

The alignment of testing and second language classroom instruction

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Języki ODNOWA: Jak oceniać, żeby doceniać

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20 November 2021



My background

- ISLA Researcher
- Conduct research in language classrooms
- Haven't taught English since 2006
- I don't focus on language testing



Instructed Second Language Acquisition (ISLA)

Research into how additional languages are
learned through teaching





HOW EXPERT Presents

HOW TO LEARN ENGLISH GRAMMAR

HowExpert with Virginia Fidler



ISLA – Primary question

Is L2 instruction effective ?

Yes

What makes L2 instruction more or less effective?



Goals for L2 learning?



What do your students want to achieve?

- A passing grade?
- Pass a standardized test?
- Knowledge of L2 grammar?
- Ability to communicate?

A+

If I had known this class was going to be entirely in Spanish, I wouldn't have taken it!



What do YOU want your students to achieve?

- Ability to communicate?
- Ability to do academic work?





ABOUT

PROGRAMS

APPLYING

TESTING

STUDENTS

ESL LAB

CONTACT

HOME

FACULTY

LOCATIONS

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HOME

- Local
- Job Opportunities
- News
- Research Inquiries
- Online Training
- Eurocentres at MSU
- ESL 291
- Preparing for Academic Life
- Special Contract Programs
- Visa Info
- Transfer Info
- Pre-Arrival Info
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Staff
- Locations and Map
- Prof Dev Archives

“...improve their English language skills...”

The Goal

Ability to
communicate
(spontaneously)
in the L2



How do we get learners to do that?



Two Types of L2 knowledge



Explicit

Implicit



Two types of L2 knowledge

Explicit

- + Awareness
- Declarative
- Accessed through controlled processing
- Metalinguistic
- Decontextualized

Implicit

- - Awareness
- Accessed automatically
- Underlies communication
- Similar to L1 knowledge

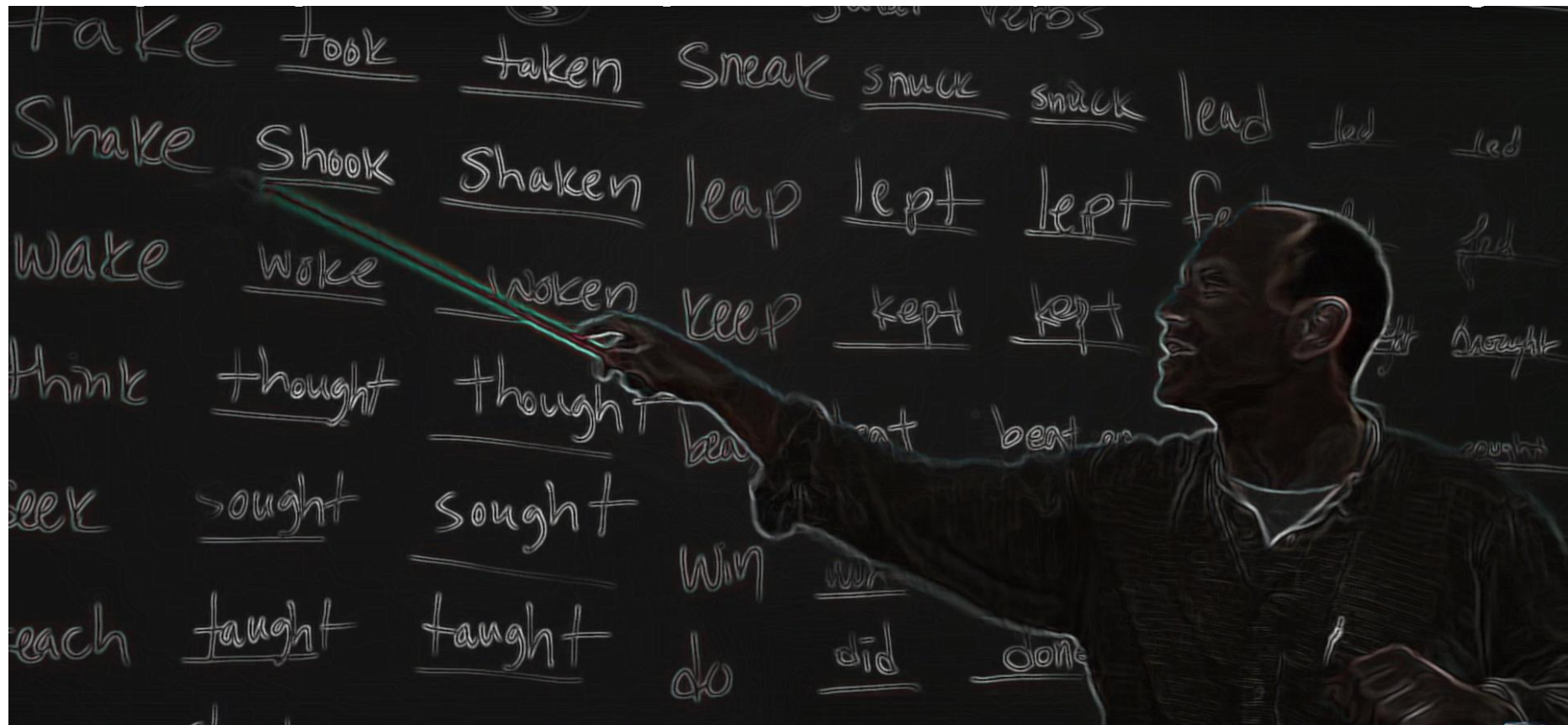


Explicit knowledge – English Irregular Verbs

Present	Past	Participle
See	Saw	Seen
Take	Took	Taken
Wake	Woke	Woken
Teach	Taught	Taught
Sleep	Slept	Slept
Bring	Brought	Brought
Drink	Drank	Drunk
Swim	Swam	Swum



English Irregular Verb Rap Song



Implicit knowledge



1. John gave the book to Mary.
2. John gave Mary the book.
3. John donated the book to Mary.
4. *John donated Mary the book.



Explicit knowledge

- Useful if learners have time to reflect
- Doesn't contribute much to communicative competence



Implicit knowledge

- Primary contributor to communicative competence



The Goal

Implicit
Knowledge



Assessing Linguistic Knowledge



- What types of tests do you give your students?



How do we test these two types of knowledge?

Explicit

- + Awareness
- Declarative
- Accessed through controlled processing
- Metalinguistic
- Decontextualized

Implicit

- - Awareness
- Accessed automatically
- Underlies communication
- Similar to L1 knowledge



Construct Validity

- Making sure the test measures what we want it to



- Explicit and implicit knowledge aren't measured in the same way



Tests of Explicit Knowledge

- Response using rules
- No time pressure
- Primary focus on language
- Metalinguistic knowledge encouraged



Tests of Implicit Knowledge

- Response according to feel
- Time pressure
- Primary focus on meaning
- Metalinguistic knowledge not required



Table 4. Design features of the tests

Criterion	Imitation	Oral narrative	Timed GJT	Untimed GJT	Metalanguage
Degree of awareness	Feel	Feel	Feel	Rule	Rule
Time available	Pressured	Pressured	Pressured	Unpressured	Unpressured
Focus of attention	Meaning	Meaning	Form	Form	Form
Metalinguistic knowledge	No	No	No	Yes	Yes



Imitation Test

- Beliefs Questionnaire
- Hear a sentence (either grammatical or ungrammatical)
- Respond to it semantically
- Reconstruct the sentence "in correct English"
- Administered individually one-on-one



Training sheet

A		<p>1. Vrai <input type="checkbox"/> Faux <input type="checkbox"/> Je ne sais pas <input type="checkbox"/></p>
B		<p>1. Vrai <input type="checkbox"/> Faux <input type="checkbox"/> Je ne sais pas <input type="checkbox"/></p>
C		<p>1. Vrai <input type="checkbox"/> Faux <input type="checkbox"/> Je ne sais pas <input type="checkbox"/></p>
D		<p>1. Vrai <input type="checkbox"/> Faux <input type="checkbox"/> Je ne sais pas <input type="checkbox"/></p>
E		<p>1. Vrai <input type="checkbox"/> Faux <input type="checkbox"/> Je ne sais pas <input type="checkbox"/></p>



Imitation Test Example



Evaluation

- Elicited relatively spontaneous production
- Could test specific structures

- Unnatural
- Time-consuming



Oral Narrative

- Students read a story
- Then retell it without the prompt or notes

- Mr. Lee finds a wallet



Oral Narrative

- Example



Evaluation

- Closest to real communication
- Spontaneous production
- Similar to real life

- Student might avoid target structures
- Time-consuming



Timed Grammaticality Judgement Test

- Make grammaticality judgments under time pressure



Timed Grammaticality Judgement Test

- Example



Evaluation

- Statistically it grouped with the Imitation and Narrative tests, but weakly
- Target specific structures
- Not very meaning-focused
- Difficult to get the time pressure right
- Students might have time to draw on explicit knowledge



Untimed Grammaticality Judgment Test

- Make grammaticality judgments without time pressure



Grammaticality Judgement Tests

1. Since (G) I haven't seen him for a long time.
2. Comparative (G) I think that he is nicer and more intelligent than all the other students.
3. Dative (G) The teacher explained the problem to the students.
4. V comp (UG) Liao says he wants buying a car next week.
5. Past ed (UG) Martin completed his assignment and print it out.
6. Tag (UG) We will leave tomorrow, isn't it?
7. Adverb (G) He plays soccer very well.
8. Aux do (UG) Did Keiko completed her homework?
9. Modal (UG) I must to brush my teeth now.
10. Conditional (UG) If he had been richer, she will marry him.
11. Since (UG) He has been living in New Zealand since three years.
12. Reported (G) Pam wanted to know what I had told John.
13. Article (UG) They had the very good time at the party.



Evaluation

- Target specific structures
- Familiar type of test

- Students didn't have to use explicit knowledge



Metalinguistic Knowledge Test

- Two Parts
- Write a rule
- Identify parts of speech



Instruction

You will see five sentences. They are all ungrammatical. The part of the sentence that contains the error is underlined. You will be asked to:

- (1) correct the error; and
- (2) explain what is wrong with the sentence.

Practice

Here are two examples.

Example One: I have lost mine ring.

Example answer:

I

(1) Correct the error.

my ring

(2) Explain what is wrong with the sentence.

Before a noun, you have to use the possessive adjective, not the pronoun.

Evaluation

- Good test of explicit, metalinguistic knowledge
- Difficult to score the rules



Conclusion

- No test measures just one type of knowledge
- Explicit knowledge is fairly easy to assess.
- Implicit knowledge is harder.
 - Time-consuming
 - Not easy to design



Conclusion

- Standardized tests of explicit knowledge don't encourage or measure the development of implicit knowledge



Conclusion

- Important for classroom teachers to think about their goals with assessment.
- Align the tests with those goals.



One last thing

- Survey of English teachers beliefs about and experiences with ISLA research

Dear English language teacher,

- We would like to find out about your involvement with research, including 'consuming' research and doing research!
- We would like to find out what helps and what hinders English language teachers' engagement with research.



Thank you!
Dziękuję!

