焦点式语言形式教学的注意研究

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Abstract

This book investigates the way focus on form is best promoted. The basic format of the treatment is instantiated in two types of tasks — text-reconstruction tasks and comprehension tasks.

With the book focusing on teenage learners of English as a foreign language, the author has conducted an analysis of " noticing ", the rationale behind focus on form, and different types and extent of noticing that different linguistic aspects require, emphasizing that output is crucial to stepping up deeper level of awareness and more strongly focused attention. It is verified in the book that output is a key factor of either the syntactical or lexical learning.

The book includes 7 chapters.

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the investigation, delving into the limitations of Krashen's input hypothesis and the necessity of focus on form.

Given that focus on form is necessary, an overview of the theories related to focus on form is provided in Chapter 2. What is more, with the research questions in the present study considered, the author remarks on these theories pointing out where the future researches should develop in respective fields.

Besides the theoretical overview, an introduction is needed to the empirical studies in relevant fields. Chapter 3 gives a description of some empirical achievements in the relevant fields. Having commented on their merits, the author makes judgment about their limitations, posing questions that have yet to be resolved.

A syntactical experiment (Experiment 1) is reported in Chapter 4, which gives a detailed account of the experimental conditions, procedures, results and its discussion.

The experimental conditions and procedures of the lexical experiment in Chapter 5 are the replication of Experiment 1. A contrast and a comparison are made of the results of the two experiments in this chapter.

Chapter 6 deals with several pedagogical implications and some suggestions about how to carry out focus on form effectively. The limitations and future research directions of this study are also included in this chapter.

The last chapter, Chapter 7, is a summary of the major findings in this investigation.

The major findings are summarized as follows:

In light of the experimental results,

1. noticing differs in levels and degrees of focused attention. It is output that prompts the deeper level of awareness and more strongly focused attention, which are in good association with learning.

2. the high communicative value that the lexical items have is the decisive factor in enhancing their salience. In other words, with the lexical items with high communicative value, there is no need for visual enhancement, while with those with low communicative value, visual enhancement has its facilitative effect on drawing learners' attention to them.

3. output and the subsequent feedback are major components of the most favorable learning environment. The incorrect hypotheses may arise in production. With timely feedback, learners get opportunities to examine their hypotheses. As a consequence, the wrong learning will be obviated. It is confirmed in the present experiments that output and the subsequent feedback are inseparable from each other. The "noticing the

gap" function of output spurs learners to pay more attention to the relevant feedback so that the role of the feedback is brought into full play. Without output, there is no full manifestation of the role of feedback.

4. task instructions and demands make some particular linguistic forms salient directing learners' attention to these forms, and the conditions that the task is implemented have an impact on the way that learners process the input.

5. as is compared with comprehension tasks, the output tasks raise the extent of awareness.

6. little gains are made through the analyses at the level of comprehension.

In addition, some findings derive from particular linguistic types.

In terms of the syntactical learning, through experimental rehearsal, external input enhancement alone enables learners to be aware of the targeted rule as revealed in the post-test. Unfortunately, seeing that learning engages learner's internal factors, mere visual input enhancement does not stimulate learners to further process the targeted forms; therefore, external enhancement alone is of little assistance to the learning of the targeted forms.

The cognitive resources that output triggers are not ample for a good command of the targeted rule. A fast and good control of the targeted rule necessitates external help. It follows that the external help will divert the learners' attentional resources to the targeted elements, thereby altering the allocation of the learners' attentional resources. As a result, learners perceive the rule utilizing much less time compared with the group devoid of the external help, which leaves them time to consciously rehearse the targeted rule grasping the targeted rule rapidly and solidly.

In contrast to the syntactical learning, in terms of the lexical learning, self-initiated attention to the targeted words means higher

degree of focused attention. Hence, learners' internal resources that output triggers are sufficient to learn the meaning and use of the targeted content words. Visual enhancement plays little role in vocabulary learning.

Further, in comparison with Izumi's experiment, when the enhanced materials are delivered to the output participants in completing two reconstructions, the best learning obtains. Chances are that the experimental treatment device (the repetitive rehearsal of external enhancement) , in combination with the activity of output, affects the learner's allocation of his or her attentional resources, which consequently stimulates further cognitive processing of the targeted rule on the part of the learner. Since learning involves learners' internal factors, the repetitive rehearsal of external enhancement alone is of no measurable effect for the learning of the targeted rule to happen. In lexical learning, neither mere visual enhancement nor visual enhancement embedded in output is a good facilitator of learning the targeted content words.

In conclusion, either experimentally or theoretically, the book brings forth new ideas. Experimentally, the author improves Izumi's experiment making it more effective. Theoretically, the dissertation empirically confirms that different types of linguistic aspects differ in attentional and learning demands, which has ever been mentioned by some scholars with few empirical researches conducted. In terms of a comparison between the syntactical learning and notional words learning, only an idea arose in Izumi's (2002) mind. No relevant researches have been done into it. In addition, the book still presents an analysis of how different levels of awareness affect the noticing and learning of different linguistic aspects and what factors impact on different levels of awareness.

Further, some pedagogical implications have been drawn in what

follows.

First, the book lends empirical support to the position that the comprehensible input is not sufficient to raise learners' language accuracy. The suggestion is that it is when learners are aware of the linguistic items or the linguistic items are activated, in particular, when learners notice the gap between the target language and the interlanguage that the instructional intervention is most effective. It is still proposed that the instructional intervention should not be a stumbling block to language processing for meaning.

Second, learnability and learners' long-term and short-term needs have to be taken into account when a form is chosen in focus-on-form instruction.

Third, a well-designed task is a major contribution to the noticing of the linguistic items with low communicative value. And an output task can effectively lead to the enhanced extent of noticing of the linguistic forms.

However, when an output task is designed, the following points have to be noted:

First, an overloading task will hamper learners' processing of the targeted forms. In view of the different attentional and learning demands of different linguistic aspects, the task should be designed to satisfy different needs.

Second, the merits of feedback should be cherished. The timely feedback on production can play the role of examining and consolidating hypotheses. It is no exaggerated idea to claim that the appropriate feedback guarantees successful learning.

However, when feedback is provided, the following advice is recommended:

First, feedback had better enable learners to notice the gap between the TL and IL. Self-discovered discrepancies are good reflections of the

gap between their interlanguage and the TL because the process of identifying the mismatches gets their interlanguage system engaged. Thus, more input will feed into intake, which has more chance of entering the long-term memory due to the role of feedback. It is confirmed that how learners solve the problems they encounter in production associates with learning.

Second, feedback must be explicit, with individual differences considered.

Third, the emphasis is that either noticing or noticing the gap amounts to no learning. A good example is that mere visual enhancement is not contributive to effective learning. Output gives rise to the deeper level of processing, which enhances the degree of noticing; the "noticing the gap" function of output allows the learner to seek appropriate alternatives actively for hypothesis testing or confirming.

中 文 摘 要

这是一项如何有效促进焦点式语言形式教学的研究。该研究以写作任务为研究单位,以高中一年级的学习者为研究对象,采取多样化的研究方法(实验、问卷调查和访谈),分析了形式教学的根基"注意",证明了不同类型的语言项目对注意的度有不同的需求。本书强调输出促进了学习者对语言形式深层次的注意,促进学习者对语言形式高强度的集中注意。无论是习得语法类型的项目还是词汇类型的项目,输出都是不可或缺的。

全书共分为七章。

第一章介绍了克拉申输入假说的局限性和焦点式语言形式教学的必要性。

第二章为本书的理论框架,作者介绍了相关的理论研究,并结合本文的研究问题对这些理论逐一进行评说。并进一步指出该领域有待解决的问题。

第三章是实证研究回顾,作者回顾了相关理论的一些实证研究,在肯定其研究成果的基础上,谈到了其局限性和需要进一步解决的问题。

第四章是一项以定语从句为目标规则的教学实验,本章详细描述了实验程序、实验结果,并对结果进行了分析讨论。

第五章是一项以实词为目标词汇的教学实验,该实验遵从第四章的实验程序,作者分析并对比了两次实验的结果。

第六章讨论了该研究在语言教学中的指导意义,并对如何在课堂中实现焦点式语言形式教学提出了一些建议,还指出了本研究的不足和未来的研究设想。

第七章总结了本研究的主要发现。

实验结果证明：

1．注意有层次方面的差异，注意的集中强度也不尽相同。输出促进注意的层次，并加强了注意的集中度。深层次的注意和强集中度的注意均与学得紧密相连。

2．词汇本身所具有的交际价值是决定词汇突显度的决定性因素。换句话来说，交际价值高的词汇不需要外部突显，而对于交际价值低的目标词，外部突显促进了学习者对目标词的注意。

3．输出和即时反馈构成了最佳的学得环境。实验证明输出会形成错误的假设。若没有及时的反馈，错误学得会发生。即时反馈提供了检验假设和证实假设的时机和场合。实验证明：输出和随后的立即反馈两者密不可分，输出使学习者更加注意并有效地利用相关的反馈。缺少输出这一环节，反馈的有效性得不到充分发挥。

4．任务的指令和要求突出了特定的语言形式，引导了学习者的注意力；任务执行的条件影响学习者加工输入的方式。

5．与理解性任务相比，输出型任务抬高了注意的度。

6．语义层面的分析获得很少的收益。

另外，本书还有一些适用于特定语言类型的发现。

在句法规则学得方面：

1．后测显示，经过实验操练，单纯的外部突显使学习者注意到了目标规则，但对学习目标规则作用不大，原因是学得过程卷入了学习者内部因素，单纯的突显不足以促使学习者对目标形式进一步加工。

2．输出所激发的认知资源部不足以使学习者有效地学得目标规则，欲要熟练快速地掌握句法规则，还需借助外力的作用。外力通过引导学习者的注意力资源并改变学习者的注意力资源分配从而使学习者很快发现了目标规则。从而对目标规则进行有意识的操练，这种有意识的操练最终使学习者迅速固化了目标规则。

在词汇学得上：

输出所产生的自发意识集中度更强。输出所引发的学习者的内部资源足以使学习者学得目标词汇。在实词学得上，外部突显的作用微乎其微。

与 Izumi 的实验结果相比,本书证明:在句法规则的学得上,在输出组,通过强化突显,也即,在学习者执行两次输出任务时,两次都接受突显的输入,学得效果最佳。极有可能是本实验的实验手段(重复操练突显),在和输出任务结合时,影响了学习者的注意力分配,促进了学习者对目标规则的认知加工。由于学得过程卷入学习者内部因素,就单纯的外部突显而言,无论怎么重复操练,都不会对目标规则的学得产生明显的效果。另外,无论是单纯的外部突显还是外部突显与输出相结合都不能促进实词的学得。

总之,本书在实验和理论上都有创新。

在实验上本书修正并复杂化了 Izumi 的实验。在理论上,本书用实验证明了不同类型的语言项目可能会对注意和学得有不同的要求,比较了句法和词汇(实词)对注意和学得的不同需求。虽然上述论断有学者提及过,但在实践上鲜有支持。尤其是把句法和实词进行对比,只有 Izumi 提出过这样的设想,未有相关的实证研究。另外,本书还着重分析了不同层次的注意对不同类型语言项目的注意和学得的影响,且分析了影响不同层次注意的因素。

另外本书在教学实践上有一定的借鉴意义。

1. 本书用实验推翻了克拉申的"输入假说",证明了焦点式语言形式教学在提高学习者语言形式准确度方面的必要性。并建议只有当学习者注意到语言项目或语言项目处于被激活的状态时,尤其是当学习者注意到目标语言与中介语的差异时,教学干预的效果才是最好的。作者还提出干预不应该妨碍学习者的语言学得进程。

2. 语言形式的选择要遵循可学得性原则,要考虑到学习者的长期和短期需要。

3. 任务的设计异常重要,通过任务设计,可以促进学习者对那些突显度低的语言形式的注意。本书的研究证明输出型的任务可以抬高对语言形式注意的度。

但是在设计输出型的任务时,要考虑如下因素。

1. 任务负担不能过重,否则会影响学习者对目标形式的加工。鉴于不同类型的语言项目对注意和学得的要求不同,笔者建议要针

对不同类型的语言项目设计最有效的任务。

2. 要考虑到反馈的价值,输出后及时的反馈是必要的,学习者可以有机会验证并固化假设。可以毫不夸张地说,反馈是成功学得的保障。

但当提供反馈时,要注意如下几点。

1. 反馈最好能让学习者自己注意到目标语和中介语的差异,这种自我发现的差异有其特殊的含义,这些差异真正反映了它们的中介语所处的阶段。而且寻找差异的过程卷入了中介语系统,这样,更多的输入转化为摄入。借助反馈的作用,这些差异更有可能进入长时记忆。结果证明,学习者解决输出过程中发现错误的方式和学得密切关联。

2. 提供反馈时,反馈要清晰准确,还要考虑到学习者的个体差异。

3. 关于输出的作用,本书强调注意和注意差距不意味着学得,单纯的突显在句法规则和词汇学得上均没有明显的效果即为极好的例证。输出的深层次加工抬高了注意的度。输出的注意差距功能使学习者积极地寻找相关的反馈以便修正和证实假设。

Abbreviations

IE	input enhancement
O	output
SLA	second language acquisition
L2/SL	second language
L1	first language
TL	target language
IL	interlanguage
RP	relative pronoun
HN	head noun
RC	relative clause
IP	input processing
ESL	english as a second language
FonF	focus on form
FLA	foreign language acquisition
PPP	presentation, practice, and production
TBLT	task-based language teaching
STM	short-term memory
FL	foreign language

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