

# What is Wrong with the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model? An Analytical Study of the Model

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## Abstract

The settlement of immigrants with different tongues in the United States urged the official authorities in the field of education to adopt the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model as a new salvation teaching method in such a way as to help them accelerate their integration in society and at school. The model, which proved its adequacy on the academic level, is an instructional framework that is designed to teach English learners language and content areas alongside with their classmates whose first language is English. However, the SIOP turned out to be a classical-like and a teacher-centered model that restricts the students' learning, which is counterproductive. Our analysis of a SIOP lesson in terms of the learning components, which should be taken into consideration from the beginning of the learning until the end, unveiled some of its limitations which introduces us to an assumption that is based on the fact that says this is how learning should be handled. Such pitfalls witnessed among non-language teachers in terms of implementation, especially among beginners, sound too exhausting and challenging. Hence, what the SIOP provides turned out to be a set of some well-designed practices that are ready made for use, which questions the utility of the model in terms of its performance as far as the learners' linguistic needs are concerned. The model provides weak feedback and less interaction among the learners in both content and language classes.

**Keywords:** SIOP, linguistic needs, English language learners, learning components, best practices, the observation protocol scale.

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## 1. Introduction

Language learning and language teaching processes are one of the oldest human practices. Humans kept striving throughout history to use and understand other languages that are different from their mother tongues for different reasons. The way in which these languages are acquired differs in terms of their utility. The most common purpose of the use of any language is its communication determination, which is considered as an urgent need that paved the way toward a minimal understanding among people with different tongues.

In fact, one of the main purposes behind the learning of the English language in the United States is their willingness for the realization of the full integration of the increasing number of the immigrants with different tongues in society and at school. On the basis of the Sheltered Instruction approach, which was coined by Krashen (1981; 1983) in such a way as to protect the students' linguistic demands at school, three American scholars developed a new teaching method which they called the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model (Echevarria, Vogt, and Short, 2004). The model an instructional framework and adequate tool that provides an adequate level of equity among language learners without being obliged to isolate them in ESP classes. In the SIOP Model classes, these learners are taught English and content subjects alongside with their classmates whose first language is English and they were able to perform well academically and in terms of proficiency.

What is then wrong with the SIOP Model? On the theoretical and practical level, Crawford and Reyes (2015) realized that the three founders of the model were the only researchers who did most of the research about the SIOP, especially on the level of its implementation among beginners. They also added that the process of learning in a SIOP class is teacher centered where the learners are completely restricted with the use of a classical-like method and that the use of L1 as a bilingual instructional practice is counterproductive. On the other hand, Krashen (1981) stated that the fact of not having the minimal linguistic level to express one's ideas would raise the affective filter as a psychological hindrance. This fact paved the way toward his new claim when the SIOP founders ignored two crucial hypotheses that are required for the acquisition of any language, the skill building and the comprehension of the input, which are taken as equal and not as two different entities (Krashen 2013). Such unusual defects and gaps unveiled some unexpected limitations of the model in terms of its results despite its success and wide use worldwide.

However, further criticism of the SIOP Model is done through the analysis of a SIOP lesson that focused on the best practices in the field of education. This act that exposes us to an implicit assumption that says that this is how learning should take place, without taking into consideration the integration of all the learning criteria, which question the richness of the input, the building of the students' competency, and their engagement in

communicative acts (Boughoulid, 2022).

## 2. The Sheltered Instruction method (SI)

However, the development of a language teaching method on the academic level has exposed itself as an urgent linguistic tool, especially when it has to do with English language learners' performance in terms of both language and content areas. Actually, different teaching approaches emerged as a kind of reform of the linguistic field in the domain of education. These approaches varied from the traditional to the natural, to the psychological, etc. These attempts paved the way toward the establishment of more rigorous methods where most of the four main language skills are properly integrated in the process of learning. Among the approaches that dealt with the teaching and learning of the English language as a second or foreign language, one finds the Sheltered Instruction approach, which was introduced by Stephen Krashen in the 1980s as one of the most instructional methods of teaching. This approach consists of a method in which content subjects are adapted in such a way as to meet the needs of students while learning English as a second language (Krashen, 1981; 1983). According to Faltis (1993), the term "sheltered" shows the extent to which the learners are protected by taking into consideration their linguistic demands and making them comprehensible while learning complex content areas such as Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

However, Fritzen (2011) stated three examples of Sheltered Instruction: (1) sheltering as protection, (2) sheltering as nurturing, and (3) sheltering as separation. The main objective of Sheltered Instruction is to develop the learners' use of language, learn the content, and prepare them academically in such a way as to facilitate their full integration in society and at school. Hence, the absence of a concrete and an agreed upon model as well as the shift from an adequate focus on language development and the ineffectiveness of some sheltered classes has affected the implementation of the Sheltered Instruction method in an undesirable way (Nash, 2006).

## 3. The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model

According to Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2004; 2017), the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model is a research-based and instructional framework for teaching English language learners language and content subjects alongside with their classmates whose first language is English. It is an attempt to find an agreement concerning the definition of Sheltered Instruction on which Jana Echevarria, Maryellen Vogt, and Deborah J. Short started working in the 1990s due to the English language learners' population growth in the United States. The working on the refinement of the Sheltered Instruction method in collaboration with the Sheltered Instruction teachers in the educational field gave birth to an Observation Protocol known as the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model. This model is a new teaching method that provides teachers with "a model for lesson planning and implementation that provides English learners with access to grade-level content standards" (Echevarria, Vogt, and Short, 2017, p. viii).

The SIOP model is then a teaching approach that deals with the educational areas in general and the English language learners' performance in particular. It is a rigorous educational resource that provides teachers with well-designed lesson plans and well-selected strategies and best practices in such a way as to help them prepare their learners for a better academic achievement in terms of the learning of content knowledge and language skills (Echevarria, Vogt, and Short, 2004; 2017).

### The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model: Components and features.

| N° | Components         | Features   | Illustration   | Questions to ask   |
|----|--------------------|--|--|--|
| 1  | Lesson Preparation | 1. Content objectives<br>2. Language objectives<br>3. Content concepts<br>4. Supplementary materials<br>5. Adaptation of content | They describe what the students will be able to learn during the lesson. They are clearly defined, written on the board, orally stated, and reviewed with students.<br>They describe how the students will learn the content of the lesson. They are clearly defined, written on the board, orally stated, and reviewed with students.<br>They should be appropriate for students' educational level and age.<br>They are used to provide students with concrete experiences, and make lessons clear and meaningful (the use of graphs, models, visual aids, etc).<br>The content is adapted to all levels of student proficiency. | How is a lesson plan that includes content and language objectives designed? |

| N° | Components             | Features  | Illustration   | Questions to ask  |
|----|------------------------|---|--|---|
|    |                        | 6. Meaningful activities  | They integrate activities that integrate lesson concepts with language practice opportunities that include letter writing, plays, games, etc.  |   |
| 2  | Building Background    | 7. Concepts explicitly linked to students' background experiences | Concepts should be directly related to the students' background experiences.   | What should be done in order to link the lesson to the learners' experiences?           |
|    |                        | 8. Links explicitly made between past learning and new concepts   | Teachers should explicitly relate the past learning and the new concepts.  |   |
|    |                        | 9. Emphasis of Key vocabulary                                     | Key vocabulary should be introduced, written on the board, repeated, highlighted, etc.   |   |
| 3  | Comprehensible Input   | 10. Appropriate Speech  | The use of an appropriate speech that fits students' language proficiency level.   | How language and content are clarified and made well understood for the learners?       |
|    |                        | 11. Clear explanation of academic tasks                           | Present and explain instructions clearly through modelling and paraphrasing.   |   |
|    |                        | 12. A variety of techniques                                       | A variety of techniques are used to make content concepts clear by using visuals, hands-on activities, demonstrations, TPR, etc.   |   |
| 4  | Strategies             | 13. The use of learning strategies                                | Students should be provided with ample opportunities that include meta-cognitive, cognitive, and social / affective strategies.  | What kind of strategies the learners need in order to support their understanding?      |
|    |                        | 14. Scaffolding techniques  | The use of scaffolding techniques to assist and support students' understanding (e.g., think-aloud, collaborating, etc.).  |   |
|    |                        | 15. HOTS questions or tasks                                       | The use of a variety of question types that promote students' higher-order thinking skills (HOTS).   |   |
| 5  | Interaction            | 16. Opportunities for interaction and discussion                  | Provide students with frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion (teacher/student and student/student).   | How are the learners engaged in positive and meaningful interactions?                   |
|    |                        | 17. Grouping configurations                                       | All the learners should benefit from instruction that frequently includes a variety of grouping configurations such as pairs, triads, teams, etc.                                      |   |
|    |                        | 18. Wait time   | Provide students with sufficient wait time to express their thoughts fully without any interruption. While one student is responding, let the other students write down their answers. |   |
|    |                        | 19. Clarification of key concepts in L1                           | Clarify key concepts in the students' first language when possible by using strategies such as aide, peer, or L1 text.   |   |
| 6  | Practice & Application | 20. Hands-on materials  | Learners should be provided with hands-on materials and / or manipulatives to practice using new content knowledge.  | How to provide the learners with opportunities to apply content and language knowledge? |
|    |                        | 21. Apply content and language knowledge                          | Learners should be provided with activities to apply content and language knowledge in the classroom.  |   |
|    |                        | 22. language skills activities                                    | Learners should be provided with activities that integrate the language four skills.   |   |
| 7  | Lesson Delivery        | 23. Content objectives  | Content objectives are clearly supported by lesson delivery.   | How to make the learners focus on the content and                                       |
|    |                        | 24. Language objectives   | Language objectives are clearly supported by lesson delivery.  |   |

| N° | Components          | Features  | Illustration  | Questions to ask  |
|----|---------------------|---|---|---|
|    |                     | 25. Students engagement                         | Learners are engaged approximately 90% to 100% of the time.                                 | language objectives?  |
|    |                     | 26. Pacing of the lesson                        | The lesson should be paced appropriately to the learners' ability level                     |   |
| 8  | Review & Assessment | 27. Key vocabulary review                       | Provide learners with a comprehensive review of key vocabulary.                             | When and how to assess the learners' learning in terms of language and content achievement? |
|    |                     | 28. Key content concepts review                 | Provide learners with a comprehensive review of key content concepts.                       |   |
|    |                     | 29. Feedback                                    | Provide feedback to learners regularly on their output through discussion, correction, etc. |   |
|    |                     | 30. student comprehension & learning assessment | Conduct assessments of student learning throughout the lesson.                              |   |

Adapted from Echevarría, Vogt, and Short, 2017, *Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners: The SIOP Model*.

However, the SIOP Model is composed of 8 components and 30 features (See the table above). These components and features were finalized in 2000 by Echevarría, Vogt, and Short, and they “emphasize the instructional practices that are critical for second language learners as well as high-quality practices that benefit all students” (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2017, p. 318). They also help teachers improve their ways of teaching in order to ensure their learners' achievements, especially when the learned content is conducted in a language that these learners do not speak. The eight components of the SIOP Model are: (1) Lesson Preparation, (2) Building Background, (3) Comprehensible Input, (4) Strategies, (5) Interaction, (6) Practice and Application, (7) Lesson Delivery, and (8) Review and Assessment (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2000). The guidance approach that has been recognized as an effective and a research-based model of instruction is designed as a framework that makes content subjects comprehensible and achievable to the English language learners. Treatment teachers took professional training in this approach before its implementation takes place in the classroom. The observation and the rating of the treatment and comparison classes by using the SIOP Model resulted in the outperformance of the English language learners in the former classes. The SIOP Model is then regarded as one of the best teaching instructional design models because it provides teachers with ample tools to plan, teach, and reflect on their lessons. The degree of performance may vary according to the way the implementation is conducted in class. Hence, one may notice the apparent difference between lower and higher implementations on the basis of the teachers' performances (Boughoulid, 2020). Thus, could one admit that the SIOP Model is a miraculous teaching approach, or it is just a classical foreign language instructional model?

### 3.1. The SIOP lesson plans

In order to facilitate the teachers' work, Echevarría, Vogt, and Short (2017) designed four different SIOP lesson plan templates, which are designed as an implementation model based on the SIOP eight components and thirty features. They incorporate all the details that concern the building of a SIOP lesson starting from content and language objectives to the teachers' reflections. The lessons can be adapted according to the level of the students, their ages and backgrounds as well as the theme of the lesson and the required standards. This adaptation also takes into account the kind of learning/teaching areas the teacher is conducting, such as Science, Mathematics, English Language Arts, History and Social Studies, etc. Educators are in need of such well designed and varied models in order “to strengthen their lesson planning and delivery and to provide students with more consistent instruction that meets language and content standards” (Echevarría, Vogt, and Short, 2017, p. 24). It is an issue that targets both students and teachers' achievements. Learning cannot take place in the absence of a lesson plan that does not take into consideration the major goals of the lesson and the clear instructions that should indicate how students are going to deal with the new learned knowledge. “With careful planning, we make learning meaningful and relevant by including appropriate motivating materials and activities that foster real-life application of concepts studied” (Echevarría, Vogt, and Short, 2017, p. 28).

The fact of recognizing that the SIOP Model requires teachers to include the eight components and the thirty features does not mean that they are going to incorporate them all in one single lesson plan. In fact, the four different lesson plan templates are designed in such a way as to guide teachers who are willing to implement the SIOP Model whether as professional or novice teachers. For instance, the examination of the SIOP lesson plan template number four indicates its flexibility on the level of its design. It is noticeable that it does not include all the SIOP components and features. It includes only the ones that are seen as necessary, namely the Building Background as a way of touching upon the students' experiences, the content and language objectives

that put the students on the track of the lesson from its very beginning, and Review and Assessment for an effective evaluation of the whole process in terms of the learners' achievement. Thus, it does not mean that the missing components and features in the lesson plan are not crucial. It is just because teachers cannot meet them all in the same session, even if they are integrated, but they can incorporate them according to the theme of the lesson and the number of the lessons that are integrated in each unit. By the end, teachers will find themselves using all the main features. It also depends on what is meant by "a lesson". According to Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2017), "a SIOP lesson may be a single day or multiple days in length" (p. 29).

In fact, the building of a lesson plan is not an easy task, especially when it has to do with the construction of lessons that target the teaching of complex learning/teaching areas such as Science, and History & Social Studies. It is a kind of challenge for non-SIOP teachers as well as the SIOP ones because they are taking some risk to modify their own usual teaching strategies for designing their lessons. The fact of starting small will be the key for success because the understanding and mastering of the SIOP process requires some time. Once the teachers master how to implement a SIOP lesson, they will be able to deal with each component and each feature on their own and decide when, where, and how to include them in the lesson and under which circumstances. The fact of understanding all these issues will help teachers design perfect lessons without making extra effort.

However, in order to prepare a comprehensive and appropriate lesson that fits all kinds of students' attitudes and tendencies, teachers should establish these lessons "in meaningful, real-life activities and experiences that involve students in reading, writing, and discussing important concepts and ideas" (Echevarria, Vogt, and Short, 2017, p. 68).

Therefore, the SIOP Model is an instructional and scientifically-based framework that indicates to teachers what to teach and how to teach it, and it never asks them to change their whole ways of teaching. Rather, it gives them an opportunity to rethink their own work and refine it in terms of the requirements of the standards and curriculum. It is an effective implementation tool for both pre-service and practicing teachers. The former ones use it to develop their ways of teaching in relation to the integration of language and content areas for the English Language Learners (ELLs). The latter use it to reinforce and improve their performance in order to design perfect lesson plans that facilitate the conduction of the lessons that tap upon the English language learners' needs and achievements.

### 3.2. *The Observation Protocol scale*

Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2017) created a scale of five points, which is taken as a measurement tool for the implementation of each SIOP feature and it is called the "Observation Protocol". Between 2004 and 2007, the founders of the SIOP Model refined it through the conduction of different replications in different schools across the United States. The achieved results of this experimental study were significant in comparison to other evaluative programs such as the Idea Proficiency Test (IPT) that is widely applied in such circumstances. The protocol's main goal is designed to evaluate the users of the SIOP Model and show to what extent their implementation is adequate in terms of its understanding and use.

In the light of any SIOP experimentation, the distinction is made between two classes. The first class is composed of English learners who are taught by teachers who have taken some training in the implementation of the SIOP Model, which is called "the treatment group". The second class is composed of English learners who are taught by teachers who have never taken any training in how to implement the SIOP Model, which is called "the comparison group". The scoring of the whole process of evaluation is based on a scale of "4-0" points, where "4" stands for the successful implementation of the thirty SIOP features in the lesson. Hence, "0" stands for the fact that there is a failure in this implementation and that it needs more consideration from the teacher's part in terms of training in order to understand how the process works and when and why the features are incorporated in any lesson (Boughoulid, 2020).

It is noteworthy to mention that five of the thirty features have an "NA" option that stands for "Not Applicable". These features are, (1) the adaptation of content in the component of the Lesson Preparation, (2) the concepts explicitly linked to students' background experiences in the component of the Building Background, (3) the sufficient wait time for the students' responses in the component of Interaction, (4) the hands-on materials provided for students, and (5) the activities provided for students to apply content and language knowledge in the classroom in the component of Practice and Application. They are determined as "Not Applicable" or not necessary in the building of a lesson because teachers do not have to incorporate them in every SIOP lesson, especially when dealing with students of an advanced English level. The importance of the NA rating is embodied in the fact that it explains why such features are not scored "0" in order not to influence the observer's general grade of the lesson. There is also the integration of another important area after each SIOP component that is designed in such a way as to add comments on whether or not the lesson includes the required features. These comments are discussed by the end of each lesson as a means for clarifying the utility of each single SIOP feature. The feedback is taken into consideration in such a way as to design a new lesson plan.

In fact, the Observation Protocol Scale is a flexible measurement tool that allows the teachers'

interpretation and evaluation of the SIOP features on the basis of their students' needs, age, level, and background. According to Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2017), the SIOP observers should take into consideration this emotive act and "establish a common understanding and interpretation of the features, and rate lessons accordingly across settings" (p. 278).

Given that there are thirty SIOP features that are graded on the basis of a scale of five points, the total points that are possible is 120. In case the "Not Applicable" five features are taken into consideration, the total score will change according to the features that are viewed by the SIOP observers as NA. Hence, the highest score is 120 in case all the five above features are not scored as NA. On the other hand, the lowest score is 100 in case the observers score all the five features as NA. However, the higher implementers are teachers whose lessons received a grade of 75% or more. The lower implementers are those teachers whose lessons received a grade of 50% or less (Echevarria, Vogt, and Short, 2017).

#### **4. What is wrong with the SIOP model?**

Crawford and Reyes (2015) tried to look at the SIOP model from the theoretical and practical perspectives. In their analysis, they tried to answer rigid questions related to the teachers' requirements and how to shelter and scaffold instruction. They found that most of the SIOP research is done by the founders of the approach themselves. They stated that four out of the five studies, which are done in this field, are developed and implemented by the three main authors, namely Jana Echevarria, MarryEllen Vogt, and Deborah Short.

In a systematic analysis of the SIOP model, Crawford and Reyes (2015) adopted a critical view that states that "SIOP is teacher-centric, a classic transmission model. Sadly, this approach is all too common in the education of low-income and minority students and of English learners in particular: Learning is conceived not as something a learner does, but as something that is done to a learner" (p. 52). They also added that it is so difficult to use this model to teach beginners content subjects such as Math, Science, or social Studies because these learners have not yet reached the required level of language in order to acquire these subjects. "Beginners should be in regular ESL, where they are assured of comprehensible input" (Crawford and Reyes, 2015, p. 63). This "comprehensible input" coined by Steven Krashen in the 1980s, a concept on which he based his idea of sheltering, is considered as the main factor that is responsible for second language acquisition. Hence, the fact of urging students to use the language before having the required minimal level to express their ideas in a relaxed atmosphere would contribute to the raising of the "affective filter" as a psychological obstacle that might prevent enough input to get through, which is counterproductive (Krashen, 1981; Krashen and Terrel, 1983). It is also counterproductive in the way the model is structured to teach English learners. For example, the use of the mother tongue to explain some key concepts is criticised as one of the weakest forms of bilingual instructions, especially in terms of sheltering and scaffolding (Crawford and Reyes, 2015).

In an attempt to determine the appropriateness and validity of the SIOP developers' claims, Krashen (2013) introduced us to the two main different hypotheses in the field of language in terms of acquisition that the SIOP model ignores. The first hypothesis is the "skill-building" that requires students to learn and be aware of their skills before using them in real-life situations. The second hypothesis is related to the comprehension of the input that takes place once the message is understood by the acquirer. That is to say, "we acquire language and develop literacy in only one way: when we understand messages" (Krashen, 2013, p. 1).

However, Krashen (2013) opted for the comprehension hypothesis by stating that one gets to use a language by speaking and writing it after acquiring it through the reception of a comprehensible input. On the other hand, the SIOP model takes the two conflicting hypotheses as equals while dealing with the development of the English language learners' competency. For instance, the SIOP features 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12 require teachers to base their teaching on the Comprehension Hypothesis, and the features 2, 6, 9, 16, 22, 24, and 27 require them to build it on the Skill-Building (Echevarria, Short, and Powers, 2006). Therefore, one may deduce that the SIOP Model's features are involving some inconsistency while dealing with the language acquisition attitudes.

Actually, Krashen (2013) also evoked his remark about the analysis of four important studies, three of which are done by the SIOP founders. He claimed that "in two of the four studies, the differences are not statistically significant" (Krashen, 2013, p. 13). Such analysis demonstrates the deep concerns about the SIOP Model and the fact of being supported as a scientifically based instructional research and validated model is an exaggeration. The existence of uncommon abnormalities in these studies, in terms of flaws and gaps, showed some limitations in terms of results in spite of the huge investment of effort and resources in the SIOP trainings and studies.

#### **5. The analysis of a SIOP Model lesson**

The criticism of the SIOP Model is done on the basis of the analysis of a SIOP lesson video<sup>1</sup> (Echevarria, 2022). The video under study is a snapshot of a much larger SIOP lesson about fact and opinion as one of the state standards for the week. This lesson for teaching English learners is introduced by one of the SIOP founders, Dr Jana Echevarria, professor of education at California State University, Long Beach, United States. The duration

of the video is eight minutes thirty seconds. The teacher's name is Ms Kendra Moreno who is teaching third grade students whose ages vary between nine and ten years old. The name of the school is Alston Elementary School. The number of the students is twenty-four. They are comprised of English learners, special education students, and four of them are English-native speakers.

1 The video is a SIOP Model demonstration lesson that lasts for eight minutes thirty seconds. The participants are 24 third grade students with different level backgrounds. The teacher's name is Ms Kendra Moreno. The school name is Alston Elementary School. The video is published on the YouTube channel in 2012 (<https://youtu.be/IVGbz4EqyGs>).

In fact, the focus of the video was basically on the best practices of the lesson. The whole lesson was dealing with the component of Lesson Delivery, which is composed of six features. The focus of the lesson was on four features only. The first two features of this component are the content objectives and the language objectives, which were briefly introduced at the very beginning of the lesson. All the lesson activities that comprise reading, writing, and discussion focused on helping students acquire the knowledge and skills that were introduced throughout the two objectives of this component in such a way as to enable the students to identify and discuss them by the end of the lesson. The third feature indicated that students should be engaged in meaningful activities for approximately 90% to 100% of the whole lesson period. The fourth and last feature was about the pacing of the lesson that should be good enough for each learner.

In the process of the lesson, the teacher started by reading the content and objectives with the explanation of some difficult words. The task was done in less than forty seconds, a fact that pushes one to wonder whether all the students were able to understand what it was about or not. The fact of providing an explanation of the so-called difficult words such as the word "distinguish" does not automatically guarantee that all the students would be able to get its right meaning. In fact, the class was composed of twenty-four students among whom there were only four English-native speakers, and the answer was probably given by one of them whose name is Katrina. When the teacher asked the question, the video shows that only three students raised their hands to answer and the teacher named one of them, Katrina.

In this guided-reading activity, Ms Moreno asked her students to find the word that describes the duck and think about its meaning. She even added that she tried to look it up in a dictionary, but she could not find it. The word is "scraggly". A word that anyone could find in almost any dictionary. In trying to help her students to find an explanation of this word, Ms Moreno stated that it might be about how a baby duck looks like. She even tried to picture it as being a duck coming out of a shell. Even the "Mohawk" picture that she tried to draw on the board seems not representative of the meaning of the word "scraggly". It is as if she is trying to say that "big" is an opinion. What is once again striking about the students' answers is that the teacher has chosen the same student, Katrina, in order to give an answer that she has immediately accepted.

In terms of active engagement, the only activity where students seemed to be interacting is in the "inside/outside" circle activity where they were provided with statements to discuss in pairs, decide whether it is a "fact" or an "opinion", and explain why. Ms Moreno's instructions were clear. She explained that by "fact", she meant that one could ask an expert about it, measure it, read about it in a book or observe it. By "opinion", she explained that one could not prove it because it is about what somebody thinks or feels. On the other hand, the students have to defend their answers and say why they think what they think. By the end of the activity, the teacher used an overhead projector in order to project the students' statements on the board in such a way that every student could see them and contribute in the general discussion. All the students defended their arguments orally. Based on the best practices used by the teacher in this lesson, all the learners seemed to understand the difference in terms of meaning between a "fact" and an "opinion".

However, one of the SIOP Model founders, namely Dr Jana Echevarria, supported the introduction of this demonstration lesson. Thus, the success of this lesson is mainly based on an implicit assumption that says that this is how learning should happen. There is the suggestion of features and strategies without making it explicit, especially in terms of competency building. It is a good practice that provides students with opportunities to build their own cognitive competencies by learning about things, contents, items, etc. The SIOP founders are suggesting such practices because they know that they are selected as the best in the process of learning and teaching.

In order to go beyond criticising the SIOP Model, it is noteworthy to say that the criticism of the lesson in this video should be conducted on the basis of a discovery procedure in which three important criteria should be taken into consideration. The first criterion is questioning the statement of how rich and varied it is with respect to the input to which the learners were exposed. The second criterion looks at how strong it is with students' Competency Building. The third criterion focuses on whether it activates a quality *Energeia* context where students are able to interact meaningfully and engage into conversations and communicative acts or not.

In what concerns representation of the richness of the input in this SIOP Model lesson that tends towards being teacher-centred, it seems that the teacher tried to vary it in terms of text reading, the use of drawing to help in the explanation of difficult words, and the use of questions, which is not enough. In terms of the students'

Competency Building, the students were engaged in one single activity, namely the “inside/outside” circle activity in which they were supposed to discuss a statement in pairs and decide whether it is a “fact” or an “opinion” and state why. If we take into consideration the number of the students in the class as well as their levels in terms of the English language use and their characteristics, one can state that this activity is not enough to contribute in the building of all the students’ competencies. The third criterion, which is related to the students’ active involvement in Communicative Acts (or *Energeia*), is the unique activity in which they produced their answers by saying that it is a “fact” or an “opinion”.

Actually, the learning process should embrace all the three learning components without missing anyone of them. The input should be rich in terms of quantity, quality, manner, and relation. The students’ competency should be built by using the best practices that fit their age and level as well as their background. Hence, we could not see anything of it in this lesson except for the explanations provided by the teacher in different contexts with the help of the same student “Katrina” or a whole class response that does not exceed one or two words. This fact does not mean in itself that all the twenty-four students were able to acquire the new knowledge, as it is required by the content objectives and language objectives. The third criterion is related to maintain a quality context for the activation of *Energeia* that allows students to engage in active and interactive communicative situations in the teaching/learning process. The fact of activating students’ *Energeia* throughout the use of a variety of well-selected teaching strategies and practices will help them acquire the new information in an appropriate way.

It seems then that the whole learning in this SIOP lesson is embodied in the scene where the students were fully engaged in the “inside/outside” circle activity. It was the only activity where the students were able to talk and learn from each other for some time, at least while they were working in pairs. Even though the third learning element was of great importance, one could notice that it was not completely satisfied. The lesson in the video does not clearly show all the students’ complete engagement in Communicative Acts that should be meaningful and for approximately 90% to 100% of the time, as it is stated by the twenty-fifth feature of the seventh component of the SIOP Model (Echevarria, Vogt, and Short, 2004; 2017).

## 6. Conclusion

No one can deny the crucial role that the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model plays in helping English learners meet their linguistic needs, especially on the academic level. It is a good teaching framework that provides high-quality lessons and prepare English learners for a successful integration on the academic and professional levels. Hence, the model witnesses some apparent limitations on the level of its implementation among non-language teachers, which is taken for being a too exhausting and challenging work that requires more investment in terms of training. What the SIOP model affords for English learners is embodied in some common linguistic elements, which are selected as best practices that are well designed in such a way as to facilitate the teaching/learning process for practitioners in an unusual way, but does not guarantee the English learners’ linguistic success, which questions its utility as a protocol model. We then figure out that the SIOP model is just a tool that complements the different methods used by the teachers, especially in terms of language teaching (Echevarria et al., 2017). Another SIOP pitfall is related to feedback delivery in content classes where the teachers’ focus is on content areas. On the other hand, language teachers focus on the correction of the learners’ pronunciation and sentence structure in the absence of any other interventions dedicated to their linguistic needs which are complex and that should be dealt with consistently.

## Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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