The effects of task complexity, prior knowledge and aptitude on the acquisition of the present third person singular through recasts.

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The study examines whether task complexity affects the potential of recasts to promote the acquisition of the present third person singular and whether this relationship is moderated by the participants’ prior knowledge of the target construction, their aptitude and the type of outcome measure. One hundred twenty Greek learners ranged in age from 11 to 13 are randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions, that is: [+complex task, +limited prior knowledge], [+complex task, -prior knowledge], [-complex task, +limited prior knowledge], [-complex task, -prior knowledge]. Task complexity is operationalized as the absence versus presence of reasoning (Robinson, 2001). The research project utilizes three types of pretest-posttest outcome measures. Specifically, an oral production and an elicited imitation test are likely to measure the learners’ procedural knowledge, whereas a written production test intends to tap into their declarative knowledge (DeKeyser, 2007). The Llama test (Meara, 2005) measures the learners’ aptitude. In particular, the test provides an index of the learners’ ability to recognize patterns in spoken language, to dissociate sounds from their written symbols, to make grammatical inferences and to learn vocabulary in a short period of time.

During the presentation, I will focus on the design of the study, and describe and discuss the results, drawing on insights from previous research.

REFERENCES


Keywords: aptitude, recasts, task complexity.