Metalinguistic training – concepts, strategies and eTutor exemplars

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Metalinguistic Awareness Training: Why?

- More motivated?
- How do they learn?
- More successful?
Vignettes of Metalinguistic Analysis in action
Recently I ordered something from Amazon. I received a message in the email saying: "Your Amazon.com order of '___' has shipped!" I would think if it should have been "has been shipped". Acceptable?
Another former student ...

落咗堂，好隨意抽咗1個小男生問書。
「同學A, "love" 後面應該用 gerund 定 to-infinitive?」
「下?? (完全冇聽書) "love" 後面應該跟 "U" 嘅...」

前途無限，咁細個已經咁識冧女仔。 — feeling amused.
What did Jeremy Lin mean?

"You never try, you never know."
Metalinguistic awareness is **NOT**

- the same as explicit knowledge of grammar rules
- Just about grammar, but also:
  - Vocabulary
  - Discourse
  - Language in use
  - Communicative intent
  - Language in society
  - ....

'I love skiing.' vs. 'I love to ski.'
Ronald Carter on Language Awareness

• “... the development in learners of an enhanced consciousness of and sensitivity to the forms and functions of language.”
Why ‘metalinguistic awareness’?
Limitations of Direct/Explicit Grammar Explanation
'Must’ means it is something good ... something we can do. ‘Mustn’t’ means it’s something bad ... something we can’t do.
A preposition gives us more information about the noun phrase.
Past Continuous tense vs Simple Past tense

We use the Simple Past tense for a short action. We use the Past Continuous tense for a long action. So short action – Simple Past; long action – Past Continuous.
The first time we mention something, we use ‘a’ or ‘an’. The second time we mention it, we use ‘the’.

TEACHER D
Metalinguistic Awareness Training – Why?

• At secondary level, many language items cannot be generalized as simple rules.
• Secondary students need and like cognitive challenge.
• Input will only become intake when students are engaged.
• Metalinguistically-aware students will constantly be picking up features of the TL on their own.
• Metalinguistic-aware students are motivated learners who are eager to explore language on their own.
Metalinguistic Awareness Training

- Teaching grammar
- (vocabulary)
- ... (discourse)
- Teaching Writing (language in society)
Examples of Metalinguistic Awareness Activities – For Teachers
9 Present perfect  Now can you do this exercise?

Here are some rules for the use of the Present Perfect (Simple and Progressive). Some of them are good rules; some of them are wrong. Which are the good ones?

1. We can use the Present Perfect when we are talking about things which are still happening now.
2. We cannot use the Present Perfect when we are talking about a finished action.
3. We cannot use the Present Perfect when we give the time of a finished action.
4. We use the Present Perfect for actions which happened recently, and the Simple Past for actions which happened longer ago.
5. We often use the Present Perfect to give news.
6. We often use the Present Perfect to talk about experience.

(from The New Cambridge English Course 2 by M. Swan and C. Walter)
5 Future time

In many grammars and coursebooks, the future is dealt with as a tense, formed by
shall/will + infinitive. It is often known as the pure future. Which of the following
examples could be described as pure future? What do shall or will add to the
meaning in the other examples?

1. Don’t worry! I’ll help you with your homework.
2. My brother will talk with his mouth full.
3. Pass the mustard, will you?
4. Shall I open the door for you?
5. I’ll see you at the party tonight.
6. Shall we go for a drink?
7. Trespassers will be prosecuted.
8. Boys will be boys.
9. Do you think Liverpool will win on Saturday?
10. You shall do as I tell you!
11. Summer will soon be over.
Example 3

**Grammaring: Task Sheet 6**

1. Compare these two dialogues. What features of the second dialogue make it more formal than the first? What differences in the speakers or situation would explain this?

   **Dialogue 1**
   - Anyone fancy a coffee?
   - Sure, if you’re getting one.
   - Got any small change?
   - Here.
   - Ta. Tomorrow it’s on me.
   - No worries.
   - Milk? Sugar?
   - Black, two sugars.
   - Something to eat?
   - Get us a chocolate bar, will you?
   - OK. Back in a sec.

   **Dialogue 2**
   - Would anyone like a hot drink?
   - Well, I wouldn’t mind a coffee, if it’s no trouble.
   - Not at all. You wouldn’t happen to have a fifty pence coin, would you?
   - I think I just might. Here you are.
   - Thank you. I’ll pay you back.
   - Please, I wouldn’t hear of it.
   - Would you like milk and sugar?
   - I’ll have it black, with two spoonfuls of sugar, if that’s possible.
   - Can I get you something to eat?
   - Well, a chocolate bar would be nice, if they have any.
   - Certainly. I’ll be back shortly.

2. Change this informal dialogue into a more formal one. In what kinds of situation would...
Metalinguistic Awareness Activities for Students

Examples
Example 1

• *Work with your partner. Put the 8 words into 2 columns. Then explain your thinking to the class.*

• Bagel, fruit, bread, sausage, tart, banana, meat, dessert,

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Lock & Sze, unpublished ms
What does the word ‘concerned’ really mean?
How should it be used in a sentence?
Example 3

Count nouns vs non-count nouns
Example 4

-ed Adjectives vs -ing Adjectives
WHAT HAPPENED TO ANDREW?

TASK 1: SEQUENCE 7 SENTENCES IN RIGHT ORDER TO RE-TELL THE STORY.

HTTP://ZH-CN.PADLET.COM/WALL/6MW59KIAF5
WHAT KIND OF WORD ARE THEY?

WHEN I WOKE UP, I FELT **CONFUSED**.

I WAS REALLY **SCARED** NOW.
TASK 2: WHICH WORDS CAN BE PUT IN THE SLOT?

ANDREW FELT ____________.

(SOCRATIVE-STUDENT: ROOM 705594)
Study these sentence pairs.

Why is that (A) and (B) are correct, but (C) is wrong?
Confused vs Confusing

A. Andrew felt confused. He did not know what to do

B. The situation was quite confusing. Andrew did not know what to do.

C. Andrew felt confusing. He did not know what to do.
A. Sam has read the story 5 times. He is getting bored.

B. The book is boring. The children don’t like it.

C. Same has read the story 5 times. He is getting boring.
Interested vs Interesting

The story is so interesting that the students want to read it again and again.

The teacher told the story in a lively way. The students became interested.

C. The story is so interested that the students want to read it again and again.
Excited vs Exciting

- The trip to Disneyland was exciting. Alex tried many rides.
- Alex’s father will take him to Disneyland. He is feeling excited.

- The trip to Disneyland was excited. Alex tried many rides.
Metalinguistic Awareness Activities provide Ss with language samples for students to think about, compare, analyse, etc., with a view to guiding them to gain a deeper understanding of the language issue in question.
This paper offers a language-awareness perspective on the concept of autonomy in second language learning. The introductory section distinguishes between two kinds of language awareness and elaborates a working definition of learner autonomy. The second section looks at child development and the role played by both kinds of language awareness in first language acquisition. It considers in turn the importance of context in developmental learning, the role played by the growth of metalinguistic knowledge in first language acquisition, and the impact of literacy on first language development. The third section is concerned with the role played by both kinds of language awareness in second language pedagogy. It begins by reflecting on the shortcomings of the grammar-translation approach, then suggests reasons for the relative failure of the so-called communicative approach, and ends by proposing a reassessment of the role of variety in second language learning.
Little (1997) on language awareness and the autonomous learner

• Only autonomous learners, who take responsibility for, and charge of, their learning will achieve a high level of proficiency in the target language;

• Language awareness training helps to nurture autonomous learners;

• The question is: Pedagogically, how?

• (Writing may be a useful activity for language awareness training.)
Language Development Strategies

- develop thinking skills
- develop reference skills
- develop information skills
- plan, manage and evaluate own learning
- develop self-motivation
- work with others

From 2007 Secondary Curriculum
Writing ePlatform
The Writing ePlatform is a set of tools that assist students with their writing, allowing them to take a discovery-based approach to their learning of accurate and fluent English.
The ePlatform should:

(1) assist with constructing the lexico-grammatical and discoursal/rhetorical knowledge of the target language and the skills required to access and apply that language;
(2) encourage reflection and metacognition, where students are encouraged in independent learning and self-confidence; and
Writing ePlatform
- Developed by EDB and HKUST

Choose your writing topic: ________________________________ Useful words for your writing.

Choose the language area(s) you want to check: Language Area Filter

Choose your English level: Basic Intermediate Advanced

Check Submit

Your Writing Word Tag Vocab-Profile

Please enter your writing below: Save

Total Word Count: 0

Reference Links: Word Neighbors; Google Books; Google Fight; Just The Word
The eTutor helps learners of English with common errors and has been specifically designed for students based in Hong Kong.
• Based on Real errors made by HK students;
• Links to language investigation resources;
• Metalinguistic awareness tasks may be done as homework – Flipped Teaching?, or in class (teacher-computer; computer lab; iPads)
• eTutor Resources > how to make the best use of the resources > your creativity
References