

Institute of Christian Teaching
Education Department of the Seventh-Day Adventists

**TEACHING VERBAL COMMUNICATION
FOR MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT:
A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE.**

By
Hellen Kwamboka Ondari
University of Eastern-Africa, Baraton
Eldoret-Kenya

**622-06 Institute for Christian Teaching
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904 USA**

Prepared for the
34th International Faith and Learning Seminar
Held at
Valley-View University- Accra, Ghana
June 18-30,2006

INTRODUCTION

Language is a uniquely human phenomenon, which affords human beings the opportunity to do things that other creatures are incapable of doing. Human beings can for instance, reminisce about the past and learn from it, speculate about the future and make long-term plans for it, tell lies, and devise theories that give them a framework to chart their development. Of greater consequence, is the fact that language is related to moral development. The ability to think and reason and make moral judgment depends on language. Verbal Communication is not only instrumental in the civilization and technological advancement of man but it is also fundamental in the individual's spiritual growth.

On the other hand, the fact that human beings have sometimes used language inappropriately as in telling lies, misrepresenting truth, exaggerating facts to their wicked ends, has been detrimental to their moral well being because it has been the cause of heinous acts of corruption such as immorality, hatred and even wars that we witness in society today. Suffice it to say that speech communication is a key aspect of language, which requires proper cultivation in Christian education for the mental, spiritual, physical and social development of the student. White (1941) who recognizes the power of speech and the need to cultivate it has the following to say:

The power of speech is a talent that should be diligently cultivated. Of all the gifts we have received from God, none is capable of being a greater blessing than this. With the voice we convince and persuade, with it we offer prayer and praise to God, and with it we tell others of the Redeemer's love. How important, then, that it be so trained as to be the most effective for good.
(p335)

In Christian education, languages of instruction need diligent cultivation because language affects every aspect of human development.

In Kenya, English and Kiswahili are the official languages of communication. English as a second language is used as the medium of instruction at all levels of education. It is the national and international medium of communication. It is also used in the mass media like T.V, Radio, and Newspapers. Kiswahili is the national language and the national lingua franca in a country with over forty mother tongues. Both English and Kiswahili are used in law-courts and by legislators in carrying out parliamentary proceedings. The two languages are also used in churches particularly in cosmopolitan centers. English is used in more elitist churches in urban centers while a majority of people who are not very proficient in English use Kiswahili and other local languages. The need for a proficiency in one or both languages can therefore not be overemphasized.

The Kenyan 8-4-4 system of education English language syllabus offers an integrated approach to the teaching of language and literature, the purpose of which is to enable the

student to learn the second language through exposure to its use in various written contexts. This is besides the primary objective of exposing students to language and literature in order to develop their analytical skills regardless of the specific areas that they would like to pursue at university level. The syllabus stipulates the teaching of grammar, reading, listening, writing and speaking skills besides poetry and literature set books that have to be taught in preparation for the national examination: The Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (K.C.S.E).

Candidates sit for three written examination papers in both English language and Kiswahili. Their final grade is based on their scores in the three papers consisting of: Composition, Grammar, Comprehension and Summary and Literature. Because of the pressure to cover the syllabus and prepare students for the national examinations, teachers tend to concentrate on only those skills that are examinable at the national examination level. This means that the speaking skill, though important in the life of a student, does not receive the attention and emphasis it requires because it is not currently examinable at any level. There is no course at both primary and secondary level designed to teach students how to use the spoken language. Yet the spoken language is essential in a student's life. Students need more than grammar and written language in order to be able to operate effectively in life.

Currently, the judgment on whether a student knows language and can use it effectively for further education and in other life situations is based on how well they perform in the written Kiswahili or English in the national KCSE. The question that arises then is: Can the knowledge of grammar and writing alone constitute all that a student requires in order to use a language effectively and appropriately?

In my opinion, speech communication is a very important skill in the life of a student in and out of school. Lack of adequate development of the speaking skills of students can cause a serious handicap and be an unfortunate gatekeeper; keeping them from getting the jobs they want because they cannot pass oral interviews. It can also keep them from selling their trade and worse still from sharing their Christian faith and experience, which is the essence of being a Christian. Verbal communication is, furthermore, an important prerequisite in the acquisition of other linguistics skills. The purpose of this paper is to address the following questions:

- ❖ How can the teaching of language be approached and organized to make it an effective tool in communicating morals to the learners and at the same time enable them to develop appropriate linguistic and intellectual skills?
- ❖ Does the teaching of grammar play crucial in the provision of holistic development for the student?
- ❖ How can the language teacher affect the learners' capacity to become effective and competent communicators?

BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Traditional grammar teaching assumed that knowing the rules of a language and being able to use them were one the same thing. Yet in many cases knowing the rules of a language is no guarantee to successful communication. The teaching of grammar and grammatically well-formed sentences becomes a waste of time when students have not mastered the language. While having a sound knowledge of the grammatical rules and the deployment of them may be important, it does not imply that this is all that the learning of a language entails. Emphasis on formal correctness is a pedagogic procedure, which is only required in order to make learning more orderly. Frye (1962) cited in Stafford (1978) says that an English program that never moves beyond the study of grammar and usage would impair the development of the student. He further observes that in a broader sense, the safety and well being of the whole society is affected by its members' ability to think clearly and to act purposefully. The development of a critical intelligence is necessary for the individual who would contribute to such a society. He then concludes that:

the lack of such a critical intelligence results in a person who is unable to break its (society's) chains of cliché and prejudice, unable to see through its illusions of advertising and slanted news, unable to distinguish its temporary conventions from the laws of God and man, a spiritual totalitarian (p14)

White (1880) in her counsel to a language teacher of gospel ministers emphasizes the need for a command of language but emphatically points out the shortcomings of too much emphasis on grammar. She expresses her concern this way:

Brother _____ could have done much better work for those that were to be ministers than he has done. God is not pleased that he has carried out his own plans, and led them after his own ideas. He has not adapted himself to the situation. He has not always been patient, and encouraged men who have left their fields of labor at a sacrifice of time and expense to learn what they could do in a short time. He has mingled self in his work to a large extent. He might have done his part in sending forth these men with much greater knowledge if he had not made grammar his idol, and kept the minds under his charge drilling upon grammar when they should have been receiving a general education upon many subjects---. He has kept drilling certain students upon grammar, making that the one all important study, not giving them sufficient encouragement to have an equal opportunity for other studies, and some have left the college with only half an education. (Manuscript 3, pp1-2)

The above statement reinforces the fact that the isolated study of grammar is of little value. It implies that teachers must have a broader vision of language study than just drills in grammar. Wehtje (1978) has this to say about language teachers who drill students or use workbooks structured without the needs of the students in mind.

If because of timidity, ignorance or laziness, he (the teacher [sic]) retreats behind workbooks and drills requiring little thought on the part of either student or teacher, he is stunting his students' growth through linguistic malnutrition. (p. 70)

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF LANGUAGE

The Christian view of language is based on the Bible and the Bible has a lot to say concerning the development and use of language. The following are a few examples of Biblical basis for language use.

John 7: 46 The officers answered, “No man ever spoke like this man!”

Proverbs 30:5 every word of God is Pure.

Matthew 12:36 But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give an account of it in the Day of Judgment.

James 3:2 For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his body.

Psalms 19:4 let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight O lord.

Eccl.12:11 The words of the wise are like goads and the words of the scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one shepherd

Colossians 4:6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt that you may know how to answer each one.

The above Biblical references show that the motivation for the Christian to use language appropriately comes from the knowledge that God is pure and his word is pure. It also suggests that the purity of an individual's life is reflected in the proper use of language. Words are an index of the state of one's inner spiritual life. These texts also indicate that the motivation for Christians' use of appropriate language comes from the knowledge that they will give an account of how they have used language, on the Day of Judgment. With words we can bless or curse, praise or condemn, tell a lie or truth. Therefore, in words or language there is life or death.

Christians have a worldview and value system that affects the way they do things. When individuals deliberately practice their Christian values, they become part of their nature. Rasi (2000) defines a worldview as a comprehensive perspective of the universe and of life, from which human beings understand their existence, make choices, and establish priorities and chart their destiny. According to Walsh and Middleton (1984) cited in Rasi (2000:2) a worldview answers four fundamental questions:

- ❖ Who am I? The nature, meaning and purpose of human beings. What am I here for? How do I compare with and relate to other human beings, objects, God?
- ❖ Where am I? The nature of the universe in which we live. What is the reality that I perceive? How much does it encompass?
- ❖ What is wrong? The obstacles that prevent me from obtaining fulfillment. How do I understand the disorder, pain and evil that I observe and experience? How can I explain it?

- ❖ What is the solution? Ways of overcoming the obstacles to fulfillment. How do I solve the enigma of evil and find personal satisfaction?

Potter and Perry (1997; 308) define a value as: “A personal belief about worth that acts as a standard to guide one’s behavior” Each individual has his or her own values which develop and form over a life time and are learned by observation and reasoning and through experience. They also observe that professional groups can also hold values. Such values provide a framework for the development of standards and expectations within the profession. They point out that because values give identity, influence actions, and sustain what is meaningful; professions are as strong as the values on which they are based.

According to Stafford (1978), the Christian view of man sees him (man [sic]) created in the image of God and capable of intelligent action and hence nobility. It sees him as a creature capable of understanding human intents and actions and of making free choices. It sees him capable of creative action, able to move society toward an imagined and expected world where sorrow and sighing shall pass away. He sights Kohlberg (1969) who says that a consistency between moral judgment and moral action characterizes the adult. Stafford concludes by saying that in order to reach that consistency, we must go through phases of development all of which depend on language development. He observes further that even though language development may take place without moral development, the reverse is not possible. Language and thought are inextricably intertwined, he notes, and the ability of the individual to reach full maturity as a Christian is dependent upon his ability to understand, to think through implications in his action, to understand consequences of action, and to direct his life toward that good which he can imagine and desire because he has the language ability. He concludes that man’s ability to make conscious and consistent moral and ethical decisions to govern his life and by values which he has understood for himself, and to make operative the regulating principle of love in his actions is affected by his capacity for thought, which is in turn determined by language development.

Children are not born with language but their minds are predisposed for it. Children are able to acquire their first language without any effort to teach them as long as a linguistic environment is provided to them. The nature and the quality of the language environment will determine the nature and quality of language the child acquires. The most ideal way to learn the second language is also through exposure to the environment in which this language is used as the native language. However, this is not usually possible because most second languages used particularly in Africa are not local and so their native speakers are not in close proximity with second language learners in their various learning environments. Therefore, the task of developing any language to the highest potential depends on the parents, and the language teachers at all levels of education.

WHAT KNOWING A LANGUAGE ENTAILS

What then does knowing a language entail and what should the language teacher's approach in teaching language be at every level to make students have a balanced knowledge and use of the language? The question as to what speakers of a language need to know in order to use their language effectively is of great significance. It is one of the important questions that linguists have had to deal with. Guy Cook (2003) outlines some of the questions that may be asked about what speakers know about their language as follows: Does knowing a language imply:

- ❖ Having native speaker insight and fluency?
- ❖ Having the ability to produce sentences with no grammatical errors?
- ❖ Having the capacity to write elegantly or expressively?
- ❖ Being able to speak effectively and appropriately?
- ❖ Or is it a combination of these?

In my opinion, each of the above skills plays a unique and significant role in the life of a student and none should be over-emphasized or subordinated at the expense of the others. The teaching of language skills should not be compartmentalized either. This is because, according to Carroll (1964:98) cited in Stafford (1978:12), there is a relationship between language and action. Language influences thought and according to his observation, a child who has learned a concept verbally would be more likely to perform successfully in any problem situation where this concept is critical. Experience has also shown that a student, who can relate experiences verbally, can also write about them effectively. Such a student can also be analytical about what he reads. Carroll also observes that the failure to recognize the relationship that holds between literature, grammar, and composition has been the reason for their being treated as separate subjects. Stafford (opp.cit) views language as a unifying subject which affects human thought and personality. It also affects the individual's ability to accomplish worthwhile goals. White (1941) concurs with this thought in the following words:

The more thoroughly the intellect is cultivated, the more effectively it can be used in the service of God...None can know where or how they may be called to labour or speak for God. (pp. 333-34)

The implication of these words is that students need a thorough cultivation of their linguistic skills whether their future career choices are language-related or not. God can use people in whatever career and in whatever capacity and they need language to be able to accomplish the work that God may want them to do.

In an integrated approach as has been suggested above, the speaking skill is of paramount importance. It cannot be left out without rendering the other skills impossible to attain. For instance, if students are not able to talk about events and experiences they see, hear or read about every day, then writing becomes a nightmare to them. On the other hand, students who are able to internalize experiences by talking about them are likely to find writing as spontaneous as speaking.

The following are the objectives of speaking outlined in the Kenyan K.C.S.E English language syllabus (2002-2003: 23):

Specific Objectives: The student should be able to:

- ❖ Pronounce words correctly
- ❖ Use correctly the required range of vocabulary
- ❖ Express himself or herself intelligibly in English
- ❖ Demonstrate acceptable communication habits
- ❖ Express his or her effectiveness and fluency in connected speech
- ❖ Use oral English effectively in a variety of situations.

These are excellent objectives. However, the fact that they are not directly examined has resulted in their not being emphasized in the classroom. Yet the speaking skill is crucial in the attainment of the other linguistic skills and in the moral development of the individual

According to McGregor (2002), if we truly want to teach “English for life” then the aim of all our teaching of spoken English should be to improve our student’s skill and enjoyment in English conversation. However, he observes that in most secondary schools there is not enough English conversation that goes on and while students are encouraged to speak English in the classroom and within the school compound, they are not well equipped to use English outside the classroom. McGregor further states that genuine conversation occurs when students talk freely because they have something they want to say to someone whom they believe will listen to them.

Genuine conversation does not take place in circumstances where students are forced to speak a particular language by use punitive methods. I remember when I was in primary school; there was an outcry about pupils’ inability to communicate in English, which led to dismal performance in English examinations. Consequently, the ‘disc’ was introduced as a way of getting pupils to speak in English while in the classroom and outside. The disc was a small piece of wood that was usually given to one student in the classroom at the beginning of the school day. The disc was then supposed to be passed on to any student heard speaking in mother tongue. The process went on until the end of the school day. At the end of the day, an evening assembly was called at which time the identity of all students who had been given the disc was revealed. It all started with the first pupil naming the person s/he passed the disc to. The chain then went on until the last pupil surrendered the disc. Those who had been in possession of the disc during the day were heavily punished. Some schools used more crude items like a horn, which was hung around the neck of anyone found speaking in mother tongue.

Because students were not allowed to use any other language even during their play time, they resorted to translating their play songs from their various mother tongues into English. The directly translated play songs were meaningless and the pupils lost fun in playing and they did not learn English any better anyway. Those who could not speak English kept quiet for all the time they were in school and learning English became a nightmare to most children. This definitely was not the proper way of getting pupils to learn a second language. Yet this was the critical period when they could have learnt it

best. No interest was created in the children to learn the language. Using language should be fun rather than punishment. Students should have time to speak in class and outside.

McGregor (op.cit), citing the case of Uganda, observes that pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher. They are encouraged to only respond to questions but they are not given time to ask questions or speak freely to the teacher or to one another. In Uganda as in Kenya, conversation is not in the secondary entrance examination and so there is no time for it on the syllabus as well. He cites Professor Mukama of Makerere University who also laments the scanty opportunity that pupils have of learning English for communicative purposes as follows:

The learning of English in our primary schools is not an interactive activity but a liturgical experience. Pupils are restricted to one word-rejoinders, and recitation leads to the deplorable art of talking without feeling (p.52)

What Kind of Spoken English Should We Teach?

English like any other spoken language has a number of recognizable regional varieties throughout the world. In teaching English, there is need to equip students with a quality of pronunciation which will enable them to be understood by speakers of English anywhere in the world. Intelligibility, rather ability to speak English with native-like competence, should be the teacher's aim in teaching pronunciation to students. There is often a tendency among students who have acquired an approximate British or American accent to consider themselves as better speakers of English than those whose pronunciation has been influenced by mother tongue. This attitude should be discouraged.

Language, especially pronunciation, has certain indexical features, which reveal personal characteristics of the speaker. The manner in which we pronounce words can, for instance, give others a clue about our geographical origins, our social class or educational level. These indexical features have social meanings attached to them. They can have positive or negative social consequences. They can be highly esteemed or highly stigmatized. Kembo (2000) observes that when these indexical features are evaluated negatively, they can have very serious consequences on education. First, they can lead to loss of self-esteem among students and eventually to educational failure. There is also a tendency to see those with heavily accented pronunciation as being backward. When such an attitude is manifested in class, it makes it difficult for a student with a region-marked accent to freely ask questions in class and to engage in class discussions. Secondly, these features can disqualify otherwise perfectly able people from particular jobs like broadcasting. There is therefore all reason for a language teacher to make a deliberate effort to assist students particularly in primary school to overcome some pronunciation problems that make him or her unintelligible.

Indexical features have even been noted in the Bible. On one occasion, the Ephraimites were trying to get past the Jordan without revealing their identity. The Bible relates this incident as follows:

The Gileadites captured the fords of Jordan leading to Ephraim, and whenever a survivor of Ephraim said, "Let me cross over" the men of Gilead asked him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If he replied "No," they said, "All right, say Shibboleth." If he said "sibboleth", because he could not pronounce the word correctly, they seized him and killed him at the fords of Jordan. Forty-two thousand Ephraimites were killed at that time. (Judges 12:5-6)

Abercrombie (1990) observes that even although both Ephraimites and Gileadites spoke Hebrew, they differed in the pronunciation of the consonant at the beginning of the word "Shibboleth", and many other words. On this occasion the pronunciation of this word made a disclosure of the geographical origins of the Ephraimites, which led to their demise. Since then the word "Shibboleth" has been used to refer to any peculiarity of pronunciation, which is an index to a person's origins.

The purpose for teaching pronunciation is, however, not so much to change student's regional accent. Our aim, rather, should be to help them to become intelligible. Firth cited in McGregor (2002) explains what this type of English is as below:

By educated English we must not understand Standard English. Educated English shows a wide range of permissible variations. Speakers of this kind of English do not necessarily submerge all signs of social geographical origin. Their accent is often unmistakably local or characteristic of a class. All classes of people all over the world speak educated English. This is the only kind of English that has the remotest chance of universality in Great Britain itself (p53)

White (1948) emphasizes the need for cultivating the voice and speaking distinctly but discourages the habit of speaking just to impress.

When you speak, let every word be full and well rounded every sentence clear and distinct to the last word. Many as they approach the end of a sentence lower the tone of voice, speaking so indistinctly that the force of the thought is destroyed. Words that are worth speaking at all are all worth speaking in a clear, distinct voice, with emphasis and expression. But never search for words that will give the impression that you are learned. The greater your simplicity, the better will your words be understood (6T 383:1)

VERBAL COMMUNICATION AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF LEARNING AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

The teaching of verbal communication generally varies in content and approach according to the intellectual and cognitive state of the learner which is determined by age and level of education. Teaching starts from the early childhood years at home and progresses into adulthood with varying demands and challenges at every stage.

Verbal Communication during the Early Years in the Home

Children are not born with language but their minds are predisposed for it. They are able to acquire their first language without any effort to teach them as long as a linguistic environment is provided to them. The nature and quality of the language environment will determine the nature and quality of language the child acquires. The most ideal way

to learn the second language is also through exposure to the environment in which this language is used as the native language. However, this is not usually possible because the native speakers of these languages, which are mainly European, are not in close proximity with African second language learners in their various learning environments. Therefore, the task of developing any language to the highest potential depends on the parents, and language teachers at all levels of education. White (1952) recognizes the home as the best school for appropriate language study, but says that since the work of the home is so often neglected, it devolves on the teacher to aid his pupils in forming right habits of speech Seltman (1978) says that parents have the obligation of immersing their children in language in their early years in the home. He suggests that even the young infants be spoken to constantly. He suggests further that the parent should provide a linguistic analogue to as much of the child's life as possible since constant talking enables the child to relate the abstract symbols of language to the concrete features of his world.

Children should be taught at their tender years how to express their feelings using language instead of using physical force. The deep communication of feelings, which is the highest level of communication, will never be achieved unless the child learns how to do so early in life. A child who misses such a chance in his early life, will have his ability to express himself, particularly his feelings, stunted and it may be difficult to get it to normal later in life. Seltman (opp.cit) notes that children who have been abused have been dealt with physically rather than through language. Such children later in life, in their adolescence and adulthood, will tend to deal with problems using physical force. Seltman further observes that a significant number of abused children, according to statistics, form a large percentage of the murderers and rapists in prisons.

Lower Primary School Years

These are years between six and nine. Habenicht and Bell (1983) describe children of this age category as being curious, inquisitive, and mentally alert. They love words and they get excited as they learn new words and expand their vocabulary. They suggest that at this age, children should be given plenty of time to talk about what the teacher is teaching as this helps them to assimilate the new ideas. They also suggest that stories are the best teaching tools to use during these years because children love stories at this age. Emotionally, children at this age are sensitive and easily offended and so the teacher needs to be patient with them and avoid criticizing them. The same techniques can be applied in getting children to speak, in primary school.

During the early primary school years, the child addresses larger audience than those in the home environment. At this time, the child is faced with the need to address various groups and he or she learns the social consequences of always saying what he thinks. He also learns the social consequences of not speaking when he should. Speech development reflects intellectual, physical and emotional growing up or failure to grow up. Coates (1986) citing Hymes (1972) observes that;

It is not sufficient for the child to be linguistically competent; in order to function in the real world, s/he must also have learned when to speak, when to remain silent, what to talk about - and how to talk about it in different circumstances. (Pp 96-97)

A child needs to learn socially acceptable behavior that should be observed when people are using language. Such behavior includes responding to questions, giving others a chance to speak without interrupting them unnecessarily and responding to what other speakers say in a manner that shows that s/he is a cooperative listener.

Hymes (1974) proposes that we should study the knowledge that people have when they communicate. He says that just like linguistic competence tells you whether a sentence is grammatical or not, communicative competence tells you whether an utterance is appropriate or not within a situation. He observes that a child who is able to use all well-formed sentences could be a social monster if he does not use these appropriately. Hymes developed a mnemonic device to describe the elements that make up any speech and he referred to it as the SPEAKING model. The objective of the model is to enable the speaker to know what to say, to whom, when and how. The factors are:

Setting and Scene: Setting refers to the time and place or the physical conditions under which a communicative event takes place. The setting may be a church, classroom or marketplace, while scene relates to the psychological setting or cultural definition of the formality of the situation. Children at this early stage should be taught to determine the proper code and right choice of words to use in every context. The earlier they learn that choice of words has a relational impact, the better it is for them and for the society in which they grow up and serve. Deliberate training is required to get children communicating competently for as the Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it."(Proverbs 22:6) At this age children should be taught reverence to God in using language. The choice of words and the manner of communication in church, for instance, should be different from that of a party. In regard to language use in reference to God, White (1890)says:

Humility and reverence should characterize the deportment of all who come into the presence of God. In the name of Jesus we may come before him with confidence, but we must not approach him with the boldness of presumption, as though He were on a level with ourselves. There are those who address the great and all-powerful and holy God, who dwelleth in light unapproachable, as they would address an equal, or even an inferior. There are those who conduct themselves in His house, as they would not presume to in the audience chamber of an earthly ruler. These should remember that they are in His sight whom seraphim adore, before whom angels veil their faces. God is greatly to be revered; all who truly realize His presence will bow in humility before Him, and like Jacob beholding the vision of God, they will cry out, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."
(p. 252)

Children must also learn to use language that suits the occasion. They should know, for instance, how to express sympathy when the situation calls for that.

Participants are people involved in the speech event and their role relationships. It may be parent-child, teacher-student. Children should be taught proper etiquette in addressing

people of various categories. They should respect those who are senior to them in age experience and social rank. White (1982) warns parents who permit the use of unbecoming language among their children. She says that such parents are more worth of blame than their children. (Child Guidance 288:2) Children must also know not only what to say and how to say it but also when to keep quiet. They should be able to listen because when they do so then they know what is appropriate to say.

Ends are purposes, goals and outcomes of a communicative event. These may be to entertain, to persuade, to inform or to get people to do something. Students can be taught to evaluate situations and occasions to be able to determine the kind of language, which may be appropriate in achieving the purpose of a communicative event.

Act sequence: refers to the sequence of events during the speaking. It is important for a student to learn to relate events according to their order of occurrence. This order makes discourse coherent. Events should run from beginning to end and not vice versa. In story telling, for example, the order of occurrence of events is important if the story is to be understood well. The art of story telling is instrumental in Christian witnessing. Story telling can be an effective way of getting children to speak. The teacher should be patient enough to listen to the stories however simple.

Key: refers to cues that establish tone, manner or the spirit of the speech act. These can be verbal or non-verbal. A speaker's non-verbal cues like eye contact; voice inflection and all other paralinguistic cues should be relevant because they reflect the attitude towards the addressee or the subject. A serious speaker must pay attention to these paralinguistic cues because they enhance or reduce the seriousness of his message. A person who expresses a sympathy message with a broad smile may give an impression of being insensitive.

Instrumentalities cover the choice of a communication channel. The channel can be oral or written. Children should learn the advantages of each of the two channels and the impact of using one as opposed to the other. When would writing be preferable and when would speaking be more appropriate? Written language is permanent and more difficult to clarify meanings because the writer is in most cases a way from the receiver of the message. Spoken language can however be clarified in the process of speaking. In day-to-day communication, students need to know that spoken language is necessary in the maintenance of social relationships than written language.

During the early primary years the child should be encouraged to read simple well written literature for moral development and development of vocabulary. Because the child at this stage has more needs than the infant, he or she needs more vocabulary to be able to express his or her increased needs. Children whose vocabulary is inadequate for the environment tend to be frustrated and they reveal their frustration through crying, temper tantrums and other non-verbal means of expression.

Children at this stage should also be exposed to good examples of effective language both oral and written. The teacher can accomplish this by deliberately creating situations that require a verbal response. The most important challenge is to get the children to

speaking freely. The teacher must avoid criticizing the child who is trying to speak even though the child may not be able to pronounce words very well or form grammatically correct sentences. A different opportunity should be sought to teach the child pronunciation and sentence formation. When a child is criticized, he or she will resort to silence as an effective defense against criticism.

Upper Primary and High School

These are between 12 and 16 years. Children want to belong to the peer group but they also want to be independent from adults. Here the language use is directed to the peer group. This is the stage of linguistic autonomy when teenagers resort to slang in order to maintain their autonomy. Students at this age are sensitive to criticism. They are beginning to see things beyond the immediate physical realities. Language enables them to conceptualize abstract values represented in the expectations of the family, the group or the nation. Students should be encouraged at this level to engage in the discussion of the well-selected literature. McGregor (2000) encourages teachers to convince students in their early weeks in secondary school, that their own feelings and ideas are not only valuable but are the most important material for conversation. When this is done then the students' confidence will increase rapidly.

McGregor further suggests that teachers should tell their students that even though their education may not lead to employment or travel beyond their country, they will need to talk to other people for the rest of their lives. He concludes that language teachers should therefore spend time teaching students how to speak well in whatever language, as this will give the not only enjoyment but will also make them more relaxed in their social lives. It will also increase their chance of finding interesting work.

Because students at this age are sensitive to criticism, the teacher should use polite language in talking to them. They should also be taught to use polite language among themselves in carrying out conversations and class discussions. Polite language is language that is mindful of other peoples' face.

Sociologist Erving Goffman (1967) uses the notion face to refer the public image reputation or good name that every human being wants to claim for himself. In this sense, one can lose face and one can save face. To lose face is to be humiliated, to lose one's credit, one's good name or reputation. In the choice of language, the speaker must avoid face threatening acts (FTAs) Brown and Levinson have identified two types of face: positive face refers to the consistent self-image or personality including the desire to be appreciated and approved and of by interactions. Negative face on the other hand, is the basic claim for rights to non-distraction that is, to freedom of action and freedom from imposition.

Teaching students involves making criticisms about their work and at the same time making suggestions to them. Criticisms and suggestions are face-threatening acts. The teacher must find a way of making suggestions less threatening and more acceptable by using face-saving devices to mitigate their effects. Criticisms imply that someone is wrong and suggestions imply that the person needs to redress the wrongs. Yuan Yi (1997) suggests the following face-saving strategies.

Hedges: are markers of possibility, probability and uncertainty to the hearer. It may be necessary to use such hedges as seems, maybe perhaps or modals like can, past tense of verbs like, could have. In trying to correct an error in pronunciation, a teacher may use such an expression: “And what on earth is that supposed to mean?” This kind of expression is insensitive and is likely to embarrass the student. The truth of the matter is that the teacher understands the meaning of what the student said but is not happy with the student’s pronunciation in which case he should have been polite by saying: “I see what you mean but that is not quite the right way to say it.”

Point-of-view Distancing Expressions: These include ‘ I find’, ‘ think’ and ‘I personally think.’ These expressions help to make the speaker’s suggestion a personal opinion, which the hearer is not bound to take. For example, in commenting on a student’s use of examples in a speech presentation, a teacher may say: “Your examples are irrelevant to your topic.” However the teacher could put this across more politely by saying: “I personally think that the examples you cited were not related to the topic of your speech.”

Understatement Markers: Expressions such as ‘quite’ lower the force of a statement and modify the content of a proportion (Hubler, 1983 in Yuan 1987). This also includes diminutives like a few, a little, a little bit, and a bit, which reduce the negative force of criticism or suggestion. For example,

- (1) Your last statement was quite ambiguous.
- (2) You made the rest of the class feel a little bit uncomfortable when you made the remark.

Compliments: Using compliments either immediately before or after a criticism or suggestion helps down grade the criticism or suggestion. For example:

“I liked the way you ordered your points in the debate but you could have been more sensitive to feedback from the audience.”

Application of Face-Saving Principles in the Classroom

One of the ways to make the teaching of face-saving strategies practical would be to create scenarios in which face threatening expressions were used. Students will then be assigned group tasks in which they will try to replace the face- threatening expressions with- face saving ones. The following are samples of scenarios, which could be used in a communication skills class.

1. During a class presentation day, a student presents his speech following the Motivated Sequence. However, the speech does not to impress his instructor because the introduction fails to capture his attention. At the end of the presentation the instructor makes the following remark: “That is the worst introduction I ever heard. Don’t you know better how to start a speech?”

Suppose you were the instructor what would you do differently?

2. One of your colleagues in the Communication skills class has selected a speech topic entitled “Eating Fried Cockroaches.” You think that it is not an appropriate topic because it is not intellectually challenging.

Explain how you would help him change his topic and take up alternative topics you have suggested to him without him feeling that you are imposing your ideas on him.

3. During one of your Communication Skills lesson, the instructor requests the class to present their assignments on topics assigned earlier. You do not think that one of your colleagues who was assigned to research on The Strategies of Ending a Speech “really did a thorough job.

Suggest how you would give your additional ideas on the topic without making it appear like your colleague did a useless job.

4. One of your colleagues is fond of criticizing other people. She comes to you and makes a lot of allegations about some of your teachers, which you think are untrue. You do not think that this is a good habit whatsoever.

How would you correct this bad habit without making your colleague feel rejected?

5. You are the chairperson of the student government. You convene a meeting of student representatives from various departments. Your vice chair makes a lot of false allegations about you during the meeting. You feel that you should make it clear to this meeting that these allegations are not true.

Show how you would do this without creating bad blood with you vice.

This type of questions would motivate students to speak and at the same time help them develop language that is appropriate for use in diverse moral situations.

The Young Adult in College or University

This is a time when the student should make the highest demand of language because the complex contemporary world requires powers of expression. At this stage the, individual student should be able to communicate with other individuals of all ages and all levels of linguistic and moral development. He should be able to interact with all categories of people. He should be able to tell the children’s story for instance, talk with adolescents and adults. At this level, the young adult should be able to discuss freely whatever he has read in science, philosophy, psychology or poetry. He should also be able to share his convictions about God with others. If the young adult can attain this level of language use, then according to Seltmen (1978), he will have accomplished its purpose of enabling the young adult to reach the highest levels of moral development based upon the values

and principles he has committed himself to. He will be reaching both linguistic and moral maturity.

Seltman further suggests that it is the responsibility of the school and college to exact from the student complexity of thought, functional uses of abstraction, distillations of experience into vital language and imaginative foreseeing of consequences. Students should develop a well-grounded independence in their analysis of and expressions in language. A student who depends upon the authority of the teacher throughout his formal education will be stunted in his linguistic and moral development. Seltman's argument here is much in line with White's (1952) counsel that:

Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator-- individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought. Instead of confining their study to that which men have said or written, let students be directed to the sources of truth, to the vast fields opened for research in nature and revelation. Let them contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny, and the mind will expand and strengthen. (P18)

White affirms that human beings were made to be thinkers. Thinking does not happen in a vacuum. We need language in order to think in a majority of cases. According to Whorf (1976) language plays an important role in shaping the ideas in our minds and in conveying them. People's values and perceptions are embedded in the language they use. It is therefore important that Christian teachers deliberately integrate faith in the teaching of language as it has eternal consequences on their moral

CONCLUSION

The value of speech in human society cannot be overemphasized. Verbal communication is one of the major distinguishing characteristics of the human species. Speech plays an important role in human relationships and it is paramount in their survival socially, emotionally, spiritually and mentally. When these aspects for human life are not properly taken care of at home and in school through the use of language, students are not able to realize their maximum potential in their attempts to learn. Without language skills, the ability to share one's faith is also limited. Students should therefore have an opportunity to talk about what concerns them in their day-to-day life. This will enable them to meet their needs in all these aspects. Experiences that excite children and those that frustrate them should be part of what they talk about and write about in school. When speaking about their experiences becomes spontaneous they will always have something to converse about and speaking in the required language will be something that they will treasure.

The most important challenge for the language teacher therefore is to get the children to express themselves verbally, for they are more likely to conceptualize and remember longer what they speak than what they hear others say. In addition, they should be made to realize that God wants us to perfect our speech and we shall give an account of the use of this special gift. Jesus is our example in speech and we should emulate him in our verbal interaction with others. Our students should be allowed and encouraged to share ideas that they read in books, with others in class and with time develop into critical

thinkers. Their ability to think critically will depend on how much language they have acquired and the opportunities they have had to interact in this language in various real life situations. If students have not been trained to be critical thinkers, they will take wholesale whatever ideas they hear or read at their face value. They will also depend upon those who are able to speak well to be their spokespersons whenever the need arises. It should not be the desire of any Christian language teacher that their students be socially crippled for lack of ability to critically analyze life situations. Even though the speaking may not be examinable, its value is eternal. Language teachers should therefore not give up on teaching verbal communication for its effects on moral and intellectual development are worth the pain.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abercrombie (1967) *Elements of General Phonetics* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
- Coates, J. (1986) *Women, men and Language: A sociolinguistic Account of Sex differences in Language*. London & New York: Longman
- Cook, G. (2003) *Applied Linguistics* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Habenitch, D and Anne Bell (1983) *How to Teach Children in Sabbath school*. Washington, DC20039-0555 Hagerstown, MD21740: Review and Herald Publishing Association
- Holy Bible: New King James Version. Copyright© 1989 by Thomas Nelson, Inc
- Hymes, D. (1974) *Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach* Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press
- Kenya National Examination Council (2002) *Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E) Regulations and Syllabuses 2002-2003*. Nairobi, Kenya
- McGregor, G. P. (2002) *English for Life? Teaching English as a Second Language in Sub-Saharan Africa, with reference to Uganda*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers
- Potter, P.A and A.G.Perry (1997) *Fundamentals of Nursing concept, Process and Practice* (4th ed) St Louis: Mosby
- Sauls, L. (1978) in Wehtje, V. (1978) (ed) *Language Matters: Notes Towards an Adventist English Program*. Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association. (pp 69-84)
- Seltman, K. (1978) *Language and Moral Development in School Years* in Wehtje, V and Lynn, S. (1978)(eds) *Language Matters: Notes Towards an Adventist English Program* Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association (pp 21-27)
- Stafford, O. (1978) *At The Center of Development* in Wehtje, V and Lynn, S. (1978)(eds) *Language Matters: Notes Towards an Adventist English Program* Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association (pp 9-20)
- Stone, E. (1978) *Homo Loquens and Homo Grammaticus Development* in Wehtje, V (1978) (ed) *Language Matters: Notes Towards an Adventist English Program*. Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association. (pp 69-83)
- Rasi, H.M (June, 1993) *World Views: Contemporary Culture and Adventist Thought*. A

Paper presented at Faith and Learning Seminar, Union College Lincoln, Nebraska

White, E. G (1941) *Christ's Object Lessons* Washington D.C: Review and herald Publishing Association

White, E. G. (1880). *Manuscript 3*

White, E.G. (1948). *Testimonies Vol.6*. Idaho: Pacific Publishing Association

White, E.G (1952). *Education* Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association

White, E.G (1890). *Patriarchs and Prophets*. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press publishing

Whorf, B. (1956). *Language, thought and Reality*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.