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TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED MEDIATIONAL MODEL FOR EFL DEVELOPMENT: FROM INPUT TO INDEPENDENT USE

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Abstract

Background. Input-based second language acquisition theory and Vygotskian sociocultural are frequently given to language teachers as compatible lenses on the same process.

Objective. This article asks whether the two traditions, though not equal, can still be gathered into a usable model of EFL development.

Method. In this study, input, negotiated interaction, and output (Krashen, 1985; Long, 1996; Swain, 1995) are reinterpreted as types of mediation in line with a Vygotskian developmental framework (Vygotsky, 1978), resulting in a 3 stage model. This model is assessed through a secondary analysis of an existing case study (Ioup et al., 1994; Schmidt, 1983) and is further illustrated with a hypothetical classroom scenario.

Results. The reanalysis shows that a learner's creation of self-made tools, rather than merely the amount of exposure, accounts for the differentiation of outcomes among learners who share similar input experiences. The application in the classroom explains a famous teaching sequence as a mediational trajectory.

Conclusion. Assigning the task of detailing observable mechanism to SLA constructs, while giving sociocultural theory role. This addresses the idea that the 2 frameworks can complement one another rather than be in conflict. The impact on teaching and assessment is explored, as well as the obstacles and for future research.

Keywords: ZPD, SLA, EFL pedagogy, mediation, comprehensible input,

sociocultural theory, assessment.

1. Introduction.

A related article examined a claim proposed by Kinginger (2001): input- based SLA theory and sociocultural theory SCT are not, even though they are commonly paired in teacher education, two accounts of the same phenomenon. Krashen’s (1982, 1985) Input Hypothesis regards the learner as a unique intellect interpreting external stimuli. Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory views the learner as formed continuously through interactions and mediated activities with others. The Zone of Proximal Development ZPD is meaningful and reducing it to input slightly above the learner’s level removes the characteristic that gives it value.

That leaves a question unanswered. If the two traditions cannot be equated does an EFL teacher have to pick one over the other? This article says no long as each tradition is used for what it does best: SLA constructs help identify what to observe in the classroom while sociocultural theory explains. This is why those observations matter and what progress looks like as a learner moves from relying on others to using the language independently. 3 questions then arise: What kind of explanation can each tradition provide when neither is seen as an account? Does a model built this way explain a pattern, in classroom evidence that neither tradition can explain well by itself? What does this mean for teaching practice?

2. Method

This article takes a synthesis approach instead of an empirical design that collects data. The main goal is to build theory. This theory is checked against information that’s already available in published studies. This method is similar to the one used by Kinginger in the article from 2001 that goes along, with this one. Table 1 shows the sources. How they are used in the analysis.

Table 1 data sources and their role in the synthesis.

Source type	Example sources	Role in the analysis
Input based SLA theory	Krashen (1982, 1985); Long	Provides the elements that



	(1991, 1996); Swain (1995)	need to be thought (input, interaction, output)
Sociocultural theory	Vygotsky (1978); Wood, Bruner, & Ross (1976); Poehner (2008, 2009)	Provides the process in which the elements are rethought
Comparative analysis	Kinginger (2001)	Provides the approach and the theoretical differences the combination relies on
Case study	Ioup, Boustagui, El Tigi, & Moselle (1994); Schmidt (1983)	data used to check the model against a known result
Constructed example		Example of how the model is used in a classroom setting

I carried out the analysis in 3 steps.

First the analysis reframed each SLA mechanism against Vygotsky's (1978) account of mediation to build a three-stage model (see Sections 3.1-3.2).

Next the analysis reread the published Julie and Wes case, through that model

Finally the analysis applied the model to constructed teaching sequence

Because the analysis did not collect data the outputs are theoretical claims and a worked illustration, not generalizable findings (see Section 4.2).

3. Results

3.1 reframing input, interaction, and output as mediation

Of seeing input, interaction and output as 3 separate things that drive an internal process we can look at them as different forms that mediation takes at various stages along a Vygotskian path. Input becomes help that comes from other guided by someone experienced. Interaction is when both the learner and the guide work together offering support that grows gradually as needed. Output is the moment when the learner tries to do things on their own testing how far they can go independently. **Table 2** shows this idea in a model.



Stage	SLA mechanism	What mediation looks like	Teacher behaviour
1. other regulation	Comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982)	Rich understandable language from a capable source	Modelling, listening input, explicit instruction where needed
2. shared regulation	Negotiated interaction (Long, 1996)	Graduated hints targeted at the point. Withdrawn as capacity grows	Clarification requests. Recasts. Partial prompts.
3. self-regulation	Pushed output (Swain, 1995)	Independent production, under communicative pressure.	Stepping back. Offering help only if the learner reverts to a stage.

Attention to form as discussed by Long (1991) and Sheen (2002) is not limited to one stage only. It can show up in ways. It might appear as input during Stage 1. It could be a comment at Stage 2. It might come back as a short explicit lesson at any stage especially when a certain form is hard to notice by chance (Doughty & Williams 1998). Going back to a stage for a more difficult target is normal. It is not a mistake. Development does not follow a step-by-step path. It moves in ways. It is also task-specific, not a staircase (Vygotsky, 1978; Kinginger, 2001).

This change in perspective does not mix the two approaches into one. SLA research provides the evidence. It shows which classroom events are linked to learning (Norris & Ortega 200; Mackey & Goo 2007). Sociocultural theory explains why those events are important. It gives us tools, such as scaffolding and dynamic assessment which makes teaching more precise. These tools go beyond the idea of comprehensible input (Poehner, 2008; Kinginger, 2001).

3.2 Case reanalysis. Julie and Wes

Ioup and colleagues (1994) describe “Julie”, who gained native skills in Egyptian Arabic over 26 years without any formal teaching and Wes (Schmidt, 1983) a learner who had a

lot of natural exposure but never reached more, than basic grammar. An idea that only exposure matters has trouble explaining this situation. If the amount of input was the factor Wes should have done better than he did. Ioup and colleagues (1994) say the difference is due to aptitude. This explanation makes sence. Cannot be tested just from the information given. Table 3 shows the analysis.

Table 3 reanalysis of Julie and Wes through the 3 stage model

Feature	Julie	Wes
Exposure history	26 years, without instructions	Long period and natural exposure
Outcome	Near native competence	A lot of grammar mistakes
Engagement with feedback	Had a notebook and actively revised mistakes	Had feedback, but did not act upon it.
Reading on the model	Self built mediation, self regulation	Long reliance on other regulation

The new analysis does not say that ability is not important. It shows another factor that is more connected, to the classroom. What a student does with the help that is available. This includes the help that a student creates on their own. Unlike ability this factor can be seen in students as well.

4. Discussion

4.1 pedagogical implications

Table 4 summarises the implications that follow from the results in Section 3.

Table 4 pedagogical implications of the integrated model

Implication	Rationale
Treat input as the opening move, not the plan	The curriculum should be built purposely toward work that is heavy on interaction rather than just assuming that exposure alone will produce it
Judge interaction by quality not communicativeness	Judge interaction by mediational quality not communicativeness is valuable because help should follow a learner’s growing capacity and then step back according to Poehner, 2008.

Build a strand into assessment	Responsiveness to graduated help is diagnostic, not just unassisted accuracy, as shown by Poehner, 2008, 2009.
Let attention to form vary by learner and target	Explicitness tracking resistance to noticing instead of sticking to a fixed methodological camp according to Sheen, 2002.
Read regression as information	Internalization is uneven across targets as Kinginger 2001 points out
Train teachers in graduated hinting	Calibrating help in real time is a distinct learnable skill, not just a by product of task design.
Vary error correction by inferred stage	A single correction rule does not fit either never always correct cases so we should adapt based on the learner's inferred stage.

4.2 Limitations

This synthesis has 3 limits. First its outputs are claims and one worked illustration, not findings from new data collection. Second three discrete stages risk overstating the discreteness of what Vygotsky (1978) and Kinginger (2001) both describe as a non linear process, a learner's position is better read as a point on a continuum than a fixed category. Third the case analysis and classroom application both concern cycle grammatical targets, whether the model extends to slower moving targets such as symbolic or translingual competence (Kramsch, 2006; Gracia & Wei 2014) or investment (Norton, 2000) is not established here.

4.3 Future research and conclusion

Classroom studies could follow learners through 3 stages for goals using dynamic assessment (Poehner, 2008) and microgenetic analysis (Kinger, 2001) to see if the way hints are given and then reduced predicts better independent performance than just the amount of input.

In input based SLA theories and sociocultural theory do not have to be in conflict once each has a clear role. The first describes what can be seen happening. The second explains why those processes lead to lasting and independent skills. The 3 stage model built on this split explained a difference, in a published example that an approach focused



on exposure could not and it offered a clear way to look at regular classroom teaching. Findings that should be seen as the result of combining ideas with real testing needed next.

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