Idioma estranger i la seva didàctica

L1 acquisition vs Foreign Language Learning & the teacher’s role

Maria del Mar Suárez Vilagran - 2008
L1: mother tongue
FL / L2: Foreign Language (second language)

Similarities:
Order of acquisition (route)*
Speed (rate)
Motherese / teacher-talk
Imitation, repetition, formulaic language
L1 and L2 route: 4 basic steps

1. Work out rules about how lg works
2. Generalization of the rule from similar instances.
3. Overgeneralization of the rule
4. Correct use of the rule
L1 vs L2 acquisition

Now, can you think of differences between L1 acquisition and FL learning?
# L1 vs FL: differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L1</th>
<th>FL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete mastery</td>
<td>Native-like: difficult to attain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language together with concept</td>
<td>The concept is already there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal / naturalistic</td>
<td>Formal (except for immersion)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authentic language</td>
<td>Individual differences (IDs) play a role</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncontrolled by oneself</td>
<td>Learning strategies are used</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Authentic” language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Controlled</td>
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</table>
Some L1 and L2 acquisition processes are very similar, although many of the learning conditions are very different.
L1 vs FL learning

- Check reading pack “The young language learner” to complete your notes
- Check reading pack “Jigsaw puzzle or Bringing English to Life”
Young children: summary

- They respond to **meaning** even if they don’t understand individual words.
- Their understanding comes not just from explanation, but also from what they **see, hear, touch and interact with**.
- Generally motivated and curious,
- Need for individual **attention and approval** from teacher.
- Keen to talk about **themselves**.
- **Limited attention span** (10 mins).
Learning a language depending on the children’s age

- Children between four and twelve years old are very different as language learners.
- Different stages of development.
- Activities in the classroom need to address their cognitive, motor, language and social development.
- Check Reading pack “Curriculum educació primària” and “How children learn” in class.
Dunn’s article (1990)

- Questionnaire on “Beginning oral communication” by O. Dunn (1990) Check answers
CLASSROOM LANGUAGE
HELPING CHILDREN LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE:
SOME TIPS

- Use English in class as the main language.
- Use **gestures**, mime actions, and show pictures to help children understand.
- Let children use their L1 for communication to start with.
- **Recast** in English what children say to you in their L1.
- Answer children in English as much as possible.
- Use their L1 for support when you do a new activity or if no one understands.
- Establish routines and classroom language in English.

Adapted from Slattery, M. & J. Willis. 2001. *English for Primary Teachers*. OUP
REMEMBER:

The more English the children hear, the more they will learn.

They will learn gradually – they won’t say everything perfectly to start with.

Encourage them by responding positively.