45th ASOCOPI Conference
Promoting interaction in the EFL classroom

Ana Clara Sánchez S.

Gabriel Vicente Obando G.

Universidad de Nariño

Introduction

It is commonly believed that learning an L2 involves learning the rules of grammar of the L2 (often in the form of memorization), along with vocabulary items & correct rules of pronunciation. Putting those rules to use in the context of conversation is then construed as a natural extension of grammar acquisition… all that would be needed to successfully converse in an L2 would be to plug in the correct the correct forms to say the same thing as one does in one's L1 (Gass & Selinker, 2008)

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How do people learn a foreign language?

The input and interaction approach takes as its starting point the assumption that language learning is stimulated by communicative pressure, and examines the relationship between communication and acquisition and the mechanisms that mediate between them. (Gass,2003)

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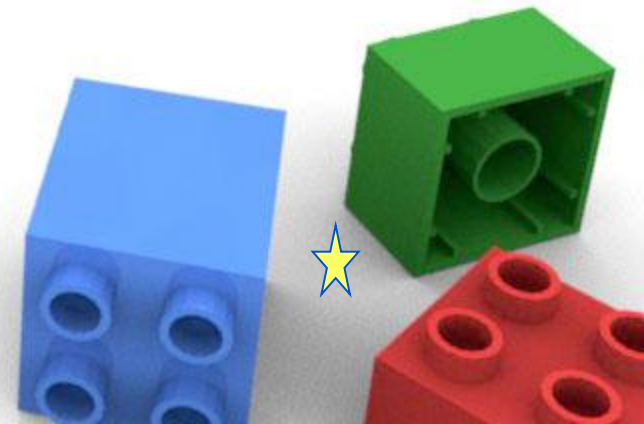
The role of input and output in L2 Learning.

❖ What kind of language is available to the learners?

❖ What are the theoretical consequences of having such language information available?

❖ What is the significance of language use (output)?

The focus is on the types of information that learners must have to construct L2 grammatical knowledges.

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Language Evidence Types

- Positive evidence: It refers to the input and to well-formed sentences which learners are exposed to. In other words this type of evidence is called models. It can be oral or written.

- Negative evidence: The type of information that is provided to learners concerning the incorrectness of an utterance.

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The significance of evidence types

- Students must have positive evidence so they have exposure to the set of grammatical sentences in order for learning to take place.

- Negative evidence also has an important role in learning because students need to be exposed to mistakes in order to distinguish them.

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The significance of output

- Students need sufficient opportunities of language use because this is the only way students are forced to impose syntactic structure on their utterances. The only way the speech can become more elaborate.(Swain, 1995)

- Only if there is output one is able to receive feedback.

- Output can also allow hypothesis testing.

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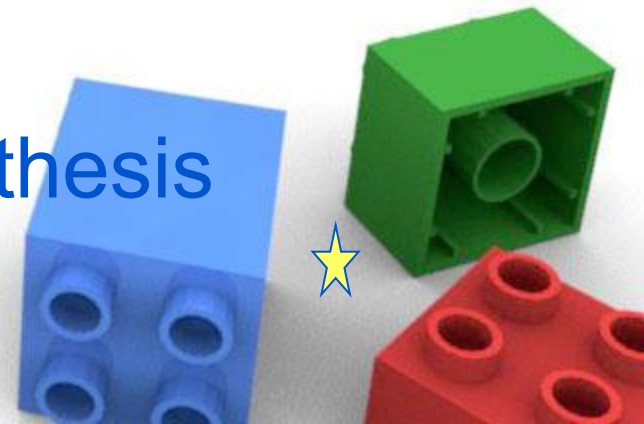
- Output can generate automaticity. Sometimes language needs to become routinized. Only through practice is that language can be fluent for students to be advanced in the language.

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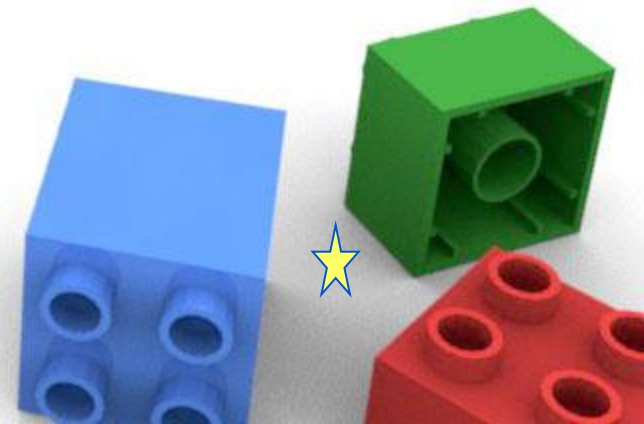
Characteristics of Input

- Input needs to be modified so students can understand the language spoken to them, but in the early stages so they can learn vocabulary.

- Nevertheless, input needs to be elaborated so the students can make inferences, specially from a text that has a greater semantic detail.

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Questions to Reflect Upon

- Should teachers speak English in class?

- Should teachers have a good level of English?

- Should students speak English in class?

- Should teachers spend time explaining grammatical rules?

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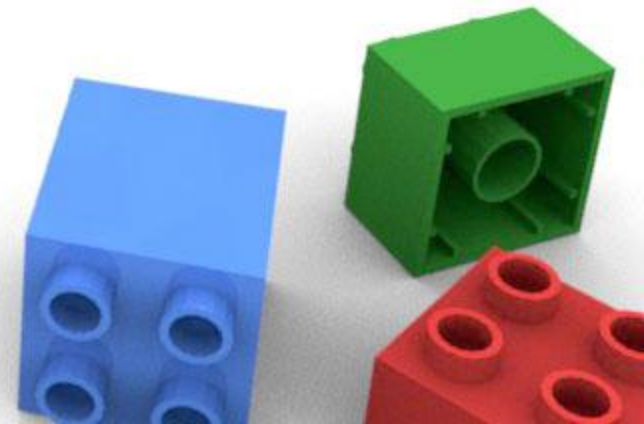
Interaction

The collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other (Brown, 2007).

For Saville-Troike, (2008) modifications and collaborative efforts which take place in social interaction facilitate SLA because they contribute to the accessibility of input for mental processing.

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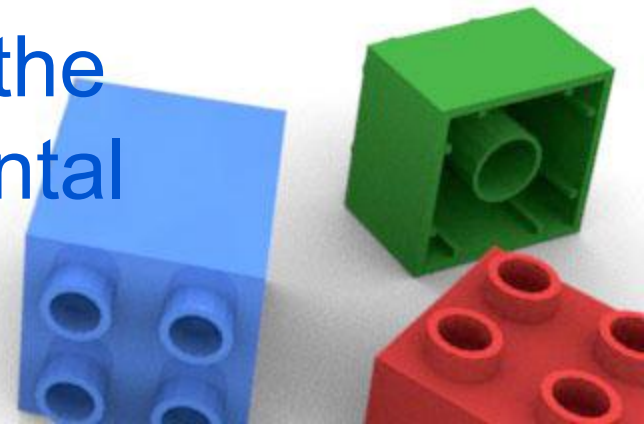
Among research on interaction we have…

- Wagner-Gough and Hatch (1975) were among the first L2 researchers to consider the role of conversation in the development of an L2.

- Gass and Varonis, 1985,1989; Long, 1981, 1983; Pica, 1987, 1988; Pica and Doughty 1985; Pica, Doughty and Young, 1986; Varonis and Gass, 1985.

- The main conclusion of these studies is that conversation is not only a medium of practice, but also the means by which learning takes place.

- Conversational interaction in a second language forms the basis for the development of language rather than being only a form for practice of specific language features.
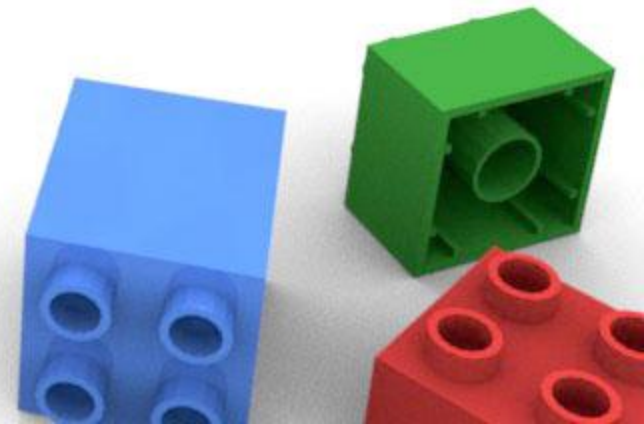
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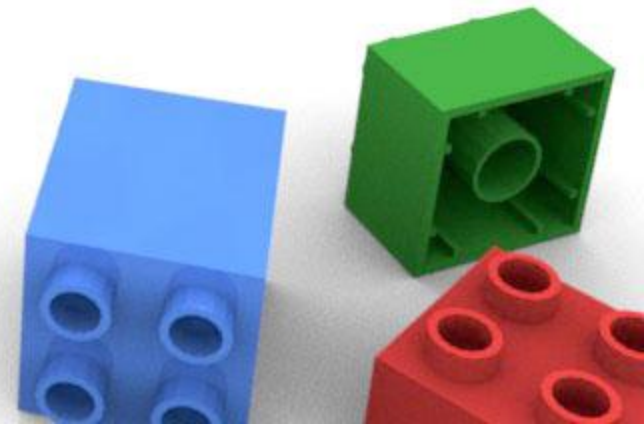
Interaction Patterns

- Collaboration
- Student initiates, teacher anwers
- Full-class interaction
- Teacher talk
- Group work
- Closed ended teacher questioning

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- Self- access
- Open-ended teacher questioning
- Individual work
- Choral responses

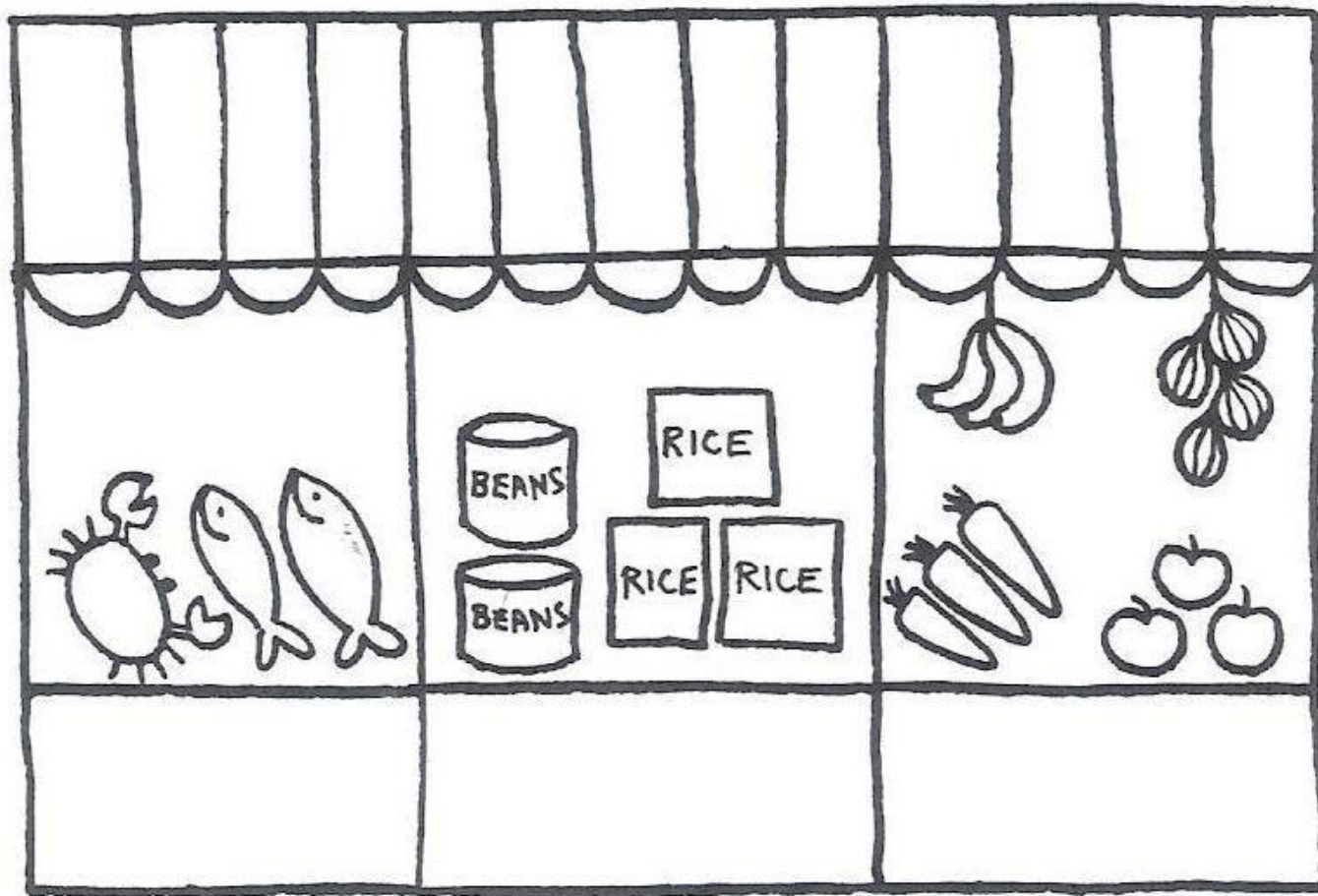Ana C. Sánchez/Gabriel Obando

Why Using Interaction ?

- Interaction can help students obtain negative evidence.

- Interaction promotes production and therefore hypothesis testing and automaticity.

- Attention (noticing) is promoted. Students can realize the differences between the L2 and learner-language forms and learn new forms.
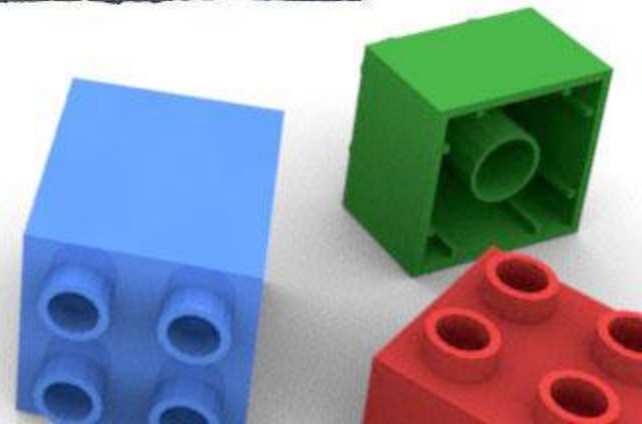
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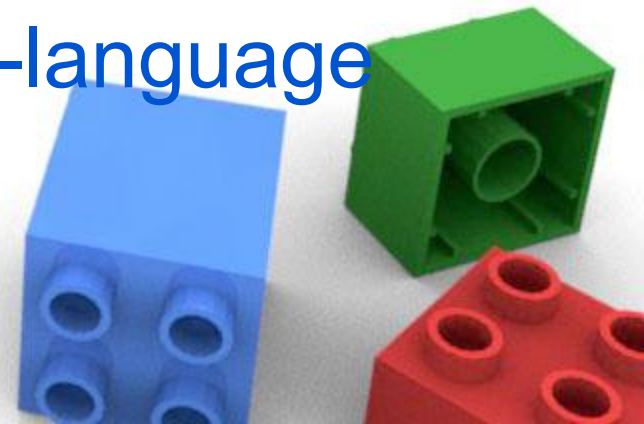
Examples of interaction activities

- Students can talk about a favorite sport, actor, or movie. (to practice adjectives)

- Students can talk about an important event in their life. (to practice the past tense)

- Students can talk about solutions to a common problem. (To make decisions about what to eat or what to cook)

- Students can use their knowledge to speak about a famous painting.

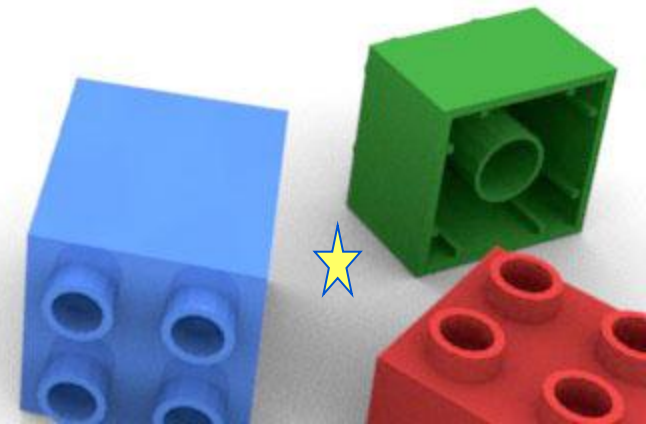Ana C. Sánchez/Gabriel Obando

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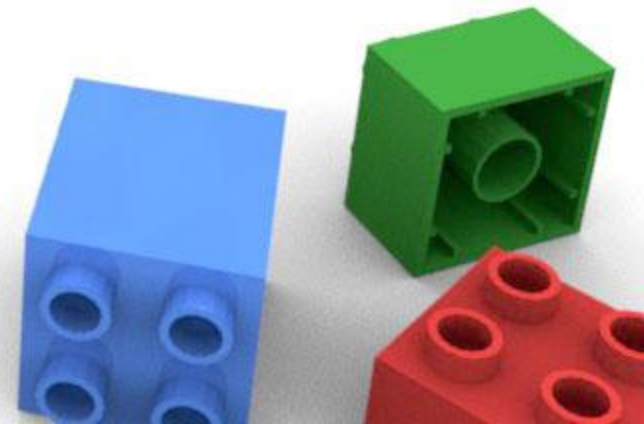
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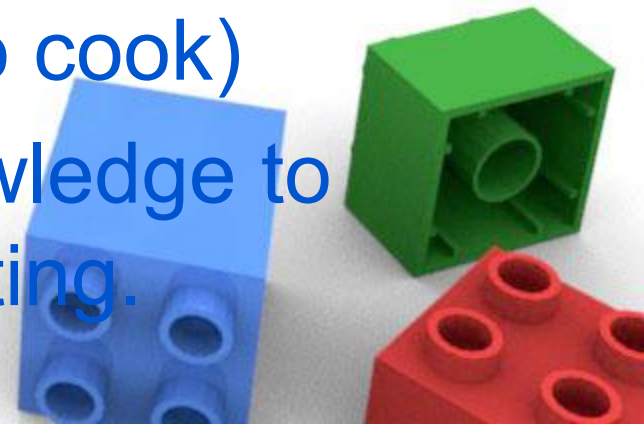
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- Name: **Toro Condor**
- Artist:
- City of birth
- Place of residence
- Date:
- Materials: Ana C. Sánchez/Gabriel Obando

- Name: **Toro Condor**
- Artist: Alejandro Obregon
- City of birth: Barcelona
- Place of residence: Barranquilla
- Date: 1960
- Materials: Oil Paints

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Who painted _____? Where was he/she born ? Where did he/she live?	It was painted by _____? He/she was born in _____ . He/she lived in _____.
When was it painted?	It was painted in _____?
What was it painted with?	It was painted with _____ .
Let me get this straight: It was painted by _____ in _____ With _____.	That's right/correct.

Adapted from:
http://www.bogglesworldesl.com/

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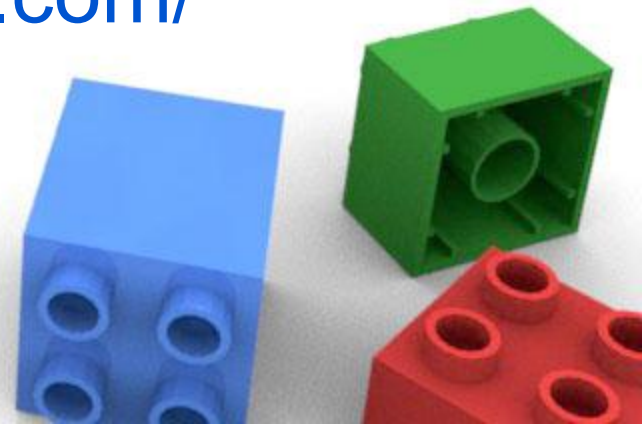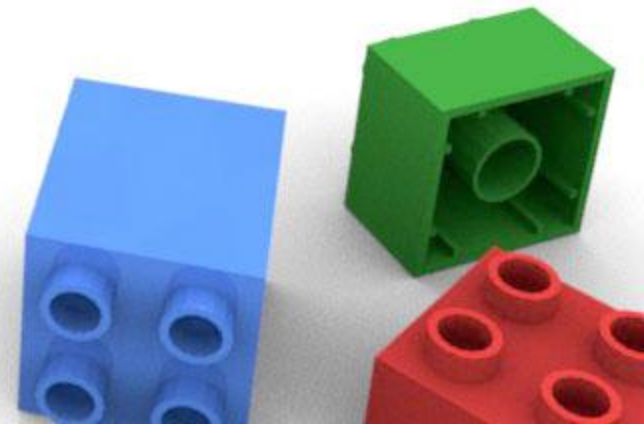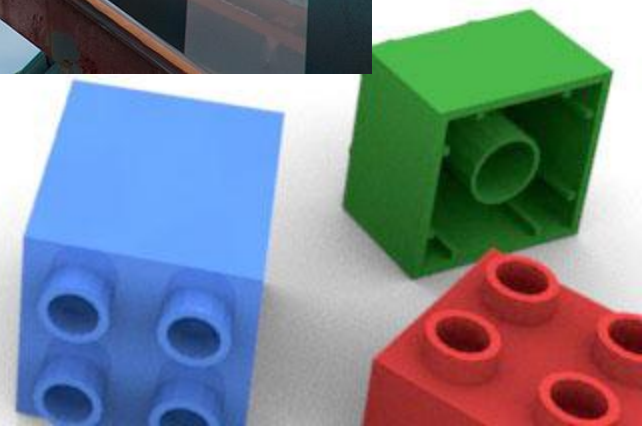
- Do you like roller coasters?
- How do you feel when you go in a rollercoaster?

Look at the picture and with the person next to you describe how the people in the picture feel.

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•THANK YOU!

emails:

gobando@udenar.edu.co

acsanchez@udenar.edu.co

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