Introduction to Teaching English Language Learners and Foundations of Language Acquisition

Overview

Language:
- BICS and CALP
- CULP (transfer)
- Cummins’ quadrant of task difficulty

Language Learner:
- Krashen’s natural order hypothesis (stages of language acquisition)
- The process of language acquisition
- The phenomenon of two languages in contact

Terminology to Know

- BICS (basic interpersonal communication skills)
- CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency)
- Cognates
- CULP (common underlying language proficiency)
- Idioms
- L-1/L-2 primary language/second language
- Vernacular
Conversational vs. Academic Language

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)
- Conversational English
- Concrete examples, shared experience
- "Surface"/not abstract
- Informal language
- Native speakers—3 to 4 years old
- English learners—6 months to 2 years old

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)
- School language
- Subject-specific vocabulary
- Process language
- Deep, abstract thinking language
- Literary nuances/idioms/humor
- Formal speaking registers
- Native speakers—10 to 12 years old
- English learners—5 to 7 years old
Checking for Understanding

Jot down three examples of BICS:

1. E.g., lunchroom chat about your new baby
2.
3.

Possible Answers

Your answer should include examples of informal settings, informal language, and familiar topics:

1. Face-to-face conversation with a friend
2. Banter with fellow members of a sports team
3. Chatting with the teacher on the playground
4. Singing along to a song on the radio
5. Selecting lunch items in the cafeteria

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

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Common Underlying Language Proficiency (CULP)

- Concept knowledge transfers across languages
- Building up L1 pays off in L2 also
- Explains why learning subsequent languages becomes easier and easier
- Additive versus subtractive bilingualism

Common Underlying Language Proficiency

L-1 is an Asset

- What students know in one language contributes positively to learning a new language
- Build on what students know:
  1. Concepts transfer
  2. Reading skills transfer
  3. Cognates
  4. Bilingual dictionary
  5. Use L-1 resources
L-1 and L-2 Interdependence

Students only learn to read once

Advice for families about L1 (primary language use):
• Encourage parents to read and speak to their children in L-1
• Provide bilingual dictionaries for homework

Cognates

• Cognato = Italian word for brother-in-law
• Cognates are words in different languages that relate to the same Latin or Greek (or other language of origin) word family

Activity:
• Look at the words in the chart on the following slide. What do they mean? How do you know?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>matemáticas</th>
<th>historia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>respiración</td>
<td>operación</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nutrición</td>
<td>adición</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reproducción</td>
<td>multiplicación</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>división</td>
<td>división</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>repetición</td>
<td>fracción</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cognate Activity Review

• The words are related by root. They also follow a pattern: words ending in -ión are -tion in English
• Teaching EL/ELL students about cognate patterns can give them access to sophisticated, academic content vocabulary

Building Academic Vocabulary Through Cognates

• Print out the handout (in Resources) of cognate patterns in Spanish and English
• Share these with Spanish speaking students and parents
• Introduce one pattern each week. Post a large sheet of poster board with a T-chart for the cognate pattern of the week
• Have students add words they find in their readings or other sources

Cummins’ Quadrant Task Difficulty

• If educators know what makes language learning easier, they can apply those principles to instruction to make challenging concepts more easily understood
• Comprehensible Input – Krashen’s acquisition vs. learning hypothesis
What Makes Learning Easy?

- Context: A Cognitively
- Undemanding: B Context

What Makes a New Language Easy? BICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXT EMBEDDED</th>
<th>CONTEXT REDUCED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-face conversation</td>
<td>Telephone conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning a new song in class</td>
<td>Singing along to the radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running soccer drills</td>
<td>Explaining soccer drills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What Makes Learning Easy?

- Context: A Cognitively
- Undemanding: B Context
Mediating Task Difficulty

1. Select a subject area
2. Discuss with others an illustrative example for each quadrant

Suggested answers should include:
• The subject area you chose
• How the task language was initially abstract or difficult to understand
• Ways you added more visual or concrete clues to the task to clarify meaning

Examples:
• Adding a PowerPoint with graphics to a lecture
• Talking with a partner about how to solve an equation

Stages of First Language Acquisition

Language development is a continuum. A first language is acquired in predictable, sequential stages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Typical age</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Babbling – no other animal does anything like babbling</td>
<td>0 hours – 6 months</td>
<td>Repeating CV patterns</td>
<td>ba-ba-ba, ma-ma-ma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holophrastic (one word)</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Naming words (nouns) used in context – overextensions or underextensions</td>
<td>John = &quot;I want juice&quot;; Kitty = dog, lamb, cat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-word stage</td>
<td>1 to 2 years</td>
<td>Combining words and using set phrases</td>
<td>BIG juice, no way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-word stage</td>
<td>2 to 3 years</td>
<td>Overgeneralization of the regular case</td>
<td>I crossed the fence, feeds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Over-Generalization

Child: Teacher, teacher I run-ded to the fence.
Adult: You ran to the fence? That's great!
Child: Yes
Adult: Tell your mom you ran to the fence.
Child: Your mom, I randid to the fence.

Child: Mommy, are we being hāve?
Adult: Yes, sweetie, your are behaving so nicely, thank you.
Child: Papi, mommy says we are being hāve.

When Two Home-Languages Are In Contact....

• Code switching may occur
• Code switching is the ability to use elements of both languages when speaking to another bilingual person
• Young ones are focused on making meaning, during communication, so they may not treat L-1 and L-2 as separate languages
• They often create new words
   Examples:
   • Let's go to the remate...I need some masa.
   • Gracias a dios, the baby was ok.
   • Vamos a ir al high school para jugar basketbol