Key concepts in second language teaching and learning
Focus-on-form in the Japanese language classroom context

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Abstract

This paper will focuses on the educational environment and forms used to teach specifically English as a second language and English as a foreign language. Current research is analyzed and applied to teaching forms used in the Japanese upper-secondary English education environment and the Japanese education system as a whole. The author attempts to bring out the unique aspects of the Japanese education system and tries to make note of reforms that will be necessary, in order to improve second language education in the future.

Introduction

   In second language acquisition（SLA）there has been controversy about whether or not formal instruction is effective. While some researchers claim that SLA automatically takes place in any environment where the learner is exposed to input, others maintain that a conscious attention to form is necessary. Thus, while scholars such as Krashen（1981）and Prabhu（1987） have suggested that formal instruction is not beneficial for SLA because learners acquire their second language（L2）through a subconscious process, others, such as Schmidt（1983）and White（1989）, have advocated the necessity of instruction and an explicit focus on form which are believed to activate psycholinguistic processes.

   Japanese English education is in an EFL environment in which an explicit focus on form has been the predominant approach to the teaching of English as a foreign language. However, an examination of Japanese students' results on international English proficiency tests such as the TOEIC reveals that the average Japanese proficiency level in English is not very high. While such tests certainly do not capture everything there is to know about an EFL student's English language proficiency, the continued poor performance on such exams does suggest that there should be an analysis of how English is taught in Japanese senior high schools, and in particular the way that Japanese teachers focus on form.

In this essay, the aim is to examine how focus-on-form contributes to SLA in the Japanese EFL context, especially in senior high school classrooms. The argument this author wishes to develop is how Japanese practices are not supported by current SLA research and what change they need under the definite goal. This done, I propose some beneficial activities on the basis of this discussion. In section 1, the goal and present conditions of Japanese English language education will be described. In section 2, the importance of conscious attention to form or noticing will be examined. In section 3, how output promotes noticing will be discussed. Then in section 4, how feedback promotes noticing will be discussed. In section 5, principles and activities that promote the instruction of focus-on-form effectively will be presented for Japanese EFL classroom context.

Goals and present conditions of Japanese English language education

There are a number of different reasons why Japanese study second languages. They study for everyday living, business and political communication, intellectual development and so on. For the most part, adolescents study English because they are required to do so under the Japanese education system. English is taught mainly at high schools and colleges as a foreign language, with the vast majority of students taking it as a required subject. In other words, English is mostly taught as formal instruction in classrooms.

A big part of the study of second language acquisition, and arguably the first important stage in the learning process, is a question of how the language input is understood by language learners. Therefore, it is essential to consider the type of second language learning when the mechanism of the acquisition is studied.

Since Japanese English education at the senior high school level, in accordance with the national Course of Study, is in an EFL environment, an explicit focus on forms in classrooms plays an important role. Some studies suggest formal instruction influences second language acquisition (SLA) because conscious attention to form, or noticing, through input, output or corrective feedback will be efficacious (Schmidt 1983, Long 1981, 1983, White 1989).

However, it has been long said that Japanese people who have learned English at schools do not have a good command of English. An examination of Japanese students' results on international English proficiency tests manifests their poor performance. For example, a look at

2002－2003 TOEIC performance reveals that the average score of Japanese test takers is only 4 51compared to 519 for other Asian countries（Educational Testing Service 2004）. Although these results do not entirely refer to their absolute competence, there should be call to analyze the learning context. In other words, there is a question why not only formal instruction, but also other current SLA research does not apply to Japanese classroom learning.

In view of this state of affairs, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology（MEXT）has formulated various methods of instruction for teaching English at schools. In 1994 MEXT introduced Oral Communication to the course of study for senior high schools. In 2003 it established an 'Action Plan.' This is a plan to improve the general ability level of Japanese students within a 5-year timeframe by focusing on four points :

1. Improving teaching methods
2. Improving the teaching ability of teachers
3. Developing a selection system for students
4. Working toward the development of new curricula.

In 2005, a listening test will be a compulsory part of the English test of the National Center Test, which is an entrance examination for all the national universities and most private universities. Given these changes in language education policy, it is obvious that Japanese curriculum designers are increasingly considering it more important that Japanese students develop their English language proficiency in a more practical way. This demands a critical look at classroom English language instruction. Thus it is primarily essential to examine how focus-on-forms functions and what kind of change should be carried out, if necessary, in the EFL context. This paper will discuss the current research of second language acquisition（SLA）and then verify whether or not this can be applied to formal instruction of English in Japan.

The importance of conscious attention to form or noticing

In second language acquisition（SLA）there are two opposing perspectives in terms of the role of consciousness. One advocates its necessity, the other subsidiary. For instance, Krashen（1982, 1985）claimed that a second language is acquired by a subconscious process and he distinguished language 'acquisition,' such as implicit knowledge of the language, and language 'learning,' such as explicit knowledge about the language. According to Krashen,

"language acquisition is developed subconsciously through comprehending input while language learning is developed consciously through deliberate study of the L2." Prabhu (1987) also emphasized that language acquisition takes place not through attention to form but through the exposure to the adequate input.

On the contrary, Researchers such as Swain (1985) and Schmidt (1986) claim that merely exposure to language input is not sufficient for second language acquisition (SLA). Swain (ibid.) studied the students in an English-French immersion program in Canada. Those students were sufficiently exposed to French language as a second language input for a long time and their French proficiency of reading, writing, listening and speaking was close to that of native speakers. It turned out, however, that their productivity of French language was not accurate although their fluency was acknowledged. Those students were less proficient in the grammatical domain. This suggests that something more than comprehensive input is effective for second language acquisition (SLA). Therefore, it will be significant to examine the theory which explains the relation between input and learners' mental powers-consciousness. So it is important to discuss what role learners' consciousness plays for acquisition by focusing on some researchers' works.

In order to explain the issue, researchers such as Schmidt (1990), Tomlin & Villa (1994) drew on work in cognitive psychology. They studied language learning by focusing on how information is processed. Schmidt (ibid.) developed the idea that learners pay attention to matters of form in second language input and output, and that this internal process may be influential for second language acquisition (SLA). Schmidt and Frota (1986) explained this idea further by analyzing Schmidt's own experience of learning Portuguese. Some forms of the language which he had not understood in his class for a certain period became understandable. Their journal proved that those forms had been used and taught in the class before, so they assumed that he in fact started to use those forms which were taught in the class after he paid attention to them.

Schmidt (1990, 1994, 2001) carefully distinguished different types of attention which learners may be paying, such as noticing, understanding, and awareness. Among them, he used the term 'noticing' to refer to the conscious attention to linguistic features in the input and only the noticed information could become 'intake' to stay in learners' memory (noticing hypothesis).

Schmidt（ibid.）proposed the construct of noticing as follows : "Not all input has equal value and only that input which is noticed then becomes available for intake and effective processing." Intake is a portion of the input that learners attend to and take into short-term memory which may be subsequently incorporated into interlanguage which is a language independent of both the target language and the learner's L1（Selinker 1972）.

Therefore, what is noticed by learners should be noted. Schmidt（1990）refers to 'noticing' as a cognitive process that involves attending to linguistic form in the input learners receive and the output they produce. During this process, learners notice the conspicuous linguistic features in the input and compare those forms that have been noticed with their produced forms in their interlanguage. In other words, learners notice the salience of the 2L input and the difference between the 2L input and their own interlanguage（noticing-the-gap）. This process is prerequisite for learning to take place and this theory will lead to the output hypothesis.

Thus far Schmidt's claim is valid because there are a lot of different language features in input and learners/ hearers have to process all the information which they hear simultaneously when they hear it. They do not comprehend all of it, however, because some are unknown languages and others simplified or reduced. They have to distinguish what they know from what they do not know in the input and then integrate what they comprehend during this process. This internal action requires learners to notice the salience of the linguistic features.

Next, we should look through another theory of learners' internal process. Ellis（1997）clarified Schmidts' process model of learning implicit knowledge. According to Ellis, there are two stages which are involved in the process of input becoming implicit knowledge. In the first stage, input becomes intake when linguistic features are noticed by learners. This intake consequently becomes learners' short-term memory. It is also regarded as their consciousness（Kihlstrom 1984）. In the second stage, learners process the short-term memory and then it becomes long-term memory. Only this memory could enter their interlanguage system. Although it seems that this process has yet to be confirmed, it still can be said that learners' conscious attention to linguistic features, or noticing, hold the key for second language acquisition（SLA）.

Other research also supports the importance of noticing（Sharwood-Smith 1981, Rutherford 1985, 1987, McLaughlin 1987, Gass 1988, Lewis 1993, Lynch 2001）. Van Patten（1994）

claims the importance of noticing for acquisition by following the process of language development of one student who studied Spanish as L2. After the learner noticed a linguistic feature which was being used by other people, he started to use it in his speech although he could not explain the linguistic rule. This fact verified the theory of the memory process which is suggested by Ellis. That is, the learner processed the memory into his interlanguage.

Consequently, it can be deduced that learners' conscious attention to form in input has a significant meaning for second language acquisition（SLA）. As English in Japanese education is taught mainly in formal instruction, an examination of how learners' noticing is promoted by instruction becomes crucially important. Therefore, it is appropriate to discuss relevant work of noticing and formal instruction by examining some research.

Schmidt（ibid.）suggested some influences of 'noticing' as follows :

1． "Other things being equal, the more frequent a form, the more likely it is to be noticed and then become integrated in the interlanguage system." This means that language features which learners notice are frequent in formal instruction because teachers will repeat them. From this point of view, it can be said that formal instruction encourages learners to notice the form.

2． "It concerns how salient a form is in input." In other words, the more salient a form, the more likely it is to be noticed. In formal instruction, specific forms are initially focused on and learners will notice the linguistic salience more easily.

3． "Instruction is crucial." This implies that learners must select relevant features to focus on in input as there are a lot of different features in input. Because the salience of the language in input can be emphasized by teachers, learners will know it immediately. Otherwise the language might be unstressed, or contracted. Thus, selection of the features by learners will be more difficult.

4． "Individual differences in processing ability concern the learner's capacity to deal with the range of forms in input." This means if individual learners have a greater ability to memorize, they are more able to notice the form. On this point, Skehan（1989）also suggested that some learners are better input processors as they have a larger working memory capacity or due to their superior speed of analytical processing within working memory. Schmidt（ibid.）suggested that learners' skill level includes how well individuals

are able to routinize previously met structures. This processing ability in turn determines how ready learners are to notice forms in input. This idea proposes that learners should cultivate their own proficiency and if teachers help them, it will be more profitable. Schmidt (ibid.) also said that individual ability to attend to both form and meaning in L2 input during processing is important. This idea indicates the adequacy of the instruction and it will be the next item.

5. "Task demands influences on noticing." He states that task demands refers to the way in which an instructional task causes learners to notice particular features that are necessary in order to carry out that task. Ellis (1997) suggested that language features may be made intentionally prominent or that the task should be designed to force learners to process the language. This means also that specific ways of instruction is effective for L2 learning. Thus, instruction provides a lot of different features of language which assist noticing. Consequently, noticing plays an important role for second language learning and instruction is an efficacious method of acquisition.

It is understood that language salience enhances learner's attention to the form in input. In English education in Japan, formal instruction is dominant. Therefore, frequency, saliency, and individual enhancement in learning English may be promoted in classroom instruction by teachers. However, students pay attention to forms but they can learn the linguistic features in a more direct way because linguistic accuracy is focused on more than any other aspect in the language. In other words, fluency is not as encouraged as accuracy in classroom. It is assumed that this may cause Japanese students to be less fluent in producing English. Then this leads to the necessity of investigating the connection between learners' noticing and fluency in their production of L2.

A study of Swain (1993, 1995) suggests that fluency is promoted by output. In formal instruction, output also plays an important role because learners can learn from their output with the help of the clearer instruction. This may enhance noticing. Further discussion is required on how output promotes noticing.

The role of output

It is understood that attention to form in input and noticing are effective, and will affect

interlanguage, which also plays an important role in learning L2. Moreover, instruction enhances this cognitive process. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the role of output of instruction and noticing as processed by learners during production of their L2.

Schmidt（1995）studied the role of output through various researches. One study showed how two students who were learning French work on some task activities. The result shows that the learners paid more attention to forms in their output by interaction through activities and stored those forms in their memory. Another study focused on an adult learner of English language who described a picture in English to the interlocutor. This observation showed that the learner noticed his own errors and corrected his own English by interaction and feedback. Another study observed three learners of French language who formulated their linguistic system on the basis of their utterances. According to the result, they built the linguistic rules in their memory by paying attention to other people's utterances.

These studies suggested that output promotes learners' attention to form. Swain（1995, 1998）claimed the importance of comprehensible output in second language acquisition（SLA）. In her output hypothesis, she indicated following various main functions of output : （a）enhancement of fluency, （b）the noticing function, （c）the hypothesis formulation and testing function, and （d）the metalinguistic function These indications suggest how learners' output promote their noticing. In other words, they notice the gap in their interlanguages through analyzing their own production and that cognitive process promotes learners' L2 facilities. When learners try to speak L2, they recognize the difficulty in structuring their output. Then they realize that their L2 knowledge is deficient in the grammatical domain. Also, learners can test their linguistic knowledge in real communication. That is, they will be able to know if their interlanguge is correct or wrong by producing L2. In addition, learners can talk about their linguistic problems and realize the solutions to structure their L2 more easily. These functions contribute to enhancement of learners' noticing. In other words, they attend the linguistic rules in order to focus on, and then notice the gaps in their interlanguage through output of L2.

Thus it can be said that output is also important for L2 leaning. If output promotes learners' noticing, in formal instruction output obviously functions more effectively because teachers focus on the productions of learners and learners receive explicit instruction from teachers.

When we examine the context of Japanese classroom of English, output is encouraged

especially in writing, not in speaking. According to Swain (1993), fluency is promoted by practice of learners' output. However, since output is encouraged more in writing in Japanese classroom, students do not practice speaking very much. Consequently, their fluency is still not prominent although output is highly focused in learning English in Japan. So it is necessary to look to another factor for enhancement of noticing.

Output involves feedback as Swain (1995) concludes through her own study. In the next section, how feedback promotes learners' language developments will be discussed.

Feedback

Since output is presumably an effective factor for L2 learning, it will be also possible that interaction is efficient. The study of error correction has been done by some researchers (Krashen & Terell 1983, Long 1977, Tomasello & Herron 1989, Chaudrom 1988). They discuss it from different views. While some researchers such as Karashen & Terell (1983) claimed that error correction is not necessary for L2 learning, more researchers suggests how important error correction-especially negative feedback is. Rutherford (1987) and White (1989, 1991) further claimed that negative feedback is essential for learners when positive input can not lead learners to correct form of the targeted language.

Long (1996) suggests in his interaction hypothesis that learners acquire forms of the targeted language through negotiation for meaning. According to Long, "negotiation for meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the NS or more competent interlocutor, facilitates L2 development since it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways." (Long 1996 pp 451－452) That is, learners will pay attention to their own problem when they find some difficulty negotiating with their interlocutors during interaction. Learners noticing could be promoted by this interaction.

During the interaction, errors in production by learners will be corrected somehow. Not only in formal instruction but in natural conversation between learners and native speakers of the targeted language, learners receive correction of their L2 production explicitly and implicitly. So learners can focus on what is ungrammatical more easily and acknowledge what is grammatical. Especially negative feedback in formal instruction will have learners notice the

grammatical features more directly and it will also help them to focus on non-salient features which learners usually apt to slur over. Carroll and Swain（1993）suggested that explicit feedback which offers grammatical rules to learners is better than implicit feedback which only suggests incorrectness of learners' L2 production. Samuda（2001）also indicated that implicit feedback may not be sufficient to ensure that learners attend to targeted features and that explicit feedback may be needed.

In Japanese classrooms of English also, feedback is carried out in various ways. Since accuracy is emphasized more in Japanese English classrooms, error correction is the primary exchange between teachers and learners.

This brings about a discussion of the works of feedback in accordance with the classifications criteriacarried out Lyster & Ranta（1997）. They categorized corrective feedback which learners receive from their interlocutors by interaction.（1）Explicit correction－"the explicit provision of the correct form"（p. 46）（2）Recast－"the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a students' utterance, minus the error"（p. 46）（3）Clarification Requests－"indications to students either that their utterance has been misunderstood by the teacher or that the utterance is ill-formed in some way and that a repetition or a reformulation is required"（p. 47）（4）Metalinguistic Feedback－"either comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the student's utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form"（p. 47）（5）Elicitation－"techniques that teachers use to directly elicit the correct form from the students"（p. 48）（6）Repetition－"the teacher's repetition, in isolation, of the student's erroneous utterance"（p. 48）Admittedly, these types of corrective feedback encourage learners to pay attention to forms and understand them.

In Japanese classrooms, 'recast' and 'repetition' are preferably performed because teachers do not directly point out errors in students' language. However, 'explicit correction' is not commonly seen in classroom instruction because it is thought by some teachers to be rather acrid to students and reduce their motivation to produce their L2. 'Clarification request,' 'metalingusitic feedback,' and 'elicitation' are not much accepted either because they are aiming to bring out students' spontaneous correction and Japanese students are apparently poor at spontaneity in learning language. Japanese social structure and values do not provide ground where spontaneity is encouraged. Japanese culture emphasizes group accomplishment rather than

individual work. Consequently, Japanese students are inhibited because they are little expected to develop spontaneity in classrooms. By and large, it seems that implicit correction is more acceptable than explicit correction in Japanese classrooms although it does not necessarily mean implicit correction works well in Japan. Doughty and Varela（1998）suggested that especially recasting is an effective feedback. Mackey and Philip（1998）also indicated the usefulness of recast. That is, the teachers' reformulation promotes learners to notice the specific linguistic form cognitively. As this suggestion and the situation described above shows, in Japanese classroom of English recast may be more helpful for students to develop their English facility.

Proposals for focus-on-form in the Japanese classroom context

In Japanese classrooms of English, forms are focused organizationally. They are categorized in accordance with aspects of language such as part of speech, grammatical function, and sentence pattern. In other words, students are mostly taught pre-selected linguistic items in activities where they primarily focus on linguistic structures or forms rather than meaning. This is what is called focus-on-forms instruction（Long 1991）which in fact is a traditional instruction based on a structural syllabus.

However, it is difficult for learners to acquire linguistic items each by each. For instance, they have to learn about all the relevant grammatical features even including some exceptions in one time. Then in the next lesson, the lesson moves to another grammatical step even though students do not have sufficient applied practice. Consequently, most of learned linguistic knowledge will fade away because a form is focused on intentionally. Also, in real communication, students can not easily combine and use the learned linguistic forms because forms are not taught according to the social context. Because of that, they can be less motivated to learn English. This fact may cause the deficiency of their communicativeness.

As the current situation in Japanese classroom is described in this essay, students are less motivated to be communicative, although they have adequate input, output, feedback, and formal instruction. Therefore, it is needed to call for a different type of instruction in Japanese classroom. Ellis（1997）mentioned："More recently, language pedagogy has emphasized the need to provide learners with real communicative experiences." Provision of real communicative experience will be conducted by task.

Activities in language classroom are mainly categorized into drill, exercise, communication activities（CA）and task（Takashima 1995, 1998）Obviously, form is most focused in drill and meaning is task. Japanese classroom of English is mainly supported by drill. 'Exercises' and 'Communicative activities' are also involved. However, these two activities rarely lead to cognitive learning, or an increased attention to from. A number of researchers such as Prabhu （1987）and Skehan（1996）suggest the benefit of task for second language acquisition（SLA）. Some researches show, however, that focusing on meaning alone is insufficient to acquire L2. Long（1997）suggested that :

> a focus on meaning alone in classroom settings, this is best achieved not by a return to discrete-point grammar teaching, or what I call focus on forms, where classes spend most of their time working on isolated linguistic structures in a sequence pedagogic predetermined externally by a syllabus designer or textbook writer. Rather, during an otherwise meaning-focused lesson, and using a variety of pedagogic procedures, learners' attention is briefly shifted to linguistic code features, in context, when students experience problems as they work on communicative tasks.

Focus-on-form is presumably an effective form of English teaching in Japanese high schools because of two main reasons : First, in Japan English is taught by present-practice-production （p-p-p）approach and this will promote students' grammatical knowledge more effectively. This knowledge is important because it is helpful for students to be aware of linguistic forms during task. Also, in Japanese high schools, it is inevitable to prepare for entrance examination for college. Since that examination requires wide knowledge of English grammar, students need to learn it systematically. Focus-on-form provides students with both grammatical knowledge and communicative skills through task-based instruction and this is exactly what is demanded in Japanese classrooms.

Although both focus-on-forms and focus-on-form primarily aim at learners' acquisition of linguistic form, the pedagogical effectiveness of focus-on-form is to promote students' noticing. In other words, because learners are taught linguistic forms in a communicative way, it leads to learners' cognitive process more naturally. However, it may be difficult for teachers to apply this concept to actual classroom activities. For instance, when and how form should be focused will be a question. Especially in Japanese high schools, skills of reading, writing,

grammar, and communication are discretely taught in classroom as a different subject. Therefore, teaching those skills simultaneously needs special effort. Teachers need to think over the syllabus very carefully.

Research is being done in terms of how form is focused on and what form is focused on. A study by Williams & Evans（1998）shows that focus-on-form should be integrated into communicative curricula and that as each student has a point of readiness for focus-on-form and every form may be ideally suited to different degrees and kinds of focus-on-form, teachers should be always aware of student' interlanguage and develop alternative instructional strategies. That is, teachers should be careful about students' linguistic development and timing of giving them task. White（1998）suggests that learners may need somewhat more explicit information about the L1－L2 contrasts in focus-on-form instruction. Doughty and Williams（1998）suggests the importance of the combinations of explicit and implicit focus on form and also possibility of crossover from focus-on-form to focus-on-forms. Consequently, selection of forms and timing to focus on them will be important in accordance with learners' linguistic development of L2.

If we take these suggestions into consideration, focused tasks may work effectively. Focused task provides learners with this implicit process. In this task, learning implicitly through communication is a primary thing. Attending form during communication is also important. Explicit knowledge about the language is also taught. In other words, learners can have opportunities to communicate for meaning and also learn specific linguistic forms implicitly. This is supposed to attain to learners' cognitive process－noticing.

In Japanese high school classroom, this will be also beneficial. Without information of the specific linguistic focus, they will take more interested in both meaning and forms because of their motivation to participate in the task and also to learn unknown form. However, it is also noticeable that the proficiency levels of students will vary and implicit teaching may not be ideal for all the students. Therefore, teachers are required to be flexible in the classroom. For instance, teachers can ask students what kind of linguistic knowledge they need in order to be more creative. Then teachers adapt this knowledge for use with the entire class. In addition, task formation should be considered. Because of the social and cultural norms within Japanese society, it will often work better if tasks are performed in groups or between the teacher and a

group of students.

It should be noted here that this general focus on group-oriented tasks, that is deeply rooted in Japanese culture, causes a dilemma unique to the Japanese L2 classroom. Group-based tasks are fine to a certain point, but since the ability to use language requires learners to perform as individuals with at a degree of spontaneity, excessive focus on group-based tasks actually needs to be avoided. However, by the time students are at the upper-secondary level of schooling, the habit of doing things as a group are deeply engrained, since these practices are common in all subjects of instruction from the time they are in nursery school. Reforms are happening, but they take time.

Still further, it is a good suggestion that teachers always give students explicit and declarative knowledge about form in the next lesson, allowing students to receive some feedback. Since learning English in Japan is an EFL environment, the lack of practice of communication needs to be complimented with such feedback.

Conclusion

English Education in Japan is now, because of practical demand, necessarily carrying out some reforms. This essay has looked at current SLA research and investigated the reasons why Japanese learners' communicative proficiency in English is lower than that of other countries.

Some studies found that only exposure to targeted language is not sufficient for SLA and that learners' cognitive process－noticing－is important. Noticing takes place when learners pay attention to a certain linguistic feature as input. Formal instruction promotes noticing. Output and feedback are also helpful for SLA. Especially output by interlocutors who are non-native speakers or whose targeted language is better than learners' promotes learners' targeted language is remarkable. Learners receive feedback from interlocutors through interaction. Moreover learners' noticing the gap in their interlanguage, or between their interlangue and interlocutors' language will help learners with their memory system for acquisition. Negative feedback can be more effective to L2 learners than positive feedback because they pay attention to their problematic linguistic features.

Thus, formal instruction, output, and feedback from interaction are all effective for SLA because they promote noticing. As this fact could be applied to the Japanese classroom context

too, English teachers should think over how to develop a syllabus and make good use of it. In order to acquire more communicative proficiency from learners, focus-on-form instruction should be effective. In contrast with focus-on-forms, focus-on-form instruction provides learners with not only grammatical knowledge but also communicative skill. As a practical activity in focus-on-form instruction, focused task is recommended. Focused task aims at learners' acquisition of grammatical knowledge. However, during the focused task, learners focus on meaning principally through negotiation for meaning but simultaneously they focus on linguistic features. In other words, learners explicitly and implicitly acquire forms. This instruction should apply to the current Japanese teaching context.

However, a syllabus which is based on focus-on-form instruction may not be easily designed in terms of selection of forms and timing for forms to be focused on. Therefore, more SLA research on function of focus-on-form should be conducted from different points of view.

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