ENGLISH (L2) CAN BE TAUGHT EFFECTIVELY BY USING META LANGUAGE AT SECONDARY LEVEL IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This article tests the assumption that met language plays a vital role in teaching English as a second language. It also verifies the assumption that students / teachers feel comfortable to learn/ teach English with help of met languages. Especially when English teachers are teaching the use of different verb tenses and providing explanations of how and why those different tenses are appropriate to different sentence construction patterns, they are using met language. One topic that is sidelined in the professional literature on second language (L2) teaching and learning is the use of met language in the classroom. In the past three decades, explicit and formal instruction in L2 grammar has fallen from its centrality in traditional pedagogical approaches and been relegated to a peripheral position in many classrooms, due to the joint influences of some popular theoretical claims, findings from early empirical studies about the disassociation between learners' explicit knowledge of L2 target structures and their ability to use these structures. Data was collected through questionnaires. The questionnaire was made for students. Questionnaire was consisting of 22 items. The sample of study was 200 students of different private and government high schools. The data was collected from all respondents. The data was analyzed by using SPSS. The mean and frequency were counted. Teacher's (Government and Private Schools) comments about the use of meta language in the class are also included in this study. It concludes that students need to be taught the appropriate vocabulary with the help of met language as they are initially being exposed to a wide range of different genres while reading English text books. They should be explicitly taught genres and the met language of these from an early age.

Keywords: Met language, toolkit, L2, factors, appropriate

INTRODUCTION

Meta" is a Greek prefix, used to indicate analysis of how something works. For example, "A grammar is also described with the help of meta language in linguistics which is used as an essential language for describing another language but not itself.

The use of meta language in teaching English as a second language is like a toolkit. Teachers use this toolkit in teaching L2 to make the lesson easy and understandable for the learners. The importance of meta language in L2 cannot be denied. It is a very useful technique which is mostly used in Pakistani education system. Mostly teachers in Pakistan teach English as a second language with the help of their native language (Urdu).

This article purely throws the light on Pakistani education system where English + Urdu, English + Pashto, English + Sindhi in different provinces of Pakistan are used as meta languages. In other words English is taught in different parts of Pakistan with the help of their

native language. So in this context native language is a meta language used to teach L2. There are two types of education system in Pakistan. One is Government Schools and second is Private Elite English medium schools. In Government Schools English is taught with the help of native language (meta language). Teachers are mostly bilingual. They use their native language to teach English as a second language. Students have the paragraph in English language in their exam and they have to translate this paragraph into their native language. On the other hand Private Elite Schools have purely English environment. These schools teach L2 with the help of English language. They have trained teachers of every subject who know the right usage of L2. In short meta language is like a technique used to teaching and learning L2.

Meta languages play a vital role in teaching and learning L2. It has been observed that the students with English medium back ground have good command of L2 but they may weak in their native language (meta language). When they communicate with native speakers they feel difficulties to convey their messages. On the other side the students who have been taught L2 with the help of meta language can perform well in English + Native Language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Meta-language is the language teachers and learners use to talk about the English language, learning and teaching. For example words and phrases such as 'verb', 'noun', 'present perfect continuous', 'phrasal verb' and 'reported speech' are all examples of common classroom meta-language. Certain classroom teaching materials rely on the learner knowing an extensive range of meta-language and teachers sometimes spend time teaching learners some of the more common terms.

This research reviewed the literature with a focus on meta language research techniques and its results on the learner's performance. Furthermore Ellis (2004), argued that access to meta language can sharpen a learner's understanding of the structure of the target language and lead to verbal sable, analyzed knowledge, which according to Bialystok (1990) and Schmidt (1990) constitutes the highest level of consciousness of language. So meta language can be a main stream to achieve the highest objectives of learning L2. It is important to note that meta language is essential for the strong foundation of L2. The basics of L2 with the help of meta language will help the learners to develop confidence.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to show the importance of meta language in teaching and learning L2. By using meta language the students can be taught effectively. The significance of this study will give the basics for the coming researchers. This article will also high light how meta language can be helpful in teaching and learning L2.

Research Question

The study is designed to find the answer of following research questions:

1. Is the meta language helpful in teaching and learning L2?
2. Can L2 be taught effectively by using meta language?
3. Can students feel comfortable to learn English when it is explained with meta language?
4. Does meta language help the beginners of English learner?

5. Are there any significance difference between boys and girls while learning English with the help of meta language?

Research Hypothesis

Use of meta language can do better in teaching and learning L2

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The participants for this study were taken from public and private schools of Lahore. There were 200 students involved in this process. The ratio male to female students is 6 to 5. All the students were new. They were first time selected for this research. Furthermore, Teacher's comments about the use of meta language in the class are also included in this study.

Research Design

The present study was mainly quantitative in design by using a questionnaire and the subjects responded to each statement on a three-point Liker type scale (from 3 for 'no' for 2 'to some extent' and for 1 'yes'). The respondents are also told about the purpose of research by providing them brief introduction about meta language. The data was analyzed by using SPSS. The mean and frequency were counted.

The Research Instrument

The questionnaire comprises 22 statements is used for this research article.

Subjects

Only Lahore city was chosen for the study. The data was collected very carefully. It is made sure that respondents fairly gave the answers which are asked in questionnaire. The sample of study was 200 students of different private and government high schools. The data was collected from all respondents. The nature of this research article was discussed with L2 teachers. Plus Teacher's (Government and Private Schools) comments about the use of meta language in the class are also included in this study. Lot of things related to research had been done due to their opinion. All the data was collected from at matriculation level. The researcher himself collected the findings of the students.

ANALYSIS

Most of the students are agreed that they like learning English with the help of Urdu. Mean= (2.5100) and St.D (.50115) Majority of the students are satisfied that they want to be able to understand English with the medium of English Mean= (3.0000) and St.D (.00000) the high mean of this statement shows that students can understand English grammar better with the help of Urdu. Mean= (2.5100) and St.D (.50115) Students think that activities to translate Urdu into English have helped me to learn English. Mean= (2.0200) and St.D (1.00231) English with Urdu helps students to improve my speaking English but to some extent. Mean= (2.0200) and St.D (1.00231). Students really enjoy English lessons when it is told into English. Mean= (2.5100) and St.D (.50115). Use of English with Urdu language can be helpful on how to do the research. Mean= (2.5100) and St.D (.50115) English with Urdu language teaches me how to make good use of academic resources. Mean= (2.0200) and St.D (1.00231). Learning English has improved my Urdu as well. Mean= (2.5100) and St.D (.50115).

Teacher's Comments

1. I can explain my lecture easily with the help of meta language.
2. To some extent meta language can help the students.

3. No, meta language is a great hurdle in L2 learning

4. We use meta language according to the situation.

5. L2 can be learnt better without the involvement of native language.

6. I can control the class room situation by using meta language.

7. I think meta language should be used for the beginner of the English language.

8. I feel comfortable to teach English with meta language.

9. Asmeta language is used in our system of education so I prefer to teach English with meta language.

10. I always give the introduction of stories and text book lessons in Urdu so I agree to teach English with meta language.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this research is to highlight the importance of meta language in teaching and learning L2.After collecting and analyzing the data the researcher comes to the conclusion that the use of native language in teaching and learning L2 can make the students confident. Meta language can make the students proficient in the use of L2. Overall the research shows positive response towards the use of meta language. The discussed above points need to be considered the role of meta language inL2 teaching and learning in the light of current research on the L2 proficiency. The empirically identified positive correlations many potential advantages that use of meta language can lead to the conclusion that meta language deserves a place in L2 teaching. A case can be made that, unless it is taught purely for its own sake, meta language can be a valuable means of facilitatingL2 learning rather than 'an additional learning burden' that 'remain[s] a separate body of knowledge' **(Mohammed, 1996, p.283).** This reappraisal of the role of meta language, however, does not resolve all pedagogical issues concerning the use of meta language. While a return to the boring and sterile pedagogical practices of the traditional approaches is out of the question, many issues (e.g. when and how to use meta language) remain to be explored. In particular, there is a need for empirical research, along the direction taken by such studies as **Basturkmen, Loewen, and Ellis (2002) and Storch (2008),** that seeks to explore how meta linguistic awareness and meta language can be most fruitfully integrated into a meaning-focused, communication-oriented L2 pedagogy.

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this research is to highlight the importance of meta language in teaching and learning L2. After collecting and analyzing the data the researcher comes to the conclusion that the use of native language in teaching and learning L2 can make the students confident. Meta language can make the students proficient in the use of L2. Overall the research shows positive response towards the use of meta language. The teacher's responses were almost equally positive as well. The use of meta language for teachers and students is equally good. They feel comfortable while using it in daily life.

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