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UNIT : II

SUBJECT NAME : ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

SUBJECT CODE : CSEN66

Interference and Transfer from the Mother Tongue

English is valued highly in the Indian society with a lot of prestige being attached to the language. A lot of time and energy is dedicated to teach or learn English in the Indian schools. Despite this, not much attention is given to enhance the speaking skill in the average Indian classroom. That the learner will pick up the skill from general classroom activities and instructions over a period of time is a false assumption made. As a result, the learners are not able to develop this skill and hence lack confidence while conversing in English.

To further this, though articulation of individual sounds while teaching this language is addressed, teaching of pronunciation is not given much importance either. In regular Indian classrooms, the importance of native-like accent is not given due stress. One strong reason that could be attributed to this could be that number of dialects found is so large that it is practically impossible to address all the accents in a classroom. This is serious challenge in the Indian classrooms. The areas of sound relating to spoken English and to pronunciation in the Indian context needs to be consciously addressed to counter this challenge and to make native-like accent in Indian learners more plausible.

The importance of pronunciation in communication cannot be denied. In fact it is as important as grammar and vocabulary. Yet, the evidence of **mother tongue influence** on English is very obvious. This manifests in the form of incorrect pronunciation.

Pronunciation error may be due to many issues. Guesswork or vagueness of the correct form of a word or sentence, or a general ineptness of the language could be the reason of mispronunciation. The most common reason is transfer or interference from the mother tongue. Generally, errors made in pronunciation are due to difference in the sound system and spelling symbols between the mother tongue and English.

As a regular practice the teacher is seen as a model for correct speaking in class. The learners are expected to be introduced to the pronunciation of words in English by their teacher during the day-to-day interaction. It is when the teacher her/himself has coloured pronunciation that the learners are unable to acquire correct skills in spoken English. The pronunciation samples they are exposed to in their classroom environment being inappropriate, the learners are most likely to adopt a similar pronunciation skill.

Added to this is the challenge of the fossilised sound system of the mother tongue of the learners that inhibits the acquisition of the pronunciation and sound system of the second language. It is understood that if the second language is introduced to the learners before puberty, the chances of attaining a native-like pronunciation skill is easier. This challenge can surely be met by using the mother tongue removal tool offered in good **digital language lab. Words Worth English Language Lab** has an inbuilt facility to meet this requirement.

To help reduce this problem in Indian schools, it is vital that while on one hand spoken English be encouraged and promoted, on the other hand, such sound patterns as which are likely to be confused and faltered be identified and drilled. The learners should be able to practise these sound patterns over and over again using a model voice to emulate.

It has been realised that such activities when done in digital language labs, not only help eliminate the mother tongue influence, but also hasten the acquisition of the target language. **Digital language labs** equipped with this facility allow learners to listen to correct pronunciation of a word and then check their own learning during the practise session.

Listening Activities

Listening is a really important skill and there are lots of activities we can do in class to help develop this ability which do not require a formal listening practice set up (CDs, videos, etc.). Of course, having regular listenings in class is great but we can also combine this with listening to the teacher and fellow students. Below are some fun and interactive ways to provide listening practice in your lessons.

Listen and draw a story

The teacher reads or makes up a story and as the students listen they draw the different scenes. You can help them by explaining which scene to draw. This can be done individually or in small groups on larger paper. This really helps you to see if the students are understanding and they will often ask questions if they don't understand (because they'll be so keen to draw the picture!)

Adjectives draw

After teaching various adjectives (big, small, long, short, tall, high, low, etc.) give each S a piece of paper. The teacher says an adjective / noun combination and the students have to draw it (e.g draw a long snake, draw a big house, etc.). It is fun to make silly words (draw a small elephant). The teacher should also draw so he/she can compare with the students' pictures at the end.

Blindfold walk

This is really fun. Teach: go forward, go backwards, (3) steps, turn right / left. Then place a blindfold on a student and direct him/her around the room to eventually pick up a flashcard or object (e.g. "Go forward 3 steps, turn right, go forward 5 steps, now go backwards 2 steps, turn left, etc.). Finally, have students work in pairs – one blindfolded and one giving directions.

Listening with flashcards

Scatter a lot of flashcards that students have already learned around the room and have the students sit on floor. Make up a story and incorporate all of the flashcard pictures ... as you say the flashcard word the student nearest that card must touch it. For example, if students have learned lots of animal vocab the story could start "Once upon a time there was a farmer who had some cows (touch), sheep (touch) and pigs (touch). One day he was surprised to see lots of new animals on his farm. Next to the gate was a zebra (touch) and in the pond was a hippo (touch ...), etc, etc."

Secret Message

Make two teams and have each stand in a line (parallel with each other). Take two students from the front of each line outside the classroom and whisper a sentence to them (e.g. “Tonight it is going to rain and tomorrow it is going to be sunny”). Then the students come back and whisper the sentence to the next S, who in turn whispers it to the next, and so on down the line. The student at the end either writes the correct sentence on the board or says the sentence to the teacher (depending on the level of the class). Points are awarded: 2 points for a perfect sentence, 1 point for nearly perfect and a bonus point if the team finished first and got the sentence right. Then do it again with two new students.

Guess what it is

Put students into teams of 3 or 4. Then everyone sits and listens carefully to the teacher for a description of something or someone (e.g. “This is an animal which lives in Africa and Asia loves taking baths. It flaps its ears to keep cool. It has a really long nose” – answer: elephant). Then each team discusses what they think it is before giving an answer. You can give the description sentence by sentence, encouraging the students to guess each time, until one group wins. You can start off with easy clues and slow speech but then progressively choose more difficult words and speak more quickly so the students really have to concentrate.

Put in order

Put your students in teams and have them sit together. Give each group around 10 objects or picture flashcards – each team must have the same things. The T now says all the words for items in front of the students ... the students listen but mustn't touch the objects. Finally, the teacher says “Put the objects in the correct order” and the teams have to put in order the objects in the order that the teacher said them. Make sure you write down the order as you say it or else you'll forget!

Listening dialogs

Before class, prepare some dialogs based on the lesson theme. Also, prepare some comprehension questions based on the dialogs. In class, have two students read the dialog and the other students have to listen and then answer the questions. In higher level classes, make groups and give each group 15-20 minutes to write a dialog and questions (questions on a large sheet of paper). Then each team reads their dialogs while the rest of the class answers the questions which have been taped to the blackboard.

Number / Word bingo

Playing bingo requires students to listen carefully. You can use either numbers or words that they have been learning. Creating the bingo sheets and words takes a bit of time but once done can be used with other classes, time and time again.

Spelling Messenger

Put students in teams of three. S1 is given a word on a piece of paper and mustn't show it to his/her team mates. He/She stands at the end of the room furthest from the board facing the wall. S3 is at the board facing the board. S2 acts as the messenger. S1 whispers the first letter to S2 who then runs and whispers it to S3, who in turn writes it on the board. S2 goes back and forth until the word is written on the board. All the teams compete – they have different words but all with the same number of letters. The first team to complete the word correct wins a point.

Techniques in Teaching - Speaking

Speaking is a crucial part of the language learning process. Techniques are needed in which they use to help themselves expand their knowledge of the language and their confidence in using it. Some techniques are presented primarily based on Pollard (2008) as describes below. Pollard (2008: 35) states students need to feel that there is real reason for speaking. This is often referred to as the communicative element. For example that the students are communicating something the others do not know or that the others would like to hear about. All aspects of teaching are important to introduce variety and to choose topics that think will interest your students. Some techniques to involve real communication include: information gap, tasks involving an element of persuasion, problem solving and role play.

1. Information gap

Each student in the group has some information required to complete the task or activity. The aim is to share the information and to complete the task. Students do not know what the others are going to say and as such it imitates real life conversation.

1. Discussions: reaching a consensus

Choose one of the following subject: 10 things to take into space, 10 things to take to a desert island, 10 things to take into a desert. Ask students to work alone and brainstorm 10 things they would take with them. Alternatively, prepare a list of 20 objects and each person chooses ten from list. Ask students discuss their lists in pairs and to come to a consensus.

1. Discussions: moral dilemma

A variation on the theme of consensus. Explain to students that a single mother who does not have much money has been caught stealing milk. She explains why she did it: to feed her young children. Give students roles, for example store detective, social worker, and shoplifter's friend. Allow time for preparation in group: all the social workers together, all the store detectives work together, and all the friends work together. When everybody is ready, regroup the students so that there is 1 store detective, 1 social worker and 1 friend in each group ; students say how they would deal with the situation. They have to convince each other that their opinion is the valid one.

1. Discussions involving opinions

Try to use topic that will generate varying opinions rather than having everybody agrees. Typical examples include life in the city and life in the country, environmental issues, and traditional and alternative medicine. You can also use controversial subjects and topics that are currently in the news. Discussions involving opinions work well in a group that has something to say.

1. Debates

This involving choosing a controversial topics; one speaker presents one point of view on the topic and a second speaker presents a differing opinions. Debates are good at advanced levels. It is a good idea to give some input on the topic matter first.

1. Spontaneous conversation

real uncontrolled conversation breaks out in class. Students communicate something about themselves that others are interested in (something the student did at the weekend, a film they saw, a place they visited). If time allows, it is good to allow this type of conversation because it has a real communicative purpose. The teacher's role throughout is to prompt, help with language or communication difficulties. Correction should be kept to a minimum and carried out at the end of the discussion. This type of conversation can be excellent when it is spontaneous but it works less well if the teacher contrives to make it happen.

1. Role play

This involve students taking on a role and carrying out a discussion with each person playing their role. For example, the local council wishes to introduce a new system and location for dumping waste. Some students play local councilors others are local residents, others are member of environmental organization and others are managers and employees of the company being asked to carry out the work. The teacher describes and set up the situation. The students prepare in groups, those playing the same role prepare together. Then, they form new groups to carry out the discussion.

Barriers of Effective Communication

Communication is defined as the process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a system of signs, symbols. The concept of communication involves a sender, a message and a recipient.

The sender sends the message and the recipient is the receiver of the message. The process of communication is never smooth as it is affected by the barriers of communication.

Barriers to effective communication can result in confusion which can lead to incorrect information being conveyed or miscommunication which can lead to loss of business.

Following are some of the **barriers** to effective communication:

1. Semantic barriers

2. Psychological barriers
3. Organisational barriers
4. Cultural barriers
5. Physical barriers
6. Physiological barriers

Let us study in detail about the various types of barriers to effective communication.

Semantic barriers: Semantic barriers are also known as language barriers. These barriers are caused due to improper communication between the sender and the receiver. The following instances of semantic barriers can be witnessed in communication.

Poor quality of message: Message when communicated should be precise and easy to understand, that makes it easy for the receiver to grasp the information conveyed.

Sometimes, due to the lack of clarity or complexity of the way of providing information from the sender, there can be a case of semantic barriers.

For e.g. A manager is conversing in English to a group of workers who understand and speak Bengali. It will create confusion among workers as they will not be able to understand what is being conveyed by the manager.

Technical language: Language barriers also arise when the sender of the message is speaking in technical terms while the receiver is unaware of the terms. It creates confusion and misunderstanding between the sender and receiver by acting as a barrier to effective communication.

Psychological Barriers: Psychological barriers play an important role in interpersonal communication as the state of the mind of the sender or the receiver can make it difficult to understand the information that is conveyed, which often leads to misunderstanding.

Here are some instances where psychological barriers to communication can be seen.

1. Premature evaluation of information by the receiver even before it is transmitted can lead to barriers in communication, as it will create premature conclusion to the message, which withholds the original message.
2. Inadequate attention from the receiver's end at the time of communication can lead to barriers of communication as the information conveyed by the sender is not properly received by the receiver.
3. When information is passed within multiple sources, the final information is distorted as the receivers of the message are not able to retain everything that was conveyed. This can cause communication barriers.

Organisational barriers: Organisational barriers are those barriers that are caused due to the structure, rules and regulations present in the organisation. The various types of barriers that can be encountered due to superior subordinate relationships where the free flow of communication is not possible.

Sometimes the complexity of organisational structure and multiple managers make it difficult to convey information properly, and the information gets distorted leading to miscommunication.

Cultural barriers: Cultural barriers are those that arise due to lack of similarities among the different cultures across the world. A term that can be harmless in one culture can be regarded as a slang in another culture. Moreover, various beliefs can differ from one culture to another.

Physical barriers: Physical barriers to communication are those that arise due to certain factors like faulty equipment, noise, closed doors and cabins that cause the information sent from sender to receiver to become distorted, which results in improper communication.

Physiological barriers: Physiological barriers arise when a sender or the receiver of the communication is not in a position to express or receive the message with clarity due to some physiological issues like dyslexia, or nerve disorders that interfere with speech or hearing.