



Research Paper

Influence of Mother Tongue in Teaching English

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Abstract

This study focuses on the influence or impact of mother tongue in teaching of English. As we know that language is a system of communication by which we can convey our thoughts, ideas and knowledge to others. To see how important a language is, let us imagine our life without language. Language is the center of our life and without any language there will be no teaching, no learning and no sciences. The native language is the child's strongest ally in learning English. Using the native language, we learn to think, learn to communicate, and learn to express our feelings, needs, opinions, and attitudes. It can improve language accuracy, fluency, and clarity as it is the continuous source of supply of thoughts and ideas. Language teaching is a very complex process, especially in the case of a foreign language. When we start teaching a child before he reaches three year of age, he does not realize what he says or does, but by the time he reaches the age of seven or eight, the mother tongue takes root and he becomes aware of what he does. He can express his thoughts and feelings to others. So, English can support and help at this level. This paper explores the use of mother tongue and translation in English teaching. All learners need native language support in learning English but the amount of native language support depends on the students' proficiency in English. The main objective of this study is to measure the effect of mother tongue in teaching. The results of the study have revealed the fact that the use of mother tongue has a significant influence in teaching English.

Keywords: Influence, Mother tongue, Native, Teaching, Language, Inference, Learner etc.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Overview

In everyday life English Language has become increasingly important. It is used and practiced everywhere in the world. In India and in Arabic countries, English language is the major factor affecting students' performance at university as well as at the workplace, where fluency in English language has become an indispensable requirement. The best time for students to master this language is during their school education. However, there are major impediments that affect students' performance in learning English language, such as lack of practice, lack of motivation among certain categories of students and lack of supporting facilities/materials in some schools. As a matter of fact, it is demonstrated in the present work. Social and economic factors can potentially have a formative effect on students' performance. The need for common language in diverse situations has become necessary. English has been the most common link language. So, the teaching of English has taken special significance. However, English language, now a days has become language of globalization process. The impact of mother tongue is a natural phenomenon and a quite suitable term for the language. A child acquires his first language through variety of mechanisms. Some believe that the child acquires L1 mainly through imitation: parents, adults and peer group around him. The language used by the parents creates difference in the accent of the second language pronunciation. It acts as a barrier for smooth spoken communication in second language. Language is a medium of communication within the family and society. In the past, the prevalence of grammar-translation method led to the extraordinary phenomenon that students were unable to speak and communicate fluently even after having studied the language (L2) for a long time. The translation was found as uncommunicative, boring, pointless, difficult and irrelevant. This idea led to

the avoidance of use of mother tongue in the language classrooms (Harmer, 2001:131). Whereas, recent research findings, on the issue, emphasized that mother tongue has been used as a resource for promotion of language learning. Translation has been found capable of developing three qualities essential to all language learning: accuracy, clarity and flexibility (Ross, 2000:61) and facilitates the acquisition of "accent mobility". Translation is, sometimes, referred to as the fifth language skill alongside the other four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW). Mother tongue may serve social and cognitive functions (Carless, 2008:331) and relates to learner's identity. Therefore, the use of mother tongue and translation can serve as a tool for improving language skills.

The researcher noticed during her experience in teaching English courses that most of the students lack one or the other mentioned abilities or some of them. Depending on this, the researcher conducted the research. Influence of mother tongue in teaching English is chosen by the researcher. Though, it is well known that many research works have already been submitted in the field of mother tongue interference as general, yet the researcher wants to reveal the problems that give the impression that the students are not able to write correct sentences due to this impact. However, those learners cannot gain access to the language resources required to express the desired meaning.

1.2 Problem of the Study

Language is said to be one of the most important features that distinguishes human beings from other living beings. It is the basis of communication among human beings. It is the most important and effective key to the achievements of humans. Researchers have carried out studies on identifying ways and means showcasing the decline rate of student academic achievements in English language. These research studies have dealt with curriculum issues, effective teaching method, study habit, student- friendly instructional material and so on. Out of all these studies, there is no convincing evidence on the impact as well as the effect of using mother tongue.

1.3. Research Question

1. Does the use of mother tongue affects English learning process of the non-native university students?
2. Does the mother tongue make any impact while teaching English?
3. What strategies should be used to improve the performance of students for learning English language?

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The main concern here is to show how mother tongue affects either positively or negatively by teaching English language. The importance of the mother tongue, in the education of child, is over emphasized. It is a paramount fact that a child's education begins in his mother tongue, since it is the language of his family as well as related to the cultural roots of the family. The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of using mother tongue in teaching English language.

1.5 Definition of Terms

It is an intensive study of the aspect of behavior, either at one period of time or over a long period of time. The case study method provides an opportunity to collect detailed information that may not be observable while using other research techniques.

II. FACTORS AFFECTING MOTHER TONGUE INFLUENCE

Journal of Interdisciplinary Cycle Research pointed out that influence of mother tongue means interference of child's first language in learning the pronunciation of other language. Interference of linguistic and structural elements of the mother tongue puts hurdles in the process of learning of second language. When speaker has good command over two languages i.e. mother tongue (first language) and English (second language) then there is no problem of interference. When learner is not enough mastered in second language, his mother tongue dominates the second language and that leads to interference.

Mother tongue influence is one of the current problems in foreign language teaching. Brown (1994) said that there are several factors that affect learners' pronunciation, i.e. Native language, age, experience, innate phonetic ability, identity, language ego, motivation, and concern for good pronunciation. Studies tell that native language interference is the main influential factor in affecting the learner's pronunciation. Bose (2005) stated that most of the pronunciation errors are due to the interference of mother tongue. Language learners use the sounds of their mother tongue instead of those of their target language. Ladefoged (2001), Carter & Nunan (2001) mentioned that mother tongue has clear influence on learning (L2) second language pronunciation. Where L1 and L2 rules are in conflict, errors are expected to be committed by foreign learners.

Avery & Ehrlich (1992) stated that the sound features of the learners' first language are transferred into the target language that results in mispronunciation. The mispronunciations of words by non-native speakers reflect the rules, stress, intonation and sound influence of their native language. The interesting fact is that most of them are unaware of the fact that they are speaking with mother tongue influence. It has been observed that mother tongue influence has nothing to do with intelligence, age, knowledge of grammar and vocabulary or level of education. Many learners, who study English as their second language, have mother tongue influence on their English pronunciation. The degree of mother tongue influence varies from speaker to speaker depending on various factors such as home, teachers, exposure, environment etc. Here is an effort to identify the reasons for mother tongue influence in English pronunciation and suggestions to overcome them.

2.1 English Language Performance

The spread of English was stated by Salameh, (2012.9) in which he distinguishes three circles. The first is the Inner Circle, which includes countries where English is used as a native language as in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United States and the United Kingdom. The second is the Outer Circle, which includes countries where English is used as an official language such as South Africa, India, Nigeria and Zambia. The third is the Expanding Circle which includes countries where English is used as a foreign language such as Jordan, Japan, China and Syria (These are a few that belong to this category).

Currently, English Language is learned as a second language and used as an official language of the European Union. Mandarin, Chinese and Spanish are the 2nd and 3rd largest spoken languages after English language, respectively. There is a strong relationship found between English and Latin language because many words of English language are derived from Latin. Apart from Latin, there are a number of words from Norman, French and Old Norse language (Edward 2000). Currently, English Language has become the largest and most widely used language in the world. This is the only language that borrowed words from all over the world. According to estimation, an English dictionary has over 250,000 distinct words excluding scientific, technical and financial words and jargons. The English language has now arisen as the widely used official language in communication, science, information, business, technology and finance.

Salameh further adds that the sense and essence of true globalization can be found quite easily in this particular language which started in the late 18th century and is now dominating the entire world. English has become a dominating language in the United Kingdom (of course), the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand (Edward 2002). There is a marginal difference between the spoken and written English Language in these countries. It has been observed that in countries where English Language is used as the 2nd language, British English has been preferred to American English (Edward 2000). As a lingua franca of the past century and the new millennium, English is the most important means to have an access to the world's technical and intellectual resources. Although he recognizes it as a vestige of British Colonialism or the sign for the American cultural imperialism, English is now seen differently, it is less seen as a symbol of imperialism and more as a viable candidate for the world's most important international language.

The stance of learning English Language has been increasing tremendously well from the past few years. According to the statistics, every year there is an increment of around 40 percent in the people who are coming in the industry to learn English Language (Edward, 2000). Crystal, (1992) reports that non-native speakers of English comprise more than two thirds of its potential speakers, so it can be argued that English, in international setting, doesn't belong to any group of people. The performance of this particular language is comparatively more wonderful than any other languages of the world.

III. CONCLUSION

With all the benefits of the tool 'translation', which can be considered as the fifth tool, it can't be said that translation gives the proper and accurate meaning of the thoughts of the speaker. The quality of expressions in mother tongue is far better than in the translated form. It is comfortable to comprehend anything in mother tongue. Even when translated into English, the effect of mother tongue is clearly visible. Every day we are having many theories and researches by scholars in this field and have found the solutions as well. Still, there is a lot to do on this issue.

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