

However research has shown that instruction and correction can accelerate the learners' movement and progress along the path, if provided at a time that is developmentally appropriate.

When helping students to form English sentences, therefore, what must be kept in mind is that sentence construction is acquired in an order of increasing complexity, with simple statements before questions, and copular yes-no questions before lexical yes-no questions before wh-questions. This was found in research such as that of Pienemann (1984; see also Lightbown and Spada 1993). If this is not the order of instruction in student textbooks, therefore, the students cannot expect to be ready to internalize sentence grammar with strict accuracy. (Ellis 1989, Meisel, Clahsen, and Pienemann 1981). The best that teachers can hope for is that the students have been alerted to the more complex structures so that they can begin to *recognize* them. However, the students cannot be expected to use these complex structures correctly until they have gained at least some control over the simpler ones.

4. Effective activities for grammar learning let learners know they are being corrected

This is not always possible in the height of a communicative activity, but hearing a corrected version immediately following what learners have just said helps them "notice the gap" between their production and the correct second language version. (Doughty & Varela in press, Schmidt 1990, 1992, Schmidt & Frota 1986).

In one of these studies, for example, it was found that students whose teacher provided immediate corrective feedback on one particular error (substitution of have for be) during communicative activities, were able to overcome the error and sustain correct production well beyond their period of instruction. However, those students who were corrected during audiolingual drill and practice activities were able to self-correct, but could not sustain such correction beyond the classroom. (Lightbown 1991).

5. Effective activities for grammar learning integrate instruction with correction

An innovative practice that incorporates traditional methods with newer views of second language learning that focus on attention and awareness of language structures is the "garden path" technique. In studies on foreign language classrooms, it has been shown that learners who participated in the "garden path" technique of sequencing instruction on grammar rules then exceptions were more successful at learning the rules than those who were taught rules and exceptions at the same time.

Thus, in one study on the "garden path" technique, learners were first taught only regular forms of verb structures. Then they practiced on exercises for both regular and irregular structures. This activity led them to produce typical errors of overgeneralization as they applied the rule for

regular verbs to irregular verbs. The teacher then gave immediate feedback on their errors and instruction on the exception. This feedback called the students' attention to the difference between regular and irregular verbs in ways that instruction alone had been less effective in doing. As a result, students were able to make more rapid progress in their verb learning. (See Tomasello and Herron 1988, 1989 for further details).

6. Effective activities for grammar learning can sustain the effects of instruction and correction through target feature models and metalinguistic information

Traditional strategies such as modeling, imitation, and practice are also useful for second language learning and use. This is because we know that learners are able to communicate within the current developmental state of their own grammar. This gives them an opportunity to avoid words and grammatical structures not yet under their control. When asked to imitate a model, however, they have to reconstruct the grammar & meaning of what they hear and attempt production of new structures not quite within their current capacity. (Eisenstein, Bailey, & Madden 1983).

A similar finding has held for Chinese language learning by native English speakers. In a recent investigation, students who were studying measure words were given one of several different correction strategies whenever they made a mistake. These included suppliance of models, provision of metalinguistic information and rules, comments, and explicit rejection. The only significant effects on production were shown for models and metalinguistic information. Simply informing students when they were wrong, or leaving the error unattended, to develop into a target feature on its own, was shown to be far less effective than these more instructional techniques. (See Chen 1996 for more details, and Lightbown and Spada 1993 for review).

What research has suggested is that even when there is a need to isolate a particular structure for attention, it is also important not simply to teach rules and drill sentences, but to present the second language structure in context and discuss it with students, using their native language, if possible and necessary, to do so. This is so that learners can take advantage of their metalinguistic capacity and their ability to think about language and to understand its intricacies.

7. Instruction and correction can be effective in guiding learners to acquire sociolinguistic rules

The above guidelines for instruction and correction apply to other structures that have multiple form-function relationships. Of particular importance are those that depend on context and interlocutor roles and relationships for their accuracy and appropriateness. Among these are sociolinguistic rules, formulas, and routines.

Research has revealed several strategies that build on learners' cogni-

tive skills for acquiring sociolinguistic rules in a second language. These include telling them what to say and why to say so, letting them practice in dialogues created by native speakers, and providing them opportunities to compare their own production with that of speakers of the second language. These are but a few of the ways in which learners can become aware of these difficult, but crucial features of English.

Recent studies have shown that instruction on social rules and formulas makes a difference in the rate and extent to which they are learned. (Billmyer 1990, Lyster 1994, Olshtain & Cohen 1990, Swain and Lapkin 1989). Also important to their growth is the opportunity to learn cultural information, which may be difficult to obtain in classroom input. It seems likely that role plays are helpful for communication, but they are not sufficient for learners to gain access to the norms of the native speakers. They develop their own interpretation of these rules if left to their own devices. Practice through dialogues that have been specially created for them may very well hold the key to this extremely challenging dimension of language learning, particularly in foreign language contexts.

Many teachers who are not native speakers of the language they are teaching are reluctant to teach sociolinguistic dimensions of the second language. The strategies noted throughout this section, with their emphasis on the cognitive dimensions of learning might allay some of such teachers' fears. Since sociolinguistic rules are generally so complex and difficult that a good deal of explanation and example is important for their learning, teachers need not feel that they must be native like in their use of sociolinguistic rules in order to be a resource for their students in this area. In addition, these more cognitive activities may be particularly attractive, as growing numbers of learners reject games and even discussion as too easy and easy-going (See Futaba 1994).

Many of these strategies have as much to do with second language learning as they do with communication. For example, learners need additional help with questions, especially confirmation checks and clarification requests. Such strategic moves as Did you say X? or Could you say that again? are effective ways of helping learners to have messages repeated and adjusted for comprehensibility. Research has shown that these useful strategies can be taught to students quite effectively, even when the instruction is provided by non-native speaker teachers. (See, for example, Dornyei 1995). The challenge to the teacher is centered both on the teaching and learning of the strategies as well as on creating a classroom environment where such strategies are welcome.

As the need for direct instruction and correction continues to grow, along with evidence that both are effective when used in a principled way, we see a transition in the conceptualization of relationships in participation between teachers and students and among students themselves in the classroom. As will be discussed in the next section, one consistent finding is that again, a principled integration of these different participation structures is critical for success in English learning.

Integration of classroom participation structures

Most teachers would agree that there is a need for communication that balances teacher-led instruction with group work and learner-to-learner, or peer, interaction. This observation has become even more important in the transition in language teaching methodology. Research has been especially revealing in this regard. Strengths and weaknesses have been identified in both group work and teacher-led instruction. These are identified next.

1. Communication with peers promotes authentic, purposeful second language use

Research has revealed that peer and group work enable students to use language more communicatively and across a broader range of functions than do lessons characterized by lock-step, teacher-led classroom interaction (Long et al. 1976). Learners are particularly helpful in using a technique known as scaffolding, in which, when working in pairs, one tends to complete each other's utterances when the other is struggling to find a word or expression to communicate a message. (Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, and Linnell 1995, 1996), as well as in supporting each other's answers even during teacher-fronted lessons. (See Tseng 1992).

2. Peer communication activities are effective in the short term

Research has shown that when working in pairs on a communication task, learners rarely incorporate each other's errors into their own production. Far more prevalent are learners' self-corrections and modification of their own utterances into more complex forms (Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, and Linnell 1996), their self-generated adjustments toward more correct production (Bruton & Samuda, 1980) and their incorporation of each others' correct productions (Gass & Varonis 1990). Thus, in the immediate term, peer and group work do not handicap correct production, indeed they can greatly assist it. However, when looking at long range goals for learners, peer and group activities appear to be less effective in that regard, particularly for mastery of grammar and pronunciation. This will be discussed below.

3. Peer communication activities are not sufficient for meeting learner goals toward second language mastery

In the long run, it has been found that students who engage in extensive student-to-student interaction, without the benefit of much direct interaction with their teacher, develop fluent, but non-target like production, this is largely because the input they receive from peer learners reinforces their own errors and misanalyses of the target language. (Lightbown & Spada 1990, Plann 1977, White 1990, Wong Fillmore 1992).

Further, not all students working with peers have been found to take advantage of the opportunity to speak. In fact, they are often prevented from doing so by more assertive group members (Pica and Doughty 1985). In addition, group work has been found to assist certain language skills more than others. Listening comprehension, in particular, appears to be greatly facilitated in that regard (See Bejarano 1987 for further details). Such findings suggest that other approaches are required to insure language proficiency.

There are several classroom tasks that are particularly effective in guiding grammar learning through peer and teacher integration. Most are reminiscent of traditional activities such as grammar exercises, dictation, and recitation, and thus integrate traditional concerns for grammar instruction with the communicative technique of group work. Among them are tasks in grammar decision making and information exchange, and the dictogloss and dictocomp tasks, to be described next.

Integration of tradition and transition through grammar focused tasks *Grammar decision making tasks*

In grammar decision making activities, actual grammar exercises can be given to students to work out together and report to their classmates. Here, students are asked to complete fill in the blanks or multiple choice exercises, selecting among verb tense or aspectual features, for example, explaining choices to their teacher, to each other, and to their classmates. Research has shown that such tasks are very simple to locate, adapt, or devise, and yet can have powerful impact on students' grammar learning over time (See Fotos and Ellis 1991).

Information exchange tasks

Known popularly as jig-saw tasks, these communication activities are characterized by a format that adheres to the following two conditions: Each student is given a portion of the information needed to carry out the task, and is required to exchange this information with the other students in order to complete the task successfully. (See Doughty and Pica 1986 and Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun 1992 for review of these and other tasks which belong to different task types). Such tasks thus provide a potential context for learners to focus their attention on the form and meaning of the messages, as message providers and as message comprehenders. There are two main types of these information exchange tasks that seem to work well. One task involves communication through visual description, the other involves communication through story telling.

In a description task, learners are asked to draw or describe pictures or other visuals, and describe them to peers who themselves must draw them on the basis of the learners' verbal description. Maps, diagrams, charts, nearly any visual can be used. Learners who are reluctant to draw can be

asked to assemble or even locate the visual being described.

In a picture story task, learners must compose a single story by exchanging information on their own individually held pictures of the story, the full sequence of which is kept hidden from their view until the end of the task. After they have assembled the pictures in a way that they believe reflects the story, they are allowed to see the hidden sequence of pictures, and judge their success.

One story that has been used successfully in both research and classroom contexts, consists of pictures depicting a woman who was getting ready to begin cooking at her gas stove. She had turned on the gas and was about to light a match to ignite the gas, when she was interrupted by a surprise visitor. She then proceeded to answer her door and sat down to a conversation with an unexpected guest. However, in so doing, she forgot to turn off the stove. When the guest lit a cigarette, this was followed by a small explosion in the woman's home. This story lends itself to contrasts in time and activity as well as foregrounding and backgrounding of information. It is thus excellent for drawing learners' attention to verb forms as they try to work out the story together.

Each of these types of information exchange tasks, with their different grammatical emphases enables students to produce a broad range of input, feedback, and output modifications during their exchange of information. The visual description task engages learners in describing attributes, states and conditions in their pictures. Such description guides them to focus on the names and features of objects, individuals, and contexts. The story telling task, on the other hand, with its emphasis on a sequence of events, leads them to focus on verb inflections for actions and experiences, with reference to time sequences and foreground-background relationships among the story events.

Dictogloss and dictocomp tasks

The dictogloss and dictocomp resemble traditional lecture/text reading, presentation and dictation exercises, but build on them in the following ways: First, the teacher provides a lecture or brief passage that has been adapted to emphasize a particular structure or structure contrast, say verb tenses, noun number or sentence vs. question construction. This structure can be pointed out to the students before they undertake the task. During the dictation or text reading, students take notes on an individual basis, then work in teams, using their notes to reconstruct the text for a follow up presentation in oral or written form. (See Nunan 1989, Swain 1995, Swain 1993, and Wajnryb 1994 for further discussion). Research on students as they work through dictogloss and dictocomp tasks has revealed that they discuss grammatical features as well as rules for accuracy. This is especially so when after the reconstruction, the groups get together to compare versions with each other and with the original version given them by

their teacher.

The dictogloss and dictocomp are of particular interest in bringing together the traditional and transitional dimensions of language teaching methodology. This is because they strike a balance between the more traditional teacher-led instruction and the sorts of group work that have been promoted in communicative approaches. As concerns for achieving a balance between teacher led instruction and peer work, continue to mount in language teaching methodology, there is also renewed interest in the contributions teachers can make toward using students' native language to guide their learning. This will be addressed in the following section.

Integration of second language and native languages as learning resources

Research has shown that teachers can work to restore the importance of the student's native language, in planning classroom lessons, carrying out classroom activities, and facilitating language learning. These are based largely on the work of Polio and Duff (1994) and Sticchi-Damiani (1983). It is important to note that the research does not suggest a return to translation as an all encompassing strategy for language teaching, but rather as a helpful dimension of learners' and teachers' communicative competence.

The main contributions are in the following areas, including 1. **Management:** in order to explain rules and help students to understand their errors, to provide clear directions for assignments both in and out of the classroom. 2. **Guidance:** in order to let students ask questions, again to achieve as much clarity as possible of both the second language as well as tasks and assignments. 3. **Clarification:** to assist comprehension of word meaning and complex sociolinguistic rules. 4. **Preparation:** to provide pre-reading context so that students can apply their knowledge and experience to an assignment. 5. **Rapport building:** to develop and insure solidarity and rapport among students and between students and their teacher. 6. **Anxiety reduction:** to avoid emotional interference with language learning.

It is important, of course, for learners to be able to blend such strategic use of the native language with strategic use of the second language. This latter must be applied to aid comprehension through use of contextual cues, reliance on prior learning, and asking clarification questions. The native language can serve as a bridge, and a very useful one at that. However, as students are aiming toward second language learning, and will eventually communicate with English language users who do not know their native language, it is critical for them to learn strategies for exploiting the second language in their language learning process.

Conclusion

Today, in English language teaching, tradition and transition are not proceeding separately, with each meeting some dimension of language

learning on its own. Instead, tradition and transition are becoming integrated into fresh and original approaches which can be very helpful to teachers and students. Of utmost importance to this integrated approach is that the classroom become an environment for learning through communication, for learning to communicate, and for learning to learn effectively and efficiently.

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Teresa Pica is the Ethel G. Carruth Associate Professor and Chair of the Language in Education Division. She has earned an MA in Speech Pathology from Columbia University Teachers College and PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. Her research interest are social interaction between language learners and native speakers and the role of instruction in the acquisition process in second and foreign language acquisition.

