CoBI through Shelter Prototypical in Language Laboratory

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Abstract

*The present article is a report of a study that was undertaken in teaching the B.Ed. Trainee Teacher in the language laboratory in the **shelter prototypical of CoBI**, for a period of one academic year, the observations made consists of team teaching where a team of teachers partake in the teaching acts simultaneously which includes presenting, practice and evaluation of the language content, an analysis is done of the utility of shelter method to the Indian classrooms especially the lab sessions in B.Ed. colleges which involves a careful selection gradation and language the course mainly consists of teaching pronunciation and neutralization of accent. This method Incorporates technology into CoBI can be explained how it may be enhanced through computer based activities. It is observed that these sessions are highly interactive, encouraging and supports real world language use which may be further strengthened.*

Key Words: CoBI, Prototypical, Language Laboratory

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INTRODUCTION

CoBI is a teaching method which emphasizes language learning rather than learning about a language. This kind of teaching has been found that learners are excited to learn English in Indian classroom. It is also observed that Shelter prototypical is effectively used and taught in English and French in Ottawa (Briton, 1989). Where computer based activity of language is taught in each session tested and evaluated making the Laboratory session bilingual only in the initial few sessions.

The present study is informal observations of B.Ed. Trainee Teacher in the English Language Lab. The Shelter prototypical method is beneficial than the other methods for this Lab. The Language Lab is divided into two parts, Computer Aided Language Lab and Audio visual Lab the former trains in neutral accent of English sound system and the latter deals with the soft skills. The team of teachers (presenters and evaluator) is supported by Lab assistant to address the technical problems in the Lab and to run the sessions effectively. Each section has a set of sixty learners, divided into two groups of thirty attend computer Aided Language Lab and Audio Visual lab. The time allocated for the Lab session is two hours for each section, every week; these are the weekly sessions conducted for the learners. The presenter in each lab presents the topic and then after few minutes the learners move for the practice session. The evaluator's role is to check the attendance, observation notes, record and clarify the doubts on the related topic for that session and the evaluator is active during practice session and very much available to explain and clear the doubts and that helps the learners to step forward in taking the tests, the final evaluation is done by the evaluator. Consequently a learner's performance is gauged in this Lab.

Importance of CoBI in Language Laboratory

The importance of learning a language is that acquiring academic skills from the first year because as learning takes place in the initial stage it helps to grasp the main ideas of reading a text, interpreting , analyzing the jargon, the concepts and to acquire knowledge from lower level to target level. As a part of the academics they have to learn variety of skills and each skill

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is essential for progress as language is used to express ideas and thoughts. They also develop competence; speaking skills may be effectively developed through teacher created material/technology for Lab sessions. Language made easy to interact with the peer group, using language effectively in group discussions, debates and presentations, which are essential in future. The learner has to neutralize his accent, understand and has to give more time to practice to overcome the problems such as Mother Tongue Interference involved in mastering, the learners' language should be intelligible and unambiguous. Language is very much required in competitive exams such as TOFEL and IELTS. A team of teachers help the learners to learn the language which initiates learning of sound system i..e.. R.P. one teacher presents the topic and another evaluates, the evaluator who examines the learner and explains in mother tongue when they are unable to learn and fail to take the tests.

Hypothesis

1. Lack of appropriate pronunciation leading to unintelligibility and ambiguity

2. Mother Tongue Inference is hindering in mastering R.P. accent.

The problems/difficulties faced in the Language Laboratory

The learners find it difficult to focus in the Lab sessions because of various reasons. Usually they come from

- ➢ regional background i.e. Gujarati medium,
- ➢ as first generation learners
- ➢ where they do not have good exposure of the language
- ➢ have Mother Tongue Interference

The following are some of the problems recognized/identified by the author in the lab sessions

1. Articulation

The learners fail to enunciate the vowel sounds because of the less exposure to the English sound system. The sounds which exist in Gujarati sound system are entirely different from English sound system hence; to catch/follow the sound becomes difficult when learning the short vowel sounds and the following are some sounds:

Front Vowels

Received Pronunciation General Indian English

/I/ pronounced as /e/ realized as /I/

in the words such as

sit - seet sit -sIt

chip - chep chip - chIp

it - at it – It

/e/ pronounced as /a/ realized as /e/

in the words such as

set – sat set - set

pet – pat pet - pet

ate – at ate – et

/æ/ Pronounced as ah

In the word such as

at – et

The above examples were taken from the language learning software called Sky pronunciation suite which was used in the language Laboratory for the learners. The trainer in the software is typically a native speaker who helps the learners during practice session; learners have to follow the trainer's articulation throughout the practice session. For all the above examples, learners' articulation deviated with trainer's articulation especially for **/æ/ - at** and **/e/- ate both have similar pronunciation /I/** - it sounds **/e/** and **/e/** - sounds **/æ/**

2.Wrong pronunciation

It is well-known that for a non-native speaker practicing English vowel sounds in the

Language Lab will be different, difficult and ambiguous. Learners go away with the

Gujarati sound system and that result in wrong pronunciation. Given below are

some of the examples where learners went wrong in marking the sounds wrong

in connected speech and they are:

i. We live in London

/æ, e, I, ɒ, ʌ, ʊ, ə/

The correct answer is /ə/

but the learners marked /ʌ/

ii. I am not going to work today

/æ, e, I, ɒ, ʌ, ʊ, ə/

The correct answer is /ə/

but the learners marked / ʊ /

iii. Please do not contradict me

/æ, e, I, ɒ, ʌ, ʊ, ə/

The correct answer is /ə/

but the learners marked as / æ /

iv. She competed in the Olympic games

/æ, e, I, ɒ, ʌ, ʊ, ə/

The correct answer is /I/

but the learners marked as /ʌ/

v. Have you got any money?

/æ, e, I, ɒ, ʌ, ʊ, ə/

The correct answer is /ʌ/

but the learners marked as /ə/

vi. Her name is Lucretia

/ e, ə, i:, I, ei, i/

The correct answer is /i:/

but the learners marked as /I /

vii. I voted for the opposition party

/ e, ə, i:, I, ei, i/

The correct answer is /I/

but the learners marked as / e /

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The learners need thorough practice of the English sound system. It is observed from the above sentences that they tried to follow their own method to pronounce and fail to identify the sound in isolation and in connected speech. As Indian Languages have syllable timed rhythm it is very difficult to hold and to follow stressed timed rhythm. This is one of the major reasons for pronunciation.

3. Variation-Fail to maintain the vowel length

Vowels are described based on the criteria, three term label. The parameters to

describe the vowel are

· The position of the tongue (front, central and back part of the tongue)

· The height of the tongue to what extent it is raised (close, half-close,

half-open, open)

· The position of the lips (rounded, un-rounded, neutral)

Here learners fail to maintain the length of the vowel and therefore deviate. Variation occurs due to this reason and it takes a large amount time to be trained English vowels. They can't learn just in few sessions with short term memory problem.

The relevance of Shelter Prototypical method in the Language Laboratory

For all the above reasons, the problems are being identified and addressed by the author in the Language lab session through Shelter prototypical by giving the clear details in Gujarati language (as they were Gujarati speakers) for a set of learners in a class. When a sound is explained describing the three term label the learners easily recognized and realized the difference of the sounds for example: the learners got a doubt for both the sounds which one to select between /**e/, and /æ/** when the author gave the description of three term label of both the sounds and the English vowels chart, it was intelligible and unambiguous for the learners and were progressed to take the vowel sound test and showed the best performance by scoring cent percent. Hence the results were constructive and satisfactory.

Three term Label detailed explanation

Classification and description of English Phonemic sounds

Three Term Label of the Sounds

· **Front Vowels: /i: /, /I/, /e/, /æ/**

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· /i: / front, closed, unrounded vowel.

· /I/ front, unrounded vowel between close and half-close

· /e/ front, unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open

· /æ/ front, unrounded vowel just below the half-open position

· **Central Vowels**: **/ʌ/, /ɜ:/, /ə/**

· **/ʌ/** central, unrounded vowel between open and half-open

· **/ɜ:/** central, unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open

· **/ə/** central, unrounded short vowel TRA

Changes to be made in the Laboratory sessions

Practice of shelter prototypical method by each teacher in English Lab session is highly recommended for the accurate performance of the learners. The evaluator, third teacher in the set should take his/her role in checking the learners and explaining them in their mother tongues in detail. To enhance the confidence in the academic skills of the learners they need to make use of the lab sessions. Learners come to the Lab with the following Problems and they are almost addressed during the Lab sessions.

· Problem in learning English pronunciation

· The rate of intelligibility and comprehensibility and

· Few sessions encourages their active interaction.

Suggestions

CoBI may be enhanced through computer based activities with the increased

possibilities of cooperative learning. The following are some of the suggestions to

enhance the academic skills

Time: The team of teachers should take time to interact with the learners that is face-to-face interaction because the intelligibility rate is low among the learners.

Focus: The Language Laboratory should focus on the innovative approaches by incorporating technology into CoBI, so that the learners may become techno-savy to gather and manage the information and should become independent learner and learning continuing beyond the classroom.

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Practice and Tests: To enumerate positive outcomes learners require lot of practice for good performance in the test. This will be the greatest achievement in their academic/professional career.

Evaluator: It is observed from the above instances that how evaluator plays an important role and it is very crucial during the lab sessions in making the learners learn the language without any difficulty so that they may have easy grasp and grip over the language. Hence the evaluator should recognize his/her responsibility for the positive outcomes in the language Lab.

Conclusion

English is lacking in the environment and progress takes several generations. First generation learners need the best of learning environments. In order to meet the demands of the recruiters the academic skills should be developed incorporating technology into CoBI so that the teacher may be a part in giving a richer and more valuable educational experience to interact with languages in new and different ways. Building language skills through CoBI from lower level to target level is essential to academic progress, for academic language proficiency is necessary for college level activity.

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