PROBLEMS IN TEACHING ENGLISH AT UG LEVEL IN INDIAN CLASSES

Dr. Nirmala S. Padmavat

Assistant Professor, English Department, Nutan Mahavidyalaya, Selu, MS

ABSTRACT

Teaching and learning of a language is as such a normal course of cognition and development of human communication skills. Both of these activities go hand in hand, at least are expected to go that way. There is not only one factor that influences the same. Also barring some common elements, these factors differ in nature and relevance depending on the circumstances, geography, culture, social practices, economic conditions and the similar countless number of factors that surface up as key reasons. A study intending at giving exposure or at least an insight to dwell deep in the area is always solicited and this paper in an attempt to view the subject from all possible angles at the process of teaching the English language to children and adults in the Indian context. Introduction to the language may not necessarily be always at a young age. One may seek or desire to learn a language at any point of time in life when there is a need felt for it. Aspirants may or may not succeed in the achievement of the objective. But the identification of conditions under which the process of learning or teaching of the language has failed will surely help the future beneficiaries and benefactors develop or contribute in the evolution of a more robust, effective yet easy methodology. The objective is to make more congenial teaching and learnings environment so that e better intellectual capability is built into a human being.

Keywords: Language, Learning, English, Teaching, Acquisition, Skill, Communication, Cognition etc.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a noble profession. Every teacher commands a highly respectable position in the eyes of one's pupils. It is said that the first teacher of a person is his / her mother who teaches basic life skills. The rearing up is a form of teaching which makes an infant capable of standing out by oneself, making a place for oneself. The most important skill to excel in life that one has to learn is effective communication skills. It is the way for people to express, share, exchange or pass-on their ideas, thoughts, opinions, information, understanding. The language also is a mirror of one's persona and also gives a perfect understanding of the environment in which one's infusing is done. Teaching and learning of language start with the very first interaction a child is born. Learning language is natural and babies are born with the ability to learn it.[1] Children learn any language in the same way irrespective of language their parents speak.
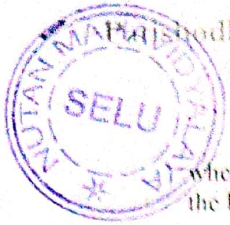
The process of acquiring the capacity to perceive and comprehend a language and then able to reproduce and use words in the form of meaningful sentences to communicate is termed as language acquisition. Language acquisition involves structures, rules, and representation. This includes a range of tools such as phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and an extensive vocabulary. Although the learning of a native language which may also be called mother tong is not taught to children formally, it is a popular opinion that the children learn the same much faster and have better expression in that language. There is much higher sense of comfort in native or mother language for people as compared to any other acquired language at a later stage of life. Use of all other languages learnt later by a person is less pleasurable an experience and is always subjected to all priorities other than first. This thought connects to the study of reasons for such differences and factors influencing the process of language acquisition.

The native languages are learnt by the simple cognitive process as the use of those languages is a routine in day to day matters and small things happening around. There is no need for a separate, focused and deliberate attempt to consciously acquire linguistic skills whatsoever. Children and Adults can learn a language by frequent use in expression and interaction by listening, speaking, reading and writing. Emotional expressions make better connect with infants resulting in most effective communication. Also,

International Conference on "Entrepreneurship, Engineering, Management, Science and Humanities... Between Industry & Academia"

Page No:161

when it comes to adults learning a new language, it becomes easier for them to acquire the intricacies of the language when there is more of a rehearsal than formation of concepts.

India is country where many languages are used by people. There are 22 languages being listed in the Eighth Schedule of Indian Constitution. [2] In addition to these 22 languages, THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT, 1963 allows the English language also to be continued to be used as a language for all the official purpose of the Union for which it was being used immediately before that day; and for the transaction of business in Parliament.
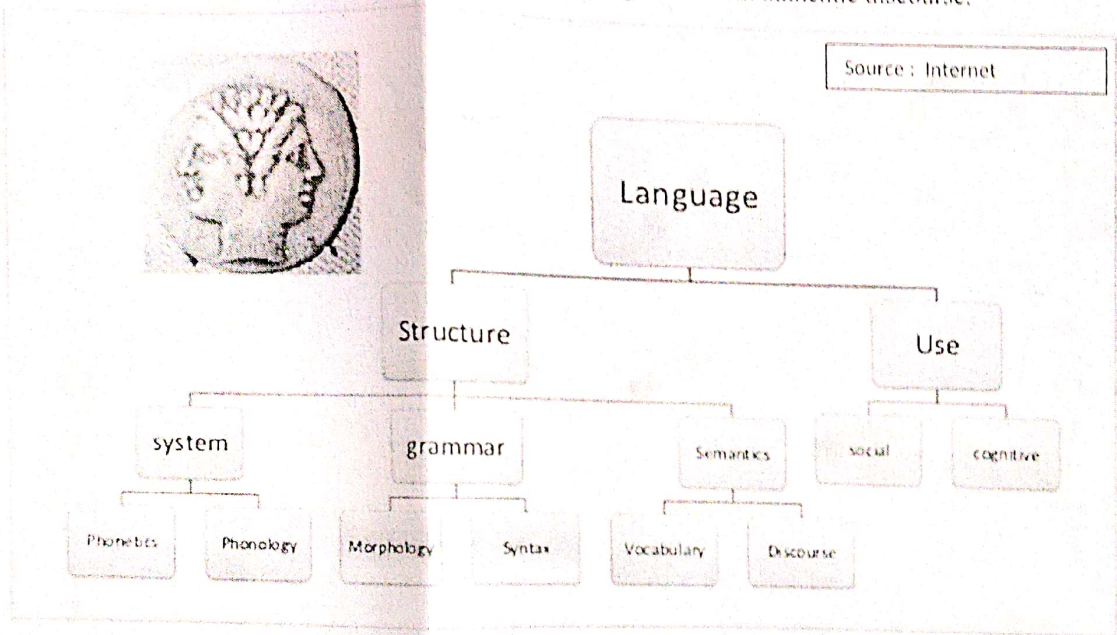
....

[1] : Hutauruk B. Children First Language Acquisition At Age 1-3 Years Old In Balata. IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science. 2015;(20)8:51-57. doi:10.9790/0837-20855157

[2] : Constitution of India : EIGHTH SCHEDULE [Articles 344(1) and 351]

All the Indian languages have their structures, which are different from that of English, and hence there is a great challenge for people using all such languages as their primary language for communication. For ease of understanding the challenges for teaching English language, it is most solicited to understand the structure of English Language.

STRUCTURE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

It may also be referred to unit of language. It focuses mainly on a variety of basic and complex structures of English, (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, comprehension and writing) phonology, semantic, lexical, syntax and morphology comparing them to structures of other languages. SoE requires us to gather and analyze information and data on English usage in current authentic discourse.

Source : Internet

COMPLICATED AND CONFUSING SPELLING SYSTEM

It is considered a tough language because most of the literary terms used is confusing. English isn't really "pure" but mixed with many languages like Latin, Celtic, Norse, etc. The reason why it might be considered difficult is due to many reasons. For example, why can we put -ed or -ing at the top of verbs while some are spelled differently.

International Conference on "Entrepreneurship, Engineering, Management, Science and Humanities"., "Bridging Gap Between Industry & Academia"

Volume IX, Issue II, February/2020   Page No:162

English orthography is the system of writing conventions used to represent spoken English in written form [3][4] that allows readers to connect spelling to sound to meaning.[5] learning the language.

In English language, the spelling system is so confusing that nearly every word can be spelt in multiple ways. This is most unlikely phenomenon as compared to a more distinct and definite way of spelling in most of the languages of the world.

In the languages using Devanagari script, pronunciation of words is unique there can be multiple meanings though. However, the phonetics of script are definet unlike English language.

The concept of homophones is one such cause of confusion. After a repeated rehearsal and practice of spellings which may be termed as mugging up, here is very strong possibility of using a correctly spelt word while speaking or writing but one cannot be sure of it's correctness and appropriateness in terms of meaning and reference.

New' and 'Knew'; 'no' and 'Know'; to, two, too: are some of the examples of homophones. In addition to these some examples mentioned below can be referred to explain the same.

All [everything]   All the people you invited have attended.

Awl [a small point tool]   The wood was carved with an awl.

Ail [troubles] Mental agony ails her.

ale [Kind of beer]   They were with ale for dinner.

Birth [Born]   She gave birth to a female child.

Berth [With bed]   I reserved 4 berths for my family.

....

[3] Venezky, Richard L. (1967), "English orthography: Its graphical structure and its relation to sound", *Reading Research Quarterly*, 2 (3): 75–105, doi:10.2307/747031, JSTOR 747031

[4] Jared, Debra; Seidenberg, Mark S. (Dec 1991), "Does Word Identification Proceed From Spelling to Sound to Meaning?", Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 120 (4): 358–394, doi:10.1037/0096-3445.120.4.358

[5] Van Assche, Eva; Duyck, Wouter; Hartsuiker, Robert J. (2013), "Phonological Recoding in Error Detection: A Cross-sectional Study in Beginning Readers of Dutch", PLOS ONE, 8 (12): e85111, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0085111, PMC 3875550, PMID 24386453

Fair [good]   She is a fair lady.

Fare [charge]   The ticket fare has been hiked.

Loose [ill fitting]   Her garments are loose.

Lose [failing to keep something]   Don't lose the opportunity.

And many more such words are potential confusers with only choice for learner and teachers to mug up the words as they are being passed on from generations to generations. Transferring the idea is quite difficult, very close if not absolutely impossible at once. The teachers may rarely be able to explain the reasons for such spelling which results into a misleading thought process and an apprehension for the language in general. Changing pronunciations of vowels.

Due to the complexity and richness of the vowel system of English language and its many variations it is very difficult to come across a clear pronunciation system. Study the vowel phonemes or diphthongs is

International Conference on "Enterpreneurship, Engineering, Management, Humanities" "Bridging Gap Between Industry & Academia"

Volume IX, Issue II, February/2020

Page No:163

an elemental task all English language student has to take seriously, since vowels are the most important part of a syllable.

Also, some ideas are difficult to understand and remember. For example, when "the" is proceeded by a vowel sound, like "apple" or "hour", it's pronounced as "thee" and not as "thu".

Such ambiguous elements of the system are difficult to be adopted. The difference in pronunciation of same vowels in a different way is an inexplicable concept. As an example, the letter "a", in words water, same and fat can be considered where the letter (a) has three different pronunciations.

LIMITED ALPHABETS AND SYLLABLES

Language	Number of Alphabets	Remarks
Chinese	20,000	Does not have alphabets instead has characters. Considered as it is the largest language in the world.
English	26	Considered since is the subject of study.
Spanish	30	Considered since second largest language.
Devanagari	46	Considered since it is relevant in context of study

The figures in the table above are easily available on internet. It can be a separately studied in details but prima facia it appears that speaking and writing English has limitations because it brings along limited resource ie number of alphabets as basic units of the language.

INADEQUATE TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

Unlike west, in India the education is less dynamic and ages old traditional practices of teaching are still prevailing. Not much of experimentation, innovation and creativity is subjected to teaching which results in a monotony and reluctant climate of learning. Although there are some institutions willing and trying to bring about changes in practices yet they are very insignificant as compared to the need to cater for the total requirement of education. Some education boards and institutions are doing a great job of creating awareness about the usage of the language. Making the use of English language compulsory in conversation at school or institution gives a better impact on the mindset and preparedness of the speaker to confidently express oneself. It should be no obligatory business to use the language for the speaker and the environment of learning can flourish so that it becomes an enjoyable experience.

Language is learnt by infants as an activity of fun. The same way if the language is taught in a free and fun environment, the learner gets engaged with the content thereby starts to develop an interest. Unfortunately, not many teachers take interest in teaching which may be inclusive of the methodology welcomed by the learners.

Training of teachers is also a concern which contributes significantly to the problems of teaching English language at UG level. The basic learning and development of brain happens till the age of 15 years and yet that's the age when the foundation of structure of language needs to be built. If the same is feeble, hoping for a strong linguistic skill oriented, authoritative and grammatically correct language is a dream far beyond reach.

EMOTIONAL BLOCKS AND SOCIAL TABOOS

India has been a colony of The British for quite some time. There have been a substantial spread of negative feelings about the British in common masses. This has gone to the extent of discarding or disregarding the language as a useful medium of communication. Though not rational enough to qualify as a reason for keeping a feeling hatred, sad but true the same has happened in context of some social groups. People are reluctant to accept it objectively as a language of communication and on the contrary advocate proscribe it's usage.

If not political reason is enough to avoid usage of this language, there is also tendency in south India to bend English language conveniently, for adjusting pronunciations of English words like accents and sounds of native languages. The same tendency can be observed in north India as well.

CONCLUSION

All the factors above mentioned are contributors of the restrictive environment for use of English language before it is being taught at UG level in Indian education system. Complications in Structure , Grammar and Vocabulary make an impact on the process of teaching and learning. Also, English language does not remain English and takes form suitable to the land. The various forms being developed regionally are uncommon and create heterogeneous mix of sounds. Also, the reluctance contributes significantly in the share of problems in teaching English at UG level in India.

REFERENCES

1. "Case Studies - Asian English". British Library. University of Leeds. Retrieved 30 May 2019.

2. "Court language is English, says Supreme Court". The Economic Times. 7 December 2015. Retrieved 16 July 2018.

3. Census of India's Indian Census Archived 14 May 2007 at the Wayback Machine. Issue 25, 2003, pp 8–10, (Feature: Languages of West Bengal in Census and Surveys, Bilingualism and Trilingualism).

4. FAMILY-WISE GROUPING OF THE 122 SCHEDULED AND NON-SCHEDULED LANGUAGES Archived 7 February 2013 at the Wayback Machine – 2001 Census of India.

5. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Indian English". Glottolog 3.0. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.

6. In local vernaculars such as Hinglish, Tanglish etc.

7. "India - Languages". ethnologue.com. Retrieved 14 May 2019.

8. "LANGUAGE - INDIA,STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES (Table C-16)" (PDF). censusindia.gov.in. Retrieved 14 May 2019.

9. "POPULATION BY BILINGUALISM AND TRILINGUALISM (Table C-17)". censusindia.gov.in. Retrieved 14 May 2019.

10. The Constitution of India (PDF). Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India. 1 December 2007. pp. 212–267. Retrieved 30 May 2019.

PRINCIPAL
PRINCIPAL
Nutan Mahavidyalaya
SELU, Dist. Parbhani

International Conference on "Entrepreneurship, Engineering, Management, Science and Humanities", "Bridging Gap Between Industry & Academia."

Volume IX, Issue II, February/2020

Page No:165

Scanned with OKEN Scanner