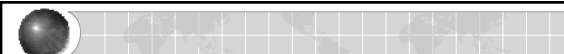





Issues in Learning and Teaching Grammar

Language Learning vs Language Acquisition

- SLA involves creation of an implicit linguistic system.
- SLA is complex and consists of different processes.
- SLA is dynamic but slow
- Most L2 learners fall short of native-like competence
- Skill acquisition is different from the creation of an implicit system

Some Misconceptions

Belief One: That's the way I learned, So...

- Other contributing factors...
- Optimal context for SLA
- Does instruction play a role?
- Changing the status quo



Some Misconceptions

Belief Two: Drills are effective tools for learning grammar.

- Drills are important
- Drills vary in nature
- Pervasive nature of drills



Mechanical Drills

Mechanical drills:

- Learners don't have to attend to meaning.
- There is only one right answer.

Examples:

Juan pone los vasos en la mesa. (las copas etc)

Juan los pone en la mesa.

Juan gaga los momos en la posa. (las dodas)

Juan las gaga en la posa.



Meaningful Drills

Meaningful Drills:

- Learners attend to meaning of stimuli and their own answers.
- There is still only one right answer.
- There is no new information. Everyone knows the right answer.



Communicative Drills

Communicative Drills:

- Learners must attend to meaning.
- Information in learner's answer is new and unknown to person asking question.
- There is more than one right answer.



Some Misconceptions

Belief Three: Explicit explanation is necessary...

- Testing drives grammar instruction
- Testing assesses learned language
- Research tends to indicate otherwise
 - VanPatten & Oikennon (1996)
 - Sanz & Morgan-Short (2003)
 - Benati (2003)
 - Farley (2003)
 - Wong (2003)



Some Misconceptions

Belief Four: The first language is the source of all errors

Belief Five: Acquisition involves the learning of paradigms



Limited Effects of Instruction

- Natural acquisition orders
- Instruction doesn't seem to override natural acquisition orders
- Instruction seems to develop "monitor."
- Instruction may speed up acquisition process and may develop accuracy in certain situations



Advantages of Classroom Learning

- More language data
- Heightened awareness of grammatical form and structure
- Self-selected learners
 - May be more motivated
 - May have more aptitude
