City University of Hong Kong

Input, output and interaction. Oral task design, performance and evaluation.

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by

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Abstract of contents

Undergraduates in Hong Kong universities are taught in an English medium environment but come from an educational background where classroom opportunities for oral development are limited. Interactive peer group oral tasks can provide a practical basis for oral development within a language syllabus, and a justification for their use can be derived from second language acquisition research and from learners themselves.

Previous researchers in this area have made strong claims in relation to the potential of such tasks for language acquisition, using small research samples and limited descriptions of task design and task performance.

The first part of this investigation establishes a method for classifying the design of commonly used oral interactive tasks. It then establishes a method for evaluating the performance output of such tasks. The central performance activity of negotiated meaning is discussed in relation to task participant interaction and the question of language acquisition. In the second part of the investigation, the perceptions of task participants are used to validate research constructs and to broaden the description of task-based interaction.

The investigation concludes that statistically significant links between task design and task output are evident and offers a principled basis for the choice and use of oral interactive tasks for both pedagogic and evaluation purposes.

Thesis length The length of this thesis conforms to the City University of Hong Kong directive (FHS/8/PGSC, 12.11.96) of approximately 70,000 words maximum length.
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