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TOWARDS ENHANCED OUTPUT: AN APPROACH TO REMEDIAL TEACHING

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Abstract

Based on a Vygotskyan sociocultural perspective, the paper is aimed at socializing an approach to small groups or individual learning situations when, after having been enrolled in several English language courses, the learners may have considerable knowledge about the language, yet cannot use it in communication. The approach makes use of contemporary concepts in language learning such as *noticing* (Schmidt, 1990, 1993, 2001, 2010; Hulstijn & Schmidt 1994; Andrews, 2007), *enhanced input* (Sharwood Smith, 1993), *intake*, *interlanguage* (Selinker, 1972), and posits that of *enhanced output* as a conceptual category in the field. Enhanced input focused on meaning noticing leads to increased intake and gradual interlanguage development. Once certain preconditions are attained and enough opportunities for communication realization given, the result is likely to be enhanced output. *Enhanced output* is defined as accurate and fluent learner language used in foreign language communication. Learning how to learn and decreasing dependence on the mother tongue to produce the L2 are just two among those prerequisites while managing time effectively results in a different kind of lesson where the teacher-student relationship is mostly devoted to communication in the L2. Two categories from the personality sphere in second language learning: self-regulation (Zimmerman, 1990, 2013) and self-confidence are considered to be central to the conception because both play a crucial role in fostering learning development. Finally, the paper describes the cases of three students that seem to validate the *enhanced output* proposal.

1. Introduction

Long gone are the days in which language learners enrolled a course to improve their reading skills, increase their vocabulary, or perfect their grammar. Today, they want to develop their communication skills to be able to interact while they travel or within their professional sphere. As a result, helping learners to bridge the gap between knowing the target language code and using it effectively is still very much written about.

The debate on whether the students any teacher has are acquirers or learners; in terms of being either good language learners, or those do not employ effective learning strategies, is extremely important for the teacher to bear in mind, for like it or not, those who have not succeeded in mastering the L2 are the imperfect raw material to be molded into successful foreign language users. Despite the truth of Selinker´s argument (1972) referring to the fact that the vast majority of second language learners do not attain native speaker proficiency, many do not have the time, want, or are able to - due to many reasons-to achieve that stage. Most just need to be proficient enough to meet their personal and/or professional goals in a limited span of time, usually two or three years, sometimes less, at a rate of two lessons a week, usually before, but most often, after their exhausting work schedule.

This type of learner may be characterized, in general terms, as an adult graduate who wants to take an international exam to emigrate or work/study abroad. Quite often, the very nature of his job requires the use of the foreign language (hereafter referred to as FL, L2, or TL) for he wants to work, or already does it, for an international company, or intends to enroll in a course where the L2 is the language of instruction or training. Sometimes quite embarrassed, he says that he has been studying the FL for a long time, usually since his school days, but cannot speak it fluently. He is very concerned about grammatical accuracy and relies a lot on his mother tongue (hereafter referred to as MT or L1). This prospective learner more often than not has a family and pays for the course tuition from his own pocket, something that often poses a domestic financial constraint.

An initial assessment through a diagnostic written placement test reveals that his lexicogrammar is not that bad. Quite often, his final score is that of an intermediate level. However, when interviewed, he does not seem to be able use it in communication effectively; that is, he asks for repetition, clarification of words, and cannot cope with rephrasing. He struggles to build a sentence, and at text level, it is difficult for him to understand the message. Things that he did well in the placement test such as tenses, articles, and verb patterns are wrongly used in actual communication. In addition, his spoken language consists of simple sentences with a very limited vocabulary scope. That is, he may use *angry*, but does not relate this concept to other states such as *upset*, *furious*, and *annoyed*, let alone *irate*. Some of these subtle shades of meaning are missing in his speech. Furthermore, in some instances, he has difficulty in recognizing lexical derivations such as *obedient* and *obedience* even though he immediately understands the meaning when told the root is *obey*. In other words, in purely Krashenian terms, he seems to have learned a lot, but acquired very little of the L2 for successful communication.

The above generalization is usually the sad picture of many adult language learners in many developing countries. The roots of the problem are not in the learners themselves, but of a very different nature. Ideally, these learners may have gone through several four-academic-hour sixteen-week semesters in a fifteen-student classroom with a teacher devoted to develop communication skills in learner-centered

lessons. However, from an arithmetical perspective and provided the teacher only did that - something that is far from real - this period only allowed for 3.2 hours of communicative practice per student every term. In this environment, there might have been enough *input*; in the best of the cases, adequate *intake*; but practically no *output*. The glaring disparity between what he seems to know as evidenced by the placement written diagnostic lexicogrammar test and the oral part measuring language use point in that direction.

The demands and results of any learning process depend on objectives and as such differ significantly. Learning to ride a bicycle, for instance, cannot be compared to learning an L2 in terms of complexity that, in turn, implies time and effort from both the teacher and learner. In other words, the teacher has to bear in mind that internalizing *input* does not follow the teacher saying, "This is important" or "This content will be a test question" because in language learning, every content is important. The FL lessons that the learner ŧ whose profile was outlined in the introduction might have been test-focused or code-focused, as a result of which, he only internalized grammar rules and basic vocabulary. Besides, he may have memorized texts and recited them as well as answered direct questions from listening or reading passages. In other words, the learner was never asked, compelled, or given the opportunities to use the L2 naturally. As a result, the "problem" has been identified as the need to unleash the communication potential of adult learners who have not achieved a satisfactory level of communicative competence despite being involved in L2 studies for a long time.

It is, therefore, entirely feasible to "hypothesize" that this learner has the potential to communicate in the L2 and what he needs are simply, the opportunities to realize it through a language course that caters for his individual needs. This paper's objective is to argue for a practical approach aimed at remedying such situations through the enhancement of communicative skills in the FL.

2. Review of Literature

Regardless of the subject he teaches, every teacher knows that a learner does not interiorize everything he deals with in class. To clarify this phenomenon, language teaching makes use of two concepts: *input* and *intake*. The Teaching English section of the British Council defines the first as "the exposure learners have to authentic language in use." That is, the exposure to communication with the teacher, the teacher and other learners, among his peers and any contact he has with the language outside the classroom. *Intake*, on the other hand, is *input* "taken in and internalized by the learner **so it can be applied** [writer's bold]." Intake used in communication is conceptualized as *output*.

Each of the concepts, as envisaged above, seem to belong and work in different dimensions, as separate entities. If seen in that way, their didactic connection and cause-effect relationships are difficult to appreciate. However, if they are analyzed from a dialectic perspective, it would not be difficult to realize that the type of learner looking for remedy to his FL ailments is the result of ill-conceived language teaching practices with strong emphasis on grammar and vocabulary and little, or no, attention to communication.

In Didactics, an ability is *knowledge in action*. This is a pedagogically vast and extraordinarily complex concept that allows the individual to use what he knows creatively in the development of theoretical or practical activities (Danilov & Skatkin, 1985). It follows that a given ability or skill (both

concepts will be used interchangeably) by no means can operate in a vacuum. It would be like trying to learn how to drive a car without actually sitting behind the steering wheel and starting the vehicle. That is why, in any teaching learning process, the second component of the action, *knowledge*, is determined in terms of its level of assimilation and depth, both of which have a bearing on the corresponding action systematization.

Undoubtedly, knowledge of the L2 system is essential. Using it is a very different thing. Hyme's postulate "There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless" (1972, p. 278) points in that direction. A teacher does very little with teaching the present progressive and giving practice as prescribed in textbooks if he does not point out how it is used in real communication. For instance, "You are smoking again" and "Look, Lena! Danny is eating hungrily" as statements do describe, in fact, actions happening at the moment of speaking. However, the first speaker is expressing criticism while the second is expressing his joy at the behavior of his inappetent child. In other words, teaching the learners the what, to whom, how, where, and when are also part of ability formation in the L2.

An ability may consist of a single activity such as understanding the gist in reading comprehension or more than one, if interacting with a text is necessary. Interaction with a text's writer, for instance, requires "understanding conceptual meanings and cohesion to link ideas, distinguishing main from supporting details, interpreting text by going outside it, and recognizing indicators in discourse" (Grellet 1981, pp.4-5) among others. In addition, it demands applying background knowledge and integrating it with new information from the very text to cast doubt and disapprove or give a favorable opinion or balanced judgment.

From a sociocultural perspective, for the learner, any L2 functions as the mediator between the outside material-spiritual world and its individual users, members of a given society. Therefore, appropriation of the L2 complex cultural system to be used in communication is not a mechanical process, but an active one. These functions appear twice: first on the intermental plain; that is, as *input,* L2 language mediated subject-subject communication in and outside the classroom; and second, as *intake* on the intramental plain, as the learner internalizes and appropriates its forms to control his own thinking. The transit from the intermental to the intramental plain entails "selective attention resulting in reduction, expansion, and repetition of social models" (Lantolf & Thorne (2009), pp. 178).

Hence, *interlanguage* (Selinker, 1972), that is, the individual language learner system constructed from intake, is likely to be boosted if the teacher enhances input in ways that facilitate transit to internalization. "Enhanced input," Sharwood Smith (1993, p. 176) argues, "Implies only that we can manipulate aspects of the input" … in different ways to make it salient, but at the same time, there are "different ways in which such salience may affect the learner's knowledge and performance in the second language." Positively affecting the learner's knowledge and performance is very likely to be achieved through teaching how to *notice*. As a result, learning how to *notice* would inexorably lead to increased intake.

Noticing as a concept is central in foreign language teaching cognitive psychology. "While the intention to learn is not always crucial to learning," Schmidt (1993, pp. 209) insists, "attention (voluntary or involuntary to the material to be learned is." This implies that drawing the learner's attention to input is

a condition to be met in the FL classroom for this action leads to awareness. Though unconscious learning certainly happens, drawing attention to the language features working in context is more likely to lead to increased intake than if it is not done. "This awareness ('noticing')", Andrews (2007, pp. 59) highlights, "should include the learner noticing the difference between his/her interlanguage rule and the target language rule." Moreover, if this is done through interaction i.e. by involving the students in the discovery of those features, rather than the teacher explicitly describing them, the learner is more likely to learn how to notice.

Noticing as a prerequisite to understanding is not enough to learn; other cognitive and metacognitive as well as behavioral demands on the part of the learner are also necessary. Schmidt (1990, pp. 131-135) distinguishes three dimensions in the consciousness phenomenon in learning. The first is **consciousness as awareness** where he recognizes three levels: **perception** that imply mental organization and the possibility to create internal representations of external events, **noticing** and **understanding**. No one can learn what is not understood. The second is **consciousness as intention** implies efforts, attempts, and strategies of volitional and deliberate nature on the part of the learner. That is, as a bilateral process, teaching and learning depend not only on the teacher but on the learner as well. Involving the learner and making him responsible for his own learning are part of achieving his goals. The third dimension **consciousness as knowledge** influences organizational processes and strategies to boost learning.

In other words, raising consciousness in learning is more likely to boost intake if perceived elements are highlighted enough to guarantee understanding. Moreover, at the volitional level, the learner's deliberate actions aimed at interiorizing as well as knowing how to learn could be considered prerequisites to increase intake, both in quantity and quality. Furthermore, knowing how to seek for contact with exposure, solve deficiencies and organize learning seem also to be paramount.

One aspect that has an indisputable bearing on achieving academic success is **self-regulation**. Zimmerman (2000, p. 14, cited by Li (2017, p. 10) understands the concepts as "self-generated thoughts, feelings and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the adaptive and modifiable nature of self-regulated actions." This concept suggests desire and commitment in the pursuance of goals. A learner who self-regulates is a "metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participant" learner (Zimmerman 1990, p. 4; self-cite 1986) who is "responsive to feedback regarding the effectiveness of their learning; and by the self-perceptions of academic accomplishment" (Ibid, p. 14). That is,

> Metacognitively, self-regulated learners can plan, organize, self-instruct, self-monitor,
> and self-evaluate their learning process. Motivationally, self-regulated learners
> perceive themselves as competent, self-efficacious, and autonomous learners.
> Behaviorally, self-regulated learners select and create positive working environments
> that could promote learning. (Li, ibid, p. 10)

The Cyclical Phase Model of Self-Regulation (Zimmerman, 2013, pp. 142-146) supports the present writer's contention of assumed relationships between enhanced input, noticing and intake from a cognitive point of view as well as highlights this socio-cultural conception in the transit *input-intake*. Therefore, it seems that the learner's self-regulation should become a key component of L2 remedial teaching, though it may not be singled out as the road to success.

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Other variables such as self-satisfaction, beliefs, previous language learning experiences, perceived needs, among others as well as external pressure derived from workload and social responsibilities, because of their priorities in the learner's life, may hinder the search for a solution to the situation. The only palliative for this is personalization in teaching.

In summary, an approach to remedial teaching has to focus on the social uses of L2 rather than its formal characteristics; rather than repeating the same approaches based on grammar and vocabulary, it has to engage the learner with more exposure to the L2. This exposure is enhanced in terms of volume and quality at which point the learner, through training, learns how to notice and understand. This is achieved by raising awareness of how the language is used to do things, what is done to achieve the desired linguistic effects, in what situations and with whom. At the same time, self-regulation determines the learner's assumption of responsibilities in his own learning. Though this may seem like a burden, it makes him aware of the "what", the "how" of learning foreign languages, and more importantly, that merely classroom instruction is not enough to achieve the desired results.

Internalized language, that is, intake, not always can be applied and become output. This author differentiates between controlled and free output. The first implies the teacher's control over the language such as it happens in the speaking section in current textbooks where the student is compelled to use a given lexicogrammar creatively; free output means creative language use and implies no control can be exercise over its features, let alone the message. The statements above explain the words in bold in the first concept of this section. Controlled output is less creative and demands conscious self-monitoring of the lexicogrammar, whereas free output is creative in nature and demands conscious monitoring of the message and unconscious self-monitoring of the lexicogrammar.

Accuracy and fluency in both, controlled and free output largely depend on dependence/independence from the MT system. Forteza (2015) and Forteza and Korneeva (2017) demonstrate that interlingual interference is a major factor affecting L2 output. Dependence on the mother tongue to produce the L2 is a major factor not alien to many language learners. Only those who gain confidence enough through, again, self-regulation are successful in getting rid of translation from the MT to produce the L2. Leontiev (1981), Leontiev (1981) and DeKeyser (2001) cited by Lantolf and Thorne (ibid, 298-299) concur that giving the learner appropriate experience in the L2 and [self-regulated] practice is essential. That is, appropriate input-output opportunities are essential because they pave the way for procedural knowledge to be processed with increased automaticity resulting in rapid, effortless performance. This means that enhanced input, as it is conceived for remedial work, is more likely to lead to a type of enhanced output with fewer and fewer MT traces in its development when self-regulation acting as self-monitoring in what is said and how it is said is present.

Finally, **self-confidence**, understood as trust in one's abilities, possibilities, knowledge, and judgment, because of its impact on affective factors, has strong effects on the development of fluency. Forteza (2015) describes a Russian-speaking learner of Spanish whose main preoccupation is being correct to the extent that she cannot practically utter a full sentence in the L2 despite having all the means to do so. Lightbrown and Spada (2006, p. 62) report research stating that self-confidence in the L2 develops because of "lack of anxiety combined with a sufficient level of communicative competence arising from reasonable pleasant (second) language experiences." It seems, therefore, that a relaxed

language learner atmosphere combined with encouragement to use the L2 focusing on meaning rather than on form together with self-monitoring are essential to bridge the *intake-output* gap.

3.   The enhanced input-enhanced output approach

The enhanced input-enhanced output approach is a pedagogical conception based on cognitive and personality psychology integrated to a Vygotskyan perspective aimed at the personalization of remedial teaching with individual students or very small groups. The main idea behind the approach is the manipulation of input to boost the kinds of intake the learner really needs as a means to enhance output. The approach makes strong emphasis on learner self-regulation through the development of learning strategies and optimal time management in a relaxed L2 experience where the main objective is communication and fostering self-confidence in the use of the FL.

As a set of principles, beliefs, or ideas about the nature of learning translated into the classroom, this approach to remedial teaching presupposes three stages, each of which is controlled by a set of teaching learning objectives that set the grounds for development and pave the way for the next stage.

3.1. Initial stage:

a)   Knowledge of the learner's real L2 needs and his beliefs about the nature of FL learning, as well as previous experiences.

b)   Understanding of and commitment to change on the part of the learner.

3.2. Implementation stage:

c)   Individualization of learning

d)   Exponential growth of the individual workload at the zone of proximal development (henceforth ZPD).

e)   Development of language learning skills

3.3. Communication-only stage

f)   Increase in learner independence ~~increase~~

g)   Interaction focused on meaning

The introduction section gives a general picture of the information necessary to start a course in remedial teaching. This means that at the initial stage what the learner knows in terms of the language system is essential. In addition, the teacher has to find out everything possible about the future learner as an individual to determine his real needs. Learning a language not only entails the language itself. Because the learner is a human being with his own beliefs, background and current experiences, the teacher has to approach each case as a distinct personality encompassing characteristic patterns of

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thinking, feelings, behaving, and preferred modes of learning, at least. The more the teacher knows the learner, the better he can tailor a course for him.

Only after the teacher has a clear picture of the task ahead, can he discuss with the learner the results of the initial screening session. The session consists of two parts: first a diagnostic placement test and an interview in the FL. The interview questions assess communication and is useful to obtain information about the student as a human being. For instance, asking the student why he wants to study English again, how often he uses the language, where he studied English before, what he liked and disliked about the experience do provide the teacher with very useful information about the student apart from confirming competence-performance gaps.

Only when the learner understands his situation, can the teacher propose a course of action. Only when both are clear about each other's expectations, a decision on the appropriate course is decided by mutual agreement. It would be wise not to impose, but to negotiate. The market is full of English language teaching courses based on the communicative approach which are adaptable for enhanced input-enhanced output. At this initial stage, the learner has to be convinced of one fact: he is responsible for his own learning. As a result, he is expected to commit himself to learning. "It's like a patient who has to take medicine and follow a strict regime, if he wants to get better," the writer usually tells this type of learner.

During the implementation stage, teaching is personalized by giving him exactly what he needs. As the usual problem is language in use, the focus of every lesson must, at least 60 % of the time, be devoted to this. This implies that traditional grammar, reading and vocabulary exercises are assigned as homework. Against all traditional conceptions, the writer believes that **everything that the learner can do alone may, in principle, be left as homework, if the learner is prepared to carry out the task**. There is no specific formula as to what can be designated as homework. For example, the teacher may develop all pre-reading tasks in class, leave the comprehension and vocabulary questions as homework, and retake the reading for post-reading in class. These ten or fifteen minutes saved from comprehension questions will be used for conversation or discussion of similar topics to which it will be possible to come back during post-reading, but from a different perspective.

Once the learner knows how to deal with receptive tasks, look up for information in a monolingual dictionary, notice and understand how language works, how words pair up to form collocations and phrasal verbs, for example, the teacher has paved the way for the student to learn how to learn. This is a long process reached in successive approximations; as the learner becomes more independent, the teacher becomes less of a teacher and more of a mentor.

At this stage, input is enhanced by providing extra reading and visual materials. For instance, films, novels, and the news become part of the lesson. The idea is increased exposure to interesting, live L2 connected as much as possible to the learner's reality and material studied in class. All the materials used as enhanced input should be in the ZDP; the ZDP is the difference between what the learner can do without help and what he can do with help. In other words, educational material must be pitched a little above the learners' language level to bring about development. Sometimes as the learner is interested in further practice, specialized textbooks such as Murphy's *Grammar in Use*, McCarthy and O'Dell's *Vocabulary in Use,* and Hancock's *English Pronunciation in Use* are recommended.

Enhanced input to material not contained in the textbook means extra work for the teacher. He has to check and plan what to do with it in class. For instance, as environmental issues is a recurrent topic in most coursebooks, reading material from the *Simple English Wikipedia* combined with Al Gore's documentary on the environment with subtitles in Russian have been used for discussion with pre-intermediate and intermediate students in remedial courses. Upper-intermediate and advanced students, on the other hand, have been asked to watch the same documentary without subtitles, read about the Kyoto and Paris Protocols, and the arguments from scientists who deny the existence of climate change. All this information may be integrated into a discussion involving an analysis of the situation in the region and the country, their position and expectations on the topic, what they may do to help the environment, and conclude with writing an essay or a letter to local officials about a particular environmental issue affecting them.

The transit from the implementation to the communication-only stage is gradual and takes time. Everything depends on the learner's commitment and degree of independence achieved. A learner fully committed to the course ideally self-regulates metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally; the more he advances, the more self-confidence he gains.

Once the learner is independent enough, the L2 lesson (around 80-90%) can be devoted to **communication-only**. The rest of the time is used to make them notice the subtle aspects of language in use and, thus, expand their communication potential. Language at text and discourse level, metaphoric expressions, similes, synonyms, connotations and implicatures become the specific focus of attention.

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to reach this final stage. Sometimes a learner drops out because of work, personal or family problems; in other cases, the learner feels he has reached his goal or believes he can dispense with the teacher because he has acquired the required learning strategies.

4. The enhanced input-enhanced output approach in practice

The two case studies below portray three Russian-speaking learners of English who are currently being taught using the enhanced input-enhanced output approach. Both case studies take into consideration the learners' background, former L2 education, and how individuality is reflected in reactions and outcomes in the new environment. At the same time, each case is compared with another learner to highlight positive or negative aspects that have been deemed useful for generalization or conclusions.

4.1. Case 1: Alexander

Alexander is a 30-year-old computer software engineer who, together with his ex-wife (a secondary school teacher of Physics), started studying English five years ago at the pre-intermediate level with the writer in a two-academic hour sessions twice a week. After they completed the intermediate level satisfactorily, they expressed their desire to train for the TOEFL exam, at which point they were warned of the exam demands, the time it would take to achieve the necessary knowledge and skills to obtain a passing mark as well as the need to bridge all their language gaps. Nevertheless, they decided to go ahead

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with their family project because they believed it was possible to reach the upper-intermediate level through the TOELF materials chosen (Sharpe's *Barron's TOEFL iBT*, 13th Ed.).

During the TOEFL training, it was observed that he seemed ready for TOEFL training and had real possibilities to advance; his wife, on the contrary, made no visible progress. Though this was never told to the students, because of ethical reasons, it was clear since the beginning that her cultural level and mechanistic approach to learning and doing tasks together with full dependence on the mother tongue were a deterrent to her progress. Six months later, they changed their plans, dropped out, and divorced.

At the end of 2016, he contacted the writer with the aim to restart TOEFL preparation. He has a new life, twice the work he had formerly, and ambitious plans in which English and passing TOEFL play a central role. Once agreed the course of action and chosen a textbook (Phillip's *Longman's Preparation Course for the TOEFL Test, 2006*), a step-by-step period devoted to the practice of how to answer each type question evaluating receptive and productive skills period followed. Both receptive and production practice were preceded by enhanced input, noticing and, thus, understanding. The enhanced input-enhanced output stage was fully implemented around five months ago.

Alexander has shown to be a metacognitively, motivationally and behaviorally self-regulated learner. Despite his huge workload - apart from his main job, he is involved in launching his own business, has responsibilities as the father of two daughters; he has seriously committed himself to passing the exam with excellence. His exposure to English has probably increased threefold: in class and outside (the material provided or suggested by the teacher plus contact with foreign partners and during business trips abroad). He is almost ready for the exam. However, his personal goals go beyond the TOEFL test; he has realized he needs much more to function adequately in his future business and life.

For the time being, just two months, this student has been engaged in the communication-only stage where he is progressing steadily, without giant leaps, as it should be. He still does not have enough self-confidence to face the stress an exam like TOEFL entails, nor is he reasonably able to self-monitor output in all cases. He also needs to improve organization for speaking and writing skills to meet the requirements of the exam.

4.2. Case 2: Andrey and Mikhail

Andrey and Mikhail are software engineers, working for a local company with international connections, who started a two-academic-hour remedial course at the pre-intermediate level twice a week at the beginning of year and are almost finishing it. They are in their mid-thirties, have families, and, at times, huge workloads that usually involve business trips within the country and abroad. These learners need English for communication in their business trips and tours abroad.

In the placement test, both did well, but the interview that followed showed problems in communication with frequent recurrence to the MT and errors in the very grammar they had encountered in the diagnostic test. As their L2 experiences contained little or no language practice, being confined primarily to the learning of lots of grammar rules, while vocabulary seems to have been neglected, the results of the interview were the ones expected. In other words, it usually happens that a learner cannot use in communication a grammatical content he apparently knows. Knowing in language learning does not necessarily mean or lead to the skill to use it.

During the enhanced input-enhanced output implementation stage, it was perceived that Andrey is remarkably more efficient than Mikhail in the application of learning strategies such as looking up for words in a monolingual dictionary and noticing how language works. He also self-regulates input by organizing his time to study independently, looking for extra exposure to the language. His output reflects that, most of the time, he correctly uses new language items learnt in class and from additional materials. This learner also integrates new knowledge to old cognitive structures, monitors language production, and surprisingly, that of his classmate's.

Contrary to his classmate, Mikhail does not seem to plan, organize, and control his input-output optimally. He wastes precious lesson time and, supposedly outside too, in comparing his MT with the FL, and profits less from enhanced inputs. Though he seems to notice and understand, he apparently fails to self-regulate both lexicogrammar and message. As a result, his output is sometimes incoherent which makes it difficult to understand because it is full of mixed tenses and pronouns without any clear referent, for instance. In addition, if he studying the progressive tenses, he shows determination in applying it at all costs regardless of the context of situation. It seems, therefore, that when he interiorizes new content, he does not integrate usage in a systemic way.

These students have been immersed in the communication-only stage for about two months; it has to be said that both comply with the extra-readings, videos, and specialized materials suggested. Furthermore, as they worked together some pair-work activities have been given as homework too. Andrey seems to be progressing much faster that his workmate Mikhail who stills depends on a lot of translation and shows obsessive preoccupation learning grammar rules regardless of usage. In addition, he seems to have realized his workmate-classmate is leaving him behind. As a result, he is sometimes unsure of what he is going to say and seems anxious.

Summarizing the situation, Alexander and Andrey seem to have benefited from the enhanced input-enhanced output approach. However, they still have a long way to go. It seems their capacity to self-regulate, especially self-monitoring output, and self-confidence are the factors that have made them advance faster in comparison with Mikhail.

5.   Conclusion

The enhanced input-enhanced out approach to remedial work is based on a strong version of the communicative approach where the L2 learner is given what he actually needs. It places strong emphasis in increasing the opportunities to expand his contact with the target language outside the classroom, not in the usual fashion characterized by telling the student he has to read, listen to the radio or watch TV. On the contrary, it involves giving the student appropriate exposure a little above his actual language level at the ZDP as well developing strategies to cope with the language. It follows three stages, each of which has its own goal where the transition to learning independence is paramount. This implies changes in the teacher's roles too.

The case studies show that the approach works when the learner commits himself to the learning task and exercises a high degree of self-regulation, lowers the affective filter, and with it gains self-confidence, all of which increases intake and allows for enhanced output in the communication-only

stage. At this stage, it can be said the student is independent, and the L2 classroom loses its traditional formality to become the place where the student comes to use the L2 rather than learn it.

Finally, as it is inspired in action research methodology, the approach is not very likely to be suitable for replication; however, the ideas expounded are worth trying if adapted to remedial situations where the learner's aim and real need is effective communication in the foreign language.

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