

Hesitation and Ambiguity – Major Constrains of LEP in the Heterogeneous Classroom

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Abstract

This paper highlights the problems faced by Second Language learners in spoken communication. The Limited English Proficient (LEP) students were able to write better than they speak. The hesitation becomes the major factor of the communication problem. The researcher focuses on the study of attitude of LEP towards English and their hesitation and ambiguity in communication. The objective of this study is to identify a suitable writing strategy for students who had their education in regional medium. The study deals with some of the problems these learners face while communicating in English, it aims at finding ways in which the learners' can be used as a resource to develop their communication.

Keywords: Hesitation, Ambiguity, Limited English Proficiency

Introduction

As communication is a complex process, it is desirable to take care of communication interference and the barriers in communication that may hamper the smooth flow of effective communication. These barriers may emanate from the sender/ receiver or the circumstances of

communication. However, we need to avoid them to become effective communicators. On a careful analysis the researcher has identified two major problems of communication, they are Hesitation and Ambiguity. Due to hesitation, they are unable to present themselves well in the interviews. They can't network effectively and hence miss out on a lot of opportunities. They are typically not able to pursue opportunities with the same fervor as their more confident and unabashed peers. A sentence is said to be ambiguous when the listener or reader interprets two meaning. Ambiguity however has a way of intruding into communication and subjecting ideas/messages to double or multiple semantic interpretations thereby resulting in semantic complexity and sometime leading to semantic confusion.

Ambiguity

In language, limited sounds are interwoven to form a greater number of colourful words satisfying our communicational needs, which pay way for formation of homophones in large quantities and limited grammatical rules and structures are repeatedly organised to form numerous phrases, sentences causing different semantic relations. These make it possible that ambiguity emerges in communication. A sentence is said to be ambiguous when the listener or reader interprets two meaning. Ambiguity sometimes is unavoidable. Joseph F. Kess and Ronald A. Hoppe have pointed in their book 'Ambiguity in Psycholinguistics' that upon careful consideration, one cannot but be amazed at the ubiquity of ambiguity in language.

The students though have good command over the language hesitate to talk in English because English is a language where any small mistake will lead the receiver to interpret two meanings. Ambiguity can therefore be a hindrance to effective communication. When the LEP students tend to commit ambiguity in the sentence, they have been laughed at in front of the classroom, which lead to hesitation in communication.

Hesitation

Even though the limited English Proficient students can write in English, they were not confident enough to talk in public. On careful analysis in the classroom, the researchers have found the four main factors which influence hesitation are:

- (1) Lack of vocabulary
- (2) Peer Pressure in the heterogeneous classroom
- (3) Prevalence of ambiguity in communication
- (4) Lack of exposure to English

The researcher has tried out different activities in the classroom to clear all the above-mentioned barriers. The teacher and the classroom ambiance play a major role in the learning process. To enhance the vocabulary of the students and to build confidence in them, the

researcher has tried out an activity - 'one word to one line'. Ten one words would be given to the students and they will be asked to say one line about the word in simple English. This activity created an impact on the students, followed by the active responds from the students, the slogan writing practice was given to them to improve their vocabulary.

To Enhance Vocabulary

LEP students hesitate to talk in English because they lack vocabulary and they lack clarity of grammatical rules. Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides the basis for understanding how well learners listen, speak, read and write. Without extensive vocabulary knowledge it is difficult to acquire fluency in a language. The researcher has taken slogan writing as one of the activities to enhance the vocabulary of the LEP students.

Slogans are short one-line statements which will be easy for the second language learners to begin the learning process. Slogans don't follow the normal sentence pattern, so they need not worry about grammatical rule. Slogans which are short and striking, memorable phrase used in advertising. Slogans are concise and clear. LEP students were trained on LSRW of slogans. Slogans are Direct, Simple, Brief, Vigorous and Lucid so it was easy for the LEP students to grasp the language sooner. Instead of learning a lengthy sentence pattern LEP students were fed with short sentences which they hear often in famous advertisements repetitively. This slogan writing practice will enable the students to learn new vocabulary.

Methodology

This study has been conducted among the LEP studying in the Engineering College. Slogan writing was the main focus of the study. 50 slogans with their product have been given to the students and various activities have been conducted on them to develop their vocabulary and confidence.

Participants

Second Language Learner and the Limited English Proficient First year students from five different classes have been selected based on their performance in their Periodical exams. 9 students from Mechanical Engineering, six students from Civil Engineering, five students from Electrical and Electronic Engineering and six students from Computer Science Engineering, totally 26 students have been selected for this case study. Out of 26 students 10 were girls and 16 were boys.

Procedure

Primarily, 50 slogans were given to the students. They were asked to learn all the slogans. Initially not all the students have shown interest towards learning, they continued their hesitation

and dullness. To create a learning Environment and to inculcate the learning process in them, few activities and exercises were added in the sessions. They are as follows.

1. Fill in the blank
2. Replace the words
3. Multiple choice question
4. Synonyms
5. Frame slogans
6. Guess the product using the slogan

The questions were framed only on the 50 slogans given to them. It was a ten hour session class. Many quizzes were also conducted in the classroom to create a competitive spirit in the learning and to encourage them to come out of their hesitation towards English language. Students were encouraged to work in groups. They were asked to set question for the other group. This activity helped the students to face the peer pressure. They were trained to handle peer pressure in a healthy competition.

Results and Discussions

The data obtained from the following activities have been analysed. Based on the findings of data analysis, few advantages students faced were discussed below:

1. They tend to learn new vocabulary easily as they were aware of the products and brands in the market.
2. Slogans don't follow the normal sentences pattern so they were not worried about grammar correction.
3. Since slogans are written in short and simple sentence, it was easy for the LEP students to cope up with learning process.
4. It provides the start up for the students who hesitate to talk in English.
5. When they write their own slogans, it builds the confidence in the students.
6. They have learnt to handle peer pressure, since they worked in group.
7. They formed simple, short sentences which avoided ambiguity to an extent.

The purpose of the communication is to issue, receive, interpret, act on commands and to share information. This can more easily and effectively be achieved by being," Direct, Simple, Brief, Vigorous and Lucid". The slogan writing practice has helped the students to convey their thoughts and emotion in simple, short sentences without ambiguity and build their confidence to work in group.

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