Cross-cultural Influences of the English Language

Dr .Dinesh[1]

Principal[1]

S R P A Adarsh Bhartiya College[1] Pathankot[1], Punjab[1]

ABSTRACT

The paper is a discussion of verbal and non-verbal communication issues. This paper seeks to demonstrate that values and customs are manifested not only in non-verbal communication but also in verbal communication in that native language influences the speakers' ways of using a non-native language. Language: When people do business, they need to be speaking the same language. Even if two folks are not naturals of a certain language, there must exist a certain consistency in the verbiage in order to avoid some potentially catastrophic circumstances. An increase in multicultural interactions presents language challenges. When organizations communicate with the large number of people who speak the languages other than English - misunderstandings may occur. In language learning classroom learners need to engage with the ways in which context affects what is communicated and how. Both the learner's culture and the culture in which meaning is created or communicated have an influence on the ways in which possible meanings are understood.

Keywords: *Cross-cultural, English Language, second language*

INTRODUCTION

The English language is considered, and widely accepted as the international language, so knowing how to use this language is an indispensable ability. When one decides to learn English as a second language, it is important to realise that he or she is also learning about the culture the language is tied upon. It is often said that language and culture are two inseparable aspects of society. One may think that language without culture is nothing and there is no a culture without a language. The social and cultural impact of EIL is a wide field encompassing many often-conflicting issues, especially with regard to whether it has been advantageous or disadvantageous to former colonies, and whether this continues to be the case at present with unprecedented globalization. The culture of the second language speakers does not necessarily affect the culture of the first language speakers. By this I mean, even though the L1 speakers are affected by the L2 culture, it does not mean their L1 culture is affected or changed. Therefore, there are times that second language learners add to their existing culture or even become more civilized by being exposed to different cultures while not necessarily losing their own culture.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this paper, the research and the ability to successfully foster, improve and form relationships with the members of different cultures is known as cross-cultural communication.. It is based on other culture's manners, values, decision-making practices, social structure and perceptions, and the way of communication of group members - in person, verbal or non verbal or in writing.

1. For understanding to take place, both people must have some form of knowledge or awareness regarding the norms or customs that exist in each other's culture.

2. It is essential that people understand the potential problems of cross-cultural communication and make a conscious effort to overcome these problems and it is important to understand that one's efforts will not always be successful, and adjust one's behaviour appropriately.

CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Communication is the process by which people exchange their views, meanings or information which they want to convey. In each communication there is an involvement of message sender and message receiver. Communication also depends on a person' s (sender's and receiver's) cultural background and is not the same " " for each person. Many times the same word differs in meaning. It is because of the difference in cultural background of two or more than two people who are involved in communication. Therefore, it demonstrates that the greater the difference in background between senders and receivers, the greater the difference in meanings attached to particular words and behaviours. The communication process is a continuous process of sharing of meanings with people. [1]

In cross-cultural communication, people from one culture share his/her views, information or messages with

people of other culture. Cross-cultural miscommunication occurs with the confusion or misunderstanding between people who belong to different cultures and when the sender's intended message is not clear to the receiver who is from another cultural background. Therefore, the chances of cross-cultural miscommunication becomes more with the increase in difference between the sender s and the receiver s cultures. Many times" " misinterpretation, misevaluation and misperception leads to cross-cultural miscommunication. Hence, cross-cultural communication can become cross-cultural miscommunication when there is lack of understanding. The cultural difference lowers the precision level of conveying a message. [2] Cultural behaviour study, body language study and societal background study according to culture helps to avoid these kinds of problems. Efficient cross-cultural communication can motivate the behaviour of the people regarding coping with the other environment, society, culture and people. The foreign language teaching classrooms helps the learners to develop their insight regarding the differences in the language. So, cultural study in target language learning atmosphere motivates the learners

1.Accept wider range for the perception among individuals of different culture.
2. Create comfortable and enjoyable teaching classes that inform the learners about the possible mistakes during interpretation, communication, comprehension and translation.

3.Cross cultural communication help and support in maintaining prosperity and peace in the world
4.Facilitate communication and co-operation.

5.Increase the communication ability of the learner with other culturally different individuals.
6.Increase the international and intercultural understanding level.

7.Mutual understanding and enrichment of language, business,,,socio-political affairs etc.[3]

8.Recognize and understand the linguistic and behavioral patterns of the target and the native culture properly.

9.To achieve unity in the field of language learning and teaching.

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

One important factor to maintain harmonious relationships with others is to be polite with others. There is a little difference in the usage of polite words between Indian and English. Though it is true that in every culture, people use polite language to be polite, when and what to say make a difference. It can be very impolite not to add the polite words when one is supposed to. Take "Thank you" for example. When they receive help from others, and if it is only a minor help, people always omit that. However, in western countries, it is used in a much broader context. Apart from when getting help, they use it on occasions like buying things, receiving a call, or just for the attendance in a party. It sometimes puzzles the Indian, when a westerner says 'thank you" after we sell things to them. For we think it should be we who need to say that, and we sometimes respond that "thank me for what". [4]

This kind of misunderstanding is due to the ignorance of other's culture. In fact, "thank you" for westerners does not only show the gratitude in our understanding, rather, it has been used as a custom and of course, they sometimes are prepared for the others to say that. If we treat this situation the same as we Indians do, it will not be very polite. There is another point regarding to the difference in using "Thank you". We Indians will not use it when family members or relations help us out and just bear the gratitude in mind. For Indians are more introverted in showing feelings. However, in western countries, people are more open in showing feelings, so they will not omit that even to their parents. This different language expression concerning polite words is caused by the different culture.

CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON READING

The reading process is not simply the repetition and reappearance of the language knowledge which the students already have, but it is a complicated process under the stimulations of outside information to decode, recognize, analyze, judge and infer the material through the cognitive system. So, it is critical for us to catch the nonverbal information, such as: the background information about humanism, history, geography and the traditional local customs, etc. Linguistic knowledge can affect one's reading, but cultural factors playa more important role in the reading process. Most of the real and serious reading barriers are not only from the language knowledge itself, but also caused by the cultural differences between the target language and our mother tongue. [5] Cultural differences exist in background information, words, sentence sand text structures, all of which are going to become potential barriers in reading matters. Sometimes we find that the students may recognize and understand the meaning of each word in the text, but they are still not so clear about the meaning of the whole sentences or paragraphs. One of Churchill s speeches during the Second World War is a very typical example of this case. In his speech, he used his private secretary's words to express himself: "After dinner, when I was thinking on the croquet lawn with Mr. Churchill, he reverted to this theme, and I asked whether for him, the arch anti-Communist, this was not bowing down in the house of Rimmon. Mr. Churchill replied, "Not at all. I have

only one purpose, the destruction of Hitler, and any life is much simplified thereby. If Hitler invaded Hell, I would make at least a favourable reference to the devil in the House of Commons." In the above paragraph, Churchill quoted three religious allusions: the first one is 'bow down in the house of Rimmon' which comes from the 'Bible'. That means, 'doing things against one's willingness'; the second one is 'Hell'; and the third one is 'the devil'. [6]

If we don't know the three allusions, we can't fully understand that Churchill likened Communist USSR to the 'Hell' and the Soviet Communist to the 'devil'. In the use of the religious allusions in this paragraph, Mr. Churchill not only showed his anti-Communist stand, but also avoided annoying the Soviet Union Communist directly. So the real meaning of this paragraph is that his support to the USSR is for the salvation of the human beings, and it does not mean that he has changed his anti -communist stand. So we can see that the knowledge of language itself cannot solve all the problems in reading. People's works are always related with the culture of their nations, especially related allusions or usage, which we are not familiar with. That reminds us that we should pay attention to the cultural influence in reading.[7]

LINGUISTIC INFLUENCES IN INDIA

Previous studies have reported on the relevance of linguistic knowledge to interpret non-literal speech.Adults generally interpret non-literal speech through paralinguistic and kinesic features like facial expressions, gestures, intonation and volume. These cues are used to convey emotion and intent; they draw attention to the nuances of meaning in communicative discourse by supplementing oral speech with nonverbal meaningful information, signifying to the listener that additional meaning is embedded in the utterance that is not fully communicated through the oral statement alone. As an example, verbal utterances spoken in a low, dry tone can indicate a speaker's ironic intent by accentuating a contradiction to an emotionally charged statement, such as commenting, "Isn't this a beautiful day?" during a disruptive wind storm. The context of the situation, the utterance imbued with emotion, and the presence of intonation collectively attempt to convey an incompatible literal interpretation of the spoken statement with the speaker's intention. [8]

However, language use varies among individuals and cultures. There is not a uniform formula to communicate non-literal language that transcends individual difference. Linguistic development is fundamentally influenced by socio cultural contexts and experiences. Language development is unique to each individual. Moreover, the language input received from life experiences facilitates acquisition at varying degrees; this is particularly relevant for non-literal language processing. To illustrate, in a study that analyzes children's non-literal language development, Capelli, Nakagawa, and Madden contrast children s and adults abilities to process non-literal language (sarcasm). They explain that children are less reliant on context to understand non-literal language than they are on international cues. They highlight, however, that children are distinct from adults in their reliance on intonation to interpret sarcastic utterances.[9]

Adults, they contend, recognize non-literal language use, namely sarcasm, by interpreting the context in order to understand the speaker's intention. In their conclusion, Capelli et al. maintain that children can recognize sarcasm with international cues because "children would note the negative tone of voice and use it to infer correctly the speaker s basic intention (to insult or convey something critical) without ever recognizing that the statement was non-literal". Lastly, they suggest that children's initial dependence on international cues may be a step towards a more cultivated comprehension of ironic language in the developmental process of language acquisition. Conversely, in their study, Winner, Windmueller,Rosenblatt, Bosco, Best, and Gardner declare that children do not depend on intonation to interpret an utterance as sarcastic, at least up until age eight. From the data, they propose that children s miscomprehension of sarcasm is more affected by the obvious violation of truth in the relationship between what the speaker says and what the speaker means (Winner et al.,). Filippova and Astington corroborate these findings, suggesting that semantic cues are more influential in accurate ironic interpretation than intonation. Furthermore, Winner et al. resolve, "when the sentence meaning directly contradicts the facts, children are more likely not only to notice the discrepancy but to recognize the utterance as non-literally intended

Therefore, when there is a disjunction between the context of the situation and the non-literal utterance, children can identify the speaker's intention and then interpret the statement as non-literally intended, thereby continuing to engage in the conversation. Language experience influences the use of intonation to convey sarcasm ,according to Cheang and Pell. In their cross-linguistic study to compare how English and Cantonese speakers recognize sarcasm, they expound that there are particular, though different, acoustic markers which signal sarcastic speech in both languages. Their experiment reveals that sarcasm is more easily identified in one's native language, and more problematic to recognize in a foreign language. Cheang and Pell submit that the difficulty in identifying sarcastic utterances in an unfamiliar language might be due to transferring a generalized conceptualization of sarcastic interpretation in their L1 to all other languages, consequently misattributing sarcastic intent in cross-linguistic contexts.

An example of the potential to misattribute sarcastic features can be seen in the researchers' study in which both Cantonese and English speakers rely on acoustic features like fundamental frequency to infer a speaker s

intention and attitude. Despite the mutual reliance on acoustic features, the respective languages display opposing inferences: Cantonese speakers use a high F0 to convey sarcasm, whereas English speakers do the opposite. From this study, Cheang and Pell conclude that speakers should be aware of the language community they are in and adapt their acoustic cues accordingly. Their experiment determines that beginning L2 learners might experience constraints on their abilities to process extralinguistic cues (e.g., facial expressions, intonation, gestures) that signal irony because they are concentrating on vocabulary and syntax. In contrast, more advanced L2 learners focus less on rudimentary linguistic knowledge, enabling them to be more attentive to contextual cues that help them to recognize ironic utterances. Thus, Shively et al. conclude that identifying the use of irony improves with proficiency and experience in the target language.[10][11][12]

CONCULSION

(a) Understand your own culture: Improve communication with others by increasing awareness of your own culture and its influences on your beliefs, values, and behaviour r patterns. Recognize that your cultural background and experiences shape how you think, what you value and how you communicate a language .

(b) Identify and adapt to language differences: If you are communicating with persons from another culture, learn how that culture's verbal and nonverbal languages differ from your own. Observe and learn the meaning of nonverbal communication signal such as facial expressions, social distance for conversing and hand gestures. Avoid nonverbal signals that may be offensive.

(c) Keep an open mind and respect diversity: Learn about other cultures, beliefs, and customs without judging them by your own cultural identity and unexamined biases. This is not to suggest that you change your beliefs or disrespect your own culture, but rather that you recognize that cultural values affect beliefs and behaviours and that understanding how others interpret verbal and nonverbal language helps your communication receive the intended response.

REFERENCES

[1]. MacIntyre, P. D. & Doucette, J. (2010). Willingness to communicate and action control. System, 38, 161-171.

[2] MacIntyre, P. D., & Noel, K. A. (1996). Using social-psychological variables to predict the use of language learning strategies. Foreign Language Annals, 29, 272-286. |

[3] Pang, V.O. (2001). Multicultural Education: A Caring-Centred, Reflective Approach. Boston: McGraw-Hill. |
[4] Richards, Jack C. and MayriSukwiwat (1983): "Language Transfer and Conversational Competence". Applied Linguistics 4 (2): 113-125 |

[5] Crystal, D. (1997). A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics. Oxford: Blackwell publisher Ltd.
[6] Guixia Sun. (1997). Instructing Foreign Language Teaching from Social Linguistic Aspects. Foreign Language Teaching and Research. Qinghua University Press.

[7] Brown, J. D. (1995). The Elements of Language Curriculum: A Systematic Approach to Program Development. Boston, MA: Heinle&Heinle Publishers

[8] Huang, H., Chern, C., & Lin, C. (2009). EFL learners use of online reading strategies and comprehension of‟ texts: An exploratory study. Computers & Education, 52, 13-26. doi: 10.1016/j.compedu.2008.06.003

[9] Adkin, N. R., &Ozanne, J. L. (2005). The Low Literate Consumer. Journal of Consumer Research, 32, 93-105.

[10] Bartel, C.A. (2001) „Social Comparisons in Boundary-spanning Work: Effects of Community Outreach on Members Organizational Identity and Identification , Administrative Science Quarterly 46: 379–413.‟ ‟

[11] Deng, Yanchang& Liu Runqing. (1989). Language and Culture--Comparison between English and Indian. Beijing Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

[12] Yuhui Yang. (1997). The Influence of Cultural Elements in English Teaching. Foreign Language Teaching and Research. Qinghua University Press.