The Features of Communicative Language Teaching Strategies (CLTS) used by Non - English Major Teachers in Teaching English

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Abstract: *The study aimed to identify the Communicative Language Teaching Strategies used by non – English major teachers in teaching English and how effective are these strategies as perceived by the students themselves. The study was conducted in eight (8) Public High Schools in Sta. Cruz, Zambales The study revealed that the non-English major teachers teaching English are more adept in emphasizing on learning to communicate through classroom interaction and the non-English major teachers are not familiar with the use of authentic materials as springboard in teaching English. School authorities should give ample trainings for non-English teachers teaching English subjects or better yet, to let only the English teachers teach the English subjects in order for mastery of the language and outcomes-based education be achieved. Learning doesn't have to be confined in the classroom alone, but has to be extended or linked outside or in the community. It is then recommended that school administrators should encourage all schools to link learning outside the schools so that the students will have a larger avenue and opportunities of learning through the things they see and experience outside the classroom or school.*

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching Strategies (CLTS), Non-English major, Public High Schools, Sta. Cruz Zambales

1. Introduction

There are already a lot of researches or studies that are focused on Communicative Language Teaching Strategies that are implemented by English teachers who are English majors but limited researches have ventured on studying the CLT strategies used by non-English major teachers who are teaching English. Hence, this research centered on the communicative approaches that enhance communication skills of students implemented by non-English major teachers who are teaching English. The study centers on non-English major teachers who are teaching English in public schools in Sta. Cruz, Zambales. Non-English major teachers are those whose major or field of specialization is not English but other learning areas such as Filipino, Mathematics, Science, Technology and Home Economics (TLE), AralingPanlipunan and Music Arts Physical Education and Health (MAPEH).

CLT continues in its classic form as seen in the huge range of course books and other teaching resources that cite CLT as the source of their methodology. In addition, it has influenced many other language teaching approaches that subscribe to a similar philosophy of language teaching (Richards, 2006). Using the communicative approach through the aid of training attended by the English teachers in teaching English as a subject will help them out in imparting knowledge to the learners and become more competent in their quest to becoming not only effective; but also, efficient English teachers. Prior to the knowledge that the teachers learn from the trainings they attended are the techniques that they learn during their students' years, which serve as the bases of their daily practice and significantly affects their capability in teaching. Accordingly, the competence of the teachers varies to a certain extent based from their experiences. Language is the basis of daily life, culture, religion, commerce, science and civilization (McKenzie-Brown, 2006).

The K + 12 Enhanced Basic Education has already made a difference in the Philippines' Educational System and made an impact especially in terms of the teaching – learning process which is the core of the system that had long existed for several decades.

In line with this, the teachers in secondary schools are still given loads or subjects that are not in line with their field of specialization. Some are effective, some are efficient but it is always important that a teacher is both effective and efficient so that he can perform his role as a molder of the minds especially the young.

The above notion is easier for the English major teachers because back in their tertiary education, they have somewhat mastered the concepts in field of specialization hence; they are already confident during class discussions and the activities therein. At present, CLT can be seen as describing a set of core principles about language learning and teaching, as summarized above, assumptions which can be applied in different ways and which address different aspects of the processes of teaching and learning. Communicative language teaching today refers to a set of generally agreed upon principles that can be applied in different ways, depending on the teaching context, the age of the learners, their level, their learning goals, and so on. The following core assumptions or variants of them underlie current practices in communicative language teaching (Richards, 2006).It is already given that English major teachers are competent in the use of various strategies in teaching the English Language as compared to the non – English major teachers. All the concepts above have made the researcher decide to work on his research regarding the Communicative Language Teaching Strategies used by non – English major teachers in teaching English. Furthermore, only one published research was found by the researcher that is focused on communicative language teaching in the Philippine setting but it is not addressed to non – English major teachers. Researches are more focused on the communicative language teaching strategies used by the

English major teachers as a whole. Clearly, there are benefits to using Philippine English (PE) in Philippine English Language Teaching. Thus, by promoting PE in the classroom, feelings of intimidation, low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence among both teachers and learners may diminish (Martin, 2014).

2. Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to find out the Features of Communicative Language Teaching Strategies used by Non – English Major Teachers in Teaching English in the eight High Schools in Sta. Cruz, Zambales. Specifically, the study attempted to answer what features of CLT strategies are used by non – English major teachers in teaching English as an emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction, the introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation, the provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the learning process itself, as an enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning and, as an attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom.

3. Research Methodology

This study on the features of communicative language teaching used by non-English major teachers (Nunan, 1999) used qualitative-descriptive method. Analysis of the documents gathered like the recorded classroom observation was the main tool and a face to face interview and a focused group discussion with the respondents to validate the results were conducted. Selinger and Shohamy (1989) emphasized that the use of interview as a data collection instruments permits a level of in-depth information, free response and flexibility that cannot be obtained by other procedures. The target subjects of the study were12 English teachers who are non – English majors in eight (8) Public High Schools in Sta. Cruz, Zambales. These were Guisguis National High School, Sta. Cruz National High School, Don Marcelo C. Marty High School and Lipay National High School, Sta. Cruz South High School, San Fernando High School, Mena Memorial National High School and Jesmag-Sta. Cruz National High School-Annex. Audio-video recording and observations for at least five (5) meetings in the English classes of the teachers were done but first and second observations was not included in the analysis as students are still in their adjustment period with the observer. An interview guide was used to ensure that the same questions were asked to all participants. Follow up questions were aired for clarification or further description of the detail, without suggesting what is being sought for.

First, the researcher wrote a letter of intent addressed to the school heads of the eight (8) High Schools in Sta. Cruz, Zambales to conduct audio-video recording and observation on the respective classes of the respondents for five (5) meetings and interview the teachers and selected students after the fifth observation. The recorded data were analyzed by the researcher to determine the features of communicative language teaching strategies used by the non – English major teachers in teaching English. The data that were relevant to the research were organized through coding. Coding is the process of examining the raw qualitative data then assigning labels to these data. In this study, transcription was used in order to ensure the validity of the results in the Focus Group Discussion during the interview. (Biddix, 2009). As posted in ReadingCraze.com (2014), data coding is the process of driving codes from the observed data. In qualitative research the data is either obtained from observations, interviews or from questionnaires. The purpose of data coding is to bring out the essence and meaning of the data that respondents have provided. Transcription is also considered to be a representational process (Bucholtz, 2000; Green et al., 1997) that encompasses what is represented in the transcript (e.g., talk, time, nonverbal actions, speaker/hearer relationships, physical orientation, multiple languages, translations); International Journal of Qualitative Methods 2009, 8(2) 38 who is representing whom, in what ways, for what purpose, and with what outcome; and how analysts position themselves and their participants in their representations of form, content, and action. (Green et al., 1997, p. 173) This elaboration reminds that transcription is not merely the mechanical selection and application of notation symbols.

The communicative language teaching strategies that are manifested in the research will be categorized accordingly. Categorizing is the process wherein concepts or ideas are being labeled from the least effective to the most effective or vice versa (The Free Dictionary.com).

4. Results and Discussion

This study presents the Features of Communicative Language Teaching Strategies used by non – English major teachers in teaching English. These features are (a) an emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction; (b)the introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation; (c) the provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the learning process itself; (d) an enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning; and (e) an attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom.

(a) An Emphasis on Learning to Communicate through Interaction. Interaction is a kind of action that occurs as two or more objects have an effect upon one another. The idea of a two-way effect is essential in the concept of interaction, as opposed to a one-way causal effect.Hence, regardless of who the teacher is, and whatever subject he teaches, it is important then to remember that interaction in the classroom should mirror the authentic communication that occurs in the real world. It should also encourage informal, unrehearsed use of language along with a relaxed classroom environment.

(b) The Introduction of Authentic Texts into the Learning Situation. The use of authentic materials in an EFL classroom is what many teachers involved in foreign language teaching have discussed in recent years. Generally, what this means is materials which involve language naturally occurring as communication in selected contexts where standard English is the norm: real newspaper reports, real magazine articles, real advertisements, cooking recipes,

horoscopes, etc. Most of the teachers throughout the world agree that authentic texts or materials are beneficial to the language learning process, but what is less agreed is when authentic materials should be introduced and how they should be used in an EFL classroom (Gilmore, 2007).The use of authentic materials in the classroom is beneficial to the learning process. However, on the question of when authentic materials can be introduced into the classroom there is less agreement. In addition, the notion of authenticity has largely been restricted to discussions about texts; there have been few systematic attempts to address the question of task authenticity. In the paper that follows, the authors endeavor to address both of these issues (Rings, 1986).

(c.) The Provision of Opportunities for Learners to Focus, not only on Language but also on the Learning Process itself. The role of the teacher in the classroom is to initiate classroom interaction through strategies and behaviors in order to give students the best possible opportunities for learning the language. According to Lowman (1986), excellent teachers use verbal and non-verbal means to elicit and maintain attention, encourage communication and interaction and facilitate learning in and outside the classroom. In fact, the current trend now in teaching English is not focused on grammatical competence alone but more importantly on communicative competence. Indeed, the primary role of the teacher is to develop communicative competence of learners. According to Savignon (1983), communicative competence is relative, not absolute and depends on the cooperation of all the participants involved. It is not so much an interpersonal construct rather dynamic interpersonal construct that can be examined by means of the overt performance of two or more individuals in the process of negotiating meaning.

(d.)An Enhancement of the Learner's Own Personal Experiences as Important Contributing Elements to Classroom Learning . When students are given the chance to share their own experiences during class, they become more participative and active. Primarily because they know exactly what they are going to say. Also, their confidence were boosted because they were able to express themselves while sharing their own experiences. The experience of the learner occupies central place in all considerations of teaching and learning. This experience may comprise earlier events in the life of the learner, current life events, or those arising from the learner's participation in activities implemented by teachers and facilitators(Andresen, Boud, & Cohen, R,2000).Experience – Based Learning (EBL) is based on a set of assumptions about learning from experience. These have been identified by Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993) as: experience is the foundation of, and the stimulus for, learning; learners actively construct their own experience; learning is a holistic process; learning is socially and culturally constructed; and learning is influenced by the socio-emotional context in which it occurs.

(e).An Attempt to Link Classroom Language Learning with Language Activities Outside the Classroom. Learning and personal development during the undergraduate years occurs as a result of students engaging in both academic and non-academic activities, inside and outside the classroom (Astin,

1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). To enhance student learning, institutions must make classroom experiences more productive and also encourage students to devote more of their time outside the classroom to educationally purposeful activities (Kuh, Schuh, Whitt &Associates, 1991).It is indispensable to note that learning does not only occur inside the classroom. Most of the time, the best lessons are learned outside the four walls of the classroom.

The table shows the features of communicative language teaching strategies used by non-English major teachers in teaching English. The findings reveal that among the features of CLT, an emphasis on the learning to communicate through interaction was used by the majority of the teachers while the introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation was used by only a few of the respondents.

Table 1: Summary of Features of Communicative Language Teaching Strategies used by non – English major teachers teaching English

Features of CLT	N	Rank
An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction	10	1
Introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation	1	5
Provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the learning process itself	7	3
An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning	8	2
An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom	2	4
Total		12

Table 1 shows that out of the 12 non-English teachers teaching English, 10 of them used the emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction followed by enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning with eight respondents. The third Feature of Communicative Language Teaching Strategies used by non – English major teachers in teaching English was the provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the learning process itself with 7 respondents using it and fourth was an attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom with 2 respondents who did it. The least feature of Communicative Language Teaching Strategies used by non – English major teachers in teaching English was introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation with only one respondent who implemented it. The emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction is commonly initiated in the classroom because interaction is important in classroom discussions so that students will have the chance to speak and share their ideas. It is not healthy for a teacher to always do the talking especially at present times when they are already expected to just act as facilitators of learning. Interaction plays an important role in class discussions because it is where the students get the chance to communicate and share insights with their classmates as well as their teachers.

These points are reflected into what Kolb (1976) has emphasized that the experiential learning model is an approach that takes learning from the confines of the classroom and formal education into life and work. This article describes experiential learning theory and the concept of different learning styles. These styles are strongly associated with career specialties and methods of problem solving, decision making, and learning. Organizational learning is seen as a problem of integrating the various learning styles associated with its functional specialties and matching these specialties with appropriate environmental demands. The role of the teacher in the classroom is to initiate classroom interaction through strategies and behaviors in order to give students the best possible opportunities for learning the language. According to Lowman (1986), excellent teachers use verbal and non-verbal means to elicit and maintain attention, encourage communication and interaction and facilitate learning in and outside the classroom. In fact, the current trend now in teaching English is not focused on grammatical competence alone but more importantly on communicative competence. The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation,on the other hand, was seldom used by the teachers. It can be gleaned that for most of the time, teachers are engrossed with other functions so they opt to be satisfied with the use of the textbooks alone. It has to be considered that most teachers are given extra work like being a class adviser at the same time adviser of student organization, coach, clerk and others. With these scenario, teachers lack time to prepare materials for the next class.

However, the teachers should remember that students themselves were participative during class discussions when they interact with their classmates and teachers. Therefore, the use of authentic materials in the classroom as stressed out by Rings (1986) is beneficial to the learning process. Again, the use of authentic materials like real newspaper reports, real magazine articles, real advertisements, cooking recipes, horoscopes, etc. are effective in activating the communication skills of students because they can share their thoughts based on the materials being discussed. Most of the teachers throughout the world agree that authentic texts or materials are beneficial to the language learning process, but what is less agreed is when authentic materials should be introduced and how they should be used in an EFL classroom (Gilmore, 2007).If language learner literature is available in the language you teach, it is the most appropriate material for extensive reading by beginning and intermediate learners. It is important to differentiate extensive reading from other pedagogic aims, for example, teaching students to cope with text that is above their linguistic level. In order for extensive reading to do its work -- build automaticity of word recognition, build vocabulary knowledge and develop positive attitudes toward reading -- the reading material must be well within the students' linguistic ability. Most of the teachers throughout the world agree that authentic texts or materials are beneficial to the language learning process, but what is less agreed is when authentic materials should be introduced and how they should be used in an EFL classroom (Gilmore, 2007).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The non-English major teachers teaching English are more adept in emphasizing on learning to communicate through classroom interaction. The non-English major teachers are not familiar with the use of authentic materials as springboard in teaching English. School authorities should give ample trainings for non-English teachers teaching English subjects or better yet, to let only the English teachers teach the English subjects in order for mastery of the language and outcomes-based education be achieved. Learning doesn't have to be confined in the classroom alone, but has to be extended or linked outside or in the community. It is then recommended that school administrators should encourage all schools to link learning outside the schools so that the students will have a larger avenue and opportunities of learning through the things they see and experience outside the classroom or school.Also, teachers need to use other materials in the teaching-learning process other than textbooks.

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