Editorial

Alessandro Benati & Elena Nuzzo

The five research papers published in this issue cover a variety of topics in the field of instructed second language acquisition. The first study, by T. Farzaneh and A. Benati, investigates the participation patterns and effectiveness of two different instructional conditions: task-based activity and whole-class discussion. The quantity of information learners could remember immediately after instruction and one week later, and the information that emerged through the interactional formats were measured. L2 learners' response towards the task-based activity showed positive results and the task-based activity treatment was considered more effective than whole-class discussion.

The second paper in the current issue, written by E. Kissling, analyses intermediate Spanish learners' explicit knowledge about a contrast in grammatical aspect (preterite/imperfect) after they received rule-based instruction. The analysis showed that learners failed to learn the concept of grammatical aspect, they demonstrated confusion about lexical aspect, they attributed the difference between preterite and imperfect to a binary system of lexical aspect feature complexes based on duration of the verb/predicate, and they relied on self-developed categorical rules about adverbial markers. Suggestions for modifications to the conventional pedagogical rules are offered by the author.

In the exploratory study conducted by D. Pili Moss, the relationship between corrective feedback and linguistic target complexity is examined. In a pre-test/post-test/delayed post-test design, forty-four adult

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intermediate L2 Italian learners from different L1 backgrounds were assigned to a recast, a prompt and a no-feedback group. They were compared on oral and written measures on the development of *passato prossimo*, an Italian compound past form characterised by a set of complex semantic and morphosyntactic rules and participles displaying different degrees of form-meaning transparency. Only the frequency of recasts predicted development of full *passato prossimo* sentences, and only prompt frequency was positively related to accuracy in participles displaying more transparent form-meaning relationships.

F. La Russa compares the effects of direct and indirect written corrective feedback on text rewriting and assesses the impact of students' engagement during feedback processing. The study was conducted on twenty-six Italian FL learners at a high school in Bordeaux. Students were divided into three groups (direct feedback, indirect feedback and control), and they performed two writing tasks. After receiving the corrections, they revised and rewrote their texts. The experimental groups outperformed the control group. An extensive engagement in feedback processing, generally promoted by indirect feedback, led to better results in text rewriting.

In the final paper of this issue, A. Mendes Porcellato proposes an interventional study of L2 pragmatics focusing on the speech act of request. A pre- and post-test quasi-experimental design was implemented, where three classes were randomly selected to serve as the experimental group and two classes served as the control group. The data collected through written DCTs and simplified retrospective questionnaires revealed that the learners in the experimental group showed a more significant improvement in their sociopragmatic, pragmalinguistic and metapragmatic competence compared to the control group. These results suggest a positive effect of consciousness-raising activities on learners' declarative knowledge in the short-term.

This issue offers two book reviews including D. Arteaga's edited book on L2 grammatical representation and processing, and G. Benati's introductory volume to key issues in second language teaching.

Obituary

It is with great sadness that we report the passing away of Professor Mike Long in February 2021. Mike played a huge role in the development of second language acquisition as a field of research. He will be remembered as the scholar who coined key terms in second language acquisition such as ‘focus on form’, developed theories such as the ‘Interaction Hypothesis’ which had a profound impact on the way we think about language learning and teaching, and contributed substantially to define the paradigm of task-based language teaching.

He was a true academic; relentless in his publications right up until his untimely death. He was a believer in the power of dissemination to further the debate in our field. He was truly committed to the promotion of research in second language acquisition. We are all indebted to Mike for his contributions and support for this journal since its foundation. It is worth remembering that he wrote one of the articles published in the inaugural issue, helping to focus the scope of *Instructed Second Language Acquisition*.

On a personal level we remember his generosity of time for others, his dedication to his students and his friendship with his colleagues. The last time he visited his homeland, it was to enjoy a Premiership football match and to reminisce about his formative years in London. We send our condolences to his wife and family. We will miss him greatly.