

Some Instructional Techniques for Effective L2 (Second Language) Learning

Farhana Farooqi¹, Sujit Kumar Singh², Shimpi Kumari Chaturvedi³, Vineeta Kaur Saluja⁴, Shaifali R. Puri⁵

^{1,2}Assistant Professor, Department of Arts, Mangalayatan University, Aligarh, UP

³Assistant Professor, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, Usha Martin University, Ranchi, Jharkhand

⁴Professor, Department of English, Mangalayatan University, Jabalpur, MP

⁵Associate Professor, Department of English, Himalayan University, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh

Abstract

Lapses and mistakes are the pillars to success in acquiring second language acquisition (SLA). But if these lapses and mistakes are ignored or not eradicated, they may fossilize which lead the learners towards errors. It is observed that L2 learners make most of the errors in grammar as they make mistakes in the construction of grammatically correct sentences. L2 learners face problems in forming correct structure of a sentence for instance they may mistakes in making subject - verb agreement, marking plural nouns, correct use of verb (regular and irregular) forms and a large number of mistakes are committed in the use of English articles (especially definite article) and prepositions . Because of these errors in grammar, learners learning English as a second language find it difficult to communicate fluently and accurately. In order to improve these mistakes, the teacher should adopt certain techniques for correcting grammatical errors to help the learners improve their oral as well as written communication. Keeping in view the present scenario in L2 learning acquisition, this paper intends to investigate Some Important Instructional Techniques for Effective L2 learning. They are as follows:

1. Recasting (self - correction)
2. Adaptation of Processing Instruction (PI)
3. Designing and Teaching ESP Courses
4. Eclectic Approach including- collaborative language instruction; enhancing input; out practice; correction of feedback of the learners, evaluating textbooks exercises by the teachers.

This paper will hopefully be helpful for the L2 learners in improving their proficiency in oral and written communication as well as the language teachers to adopt appropriate techniques of instruction.

Key Words: L1, L2, SLA, ESL / EFL, ESP.

Introduction

The teaching method refers to the general principles, pedagogy and managing strategies used for classroom instruction. Teaching methods are the broader techniques used to help students achieve learning outcomes while activities are the different ways of implementing these methods. Teaching methods help students: master the content of the course; learn how to apply the content in particular contexts. A teaching method comprises the principles and methods used by teachers to enable student learning. These strategies are determined partly on subject matter to be taught and partly by the nature of the learner. For a particular teaching method to be appropriate and efficient, the nature of the learner and subject matter and the type of learning is supposed to be taken into account.

In the ESL (English as a second language) context, there are two main processes: 'Teaching and Learning' which are based on the learner's normal behaviour leaning a second language. In spite of being teaching approach sufficient and the student being efficient, there is always scope for errors because in learning environment, occurring of error is an inevitable phenomenon. Learners need grammar instruction so that it could help the learners overcome the difficulties that they are facing in using English in different phases and to develop their oral and written L2 learning proficiency. In order to fulfil this need, language teacher should adopt effective teaching strategies to deal with learners ' error correction. It is thought that effective teaching techniques might be beneficial for ESL learners leaning English. Therefore, the researcher decided to design some important mentioned teaching techniques that will be discussed in details a in the following ways.

Instructional Techniques

In this study important instructional techniques that are designed for Effective L2 learning, are as follows:

Recasting (self - correction)

Adaptation of Processing Instruction (PI)

Designing and Teaching ESP Courses

Eclectic Approach including- collaborative language instruction; enhancing input; out practice; correction of feedback of the learners, evaluating textbooks exercises by the teachers.

Recasting (self - correction)

The term recasting refers to repeating an error utterance back to someone but with the error corrected form. In is an implicit correction feedback. Recasting is one of the simplest and successful techniques of teaching language. In this method, the teacher makes the student conscious towards the student's wrong production and expects that the student himself or herself will correct the utterance. Here the teacher correct the learner's error either by the repeating the mistake or by providing the correct form. See examples of the conversation between the teacher and the student in section 'A' & 'B' given below.

Student: I want listen radio.

Teacher: Uhm..... Listen, listen?

Student: No. ...uhm, I want to listen the radio.

Student: I want read.

Teacher: Oh, you want to read?

In the example 'A', the purpose of repetition by the teacher is to emphasize the erroneous form and to focus learners attention on the repairing the correct sentence.

In case 'B', the teacher communicates with the learner asking him/her and provides a correct form to support the learner correct the sentence by adding 'to' to the main verb. The teacher also applies this method to make student's sentence correct.

An example can be observed by researcher's personal experience with her student. The researcher asked the student:

Teacher: Did you talk to him?

Student: yes. He say to me come at Monday.

Teacher: oh, he asked you to come on Monday.

Student: yes ma'am.

The above conversation shows that the student doesn't have sufficient knowledge of correct use of preposition as the student used 'at' instead of 'on' with the name of a day that is -Monday. Also the student is not aware of the rules of using correct verb form that -s and -es form of verb is used with singular number and third person. So, the researcher of this study repeated the errorneios utterance back to the student with the error corrected form.

Processing Instruction (PI)

The idea of adaptation of processing instruction came into existence by Bill Van Patten (1996). According to Van Patten (1996) PI consists of three stages in learning and teaching environment: explicit description of a specific linguistic; information is given to the learners of a particular input which may affect learners' proficiency of making the form. Learners are pushed to process with structural input the structure that pulls the students away from their L1 processing tendencies towards L2 processing.

This technique involves teaching a particular structure and drawing the learners' attention towards the problem in the structure, and observing the learners' ability to produce from what they have learned by processing utterances. In this technique, the teacher provides learners with information of grammatical accuracy and appropriacy of language pattern. For instance, the teacher may explain the rules that *adverbs of frequency* like-always, continually, occasionally often, usually, etc. should not come after the main verb but should be used between subject and verb. For example-

Incorrect: Mary takes usually the metro.

Correct: Mary usually takes the metro.

In this way, the technique of incorrect form along with correct items may enable students to acquire the use adverbs of frequency.

Designing and Teaching ESP Courses

ESP stands for English for Special Purpose. These courses are basically designed according to the needs for specific profession of ESL learners like to design an ESP course for pilot trainees where the main objective of the teacher would be to focus on the teaching to make the learner understand and respond to the English they listen from air traffic controllers. The learners should be provided with the support of an expert as well as the

need analysis during the period of training. It enables the instructor to the construct instruction according to the needs of the learners. With the help of an expert, the teacher may design the task easily and focus the situation in which learners need to use English. In this way, ESP teaching will be a very rewarding experience in the ESL context.

Eclectic Approach

Eclectic approach is a method of language teaching that combines various approaches and methodologies to teach language depending on the aims of the lesson and the abilities of the learners. This theory of language teaching emerged in the 1990s as an additional theory of language teaching and becomes popular because it contributes to achieving the learning objectives without much pressure on both teachers and learners. Often language teachers get confuse in choosing the technique to make classroom teaching effective. In such situation, language teacher make use of eclectic approach where he/she can adopt the one suitable approach out of the following to incorporate in their classroom instruction. Some of the influential approaches discussed in this study are as follows-

Collaborative Language Instruction

It is used to produce pushed output. Here the teacher focuses on grammatical accuracy with the selected text containing examples of a structure pattern which is regardless to the learners. The teacher may divide the class into pairs or small groups and ask them to reconstruct the utterances what they have heard correctly. In order to present new grammatical items, deductive approach is the most effective.

Enhancing Input

Two processes in the classroom applications: input flood and textual enhancement are important where input flood means to enhance logical classroom instructional technique of processing instruction as it repeats example of structures.

According to Wong **input flood** technique can be used in the classroom through stories the learners listen to or read which emphasises the grammatical structures. This technique can be made more effective or interesting if learners are asked to give answer to the input by involving exercise like taking a quiz, responding to questions of the flood input or creating a task like reconstructing a story , making a picture on the basis of given direction (2005: 44).

On the contrary, **textual enhancement** refers to the practice typographically highlighting a specific grammatical structure in a written paragraph like punctuations including capital letters, underlining, boldface, italics etc. The objective of this method is to get learner's consciousness to the specific structure in the written work. It is an interesting or attractive as the teachers may easily make passages including nouns, verb - ending, single constituents like pronouns, articles, quantifier, qualifier, determines, adverbs and preposition etc.

Output Practice

Tasks provide learners with the chance for producing language that will focus learner's problems and enhance them to reconstruct the structure. For this purpose, output practice is an effective technique. Swain cited in (95, 2000, 2001), discussed that when second language learners are encouraged to produce language beyond their proficiency level, this practice pushes them to get more and more accuracy. So the language produced by the L2 learners in this context is known as pushed output.

Correction and Feedback of the Learners

Schwartz and Gubala - Ryzak (1992) and Truscott (1996) cited in Quirk, R. et. al (1985) have given the importance of error correction in the English language teachings. It makes interaction between teachers and students and shows how teachers can encourage the learners to notice the grammatical errors they are making. Correction of errors can be effective in drawing the learner's attention to grammatical structures; individual correction cannot have much impact. For receiving feedback from the learners one of the important methods is recasting as it permits communication, proceed and enhance learners in spite of persisting error.

Evaluating Textbooks Exercises

Paulston (1971) cited in Ron Cowan (2008), suggested three types of grammar exercises. They are as follows-

Mechanical Exercises

These types of exercises restrict the performance of the learners to a single answer. A common drawback in these types of exercise is that the learners can perform the activities successfully without comprehending the

utterances. Such as fill up with the structure get + past participle of the verb from bracket. For example: Who got chosen for the part of the movie? (Choose). Here in the example student has to insert got + the past participle of the verb from bracket to make it passive. Mechanical exercises can be used in word order, verb forms etc.

Meaningful Exercises

In this type of exercise more alternatives are possible to give right answer. These types of exercises control learners' performance. Sentence completion is an effective exercise in this task.

For example: I dislike enjoy _____.

I dislike enjoy going for a long walks in the street.

It will modify as the meaningful exercise because the learner cannot make meaningful sentence unless he / she should be aware of the rules of those verbs and there is also possibility of various alternative for correct answer.

Communicative Exercises

These types of exercises involve the rules of use of communication. It should present figures of people to compare them. On the basis of this learners may be asked to use comparative and superlative degree of adjectives like big ,bigger, biggest. To encourage the influence of the teaching in the textbooks, it is necessary to make communicative tasks which focus on form or grammar but it may be problematic to make communicative exercises which focus on a specific grammar point, like comparison exercises, teacher resources and websites may be helpful.

Conclusion

In the present study, significant techniques of instruction which are used and incorporated in the teaching of grammar have been discussed. However, on the basis of observation of this study, all the mentions methods are useful and effective but it can be concluded that eclectic approach that combines various approaches and methodologies to teach language is an influential and more effective method of English language teaching. The coverage of instructional techniques in this paper has been limited. The teaching approaches which are illustrated in this study are appropriate for the teaching of English grammar in various ESL and ESP classrooms. It is hoped that some of the ideas of this paper would be adopted to be used in the classroom teaching and learning method as well.

References

1. Mohammad Aslam (2008): *Teaching of English* A Practical Course for B.Ed. Students (2nd edn.) published Cambridge University Press, India Pvt . Ltd.
2. Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S. Leech, G. and Svartvik, J. (1985): *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, London, Longman.
3. Ronwowan (2008): *The Teacher's Grammar of English: A Course Book & Reference Guide* - Cambridge University Press.
4. Sherwood Smith, M (1993). *Input Enhancement in Instructed SLA: Theoretical bases: Studies in SLA. 15: 165-179.*
5. Taylor, R. (1980): *The Computer in the School: Tutor, Tool, Tutee*, New York: Teachers College Press
6. Underwood J. (1984): *Linguistics Computers and the Language Teacher: A Communicative Approach*, Rowley, MA, Newbury House.
7. Van Patten, B. (1996). *Input processing and grammar instruction: Theory and research*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
8. **Internet Sources**
9. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/computer.assisted_language_learning.
10. http://en.www.sinosplice.com/life/archivesrecasting_in_language_learning.
11. www.ict4lt.org/en/warchauer.htm.
12. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teaching_method.