

Individual Differences in Education: From a Summary Writing of Stories

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Abstract: This research study primarily investigates what is learned in writing in order to reveal the process of outputs in education, related to the complete accomplishments of a given task to make a summary of stories for novices of writing. In terms of expressions, students develop the language usages individually that are involved in individual differences in learning writing. Teachers tend to instruct everything they want to give to students; however, it is important to be dependent on the effectiveness of outputs in education. Especially, in acquiring a second language, teachers should focus on more what is learned through instructions than what is taught in classrooms, in a state of achievements in learning.

Key words: instruction, writing, individual differences, a second language acquisition

1. Introduction

In this article, we present some necessary observations, understanding, and interpretations toward the treatment of individual differences in education. Practically it is hard to establish the exact relationship between what is taught and what is learned in classrooms. Teachers believe that students learn everything of what teachers instruct and students believe they can remember something of what was taught. However, on the whole, many of research studies tend to investigate what is effective as a significant instruction in classrooms and a little research examine what is learned with scientific learning investigations, in a state of acquisitions of knowledge.

We begin with some defining assumptions of Bruner (1966): a) growing is characterized through reactions from prompt; b) growing is dependent on stored things in minds; c) growing in the development in intelligence includes some are represented correctly; d) growing in the development in intelligence is heavily relied on a close relationship between teachers and learners; e) teaching is achieved through language; and f) growing in the development in intelligence is based on awareness. He put forward an assumption of “how the child gets free of present stimuli and conserves past experience in a model, and the rules that govern storage and retrieval of information of this model” (p. 10). Teachers have a duty that they should recognize and understand what is changed at the process of growth although the treatment is difficult in every situation of education.

With the regard of instructions, Bruner (1966) also defined the roles of instructions in teaching, related to enough experiences and knowledge. In general, students grow a lot at circumstances of having several experiences with many episodes, adventures and involvements in daily lives. Naturally, they grow with necessary information, skills, proficiencies, and accomplishments. Can teachers give such important factors to students in education, in a context with individual differences? Then, can students learn everything?

An important issue in education is memory. Markowitsch (2000) gives an explanation that “memory is embedded in other complex behavioral representations such as thoughts, reasoning, or emotion” (p. 465). Events are often forgotten; however, strong emotions are not. The structure of memory is particular and specific. Forgetting can occur, on the case of the trace decay, the limited capacity of memory and an interference (Baddeley, 2000). Baddeley also gives an exploration of the definition of memory, by adding that “a multicomponent system that utilized storage as part of its function of facilitating complex cognitive activities such as learning, comprehending, and reasoning” (p. 77). Our memory is in storage and retrieve from information in minds individually. Furthermore, Tulving (1983) refers to the episodic memory as the form of memory, in terms of the feature of “a system that receives and stores information about temporally dated episodes or events, and temporal-spatial relations among them” (p. 21). Our memory may depend on episodes, experiences, and matters we have. Anderson (2007) explains that appropriate memory to be retrieved is relied on a zoom in thinking.

The contemporary aim of language learning is not based on interpreting letters of Latin and the structures, but manipulating languages fundamentally. Historically, language structures have been taught in classrooms and the drills of repetitions have been practiced. Then, language instructions have been implemented in a way of teacher-oriented. Recent research studies into the relation between language instructions and a second language acquisition propose the practical complicated situation on the growth of what is learned (Gass & Selinker, 1994; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). For developing language abilities more, what do teachers instruct to students with intermediate and advanced levels?

2. Language Education and Writing

Here is a question that language proficiency develops through inputs or outputs in learning languages. Apparently, education of languages has been clearly based on inputs teachers give in classrooms as old instructions. On learner-centeredness, Long (2015) argues that “teachers are typically encouraged to employ pedagogic procedures likely to create a positive classroom climate. They should praise learners’ achievements” (p. 13). The important role of teachers is defined as a catch of the appropriate achievements in learning. Surely, acquiring many fundamental elements as memory is a basic. Swain, Kinnear, & Steinman (2010) insist that “language learning and teaching has been primarily organized around skills and the acquisition of vocabulary, syntax and knowledge of different sets of rules” (p. 68). With the regard to instructions, Lightbown & Spada (2013) give an exploration of that “there can be little doubt that an instructional approach that rigidly adheres to a single way of teaching all students and an expectation that all students can learn in the same way will deprive some students of learning opportunities” (p. 92). As a job of teachers, they need to understand what learners learn at practical and real situations. For example, on the direct method as the effect of behaviorism, Harmer (2007) explains that “the direct method teacher used only English in the classroom; form and meaning associations were made using real objects, pictures or demonstration. The point here is that a concentration on form was considered to be advantageous” (p. 51). For the development of language proficiency, many research studies have investigated what is a better teaching way in classrooms; however, it is quite difficult to reveal what has been taught correctly.

Writing may have a significant creativity in learning languages. Hirvela (2011) gives an explanation of a lack of writing research studies in a second language acquisition, based on the complex characteristic of writing. In terms of an experience of writing, writing itself becomes a case of judgment on the extent to which the writer has

knowledge and information (Hirvela, p. 2011, p. 47). To have a successful experience in writing is a laborious, hard, demanding thing, related to the complicated work to collect ideas, to think of coherency, and to edit all. Manchón (2011) puts forward perspectives in writing education: (1) “L2 learn to express themselves in writing” and (2) L2 engage “with L2 writing tasks and activities can contribute to development in areas other than writing itself” (p. 3). Manchón (2011) indicates that writing is teachable and learnable. However, the aspects of what can be taught and what can be learned are not revealed.

3. Research

3.1 Methodology

This research study gives a writing task to write a summary of stories to 54 students in the second grade in the public local high school in Japan. They are also given other activities which are the recitation and memorizing vocabularies in simple English.

3.2 Analysis

The results of this study revealed the individual differences to understand and interpret the context of stories. There is a difference in expressing what is happened in the story. Linguistically, the text has an expression by a relative clause. Some used the structure, on the other hand, others did not it.

(1) Excerpt 1

This is **the best robot** the doctor has ever made. Mr. N. wants to use the robot. Mr. N. paid a large sum of money for the robot.

(2) Excerpt 2

The doctor made **the best robot**, and Mr. N. bought it.

(3) Excerpt 3

*The doctor made **the best robot** that he have ever made. The wealthy Mr. N. sell it. Because he think of going to his villa. Mr. N set off for his island retrest, For a whole month. The robot was great work for Mr. N..

(4) Excerpt 4

The doctor made **the robot**. Mr. N wanted the robot. He paid a large sum of money for it. The robot immediately produced a cigarette, followed by a light.

(5) Excerpt 5

“I’ll have a smoke.” At these words **the robot** immediately produced a cigarette followed by a light. This is the best robot. It can do anything. There can be no better robot for man than this.

(6) Excerpt 6

This robot can do anything. There can be no better robot for man than this. “Then please sell it to me,” the wealthy Mr. N. replied.

(7) Excerpt 7

It can do anything. There can be no better robot for man than this. Mr. N thinking of going to my villa on a remote island for a while and I want to use it there. Mr. N paid a large sum of money for it. I’ll be able to take it easy and rest.

With the regard of the order of summary, the students expressed their coherency individually. Most of them understood what the story was correctly, and they draw what it was in reality by changing the order of stories. Organizing the stories was effortless and manageable for the students.

(8) The whole summary of student 1

This is the best robot the doctor has ever made. Mr. N. wants to use the robot. Mr. N. paid a large sum of money for the robot. The robot is splendid piece of machinery. Two days later, the robot suddenly stopped working. The robot ran away. Mr. N. dug a pit, and was finally able to trap the robot. "It seems to think it's playing tag. It must be crazy somehow." This is an absurd robot. Mr. N. immediately went to the doctor to complain. A robot that doesn't break down or go mad wouldn't do you any good because you'd grow fat and your mind would go soft. This sort of robot companion is far better for a man.

(9) The whole summary of student 2

The doctor made the best robot, and Mr. N. bought it. Mr. N. got a splendid robot, but it needed a rest now and again. Mr. N. became thinking that the robot is crazy because it did something unexpected every day. The doctor didn't make the perfect robot not to make Mr. N. fatter and soft. Mr. N. understood but didn't look pleased.

(10) The whole summary of student 3

The doctor made the robot. Mr. N wanted the robot. He paid a large sum of money for it. The robot immediately produced a cigarette, followed by a light. He said "I've got a splendid robot." It was the complete, perfect servant. Two days later, however, something seemed to go wrong, for the robot suddenly stopped working. Mr. N thought "I must give it a rest now and again." A month passed, and the boat came to take Mr. N back to the city. He went to the doctor to complain. He wanted my money back. The doctor explained "I can make a perfect robot. But if you lived with such a robot for a month you'd grow fat. Mr. N understood but did not look pleased. The next day, the robot stopped working and ran away. Every day the robot did something unexpected. Mr. N thought "It seems to think it's playing tag. It must be crazy somehow. What an absurd robot I've bought!"

(11) The whole summary of student 4

"I'll have a smoke." At these words the robot immediately produced a cigarette followed by a light. This is the best robot. It can do anything. There can be no better robot for man than this. The robot immediately preparing a meal and serving it. The robot not only prepared meals but also washed up, cleaned the house, and even repaired Mr. N.'s old watch. It was the complete, perfect servant, and Mr. N. was enjoying himself very much. But the next day, the robot stopped in the middle of washing the glass and ran away. Every day the robot did something unexpected. In this way a month passed, and the boat came to take Mr. N. back to the city. He immediately went to the doctor to complain. You'd grow fat and your mind would go soft.

There is a variety that the students grasp the whole text. It is apparent that many of the students understand what the best robot is in the context of stories.

4. Discussion

The results of this research study examined what was learned in the process of output in writing. Prepared reading texts were easy to understand for the students. The students interpreted the texts correctly, using language forms and structures of what they have already acquired. The important instruction of writing was to give a text which is simple to the students. The text included the complicated structure of a relative clause; however, they interpreted the structure correctly, on the basis of their knowledge of languages. Leki (2011) gives an exploration of language transfers in writing situations, as the case that students borrow an expression from a text in reading to writing contexts. In addition, Byrnes (2011) also gives an explanation of important and flexible recognitions and awareness towards forms and meaning in writing, and provide a statement in writing of "L2 writing instruction is

to foster learners' capacity for making meaning-based choices by fostering their continued willingness and interest in making them in the first place" (p. 149). The view is heavily based on the extent to which the students understand the reading texts of stories and interpret their characters, setting, and conditions as an ability of reading, related to the achievement to recreate the meaning of contexts. From the point of view, education of writing is defined as one of creating meaning at the given contexts, connected with the actions to choose vocabularies, structures, and coherencies appropriately. Naturally, it is relied on knowledge and information students have already acquired at the process of enough inputs.

The important things in education may be primarily focused on inputs, outputs, and intakes like transfers of forms and meaning. Without doubt, individual differences are brought to the contexts in learning languages, based on each interpretation, understanding, and interest. Teachers may be afraid of such matters in classrooms because they tend to believe that they can give the same instruction in education. However, for growing the development of intelligence of students well, teachers should make activities that students can learn all creatively. Practically, the treatment of individual differences is still controversial in classrooms, based on the doubt and fears teachers might have in their daily instructions they believe. As the first step, teachers should give an opportunity to students that can produce they want to say freely. As the second step, teachers should give time to share their productions, creativities, and opinions. As the third step, teachers should know what students learn from a given text although it is not relied on new forms structures teachers want to teach as a repetition, but on contents with meaning a text has. It should be noted that there is an argument that it is difficult to teach contexts through a focus on meaning without a focus on forms and structures. However, education in writing should be focus on language developments of proficiency students may have in minds.

With the regard to the issue of proficiency, many research studies in a second language acquisition have examined the effectiveness of communicative teaching methods in order to develop language usages in communicative contexts. The tendency provides an insight that language forms and meaning should taught at situations of communication. Until recently, based on such communicative activities, many instructions that focus on interactions and negotiations between students have been created toward a new view. However, teachers should notice what is conveyed in forms and meaning in contexts, connected with issues of memory. Then, students may learn just forms as a drill of repetitions and may understand meaning as a usual habit of translation in education. Importantly, in acquiring a second language appropriately, we actually need further research of what is learned should be investigated, in terms of every aspect of forms, meaning and interpretations of contexts.

5. Conclusion

This present study investigated the language usages in writing and suggested that teachers should accept the individual differences in education, related to creativities in writing. Certainly, it is tough for teachers to realize and notice what students learn in classrooms. However, instructions in education have enormous possibilities beyond the scope of expectations of educators. Therefore, teachers must prepare for such activities to develop intelligence through experience and knowledge. It is not easy to change instructions of what should taught in classrooms, but hard to shift awareness in education as appropriate educators.

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Appendix

“This is the best robot I have ever made,” the doctor explained proudly. “It can do anything. There can be no better robot for man than this.”

“Then please sell it to me,

“the wealthy Mr. N. replied. “I’m thinking of going to my villa on a remote island for a while and I want to use it there.”

“All right, since it’s you, I’ll sell it. It’s very useful,” said the doctor.

Mr. N. paid a large sum of money for it and set off his island retreat. For a whole month there wouldn’t be another boat going there.

“Now I’ll be able to take it easy and rest. I won’t have to read letters or business papers or answer any phone calls. Well, I think I’ll have a smoke.”

At these words the robot immediately produced a cigarette, followed by a light.

BIG DIPPER English Course II (2008, p. 62, Suken Shuppan)