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Age Group: 1st – 6th grade

Subject Area:

Processes in language acquisition and communicative skills

Motivation:

The subject of this synopsis was chosen, because of my own curiosity of what I experienced in my teaching practice. This module focus a lot about methodologies and how we would like to teach in our future practice. In my teaching practice, I experienced a lot of difficulties, regarding differentiation and how to handle different wishes from different pupils. Furthermore, I would like to know how to plan the lessons, and how much I would use *input, interaction and output*. What is the best way of learning? Is it to communicate, listen, read, produce etc? What is the best way to acquire a new language?

Problem Statement:

What is an ideal way to acquire a second language?

Theory:

This synopsis will contain two different methodologies, and different views on language acquisition through *input (Krashen), Interaction (Long), output (Swaine)*. The two different methodologies are *The Direct Method and the grammar-translation method*.

The Grammar-Translation method:

The Grammar-translation method, former known as the classical method, was the first ever method in acquiring a new language.¹ The main goal of this method, is for the pupils to translate each language into the other. If they can do this, they will acquire both vocabulary and grammar. Of the four main skills, the skills that are in focus is reading and writing. There's almost no attention given to speaking and listening, and especially pronunciation is in lack of attention. One of the main points of the grammar-translation method is for the pupils to learn and remember grammar rules, because it is considered the cornerstone of acquiring a new language.²

¹ Techniques and principles in language teaching, second edition Diane Larsen-Freeman, oxford university press, P. 11

² Techniques and principles in language teaching, second edition Diane Larsen-Freeman, oxford university press, P 16-17, principles.

Direct Method:

The direct method is a methodology that encourages the teacher to only teach his/her pupils in the target language. When practicing this methodology, the pupils should be introduced to read in the target language from the beginning. Furthermore, the pupils are not allowed speak their native language. The main focus, when using this method, is that language is primarily spoken and not written. Questions, answers and dialogue are in the target language. If the pupils don't understand what the teacher is saying, it is up to the teacher to try and demonstrate, through different objects, what is said and not try to translate it. The grammar rules will not be explained, but should be taught inductively.³

Input, Output and Interaction

Input:

The input hypothesis is a language acquisition hypothesis developed by Stephen Krashen. His key points are that everybody is learning are foreign language through *comprehensible input*, and by that he means to read a text, hear a conversation etc. at the right level for the learner. Now, what is the right level? According to Krashen, the right level is $i+1$. The "i" stands for the current acquired knowledge of the target language, and then the "+1" is the next level and the new knowledge, we should be able to acquire, due to our preexisting knowledge.⁴

In a lecture, Stephen Krashen explains how we, as teachers, can use comprehensible input to help our pupils to acquire a second language the "right" way.⁵ Stephen Krashen's input hypothesis has been criticized because it is hard to define and measure "i" and "+1".⁶

³ Techniques and principles in language teaching, second edition Diane Larsen-Freeman, oxford university press, P 26-27-28, principles.

⁴ Veje til et nyt sprog – teorier om sprogtilegnelse, Malene Bjerre & Uffe Ladegaard, dansklærerforeningens forlag, P. 50-51

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NiTsduRreug>, (2:05-5:45)

⁶ Veje til et nyt sprog – teorier om sprogtilegnelse, Malene Bjerre & Uffe Ladegaard, dansklærerforeningens forlag, P. 50- 51

Interaction:

Another aspect of acquiring a new language is, what Michael Long, describes as interaction. Michael Long is a professor of second language acquisition, and he agrees on what Stephen Krashen says about comprehensible input as a key factor of learning a new language. However, he also thinks the way to use comprehensible input is through, what he will call *negotiation of meaning*. Negotiation of meaning is when two persons interact with each other, let's call them Joe and Moussa. Now let us assume that Moussa doesn't understand what Joe is saying, because Moussa isn't a native English speaker, and he show this to Joe. Now Joe can adjust his spoken language so that it is comprehensible for Moussa. This also works the other way around, if Moussa wants to use a word he doesn't know how to say, he can use mimic to show what he means, and now there is another person to help Moussa out.⁷

Output:

The last theory of language acquisition is the output, and how it impacts language acquisition. Merrill Swain thinks it helps the learner quite a lot, because of the pressure. Now the person must try and explain it in other ways, maybe show it on a picture, describe it with other words etc. This face will help the person to acquire the target language, as much as the input⁸. Merrill Swain explains the different functions a person reaches during the output acquisition. Noticing function, Hypothesis-testing function and Metalinguistic function.⁹

The noticing function is where the learner notices that there is something that he/she wants to express but is not capable of it. The hypothesis-testing function is where the learner is guessing, with a hypothesis underlying the guess. Now the learner will receive feedback from another person who speaks the language, and after that the learner can confirm or decline whether their hypothesis was right or wrong. The last function, the metalinguistic function, is where the learner evaluates the knowledge and language acquired, from the output.¹⁰

⁷ Veje til et nyt sprog – teorier om sprogtilegnelse, Malene Bjerre & Uffe Ladegaard, dansklærerforeningens forlag, P. 51-52

⁸ Veje til et nyt sprog – teorier om sprogtilegnelse, Malene Bjerre & Uffe Ladegaard, dansklærerforeningens forlag P. 53-54

⁹ <http://alisonyang.weebly.com/blog/comprehensible-input-vs-comprehensible-output>

¹⁰ Veje til et nyt sprog – teorier om sprogtilegnelse, Malene Bjerre & Uffe Ladegaard, dansklærerforeningens forlag P. 54

Practice element:

This is a way that I would teach language acquisition in a 2nd grade, through the direct method.

The lessons would start off by the teacher explaining today's exercises. The teacher should know the pupil's language level, and must therefore adjust his/her language so the spoken language meets the pupils comprehensible level. This can be done by pointing at certain things while explaining, for example pointing at the clock when they talk about numbers.

After this, the teacher will use a teddy bear to describe, different body parts, colors, numbers etc. He/she must assure to give the pupils, the right amount of comprehensible input that they need. Remember to ask questions, let the pupils repeat, and let the pupils answer. During this exercise the pupils will acquire new vocabulary through Stephen Krashen's theory of comprehensible input.

When this exercise is over, it is time for the pupils to talk about their own teddy bear. In this way of teaching the pupils will produce certain outcome, and by this, according to Swain, acquire knowledge. The children can now choose to ask the same questions and tell about the same as the teacher did. They could also try to give information that the teacher didn't give. For example, that the teddy bear has hair everywhere. Now the teacher can interact and try to get the pupil to say "furry" or "soft".

At last the class will summarize old words and new words, so that their vocabulary and speaking skills will develop.

Literature

Books

Bjerre, M., & Ladegaard, U. (2007). *Veje til et nyt sprog: Teorier om sprogtilægnelse*. Frederiksberg: Dansklærerforeningen.

Larsen-Freeman, Diane. (2000). *Techniques and principles in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Websites

Comprehensible Input vs. Comprehensible Output. (n.d.). Retrieved January 06, 2017, from <http://alisonyang.weebly.com/blog/comprehensible-input-vs-comprehensible-output>

M. (2010, October 15). Stephen Krashen on Language Acquisition. Retrieved January 06, 2017, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NiTsdUReug>

EMU Danmarks læringsportal. (n.d.). Retrieved January 10, 2017, from <http://www.emu.dk/omraade/gsk-lærer/ffm/engelsk/1-4-klasse/mundtlig-kommunikation>

Appendixes

Lesson plan

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Number of lessons | 2 x 45 minutes |
| Competence goal | Oral communication 1st-4th: The pupil can participate in short and simple conversations of specific every day subjects. |
| Proficiencies – and knowledge goals | Language acquisition strategies (fase 2) Proficiency goal: The pupil can use visual support to acquire vocabulary Knowledge goal: The pupil has knowledge about non-verbal strategies for language acquisition |
| Learning goal | The pupils can through “show-and-tell” exercise describe different characterization on a doll/action figure/ teddy bear. |
| Activity | The teacher will start off by describing and asking questions about a teddy bear, and let the pupils repeat and answer. After this introduction, the teacher will now let the pupils describe their own teddy bear (they’ve brought from home), and try to act out what the teacher did. |
| Evaluation | Try to summarize necessary descriptive glossary. |

Interlanguage analysis (appendix)

Many years ago there was a girl with the name Zoella. Zoella was a **feary**, she was **a** queen **for** **flower-valley**. **There was pretty** and they **was** happy, but there was **a** evil queen from **blackness-forrest** **shes** name was Ellenal. Ellenal was jealous because **shes** forest **not was** as pretty as Flower-**valley**. So she chose to kill Zoella and conquer **flower-vally**. But **so** did not make it that far. Because Zoella built a wall of thorns so Ellenal could not come in and Ellenal **come never** again. **every bodys** from **flower-vally** live happy to **theres** days end.

Red = Mis-spelling, grammar, Danicism,

Yellow = Wrong use of word

Blue = Proper noun

Corrections:

- 1) Misspelling. = fairy
- 2) Wrong use of article = the queen. One country, one queen
- 3) Wrong use of the word "for" = queen of
- 4) Proper nouns starts with capital letter
- 5) Danicism = It was pretty
- 6) Concord-error = "They" is plural, and therefore "was" should be "were"
- 7) Indefinite article error = "evil" begins with a vowel and/or vowel sound, therefore "a" should be "an"
- 8) Proper nouns begin with capital letter
- 9) Misspelling = "Forest"
- 10) Wrong use of word = "She = hun" "her = hendes"
- 11) Wrong use of word = "She = hun" "her = hendes"
- 12) Danicism = "was not". Auxiliary verb before negative
- 13) Proper nouns begin with capital letter
- 14) Proper nouns begin with capital letter
- 15) Misspelling and proper noun, capital letter = "Valley"
- 16) Wrong use of the word "so" = "she"
- 17) Danicism and wrong tense (present) and adverb before the verb = "never came"
never is first because you can't say "neverly"
- 18) Misspelling = Everybody. No plural -s needed, it is already plural.
- 19) Proper nouns begin with capital letter and misspelling = "Valley"
- 20) Danicism = They lived happily ever after (De levede lykkeligt til deres dages ende)
- 21) Wrong use of word = There (Der er), Their (deres)