

A Protocol Discussion for an Enhanced Team Discussion in the Language Classes

Seok-Hoon You and Sarah Yoon

Department of Linguistics, Korea University,

syou@korea.ac.kr, sarahyoon@korea.ac.kr

Abstract

This study aims to introduce a so-called “Protocol Method” (PM, hereafter), a pedagogical measure to enhance team discussion by encouraging students to get actively involved into the discussion without being left silent among other members within a team in language classes and subject classes.

Team discussion has been known as an effective tool to enhance an acquisition of aural and oral skills by providing chances to actively interact with other members within the group. Despite the well-acknowledged potential advantages of the activity, it has been underrepresented by language instructors due to the following shortcomings: those students who keep silence due to lack of fluency of the target language and knowledge on the given topic, and the lack of an objective assessment scheme.

The PM is designed to overcome the shortcomings in the following manners: scaffolding, rapport, and peer-monitoring. To be more specific about the design factors, first, instructors remain as a tacit scaffolder or facilitator through the session, second, peer-rapport and hidden peer-assistant support, and lastly, assessment scheme based on the result of peer-monitoring.

The PM session is composed of two subcomponents: team discussion and protocol logging. In order to keep the discussion session alive through the given time, the class is divided into smaller teams with 7-8 members allocated in each team (balance in the composition of team member formation is a critical factor.). And next, one moderator and one protocol-keeper (p-keeper, hereafter), are designated among the members by themselves to proceed the session in formal and supportive manner. These staff members, moderator and the p-keeper are expected to manage the session by fully satisfying their duties assigned. Other members are encouraged to actively participate into the discussion under the moderation of the moderator and the session-logging done by the p-keeper.

Pilot study has been administered for a group of

students at college level. Interim result of the PM achieved through the pilot study has shown that it has been quite successful. Current study aims to apply the PM to the full-scale subject group in order to prove the validity of the interim result.

Keywords

Interaction, Protocol Method, Scaffolder, Recast.

Introduction

The research on language learning practical lessons from the perspective of constructivism can be applied to provide a methodology and how effective this whether you want to observe the lessons are applicable in the field. The characteristics of constructivism linguistic integrate with psychological and social paradigm

1 Traditional language education

1.1 Total Physical Response

Total Physical Response (TPR), a traditional language acquisition method developed by James J. Asher, is based on the premise language activities are centralized in the right hemisphere of the brain (and that an important condition for successful language learning is the absence of excessive stress.) According to TPR theory, children develop listening (and speaking) competence as they respond physically to spoken language in the form of commands, regardless of the children’s ability in language comprehension. An important condition for such language learning to occur is a stress-free environment where the students can freely respond verbally and eventually even ask questions themselves. Although TPR is very effective in the first stages of learning, its effectiveness decreases as the learner becomes more advanced. PM can be an alternative as it incorporates the advantages of TPR and reduces the disadvantages

1.2. Natural Approach

Stepan Krashen’s Theory of Second Language

Acquisition (1982) claims that children as well as adults learn through a subconscious process very similar to first language acquisition process of children. It requires natural communication, or a meaningful interaction in the target language in which speakers are concentrated not in the form/grammar, but in the communicative act. According to Krashen, learning or gaining conscious knowledge through formal instruction (such as grammar rules), is much less important. The theory of Natural Approach, derived from Krashen's theory and influenced by the TPR theory, also suggests learners should learn to speak naturally instead of instructing to speak. Similar to the TPR theory, Krashen accentuated the importance of stress-free learning environment and abundant communication and language acquisition to take place in the classroom. Natural Approach to suggest ways of TPR at this time the teacher can understand the learner scaffolding understandable language should be set slightly higher than the input and the learners themselves to say they feel they're ready to wait until it is output to do. This is the silent period too much respect for the utterances of the target language was too intellectual delay. In contrast, PM encourage to speak, but reducing anxiety

2 PM

The PM aims for Community Language Learning (CLL), but the in application allows for the learners to even use native language during class. A learner with a more advanced language skills can translate for the less advanced peer, recast (reconstruct idea) on their weaknesses, or ask display questions (questions to induce information that the questioner already knows) or referential questions (questions that the questioner does not know the answer).

The PM is a learner-centered methodology rather than teacher-centered one that can be used in foreign language acquisition. The teacher acts as a scaffolder, not providing one-sided learning but implicitly encouraging learners to motivate themselves and participate on their own will. As a first step, the teacher allots learners of various background and level measured through the pilot test taken during the orientation period into a group. Learners can acquire language skills and background knowledge from each other instead of learning directly from the teacher. The teacher directs and manages each group and evaluates the learners' language acquisition process. Through these steps, the PM maximizes learning performance and creates a cooperative learning environment. The teacher divides the learners into groups of 8 to 10, composed of a moderator, a

protocol-keeper, and the rest, participants or members. Here, careful grouping of the learners is important for overall improvement in learning efficiency rather than merely random allocation of learners. The teacher assigns the topic of discussion in advance and provides key words and explanations to ensure that the learners fully understand the topic before the debate. The moderator is responsible for ensuring participants to take turns and encouraging all members to participate without any single member dominating the discussion. Since a group in the PM consists of participants with different proficiency level and background, the moderator has a significant role of prompting members with limited language proficiency or internal motivation to speak and facilitating the discussion. With the moderator as the center, all participants can recast on the speaker's lack of background knowledge or ask display questions or referential questions) to increase participation in the discussion. A moderator with a relatively advanced level of language proficiency is likely to effectively facilitate the discussion. The P-keeper is responsible for recording and evaluating each participant's speech based on the frequency of participation and contents during the debate. The P-keeper also corrects for grammatical or other errors the speaker makes when recording, so that the participants do not face as much pressure to speak in perfect grammar. For participants with relatively low language proficiency or internal motivation, the teacher can assign a peer or a scaffolder to encourage such participants to actively participate. Teachers should not explicitly announce the scaffolder so that the participant receiving the help does not get covered before the peer. After the debate, the participants can evaluate each other based on the notes taken by the P-keeper. The P-keeper needs consent from all the participants for his assessment. In case of omission or error in the record, all participants can modify the evaluation results based on the pre-determined rule. The teacher makes the final evaluation based on the above process. The PM differs with traditional learning methods in that the whole class is strictly learner-centered with even assessment done by learners themselves.

References

- 유석훈 (2011). The PM Theory. P.C.
- Alison Mackey. (1999). Input, interaction, and second Language development, *SSLA*, 21, 557-587.

Douglas Brown, H. (2007). Principles of language learning and teaching. Longman.

Gass, S., & Selinker, L.(2001). Second language acquisition: An introductory course(2nd ed.) Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gardner, R., & Lambert, W. (1972). Attitudes and motivation in second language learning Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Brodkey, D., & Shore, H. (1976). Student personality and success in an English language program. Language Learning, 26, 153-159.