Comprehensible Input as a Language Learning Strategy Among Heritage Language Learners in the Spanish Classroom

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Overview

- Introduction
- Definition of key concepts
- Gap in current research
- Purpose of theoretical study
- Research question
- Methods
- Implications

Introduction

Figure 1.
Teacher and students

Note. From "A Man in Blazer Looking at the Students Work" by M. Nilov, 2021, retrieved from https://www.pexels.com/photo/a-man-in-blazer-looking-at-the-students-work-9159042/. CCO 1.0

- Spanish language learning and education
- Numerous language learning strategies
- Methods and types of learners
- Propose a study that will benefit future educators and learners

Comprehensible Input (CI)

- *i* + 1 model
- Input that is slightly above the learner's current level of acquisition
- Success in classrooms with learners of a foreign language

(Krashen, 1985; Ash, 2017; VanPatten et al., 2020; Lichtman & VanPatten, 2021).

Heritage Language Learners

A heritage language learner (HLL):

1. Has some linguistic knowledge of the language OR
2. Has some type of connection with the language

- Spanish HLLs make up largest heritage population
- Need for differentiated instruction

(Burgo, 2017; Randolph, 2017; Barros & Bachelor, 2018; Brown et al., 2018; Carreira et al., 2019; Beaudrie, 2020; Burgo, 2020; MacGregor-Mendoza, 2020; Wilson & Beaudrie, 2021)

Heritage Language Learners in the Classroom

Figure 2.
Students in class

Note. From "woman carrying white and green textbook photo" by J. Trueba, 2019, retrieved from https://unsplash.com/photos/iQPr1XkF5F0. CCO 1.0

- Separate programs for HLLs
- Combining HLLs and learners of a second language (L2)
- Diverse skill set
- Interest levels

(Randolph, 2017; Brown et al., 2018; Beaudrie, 2020)

Gap in Current Research

- Lack of data detailing HLLs experiences with CI as a language learning strategy in the public high school setting, specifically among Spanish HLLs

Purpose of Theoretical Study

- Determine instructional needs of Spanish heritage language learners

- Give language educators insight into learner preferences

- Address gap in the research

Research Question

What are the experiences Spanish HLLs in the public high school setting have with comprehensible input as a language learning strategy?

Methods

- Qualitative Study
- Sample: 12 to 15 Spanish HLLs in public high school classrooms in Southwest Virginia, where CI is used as a language learning strategy

Methods

Data Collection:

- Writing prompt responses
- Individual interviews
- Focus groups

Figure 4.
Girl writing

Note. From "Woman in Yellow Shirt Writing on White Paper" by A. Piacquadio, 2018, retrieved from https://www.pexels.com/photo/woman-in-yellow-shirt-writing-on-white-paper-3807755/. CCO 1.0

Methods

Data analysis:
- Synthesize and analyze overarching themes
- Look for patterns in responses

Implications

- Valuable information for language educators
- Means to understanding how HLLs process instruction
- Basis for future studies

Christian Worldview

- Showing students the love of Christ
- Mirroring Jesus' example of instruction
- Matthew 18:12

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