

Short Quiz 4 (Lectures 9-11)

- The quiz opens 12/14 20:00
 - This quiz closes 12/28 23:55

Applied Linguistics

Can You Learn Language in Class?

Lecture 12 (Part 1)

Main Points

We can acquire a second language without going to class, so do language classes actually help us acquire? We can research the “open systems” of language classes, but it’s complicated by many variables. Research shows that traditional “accuracy” approaches don’t always produce fluency and accuracy that they aim for. Communicative approaches do help learners improve, and learners enjoy them more.

Outline

- (1) Research
- (2) Right from the Start – Accuracy Approaches
 - Grammar Translation (GT)
 - Audio-Lingual Method (ALM)
- (3) Simply Listen and Read – Communicative Approaches
 - The ALBUM Theory again
 - The Four Strands

Key Words

- Grammar translation
- Audiolingual method
- Quantitative
- Numeric
- Variable
- Qualitative
- Ethnography
- Experimental group
- Control group
- Case study
- Inhibit
- Reluctance

(1) Research: What Works?

- SHOCKER!
- “In short, there is now convincing indirect and direct evidence to support the teaching of grammar. Nevertheless, doubts remain about the nature of the research evidence.”
- Rod Ellis (2006)
 - Current Issues in the Teaching of Grammar: An SLA Perspective.

(1) Research: Quantitative

- Experimental
 - Control variables that might influence learning.
 - What variables influence learning?

(1) Research: Open vs. Closed Systems

- In physics or chemistry, scientists work in more “closed systems.”
 - They have more control over “nature.”
 - Variables are limited.
 - They can predict and control effects more clearly.

(1) Research: Open vs. Closed System

- In linguistics (social sciences), we work in more “open systems.”
 - We have less control. There are more variables.
 - Learner variables. Environmental variables.
 - How do learners feel? How does environment affect results?
 - Learners pass grammar quizzes. Can they use it in real life?
 - Evidence attains explanatory power (not always proof).

(1) Research: Quantitative

- Exact numeric measurements
- Large sample size
- Control group
 - Don't apply the variable.
- Experimental group
 - Apply the variable.

(1) Research: Quantitative

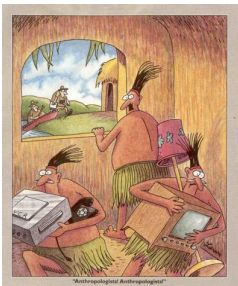
- Robb and Susser (1989) studied 125 Students (large sample size).
 - Q: Does ER help students learn more than skill-building?
 - Control Group (CG) used a traditional skill-building reading text.
 - The variable (ER) was not applied to the Control Group.
 - Experimental Group just did extensive reading (Average 651 pgs).
 - The variable (ER) was applied to the Experimental Group.
- ER students became faster readers and enjoyed the program more.

(1) Research: Qualitative

- Don't count or measure specific variables.
- Describe and interpret what happens in class.
 - Participant observation
 - Field notes, case study
 - Interviews, and surveys

(2) Research: Qualitative

- Ethnography
 - Understand learners from their perspective
 - Observation and consultation



(1) Research: "Action Research"

- Teachers do it in their classrooms.
- Answer specific, local questions.
 - Reflect on teaching and learning by journaling.
 - Find problems; make changes.

(1) Research: "Action Research"

- Problem: students don't answer questions in class.
 - Solution: videotape the class.
 - Analyze the tape.
 - Make changes. Repeat.
 - Other: diaries, interviews, surveys.

(2) Right from the Start

- Grammar translation (GT)
 - Teach grammar rules.
 - Do translation exercises.
 - Classics: Latin, Greek, Hebrew.

(2) Right from the Start

- Audiolingual Method (ALM)
 - Oral language, grammatical focus.
 - Avoid errors that become habits.
 - Prevent bad habits before they happen.

(2) Right from the Start: Simpsons



(2) Right from the Start

- T: Are there any tomatoes in the refrigerator?
C: Are there any tomatoes in the refrigerator?
T: There are very few, Mom.
C: There are very few, Mom.
 - Pure repetition, no thinking needed.

(2) Right from the Start

- Spies like these approaches.
- Government workers.
 - High motivation.
- Learners with good L1 metalinguistic knowledge like GT/ALM.



(2) Right from the Start

- GT/ALM often fail to produce fluency AND accuracy.
 - It's better to say, "I like mistakes!"
 - Mistakes are your teacher.

(2) Right from the Start

- Problems
 - Correct grammar in class ≠ correct grammar outside.
 - When not drilled, often lost.
 - GT/ALM students often can't communicate.
 - No guarantee of accuracy.
 - Feel inhibited and reluctant to speak.

(3) Simply Listen and Read

- "You have asked the biggest, most important question in language pedagogy. How do you make input comprehensible and highly interesting at the same time? That's the job of language teaching."



(3) Simply Listen and Read

- We acquire languages by understanding messages.
 - No drills.
 - No practice.
 - Just input.
 - Goal: Comprehensible and compelling input.

(3) Simply Listen and Read

- Lightbown (2002) 2-year study of hundreds of children.
 - Compare and audio-lingual approach with a comprehension-based approach.

(3) Simply Listen and Read

- "After two years, learners in the comprehension-based program knew as much English as (and in some cases more than) learners in the regular program."
 - After the two-year period, some students seem to benefit from speaking, writing, and teacher feedback.

(3) Simply Listen and Read

- "There is overwhelming evidence for recreational reading as a means of increasing second-language competence."
 - Krashen



(3) Simply Listen and Read

- “It is now perhaps the most thoroughly investigated and best-supported technique we have in the field of second-language pedagogy.”



(3) Simply Listen and Read (TPR)

- Total Physical Response, James Asher (1972)
 - T speaks commands. Ss act them out.
 - Match linguistic input with physical movement.
 - Video

Learners reached... “advanced levels of comprehension in the language without engaging in oral practice.”

Lightbown and Spada on TPR

(3) Simply Listen and Read (TPR)

- Great for beginners.
- Excellent materials exist.
- You can easily do it.
 - You need scripts.
 - Preparation.



(3) Simply Listen and Read

- “Comprehension of meaningful language is the foundation of language acquisition.”
 - Lightbown and Spada



Simply Listen and Read

- What happens with sustained L1 input?
 - We can make a lot of progress.
 - An excellent way to begin.
 - A great supplement for advanced learners.
 - Is input everything?
 - Input may not be supreme, but it is central.
 - Balance your approach.

4 Strands (Paul Nation)

- A balanced course consists of 4 equal strands
 - (1) meaning-focused input
 - (2) meaning-focused output
 - (3) language-focused learning
 - (4) fluency development

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