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**EFFECTIVENESS OF CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING TASK IN CONSTRUCTING
TENSES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AMONG STANDARD VIII STUDENTS IN
KERALA**

Abstract

When it comes to learning a new language like English language, there is a great need to study its grammar; the importance of grammar could not be neglected. Knowing about grammar also helps to understand what makes sentences and paragraphs clear, interesting and precise. The present study makes an attempt to study the effectiveness of consciousness raising tasks in constructing tenses in English language. The study is conducted with two group pretest posttest experimental design on a sample of 80 standard VIII students from Kerala. Test on syntactic structures was used as the test for pretest and posttest. Lessons on tenses were taught using lesson transcripts based on consciousness raising tasks for the experimental group and discourse oriented pedagogy for the control group. Test of significant difference between means, ANCOVA and Boneferroi test of Post hoc comparisons were the statistical techniques used in the study. The result of the study revealed that consciousness raising tasks were more effective in teaching tenses for standard VIII students compared to the present method of teaching grammatical structures.

Key words: *Consciousness raising tasks, tenses, English language*

Introduction

The historical circumstances of India have given the Indians an easy access to master English language, and innumerable opportunities for advancement in the field of science and technology. Many Indians have become so skilled in English language and have won many international awards for creative and comparative literatures during the last few years. Sometime ago, an Indian author, Arundhati Roy, won the prestigious Man Booker prize for the book “*The God of Small Things*”. English is accepted as the second language in India. It occupies an important place in the school curriculum. In the words of Gandhi, “English is a

language of international commerce, it is the language of diplomacy and it contains many rich literary treasures". Gandhiji's words give an introduction that English has occupied an important place in Indian education. It will be very difficult to neglect English language in India because of its rich literature and scientific and technical nature of the language. It is strongly felt that English is the only language that prevents isolation of the country from the world and gives access to the treasure of knowledge. English language in India provides opportunities to Indians to get employment and helps to have contact with western science and technology. It is a language of trade and industry in India that provides a strong binding force to keep all Indians united. The success of this language completely depends on the syntactic arrangement of words in communication.

Syntax always has a standard form which most of the people can recognize, even though the writer has own discretion or leeway to develop sentences in the literature as per the meaning and expressions which the writer wants to convey to the reader. It is the authors' authority to choose longer or shorter sentences which may break up the passages. There are endless virtues of possibilities to the author. Teaching syntax helps to illustrate the patterns of English more effectively and clearly, and enable to analyze the structure of English sentences in a systematic and explicit way. In this regard, teachers have a challenging but important task. To a much greater extent than before, teachers have to be able to convey a view of Syntactic Structures to students which does not make the students prejudge grammar as boring or old fashioned.

Need and significance of the study

Students learn basic grammar at school level for the purpose of only passing the tests or examinations. For students, English language has nothing to do with facing real life situations. Application-oriented advanced grammar is not taught in schools. Furthermore, adequate practice is not given to students to learn a language. Exposure too is far less to students. Consequently, the English teacher is in a state to adopt bilingual method. ELT (English Language Teaching) specialists view this as a wrong methodology. Even though students are learning English, students are not able to use it wherever necessary, without grammatical errors. The reason stated for this is that, students learn subjects from the examination point of view only. This is true with English language too. For instance, teachers' reports on public examinations at the secondary level over the past few years have

repeatedly pinpointed the candidates' grammatical mistakes and lack of range of grammatical patterns as an evident problem, particularly among the weaker learners. Apparently this indicates a gap between what is taught and what is learnt. In the school it was found that learners are struggling with teachers' own grammar explanation and a number of them are not showing any major improvements in terms of grammar in their own language productions, both spoken and written, even after having been to grammar classes for one or more school terms.

There is an urgent need to overcome this situation, by developing a positive attitude among students to help them construct grammatically correct sentences. It is at this juncture the investigators developed consciousness raising tasks to increase the consciousness of the students towards grammatical structures and there by constructing grammatical structures.

Consciousness Raising Task (C-R)

Consciousness raising tasks are one among the major techniques of focus on form instruction. Ellis (2001) defines consciousness-raising tasks as "pedagogic activity where the students are provided with L2 data in some form and required to perform some operation on or with it, the purpose of which is to arrive at an explicit understanding" of the target grammar. The grammar consciousness raising tasks look similar to the practice tasks of the PPP (Presentation, Practice and Production) model, but there is one difference between them. In the case of the practice tasks of the PPP model, students are asked to actually use a target form in speaking or writing. On the other hand, consciousness raising tasks do not require the students to actually use the form in speaking and writing, but ask them to find the rule and understand the target form in terms of form, meaning and functions. A consciousness-raising task can be used deductively or inductively: inductive tasks provide students with several sentences which contain a certain linguistic item in order to search for the rules themselves from the given data; conversely, deductive tasks provide students with explicit grammatical explanation and rules in advance (Harley, 1999).

Review on related studies

Yang and Lyster (2010) studied 'the Effects of focus on form instruction and Feedback on Chinese EFL Learners' Acquisition of Regular and Irregular Past Tense Forms'. The study compared the effectiveness of corrective feedback on Chinese learners. The

ANOVA consistently revealed large effects of acquisition of grammatical structures through corrective feedback.

Simard and Jean (2011) explored the Focus on Form Instruction interventions used by students in their study, 'An Exploration of L2 Teachers' Use of Pedagogical Interventions Devised to Draw L2 Learners' Attention to Form'. This descriptive study analysed the ability of students' noticing forms of language through Focus on Form Instruction on French second language students. The results showed significant improvement in noticing forms using Focus on Form Instruction.

Nourad and Aghayi (2014), conducted a study on Focus on Form in teaching passive voice of different tenses. In the Experimental study the researchers compared the effect of Focus on Form and focus on forms on learning passive voice in different tenses.

Methodology

Two groups pre test post test experimental design was used for study. Tenses (present tense and past tense) were selected for the study from the syntactic structures of English language.

Objectives of the study

- To find out the effectiveness of consciousness raising task on learning tenses in English among standard VIII students.
- To find out the effectiveness of Discourse Oriented Pedagogy on learning tenses in English among standard VIII students.
- To compare the effectiveness of consciousness raising task and Discourse Oriented Pedagogy on learning tenses in English among Standard VIII students.

Hypotheses of the Study

- No significant difference exists in the mean Pretest scores between experimental and control groups.

- There is significant difference in the mean Posttest scores between experimental and control groups.
- There is significant difference in the mean Pretest and mean Posttest scores of the Control Group.
- There is significant difference in the mean Pretest and mean Posttest scores of the Experimental Group

Statistical Techniques Used in the Study

- Test of significance of difference between the means of two independent groups
- Analysis of Co-Variance (ANCOVA)
- Bonferroni test of post hoc comparison

Sample Selected for the Study

- 80 Standard VIII students, 40 in Experimental Group and 40 in Control Group, were selected for conducting the experiment.

Research Tools Used for the Study

For the purpose of the present study, the investigator employed the following research tools.

- Test on syntactic structures (The test used as Pretest and Posttest)
- Lesson Transcripts based on Consciousness raising tasks
- Lesson Transcripts based on Discourse Oriented Pedagogy

Testing the pre Experimental status of experimental and control groups

Table 1

Comparison of the mean Pretest scores between experimental and control groups

Area	Nature of test	Group	N	Mean	SD	't' value
Tenses	Pre test	Experimental	40	1.45	1.10	0.71 ^{NS}
		Control	40	1.25	1.40	

**NS not significant*

As per the table it is revealed that significant difference did not exist in the mean scores of the Pretest scores of the Control and Experimental Groups on construction of Tenses. The 't' value obtained was 0.71. The t- value is less than the table value at 0.05 level of significance.

Comparing the effectiveness of Consciousness raising tasks and Discourse Oriented Pedagogy

Table 2

Comparison of the mean Posttest scores between experimental and control groups

Area	Nature of test	Group	N	Mean	SD	't' value
Auxiliaries	Post test	Experimental	40	16.15	5.67	12.58 ^{**}
		Control	40	3.67	2.67	

*** significant*

As per the table it is revealed that significant difference exist in the mean scores of the Posttest scores of the Control and Experimental Groups in the construction of Tenses. The 't' value obtained is 12.58. The t- value is greater than table value at 0.01 level of significance.

Testing the effectiveness of Discourse Oriented Pedagogy

Table 3

Comparison of the mean Pretest and mean Posttest scores in the Control Group

Area	Nature of Test	N	Mean	SD	't' value
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group						
Auxiliaries	Control group	Pre test	40	1.25	1.40	5.60**
		Post test	40	3.67	2.67	

** *significant*

As per the table it is revealed that significant difference exist in the mean scores of the Pretest and Posttest in the control Group on constructing tenses. The 't' value obtained is 5.60. The value is found to be greater than the table value at 0.01 level of significance.

Testing the effectiveness of Focus on Form Instruction

Table 4

Comparison of the mean Pretest and mean Posttest scores in the Experimental Group

Area	Nature of Test group		N	Mean	SD	't' value
Auxiliaries	experimental group	Pre test	40	1.45	1.11	15.68**
		Post test	40	16.15	5.67	

** *significant*

As per the table it is revealed that significant difference exist in the mean scores of the Pretest and Posttest scores in the Experimental Group on constructing, Tenses. The 't' value obtained is 15.68. All these values are found to be greater than the table value at 0.01 level of significance.

Comparison of mean gain scores between experimental and control groups

The means and standard deviations of the gain scores of Experimental Group and Control Groups were subjected to mean difference analysis. The consolidated results of the test of significance of difference in mean gain scores between the experimental and control groups is given in table.

Table 5

Result of Test of Significance of Difference in Mean Gain Scores Between Experimental and Control Groups

Area	Experimental group			Control group			't' value
Tenses	N1	M1	SD1	N2	M2	SD2	19.27**
	40	14.70	5.92	40	2.42	2.73	

** *significant*

The obtained t- value is greater than the table value at 0.01 level of significance. Hence it is clear that there is significant difference in the mean gain scores between the experimental and control groups. The mean gain score of Experimental Group is significantly greater than the mean gain score of Control Group for learning Tenses in English. This clearly proves that consciousness raising task is more effective in constructing Tenses among standard VIII students.

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) for Test on Syntactic Structures– Pretest scores as covariate

This part of analysis was done to examine whether significant changes exist in the mean Posttest scores when Pretest scores was taken as covariate.

Table 6

Result of ANCOVA of the Pretest and Posttest Scores

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
Group	3093.93	1	3093.93		P<.01
Error	1533.86	77	19. 92	155.32	

As per the table the obtained $F(1,77) = 54.21$ for the effect of consciousness raising tasks on Tenses is found beyond the table value for .01 level of significance. The results of the F-test support the effectiveness of consciousness raising tasks on tenses of standard VIII students after controlling Pretest score, $F(1,77) = 155.32, P < .01$.

Post hoc comparison of adjusted means between Experimental Group and Control Groups

To find out of the two groups which received two different treatments, that is, Experimental Group taught through consciousness raising tasks and Control Group using Discourse Oriented Pedagogy, which one differ in the adjusted mean Posttest scores of Test on Syntactic Structures test of significance of difference between adjusted means was applied. The data and results of the post hoc comparison of the adjusted mean Posttest scores of Test on Syntactic Structures is presented in table.

Table 7

The Data and Result of test of Significance of Difference Between Adjusted Mean Posttest Scores of Test on Syntactic Structures for – Pretest Scores as Covariate

Dependent variable	Adjusted mean		Std. Error	t- value	Level of significance
	Experimental	Control			
Learning of Auxiliaries	16.15	3.67	1.00	12.46**	.01

The obtained t- value as per the table regarding the test of significance of difference between adjusted mean Posttest scores of experimental and control groups is found significant at .01 level as the obtained t- value is greater than 2.58, the table value of 't' at .01 level. It is noted that high mean is associated with Experimental Group taught tenses using consciousness raising tasks Instruction, suggesting the advantage of consciousness raising tasks on Discourse Oriented Pedagogy in teaching Tenses.

Conclusion

Consciousness raising tasks fosters acquisition of grammatical structures. The present study also revealed that consciousness raising tasks are fostering the acquisition of the tenses in English language and hence they can use it in their communication effectively. Consciousness raising tasks fosters the consciousness and focus of the students towards grammatical structures explicitly and helps in the proper construction of the tense forms.

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