- Ranging in age from 19 - 50
- Having lived in the UK for an average of 6 years
- Informal exposure to English
- little, if any, formal instruction

Uniqueness of Instruction

The results:

- ...that learning proceeds from the unmarked (e.g., subject relative clause) to the marked structure (e.g., object of comparative relative clause).

- The context of learning did not affect this acquisition order.

- However, a difference was noted in the number of marked relative clause types used, with the formal group using more.
- In addition, the **informal groups used a greater number of noun copies** (*Number five is the boy who the dog is biting the boy*) than the formal group, whereas the **formal group used more pronoun copies** (*Number five is the boy who the dog is biting him*).

Uniqueness of Instruction

- A second example of instructional uniqueness comes from work by Lightbown (1983).
- She noted that French learners of English tended to make a large number of overuse errors.
- In that instance children exposed to -ing (progressive) associated that form with the present tense in French and thereby overextended its appropriate use.
- The overuse continued even when there was little exposure to the form in the input.

Uniqueness of Instruction

- With regard to pragmatics, suggest that without instruction pragmatic knowledge will be difficult.
- Specifically, they claim that L2 pragmatics can be taught and that, in fact, instructional intervention is better than no instruction.
- In terms of explicitness, it is claimed that explicit instruction coupled with opportunities for practice provide the best chance for success.
- It is reported that report on pragmatic studies in a study-abroad context and find that appropriate pragmatic behaviour is not always acquired just by living abroad.
- This leads to the suggestion that instruction coupled with a study-abroad experience provides the optimal condition for pragmatics learning.

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Effectiveness of Instruction

Effectiveness of Instruction

- Understanding the effectiveness of instruction entails **an analysis of the type of instruction.**
- For example, *is it explicit, implicit? Is there a focus on meaning? A focus on form, or even a focus on forms?*
- It is said that instructed SLA found that **explicit focus is more effective than implicit focus** and that **a focus on form is more effective than a focus on forms.**
- As with many areas of SLA research, the results are not always clear cut.
- DeKeyser (1995) & de Graaf (1997) → found positive effects for explicit rule presentation.
- Later study → explicit rule presentation was beneficial when it was accompanied by two other important ingredients: **input and practice.**

Effectiveness of Instruction

- Van Patten & Oikkenon (1996) → the issue of task-demand is important. Different tasks may elicit different types of output and different types of feedback.
- For example, in a study by Gass, Mackey, and Ross-Feldman (2005) concerned with a comparison of classroom versus laboratory interaction patterns.
- The authors used three tasks: a consensus task, a spot-the-difference task, and a one-way map task.
- Differences were found among task types, but not between different settings.

Effectiveness of Instruction

- Beyond mere focus on form or explicitness of input, there are numerous other variables that need to be considered when trying to understand the effectiveness of instruction:



- There are no easy answers.

Effectiveness of Instruction

- What is clear is that **instruction does make a difference**, but how precisely it makes a difference and what the contributing factors are to effectiveness continue to be issues that need to be resolved.
- Effectiveness of instruction is not a matter of *yes* or *no*, but a clearer understanding of **what**, **how**, and **when** (in terms of a learner's developmental readiness).
- These are all areas that must be dealt with empirically.

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Thanks

Does anyone have any questions?
mdrosari@jiu.ac

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