CHAPTER - II

COMMON ERRORS IN ORAL EXPRESSION - MEANING AREAS AND IMPORTANCE OF STUDY OF COMMON ERRORS

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II.1   INTRODUCTION

Teaching is communication between two or more persons who influence each other by their ideas and learn something in the process of interaction. Language is also primarily used to communicate thoughts, ideas, feelings etc. The communicative aspect of the language should never be ignored. The "Syllabus for Primary Education-1988" was prepared in the State of Maharashtra following the 'National Policy on Education-1986' and the Text Book Bureau, has lauched a new series of books for standard based on this syllabus. The main focus of the new syllabus is on communication skill. In early stage of language learning, emphasis is being laid on developing oral skills as they facilitate learning the skills of reading and writing. The present syllabus emphasises the crucial role of oral work which should be freely resorted during the entire period of learning English as it is the quickest means of practising and ensuring assimilation of new construction and usages.

II.2   IMPORTANCE OF ORAL EXPRESSION

Language is seen as a part of human psychology, a particular sort of behaviour, the behaviour which has its principal function that of communicaton". Emphaasising this principal function of language. Bloch and Trager call it a 'System of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group co-operates '?, while Whitehall defines it as "the patterned, rhythmed and segmented code of vocal signals".[1]

Perhaps the most basic contribution has been definition which state that language is speech of its users. Principal feature of language is - Language is speech (vocal).

Essentially oral approach to language - John Locke (1632-1704) knew the virtue of the oral approach. " Language , he says" were not made by rules or art but by accident and the common use of the people. [2]

There must be concentration on speech and listening and speaking must precede reading and writing.

Language is a natural activity. Oral communication is the most natural use of learning. The mothertongue begins with speech. It is, therefore, psychologically sound to begin a second language orally. There are also other important considerations as follows :

i) Speech leading to other skills

Many modern language teaching experts subscribe to the view that speech is the necessary starting point., even for the more 'profitable' skills of reading and writing.

ii) Internalisation of Grammar

There is very close correspondence between the phonological and the grammatical structure of English. When we speak at normal conversational speed, we say one phrase (syntactic group) at a time, and the pauses in our speech usually falls in places where two such phrase join. Speech thus vividly reflects the grammar and a learner practising the language orally absorbs this grammar unconsciously. here are practical advantages of oral approach.

Apart from the psychological reasons given above and the social necessity of developing good speech habits, the oral approach has certain practical advantages.

i) Economy of Time and Effort

Pratctice is essential in language learning. If this practice is done orally, a greater number of repetitions can be made by each pupil in a given time than would be possible in writting. This also means less work, both for the pupils and the teachers.

ii)   Can be introduced from the Begining

For practice through writing it is necessary to wait till the pupils have learned to form the letter of the alphabet and it is usually a long time before they acquire any degree of Mastery in this difficult skill.

iii) Instant correction

Mistakes are no longer regarded as dangerous pitfalls; on the contrary, they are considered valuable in as much as they help the learner to form his own adhoc rules by compairing the correct and the wrong form. Experience, shows that it is often more difficult to'unlearn' a bad habit than to learn a good one.

iv) Easier to correct

Correction is not only far easier and less shocking to the pupil, the teacher can also correct the whole class at once. When he corrects the mistake of one pupil, other hear it and learn the correct form without having to go over their own writing once again.

v) Simultaneous Development of Two Basic Skills

Through oral practice two basic language skills, namely, listening and speaking can be developed simultaneously. These two skills are so basic that knowing a language is often defined as the ability to use the language orally, the ability to read and write being ragarded as refinement associated with education.

vi) Automatic Response

Mastery of a language demands 'unthinking' response so far as the language demands. 'Unthinking response so far as the language forms are concerned the mind being left feee to organise the thoughts and ideas to be communicated.

vii) Motivating for the slow learner

Some pupils do not have sufficient self confidence to start writing without the help of the teacher. In oral work such pupils are carried through by the enthusiasm of the classmates and are encouraged to use the language without inhibition.

viii) Easier to Evaluate

An oral test may be difficult tool to handle in large scale public examination and for precise evaluation but it is an extremely handy device for informal classroom testing.

II.3   COMMON ERRORS IN ORAL EXPRESSION

Comon errors here means the mistakes occur frequently in oral expression of teacher. trainees. Even the good teachers make mistakes.

'To err is human' is a well known proverb. No one is exception to this proverb.

There are so many reasons for committing errors. Due to these reasons pupil commit errors in oral expression as learning a foreign language is difficult task for students.

By the time, school age is reached, normal child is well integrated into his/her immediate familiar and local speech community and they intermingle their English, at least modify their English in their directions. So the detection of error and weakness in languages is occupied disease of teacher and examiners of English.

II.4   AREAS OF ERRORS

Errors of oral expression can be classified in many ways. One of the ways in which they can be classified is as follows :

Individual errors

These errors are common to both native and second language learners. They are due to nervous reaction to personal, physilogical or physiological condition.

In simple language we can call them errors of thought repetition of ideas, omission of words, misunderstanding of ideas are regarded as the error of thought.

General errors

General errors are common to all learner irrespective of differences in source language structure.

Speaking a foreign language like English correctly is found very difficult for learner. So learner made so many errors while speaking.

Second type of classification is -

Interference Errors -

A learner when faced with the need to communicate will have recourse to what ever linguistic knowledge he has at his command which will increase the likelihood of successful communication. If he lacks the requisite knowledge of the Target Language to achieve successful communication, then he will have recourse to Mother Tongue to compensate this deficiency.

- Inter language errors, are those which are caused by the interference of the learner's mother tongue.

- Each idea which a learner needs to express at first comes to his mind in his own language. Thinking in foreign language is not possible for him.

Intralingual errors

Errors which do not derive from another language. These errors occur regardless of the learners language background.

II.4 A) GRAMMATICAL ERRORS

The chief aim of the teaching of English is to develope comprehension and direct expression. Hence teaching the formal aspect of Grammar in not so important but the functional ascpect that is

explanation of the usage of the linguistic items may be done as a short cut to quick understanding. Grammar is now occupying less and less important position in the thinking of Modern Educationalists. But basic knowledge of grammatical rules is essential. Primary and fundamental rules should be carefully observed. Misuse of articles, pronouns, verbs, tense sequence, adjectives nouns, auxiliaries, prepositions, phrase and clauses are the errors of grammar.

II.4 A.1) ERRORS OF ARTICLES

There are no 'articles' in Marathi language and in using articles there are so many rules and exceptions so the students frequently confuse. They generally made errrors in the use of articles.

1) Incorrect -   Kalidas is Shakespeare of India

Correct -   Kalidas is a Shakespeare of India.   -

- We use 'a' or 'an' when proper noun is use in the sense of a common noun.

2) Incorrect -   The honesty is the best policy.

Correct -   Honesty is the best policy.

- The definite article is omitted beforfe abstract nouns.

3) Incorrect -   Nile is one of the longest rivers of the word.

Correct -   The Nile is one of the longest rivers of the world.

- The definite article the is placed before the names of rivers or oceans etc.

II.4.A.2 ERRORS OF PRONOUNS

A pronoun is a word used instead of a noun.

Pupil made following errors in using pronouns.

Misuse of pronous -

1) <u>Incorrect</u> -   This book is <u>my.</u>

   <u>Correct</u> -   This book is <u>mine.</u>

2) <u>Incorrect</u> -   Every one should be faitful to <u>their</u> organization.

   <u>Correct</u> -   Everyone should be faithful to <u>his</u> organization.

- Each, every, none are singular words. So pronous like 'his' or 'her' are used according to reference.

II.4.A.3 ERRORS OF VERBS

A verb is a word used to tell or assert something about some person or thing.

Pupils commit mistakes while using verbs.

1) <u>Incorrect</u> -   Kavita <u>is</u> absent for two weeks.

   <u>Correct</u> -   Kavita <u>has been</u> absent for two weeks.

   - Present Perfect continuous tense is used for an action which began at some time in the past and is still continuing.

2) <u>Incorrect</u> -   Geeta <u>shall</u> answer my question.

   <u>Correct</u> -   Geeta <u>will</u> answer my question.

- 'Shall' is used in the first person and 'will' in the second and third person to express pure future.

3) Incorrect - He had <u>put on</u> a cotton shirt yesterday.

    Correct - He had <u>worn</u> a cotton shirt yesterday.

    - 'Putting on clothes' refers to the act of dressing. Once the act is over, then the clothes are 'worn'.

II.4.4) ERRORS OF TENSE SEQUENCE

(Incorrect use of tense)

The tenses are treated with almost equal despair by the students.

The following are the errors of tenses -

1) Incorrect - I know that the earth <u>went</u> round the Sun.

    Correct - I know that the earth <u>goes</u> round the Sun.

    - Universal truth are always in the present tense.

2) Incorrect - My colleague hinted that he <u>wants</u> to resign.

    Correct - My colleague hinted that he <u>wanted</u> to resign.

    - If the verb in the principals clause is in the past tense, the verb in the dependent clause should be in the past tense.

II.4.5 ERRORS OF ADJECTIVES

Adjectives are words used to qualify nouns. They do so by describing or indicating or enumerating what is denoted by the noun. Errors of adjectives can be located as -

1) Incorrect - Sharmila is the most cleverest girl in our class.

   Correct - Sharmila is the cleverest girl in our class.

   - Double superlative is wrong.

2) Incorrect - She prefers milk than tea.

   Correct - She prefers milk to tea.

   - We used 'to' and not than.

II.4.6 ERRORS OF NOUNS

A noun is a word used as the name of a person, place or thing.

Students may make the following errors of nouns-

1) Incorrect - She is good at Mathematic.

   Correct - She is good at Mathematics.

   - Politics, Physics, Mathematics, always take 's' after them, but they take singular verbs.

2) Incorrect - The cattles are a nuisance on our streets.

   Correct - The cattle are a nuisance on our streets.

- Collective nouns like dozen pair, cattle, though singular in form are always used in the plural.

II.4.7 ERRORS OF AUXILIARIES

An auxiliaries is a helping verb used to make the form of another verb.

Pupil made following mistakes in using auxiliaries.

<u>Incorrect</u> - I use to live there when I was a gilr.

<u>Correct</u> - I used to live there when I was a girl.

- 'Used to' used of habits or states that existed in the past.

  'Use to' construction is wrong.

<u>Incorrect</u> - We <u>must</u> help our neighbours.

<u>Correct</u> - We <u>ought to help</u> our neighbours.

- Must expressesNecessity or obligation - but ought (to) expresses moral obligation or desirability.

II.4.8 ERRORS OF PREPOSITIONS

A prepostion is a word used with a noun or a pronoun to show how the person or thing denoted by the noun or pronoun stands in relation to something else.

- The prepositions are often presented as a category of baffling inactability whose usage cannot be described or explained.

- Errors under prepositions involved wrong choice, omission or insertions. the prepositions mostly involved were in, on, at, of with and from.

e.g. 1) <u>Incorrect</u> - He left for Calcutta <u>in</u> train.

<u>Correct</u> - He left for Calcutta <u>by</u> train.

2) <u>Incorrect</u> - This is the same girl I told you.

<u>Correct</u> - This is the same girl I told you <u>about</u>.

- Unnecessary omission of prepositions.

e.g. 3) <u>Incorrect</u> - She told <u>to</u> him not to harass her.

<u>Correct</u> - She told him not to harass her.

- Unnecessary insertion of prepositions.

II.4.9   ERRORS OF PHRASES

Examine the group of words 'in a corner'. It makes sense but not complete sense. Such a group of words, which makes sense but not complete sense is called a phrase.

The following errors is the error of phrases -

<u>Incorrect</u> - He slapped me <u>upon the face</u>

<u>Correct</u> - He slapped me <u>on the face</u>

'On' is used in speaking of things at rest and 'upon' of things which are in motion.

II.4.10   ERRORS OF CLAUSES

A group of words which forms part of sentence and contain a subject and a predicate is called a clause. The following is the error of clause.

Incorrect -   I think you have make a mistake.

Correct -   I think you have made a mistake.

- Third form of verb (i.e. past participle) is used after 'have' 'has' or 'had'.

II.4.B) CONSTRUCTIONAL ERRORS

Under constructional pattern the error were mostly of the syntax i.e. omission, word order, inflection structural words, questioning or insert unwanted element.

Incorrect use of words, wrong construction, wrong and incomplete questions, variety of lacking in sentence patterns are the errors of language. This is the effect of lack of knowledge of grammatical rules.

The living language occasionly out runs the rules of grammar but fundamental rules of grammar should be carefully look after.

II.4.B.1)   ERRORS OF ORGANIZATION OF IDEAS

To arrange the ideas in a logical, proper sequence is necessary. The teacher should bear in mind always that the most basic objective of teaching English formally to pupils is to enable them to express in simple and correct English logically and coherantly their own ideas and emotion about all they come across in their daily life.

These errors are outcome of carelessness and ignorance. The teacher should create such an environment in the class that the students may automatically be encouranged to express their ideas and feeling, in an orderly and organized manner.

II.4.B.2) ERRORS OF TRANSFORMATION

In the process of transformation the form of a sentence can be changed with out changing the meaning.

e.g. 1) <u>Active Voice</u> - The carpenter is making the box.

<u>Passive Voce</u> - (<u>Incorrect</u>) - The box <u>made</u> by the carpenter.

<u>Passive Voice</u> (<u>Correct</u>) - The box <u>is being made</u> by the carpenter.

- As a rule - the form 'being' should be used while turning the sentence from the active voice to the passive voice - when the sentence is in continuous tense.

2) <u>Direct</u> - He said' "The horse dies in the night".

<u>Incorrect indirect</u> - He said that the horse <u>was died</u> in the night.

<u>Correct indirect</u> - He said that the horse <u>had ided</u> in the night.

- As a rule the simple past in the Direct becomes the past per fect in the Indirect.

II.4.B.3   ERRORS OF SYNTAX

Incorrect use of words wrong construction, wrong word order, wrong inflection, wrong structural words are the errors of syntax.

Incorrect -   The economical condition of country is good now.

Correct -   The economic condition of the country is good now.

- Unnecessary use of al suffix.

II.4.B.4   ERRORS OF OMISSIONS

To arrange the ideas in a logical, proper sequence is necessary. Errors of omissions are out come of carelessness and ignorance.

e.g. 1) Incorrect -   I went with all my friend.

Correct -   I went with all my friends.   -

- The omissions of s (plural suffix) in the above sentence is a reduction and the learner communicates even without the plural marker.

e.g. 2) Incorrect -   I saw the same film for second time.

Correct -   I saw the same film for the second time .

- Omission of 'the' before the ordinals such as first, second, third, etc. is an error.

- The reason for this error is the spoken form and the absence of equivalent of 'the' in the learners mother tongue.

II.4.B.5   ERRORS OF QUESTIONING

Questioning is one of the most important device of teaching. Most errors are due to ignorance on part of the student in framing questions.

Students of English language just transform assertive sentence in the question with out changing its order.

e.g.   You are my sister ?

-   Pupil made following errors in questioning.

e.g.   1) Incorrect -   Where did she lived ?

Correct -   Where did she live ?

e.g.   2) Incorrect -   Where do Raju play ?

Correct -   Where does Raju play ?

(The errors or auxiliary verbs)

II.4.V.6 ERRORS OF WORD ORDER

Subject object + verb is the general word order of Indian languages while subject + verb + object is general order of English.

-   Pupil made following errors in word order -

e.g.   Incorrect -   he gets up in the early morning.

Correct -   He gets up early in the morning.

- The above error is due to word order influenced by mother tongue. This order changes the meaning of sentence.

Incorrect - I do not know when will he come.

Correct - I do not know when he will come.

- Question pattern retaining in reported questions.

Interfernce from the mother tongue or from previously learned secondary language is one of the basic difficulties in learning a new language and causes of errors of word order.

II .4.C) ERRORS OF THE EXPRESSIONS OF THOUGHT

Repetition of ideas, irrelevance, omission of words, misunderstanding of ideas are regarded as the errors of the expression of thought.

Errors of the expression of thought, those which are the outcome of carelessness, ignorance, lack of knowledge of correct use of words.

The technique of revision is beneficial to avoid such mistakes.

The only remedy for ignorance is the slow and patient acquisition of information on a variety of subject in English and extensive reading.

II.4.D) ERRORS OF PRONOUNCIATION

The real difficulty of learning a foreign language lies in that of having to master its sound system i.e. pronounciation.

Marathi script is perfectly phonetic while English language is symbolic.

Intereference from the mother tongue is one of the basic difficulty in learning a new language it is particulary noticeable in area of pronounciation.

* <u>Some words are not spelt as they are pronounce</u> -

- In word e.g. 'garments' phonetic transcription of the word garments is [ga:ments] and not [garmetns].

- <u>Silencing</u> of the <u>'r'</u>

The general rule is that 'r' is to be sounded only when it is immediately followed by a vowel without any intervening pause.

2) lei - This diphthong occurs in not only words like mail, sail, pain, etc. but also in male /meil/; sale/seil, pane/pein/etc. As a matter of fact the latter spelling ending with a silent e (viz. , a + consonant + e) seems to be much more common for this vowel.

- But our students who are used to spelling - pronunciation, usually replace this diphthong by the pure vowel /e/ in owrds that do not have an 'i' in the spelling.

"Most such errors are due to other causes such as misplaced zeal on the part of the student or the illogicalities of English". [F.G. French - Common errors in English]

Students should be encouranged to look up in the phonetic dictionary as English spelling is not the sum total of pronunciation, at least for trouble some words.

II.5 GENERAL REASONS FOR COMMITTING ERRORS

The following reasons are the general reasons for committing errors in oral expression of learners of English.

1) Errors due to mother tongue interference or false inter language anology.

2) Weak teaching or total neglect of teaching in some school by teacher particulary in rural area, and municipal schools.

3) Lack of knowledge of grammatical rules.

4) Lack of enough exposure and practice.

5) Improper study habits and carelessness.

6) Wrong pronunciation (spelling pronunciation).

7) Incomplete Application of rules.

8) Due to poor vocabulary.

9) Habit of first thinking in mother tongue and then converting in English.

10) Lack of command over English language.

11) Due to difficulties with English pronunciation because the syllabic structure and sound system of Marathi are very different from those of English.

[Phonological dissimilarity.]

12) Errors due to lack of general reading in English.

13) They are not given sufficient time of practice.

14) They are not given sufficient work and exposure for practice.

15) Due to large size of class. (The pace slow down if there are more than twenty children to one teacher)

16) They know structure of languages but cannot use properly because of lack of practice.

II.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY OF COMMON ERRORS

"The error themselves are the product of learning. From them we can make inference about the process".

The study of common errors have a great significance. There are three reasons for that -

1) The study of errors tell him if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far the learner has progressed towards the goal and consequently what remain for him to learn.

2) Secondly it provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired.

3) Thirdly it is indispensable to the learner himself because we can regard the errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn. [3]

"Errors provide feedback, they tell the teacher something about the effectiveness of his teaching material and his teaching techniques, and show him what parts of the syllabus he has been following have been inadequately learned or taught and need further action".[4]

Error analysis based on adequate material show clearly what is most troublesome for the learners concerned and thus where they most need support.

A broadly based and representative collection of spoken and written errors sufficiently classified may help to determine several things

- The scope and nature of pronunciation teaching the time given to practice with certain structures, the time given to practice with certain expressions and words and even the order in which these structures, expressions and words are introduced.

Mistakes in the use of sounds, words and structures may thus be usefully collected and examined and error analysis at each of these level can be applied to language teaching.

Error analysis are to use to both inexperienced and experienced teacher - especially valuable to the inexperienced can also be a great help to those faced with a grade of pupils they have not taught before orpupils speaking a different first language. Even for a teacher of exprience it is a valuable guide when planning a course of lessons/study of Errors

are valuable for both the teacher and the pupil. The pupil by pondering over his errors can modify his adhoc rule where necessary while the teacher can devise his material for remedial teaching.

Error - analysis has the following tasks to perform :

1) To set up a hiearchy of difficulties.

2) to achieve a realistic ranking of priorities at different levels.

3) to produce suitable teaching materials

4) to revise syllabuses in non-ad-hoc manner.

5) to construct tests which are relevant for different purpose and levels.

6) to decompartmentalise language teaching at different levels in particular, the school and university levels.

II. 7   CONCLUDING REMARK

Critical study of errors or error analyses, based on various stages of achievement from elementary to advanced is always desirable study of errors are of great importance to teachers and framers of syllabus. An examination of learner's errors can help the teacher enter more fully into the environment of teaching.

Our aim in all work of errorss study is not to root out erros or to impose standards but it is to liberate the pupil from his limitations.

1) Whitehall, H. : <u>Structural essential of English</u>, Ref. The English Teachers's Handbook by Baruah T.C., Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., (1984), Delhi p. 22.

2) Allen, H.B. and Campbell (1978) <u>Teaching English as a Second Language</u>,Tata McGraw Hill Publishing Co. Ltd., New Delhi p.44.

3) Corder, S.P. (1974) <u>Error Analysis</u> in Allen and Corder, p.25.

4) Corder, S.P. (1973) <u>Error Analysis</u> in Allen and Corder, p.265.