

Input and Acquisition in the Language Classroom

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This talk discusses the role of linguistic input in the development of grammatical knowledge for language learners and for pre-service language teachers. Data comes from the distribution of forms of the existential quantifier *any*. This is often explicitly addressed in EFL instruction, but pedagogical rules typically rely on a simplified rule of thumb for distribution according to clause-type while other linguistics constraints are not addressed. Based on a study of classroom discourse, we show that the full grammatical properties are also not attested in communicative input but that learners can nevertheless acquire the relevant constraints. In a further study, pre-service English teachers completed a grammaticality judgement task and a questionnaire on explanations of grammaticality distinctions. The pre-service teachers' knowledge is most robust on the distinctions typically taught in EFL and least robust on implicit linguistic constraints. We discuss these results in light of how input from content knowledge of linguistics might contribute to thinking about pedagogical grammar for pre-service teachers.

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Tom Rankin is Professor of English Language Learning and Teaching at Johannes Kepler University Linz. His research interests are in linguistic approaches to Second Language Acquisition and their interface with language education.