

Title: Effectiveness of the holistic approach in SLA: a study on sentence production improvement.

This study investigates whether the holistic approach based on syntactic priming research findings in second language acquisition (SLA) facilitates learners' sentence production in the target language by comparing the performance of students with two proficiency levels. The holistic approach applied in this study has two distinctive features: generating new sentences using models provided in a bridge language and interaction with peers and an instructor using the sentences generated by these models. The concept of bridge language was expressly developed for this study. As the name suggests, a bridge language is a language between learners' first language and their target language (in this case, Japanese and English, respectively), which was developed to facilitate sentence production in the target language based on the previous priming research findings. Twenty-eight female Japanese university students participated in a ninety-minute weekly training for fifteen weeks. The data collection consisted of six interview tests in total, including the final exam. Then, the participants were divided into a high and a low group according to the total number of sentences produced in all six interviews, and the results from the first five interview tests, excluding the final exam, were compared.

The analysis produced three findings: 1. the high group significantly improved in sentence production, compared to the low group ( $p < .01$ ); 2. the improvement of the high group's performance was observed in sequential interviews ( $p < .01$ ); 3. however, the low group's performance had no significant sequential changes from the first to the fourth interview. The results suggest the need to develop other means to facilitate lower-proficiency learners' sentence production.