

Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT)

The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers is a non-profit professional association of over 4,000 members.

Through its research, resources and publications, professional development and advocacy activities, the association plays a significant role in increasing awareness, appreciation and understanding of the importance of second and additional language learning and teaching throughout Canada. www.caslt.org

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The Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute of the University of Ottawa provides instruction in Canada's two official languages provides instruction in Canada's two official languages. Through its research centre, CCERBAL, it is committed to strengthening and promoting education and research in the fields of teaching, evaluation, and language policy and planning. www.olbi.uottawa.ca

Bilingualism in a Plurilingual Canada Podcast Series

Corrective Feedback in Immersion Classrooms , by Roy Lyster

Author

Roy Lyster is a professor at the Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University in Montreal. His research focuses primarily on immersion and content-based classrooms, including both observational and experimental studies of teacher-student interaction, form-focused instruction, and corrective feedback. roy.lyster@mcgill.ca

Summary

Roy Lyster shares recommendations on corrective feedback teachers can use based on his research and observations in the immersion French classroom.

Facts

- Immersion teachers are faced on a daily basis with the challenge of having to teach their students both French as a second language and subjects such as history, math, or geography. As a result, immersion teachers often ask themselves whether they should correct students' language errors, or just ignore them in order to focus more on content.
- Second language learners not only benefit from corrective feedback; they may actually require clear feedback in order to move ahead in their second language development. Researchers suggest that it may be precisely at the moment when students have something to say, even during subject-matter instruction, that their attention can most effectively be drawn to language, rather than postponing attention to form until a subsequent language lesson.
- Four types of feedback **that are very useful are types that do** not provide students with the correct form and instead pushed them to retrieve the correct form on their own. **These are called prompts.** There are four types of prompt: elicitation, metalinguistic clues, clarification requests, and repetition.



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Podcast Series

The Bilingualism in a Plurilingual Canada podcast series is an initiative brought to you by the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute (OLBI) of the University of Ottawa in partnership with the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT).

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The goal of this initiative is to make current research in second language teaching and learning available to teachers and the general public.

All podcasts from this series can be downloaded from the CASLT and OLBI Web sites.

Elicitation: teachers directly elicit a reformulation from the student by asking questions such as, “Comment est-ce qu’on dit ça en français?”.

Metalinguistic clues: include comments or questions related to the accuracy of a learner utterance, such as “Ça ne se dit pas comme ça en français” or “Ce n’est pas le bon verbe.”

Clarification requests: teachers use phrases such as “Pardon?” and “Je ne comprends pas” to indicate to a problem even though they understood the learner’s message and are just pretending to not understand.

Repetition: teachers repeat inaccurate learner utterances, usually with rising intonation, as in: “Le chien était faim?”

Recommendations:

- First, continued recasting of what students already know is not an effective strategy for ensuring continued second language development. Recasts, however, are ideal for facilitating the delivery of complex subject matter, because they provide supportive, scaffolded help, which serves to move lessons ahead, especially when the target forms in question are beyond the students’ current abilities.
- Second, prompts are especially effective for improving students’ control over already-acquired forms, because they push students to retrieve correct forms from what they already know and thus provide opportunities to practice. That prompts are generally more effective than recasts has been confirmed by recent experimental studies conducted in immersion and other communicative classrooms.
- Prompts and recasts clearly serve different purposes, depending on the learner, the situation, and the nature of the error. As a result, teachers need to be able to juggle a range of feedback types selected in accordance with overall educational objectives and individual students’ current language abilities.

Further Reading

Lyster, R. (2004). Differential effects of prompts and recasts in form-focused Instruction. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 26, 399-432.

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Lyster, R., & Ranta, L. (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake: Negotiation of form in communicative classrooms. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 19, 37-66.

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