

# The Implications of SLA Research for Latin Pedagogy: Modernizing Latin Instruction and Securing its Place in Curricula

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## ABSTRACT

This paper calls for profound reconsideration of Latin teaching methodologies and for the promotion of Latin as a communicative language rather than an artifact to be studied. It delineates the imperative for change as a necessity for the survival of Latin programs, then introduces the reader briefly to: the discipline of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research and certain principles derived from its results that are particularly relevant to learning Latin; and to instructional applications of SLA research that pertain primarily to the teaching of grammar. Finally, it calls for SLA research aimed specifically at the acquisition of Latin with fluent reading as the goal, which would not only inform instructional practice but would also serve to set Latin on a par with its modern language counterparts, yet one whose study provides unique benefits. An appendix offers examples of classroom activities that align with instructed SLA research results.

## KEYWORDS

Second Language Acquisition, Focus on Form, Processing Instruction, Latin, pedagogy, grammar, research

Why should anyone study Latin? As instructors we often argue that Latin is different from modern languages, and indeed its status as a unique and useful discipline, one that helps train the mind, assured it a solid place in Western education for centuries. Yet for the last 50 years, Latin's position in curricula has become more and more precarious, largely because it is frequently viewed as an artifact, a leftover from an elitist and antiquated educational system. Now generally part of world or foreign language departments in the schools and many colleges, Latin is compelled to stand beside modern spoken languages, where it is often found lacking. In just this past year in my role as Coordinator of Classics in Curricula for the Classical Association of New England, I was called on to defend Latin as a language to a college counselor who had refused to credit an incoming student for any language study. I also struggled unsuccessfully to persuade a superintendent of schools, who is considering eliminating Latin instruction at the middle school level, to reconsider. While he acknowledged the great value of studying Latin,<sup>1</sup> he insisted that his students should be studying a language that has native speakers, dismissing entirely the legions of writers with whom our students are learning to communicate. Never has it been more important for us to delineate what we do and reconsider how we do it, within a theoretical framework that recognizes Latin as a

<sup>1</sup> Such as improved SAT scores or critical thinking skills, familiarity with the roots of Western culture, exposure to English derivatives, metalinguistic knowledge—all of which are by-products of Latin instruction, rather than the acquisition of the language itself.

fully-functional and communicative language, one that can indeed be acquired by our students just as readily as any modern language.

Many teachers of Latin might argue that Latin instruction already has changed or is changing with the introduction of texts that front readings and offer connected narratives—texts like *Ecce Romani* or the *Cambridge Latin Series* or *Disce Latinam*—but research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) indicates clearly that the methods and exercises used by these newer texts and their practitioners often differ little in approach from those of traditional grammar/translation texts. The focus remains on translation and the dissection of the text, wherever it appears in the chapter or unit, rather than reading. Exercises are largely mechanical, requiring a knowledge of forms but all too often without a need for comprehension. Students may be led to grammar inductively rather than deductively, but detailed (even esoteric) knowledge of grammar is often still a primary goal. Should it be and if so to what extent?

SLA research is a new discipline, less than 50 years old, and research into instruction in second languages is even newer.<sup>2</sup> For the first 25 years, researchers focused primarily on investigating the internal processes of second language acquisition, addressing such questions as the order in which certain linguistic features of a language are acquired, the importance and quality of linguistic input, the role of social interaction, and the value of motivation. More recently, a subdiscipline—Instructed SLA—has turned its attention to researching instructional practice, testing the efficacy of various pedagogical methods which respond to SLA research findings.

Perhaps the most widely known and publicized SLA research was done by Steven Krashen in the 1980s, whose results concluded that grammar should never be explicitly taught. He argued that, given sufficient comprehensible input, students would acquire an implicit knowledge of the grammatical rules of a second language, just as they did their first language.<sup>3</sup> But subsequent research has disproven Krashen's theories, at least in some settings.<sup>4</sup> The reality is that input can often be comprehended without attention to syntax, in which case grammar becomes invisible and thus is not learned. Students need to notice and use grammar, particularly complex structures, to acquire it.<sup>5</sup> More recent SLA research offers a number of insights—including ways to make grammar visible and thus accessible to students—that should inform every language teacher.

It is important to note that almost all SLA studies have focused on the acquisition of English, German or the Romance Languages, with an occasional study that considers an Asian lan-

2 In so young a discipline, it is no surprise that there are competing theories and disagreements over methodology. In addition there are many aspects of second language acquisition that have yet to be studied in depth or at all, particularly those that pertain to the importance of age and ability to learner success. However, there is certainly sufficient evidence from a number of duplicated studies to inform second language pedagogy. Texts by Lightbown and Spada as well as by VanPatten, *From Input to Output*, provide accessible introductions for language teachers to SLA theory and its application in the classroom. Nassaji and Fotos offer a review of recent and ongoing areas of research specific to the teaching of grammar.

3 Krashen and Terrell, *The Natural Approach*. Krashen, "Seeking a Role for Grammar," makes it clear that he remains unconvinced by the positive results of SLA research on the effectiveness of instruction, maintaining that these studies show that only explicit knowledge is enhanced by instruction, not acquisition of the language or the ability to communicate.

4 Of particular note are Richard Schmidt's work on the importance for acquisition of attention to form, and Merrill Swain's research with French immersion programs, which concludes that meaningful input alone does not insure mastery of syntax; her results led to her subsequent theory regarding the role of production in language acquisition, which posits that production forces the learner to process morphosyntactically rather than relying solely on semantics ("The Output Hypothesis").

5 Following Schmidt's hypothesis regarding 'noticing,' significant research has been done on the importance of attention and noticing to processing and acquisition, e.g. Leow; and Leow, Hsieh, and Moreno.

guage. I know of no formal research conducted using Latin. Yet there are many results that can and should be adapted to Latin pedagogy. So here, let us consider some conclusions that are most informative for the Latin classroom.

## ACQUISITION PRINCIPLES

### *Implicit Knowledge Is Critical to Fluency*

The most important finding in my opinion is that fluency in any language requires implicit knowledge,<sup>6</sup> that is an ability to access and use the language that is automatic. Explicit knowledge of a language may help the learner attain implicit knowledge but by itself will not lead to fluency.<sup>7</sup> Latin instruction has long been focused on imparting information about the language, rather than developing the students' implicit system and thereby the ability to read fluently. All too often our students know their paradigms and can recite the various forms necessary for even the most difficult grammatical construction but are unable to recognize the very same forms when they see them in a reading passage. Their explicit knowledge may help them to dissect the passage, after which they may be able to reassemble it for understanding, but the process is discouragingly slow and frustrating. This is not to say that there is no benefit to possessing metalinguistic knowledge, but rather that if the teacher's goal is fluent reading, the focus of instruction must shift accordingly from knowledge about the language to the language itself.

### *Meaningful Input Builds Implicit Knowledge*

It is clear that Krashen was right to focus on input, which is critical to learning any language, and to emphasize that input must be meaningful.<sup>8</sup> We all know that our students become better readers by reading and understanding more Latin. But many texts offer random collections of sentences that focus on a grammatical point, or drills that ask for isolated words to be transformed from singular to plural or present to imperfect. Such exercises lack meaning and so do little to enhance students' implicit knowledge of the language.

### *Comprehension First, then Focused Production*

In the process of learning any language, native or foreign, accurate understanding comes long before correct production. We should not expect our students to produce accurate Latin before they have had substantial experience with comprehension. This is not to say that we shouldn't ask our students to write or speak, just that we must modify our expectations and focus our requirements on production that will build skills rather than frustrate the learner. Research has shown that output is an important part of attaining a detailed grasp of the grammar of a language, but just like effective input, output must be meaningful and carefully guided by the teacher if it is to affect the students' implicit knowledge.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> For definitions of implicit knowledge and other key terms used in second language research, please see the Glossary of Abbreviations/Terms in Appendix 1.

<sup>7</sup> VanPatten, *From Input to Output*, Chapter 3.

<sup>8</sup> VanPatten, *From Input to Output*, Chapter 2.

<sup>9</sup> Since Swain first put forth her output hypothesis in 1985, a number of researchers have investigated the efficacy of communicative output in language acquisition; see particularly: Izumi, who concluded that guided output was more effective than visual enhancement of text (that is, highlighting specific elements of the text with varied fonts, colors, etc.) in drawing attention to grammar; Nobuyoshi and Ellis, who posit that pushing students to produce more accurate output contributes to acquisition of the language; and Toth, who finds that communicative output (CO) is as effective

***Vocabulary Is Critical and Dominant***

We have always known that vocabulary is paramount to understanding, but it is best learned in context rather than through memorized lists. Even then research suggests that the learner will not truly acquire a word until it has been seen or heard in a minimum of six to as many as twenty different contexts.<sup>10</sup> Why is this pertinent to the teaching of grammar? Because the lexical always dominates. If the meaning of the sentence can be understood through its vocabulary, learners will not notice forms. So, for example, the use of the future tense with *cras* or *proximo die* is redundant, and the student can and will ignore the form of the verb. Vocabulary will also dominate in a statement like: *agricola frumentum portat*, where the only reasonable meaning abrogates the need for the student to notice inflection.<sup>11</sup>

Once sufficient research on the cognitive process of learning a second language had been conducted to set some working parameters, some SLA researchers turned to designing protocols that might guide classroom practice, and the following results are particularly applicable to the teaching of grammar.

**INSTRUCTIONAL APPLICATIONS*****Teaching Complex Grammar Can Accelerate Comprehension***

Providing explicit grammatical instruction (EI) can be effective in helping students cope with complex structures in the second language (L2), particularly those that have no parallel in their first language (L1). Yet there is little indication that EI is useful for teaching simpler features of a language, items that the learner will naturally acquire with sufficient exposure.<sup>12</sup> However, the way in which input is presented always matters a great deal. The material must be meaningful, and the student must be required to pay attention to grammatical form in order to comprehend the input. In other words, to expand the student's knowledge of the language, exercises or readings must be structured to focus on a form or forms that are necessary for understanding.<sup>13</sup>

or better than processing instruction (PI) in helping students acquire forms. The use of output-based instruction is, however, not without controversy. Benati, "Comparative Study," argues that PI is superior to CO, while DeKeyser and Sokalski suggest that the effectiveness of output-based instruction depends upon the skill being learned; i.e. input is most effective for comprehension, output for production; they see these two processes (comprehension and production) as separate from one another. For more on PI, see below.

10 A recent summary of the research on the effect of the frequency of exposure to vocabulary on its acquisition may be found in Mrmol 150-1, whose results provide evidence for the positive effect on acquisition of the dispersion of particular vocabulary words through a text. Horst, Cobb and Meara demonstrate the value of reading in acquiring vocabulary and the difficulties inherent in much of the research, which have contributed to the wide disparity in hypotheses as to the necessary number and quality of exposures.

11 VanPatten's first input processing principle ("Input Processing in SLA") declares that learners process words first, ignore grammar made unnecessary by a lexical item, process non-redundant grammar before redundant forms, and meaningful before non-meaningful forms regardless of redundancy; for anything redundant or non-meaningful to be processed at all, the sentence must not be of such complexity as to strain processing resources; finally learners process items appearing first in the sentence ahead of any other content.

12 Benati, "Effects of Structured Input Activities," found no advantage in the acquisition of the Italian future tense for EI over structured input (SI), that is input designed to draw student's attention to the desired form; Farley, however, concluded that EI did increase the rate at which students acquired the Spanish subjunctive. These studies suggest that the efficacy of EI depends upon the complexity of the grammatical feature being taught.

13 Norris and Ortega analyze findings from 49 studies conducted between 1980 and 1988 and report that L2 instruction is not only effective but also durable. De Graaff, Fernandez, and Henry et al. are among those whose studies have shown the efficacy of EI when it is incorporated in PI. Hulstijn and de Graaff have proposed a series of hypotheses

### ***Focused Instruction Increases Accuracy***

Processing Instruction (PI) is a term first used by Bill Van Patten two decades ago to describe the method he advocates for helping students acquire syntax: the instructor presents grammatical information (EI), the student practices that information with meaningful exercises, and then the student produces (in a limited way) the grammatical feature. PI is certainly similar to what we have been doing in Latin classrooms for years, but it has some distinct differences. Van Patten is not talking about drill-and-kill or isolated grammatical forms. Nor is he talking about the production of sentences or even entire words, but rather very carefully orchestrated presentation of a structure, followed by exercises that are focused on a form or forms.<sup>14</sup> Since Van Patten first presented PI as a model for grammatical instruction, many studies have demonstrated this method's efficacy when compared with either traditional instruction or with input-only environments, at least for short term gains in accuracy.<sup>15</sup>

### ***Grammar Should Be Taught Selectively***

When students are first introduced to a new rule, the reliability of the rule and its scope have a profound effect on the learner's ability to acquire the rule. It is critical to teach the high percentage information first,<sup>16</sup> leaving out exceptions, particularly if the exceptions can be learned as lexical items, rather than more rules.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps the best Latin examples of items that should not be included in grammatical instruction on this basis are third declension neuter i-stem nouns<sup>18</sup> and the ablative form of the supine.

### ***Complex Grammar Should Be Simplified***

The complexity of a grammatical concept is directly proportional to the difficulty of its acquisition—not surprisingly. Furthermore the complexity with which grammar is presented to the learner contributes substantially to problems with understanding. Making the most difficult structures accessible, especially the ones that are used frequently, should be the focus of instruction.<sup>19</sup> The simpler the teacher can make the explanation, the more likely the student is to understand the concept and to attend to its use. Latin has a great deal of complex syntax, made more complex by regarding the relationship between explicit and implicit knowledge, including the tantalizing (but still unsubstantiated) idea that EI is more important for inflectional languages (105). Harrison offers a number of meaningful exercises that compel the Latin student to focus on a form or forms. Her examples include the use of pictures, which help students to make connections between the language and its real-world application, something that is often lacking in Latin grammatical exercises.

14 See Appendix 2 for examples of how PI might be used in the Latin classroom.

15 See particularly Benati, "Comparative Study"; Cadierno; DeKeyser and Sokalski; Ellis, "Place of Grammar"; and Fotos. The long-term effect of EI and PI have not been studied. Indeed there is still considerable disagreement concerning the protocols followed in this type of research, since they depend on testing that focuses on explicit grammatical knowledge. There is as yet no real understanding of the process by which explicit knowledge becomes implicit, or if, indeed, it ever does so. Regardless of the discord among researchers, the results of EI/PI testing indicate gains in L2 comprehension and grasp of syntax that consistently exceed those that result from traditional grammar instruction.

16 Mahoney's work is particularly useful for this purpose, as she demonstrates clearly the predominance of the present and perfect tenses, as well as providing clear statistics on the frequency of each of the six cases.

17 Ellis, "Current Issues," considers in detail when it is most effective to teach grammar and what types of syntax are particularly suited to instruction.

18 Of course the exception to the exception is *mare, maris*, which is used frequently; however, its forms can easily be taught as lexical items.

19 DeKeyser and Sokalski demonstrate the efficacy of EI for both simple and complex syntax. Ellis, "Current Issues," concludes that grammar should be taught not just as a collection of discrete items, but with a massed approach (101).

our overwhelming need as Latinists to be excruciatingly specific about usage. Despite the fact that I feel I must know all the minute syntactical details of a sentence, I am not at all convinced that my beginning and intermediate students really need to know, for example, the difference between an Ablative of Description and an Ablative of Specification, e.g.: *Pompeius virtute magnus erat*; *Pompeius magna virtute erat*. It seems vastly more reasonable and useful to teach them that the ablative generally serves as an adverbial descriptor, as in the examples above, where it tells the reader ‘how’ Pompey was *great* or ‘how’ *he* was generally.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Knowledge about the Language Is Valuable for Learners***

There is some evidence, particularly for older students, that metalinguistic knowledge does enable language acquisition and promote learner accuracy, and it may also allow students to move more quickly through the natural stages of second language learning—that is a language’s order of acquisition.<sup>21</sup> But how much knowledge about the language the student must have to affect the rate of acquisition is still unclear.

### ***Correction Should Be a Student-Focused Process***

Finally, Instructed SLA research regarding correction of student errors (Corrective Feedback) indicates that recitation or writing of the proper form(s) by the instructor does little to help the learner acquire proper syntax. It is much more effective for the teacher to elicit the corrected form from the student.<sup>22</sup> So with the written work that tends to dominate assessment in Latin instruction, it is better to circle an error and have the student figure out what is wrong, and with oral responses, it is best to guide the student to self-correction.<sup>23</sup>

While this has been just a brief survey of some aspects of SLA and Instructed SLA research, the implications for Latin pedagogy are undeniable. Meaningful input is crucial. We should provide engaging material for our students to read and hear, right from the beginning. As one of the founders of the Conventiculum Bostoniense,<sup>24</sup> whose Latin immersion program focuses on SLA and Latin pedagogy, I am a strong advocate for the use of oral Latin in the classroom to whatever extent the instructor is comfortable. I can attest from my own experiences that exposure to spoken Latin transforms reading ability, and here I mean Latin that is communicative, not oral drilling of declensions or recitation of forms or even the reading aloud of passages for translation, but rather

20 Ruebel demonstrates just this kind of approach in his consideration of how best to teach the ablative case. Other consolidations and simplifications of grammar can be equally effective, such as presenting verbs as belonging to one of two types of conjugation rather than five or presenting all pronouns and adjectives that use the pronoun declension as a group rather than as many discrete declensions.

21 See particularly Roehr and Gánem-Gutiérrez.

22 This is certainly the view put forth by Ellis, “Current Issues,” 99-100; he refers to the extensive literature on corrective feedback, but notes that little work has been done on the effect of feedback on acquisition.

23 Anderson and Beckwith discuss the differing effects of *indirect* and *direct corrective feedback*, declaring that the former is particularly useful for “long-term acquisition of grammar” (37).

24 The Conventiculum Bostoniense (CB) was founded in 2006 with four specific goals: to provide current and prospective teachers of Latin with a full immersion experience; to introduce participants to SLA theory and discuss its application to the teaching of Latin; to give teachers exposure to and opportunities to develop active methods—speaking and reading—to use in their classrooms; and to provide graduate credit. While the CB has unique goals, there are many other Latin speaking experiences open to teachers and others interested in oral Latin in the USA and Europe, as well as a number of schools where active Latin is an integral part of instruction. For a comprehensive treatment of the current state of active Latin pedagogy and practice see Coffee.

exchanging ideas and sharing information. Reading is a more difficult and less natural skill than listening, and there is no quicker way to familiarize students with common vocabulary and simple grammar than engaging them in using the language they are learning.<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile, with the knowledge that production is much more difficult than comprehension, we need to moderate our expectations for student writing, focusing production on meaningful output to reinforce knowledge of vocabulary and syntax. The research on grammar instruction indicates the need to simplify and distill grammatical instruction to make it less complex; we should focus on more difficult syntax that students will be unlikely to understand without assistance; and we must avoid at all costs teaching grammar without context, as if it were an artifact all on its own, disconnected from the language that defines it. It should go without saying that paradigms without understanding are useless. Who among us hasn't had the student who can state perfectly the precise form of every word in a sentence without having any idea of what it means? The paradigm does not need to disappear; in fact, some of our students, depending upon their linguistic backgrounds and learning styles, will find it helpful; but it should be the summary at the finish line, not the signal at the start.

There are a great many questions that SLA research has yet to answer. Perhaps the most compelling is why, if we can all learn a first language, do some people have persistent problems with learning a second one? The truth is that even the modern language community has been cautious in responding to the research, and rightly so, as the reassessment of Krashen's theories has demonstrated.<sup>26</sup> Yet there is no doubt that we should take instruction from persistent and repeatable results from research in other languages in order to serve our students' best interests.

On the other hand, despite some protests to the contrary, Latin *is* different from modern languages in that our classrooms are focused on the teaching of reading, rather than all four language skills. While some SLA research has been done with reading as a component of language acquisition, none has considered reading as the primary goal. Indeed, Latin and Greek classrooms may provide ideal laboratories in which to investigate the connection between reading and acquisition, information that could be exceptionally valuable even beyond the L2 classroom, in teaching reading to the profoundly deaf. But we need more than anecdotal evidence about our students' learning experience. Just some of the research areas specific to Latin that would be immensely useful to instructors include: investigating the order of acquisition for Latin, which would help us to modify instruction and expectations in the classroom; determining which elements of syntax are particularly difficult for our students and which are easily acquired (I think there may be some surprises for us here); testing the effectiveness of EI and PI in the acquisition of complex grammatical structures; examining the role of vocabulary in a language in which word order can be highly variable; considering the efficacy of alternative ways of contextualizing vocabulary to facilitate its acquisition; assessing the effectiveness of spoken Latin in enhancing reading speed and accuracy of understanding; evaluating the role of metalinguistic knowledge in the development of reading skills; testing the effectiveness of transitional readers in preparing students for advanced reading; and determining whether a focus on translation rather than comprehension contributes to

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25 There is, of course, a long history of the active use of Latin as a teaching medium. See particularly Tunberg and Minkova.

26 Ellis, "SLA and Language Pedagogy," extensively considers the issue of how SLA research should affect classroom practice and concludes that results should be used to inform pedagogy and evaluate outcomes, rather than reforming methods wholesale. He further suggests that teachers might use the research to frame their own investigations into effective teaching.

or hinders reading ability. These are meant merely to be starting suggestions for what will surely be extensive, rewarding and valuable studies.

This brief consideration of SLA research and its implications for the Latin (and Greek) classroom is meant to be a call to arms. I firmly believe that we are at a critical juncture in the history of Latin instruction, one at which we must redefine Latin not only as a tool for understanding language and culture but as a vibrant communicative language in its own right, one that stands equal at the very least to its modern language counterparts. We may not have a native population with which to communicate, but we have many of the most influential thinkers and writers of the past 2,500 years to address, riches beyond measure. The road ahead is perilous, because we must revise our pedagogy and re-present our goals without allowing Latin to lose its unique identity as a foundation for linguistic knowledge and as a training ground for critical thinking skills. We do not want to be just another language, but we can no longer linger in approaches that promote the all too common notion that Latin is irrelevant, a relic of an outmoded, elitist system. A number of our colleagues in the schools are transforming their classrooms into vibrant havens for living Latin, while still honoring the unique values of its study. College-level programs need to do the same. At UMass Boston, we have just begun to teach all of our beginning and intermediate courses actively, using immersive texts and methods. It is too soon to report definitive results, but the early data are incredibly promising—excited students and higher retention from semester to semester. Change is not only possible, it is imperative, and not only can SLA research be instructive in the process of redefining our discipline, but our participation in future studies will also signal Latin's identity as a communicative language and will help to secure its place in curricula at all levels. As its teachers and advocates, we know how transformative the study of Latin can be, but the current data-driven educational climate demands that we clearly define and then prove empirically its value.

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**APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS/TERMS**

**Acquisition:** the learning of a language; sometimes used to describe a process of which the learner is unaware, one that happens at an unconscious level.

**Corrective Feedback:** an interactive process with a learner by which the instructor points out incorrect use of the language, either explicitly correcting the error and/or providing a grammatical explanation or implicitly guiding the student to produce the correct form, e.g. by modeling it.

**Explicit Instruction (EI):** any explanation of grammatical rules in the language classroom, including both instruction by the teacher and inference by the student at the direction of the instructor. This approach to language learning contrasts directly with any immersion environment that lacks direct instruction.

**Explicit Knowledge:** an understanding of how the language works, which may include elements of its vocabulary, its forms and grammatical structures, but always as information that must be intentionally accessed by the learner.

**Focus on Form(s):** any type of instruction that draws attention to grammatical form/structures within meaningful discourse; also a component of PI (see below), in which the instructor crafts materials and approaches that compel the language student to notice and process or produce the form of a word or words in order to extract meaning from the target language.

**Implicit Knowledge:** an automatic understanding of the target language, with which the language learner understands what is read or said in the target language or accurately produces it in speaking or writing intuitively, in much the same way that a first language is understood and used.

**Input:** anything heard or read in the target language. Sources include the instructor, media, native speakers, fellow students, indeed any source through which the language learner is exposed to the target language.

**Comprehensible Input (CI):** input in the target language that can be understood by the student, whether through context, accompanying gestures or previous knowledge.

**Structured Input (SI):** input in the target language that is specifically designed to focus the learner's attention on a particular linguistic feature.

**Instructed SLA:** a subdiscipline of SLA (see below) research that tests SLA hypotheses in instructional settings to determine their pedagogical implications and efficacy.

**L1:** a learner's first (native) language

**L2:** a learner's second or subsequent language, generally one being learned in a classroom, although the abbreviation is also used to refer to the acquisition of language by cultural immersion.

**Metalinguistic Knowledge:** the ability to describe the component parts and syntax of a language.

**Output:** the production of the target language, in speaking or writing.

**Processing Instruction (PI):** a method by which students are given EI (see above) for a particular feature of the target language, followed by form-focused input and output (see Focus on Form(s) above) that compels the learner to both comprehend and produce that feature.

**SLA:** Second Language Acquisition. This abbreviation is in common use among researchers in Applied Linguistics whose study focuses on the acquisition of non-native languages.

**Target Language:** the language under study.

**APPENDIX 2: PROCESSING INSTRUCTION IN THE LATIN CLASSROOM*****Example 1***

Background: Students have a great deal of familiarity with the present tense of regular verbs of all types. They are also familiar with all of the vocabulary used in the exercise, including the third principal part of each of the verbs included in the activity. This lesson is affective in nature; that is, it asks students to identify forms, but also to assign actions to themselves and others, making the activity socially engaging.

Goal: to introduce and familiarize students with the perfect tense, since it is second only to the present tense in textual frequency, as demonstrated by Mahoney (102).

Objectives: Students will be able to identify present and perfect forms of common verbs. Students will be able to produce perfect forms of familiar verbs.

**Explicit Instruction**

The instructor will discuss the nature of the perfect tense—completed action—and will demonstrate how the forms of the tense are generated, i.e. 3<sup>rd</sup> principal part and perfect endings, pointing out the similarities and differences in stems and endings.

**Focus on Forms**

The students will then break into pairs to do the following activity.

After students have completed the exercise, the teacher will ask each of them to explain to the class at least one of the actions they chose for themselves in Part 2.

Focus on Forms—Perfect Tense

1. From the following lists of verb forms, choose two actions you think each of the persons listed in the chart might have done yesterday after school and two they might be doing now.

- |             |             |            |           |             |
|-------------|-------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| dicunt      | audis       | clamavimus | legisti   | dormivistis |
| spiraverunt | ederunt     | studuit    | sedet     | spectavisti |
| scribo      | bibi        | monet      | ambulavi  | cucurrimus  |
| dormit      | specto      | audivistis | dormiunt  | student     |
| studuimus   | sederunt    | legi       | spectas   | clamavistis |
| edo         | dormimus    | dixit      | monuerunt | audivi      |
| sedemus     | spirant     | scripsit   | bibunt    | spiratis    |
| ambulas     | scribis     | dormivit   | studetis  | scribunt    |
| curritis    | studeo      | edis       | dicitis   | ambulavisti |
| legunt      | curritis    | dicis      | spiramus  | studuerunt  |
| dormivisti  | spiravistis | studemus   | bibo      | dormivimus  |

Heri

You	Your Partner	The Teacher	You and your Partner	Your Partner & a friend	Your Parents

Nunc

You	Your Partner	The Teacher	You and your Partner	Your Partner & a friend	Your Parents

2. Now choose one action for yesterday and one for today for each of the persons in the chart that is **not** listed in the correct form above and create the correct form in the chart below.

Heri

You	Your Partner	The Teacher	You and your Partner	Your Partner & a friend	Your Parents

Nunc

You	Your Partner	The Teacher	You and your Partner	Your Partner & a friend	Your Parents

### *Example 2*

Background: Students are familiar with the nominative and accusative cases of first and second declension nouns and the present tense of the verbs *habere* and *dare*. They have already been introduced to the Roman *familia* in the exercise that follows the instruction, and they have already done similar exercises with the nominative and accusative cases.

Goal: Students will become familiar with the forms of the dative case and one of its major functions as indirect object.

Objectives: Students will be able to identify the dative case, despite varying word order. Students will be able to produce dative forms for nouns of the first and second declension.

### **Explicit Instruction**

The instructor will discuss the nature of the dative case and its use as the indirect object, as well as demonstrating how the dative is formed, including some communicative activity with the students to insure that they understand how indirect objects function grammatically.

### **Focus on Form**

1. Students are given a copy of the family tree for their class's *Familia Romana*. The exercise focuses on listening to a series of sentences about the members of the family, in order to distinguish between the nominative and dative cases.

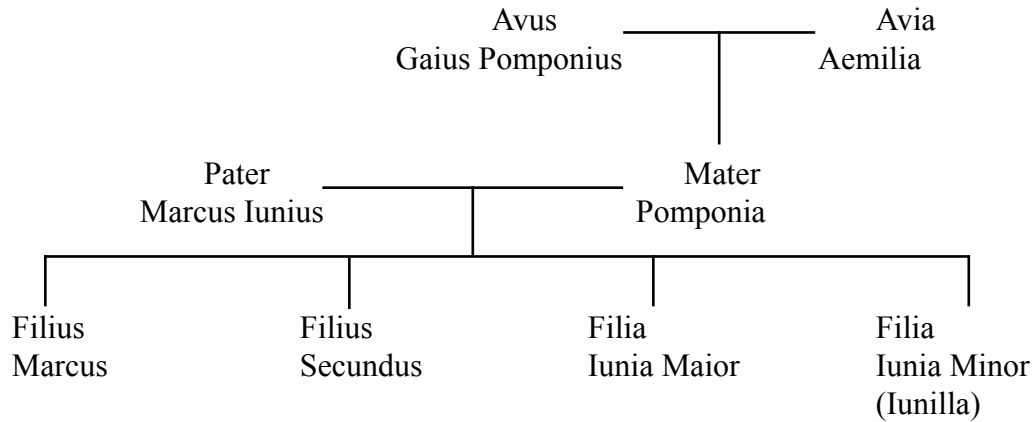
The instructor reads each sentence slowly and clearly at least twice. In response to each sentence, students are instructed to draw an arrow from the name of the person that is in the nominative to the name of the person that is in the dative. The sentences delineate the movement of an object from one family member to another, in this case, grandfather's false eye. Since the goal for Processing Instruction is to comprehend the meaning based on form, not on vocabulary, the sentences are not read in the correct order of the actions, and the word order varies from one sentence to another, so students must listen carefully to each one in order to get a complete picture of what has happened. Instructors may choose to introduce the exercise in Latin (narrative provided) or English, as desired, and according to the listening skill of the students.

At the end of the exercise, students will be asked a single question—who has the object? They will know because there will only be one family member who has an arrow coming to him/her/it without one going away.

This is an oral/aural exercise. Student response consists only of drawing arrows and answering the final question. The family tree and a model for the exercise are found on the following page.

2. Instructors may choose to extend this activity by asking students to create their own version of this exercise, with a different object. Students can work in pairs/groups, which will then challenge one another with their created exercises to listen for the correct answer.



**Nostra Familia Romana**

Alii in familia:

Feles	Canis	Servus	Ancilla
Cleopatra	Fidus	Brocchus	Horaea

**Quis Habet Oculum Avi?**

Pomponius, avus familiae, unum oculum verum habet. Alter est ligneus. Uno die oculum ligneum non invenire potest; est sine oculo falso. Ubi est oculus avi?

1. Secundus Iunillae oculum dat.
2. Secundo Brocchus oculum dat.
3. Cleopatra Iuniae dat oculum.
4. Horaeae dat oculum Iunia.
5. Aemiliae oculum dat Marcus.
6. Oculum Horaea Marco dat.
7. Iunilla oculum dat Cleopatrae.
8. Fidus Broccho dat oculum.

Quis oculum avi habet?