

Instructed Second Language Acquisition Research and Its Relevance to Classroom Practices

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Abstract

Instructed SLA research has gained considerable attention due to the widespread interest in the role of instruction in language development. This study critically reviews several influential SLA studies on classroom instruction in second language learning. The aim is to assist teachers in delivering well-informed and relevant instruction to L2 learners to enable them to meet their language learning expectations and participate in real-world practices. The paper examines the focus on form and meaning-based instructions as the most common approaches utilized in language learning settings. It critically evaluates several SLA research findings on L2 classroom instruction and interprets their data using comparisons, assessments, and descriptions. Based on these interpretations, the paper ends with a discussion of pedagogical implications for teaching second language learners, taking into account the learning mechanisms employed by learners, and how teachers, via effective instructions, can use these mechanisms to facilitate successful L2 learning.

Keywords: Instructed SLA, focus on form/forms, focus on meaning, explicit/implicit grammar

1. Introduction

Instructed SLA (ISLA), a branch of SLA is frequently opposed to the naturalistic SLA approach. ISLA examines the effects of modifying different elements of the L2 learning process, such as L2 input, language processing, and learning settings (Loewen & Sato, 2017). It stresses the correlations between various types of instructional intervention and mental processes such as information processing and internalization, knowledge storage, and language production (Han & Nassaji, 2019). Although this line of research has not yielded a macro reform in curriculum design, there are highly satisfactory results in promoting learners' linguistic and communicative needs through, for instance, incorporating task-based language teaching (TBLT).

Recent research has addressed the efficiency of instructed SLA in relation to classroom practices (Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004; Bruton & Samuda, 1980; Gass 2003; Kim 2017; Lee, & Lyster, 2015; Li, Ellis & Zhu, 2019; Lyster, Saito, & Sato, 2013; Plonsky & Gass, 2011; Yang, & Lyster, 2010).

However, it is now widely acknowledged that L2 instruction and learning aims to help students become more proficient communicators. As a result, communicative language teaching has grown in acceptance as the method of instruction in second/foreign language education programs around the globe, and it becomes clear that there are two distinct forms. One of them, the strong version of CLT, symbolizes a sole focus on meaning without consideration of form or corrective feedback. The other, a weaker CLT, gives equal weight to form and meaning (Howatt, 1984).

Hence, it is important to mention here that there has been an ongoing discussion over the acquisition of second languages between proponents of conscious attention to form and others who assert that acquisition is the result of exposure to meaningful input and learning through language usage. Traditional teaching approaches are direct and analytical and provide explicit language classroom instructions by focusing on the acquisition of forms.

These approaches, in a variety of modes, are still in use, especially in many EFL language contexts and have proponents in SLA research to date. SLA studies of focus on forms claim that second language learners can achieve high levels of conscious linguistic competence (grammar, vocabulary, phonology) from focus-centered instruction (Collins, 2012; Ellis, 2001, 2016; Spada & Lightbown, 2008). SLA research on negotiated meaning-centered instructions, on the other hand, claims that focus on meaning is more paramount in language acquisition than learning discrete linguistic elements (Eckerth, 2009; Kim, 2017; Krashen & Terrel, 1983; Long, 2014; Mackay, Birello, & Xerri, 2018).

However, the problem arises when many L2 students who are in a natural context and meaning-focused classes make numerous morphological, syntactical, and phonological errors despite having chances to access intelligible input and communicate in the target language (Ellis, 1994; Garc á Mayo, 2002b; Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Lyster, 2007). Similarly, in a more focused on-form context, L2 students struggle with generating even simple conversations and have trouble expressing their thoughts and ideas (Long, 1981; Macaro, &

Masterman, 2006; VanPatten, 2017).

This paper, therefore, explores the influence of different types of instruction in the EFL/ESL learning and teaching context. Specifically, it seeks to answer the question of how and to what extent various types of instruction, such as focus/meaning-based, explicit, implicit, guided or unguided, can improve L2 learning experience.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Focus on Form Instructions

As Long and Robinson (1998) put it out, “focus on form often consists of an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features – by the teacher and/or one or more students – triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production (p.23). Spada (1997) defined form-focused instruction as “Any pedagogical effort to draw the learners’ attention to form either implicitly or explicitly” (p.73).

Earlier SLA research has shifted from the general discussion of the effectiveness of instruction to investigating more specific elements such as noticing, focus on forms, focus on form, input enhancement and noticing (Doughty, 1991; Ellis, 2001, 2002; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Spada & Lightbown, 1999; White, 1998; VanPatten & Oikkenon, 1996).

For an in-depth analysis, Doughty’s (1991) and Spada & Lightbown’s (1999) experimental studies had quite impressive findings and guidelines that SLA can improve language teaching instructions.

Doughty’s study focused on OPREP relative clause type. Doughty hypothesized that if students were exposed to the OPREP type (the more difficult one), they would acquire SU, DO, and IO – the easier types at the same time. Thus, learners could acquire easier types of relative clauses without previous instruction about those types of relative clauses. Students who were exposed to the more difficult type acquired lower (easier) types simultaneously.

There were three groups in Doughty’s study (ROG, MOG, and COG). Each group received the flooded input that included OPREP types of clauses. In addition, the ROG group received grammar explanations on OPREP, when MOG and COG did not. Only the MOG group was exposed additionally to dictionaries and visual enhancement.

Table 1. Groups, stories, grammar, dictionaries and visual enhancement in Doughty’s (1991) study

Groups	Stories	Grammar	Dictionaries	Visual enhancement
ROG	YES	YES	NO	NO
MOG	YES	NO	YES	YES
COG	YES	NO	NO	NO

These groups can be described as:

ROG (rule-oriented group: traditional grammar explanation treatment)

MOG (rule-meaning group: focus on meaning treatment, typographical input enhancement)

COG (control-oriented group: comparison, input flood)

To compare the improvement and effectiveness of instruction and to interpret evidence, researchers need a control group that receives the pretest, no instruction, and the posttest. However, in the above study, the COG group cannot be treated as a control group because students received the same treatment as the other two groups. There was no fourth control group, and results showed that all groups learned relative clauses.

Findings showed that the MOG group achieved a satisfactory, better grammar learning and comprehension level than the other groups. This result can be interpreted as a valuable indicator for content-based curricula and immersion programs that do not provide explicit grammar instructions and try to keep a balance between meaning and form.

In sum, this study is important because it sheds light on the stages of relative clause acquisition. Additionally, it provides details regarding the efficiency of several forms of instruction. Several previous studies also proved the same order of relative clause acquisition where students learned via instruction more difficult types and got easier ones with no instructions (Aarts & Schils, 1995; Eckman, Bell & Nelson, 1988; Fitz, Chang & Christiansen, 2011; Gass, 1982; Mellow, 2006).

Spada & Lightbown’s study (1999) investigated English questions (wh- and yes/no questions). Considering the developmental stages for question formation, the study presented the 6 stages in question formation and exposed students to hundreds of different questions at appropriate stages. It concluded that a learner was in the specific stage of question formation when she/he was able to produce questions from this stage. The quantity of produced questions didn’t matter but the learner’s ability to produce them. In other words, even though learners produced more questions from stage 2 than from stage 3, they were on stage 3. Thus, the highest stage of question formation was when learners produced embedded questions and canceled inversion. For example, “*Can you tell me where I can go?*”.

This study measured the effectiveness of instruction following the pretest-instruction-posttest method. In addition, researchers observed that students did not skip any stages; they moved from one stage to another. Also, the recognition stage could be a proof of learning or change as compared to the production stage. However, there was no comparison group in this study as well. Researchers had an experimental group, but no control group that performed the pre- and post-test without instruction.

Bardovi-Harling (1994) and Doughty & Varela (1998) have had a high impact on SLA research and its applications. Bardovi-Harling (1994)

mentioned that there was some U-shaped behavior in the students' use of simple past, which went down right at the time when they started using RORs (Reversed-Order Reports). Also, the stage at which RORs began to be marked with ungrammatical/nontarget-like morphological contrasts could look like U-shaped behavior, since suddenly teachers would see students used tenses in very odd ways, tenses that they thought they had completely mastered (i.e., -ing or present perfect tenses). Finally, stages of these kinds kept accumulating in the learner's grammar, so that teachers could see the same learner produced tokens of stages 1, 2, 3, and 4 but then it could be assumed that the learner was at stage 4 (the highest stages of which that learner was capable of producing particular tokens). So, in many ways, real interlanguage data looked very "U-shaped" and disordered, not linear.

Doughty and Varela's findings might not be comparable to those of other studies that looked at recasts. In their study, first, the teacher's rising intonation was used to improve students' awareness. Second, students had a chance to fix their errors. Third, the teacher repeated their sentence in the target language if they were unable to do it themselves. As opposed to this, recasts, in other SLA studies, were simply the act of repeating a student's nonnative-like utterance in a target-like form. Similarly, Bardov-Harling's study on learners' phases of past perfect acquisition was a descriptive study rather than an experimental one. The study's participant pool was too small and there was no control group to compare the findings to. Numerous studies have been done on the instructional effectiveness of recasts, albeit they have been defined and operationalized very differently from the aforementioned studies (Al-Surmi, 2012; Ammar & Spada, 2006; Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Goo & Mackey, 2013; Lyster, 1998).

Understanding the variations in those studies' definitions and methodologies is essential when comparing their findings and evaluating the overall effectiveness of recasts. Lyster (2004), for example, discovered that prompts, as opposed to recasts, had long-term advantages for learners' written production, but not their oral production. Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006) and Sheen (2007), in their studies of adult ESL learners, found that prompts were more successful than recasts. Ammar and Spada (2006) indicated benefits for prompts over recasts on oral and written examinations, however, variances were identified depending on the learners' existing understanding of the target form. The study involved grade 5 students in rigorous ESL programs. Students with higher proficiency benefited equally from both types of CF, whereas students with lower competency benefited from prompts but not from recasts. Other research found that various CF types were more successful depending on the target linguistic feature. For instance, Ellis (2007) found that improvement in the past tense -ed was more influenced by metalinguistic feedback than it was by comparison -er. Yang and Lyster (2010) claimed that only irregular past tense forms improved with recasts while errors in both regular and irregular past tense forms improved with prompts.

One clear conclusion that arises from these studies is that instruction can only make learning more efficient, but cannot change the course of learning, because this is constrained by universal ways in which the brain processes language. This is what SLA researchers call the "efficiency argument". Instruction cannot alter the route of acquisition, but it can optimize the rate and the ultimate attainment. In plain English, teachers cannot influence the HOW students learn the target language, but they can certainly help with the HOW FAST and the HOW WELL of the learning process. It will, therefore, be true to conclude that learners receiving guided instructions will progress faster and ultimately attain higher levels of proficiency than uninstructed L2 learners. However, it appears that instruction cannot override certain 'natural' mechanisms and universal predispositions involved in SLA, as both instructed and non-instructed learners proceed through the same stages and sequences of acquisition.

Spada and Lightbown's (2008) study on focus on form instructions found that students benefited from form-focused instruction whether instructions were discrete or integrated within communicative activities. In their study, students were able to recognize and overcome linguistic difficulties. However, factors such as learners' characteristics, linguistic features of the language to be learned and learning context were crucial in assessing the effectiveness of focus on form instructions. A major finding suggested in this study was that isolated FoF instructions tailored within planned activities on forms deemed important and necessary even if the lesson was purely communicative in nature. Thus, not all teacher-student interactions in a communicative classroom have to be geared at fostering communication skills.

Similar to Spada and Lightbown's (2008) study, Wong and Barrea-Marlys (2012) found that some teachers considered specific form-focused instructions crucial, particularly when teaching grammar. According to the findings of the interviews and observations, teachers' classroom procedures reflected their beliefs and prior experiences. There were numerous instances of explicit grammatical instruction in the communicative English classes for the participants. Despite being carried out in actual classrooms, this study's objective was to compare teachers' attitudes and actual behaviors rather than to assess their performance during explicit form-focused training sessions.

In a different study by Valeo and Spada (2016), it was discovered that integrated focus on the form was preferred by instructors and students to isolated FFI for the teaching and learning of grammar. The values of integrated and isolated FFI were investigated by the researchers using questionnaires in two contexts, ESL in Canada and EFL in Brazil. The study's findings showed a tendency to favor integrated FFI over I-FFI, but they did not indicate whether or not classroom practice truly adhered to integrated FFI's guiding principles.

2.2 Meaning-based Instruction

Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2001) defined meaning-focused instruction as "a tool for achieving some non-linguistic goal rather than as an object to be studied to learn the language" (p.412). Meaning-based instruction places more focus on communicative language in everyday situations than it does on the discrete components of language. The natural approach hypothesis, which excludes direct grammar instruction, serves as an example of such a communicative perspective toward the teaching of a language. (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). The goal of learning a second language, according to MacIntyre (2007), is to develop linguistic competence, and the capacity to use the language for communicative purposes. Language usage and language learning, according to Swain (2000), takes place simultaneously. Thus, it is

impossible to ignore the importance of input- and output-based activities in the teaching of languages.

The dissatisfaction with form-focused approaches like grammatical translation and cognitive code methods gave rise to the meaning-focused approach. There were claims that there was a disconnection between what was taught in school and the communication abilities required in real-world situations.

According to proponents of the interaction hypothesis, learners must negotiate meaning when they engage with one another. For them to comprehend one another, they must define their intents and meanings. It is suggested that learners acquire the forms to convey their meanings through the process of negotiating meaning (Long, 1981). The assertions made by the interaction hypothesis prompted a significant rise in pair and group work in L2 instruction as well as the creation of communicative activities that required students to share knowledge, work through issues, and act out learning scenarios (Crookes & Gass, 1993; Pica & Doughty, 1985).

The interaction hypothesis resulted in the strong version of CLT, which concentrated solely on meaning and paid little or no attention to teaching language forms or offering corrective feedback. This was seen in a range of L2 programs, including content-based language instruction, task-based language instruction, and comprehension-based instruction.

Pica (1985) conducted cross-sectional research in which eighteen adult native Spanish speakers who were learning English had either (1) classroom instruction only, (2) input from just regular social interactions, or (3) a combination of (1) and (2). The study's findings demonstrated that classroom training had a selective impact on learners' output, increasing the improvement of accuracy for linguistically easy plural -s but delaying the achievement of target-like usage for the more linguistically complicated progressive -ing. Instruction proved to have minimal effect on very complex grammatical morphology like the article "a" since all three groups went through a similar developmental process regardless of their exposure to L2. According to the study's findings, greater emphasis might be placed on grammar elements that are more amenable to presentation and practice in the classroom while excluding complicated regions from direct instruction.

Donesch-Jezo (2011) showed evidence from classroom-based research of the influence of output on learner learning of L2 modal verbs, adjectives, and adverbs that express uncertain meanings, all of which are key meta-discourse elements. The findings of this study implied that encouraging students to generate intelligible output, together with providing them with learning reinforcement secured by appropriate feedback, could be an effective source of creating long-term grammatical correctness in the students' target language.

Yet even in communicative and content-based programs, students still have trouble using correct grammar in their speech and written production (García Mayo, 2002b; Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Lyster, 2007; Ranta, 2002). According to the weaker version of CLT and other conceptual frameworks that highlighted the requirement of a focus on meaning and communication in L2 instruction, these observations also led to the desire for more form-focused instruction.

In an intense ESL program that prioritized oral interpersonal communication skills in the L2 over formal correctness and academic competency, Ranta (2002) examined the grammatical development and fluency of English oral production. Six metrics, including speech pace, pausing, and self-repair variables, were used to evaluate fluency. For question forms and possessive determiners, learners were further grouped according to their level of interlanguage development. Based on their performance in an L1 and L2 metalinguistic task, two groups of students with varying levels of analytical ability were selected. In terms of producing possessive determiners, analytical learners outperform less analytical learners. Nevertheless, the difference between the two groups for the question forms was not significant even if the tendency was the same. With regard to fluency, however, there weren't many disparities seen across the groups. These findings pointed to a relatively uniform level of fluency among students in these intensive ESL programs, regardless of their analytical abilities. However, they also revealed a potential disadvantage for less analytical students in terms of grammatical development due to the lack of form-focused instruction.

García Mayo (2002b) looked at whether interaction other than negotiation of meaning may effectively meet the needs of L2 learners in communication-oriented teaching environments. In two dyadic communication tasks with other advanced L2 learners and native speakers, she studied the interactional strategies used by fourteen advanced Spanish university English students. The learners' spontaneous use of repair (self-and-other) and collaborative discourse were given particular attention since these two types of strategies showed that learners were focusing on grammatical, phonological, and lexical forms. According to García Mayo's research, those advanced learners modified their interactional discourse at the lexical and phrasal levels using both techniques. The learners' needs for both positive and negative input were not met by these two methods, and neither were their abilities to create the altered output necessary for morpho-syntactic development. García Mayo concluded that communicative language instruction by itself was unable to foster high levels of grammatical correctness in a situation including a foreign language. Because of this, it was necessary to include focus-on-form exercises, such as dictogloss assignments, jigsaw puzzles, and story narration which target particular problematic form-meaning correlations above the word and phrasal level. As Ellis (2016) argued, the focus-on-meaning, focus-on-form, and focus-on-forms types are not isolated entities but more of a continuum of FFI.

One of the ISLA's core concepts is that there should be a link between ISLA scholars' and ELT practitioners' interests. This research-pedagogy relationship has received a lot of attention in recent years. Meta-analyses can be valuable in establishing and sustaining a productive dialogue between teachers and researchers. For instance, Shintani, Li, and Ellis (2013), in a meta-analysis of 35 research studies, found substantial impacts for both comprehension-based and production-based teaching on receptive and productive L2 knowledge. Such study data is significant for teachers who feel that input alone is adequate for L2 acquisition and that output is simply a byproduct of learning.

2.3 Explicit/Implicit Instructions

Many SLA studies conducted since the 1990s have promoted the use of explicit formal instruction (Dekeyser, 1998; Ellis, 1990; Skehan, 1996; Spada & Lightbown, 1999; White, 1998). Other studies on second language acquisition in the classroom have even asserted that explicit instruction, which focuses students on form, is preferable to implicit learning (Doughty, 2012; Macaro & Masterman, 2006; Scheffler & Cincina, 2011; Spada & Tomita, 2010).

Furthermore, the focus of research has shifted from investigating the potential benefits of explicit instruction to pinpointing the particular type of explicit grammar instruction that best promotes learning in the classroom (Benati & Angelovska, 2015; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Spada, 1997; Spada & Tomita, 2010). Spada and Tomita (2010) evaluated the connection between different training modalities and the complexity of grammatical features in their metanalysis. They argued that for both fundamental and sophisticated features, explicit instruction led to more noticeable improvements than implicit instruction.

According to Benati and Lee (2010), through processing instruction, L2 learners with various L1s (including, but not limited to English, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, and German) developed the ability to perceive and generate target items in tasks at the sentence and discourse level. Benati and Lee (2015) looked into how processing instruction affected students and found that it was a more successful pedagogical intervention than conventional instruction. Regardless of the student's age, aptitude, or motivation, processing instruction is a resilient, long-lasting, and successful educational intervention (Benati & Angelovska, 2015).

In contrast, implicit grammar instruction teaches grammatical rules through the communicative use of the language using the inductive processing method. According to SLA researchers, in favor of implicit grammar instructions, feedback should be mostly implicit and take the form of a recast to avoid interrupting the flow of communication (Goo & Mackey 2013; Lyster, et al., 2013; Long, 2007). For instance, recasts have a successful track record in first language acquisition (L1A) and second language acquisition (SLA). Further, the degree to which implicit negative feedback is successful can be observed when both teachers and students are free to concentrate on tasks and subject-matter learning (Long, 2015). On the other hand, some have argued that learners are more likely to notice more direct forms of corrective feedback, such as explicit correction or metalinguistic information, and that this can have an impact on the learner's interlanguage system (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Loewen & Philp, 2006; Lyster 2004).

There are, however, a few drawbacks to explicit knowledge. The first is that the rules that are frequently taught in schools do not correlate to the language's real grammar (VanPatten, 2017). For instance, English L2 students are frequently taught that the definite article "the" must come before the same item when it is mentioned more than once. However, this metalinguistic norm is not always strictly followed. For instance, even if the library hasn't been brought up in the conversation before, someone seeking one in a city can still inquire, "Where's the library?" This simple illustration demonstrates how the usage of English articles is dependent on a more intricate structure connected to the information that the speaker and hearer share (Epstein 2002). However, probably, due to their complexity, these extra principles are rarely taught in the classroom.

These drawbacks do not imply that explicit information is not useful. In fact, learners can utilize explicit knowledge to generate more correct written language or refer to it briefly during a conversation if they are having trouble communicating.

Implicit knowledge, on the other hand, requires time to be internalized, as is the case with L1 speakers. However, L2 students only study English for a year or two at a time, for a total of a few hours each week. Implicit knowledge is challenging to teach, which is a problem at the heart of ISLA research. Additionally, learners are usually unconscious that they have acquired such knowledge. Furthermore, oral output assessments, which are time-consuming and subjective, make it challenging for teachers to evaluate students' implicit knowledge. During speaking exams, teachers are unable to review grammatical errors due to time constraints. As a result, in L2 classrooms, the acquisition of implicit language information may not be the main focus.

3. Discussion

Reviewing SLA literature, both focus and meaning-based instructions can effectively optimize the rate and ultimate attainment of language learning in the EFL context, but may not change the learning route. This is because the course of learning is constrained by universal ways in which the brain processes acquisition (Bardovi-Harling, 1994; Doughty & Varela, 1998; Krashen 1981, 1985). In other words, while both instructed and uninstructed L2 learners would go through the same stages and sequences of acquisition, instructed learners would advance more quickly and ultimately achieve higher levels of proficiency. However, this also indicates that instructional intervention is unable to modify certain "natural" mechanisms and universal predispositions present in second language acquisition.

Hence, instruction in various forms is a necessary trigger for enhancing the learning processes and mechanisms that are otherwise insufficiently activated due to the limited and unauthentic exposure to the target language. Both form-and-meaning-focused approaches demonstrate their beneficial effects on second-language acquisition and show how learners in a variety of contexts could purposefully benefit from each approach. However, this paper is of the view that classroom instruction should involve a form-and-meaning-focused approach. The two methods used separately might be insufficient. For instance, many students could be adept at forms in controlled settings but not necessarily at communicating in real-world contexts. Further, it has been suggested that learners would lose control of language forms and meaningful engagement unless they are provided plenty of chances to participate in communicative activities to complement form-focused instruction. According to Spada and Lightbown (2008), studies on CLT and CBI showed that meaning-based exposure to the language helped L2 learners develop comprehension abilities, oral fluency, self-confidence, and communicative skills, but they still

struggled with pronunciation and other L2 morphological, syntactic, and pragmatic features (Harley & Swain, 1984; Lyster, 1987).

Such claims have prompted the merging of form- and meaning-focused instruction for successful SLA. The impact of form and meaning-focused instruction on SLA has been the subject of some research. Montgomery and Eisenstein (1985) examined how well adult learners of L2 completed an experimental ESL course. To examine the improvements in L2 proficiency, comparisons were made between the experimental group, which took special oral communicative classes in addition to their regular form-focused classes and went on field trips to places where they frequently had to communicate in English, and the control group, which only attended the required grammar classes. The results of the learners' pre and post-test performance in an oral interview indicated that both groups improved in grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, and pronunciation. Spada (1987) looked at the L2 development of forty-eight individuals with intermediate language skills enrolled in three communicative programs with varying amounts of time spent on explicit grammar teaching. Classes A and B got form-focused and meaning-focused training, whereas classes C received meaning-focused instruction in their speaking activities (such as role-playing). Class A primarily received form-focused instruction in their speaking activities. According to Spada, learners who received more form-focused teaching outperformed students who received less form-focused instruction in terms of conversational abilities, such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, as well as grammatical structures. Later, Spada (2014) argued, "we can be confident from the work that has been done on the contributions of different types of instruction to L2 learning that a combination of form and meaning-based instruction is more effective than an exclusive focus on either one" (p. 51).

Yet, the limitations are numerous, even though there are quite impressive results and recommendations that SLA may provide to enhance language instruction. One is that many teachers are restricted in their ability to decide what and when to teach. The issue then becomes how to manage "learner readiness" in a class with students at a variety of developmental stages. Finally, while certain grammar-related topics have detailed explanations in both English and other languages, there is still a vast amount of unexplored territory for which there is no acquisitional data.

4. Conclusion

This paper demonstrated the productivity and diversity of SLA research on second language instruction, including the range of issues covered, theoretical viewpoints, and methodologies. The goal is to further theory development and inform L2 instruction.

ISLA research can contribute to advancements in classroom learning and teaching. This can only take place when teachers and researchers exchange and share ideas on how to improve the effectiveness and learnability of language in the classroom (Paran, 2017).

It is obvious that to conduct research, ISLA researchers need L2 students' and teachers' experiences. To help understand the context of the classroom, learners should also pay attention to the concerns and viewpoints of the teachers. On the other hand, instructors can benefit from the thorough investigation of ISLA (Sato, & Loewen, 2019). Teachers are in a better position to benefit from the ISLA research's investigations. However, they should not accept every study at face value. With such feedback, instructors can concentrate on the task at hand since they are aware that their practices are supported by research on successful teaching. Continued research in instructed SLA will lead to more clarity and insight and in turn relevance and applicability to L2 teaching.

5. Pedagogical implications

Regarding pedagogical implications as to the value of instruction and how learners learn things, let us consider the following:

- A large percentage of a language is learned in stages, patterns, and sequences. Language learning does not differ significantly based on methods of instruction, curriculum, or any other external influences. Many rules "come into place" in a predictable, sequential fashion that is internal to the learner and irrespective of the L1, age, training, and other criteria in terms of grammatical proficiency. For example, when it comes to relative clauses, learners may typically learn in the following order from least difficult to most difficult
SU>DO>IO>OPREP>GEN>OCOMP.
- It is important to note that every grammatical rule has exceptions. Grammar can be divided into various components, each of which may pose unique learning challenges to L2 learners. Hence, not all grammatical rules can be learned in the same way and cannot be taught in a similar manner. Some grammar systems in particular have specific learnability criteria and must be learned in stages, with no steps skipped. Students must be ready to learn them. For instance, in English, such collection of grammatical structures may include questions, negation, and morphemes. Another category of markedness-related grammatical systems in English would comprise relative clauses, voiced and voiceless stops, and possessives. In such cases, a phenomenon called "projection" occurs, where more distinct and challenging forms can be taught while the simpler forms can be learned by learners for free.
- Although several SLA researches have proven that explicit teaching strategies have a greater effect on enhancing the L2 grammar of EFL learners, the most effective way is likely to be an inclusive approach to grammar training that includes both implicit and explicit qualities. Explicit and implicit grammar instruction should be regarded as complementing rather than mutually exclusive approaches to teaching English.
- It is possible that students may not retain all the information we teach them, but they may still internalize certain rules and concepts subconsciously. For instance, students who are learning English as a foreign language may face difficulties in grasping

concepts such as past tense, simple past, and questions. This is because they need to be prepared and have a basic understanding of the language before they can effectively utilize the instruction they receive, particularly in terms of spontaneous production.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of teaching, it is important to understand the specific instructional techniques used. A thorough evaluation should be conducted on the type of teaching and components of the technique employed. Even if a name or title is not given for the technique, its features can still be identified. It is important to note that the same term may have different meanings in various studies. For instance, "recasts" can either be explicit as seen in the corrective recasts planned by Doughty & Varela (1998), or implicit as seen in the recasts designed by Long (2007).
- Even though many components of language are not stated developmentally, there is reasonably strong information on how learners learn a few morphemes, tense/aspect, relative sentences, questions, and negation. However, stages and readiness results cannot completely substitute instructional efforts. For a large number of teaching/learning tasks, we still rely completely on our teaching intuition.
- High-quality instruction utilizing approaches such as recasts that are appropriately matched with and adapted to the grammatical difficulty and context may have a substantial impact on how fast and effectively learners pick up grammar concepts that they would not otherwise acquire. As a result, if high-quality instruction is provided, acquisition with instruction is preferred to naturalistic acquisition alone.
- In educational contexts, the full development of conversational skills and a strong mastery of the language are not necessarily priorities. Instead, in many EFL contexts, students may only require a basic understanding of the language's grammar, the ability to perform well on entrance exams for university admission, and a good foundational ability to communicate with others who do not speak the language as their mother tongue.

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