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Title: The effect of structured input and comprehensible output on Chinese EFL learners' productive use of tenses
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Abstract

There is an increasing amount of attention drawn to structured input (SI) and comprehensible output (CO) in the second language acquisition field. This study continues investigating the effects of these two approaches on Chinese EFL Learners’ Productive Use of Tenses. The mixed-methods of combining quantitative and qualitative research were employed in this paper.

To begin with, in the quantitative research, 30 participants (N = 30) were assigned to two groups: (1) SI Group received a set of SI lessons, and (2) CO Group received a set of CO lessons. Students were assessed by 7 questions drawn from the Authentic IELTS Speaking Test Part 3 questions in recent years. Overall, the results showed similar gains for both SI and CO groups. There was a slight advantage of CO approach over SI approach, but this difference was not statistically significant.

Subsequently, a qualitative analysis of the participants’ pretest and post-test responses was also carried out, which focused on analyzing the error patterns participants made in their production of correct tense but ungrammatical clause structures, the incorrect tense clause structures and the modal verbs. First of all, among the six types of correct tense but ungrammatical clause errors, Type1–no agreement between subject and verb and Type 6–wrong use of be were most frequent errors participants committed. Secondly, among the 3 types of errors in incorrect tense clause, participants made the Type 1 error–present tense was used while past tense was supposed to be used most frequently. Thirdly, modal verbs were hardly used to display tenses but to express necessity or possibility, talk about ability, ask permission or make requests and offers. Participants made only 20 errors from all 536 modal verb clauses, with two types–redundant to between the modal verb and the main verb and the use of
inflected main verbs after modal verbs. All the errors participants made during their responses were caused by their L1 interference, their language proficiency level, the lack of knowledge for the word type, more usage of present tense clauses than past and future tense clauses, the more ease to employ the present tense than the past tense, the overgeneralization of one structure and some accidental factors.

Implications from all the findings in this current study may then help to develop effective English courses which facilitate Chinese EFL students’ productive use of tenses.