

THE EFFECT OF INPUT, OUTPUT & PROFICIENCY ON L2 SPANISH CLITIC ACQUISITION

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INTRODUCTION

In Spanish, direct object pronouns are difficult for native English speakers because of the differing word order between languages. Learners tend to process the first noun (the object) as a subject as they do in English.

For example, the sentence “**Juan buys it**” is subject-verb-object. In Spanish, it would be “**Lo compra Juan**”, which is object-verb-subject. The goal is to determine which method leads to stronger retention of the new word order across proficiency levels.

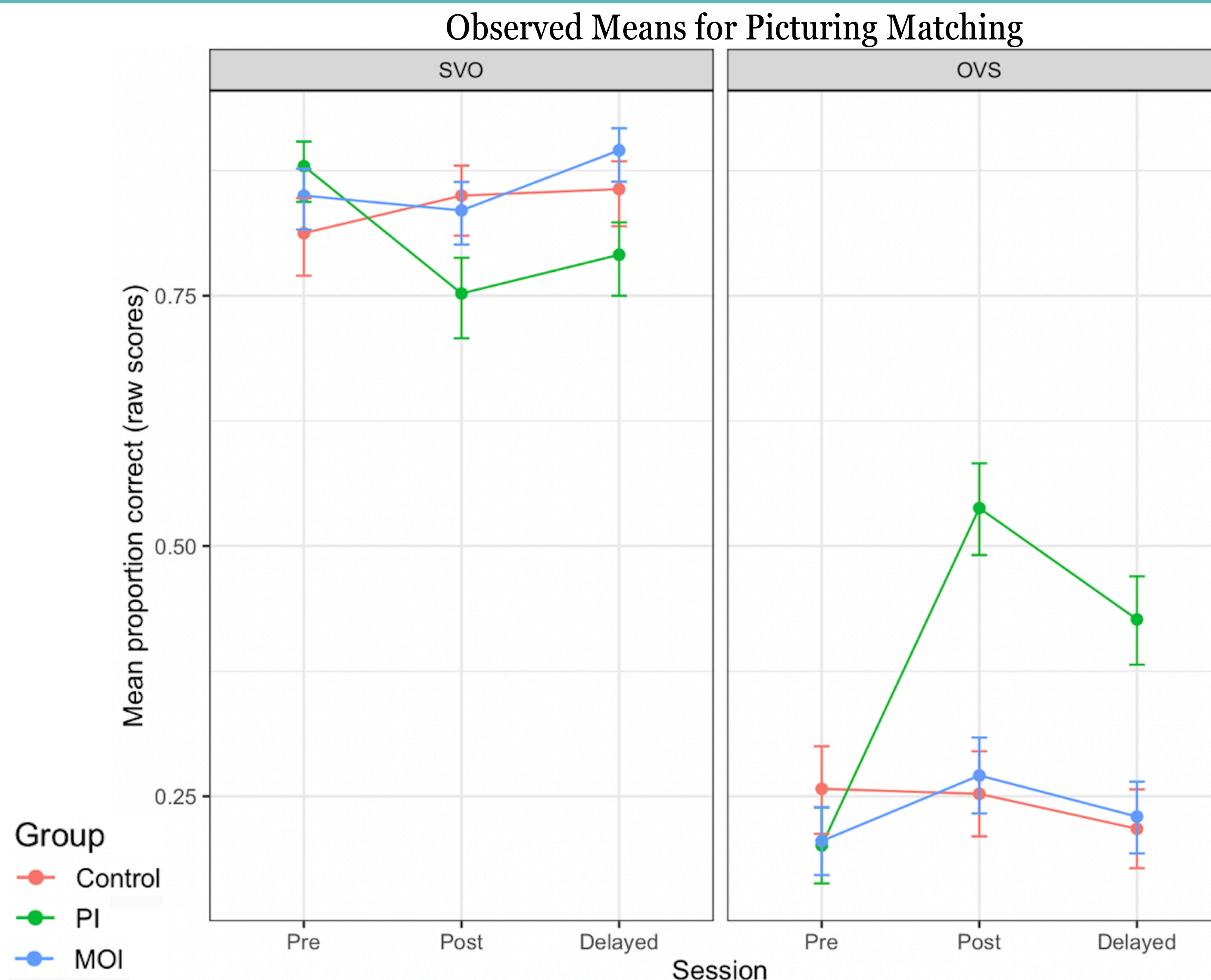
This study examines whether input-based or output-based instructional methods are more effective for second language acquisition. Identifying more effective instructional strategies could improve curriculum design, student proficiency, and cross-cultural communication skills.

Students in basic-level Spanish courses were assigned to one of three groups: Processing Instruction (PI), Meaning-Oriented Instruction (MOI), or a control group. Participants completed a pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest, each one week apart. Data was gathered through four assessment tasks measuring comprehension and production: self-paced reading, picture matching, elicited imitation, and sentence completion. During the posttest, each group was given a different treatment: PI only had input and MOI only had output.

Although results are preliminary, the findings will help determine which instructional approach better supports long-term language retention and may inform improvements in higher education language instruction.

BACKGROUND

- Learners often rely on strategies that prioritize word order over grammatical inflections, which leads to both production and interpretation errors.
- Other previous research has shown that different instructional approaches can support language development.
 - Processing Instruction (PI)** highlights structured input in order for learners to pay close attention to grammatical cues. Research has shown it to be effective at helping beginner level learners to acquire new forms.
 - Meaning-Based Output Instruction (MOI)** puts an emphasis on production to strengthen fluency and accuracy.
- This study seeks to determine whether PI or MOI is more effective at helping learners acquire DO pronouns. It also explores at what stages each method is most effective.



METHODOLOGY

111 FSU students from Spanish classes participated over 2 months.

Session 1

All Groups:

- Pre-treatment Materials: Consent Form, Language Background Questionnaire, Vocabulary Assessment, English LexTale, & three proficiency tests.
- Task 1: Self-Paced Reading
- Task 2: Picture Matching
- Task 3: Elicited Imitation
- Task 4: Sentence Completion
- Fatigue & Engagement Survey

Session 2

PI (Before Tasks 1-4):

- Explicit Information lesson in English about Spanish direct object pronouns.
- 4 reading comprehension activities
- 3 oral comprehension activities

MOI (Before Tasks 1-4):

- Explicit Information lesson in English about Spanish direct object pronouns.
- 4 written production activities
- 3 spoken production activities

All Groups:

- Task 1: Self-Paced Reading
- Task 2: Picture Matching
- Task 3: Elicited Imitation
- Task 4: Sentence Completion
- Fatigue & Engagement Survey

Session 3

All Groups:

- Task 1: Self-Paced Reading
- Task 2: Picture Matching
- Task 3: Elicited Imitation
- Task 4: Sentence Completion
- Fatigue & Engagement Survey

After completion of assessments, we graded their speaking activities and sentence completions, and coded all their work to find patterns in accuracy and proficiency levels in certain assessments.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Picture Matching:

- The PI group showed significant gains at the posttest and delayed posttest after receiving treatment.
- The MOI and Control groups did not show any significant gain after receiving treatment.
- This is consistent with previous literature.

ANTICIPATED RESULTS

- Both the PI and MOI groups are expected to show significant gains in different areas.
- PI group is expected to show gains on all tasks.
- MOI group may only show gains on the production tasks.
- The effectiveness of treatments may depend on their proficiency level.
 - More proficient: expected to show greater gains from MOI treatment
 - All levels are destined to benefit from PI, though effects may plateau at higher proficiency.

Conclusion: This study explores how treatment type is mediated by proficiency, which has not been explored with these instructional methods. The next steps include replicating these tasks with larger samples and higher proficiency levels, and exploring longitudinal and hybrid instructional models.

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REFERENCES

Please scan the QR code for references.

