Establishing　an　Interlanguage　Grammar　under　FFI:　Explicit　Jump　Start

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Learning a language, whether it is a first or a second, involves constructing its grammar as a cognitive system for determining the relationship between meaning and form of the language. Attaining form-meaning connections (FMCs) of the target language is essential in its learning. It is generally recognized that while the target language grammar may be constructed naturally in the input-rich natural learning environment, it cannot be learned effectively in the input-poor foreign language learning situation without some kind of pedagogical intervention including form-focused instruction (FFI). This article argues that foreign language learning under FFI has a unique characteristic which causes both facilitative and restrictive effect on the establishment of an interlanguage grammar: facilitative in promoting the systematization of the grammar and restrictive in establishing its FMCs. Actually the facilitative effect is the other side of the restrictive one: a form tends to be learned systematically with an emphasis put on its relations to other forms at the cost of forming the connection between the form and its meaning. This article finally contends that guiding the learner to concentrate on activities conducive to establishing FMCs is the best way to activating the positive side and suppressing the negative side of FFI.

Key words：implicit knowledge, explicit knowledge, focus-on-forms, form-meaning connections

1. Essential processes of first language learning

Among various research approaches to language learning, usage-based model (Tomasello, 2003, 2006) seems to be most promising. This is mainly because the model is concerned with the actual process of language learning rather than the product of it. Moreover, the model argues that abstract concepts of language such as parts of speech and constructional patterns of sentences are attained gradually starting with concrete exemplars without necessitating any linguistic innateness ideas. This argumentation together with the model's counter arguments against UG-based approach in terms of the linking problem and the continuity problem sounds quite natural and persuasive.[1]

Usage-based model of language learning has been proposed to explain first language learning. It is claimed in the model that children learning their first language start the task with two basic sets of skills which are both supposed to be innate: skills for "intention-reading" as a socio-interactional ability and skills for "pattern-finding" as a cognitive ability (Tomasello, 2003, p. 3).

Pattern-finding is mostly relevant to the gradual abstraction of constructions and importantly it is realized through the process of form-meaning (function) mapping (Lieven and Tomasello, 2008, pp. 170-171). Namely, a construction is abstracted as such when its form-meaning connection (FMC) is abstracted. In other words, a construction (e.g., transitive construction, dative construction, etc.) realizes a particular meaning with its formal characteristics and, thus, the pattern as a construction to be recognized there can only be captured in terms of its FMC.

Note that form-meaning connections (FMCs) assumes identification of both meaning and form and that intention-reading is responsible for meaning identification. Intention-reading is, therefore, a prerequisite for language learning.

It can be stated, therefore, that establishing FMCs or abstraction of constructions of the language constitutes the reality of its learning. In fact, children learn "a grammar－a cognitive system that determines the relationship between form and meaning in all possible sentences of their language" (O'Grady, 1997, p. 1).

Establishment of FMCs of the target language involves two main processes of abstraction. One is the process of abstracting each construction by generalizing and abstracting its FMC. The other is the process of forming interrelations among constructions and abstracting them. This latter process is concerned with the systematization of constructions as a whole system of grammar of the target language.

The abstraction process of a construction starts with initial learning of its exemplars in an item by item fashion and as these exemplars are accumulated, the same pattern in terms of its FMC is identified among them. The identification of the pattern is made initially locally and finally globally. For example, children learning English may experience utterances such as "I'm hungry," "I'm thirsty," and "I'm sleepy" item by item. Then they may find the constant connection between the form (i.e., I'm + a word indicating some physical condition) and the shared meaning (i.e., statement about the speaker's physical condition). It should be noted here that identification of both the form and the meaning entails a certain degree of abstraction respectively as is indicated by the words "a word indicating some physical condition" and "the speaker's physical condition." This finding of the constant connection may lead to a local abstraction of the FMC. With much more experience of the construction in utterances such as "I'm happy," "I'm sad," and "I'm angry," children can extend the local abstraction more broadly to the connection between the form "I'm + a word indicating physical or mental condition (adjective)" and the meaning "statement of the speaker's physical or mental condition."

The FMC between "I'm + a word indicating physical or mental condition" and "statement of the speaker's physical or mental condition" must be further extended to the connection between "I'm + a word expressing an attribute" and "statement of the speaker's attribute" including the connection pattern between the form "I'm + a/an + a word indicating a status (noun)" and its corresponding meaning. It should also be noted that the FMC needs to be extended most globally to reach the connection between the form of "S(ubject) + be + C (omplement)" and the meaning of "statement of the attribute of the person indicated by the sentence subject" (Yamaoka, 2005).

The process of systematization of grammar in terms of abstracting interrelations among constructions is also gradual. This reflects the process of abstraction at the level of construction. For example, "I'm hungry" experienced as an item exemplifying the connection between the form and its meaning may somehow be contrasted with "I'm not hungry" equally experienced as an item exhibiting the connection between the form and its meaning. With increasing experience of each of these construction types and thus with increasing generalization of each of these, the contrast between them is also generalized and abstracted.

First language learning, therefore, has several characteristics. Firstly, it starts with itemized exemplar learning. "I'm hungry" and "I'm thirsty," for example, are experienced independently as each constituting an exemplar exhibiting a particular FMC.

Secondly, item learning forms the foundation for generalization of constructions by accumulating relevant exemplars and the process of generalization is gradual following its intermediate local levels before finally reaching the most global level.

Thirdly, systematization of grammar also proceeds gradually along with abstraction of both constructions and interrelations among them. So the degree of systmaticity of the grammar is dependent upon the degree of both types of abstraction.

Thus it can be concluded that in first language learning abstract constructions and their systematization are attained gradually as the result of their respective gradual learning. It is not the case that children can use their first language because they have gained the system of grammar of the language consisting of its abstract constructions and their systematization; the system of grammar appears only after the result of children's learning and using the language. Actually "performance is really the basis for competence" rather than the way round (Garrett, 1991, p. 78).

2. Environmental limitations of foreign language learning in the classroom

First language is learned naturally while children are engaging in communication in their daily life. This process of natural learning is made possible with rich linguistic input given to children: rich not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. Children receive input all the time while they are awake and this amounts to 18,000 hours in the first five years of learning according to a conservative estimate (10 hours a day for 365 days for 5 years) (Hammerly, 1982, p. 95).

Input to children learning their first language is also rich in a situational and a social perspective. They experience their first language in genuine and concrete situations in real time. Language, therefore, constitutes a real part of their life and it occupies the essential part of it. In addition, the input addressed to them is most relevant to them following the principle of "here-and-nowness." Moreover, addressers of input are socially very close to the children: most usually their family members. They are also usually exclusively concerned with their children and always want

to be best for them.

Unfortunately, any of these features of first language learning do not apply to foreign language learning in the classroom: input is poor both in quantity and quality in the classroom. This is especially so in Japan: three hours a week in junior high school only amounts to 105 hours a year (3 hours a week for 35 weeks) and actually this is less than 3% of the time available in natural language learning (10 hours a day for 365 days). [2] Moreover, in the classroom, language teachers are usually the main and only source of input and they are responsible for dozens of students in the classroom at the same time without favoritism toward any of them.

It is also crucial to acknowledge the fact that "what is taught in classrooms in certain crucial respects cannot be in accordance with actual language use" (Widdowson, 2003, p. 112). This makes a sharp contrast with authenticity of language in first language learning. The classroom is basically an artificial space for education detached from the realities of the society for the sake of efficiency of education and the classroom contexts in which language learning takes place are different from those context within which the language is used on a daily basis. In fact, "the recommendation that teachers of English, or of any other language come to that, should, as a matter of principle, present only 'real' language is misguided, and misleading" (Widdowson, 2003, p. 103). Again, according to Widdowson (2003, p. 105), "it makes no sense to present learners with 'real' examples of text unless they can make them real for themselves."

Nature, therefore, does not take care of foreign language learning in the classroom and, thus, some kind of pedagogical intervention is essential in the learning environment for helping learners contrive to make examples of the target language real for themselves in the environment of their learning. When learners are linguistic adults and in a cognitive developmental stage called the formal operational stage, one of the most promising types of intervention might be providing form-focused instruction (FFI).

Although FFI can take at least two forms: focus-on-forms (FonFS) and focus-on-form (FonF) (Long, 1991), FonFS seems to be appropriate at the initial stages of learning in an extremely input-poor foreign language learning situation such as English learning at school in Japan. This is simply because FonF assumes communicative and task activities in advance, which seems not only difficult to realize in the learning situation but also incompatible with the learning situation. To learn to be able to

communicate verbally only through engaging in communicative interactions is to put a cart before the horse in the foreign language learning situation with extremely limited input.

Adoption of communicative and task activities from the very beginning of learning is based on an approach called task-based language teaching (TBLT). Note that TBLT is a naturalistic approach of language teaching and learning, which seems to be incompatible with the limitedness of the foreign language learning situation as described above. It may be worthy mentioning here that in fact there are to date relatively few situations in which TBLT has been put into practice and that "there is insufficient evidence on how TBLT works in real classroom situations, particularly in the teaching of foreign languages in state schools, to warrant the current advocacy for task-based programme development" (Samuda and Bygate, 2008, p. 212).

Task-supported language teaching (TSLT) rather than TBLT seems to be appropriate here in foreign language learning in the classroom. TSLT "views tasks as a way of providing communicative practice for language items that have been introduced in a more traditional way" (Ellis, 2003, p. 28), and the way of introducing language items adopted most often is FonFS in Japan. [3]

3. Implicit and explicit knowledge of language

FonFS most usually results, at least initially, in learners' possession of explicit knowledge of the target language grammar. Explicit knowledge of language, which is defined as "knowledge about language and about the uses to which language can be put" (Ellis, 2004, p. 229), is contrasted with implicit knowledge of language defined as "knowledge of language that a speaker manifest in performance but has no awareness of" (Ellis, 2003, p. 105). This means that the kind of explicit knowledge learners have about language and its use as the initial and direct result of receiving FonFS is substantially different from the kind of implicit knowledge which is to be employed in spontaneous language performance.

It is important to acknowledge that these two types of language knowledge are also contrasted in a number of characteristics as is shown in Table 1. It is also important to notice that these characterization of each of these types of knowledge reflects the way each knowledge is typically attained in its learning. Implicit knowledge is typically the result of natural language learning. Since what is attained in natural language learning, as is discussed earlier in this

Table 1 Key characteristics of implicit and explicit knowledge

Characteristics	Implicit knowledge	Explicit knowledge
Awareness	Intuitive awareness of linguistic norms	Conscious awareness of linguistic norms
Type of knowledge	Procedural knowledge of rules and fragments	Declarative knowledge of grammatical rules and fragments
Systematicity	Variable but systematic knowledge	Anomalous and inconsistent knowledge
Accessibility	Access to knowledge by means of automatic processing	Access to knowledge by means of controlled processing
Use of L2 knowledge	Access to knowledge during fluent performance	Access to knowledge during planning difficulty
Self-report	Nonverbalizable	Verbalizable
Learnability	Potentially only within critical period	Any age

(Ellis, 2005, p. 151)

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Explicit knowledge learning          Implicit knowledge learning
  Start                                 Start
    Abstract form recognition             Exemplar learning
    Systematic understanding              Item by item learning

  Result                                Result
    Systematic knowledge as explicit      Systematic knowledge as implicit
    Featured as in Table 1                Featured as in Table 1
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Figure 1 Differences between explicit and implicit knowledge at initial stages of learning

article, is FMCs of the language, the very nature of the connections characterizes implicit knowledge as being procedural in nature and automatically accessible.

Similarly, characteristics of explicit knowledge listed in Table 1 all reflect the typical way of attaining the knowledge through receiving FonFS. Conscious awareness of the knowledge, its declarative nature, controlled processing for its access, and verbalizability of the knowledge are all resultant concomitants of having the knowledge through FonFS.

Another important characteristic of explicit knowledge not shown in Table 1 is the emphatic dependency on the systematic nature of grammar in the process of learning grammatical forms and its resultant systematic understanding of them at the level of conscious knowledge, again a result of receiving FonFS.

This systematic dependency, of course, comes from the typical way of introducing target grammatical forms in FonFS: every form is introduced in connection with or in contrast with other forms of the target grammar which are already existing in the learner's mind. Take negation as an example. It is usually introduced after the affirmative sentences with the affirmative form and in contrast with the affirmative form. So negation is better understood by the leaner in its relation to the existing unmarked affirmative form. Systematic understanding of a form can lead to its firmer learning than when it is learned as an isolated item. The passive voice with its form is also the case: it is introduced in comparison with its unmarked counterpart or the active form. The passive form is, therefore, understood better than when the form is learned by itself.

Initial systematic dependency in the learning of explicit knowledge of the target grammar under FonFS also entails another very important fact that the target form is introduced at a general and abstract level. Actually form itself is an abstraction in that it is presented and learned as a general framework such as "S + be + past participle" for the passive form and "S + be + present participle" for

the progressive form.

Of course, there are at least two ways of introducing forms in FonFS: an inductive way and a deductive one. Although the deductive way of introduction begins with conscious recognition of forms as abstractions on the part of learners, the inductive way also results in learners' conscious recognition of forms as abstractions. In the latter, learners are usually invited to work out formal patterns among the examples sentences given to them. And these resultant forms are summarized as such and learners are to learn them as general and abstract forms.

Either deductively or inductively, foreign language learners attain explicit knowledge of the target language grammar which is characterized with features shown in Table 1.

Note that this systematic dependency in the learning of explicit grammatical knowledge with FonFS makes a sharp contrast with the process of learning implicit knowledge of grammar in natural language learning. As has already been discussed earlier in this article, in natural language learning, the system of grammar only appears as the result of learning constructions of the target language through their respective gradual abstraction and, at the same time, through the gradual abstraction of their interrelations.

To reiterate, the nature of systematic knowledge of language as explicit is quite different from that of systematic language knowledge as implicit. While the former explicit knowledge is usually learned with abstraction and systematic interconnectedness from the very beginning of learning, the latter implicit knowledge is learned as a system only as the result of learning. In other words, conscious learning of constructions start with their presentation in abstract and general forms together with their interrelationship. In contrast, in learning implicit knowledge, as in natural learning, constructions gradually appear as abstract FMCs only as the learning proceeds with more and more accumulation of relevant exemplars and through the stages of abstraction at local levels to the final global level, and systematicity of the grammar also appears gradually along with the learning and abstraction of the interrelationships among abstracted constructions.

The discussion presented so far concerning the differences between explicit and implicit knowledge of grammar not included in Table 1, especially those in terms of their respective developmental perspectives, can be summarized in Figure 1.

It must be stressed that while the systematic

understanding of forms of grammar under FonFS can lead to their deeper learning than the case of their isolated learning as is done in the initial stages of natural learning, it still remains as that of explicit knowledge. And a strong and inevitable side effect of this reliance on systematicity of grammar in the learning of forms under FonFS is the general tendency to invite learners to pay their focal attention to the understanding of the systematic formal interrelations among forms and, thus, deviate their mind from the main business of learning, that is, forming FMCs as constructions of the language. It should be noted that forming FMCs of the language is to build implicit knowledge of the language, and, therefore, this tendency to emphasize systematicity in the learning of explicit knowledge can be an obstacle to language learning if no measures is to be taken to activate the basic processes responsible for the learning of implicit knowledge and encourage learners to pay their attention to FMCs and actually experience FMCs themselves.

As a matter of fact, systematicity of grammar itself, either as explicit or implicit, does not cause language use; it is intended meanings to be communicated that motivate and cause language use by directly activating the connections to their respective corresponding forms. Referring to the knowledge system of grammar as generalizations about how the abstract system works, Garrett (1986, p. 138) states that "In producing utterances speakers do not start from knowledge of how the system works; they start with a thought to be communicated." Actually in producing an utterance in the passive voice (e.g., The hunter was killed by the bear.), we start from the meaning itself; we never start with the passive form being contrasted with the active form. Nor is absolutely the case that we first make an active sentence and then transform it into a passive.

4. Explicit jump start in foreign language learning

Based on the discussion so far, it is now important to discuss the possible contribution of explicit knowledge of the target language grammar in developing implicit knowledge of the grammar.

Before addressing the issue, it is necessary to refer to three theoretical positions posited so far concerning the developmental relationship between explicit and implicit knowledge of grammar: the noninterface position, the strong interface position and the weak interface position.

The noninterface position rejects the interface between the two types of knowledge. It rejects both the possibility of explicit knowledge transforming directly into implicit

knowledge and the possibility of implicit knowledge becoming explicit knowledge (Ellis, 2009, p. 21). Krashen (1982, 1985), who proclaims this position, contends that these two kinds of knowledge are mutually separate and independent developmentally.

The strong interface position insists that not only can explicit knowledge be derived from implicit knowledge, but also explicit knowledge can be converted into implicit knowledge through practice (Ellis, 2009 p. 21). For example, McLaughlin (1978), as a proponent of this position, claims that explicit knowledge is directly converted into implicit knowledge via practice. Probably this may be the position that most practicing language teachers expect.

The weak interface position acknowledges the possibility of explicit knowledge becoming implicit, but posits some limitation on when and how this can take place. Ellis (2009, pp. 21-22) admits three version of the weak interface position. One version draws on the notion of 'learnability' in accordance with attested developmental sequences in second language learning (Pienemann, 1984) and claims that explicit knowledge can covert into implicit knowledge through practice, but only if the learner is developmentally ready to learn the target form.[4]

The second version insists that explicit knowledge may contribute indirectly to the learning of implicit knowledge by activating the processes responsible for its learning.

And the third version is roundabout in that it admits the contribution of 'auto-input' or learners' own output derived from explicit knowledge serving as input to themselves in learning implicit knowledge.

Recognizing that implicit knowledge of grammar consists of FMCs and that FMCs are typically formed naturally in natural language learning gradually with identifying patterns in the connections between form and meaning on the basis of accumulated exemplars, it might be reasonable to adopt the second version of the weak interface position. This is because explicit knowledge is different from implicit knowledge and the former can be expected to play a positive role in learning implicit knowledge. Although explicit knowledge is learned with an emphasis put on its systematic nature, this is at the cost of forming connections between form and meaning. Actually, systematic understanding in explicit knowledge is not the aim of learning, may it be helpful for it; the aim is to establish FMCs of the language as implicit knowledge. Therefore, it must be recognized that learning of explicit knowledge is an aid to or a means for learning implicit knowledge rather than the end itself.

The role of consciousness-raising (C-R) to grammatical properties of the target language should be reconsidered in connection with the second version of the weak interface position. It is claimed that C-R is a shortcut to learning and that it is a means to the end rather than the end itself of learning (Rutherford, 1987). To state that it is a shortcut is to claim that with C-R activities learners can spend less time and energy in identifying the formal features of the target grammatical forms than if they are left on their own.

To say that C-R is an aid means that raising learners' consciousness to grammatical properties of the target language is not intended to be the aim of learning, namely, to teach learners explicit knowledge of the grammar as the descriptive product of its system; it is intended, in instead, to assist and facilitate the learning of implicit knowledge of the language grammar as consisting of FMCs of the language which is directly responsible for normal language use. Rutherford (1987, p. 104) put it clearly as follows referring to the distinction between process and product of learning: "… whatever it is that is raised to consciousness is not to be looked upon as an artifact or object of study to be committed to memory by the learner and thence recalled by him whenever sentences have to be produced. Rather, what is raised to consciousness is not the grammatical product but aspects of the grammatical process, and C-R activity must strive for consistency with this principle."

Noticing hypothesis which is described as "R learned and used what he was taught if he subsequently heard it and if he noticed it" (Schmidt and Frota, 1986, p. 278) and "… a second language learner will begin to acquire the targetlike form if and only if it is present in comprehended input and "noticed" in the normal sense of the word, that is, consciously" (Schmidt and Frota, 1986, p. 311) is best understood in terms of FMCs. Conscious awareness of the targetlike form accompanied with comprehension of the meaning it encodes means without doubt that the learner is concerned with the connection between the form and the meaning. Noticing does not mean mere learners' conscious awareness of the form but it entails their finding and experiencing the connection between the form and the meaning it represents through comprehension. What is noticed in noticing is FMCs of the target language.

Importantly, finding a FMC and experiencing the connection assumes prior identification of a certain meaning

and the form realizing the meaning. Natural language learners have abundant time and chance for all of these to take place. In contrast, as has been already confirmed, in the foreign language situation where no such luxury is expected, it is imporatant to lead learners efficiently to the establishment of FMCs of the target language. For this to occur successfully and efficiently, identification of both form and meaning must be made by the learner in some way. And pedagogical intervention in the form of FFI may be most promising in this regard provided that learners are linguistic adults who are able to engage themselves in abstract and formal operations in their mind.

Explicit knowledge of the target language grammar foreign language learners attain as the initial and direct result of receiving FFI, thus, help them grasp both form and meaning. It should be recognized, however, that this conscious understanding of the grammar only functions as a springboard for the essential process of language learning, namely, establishment of implicit knowledge of the language consisting of its FMCs.

As the second version of the weak interface position predicts, implicit knowledge must be learned and established afresh with recourse to explicit knowledge as a springboard in the input-poor foreign language classroom.

It should be emphasized that learning of implicit knowledge in the classroom under FFI proceeds gradually in the same way as in first language learning. Boarding on a springboard of explicit knowledge, noticing of FMCs occurs at different levels of generalization and abstraction. Initially it occurs in an item by item fashion with learning of individual exemplars mutually independently. Then with accumulation of the exemplars having the same FMCs, their noticing is generalized more and more, initially locally and finally globally.

Type frequency in accumulating experience is essential in the generalization process of FMCs.[5] The issue to be tackled is, then, how to guide learners to experience FMCs rich in type frequency. Processing instruction (PI) may be promising in this respect. This is because it provides input structured specifically for inviting learners to experience activation of the strategy for connecting the target form with its meaning through comprehension activities. As Lee and Benati (2007, p. 19) put it, "Learners who receive PI are pushed to process the form or structure for its meaning through structured input activities."

PI has the following three key components (VanPatten, 1996, p. 60):

(1) explanation of the relationship between a given form and the meaning it can convey;

(2) information about processing strategies, showing learners how natural processing strategies may not work to their benefit;

(3) "structured input" activities in which learners are given the opportunity to process form in the input in a "controlled" situation so that better form-meaning connections might happen compared with what might happen in less controlled situations.

It might be important to notice here that PI is defined as "a type of explicit grammar instruction" (VanPatten, 1996, p. 55). Thus, explicit grammar instruction or FFI is interpreted here to involve activities designed for establishing FMCs of the target language.

Actually FFI can be viewed variably. As Ellis (2006, p 84) put it, "Grammar teaching involves any instructional techniques that draws learners' attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them either to understand it metalinguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalize it." If the aim of learning a foreign language is to be able to use the language, then, grammar teaching or FFI must be interpreted to involve all the three components as shown by VanPtten (1996).

C-R, noticing, and PI all presuppose an initial cognitive registration of the target form before it is connected to its meaning and thus forming the FMC. It is in this recognition of the importance of explicit knowledge that DeKeyser and Juffs (2005, p. 442) refer to its role as "an explicit jump start." Surely it is a jump start for its aim of attaining implicit knowledge consisting of FMCs of the target language.

Systematicity of implicit knowledge of the target language under FFI develops, as in natural language learning, only gradually along with abstraction of each FMC and of interrelationship among them. Foreign language learning in the classroom under FFI is essentially the same as natural language learning in this regard as well.

The systematic learning of implicit knowledge and its resultant system of the knowledge, of course, is different from the systematic understandig at the level of explicit knowledge. The former has to be built anew in the same way as in natural first language learning but it can be helped with the latter: another role of explicit knowledge as a jump start.

The developmental implication in the classroom that systematization of implicit knowledge of the target language grammar assumes prior generalization of its FMCs

corresponds to the same developmental implication observed in natural language learning.

5. Conclusion

As has been discussed in this article, adult foreign language learners in the classroom can make a conscious jump start in the learning of the target language grammar. The conscious jump start is made possible firstly with learners receiving FFI, especially FonFS in the initial stages of learning. FFI as a shortcut to learning most usually results in learners' possession of explicit knowledge of the grammar with its general tendency to emphasize the systematic understanding of the grammar at a descriptive and conscious level.

Secondly, the conscious jump start is actualized when explicit knowledge is made use of as an aid or a means for establishing implicit knowledge of the grammar consisting of FMCs of the language.

It is important to recognize thirdly that in the formation of FMCs of the language, finding and establishing the connection of each pair of form and meaning as a construction proceeds initially independent of its relations to other construcions and it is only later that systematic interrelations among constructions are to be formed as a system. Note that the system formed in this way is also implicit in nature.

Thus foreign language learning in the classroom follows essentially the same principles of language learning as in natural learning: forming constructions consisting of FMCs of the language and establishing the systematic interrelations among the constructions, both of which are implicit. In adult foreign language learning in the classroom, these fundamental processes of learning are supported by explicit knowledge of the language which learners attain through receiving FFI.

It is crucial, therefore, that FFI is followed and complemented with PI aiming at learners' experiencing and forming FMCs of the target language. PI must never be confused with the traditional idea of practicing application of conscious knowledge in production as is often proposed in the PPP (presentation-practice-production) approach. In PI, learners do not apply anything but find and experience FMCs of the target language afresh with the help of their explicit knowledge gained through FFI. It is only through these kinds of processing activities that learners can really make a conscious jump start in their learning of the target language.

Notes

1 The linking problem is concerned with the problem of cross-linguistic diversity and asks "How can the child link her abstract universal grammar to the peculiarities of the particular language she is learning?" (Tomasello, 2003, p. 7) The answer is negative in that cross-linguistic diversity is not compatible with UG-based acquisition. The continuity problem addresses the issue of developmental change in language learning and posits the question "How can we understand the changing nature of children's language across development if universal grammar is always the same?" (op. cit.) The answer is again negative based on the fact that children's early language is represented differently from the way adults' language is represented.

2 English learning starts at junior high school when students are at the age of 11 or 12 in Japan, and it is taught 3 hours a week for 35 weeks a year. Note that 1 hour in this case is actually 45 minutes. It has been formally decided, however, that English is to be taught at the 5th and 6th grades in elementary school in and after the year of 2011 in Japan. Thus all Japanese elementary 5th and 6th grade students start learning English 1 hour a week for 35 weeks a year in the year. At the same time Japanese junior high school students are to learn English 4 hours a week in and after the same year.

3 It should be noted that textbooks authorized by the Ministry of Education in Japan with which Japanese students learn English are all compiled and organized with situational and functional considerations, but it should be stressed that they are essentially based on a grammatical syllabus.

4 In his famous experimental study, Pienemann (1984) taught a word order rule of German to children learning the language as a second language. The instruction of the rule was of a traditional type consisting of grammatical explanations and activities involving the rule. The results showed that while both the groups of learners who were developmentally ready for the rule and those who were not could answer the formal test successfully, it was only the group of learners with the developmental readiness for the rule that used the rule spontaneously in natural conversations.

5 Type frequency is contrasted with token frequency. Toke frequency means the frequency of meeting and experiencing the same utterance repeatedly. In contrast, type frequency indicates the frequency of experiencing the same construction in different types. It is contended that while token frequency leads to entrenchment of the item, type frequency contributes to generalization and abstraction of the construction.

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