

# The Noticing Hypothesis

Richard Schmidt

# Revision

Input Hypothesis	Interaction Hypothesis	Output Hypothesis
1 2 3 4		

Input Hypothesis	Interaction Hypothesis	Output Hypothesis
In order for the learner to comprehend, the teacher must simply modify his or her input	Negotiation for meaning modifies input which in turn makes it comprehensible	Output is a necessary mechanism of acquisition, independent of the role of comprehensible output
High levels of linguistic competence are possible without output	Teachers need to carry out comprehension checks by asking the learners if they have understood	The learner cannot pay attention to meaning and form simultaneously
The only thing a learner needs to acquire a language is comprehensible input	Listening is an active process: the learner needs to be involved in modifying input	Although (interactionally modified) input is <i>essential</i> , it is not <i>sufficient</i> to ensure native-like performance
SLA is a completely implicit process	Corrective feedback from an interlocutor is a crucial element of second language acquisition	Negative input from an interlocutor (e.g., 'What??') forces the learner to revise his/her output

# Richard Schmidt (1941-2017)

Learners cannot learn the grammatical features of a language unless they **notice** them. Noticing alone does not mean that learners automatically acquire language; rather, the hypothesis states that **noticing is the essential starting point** for acquisition.



” In the 1980s, the dominant theories of language and of SLA overwhelmingly emphasized the unconscious nature of linguistic knowledge and unconscious processes of learning...»

Which theories is he talking about?

«I was learning Portuguese during a five month stay in Brazil (Schmidt & Frota, 1986). I took a class for five weeks, and the rest of my language learning was through interaction with native speakers.

Classroom instruction was very useful, but presence and frequency in communicative input were more important. In addition, based on comparisons among notes that I kept in a journal, records of what I was taught in class, and monthly tape-recordings of my developing L2 production and interaction abilities, I found that some forms that were frequent in input were still not acquired until they were consciously noticed in the input.

This was the origin of the Noticing Hypothesis, the claim that learner must attend to and notice linguistic features of the input that they are exposed to if those forms are to become intake for learning.»

# Noticing the gap

” In addition, we found that although I was frequently corrected for my grammatical errors in conversation with native speakers, in many cases this had no effect because I was unaware that I was being corrected. This suggested a slightly different hypothesis that we called “noticing the gap,” the idea that in order to overcome errors, **learners must make conscious comparisons between their own output and target language input.**”

# Incidental learning vs. intentional learning

Incidental	Intentional
<p>The goal of the activity is not learning</p> <p>e.g. reading for pleasure -&gt; learning the words</p> <p><b><u>More examples?</u></b></p>	<p>The goal of the activity is language acquisition</p> <p>e.g. translating a list of words with a dictionary</p>

Schmidt said that incidental learning is certainly possible



# Objection 1

- Diary studies encompass spans of time as long as weeks or months, while attentional processes take place in seconds or microseconds.

# Objection 2

- Attention/awareness may be necessary for some kinds of learning but not others.

**Gass (1997):** some learning does not even depend on input.

ESL learners who are instructed on one type of relative clause perform well on other types of relatives -> input on those constructions was not available to the learners in the study

If no input existed, how could attention to input be a necessary condition for all aspects of learning?

# Schmidt's response:

- “If there are true cases where input is not needed for learning (which is attributed instead to UG or some other internal resource), the Noticing Hypothesis is irrelevant rather than wrong.”

If there are cases where the theory “just doesn't work”, how can we call it a theory?

# Objection 3

- How do you know if someone paying attention or not?

Think-aloud studies

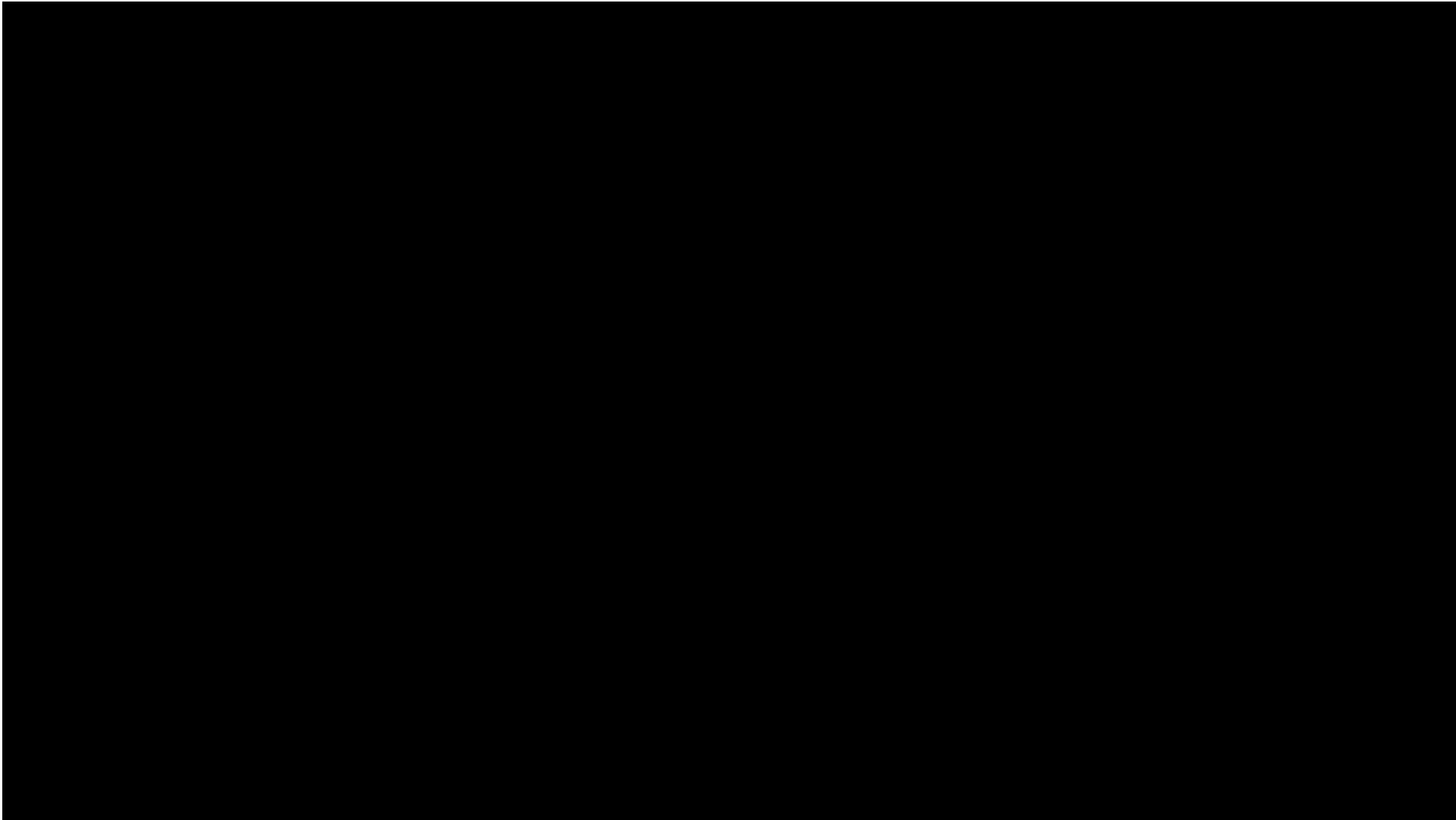
Sometimes people don't know themselves if they paid attention to something or not

# Think-aloud research

- What kinds of tasks can you give your participants?
- Does the level of task difficulty influence the outcomes?
- Tasks with written materials / instructions are better. Why?
- Prompting – asking questions, guiding – why dangerous?
- Can it be used as a sole method?
- How can this technique be used in teaching?



# Presentations (The Ling Space)



# Requirements

- 8 minutes minimum – 10 minutes maximum
- Simple language (layman's terms)
- No reading
- Evidence (studies – can find your own)
- Power Point
- Send it to me on Sunday so that I can download it before the lesson or bring a USB

Check out Google Drive for materials -

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1SkmCNn6\\_27\\_TxDpMs2O4d0cLeDEjgO6s](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1SkmCNn6_27_TxDpMs2O4d0cLeDEjgO6s)

# Topics

1 – Behaviourism

2 – Nativism (Chomsky)

3 – Cognitive Theories (Tomasello)

4 – Krashen

5 – Output & Input hypotheses

6 – Noticing (Schmidt)



# References

- Gass, S. (1997). Input, interaction, and the second language learner. Mahway, N.J.:Erlbaum.
- Schmidt, R. (2010). Attention, awareness, and individual differences in language learning. In W. M. Chan, S. Chi, K. N. Cin, J. Istanto, M. Nagami, J. W. Sew, T. Suthiwan, & I. Walker, Proceedings of CLaSIC 2010, Singapore, December 2-4 (pp. 721-737).