第二言語習得者の会話分析によって、新しい教育理論の確立を目指す

Developing Students' English
Fluency Through Active Listening Strategies

ミルン　アラン　（教養学部哲学人間システム・准教師）
MILNE Alan (Faculty of Liberal Arts, Dept. of Philosophy& Human Cognitive
Systems)

Research Objectives

This research is based on the assumption that the majority of lower intermediate learners of English already have a knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary but are unfamiliar with how to build up a conversation. This assumption comes from classroom observations over several years, of students with a reasonably good level of English skills, who have sometimes been unable to carry out a conversation without running out of things to say.　This often has been because they approach a conversation in English with sets of questions, without actively listening to the answers they receive from an interlocutor after they ask their initial questions. The result is that when they have asked all the questions they know, or have prepared, their conversation dries up. Accordingly, the purpose of this project was to find a practical method of teaching students how to effectively listen to answers to questions and to respond with appropriate follow-up questions and develop a more fluent conversation style.

Method

In April 2005 I asked a class of science major students, who had just met for the first time, to record a three minute conversation on a set of recording Walkmans. I transcribed all the recordings the students made at that time then asked them to make two more recordings in July and January 2006 before the end of the course. Between the recording periods I gave examples of model conversations, which showed how conversations were developed by actively listening to an interlocutor. I also returned all the initial transcripts with comments and advice in parts of their conversation where I thought they could develop a topic more fully. This intensive instruction and practice was supplemented with advice on conversational fillers and back-channel responses

commonly used in native speaker English.

Results

After comparing all the recorded transcripts and data, I found that many students had changed their conversation style from only question and answer exchanges to actively developing a conversation and expressing themselves more openly. There was also a marked improvement in back-channel responses and fillers which indicated a more fluent conversation style and more confidence in being able to listen to an interlocutor before forming follow-up questions. It could be concluded from this research that awareness-raising activities such as understanding conversational development, making follow-up questions, and how to use back-channel fillers are an effective way of increasing student fluency in English without recourse to intensive study of new vocabulary items.

Future research plans

My future research plan includes continuing the development of research related to the analysis of spoken interaction and materials development in this field. As opposed to relying on set text books, my ultimate aim is to be able to develop ways of utilizing source materials of naturally occurring English to help students learn through noticing how the language is structured rather than only directly teaching specific language points. Accordingly, my research would be to measure *before* and *after* communication strategies of students after awareness-raising activities such as observing naturally occurring patterns of English discourse, topic development and frequently occurring collocations in both text and conversation. My research aims being to develop both effective teaching and learning strategies which I can apply to my own particular teaching situation and specific learner needs.

Publication

MILNE, Alan. (2006) *From questions to answers: An analysis of factors affecting changes in student interaction during awareness-raising instruction in active listening and back-channel responses.* 埼玉大学紀要　教養学部　第４２（第２号）pp.203-214