



Empowering English Language Learners Through Sheltered Instruction

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Abstract: English is a widely spoken language today. It has often been referred to a 'global language', the lingua franca of the modern era and currently the language most often taught as a second language around the world. With the information technology revolution and most software and operating systems being developed in the English language has emerged. English is said to be the world's most important language having communicative and educative value. English is used all over the world not out of any imposition but because of the realization that it has certain advantages.

Keywords: Sheltered Instruction, English Language Proficiency, Academic Progress.

Introduction

Language is a system that plays an important role in the mental, emotional and social development of a person. According to Jespersen, "Language is nothing but a set of human habits, the purpose of which is a given expression to thoughts and feelings and specially to import them to others". A language may be said as a method by which a person expresses his thoughts and s in such a way that they can be understood by others.

Language learning includes the learning of skills or the acquisition of knowledge and it is also referring to learning to think. It is not automatic or instinctive to man as walking is. It is an acquired social activity. Language learning in the area of first language acquisition goes on without any teaching. But learning second language is a different issue.

There are many languages in the world which are not alike. Each language is unique in itself. By learning mother tongue or regional language one cannot learn another language taking the learnt one as a basis. Each language differs in all aspects except in a few cases. Language teaching includes individualized instruction, self-study, Computer Assisted Instruction, use of media, teaching materials, trained teachers etc.

English is one of the most widely learned and spoken languages in the world, and also with more second-language speakers than native speakers. It is the primary language of science, technology, logistics, tourism, aviation, entertainment, international communication, business and diplomacy, making it an essential tool for success in today's globalized world. It is also referred as a window of the world, a pipe-line for the stream of knowledge in all branches of learning. It is the third-most spoken native language, after Standard Chinese and Spanish; English is either the official language or one of the official languages in 59 sovereign states such as India, Ireland, and Canada.

Teaching is a process of facilitating learning. In this process learners interact with their teachers acquire new knowledge, learn new skills and develop original ideas (Koura & Zahram, 2017). Teachers, worldwide, are considered as one of the key elements to ensure success of any educational reform program and provision of quality education. Performance of teachers at all the stages of education and in all content areas affects the development of their teaching methodology especially in case of English as foreign language (EFL) teachers because they have to deal with an international language maintaining its standards (Kumaravadevelu, 2003).

Who are the English language learners?

A person in the process of acquiring English and has another language as the first native language. The terms English language learner and limited English proficient student are used interchangeably.

There are many strategies that can be used by teachers for the students to be successful in academic language. ELLs can improve their academic language if they are given LSRW activities continuously. One strategy that helps students develop both academic language and English is the sheltered instruction (Markos, 2016). Sheltered instruction uses language that is grade appropriate and is focused on the content (Kareva and Echevarria, 2013). Learners can comprehend the content as the content is rich in language and easy to understand (Markos, 2016). Sheltered instruction can be implemented in beginners, intermediate and advanced level of English proficiency along with native language to help students understand content (Saunders, Goldenberg and Marcelletti, 2013).

The sheltered instruction (SI) is an approach that offers a clear structure of direct instruction; makes educational material comprehensible for learners and increases their English language proficiency (Koura & Zahran, 2017). Various traits of operational teaching (i.e., differentiated instruction, amalgamation of four skills, reading strategies and particularly cooperative learning) are integrated in this instructional model. The sheltered instruction according to Friend et al. (2009) develops students' language skills through interaction and collaboration in all subject areas.

Moreover, this instructional approach enables teachers to provide clear and direct instruction and students learn (Koura & Zahran, 2017) and follow content material (Friend et al. 2009). It is a standard model that guides teachers at all the instructional phases from lesson planning to educational assessment. This model, though provides same instruction to the ELLs as their English-speaking peers receive but this model also introduces some additional learning material and instructional strategies for non-native learners (Cervetti et al., 2015) as well as teachers for teaching content to English learners (Echevarria & Vogt, 2010; Elfers & Stritikus, 2014).

This approach mainly focuses on students' content proficiency, language learning as well as their academic progress. Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model was initially introduced in 1996 for measuring and documenting the efficacy of teachers' instructional practices with a main focus on content and English Language Proficiency for ELLs (Song, 2015).

The sheltered instruction model is an approach for teaching content curriculum to students learning through a new language. Teachers employ techniques that make the content concepts accessible and also develop students' skills in the new language.

The term sheltered instruction (SI) has become a widely used metaphor representing a common pedagogical intervention intended to help English language learners simultaneously gain English proficiency and academic content knowledge.

Sheltered instruction in education is a pedagogical approach that addresses the needs of English language learners (ELLs). Sheltered instruction allows for targeted vocabulary and skill building with these learners.

Goals of Sheltered Instruction:

There are two primary goals of sheltered instruction.

1. Sheltered instruction allows students to effectively absorb a variety of academic information across subjects.
2. It allows for the learning and mastery of the vocabulary that pertains to those academic subjects.

Components of Sheltered Instruction

Sheltered Instruction is a method for ensuring the academic success of English language learners (ELLs) by integrating English language instruction into all academic areas, not just language arts or English as a second language (ESL) classes. There are eight components in this model, which help the learners comprehend the content easily. The eight components of Sheltered Instruction are as follows:

- 1. Lesson Preparation:** Is preparing the lessons with following key points.
 - i. Teacher should clearly define the Content and Language objectives of the lesson he /she are going to teach.
 - ii. She/ he should prepare the lesson in such a way that the students can connect the knowledge and experiences they gained earlier in the content area that is taught in the class.
 - iii. Should use supplementary materials charts, graphs, visual aids and other materials that can augment the concept to make lessons clear and meaningful.
 - iv. Provide meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts with language practice opportunities. - letter writing, plays, games models etc.
- 2. Building Background:** Teachers should link the concepts to students' background experience. They should also help students connect the current content area with what they had learnt earlier from their personal or cultural experiences also apart from academic experience. Emphasize of key vocabulary is important so that the new words are learnt contextually.
- 3. Comprehensible input:** The language used by the teachers in a classroom must be simple and easy for the students to follow as per their proficiency level. Teachers must use a variety of techniques (modeling, hands on materials, demos, film clips, charts etc) to make content, concepts clear for the students.
- 4. Strategies:** Teachers use scaffolding strategies to make the learning easier for ELL students (Hanson and Filibert, 2006). Using both explicit cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies teachers can help the students to learn not only in the classroom but outside it too. Framing different types of questions will help the students to think at a higher and complex level (Haynes, 2004).
- 5. Interaction:** By providing frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion will help the students to get time to talk about the subject and will be able to clarify the key concepts sometimes in native language also. Oral participation and group activities make the students think of complex concepts.
- 6. Practice and application:** This system has proved that practical way of teaching is the ideal method for ELLs to master the four skills in English by providing hands on materials, activities (discussing, allowing students to work in group or partners before working alone)for students to apply content and language knowledge.
- 7. Lesson delivery:** Teachers should deliver the lesson by engaging the students with various activities with 'less teachers talk' and from students (students are actively working in groups, individually). And also teachers should use a simple language at a pace to students' ability level. It should clearly support the content and language objectives.
- 8. Review and assessment:** Should provide comprehensive review of key vocabulary to ensure that the students have comprehended the lesson. Regularly feedback should be given to Students on their output. Assessment of student comprehension and learning should be conducted on the concepts they were taught.

Advantages of Sheltered instruction:

- Help students from different cultural backgrounds learn together. It focuses on supporting students who are learning English by using special teaching methods.
- Sheltered instruction helps the learner to achieve success by giving students opportunity to develop both English and Academic Language using various methods.
- Academic language proficiency can be achieved with appropriate Vocabulary Learning strategies (VLSs).

Conclusion:

Language development is an important aspect for a learner to be successful academically. Sheltered instruction helps the learner to achieve success by giving the students opportunity to develop both English and Academic Language using various methods. It is a good teaching framework that provides high-quality lessons and prepares English learners for a successful integration on the academic and professional levels.

The researches recommends that if educational department makes it mandatory for schools to incorporate sheltered instruction then students can become confident in English as well as Academic language. The curriculum should be designed to accommodate more time for the students to master both languages and teachers should be given special training in this area as most teaches are either trained to teach language or content.

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