Impediments in Language Learning

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Abstract: Impediment means obstacle or hindrance. A disability or obstruction is also possible in learning a language too. Listening impediment, speaking impediment, reading impediment, and writing impediment are very common among the learners in any language in general and in learning a foreign language in particular. Learning impediments may occur because of barriers may be many. Why does the barrier come in the process of learning a foreign language? What are the reasons? How can these impediments overcome? The paper attempts to provide solid proof for impediments and suitable solutions to overcome it.

Index Terms: Learning impediments, speaking impediments, barriers in learning, hindrance, interference.

1. Introduction

“English language is an open window for peeping into western thoughts and science”, said Gandhi.

English has provided opportunities for the Indian educated men to think about freedom and also scientific rational thinking. English, popularly spoken language learning from things around us is a continuous process lasts from cradle to cremation. Lack of exposure makes learning difficult for learners. Communication helps youngsters to achieve by acquiring four language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. English learning plays an important role in Indian education and it makes one as an erudite personality. It should be taught as living language. To provide education to all, many systems of learning has been introduced and gradually they are getting popularized. It makes learning more pleasant, profitable and easy. Education is a tool with which one can bring his internal and external. It can be achieved by getting facility of modern electronic gadgets. Simply cramming some facts and figures could not help students to seek a secured place in the field of vocation. But in present scenario, the education pattern is paying more attention to the content rather than skills. English is a skill subject rather than the knowledge subject. In institutions contents occupy a more prominent place than imparting the language skills. Employability depends more on communication than on technology knowhow. So less practice is given to the learners in the elements of the language such as phonology, morphology, semantic and syntax. This is the main reason for hurdle in acquiring the language skills among the students in higher education. Thus the communication is very sub-standard though their technology knowledge is found to be better.

2. Reasons for Impediments

English is not a phonetical language. There is lack of models and opportunities to imitate. The IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) sounds are not taught properly at the school level. English is not taught by the better qualified teachers. The language elements are not identical to the mother tongue. There is no correlation in English between sound and spelling. But all other regional languages such as Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, etc. are phonetical languages. Every letter in the word is pro-
nounced. Because of these reasons, the learners felt learning English difficult. Swami Vivekananda said that the role of the teacher should be like a gardener. The gardener facilitates the seeds for germination by loosening the soil, watering properly and manuring seeds and not testing everyday whether it has germinated. Similarly teaching is not by simply testing the learner but by providing easily and interestingly available facilities which a teacher cannot provide in the class. By using widely available electronic medium the learners can understand what education is and try to find out a solution for their backwardness in learning foreign language in institutions. This attempt would help them to reduce the strain of learning English without much interference of mother tongue in future.

3. Speaking Impediments

Though the involvement of speech organs is alike in producing sounds, the manner of articulation is quite different from the mother tongue which hinders the learners in uttering words. Defect in the method of articulation is known as speaking impediment. Some learners feel insecure to pronouncing the words properly in public. Proper speech is essential for conversation and in day-to-day life. Learners may be able to get rid of speech impediment with speech-training practices.

Barriers of Speaking Impediments

Physical, cultural, societal, family background, lack of models and learning materials available in the educational institutions, improper and insufficient practice given by untrained, uninterested and unintentional teachers and last but not least problematic peer group, etc. are the barriers of speaking impediments to the learners while learning English. Stammering and stuttering because of family problem or a head injury in an accident may also be the reasons for barriers of a person to speak clearly.

Reasons for speech impediments

- Cleft palate is the major cause for speech impediment. Surgery is suggested to get rid of it.
- Improper teeth alignment is another reason for speech impediment. Consulting dentist is necessary for proper teeth alignment.
- Neurological problem may cause speech disorder. Consulting the neurologist is the best way
- An articulation disorder is also involved in speech impediment. The problem may be in making sounds, substituted, left off, added or changed the words.

4. Impediments in learning

Learning obstacles are occurred while meeting specific learning goals. Sometimes it may be external barriers. Learning obstacles are dealt with goal-specific. Each learning goal can be accompany by different learning obstacles.

Learning Obstacles

Fluency in communication is affected to the learners by many reasons such as lack of motivation, insufficient fund of vocabulary, stage fear, the improper knowledge of structural pattern of the language and lack of proper models. Present students find it difficult to handle English effectively, efficiently and excellently in their communication. Some of the learning obstacles are
1. Uncertainty of goal.
2. Stress to achieve goal.
3. Doubts in reaching goal
4. Lack of confidence.
5. Lack of attitude.
6. Lack of interest on goal

Each of the above obstacles interludes and is difficult to separate. For example if we want to learn a new process which is not important to us and seems to be difficult creates problem in learning. These obstacles will spoil our motivation in learning.

**Learning Defenses**

- The content of the message may be one reason to put up barriers in learning. Unless the learner is quite sure of knowing or identifying the weakness in the process of learning, it is not possible to find out the way to success. When he identifies the barriers, it will be easy for him to find a solution for overcoming the impediments through proper motivation.
- The comments or suggestions or criticisms in a negative way may cause hindrance in achieving the goals set. It leads to frustration and in ability to strive hard to know proper procedure to achieve correct communication skills. This may cause stress in learning.
- Embarrassment also raises barriers.
- Complacency may also lead to insufficient work in learning language properly.
- Personality issue is also taken as learning defenses. If the person speaks and writes arrogantly, we don't like to teach him or move with him. It creates learning impediment.
- Status can be used as a learning defense. The person can be selected who is lower or younger than he and he might be dismissed the person because of his inexperience or knowledge.
- Stereotyping monotonous methodology is also another defense against learning. Some of the stereotypes are race, gender, lifestyle, culture and qualifications

**5. Suggestions to learn English easily without impediments**

*CURIOSITY MAKES INVENTIONS*

- Teacher should study the problem of the learners and try to solve it. Learning a language can be made an awesome experience for the learners irrespective of groups.
- Learners those who has speech problem should be given speech therapy
- Vigorous practice in tongue twister should be given
- Learners should be familiarized with IPA sounds, stress, tone, pitch, etc. - the strength of vocabulary and the usage of apt words help the learners to develop their communication skills. So teacher should take care of their vocabulary strength and make them to develop it by removing their impediment in learning.
- Teacher should provide opportunity to the learners to converse more with native speakers to know the proper usage of phrases and idioms to have good command on the language. More exposure to proper communication/conversation helps the learners to acquire the skill of speaking.
• Speech should be practiced using language laboratory to develop vocabulary and Individual participation must be provided to remove phobia in learners’ mind.

6. Conclusion

The solution for the problem of improper communication and the substandard language may be suggested as follows:

The language is not taught but caught. Imitation plays a significant role in language learning and effective communication. So providing good models or the fully qualified professionals is one of the recommendations for overcoming of the impediment. The goal of good communication should be correctly explained to the learners. Their proper understanding of the goal may help them to develop their attitude and aptitude for learning language. Learners who have speech impediment are not ill-treated by others. The use of electronic gadgets may also help to achieve their goals. Above all the learners should feel the urge for acquiring a good command over the language.

The joint efforts of the teacher, linguists and speech therapist will certainly be provided an effective and excellent development in communicative skill for the learners who have speech impediment while learning the language. The impediments though found to be powerful can be easily eliminated by providing intensive and systematic practice in the basic skills of the language and basic components of a language i.e. to say listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and also a sound knowledge of phonology, morphology, structure and syntax.

It is not an individual effort but the joint venture of the educational institute and the learners.

References


