Developing Naskapi Grammatical Awareness and its Effect on Adult Literacy

I. Introduction
A. Hypothesis: This presentation suggests that problems that hinder skilled, fluent biliteracy for adult Naskapi speakers could be addressed by leading learners into a better understanding of the structures of their own language through guided reading of meaningful texts.

B. The Naskapi Situation
- Location: Northern Quebec
- Population: ~1100 (2013)
- Language use: vigorous (EGIDS 5)
- Writing system: Canadian Syllabics
- Literacy: developing, part of the official elementary curriculum

II. Reading Theory and Practice
A. Theoretical continua
- Whole Language
- Skills-based (Phonics, Grammar)
B. Adams Model of Skillful Reading (1990: 158)
- Orthographic processing
- Meaning processing
- Context processing
- Phonological processing

III. Methodology
A. Incorporating Grammar into Text-based Reading Instruction
- Post-Secondary Naskapi Course
- Grammatical Resource
B. Grammar in Naskapi Reading Instruction Demonstrated

C. Results Observed
- Quantitative Results: Fluency Measurements
- Qualitative/Mixed Research Methodology:
  Analysis of “Appreciative Inquiry” and Subjective Comprehension participant questionnaires

IV. Evaluation and Conclusion
A. Summary of Results
- 144% aggregate fluency improvement
- Mother tongue literacy is an extremely high cultural value
- Improvement of both perceived and actual reading ability
B. Things proven and not proven
- Three weeks of reading instruction and practice equals improvement
- Teaching grammar to adults helps their reading - probably
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This is a presentation of research exploring how Naskapi grammatical awareness can be developed, providing insight into the form that pedagogical grammatical instruction should take, to equip Naskapi adults to become adequately literate in their mother tongue. The teaching method incorporates a grammatical description crafted to help speakers attain successful literacy in their own language, applied in the context of reading meaningful texts.

Topic area: Teaching/learning small languages

OUTLINE

I. Introduction
   A. Hypothesis
   B. The Naskapi Situation
      • Location, population, demographics
      • Language, writing system, literacy

II. Reading Theory and Practice
   A. Theoretical continua
      • Whole Language
      • Phonics
   B. Adams Model of Skillful Reading
      • Orthographic processing
      • Meaning processing
      • Context processing
      • Phonological processing

III. Methodology
   A. Incorporating Grammar into Text-Based Reading Instruction
      • Post-Secondary Naskapi Course
      • Grammatical Resource
   B. Grammar in Naskapi Reading Instruction Demonstrated
      • Discovery stage, nouns
      • Analysis stage, nouns
      • Discovery stage, verbs
      • Analysis stage, verbs
   C. Results Observed
      • Quantitative Results: Fluency Measurements
      • Qualitative/Mixed Research Methodology: Participant Questionnaires

IV. Evaluation and Conclusion
   A. Summary of Results
      • 144% aggregate fluency improvement
      • Mother tongue literacy is an extremely high cultural value
      • Improvement of both perceived and actual reading ability
   B. Things proven and not proven
      • Three weeks of reading instruction and practice equals improvement
      • Teaching grammar to adults helps their reading - possibly

SELECTED REFERENCES


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