

**Individual Paper Session 4**  
**Classroom**  
**Tuesday, July 4**  
**2:45-3:15pm**

**Developmentally moderated focus-on-form**

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The aim of this paper is to show how the combination of two components in L2 instruction, that is (a) a principled psycholinguistic developmental schedule for the L2, such as Processability theory (Pienemann, 1998) applied to Italian L2 (Di Biase, 1998, 2002;) in combination with (b) focus-on-form (Long 1991, Long and Robinson, 1998) used in feedback on the developmentally targeted structure(s), results in measurable gains in development and accuracy. From a more general theoretical stance this kind of study might illuminate the highly controversial issue of the interface between explicit and implicit learning (Long and Robinson, 1998; Paradis 1994, 2004).

The study presented here follows a pretest-delayed posttest design focusing on the learning of the singular/plural form contrast in nouns and adjectives and their agreement in the Italian NP. It is part of a larger ARC-supported project, with a community organization (CoAsIt, Sydney) as industry partner, looking at outcomes of Italian L2 programs in primary schools. Here we concentrate on 18 learners from the same school with the same teacher, half of them from the experimental class, where focus-on-form feedback was directed exclusively to the (developmentally) targeted structure, while the other half of the learners (from the comparison class) had the usual corrective feedback from the teacher (i.e. on any error).

The delayed posttest results show that even small doses of (developmentally moderated) form-focused instruction appear to bootstrap grammatical development in the learners who mostly reached stage 3 (NP plural agreement) after 16 weeks of instruction. In particular, the experimental group, where form-focused feedback was directed exclusively to the (developmentally) targeted structure, displayed greater accuracy and faster acquisition of more complex form-function mappings occurring within the same developmental stage. Results seem consistent with Paradis' position that the link between explicit and implicit L2 learning is indirect and mediated through practice.