



Barriers of Language Learning in India

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Abstract:

Learning is a conscious process. By knowing the rules and having a conscious knowledge of grammar and vocabulary one has to learn language. In learning, situation has to be created whereas language acquisition takes place in a natural situation. Being a social creature human being needs to communicate with others. And here lies the importance of learning a language. Language is the best means of communicating thoughts, feelings and ideas. It is a learned arbitrary system of vocal symbols by means of which human beings interact and communicate. Except communicative functions, there are some other functions of language. According to Micheal Halliday, language has -instrumental, regulatory, interactional, personal, heuristic, imaginative and representational functions also. Again in view of Roman Jakobson, some other functions of language are referential, poetic, expressive, phatic etc. So language learning is of utmost importance in human life as well as in the field of education. Language plays an important role in the entire gamut of teaching learning process. It is the base of all knowledge. But this language learning is not problems free as no activity in human life is problem-free. Successful language learning depends to a great extend on successful teaching of language. Some of the important barriers of language learning are-the aim of language teaching is neglected; faulty methods of teaching; lack of infrastructure facility; taught like other subjects; overcrowded class; lack of competent teachers; non-availability of good textbooks; lack of confidence or fear of committing mistakes etc.

Keywords: Barriers, Acquisition, Vocal Symbols.

Introduction:

Learning is a conscious process. To promote learning situation has to be created. It is the product of formal instruction. By knowing the rules and having a conscious knowledge of grammar and vocabulary one has to learn language. In learning, situation has to be created whereas language acquisition takes place in a natural situation. The term 'language' is closely related to human life. Being a social creature human being needs to communicate with others. And here lies the importance of learning a language. For them, language is the best means of communicating thoughts, feelings and ideas. A language is a system of signs for encoding and decoding information. It is one of the unique possessions of man. One can win the heart of others by using a language. Language is called a social phenomenon. It has relevance only in a social setting. Thus, language plays an important role in human life. As a human being, all of us make use of it. From birth to death, we are

surrounded by it. Each community is said to have been formed by the activity of language. As a result, no society can function without language. It has a great influence in making man good and noble. Language is a learned arbitrary system of vocal symbols by means of which human beings interact and communicate. But language is not only the means of communication rather it has some other role to play. In this connection we can refer to Michael Halliday, who has mentioned six functions of language such as:

- (i) Instrumental functions of language: In this case language is used to fulfill the need of the speaker, such as obtaining of food, drink, comfort etc.
- (ii) Regulatory functions of language: Here, to influence the behavior of the other language is used. For example, commanding, request, or persuading sentences like-do help others, always be honest.
- (iii) Interactional functions of language: Language is used to develop social relationship and ease the process of interaction.
- (iv) Personal functions of language: To express the personal preferences and identity of the speaker, language is used. To express the feelings or opinions of the speaker, language is used.
- (v) Heuristic functions of language: Language is used to learn and explore the environment.
- (vi) Imaginative functions of language: To explore the imaginative power of children, here the language is used.

Again in view of Roman Jakobson, some other functions of language are referential, poetic, expressive, phatic, conative and metalingual. So language learning is of utmost importance in human life as well as in the field of education. Language plays an important role in the entire gamut of teaching learning process. It is the base of all knowledge. But this language learning is not problems free as no activity in human life is problem-free. Successful language learning depends to a great extent on successful teaching of language. Thus, there are some obstacles which hinder language learning. To find out these obstacles the present study is designed with the following objectives:

Objectives of the study:

- (i) To find out the problems faced by the learners in learning language and
- (ii) To suggest measures to overcome the problems.

Methodology of the study:

To work on the aforesaid objectives, the researchers have adopted the documentary analysis related to the present topic.

Analysis of data with regard to find out the problems faced by the learners in learning language:

As we know that field of education is not problems free. The same is the case with language learning. The path of language learning is full of obstacles. Here we are talking about language learning not language acquisition. That means for learning a language one needs to depend on the instructor. Hence, sometimes the obstacles arise from teaching part and that is why it is regarded that successful learning of a language depends to a great extent on the successful teaching of a language. Below the obstacles of language learning are discussed:

- (i) **The aim of language teaching is being neglected:** The basic aim of language teaching is to develop the four skills-listening, speaking, reading and writing and the literary appreciation. But many a times it is found that while teaching a language subject, the teacher takes away from the fact. The

teacher teaches only for the sake of completing the syllabus. In this situation the learners do not learn the language in the truest sense of the terms. Thus neither the skills of language nor the taste of literature is being developed in the learner. They only learn the language for the sake of examination.

- (ii) **Faulty Methods of Teaching:** Till date teachers are unaware of new methods, approaches and techniques of teaching a language subject. Very often they use traditional lecture method. It neglects the interaction of the learners. But interaction especially in the language class is of great importance. In an interactive language class the students get interested to learn the language in spite of its difficulty. But the scenario of our language class is something different. That's why students face difficulty in learning a language.
- (iii) **Apathy of new techniques and procedures:** Time is an ever changing factor which compels everything to change. The field of teaching learning process is not an exception. So with the passage of time, new methods and techniques of teaching should also be adopted. But sometimes it is found that the teachers are not interested to adopt new techniques as it may increase workload of the teacher. It becomes an obstacle to learn a language.
- (iv) **Lack of competent teachers:** Teacher is the heart of so called body 'education'. Teaching a language subject is not a joke. Sometimes due to lack of an expert teacher students fail to learn a language properly.
- (v) **Lack of Proper Teacher Education:** Teacher education is a vital part of education system. But it's a matter of regret that due importance is not given to skill development especially in case of skill subjects. The course of teacher education programme is not skill oriented rather a theoretical course. Thus after completing the training a teacher fails to teach a language subject properly which becomes a hindrance to the student to learn a language.
- (vi) **Non-availability of basic infrastructure:** It is one of the major obstacles in learning a language. Even if a competent teacher fails to teach well due to lack of infrastructure facilities. Though use of technology makes language learning easy and interesting but non-availability of it deprives the students from learning a language.
- (vii) **Taught like any other subjects:** One of the greatest obstacles in learning language is, it is taught like other subject. It is the inability of the teacher to understand the difference of teaching a content based subject and a skill based subject. So they teach a language subject just like other subjects. As a result the aim of learning a language is hampered.
- (viii) **Lack of use of technology:** Living in a technology dominated era we cannot take ourselves away from technology. Now-a-days, the use of technology in the field of education is a must. But very few teachers eagerly use technology in the classroom situation. They feel more comfortable in traditional lecture method. Thus, the learners are deprived of new technology which would help them to expand their knowledge horizon.
- (ix) **Less use of audio-visual-aids:** It's an admitted fact that due to lack of funds, expensive aids may not be used. But easily available teaching aids like-pictures, models, charts est. are also not used. Only during the training period the trainee-teachers use this aids for scoring marks but they do not use in the real classroom situation to avoid hard work.
- (x) **Non-availability of good text books:** Sometimes it is found that language text books are not designed keeping in mind the objectives of language leaning. Thus the students fail to achieve the desired goal of language learning.

- (xi) **Overcrowded Classroom:** To provide quality education the ratio between the teacher and the students should be maintained. But, the ratio of 1:40 is generally not maintained. This type of classroom hinders the quality delivery of any lesson. Language teaching is a challenging job because along with content skills should also be developed. That means individual care should be provided. But in an overcrowded classroom it is just next to impossible. Thus, overcrowded classroom is a big obstacle to the students in learning a language.
- (xii) **Lack of Interest among the learners to learn a language:** In most of the cases teacher follows traditional methods of teaching. This in turn fails to develop interest of learning a language among the learners. And without interest learning anything is tough.
- (xiii) **Lack of Interest among the learners to learn a language:** Motivation plays a vital role in teaching learning process. But lack of interest leads to low level of motivation.
- (xiv) **Examination oriented syllabus:** Language learning is like cycling, singing, dancing etc. So the syllabus should be framed to develop the skills rather than the content. But this is not the case with language learning. Hence, the students face problem in learning a language.
- (xv) **Traditional methods of examination:** Our examination system is basically to develop the cramming power of the students. To some extent writing skill is developed but the three other skills are being neglected. Hence, no attempt is made to realize the real aims of teaching a language subject through examination.
- (xvi) **Lack of confidence among the learners:** Out of fear of committing mistake, sometimes the students feel shy in public speaking. And without speaking language cannot be learnt.
- (xvii) **Lack of opportunity:** Practice makes man perfect. But sometimes students do not get this opportunity of using their language learnt; this situation generally takes place in learning second language.

Analysis of data with regard to suggest measures to overcome the problems:

Obstacles can easily be removed by adopting some remedial measures. To overcome the aforesaid problems various remedial measures should be taken under consideration. First of all while teaching a language subject the teacher should keep in my mind the aims and objectives of teaching a language; so that the students could achieve their desired goal of language learning. Teacher should use suitable methods and techniques to meet the needs of the learners. The field of teaching is dynamic. With the passage of time new methods and techniques take place. A teacher should always keep himself up-to-date to meet the challenges occurring in the field of education. In this way the students get the opportunity of learning a language without any obstacles. Twenty-first century is a technology dominated era. So to make language learning interesting, easy and attractive to the learners, technology should be merged to the general methods of language teaching. To overcome the monotonousness of language classroom and also to make language leaning interesting some audio-visual-aids should be used. Especially in a language class use of audio-visual aids is of great importance. It helps the teacher to convert the abstract ideas concrete. In this way students could become able to taste the literary aspects of language. In teaching learning process we are lagging behind competent teachers. This problem can be solved to some extend through proper teacher education programme. Due emphasis should be given to skill development instead of content, because language is a skill. Textbook the main source of learning a language should be designed keeping in mind the aims and objectives of learning language. Proper infrastructure facilities should also be provided to make language learning free of obstacles. Again, the syllabus should also be framed to promote language learning. Traditional methods of examination should also be changed to develop both linguistic skills as well literary appreciation. It is the role of teacher to create interest and motivate the learners to learn language by

developing confidence among the learners. Again, overcrowded classroom is a big hindrance to language learning. In this case the proportion of 1:40 should be maintained.

Major findings of the study:

After analyzing and interpreting the data, the researchers find the following findings:

- (i) While teaching sometimes the teachers fail to keep in mind the aims of teaching a language subject. They teach language just like other content based subjects. But language cannot be taught like other subjects because it is more skill oriented than content oriented. In such case the students fail to learn language in its truest sense of the terms.
- (ii) Sometimes there are lack of competent teachers and infrastructure facilities also.
- (iii) A skill can be learnt better in learning by doing method, but there is very less scope of learning language in this way so the learners get deprived of learning a language. Generally the teachers avoid using modern and up-to-date methods of teaching to reduce their own effort. They are also not interested in using audio-visual-aids.
- (iv) Individual attention should be received in learning language, but due to overcrowded classroom it is not possible.
- (v) Teachers fail to create interest of learning language among the learners as they are unable to motivate the students towards language learning.
- (vi) On the hand we have examination oriented syllabus and on the other hand examination is also not to develop linguistic skills or literary taste. That's why students lose interest of learning language.
- (vii) Language textbooks are not designed keeping in mind the objectives of learning a language.
- (viii) To overcome all these problems suggestive measures should be taken into consideration. At the very beginning the teacher should take care of the aims and objectives of language learning. Accordingly textbooks should also be designed and minimum infrastructure facilities should be provided to enrich the field of language learning. One of the major obstacles in language leaning is overcrowded classroom. So if the ratio of 1:40 is maintained then this problem can be solved. To overcome the problem of incompetent teacher due emphasis should be given on teacher education programme. By using audio-visual-aids the teacher can not only motivate the students towards learning but can lake the language learning easy and attractive. Syllabus and methods of examination should be made language development oriented.

Implications and conclusions of the study:

'Where there is will there is way'-if there is any problem then there must be some measures. The fact is that one has to find out the solution. Thus, the present study reveals that though language learning is full of many obstacles but these can easily be removed. The teacher, school authority as well as the government should work together to meet the desired goal. Of course the main responsibility goes to teacher. A teacher can change the entire scenario if he or she is dedicated to make the language learning obstacles free to the learners.

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