COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract: *In this paper, overview the various English language teaching methods which are presented at the outset. Some prominent definitions of Communicative Language Teaching are mentioned along with the origin, theoretical background and major characteristic features. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is one of the best and a recent approach in teaching English as foreign / second language and it has been brought under focus by many linguistics and researchers. This paper also explains who this approach has made, language learning more communicative with reference to many researchers conducted studies on this approach. It also explains the advantage and disadvantage of CLT in implementation. Finally, it is drawn as per the review of the literature indicated. Certain methods, such as Audio-lingual, Grammar Translation, Suggestopedia, and Total Physical Response, have appeared in the history of language instruction.*

Key words: *Communication language teaching, approach, method, teaching, Audio-lingual, Grammar Translation, Suggestopedia, and Total Physical Response*

INTRODUCTION

Theories like as behaviorism, structuralism, constructivism, and universal grammar are used to design methodologies. In this regard, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is no exception (Larson - Freeman, 1 986; Ellis, 1 994) .The CLT approach, which developed in the United Kingdom, is now widely utilized in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes all around the world.

MAIN BODY

According to Barnaby and Sun (1 989) and Ellis (1 996), CLT is recognized by many linguists and language teachers as a powerful theoretical modelin ELT and a useful approach to language education. In this brief overview of CLT, I attempt to define the Communicative Language Teaching approach, its theoretical foundation, and some key characteristics. I will also discuss the main benefits and drawbacks of CLT implementation.Many publications identify Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as amethod of teaching language (Cannale, 1 983; Cook, 1 991 ; Littlewood, 1 981 ; O'Malley and Chamot, 1 990; Richards and Rodgers, 2001 ; Rivers, 1 987) . CLT is described as "an approach to foreign or second language teaching that emphasizes that the goal of language learning is communicative competence" (1 992: 65) by Richardset al. in the Dictionary of Language instruction and Applied Linguistics.

CLThas been described and characterized in various ways by other authors in the field (Howatt, 1 984; Littlewood, 1 981 ; Savignon, 1 991 ; Scarcella and Oxford, 1 992) .According to Littlewood (1 981 :1), "paying systematic attention to both functional and structural aspects of language, combining these into a more fully communicative view" is one of the most distinctive characteristics of communicative language education.Generally speaking, proponents of CLT go beyond simply teaching the target language's grammar rules and suggest.

Language teaching approaches have always been serious attempts to better the educational process of teaching foreign languages. One of the outcomes of these attempts is the communicative language teaching approach. The latter has been empowered and undergirded by the greatest linguists, such as Chomsky, Hymes, and Michael Halliday.Communicative language teaching (CLT), sometimes known as the communicative approach (CA), is a method of teaching languages that stresses interaction as both a means and an end goal.Learners in communication environments learn and practice the target language through interactions with one another and the instructor, study of "authentic texts" (those written in the target language for purposes other than language learning), and use of the language both in and out of class.Learners talk with partners about personal experiences, and teachers teach themes outside of traditional grammar to enhance language abilities in a variety of circumstances. The ability to communicate in the target language is the purpose of language instruction, according to CLT.This is in contrast to past beliefs in which grammatical competence was frequently prioritized.

CLT also elevates the teacher to the role of facilitator rather than instructor. Furthermore, the technique is a non-methodical system that does not employ a textbook series to teach the target language but instead focuses on developing strong oral and verbal skills before beginning to read and write. First of all, it is quite appealing to open the discussion with a reflection on the historical background of the CLT approach as a preliminary stage in this article. Going back to the late 20s, the language teaching/learning scene was totally different. The language learning process was based on repetition and the habit of formation. Additionally, the focus of learning was primarily confined to the accuracy of production, rather than meaningful interaction. The focus of language learning lessons was centered on rehearsing grammatical patterns and vocabulary items. As a consequence, individuals who are taught according to this approach frequently experienced considerable difficulty in real-life communicative encounters. In this aspect, this teaching perspective has received critics from prominent linguists such as Noam Chomsky. The latter argued that the use of language should be beneficial for our actual performance. Hence, any language teaching attempt has to contribute to training learners to be good language users in real-life situations. Hymes (1 971), in particular, stressed the need for language learners to develop communicative competence, which suggests that successful communication requires "knowing when and how to say what to

whom'.Therefore, the knowledge of grammatical structures and vocabulary is not sufficient to enable communication on a functional level.

The critics mentioned above in addition to the expansion of global English resulted in a fundamental change in language teaching concepts. The passive skills – reading and listening- have been labeled as receptive ones. Furthermore, it has been recognized that communication consists not only of production (message-sending) and reception (message-receiving), but negotiation of meaning, or collaboration between senders and receivers. As a next step, then, the language education conception will be reframed from that of teaching a language to teaching students how to use the language. Any attempt in the field of language teaching that aims at preparing adequate language users for real-life situations needs to adopt solid principles. The communicative approach is based on overarching principles that carry out different methods. Among the CLT principles stated by Berns 1 990 are the following: first of all, language teaching perceives language as a social tool and key to communication in real-life situations. In addition, the aspect of diversity is highly relevant when it comes to language learning for communication purposes. Diversity is accepted in second language learning as similarly as in first language learning. Another significant principle is the aspect of culture in language. Language is the cornerstone of any culture. Thus, culture affects and shapes learners'communicative competence in one way or another.

Last but not least, learners need to do things with language. In other words, learners are taught languages to purposefully perform acts in various pragmatic contexts using language. Taking this scenario into consideration, we can assume that the CLT approach has treated language as a means of acting in different situations using language purposefully. All in all, language is the medium while communication is the aim.Having in mind the aforementioned principles that construct the CLT approach, it is worthwhile to mention how the instructional practices in this approach promote the aspect of communication. In this regard, Nunan (1 989) enumerated six basic elements that should betaken into account in designing communicative tasks, including (1) learning goals; (2) linguistic input; (3) classroom activities; (4) the teacher's role; (5) the role of the students; and (6) the setting in which the activity is situated. The learning goal of a communicative activity indicates the outcomes expected from accomplishing a specific learning task. In terms of communicative language learning, these goals entail "establishing and maintaining relationships";exchanging information; carrying out daily tasks; and obtaining and utilizing information from a variety of sources, such as the internet, television, and newspapers. Next, the linguistic input of the activity depends on the learning objective and the needs of the students. For instance, a teacher might design an activity framed around a newspaper article, a class schedule, a recipe, or amap…etc. Concerning classroom activities, they 'should be designed to mirror authentic communicative scenarios as closely as possible'.As areason, the use of information-gap and problem-

solving exercises, dialogs, role play, debates on familiar issues, oral presentations, and other activities is highly relevant. Such activities develop the learners'skills that they will need to use the language in unrehearsed, real-life situations. Coming to the role of the teacher inCLT, Rodgers (2001) emphasizes the teacher's role in this setting as that of a "needs analyst".

In other words, ateacher in CLTisa facilitator, activities designer, and monitor of students'progress. Nunan 1 989 also documented that the instructor may even take on the role of a participant in a given exercise, or even act as a co-learner himself, as students express themselves during the course of a communicative task. Equally important,   the student's role is to negotiate meaning to accomplish a given communicative task. Since the   activities are highly interactive, they can take place in small groups or even with the whole class. Finally, the setting where learning occurs does matter a lot inCLT. The classroom is not the only venue where communicative tasks can take place, but also other occupational settings, such as online instruction, community ...etc.

Considering the implementation of the CLT approach in different EFL contexts, there are opposing perceptions about it. The CLT approach has been regarded as progressive and effective not only in settings where English is used as a second language but also in places where English is not the primary means of communication. However, an opposite view argues   that the notion of creating authentic communicative scenarios in a foreign language setting is, in essence, a contradiction. In the same vein, Widdowson affirms that the target language as it is used in the EFL classroom "cannot be authentic because the classroom cannot provide the   contextual conditions for it to be authenticated by learners".Another challenge that encounters the effectiveness of CLT in the EFL context is the traditional teacher-fronted approach to language that students are accustomed to. They can hardly become active learners under such an approach.In a nutshell, one cannot doubt the effectiveness of the CLT approach when it comes to teaching foreign languages. Though, applying this approach requires a lot of attention, creativity, and reasoning, especially when it comes to the setting as well as the activities planned to involve students in real interaction. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) originated in England, a mostly English as a Second Language (ESL) environment. In the early 1960s, notions regarding second language education were evolving, as were the theoretical assumptions underlying them.CLT was born at this period of re-evaluation. According to Galloway, the communicative Approach was developed by educators and linguists who were dissatisfied with the Audio-lingual and Grammar Translation techniques of foreign language training.   According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), the beginnings of communicative language teaching can be located in shifts in situational language teaching approaches that affected the British language teaching tradition until the late 1960s.Candlin (1981) and Widdowson (1978) saw the importance of emphasising communicative proficiency above structural mastery in language teaching. They

believed that students were not learning enough true, whole language in methods such as Situational Language Teaching, Audio-lingual or Grammar Translation (Richards and Rodgers 1986; Savignon 1987, 1991; Galloway 1993). Students lacked communication skills in the cultures where they studied the language. In this regard (Widdowson, 1972).The communicative method to language teaching is a relatively new adaptation in the field of foreign / second language instruction.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a "hybrid approach to language teaching that is essentially 'progressive' rather than 'traditional.'" Wright (2000, p. CLT can be understood as a result of a multidisciplinary approach that incorporates, at the very least, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and educational research (Savignon, 1991).   CLT proponents typically agree that it is an approach, not a method (Richards and Rodgers 1986; Savignon 1991; Brown 1994).   Brown, for example, believes that "Communicative Language Teaching is a unified but broadly based theoretical position about the nature of language and language learning and teaching" (1994: 244-245).Although we have different versions and various ways in which CLT is interpreted and applied, educators in the area, Littlewood (1981); Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983); Brumfit (1984); Widdowson (1978, 1979); Johnson and Morrow (1981); Richards and Rodgers (1986); Larsen-Freeman (1986); Celce-Murcia (1991) and Johnson (1982) put some of the major characteristics of CLT as follows:

(a) It is felt that students need knowledge of the linguistic form, meaning and functions. However, CLT gives primary importance to the use or function of the language and secondary importance to its structure or form (Larsen-Freeman 1986; Johnson 1982). This does not mean that knowledge of grammar is not essential for effective communication, rather systematic treatment of both functions and forms is vital. Stressing on this, Littlewood says "one of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language" (1981: 1).

CONCLUSION

Communicative language teaching is one of the most recent humanistic approaches to education that emphasises language use and gives learners additional opportunities to practise the target language despite its limitations. Today, most English as a foreign /second language learners are concerned about their ability to use the language independently and fluently in a range of real-life communication contexts, such as when they are on a trip, in a meeting, or in a restaurant. If correctness and fixing grammatical faults are also taken into account in CLT, this strategy produces fluency and accuracy at the same time. CLT is an approach that does not provide a specific method. Teachers must decide appropriate single or combination of methods to gain communicative competence for the field application. The main conclusion is that CLT is recommended for a language teaching program whose purpose is to give communicative competence.

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