

Reflections to journal articles article review example

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



Reflections to journal articles

Language, language acquisition and language teaching are areas of interest that have engaged the attention of linguists, psychologists and educationists for centuries. Zest in research in these areas continues with new issues being raised as a consequence of development in technology and means of communication. While experts continue to discuss first and second language acquisition, the truth is that it is difficult to find an individual who uses one pure language. Increasing contacts between language communities in a global scenario have resulted in bilingualism and multilingualism. According to Kumar and Yunus, “ No society speaks just ‘ a language’ that is ‘ pure’ in its appearance. This is the language that constitutes the input for any child learning language in any society in any corner of the world,” (2014). A similar view is expressed in the lines, “ Multilingualism is the logical conclusion and the default pattern or position among human beings.” (Kumar, 2013). Thus, Kumar concludes that linguistic competence is actually multilingual competence. In the modern world, children must develop a multilingual competence. The process begins from the time of birth and in early childhood, which is a crucial age from the point of view of language development. The three articles selected for review are related to language and literacy development of bilingual or multilingual children.

The article titled ‘ Linguistics in Language Education’ by Rajesh Kumar and Reva Yunus evaluates the contribution of the study of language in formal linguistics to language education. Currently, formal language education revolves around literacy. The ultimate aim of research in language is to address pedagogy in the language classroom. The study of all subjects takes

place through language. This article discusses language acquisition and multilingualism to find out how teaching-learning can be made more effective.

The article begins with Chomsky's concept of Universal Grammar and the innate capacity of human beings to acquire language. The writers argue that an understanding of the similarities and dissimilarities among languages can help change language policy in education. The writers elaborate on the concept of I-language (Knowledge of language as internal to the mind) as opposed to E-language, which refers to language as an external entity, a part of a community or society. The writers emphasize the fact underlying the innateness hypothesis that the ability to acquire language is stimulated by the environment of the child. Hence, children become competent language 'users.' According to the principles of Universal Grammar, children already know grammar. They construct their own rules while learning a language. They do not merely imitate. There is a consistency in the steps that they go through. The writers come up with a bold suggestion that instead of making children learn the rules of grammar teachers must encourage them to 'reflect' on their use of language. "It is to be an invitation to reflection and culture creating. It must express stance and must invite counter-stance and in the process leave space for reflection, for metacognition. It is this that permits one to reach higher ground, this process of objectifying in language or image what one has thought and then turning around on it and reconsidering it," (Bruner, p129, 1986). According to Kumar and Yunus, such a view of language, and the need for reflection and metacognition is vital not only to language learning, but to all learning.

The article ends with a discussion of the value of multilingualism in the language classroom and a hint that using one language as a medium of instruction in the classroom is not advisable. There are some dominant languages that have broader acceptance compared to minor languages. There can be issues of power and inferiority complex or lack of confidence on the part of learners. In the given situation, a hybrid language medium is suitable. It can also help to unite cultures.

The article presents a logical and convincing argument about the role of linguistics in language education. It contains a detailed explanation of the innateness hypothesis and Universal Grammar. However, it fails to connect UG to multilingualism. The writers suggest a reflection of the use of language while talking about the early childhood phase (which they describe as the critical window). It is impossible to expect pre-schoolers who are in the process of grasping language or languages to reflect on language use. They have neither enough understanding nor maturity. The idea of using more than one language in the classroom for instruction is novel, but its feasibility and implementation are doubtful.

The second article deals with the same problem. The topic is focused and specific. The title of the article clearly states the problem: " Language and Literacy development of Dual Language Learners Growing up in the United States: A Call for Research." The writers draw attention to the fact that many dual language learners (DLLs) in US are at a risk for poor educational outcomes. The national attention has focused on the promotion of DLLs' academic abilities, beginning in the pre-school years. In spite of this interest, the understanding of DLLs' language and literacy development is limited.

The article discusses the current state of knowledge about the language and literacy development of DLLs during early childhood. The article presents a research agenda to enhance the understanding that can help to improve the educational outcomes of children who are learning two languages.

The article gives details of statistics regarding the number of DLLs in the US, the languages they use at home and in schools and the factors that affect language development and emergent literacy development. The article refers to previous research studies carried out on Latino DLLs and Asian DLLs. The results of the research studies are summarized in order to highlight the main issues related to DLLs. Results revealed that children's combined vocabulary in both languages was greater than in either language individually, (Kan and Kohnert, 2005). Studies indicated a shift in dominance from the children's home language to English when they started attending pre-school. However, the pre-schoolers were better at mapping new lexical items to concepts in their home language than in English. (Kan and Kohnert, 2008). One investigation demonstrated that Chinese speaking pre-schoolers initially developed a core English vocabulary that they used to participate in classroom routines and activities. Gradually, they expanded their vocabulary and language usage to interact spontaneously with the teacher and other classmates. (Genishi et al, 2001). Then they began to insert new words in their formulaic utterances to construct novel utterances.

The main focus of the article is its emphasis on an urgent need for research. On the basis of a review of previous research, the writers have identified and listed key issues in which research is needed urgently. They are as follows:

- Comparative study on the development of speakers of different languages

in order to find out the features those are common across all DLLs and those which are unique to each group.

- Longitudinal studies that document the development of two languages simultaneously. These studies should pay attention to various components of language like phonology, vocabulary and syntax.
- Research that identifies environmental factors that affect DLLs' language and literacy development.
- Studies that document the characteristics of children's families.
- Investigations that explore language and literacy development of children in various educational settings.

The article ends with an optimistic view that knowledge gained through research will improve the understanding of DLLs' language and literacy development. It will help to create interventions to promote learning outcomes.

The article is very clear in its purpose, and follows a definite direction. It refers to selected research studies carried out previously. They serve as apt examples to explain the kinds of problems faced by DLLs. On the basis of the review the writers have come up with an exhaustive list of topics in which research is needed. The writers have succeeded in creating an awareness of the urgency of research in the topics.

The third article is titled 'Assessing the role of Book Reading Practices in Indian Bilingual Children's English Language and Literacy Development.' The researcher states that the main aim of the study is to examine the role of Indian bilingual parents' book reading practices on the development of children's language, narrative and literacy skills. With ninety million children

in India being formally schooled in English, steps are taken in early childhood phase so that transition to English medium schools should be smooth and easy for the children.

The writer discusses the role of book reading practices at home and how they relate to children's oral language and literacy development. The researcher administered tests to selected participants for testing vocabulary, emergent literacy, phonological awareness, narrative expression and complex syntax. Parents provided information about book reading practices and lists of books. The researcher analyzed the data statistically to establish the positive correlation between book reading practices at home and their impact on language and literacy development.

The topic is interesting and reflects the concern of the author regarding language and literacy development of bilingual children. The method used for the study is appropriate and the statistical analysis is perfect. The greatest drawback is the small sample size. The writer clearly states this drawback, at the same time, draws attention to the strength of the study that lies in the home book reading practices and their benefits for pre-school teachers. However, the article lacks comprehensive coverage. It is necessary to elaborate certain points. Detailed information is necessary on the procedure used for conducting the tests in different areas of language. There seems to be little connection between the title and the content of the article. Book reading practices are mentioned only at the end. The relation between the tests for receptive vocabulary and emergent literacy are not explained. The writer has succeeded in pointing out that book reading practices play an important role in literacy development. One cannot think of literacy without

books. This is one more reason for the selection of this article.

All the articles deal with problems faced by bilingual or multilingual children in different locations. This indicates that the problem is common and global.

All the articles aim at finding out ways to improve classroom teaching methods for dealing with children using more than one language. The urgency of research in this area is conveyed by the writers who have sensed that DLL is going to be a major obstacle in education in the coming years.

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