

Teacher code-switching project

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Background

- ▶ Considerable debate about the role of the first language in second or foreign language learning classrooms.
- ▶ Study seeks to establish optimal (or principled) use of teacher codeswitching (brief switches to the first language of the learners) in French as a foreign language communicative classrooms by exploring the most effective ways of facilitating vocabulary learning during comprehension tasks.
- ▶ After each of a series of eight taped listening activities teachers will either provide information about new target vocabulary via a codeswitch into English or by French definition/ paraphrase.
- ▶ Post- and delayed-tests will measure vocabulary gains in a sample of c. 300 students via the two approaches and these in turn will be compared to a control group of 60 students not receiving the lexical information.
- ▶ Additionally, a sub-sample of 30 students will take part in stimulated recall of listening activities and be asked to report what their strategies were for dealing with the new vocabulary when confronted with the two teaching approaches.

Research Questions

- ▶ What are the relative effects on French receptive vocabulary acquisition resulting:
 - ▷ from a teacher code-switching into English (L1)?
 - ▷ from a teacher giving the definition in French?
- ▶ Does the type of vocabulary item affect the results?
 - ▷ concrete/ abstract?
 - ▷ cognate/non-cognate?
- ▶ What are the strategic reactions of the pupils to a code-switch explanation or a French one?
- ▶ What additional information could a teacher provide?
 - ▷ word class?
 - ▷ contextualization?
 - ▷ collocations?

Participants

- ▶ c. 300 year 9 pupils (aged 13-14)
- ▶ Taken French for 1-2 years
- ▶ 4 schools in Oxford
- ▶ Subset of 30 to take part in stimulated recall task.
- ▶ 60 year 9 pupils as control (Reading schools)

Tasks

- ▶ Baseline tasks
 - ▷ C-test (300 words, 30 blanks)
 - ▷ Listening task (AQA foundation listening exam)
- ▶ Experimental tasks
 - ▷ 8 listening texts divided into 2 groups of 4 (Condition A and Condition B)
 - ▷ Short comprehension task to complete for each listening.
 - ▷ Comp task not dependent on knowing the target words.
 - ▷ Ppt with 10 target and 5 distractor words for teaching.
 - ▷ Teacher will give explanation in L1 for 4 listenings then in L2 for the other 4.
 - ▷ Stimulated recall with 30 learners (15 for each condition)

Example target word: s'entraîner

- ▶ Code-switch explanation It means 'to train' as in 'to train for a sport'.
- ▶ French explanation On fait du sport. Si on va être dans une équipe, il faut s'entraîner. Par exemple, Andy Murray s'entraîne à jouer au tennis.

Phase 1: July-October 2009

- ▶ Design and pilot testing of tasks.
- ▶ Visits to schools: lesson observations

Phase 2A: October - Dec 2009

- ▶ Baseline tests, pre-test 1 on vocabulary
- ▶ First four listening tasks in schools
 - ▷ Half give code-switch explanation.
 - ▷ Half give French explanation.
- ▶ Post test 1

Phase 2B: Jan-March 2010

- ▶ Pretest 2
- ▶ Second set of four listening tasks.
- ▶ Post-test 2, Delayed post-test (4 weeks later).

Phase 3: March-April 2010

- ▶ Stimulated recall test based on videoed lesson.