The Relationship among Students’ Spontaneous L2 Utterances, Uptake, and Teachers’ Use of the L2: A Study of a Corpus Approach

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This study examined: 1) the relationship between the amount of use of the L2 by teachers and students’ spontaneous L2 utterances; and 2) whether there is a variation in the students’ uptake in relation to the degree of teachers’ input. The analysis was undertaken by a corpus approach using the corpora compiled by the author from 22 EFL classes. The corpus design criteria were divided into categories pertaining to the different stages of the lesson. Observing the corpus data, the total English and Japanese utterances by both teachers and students as well as the tokens of discourse functions such as questions, feedbacks, or directions were compared among classes. Students’ uptake data came from the uptake questionnaire in which they were required to write what they thought they learned in class. Students were asked three questions: what new points have come up in today’s lesson in terms of 1) vocabulary, 2) sentences, and 3) grammar. Based on the corpus data and students’ answers to the questionnaire, the Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test was conducted to examine the differences in uptake among classes. A Spearman rank correlation was done to examine the correlation between the teachers’ input and students’ spontaneous L2 utterances. A qualitative analysis was also undertaken to consider the transcribed data and the students’ uptake questionnaire. The findings implied that it was not only the teachers’ use of the L2 that correlates to students’ spontaneous L2 utterances but that the teachers’ feedback also facilitates students’ L2 utterances. The study also implied that the L2 utterances initiated by students themselves influence their uptake. Moreover, in classes where it was observed that the teachers gave more feedback, the amount of uptake by the students was higher than in the classes where less feedback occurred.

Gaps between Students and Teachers in Perceiving Varieties of English

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This paper is a report of research that investigated the perceptions that English learners and their teachers have toward varieties of English. Varieties of English, such as American English, British English, and non-native English, have been investigated extensively for the last two decades. The researchers who investigated this issue (e.g., Chiba, Matsura, & Yamamoto, 1995; Matsuda, 2003; Fukuda, 2010) generally support the idea that American English is preferred by Japanese students (for summary, see McKenzie, 2010). However, it seems that a possible gap between learners and teachers on this issue has never been examined. It is true that the gap between L2 learners and their teachers have been examined extensively. For example, Brown (2009) investigated the general difference between students and teachers on how L2 should be taught. The results show that while teachers value communicative approaches over grammar practice, students do not value these approaches as much. Teachers also feel that grammar should be taught in real-world contexts, whereas students do not agree with this belief. These findings are consistent with Shulz (2001), in that both studies found that students generally favor grammar teaching than teachers do. However, the difference between learners’ perception and teachers’ perception of varieties of English seems to be under-researched. In order to fill the gap, students and their teachers at a university in Tokyo were asked about their perceptions of varieties of English, using 20 Likert-scale question items. Then, the data from students and teachers were compared statistically. The results show that learners and teachers see American English a little differently. Teachers did not expect their students to like American English as much as they really do. Teachers may keep in mind that how they expect their students to perceive Englishes may be different from the reality.