

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): Advantages, Scopes and limitations

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Abstract: *The researcher would find out the method of using authentic teaching aids. He also would highlight the importance of Communicative Language teaching in students' life. In learning of a new language, learning of communication is important. The important purpose of learning a language must be to learn how to develop communicative competency. The research would also like to find out the ways to implement different methods to develop communicative competency in students.*

Keywords: CLT- Communicative Language Teaching, CA- Communicative Approach, Communicative Competence

1. Introduction

Language is viewed in different perspectives at different times by Linguists. They viewed it – as a skill, purpose of communication and as a system. In Communicative Language Teaching, “language teaching is based on use in communication: language is considered as a social tool which speakers use to signify meaning; speakers communicate related to something to any person because of some reason, either in oral or writing form” (Berns, 1990). In India, English has been regarded as yet another subject in schools and colleges. The structural approach has been used in the teaching of English language. The role of the teacher was just to lecture about various aspects, feature and rules of the English language. The learner has been treated as the inactive listeners of a lecture or instructions given by the teacher. Even the materials also have been produced keeping in view to this structural conception. The Structural competence has been given predominance on the communicative competence. Correct use of language in fluency and ability to have conversations in diverse situations is preferred.

Most of the Indians now strongly believe that English has the potential to make people more employable. It has become the most important language in India as a result of increase in the business process, out sourcing projects and call centre jobs. Since the English language is intended to be used in many states, especially by the undergraduate learners for enhancing career prospects and everyday communication, the government of some states tried to address these aspirations by upgrading the teaching skills of the undergraduate teachers of English through different training Program.

2. Principles/Features of CLT

The communicative approach is rather broad-based and it is most often defined as a list of general principles or features. Nunan's (1991) five features of CLT include:

- i. The importance is given to the learning to communicate with the help of interaction in the target language.
- ii. Use of authentic study material into the learning environment.
- iii. The availability of opportunities for learners to not only focus on language but also on the process of learning.

- iv. The development of the learner's experience is also important in the classroom learning.
- v. An effort to relate classroom learning of language to the activities of language outside the classroom.

3. Communicative Competence

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) concentrates on improving learners' communicative competence. The concept of communicative competence was initially developed in the early 1970s by the sociolinguist Hymes. Then it was developed in the early 1980s by Canale and Swain, the tinkers. According to Canale, communicative competence refers to the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication. Canale and Swain defined communicative competence in terms of four components:

- i. Grammatical competence: words and rules are there.
- ii. Sociolinguistic competence: appropriateness of words and sentences according to the situation.
- iii. Discourse competence: coherence and to the act of uniting the facts to form the whole.
- iv. Strategic competence : appropriate use of communication strategies according to the particular situation.

Bachman divides communicative competence into the broad two categories, Organizational and Pragmatic Competence. Organizational competence includes discourse or textual and grammatical competence. And Pragmatic Competence has Sociolinguistic and Illocutionary competence

Kiato and Kiato observed that the main idea or meaning of communicative competence remains the ability to use language appropriately in terms of receptiveness and productivity in real situations. According to Richards, Communicative Competence includes the following aspects of language:

Knowledge:

- i. To know how to use language for different purposes and functions.
- ii. Knowing when to use formal and informal language or when to use language appropriately for written and spoken communication)

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- iii. Knowing how to prepare and understand different types of texts for example narratives, reports, interviews, conversations etc.
- iv. Knowing how to maintain communication through using different kinds of communication strategies despite having limitations in one's language knowledge.

4. Types of Learning Activities and Techniques

In a language learning process different types of activities are used in communicative classes for example, problem solving tasks, quizzes, information gap activities, role plays, discussions on various issues, mock interviews language games and surveys. The purpose of all these things is to develop language skills and it should be done in authentic context. Littlewood in 1981 distinguished two major types of activities i.e. Functional communication activities and Social interaction activities. English Language Teaching Functional communication activities are aimed at developing certain language skills which are necessary in highly competitive world and its functions. Social interaction activities must include discussion sessions, role plays, dialogues and conversation.

5. The Use of Authentic Materials

In communicative classroom, the first and important activity of a teacher should be to facilitate language learning in meaningful ways. To fulfill this objective most of the communicative classrooms use authentic study material. The use of different authentic study material facilitates an important aid to create an authentic context in which learners can develop their communicative competence. The materials that give real life language experience is called authentic materials. According to Nunan, 'A rule of thumb for authentic material is any material which has not been specifically produced for the purposes of language teaching.' The main idea of using authentic material in the classroom is to introduce them with the language needed in real life situation.

Authentic teaching and learning materials can be included, audio and audiovisual material in which TV and radio programs, newspapers, announcements at different public places like market place railway station etc., photographs, painting telephone books, letters, circulars, minutes of the meeting, reports and information brochures can be used. Teacher of language must use the authentic material for the teaching purpose keeping in view the requirement and interest of the students, aims of language learning etc.

6. Roles of Teachers and Students in Communicative Language Teaching

Larsen-Freeman observes on the roles of teacher and students in a communicative classroom that the teacher is the facilitator of communication in the classroom. During this process of communication situation the teacher act as facilitator, advisor, he answers the questions of the students and monitors the performance of the students. He can take

note of their mistakes to be worked on when at a later stage during more accurate functioning of the activities. At other situation he might be a co-communicator engaged in communication activities with the students. Students will take part in different communication situation and try to improve their communication skills even when they have incomplete knowledge of the target language. In this method students are more active and the teacher's role is not so dominant. Because of this reason the students will be more responsible of their own learning. Larsen-Freeman commented on interaction between student and teacher and among the students, he says: When working on the language accuracy, teacher may present or teach some part of the lesson. He is the facilitator at other situations. He does not always interact with the students. Some time he plays the role of a co-communicator, but more often he creates situations that trigger communication between and among the students. When students interact with one another, they actually improve their communication with the help of pairs, small group triads and whole group.

7. Importance and Limitation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Lindsay and Knight commented that Communicative Approach (CA) is very widely used all over the world. It has changed the focus in language teaching from learning about only the language to learning to communicate in the target language. However, there are problems associated with the communicative Approach. The most important criticism of Communicative Approach is that it is as effective as it claims. It is developed in Britain, the USA and other English speaking countries. So, the implementation of the CA is not easy task in India. The teachers and learners of language should be flexible to learn the language with the help of CA. Teachers should understand that they can fulfill the requirement of the learners in a better way by the different principles of CLT.

The above discussion focused mainly on the CLT principles. In some of the Indian states the undergraduate teachers are trained in retraining program on the use of all these CLT principles. The paper also examined CLT principles and techniques that were in place to develop students' English communication skills.

8. Challenges and Changes: CLT in The Future

No one specific method is suitable for a specific learner and teacher. Different learning decides different learning methods. The researchers and scholars fail to decide the purpose of learner when concentrated CLT i.e why he or she wanted to learn the foreign language. Different learning methods have different learning methods. However, people with different cultural-national backgrounds may choose different learning methods for the language learning purpose.

The purpose of learning a foreign language can be classified in to two types i.e. learning a foreign language is for daily

use, which could be called as communicative oriented reason for learning a language; and learning a foreign language is for academic purpose: for future study and research in the field of translation, interpretation, linguistics and literature etc. which can be called as academic oriented purpose. It is easier to adopt the Communicative Language Teaching strategy including teachers and learners. They may not pay more attention to the grammatical rules and sentence construction. When the conversation goes on no matter what grammatical mistakes are there, on the condition that the speaker should be comfortable with the meaning. With the children we can see the process of learning a language. If we want them to learn a foreign language we should put them in the group of people from the foreign country whose native language is the target language. We can see that the children will learn the language very fast without learning the grammatical rule of the target language. For the academic purpose, it is more important to adopt the CLT strategies because CLT is important to focus on Communicative competence. The learners should learn to communicate first and then understand the grammatical rules and sentence construction. In the nearest future computer aided education will be facilitated to the students. There is no need to present physically in the classroom for the students and the teachers. And then the rules of teaching and learning will be obviously changed

9. Conclusion

The results of this study produces some pedagogical implications in terms of how the strategies of the faculty have to be while following CLT principles in their classrooms and what administrators need to do to facilitate better learning. The pedagogical implications are as follows

- a) Teachers give more emphasis on skill development rather than subject knowledge and follow more learner-centred teaching and learning.
- b) The teachers should teach language providing integration with more variety in language skills.
- c) Teachers should concentrate the use of authentic materials and language learning simulations.
- d) Teachers need to provide real life situations while teaching a language that could be of use in day to day life of the students.
- e) Teachers should use more communicative activities for enhancing their students' listening, reading and writing abilities.
- f) Administrators must facilitate the required materials such as text books, computers and photocopy machines to the teachers and students.
- g) Administrators should conduct different programs such as the Retraining Program periodically so that teachers can share their experiences with the implementation of CLT principles.

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