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ANALYSIS OF DIFFICULTIES IN ACQUIRING 'COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE' IN ENGLISH FOR ENGLISH SPECIAL STUDENTS

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This Best Practice was undertaken to analyse the difficulties encountered by English Special students while acquiring 'Communicative Competence' in English. Acquisition of second or target language differs from learning of mother tongue. 'Motivation' plays a vital role in learning English as a second language. English occupies an importance place in educational system and life of our country. It is the language that continues to dominate the national scene. It is taught compulsorily in most of the states of our country. 'English language has won global status. The recent international economic, technological and cultural changes are primarily responsible for English language on the highest level. Knowledge of this global English naturally provides competitive advantages over others. In this context, to get command over the speaking skills, to acquire fluency and accuracy over the English language has become an essential qualification.' The present best practice implemented to analysis of difficulties in acquiring communicative competence in English for English special students. This best practice highlighted also some strong suggestions to overcome the difficulties.

INTRODUCTION

English occupies an important place in educational system and life of our country. It is the language that continues to dominate the national scene. English language has won global status. It has become the language of job opportunity, not only in our country but overseas. Fluency in this language has become an integral part of our life. The students from Arts faculty take English as a special subject for their undergraduate degree. But, after graduation, most of them are not able to express and communicate in fluent English. They come across various difficulties. The co-ordinator noticed this problem remarkably. For the purpose, he surveyed for over a year (2021-22), total 30 students from the department, where English is taught as a special subject. He selected the students who are regular in the class. He visited and interviewed them. He drew some remarkable conclusions. Since the mid-twentieth century, the English language has become so wide-spread that it is often considered the world's most widely used language. In the recent years with the steady rise of international job market, the English language has been gaining more and more importance for global communication. As a result, proficiency, fluency and accuracy in English and its use for better communication have become imperative. English is taught as a subject, not as a medium of communication at Mumbai University Colleges. As a result, many of the graduate students can not use English effectively. Modern society requires students with English speaking skills. Communication is a skill and the objective of learning English is to use the language in verbal expression, in real life situations. (M. David Rao). In the Indian context, speaking is the least developed of students' skills and their inability to express themselves has a negative impact on their confidence and enthusiasm. We always find a wide gap between learners of English and English proficient speakers. (S. Kanhohana and Prativa Rani Saha) ('Role of Formative Assessment in Teaching Speaking')

What is 'Communicative Competence'?

The term communicative competence is coined by Dell Hymes in 1972. Hymes's theory of communicative competence was a definition of what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicative competent in a speech community. In Hymes's view, a person who acquires communicative competence, acquires both knowledge and ability for language use. (Approaches and methods in language teaching P-70, Richards and Rodgers) The term communicative competence has now become a household word in second language teaching. Communicative competence is that aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages to negotiate meaning inter-personally within specific contexts. 'Communicative competence is relative, not absolute and depends on the cooperation of all the participants involved'. (Savignon, 1983) ('Principles of Teaching English', T. Balasubramaniam, P-65)

In the prescribed syllabus of FY/SY/T.Y.B.A English special paper Gen.III,S.Phule Pune University of Pune, linguistics, phonetics, phonology, morphology are taught. In spite of it, the graduate students in English are not able to acquire communicative competence. The present paper aims at an analysis of difficulties in acquiring Communicative Competence by English special students. For the purpose, the HoD surveyed the students for the academic year 2021-22, selected 08 students from each department of 03 colleges, i.e. Arts, Science and Commerce College, Nampur. Tal-Baglan, Dist-Nashik, where English is taught as a special subject. He visited the colleges regularly, interviewed the students and realized the following facts which prove to be obstacles in acquiring Communicative Competent in English language.

1. Interference of Mother tongue –

The English spoken by most of the learners of English is strongly influenced by their mother tongue. This influence is found in pronunciation, stress and intonation. English sounds differ from the sounds in mother tongue of the learners. We still do not have a comprehensive and authentic dictionary of Indian English pronunciation acceptable to all.

2. Lack of 'Maximum exposure' of English in classroom instruction. –

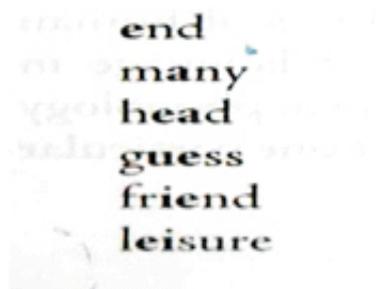
The researcher realized that Grammar Translation Method is used instead of Direct Method in classroom instruction right from the first year of graduation. Much of the lesson is devoted to translating sentences into and out of the target language. 'The first language is maintained as the reference system in the acquisition of the second language. No systematic attention is paid to speaking and pronunciation. It leads to lack of maximum exposure of English in classroom instruction.

3. Discrepancy between English spelling and pronunciation –

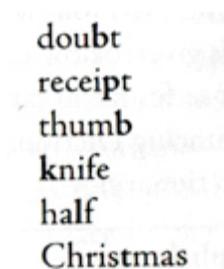
There is discrepancy between English spelling and pronunciation. The discrepancy is the result of the lack of one to one equation between English letters and sounds. There cannot be one to one equation because the number of sounds in English is 44 but the number of letters in English is only 26. One letter represents different sounds in English. E.g.. Letter 'a' represents seven different sounds in the following words-

woman	/ə/
fat	/æ/
last	/ɑ:/
what	/ɒ/
water	/ɔ:/
village	/ɪ/
late	/ei/
chemistry	/k/
chair	/tʃ/
machine	/ʃ/

Sometimes the same combination of letters represents different sounds. For example 'ch' in the following words represents three different sounds:



In certain words, we also have silent or unpronounced letters. They do not represent any sound.



This discrepancy between English spelling and their pronunciations lead to lack in communicative competence.

Remedial Measures.

4.1 Introduction-

English language has won global status. The recent international, economic, technological and cultural changes are primarily responsible for English language on the highest level. Knowledge of this global English naturally provides advantages over others. In this context, to get command over the speaking skill, to acquire fluency and accuracy over the English language has become an essential qualification. So, the investigator would like to suggest the following remedial measures in order to acquire communicative competence in this language.

4.1.1 Use of ‘Direct Method’ in classroom instruction-

It would provide the students with maximum exposure of English. It is because, in direct method, classroom instruction is conducted exclusively in target language. Oral communication skills are built up in a carefully graded progression. New teaching items are introduced orally. Much attention is paid to speech. Correct pronunciations are emphasized. It brings about fluency and accuracy in English.

4.1.2 Intensive use of ‘Language Laboratory’ -

Definition of Language Laboratory “ A language laboratory is a classroom containing equipment, design and arranged to make foreign language learning more effective than is usually possible without it”. – Heayes A. S. The students should be provided with maximum opportunity to listen to English, to express in it and to use it in real- life situations. Language laboratory plays vital role in teaching-learning native – like pronunciations. It gives a number of conversational pieces for practice. It provides the students with oral practice of Received Pronunciation. The students listen to it and learn through imitation. But the Co-ordinator of the college S.P.H. Arts, Science and Commerce college, Nampur, there is no installation of Language Laboratory. Well-equipped, advanced language laboratory is an essential part of English language teaching-learning process. It is very useful and effective in the acquisition of communicative competence. So, the investigator would strongly like to recommend that each college under University of Pune, where English is taught as a special subject, should install Language Laboratory.

4.1.3 Provision of adequate material facilities

Teachers as well students should be provided with audio- visual aids such as flash cards, charts, pictures, models, filmstrips, gramophone recorded cassettes, tape recorders, audio CDs, OHPs, visualizers, etc. which play an important role in language teaching. It would be very useful in acquiring communicative competence.

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