ISSN: 2181-1385
Scientific Journal Impact Factor (SJIF) 2021: 5.723
DOI: 10.24411/2181-1385-2021-00273

TEACHING ENGLISH AT PRIMARY SCHOOLS USING COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH METHOD

Zahro Mirbabayeva
Master student of Uzbekistan State University of World Languages

ABSTRACT

In Uzbekistan, teacher training and re-training programs started to focus on reforming teaching methods at primary school. However, in English Language Teaching (ELT) methodology, “Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)”, which is the most dominant and experienced foreign language teaching method in many current ELT applications, has been widely used in Uzbekistan as well as in other countries in the world. Moreover, it is regarded as the most reliable and efficient way of teaching language not only for English but also for other languages. Morover, until recently, very few studies have been carried out in the field to interpret the CLT applications and their results in teaching English as a foreign language or a second language in the world. Despite the increasing popularity of the communicative approach, very few small-scale classroom studies have been carried out. Although CLT is widely practiced throughout the world via pre-school and school programs, workshops, and university courses, there is little evidence about what teachers understand from CLT and how they apply it in the classroom.

Keywords: teaching English; communicative approach; primary schools; teaching methods.

INTRODUCTION

There have been some recent innovations in the academic field in the present age of information technology. Many technological devices help academic branches to operate more interactively and they visually enrich teaching sessions. The beginning of the technological era changed the education system by making the learning process more memorable for students while allowing teachers to access more resources. Academic success is directly proportional to the quality of the teaching materials. The use of technological products as teaching aids may increase the quality and success rate of teaching. It can be seen that the production and integration of technological devices are increasing by the day. The effects of these developments can be observed in various ways in Uzbekistan.

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Frankly speaking, the primary education system of Uzbekistan is still lacking in the academic achievements of school children. The government of Uzbekistan (GOU) is directing a bigger portion, 23% respectively, on its education system (Shaturaev 2014). The ministry of public education of the Republic of Uzbekistan started to reform the teaching-learning process. In this case, GOU has signed a program for 2017-2023 reforming public education in the country (Ministry of Public Education 2017).

METHOD AND MATERIALS

The communicative commonness of English and its worldwide usefulness necessitate changes in the approaches of English teaching. Second-language curriculum development has become increasingly complex since the advent of communicative language teaching during the 1980s. The trend of language teaching has gradually moved away from traditional grammar-based approaches such as grammar-translation and the audio-lingual methods to the communicative ones. Communicative language teaching led to a re-examination of language learning and teaching goals, syllabuses, materials, and classroom activities and has been a major cause of changes in language teaching worldwide. Indeed, the influence of the communicative approach has permeated every aspect of ELT, from syllabus design to teaching material selection, from teaching methodology to learning assessment (Shaturaev 2019). In various countries, school curricula increasingly take into account learners' present or predicted communication requirements, the kinds of things they are likely to want to say, read, or write in the target language. Communicative intentions replace grammatical forms, and communicative competence is the overriding objective of instruction. The underlying principle of a proficiency-based program is represented by the functional trisection, a model for integrating the objectives of function, context (content), and formal accuracy at any level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In general, the major principles of communicative language teaching can be summarized as follows: Learners use a language through using it to communicate: The primary principle of CLT is that all activities managed and carried in classrooms are supposed to be communication-centered and serve the goal of communication (World Bank Group 2018). What teachers and students do during the classroom can be divided into two types: one is directly communicative activities. On listening it

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can be listening to weather broadcasting; on speaking it may be asking ways in a new city; on reading it could be understanding a series of instructions; on writing it can be writing a letter for booking a room in the hotel, so on and so forth. These activities are graded by students' language level. The other is indirectly communicative activities. The activity itself is not a communicative one but of use and related to communicative tasks.

Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities: Free choice" refers to what and how people say is completely chosen by themselves. In real-life communication, the speaker himself decides not only what he intends to express but uses what language form to express appropriately without being controlled by others. In face-to-face communication, his choice is made under the pressure of time (Christopher M. Whitsel 2011).

The ability to select language forms under time pressure is an important aspect of communicative competence and also a difficult point for foreign language learners. Meanwhile, as the speaker should make choices spontaneously, the listener doesn't possibly predict what the other party tends to say. That is, the language of the two sides is, to a large degree, arbitrary and unpredictable. For language teaching, if the language used by students is controlled by the teacher, it will be difficult to develop their communicative competence. The use of authentic materials is an important characteristic of Communicative Language Teaching (Berninger, Garcia, and Abbott 2009). There are various authentic materials, such as a copy of a genuine newspaper article, a live radio or TV broadcast, a menu, a literary text, etc., which expose students to examples of natural language rather than the material which has been written for language teaching purposes. Hence CLT designs classroom practice as allowing the students to decide by themselves what and how to express to achieve the goal of developing communicative competence.

It is essential to create speaking opportunities for the students to achieve communicative competence. The ability to express oneself intelligibly, reasonably, accurately, and without too much hesitation will provide opportunities for students to produce and understand tokens of the language which they may have been made aware of, or even learned, during accuracy activities. The activities which help develop fluency have features as follows:

- Students get the chance to be creative and express their attitudes, feeling, emotions, fears, etc.

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- Students concentrate on ‘what’ they are saying (or writing) rather than ‘how’ they are saying (or writing) it. The focus is on the meaning of the words more than all the others.

- Students get practice in adjusting to the demands of the situation—in a speech this means that the activity must allow for the improvising, paraphrasing, self-correction, and unpredictability that is typical of natural language use outside the classroom. In short, the CLT is to teach English for communication, that is, to give students the ability to use the language rather than simply to know its structure, grammar, and vocabulary. Active student learning is the main learning style advocated by CLT.

Fluency and accuracy are both important goals in language learning: There is always a goal for communication. The goal of one party may be offering an invitation, giving an opinion, expressing dissatisfaction and asking for help, etc.; while that of the other may be resistant or declining, etc. People in communication always keep in mind the goal and try to achieve it. Therefore whatever he says is around the goal; while he also evaluates by this goal what other people transmit to him. This strategy of making the corresponding adjustment according to information feedback of the opposite is an important point in language communicative competence. Classroom practice of CLT tends to help students, during the process of completing their communicative tasks, improve their ability to judge the target language, tone, and attitude, and the ability to make corresponding language reactions for achieving their own communicative goals (Habibov 2012).

Communication involves the integration of different language skills: Classroom goals are focused on all of the components (grammatical, discourse, functional, sociolinguistic, and strategic) of communicative competence. Goals therefore must intertwine the organizational aspects of language with the pragmatic. While involvement in communicative events is seen as central to language development, this involvement necessarily requires attention to form. Communication cannot take place in the absence of structure, or grammar, a set of shared assumptions about how language works, along with a willingness of participants to cooperate in the negotiation of meaning. In their carefully researched and widely cited paper proposing components of communicative competence, Canale and Swain did not suggest that grammar was unimportant. They sought rather situate grammatical competence within a more broadly defined communicative competence. Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error: According to CLT, in the process of language learning, making mistakes is normal and shows

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that the student *is* trying to use the language, which is not bad. Besides that, the goal of the students' learning foreign languages is to get things done successfully and to communicate with other people. There is no need (actually it is extremely difficult) for foreign students to approach the level of the native speakers on every aspect. It is not that CLT does not correct students' errors at all, but it treats different errors respectively. It has been pointed out that the errors definitely ought to be corrected which may violate the listener or reader and which occur frequently. However, no matter it is serious or slight, correcting every error can have an opposite function. Now foreign language educators generally agree that the tolerance of spoken or written errors will benefit students in confidently using the language to communicate.

Central to these principles is the frame of reference for making ELT authentic, meaningful, and the English learners fluent and accurate. Although there have been modifications and reformulations of what constitutes communicative competence, the communicative approach considers target language-based communicative competence to be essential for foreign language learners to participate fully in the target language culture. Teachers have been encouraged to integrate language and culture in EFL classrooms bypassing cultural knowledge and rules of speaking of the native speakers onto the learners, who in turn are expected to use the target language as the native speakers do. Such a notion implicitly suggests that foreign language learners should model themselves on the native speakers, who are usually taken to be speakers of a standard variety of the target language, while completely ignoring the social identities and cultural competence of the learner in any intercultural interaction. The success of ELT is measured by how native-like the learners are in their performance of the target language.

Teachers' and students' roles in class activities make up the critical focus of communicative teaching. Most of the negative and fruitless examples were observed to have been resulted from either the teachers' or students' lack of organisation and implication of CLT. Teachers' language competence and creative ability primarily affect the final product. How they understand CLT, how they instruct the students, and how much intervention is necessary determine their roles and the outcome of their performance. In the more creative types of activity, teachers should avoid unnecessary intervention because this may prevent learners from becoming involved with the activity and developing their communicative skills. The teachers' function becomes less dominant, but no less important in some situations. Teachers may find themselves talking less and listening more, becoming active facilitators of their students' learning and facilitating communication in the classroom. In speaking

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practice, it is the students' turn to do most of the talking. The teachers are like the skillful conductor of an orchestra, giving each of the performers a chance to participate and monitoring their performance to see that it is satisfactory. In CLT teachers serve more as facilitators and participants rather than being in a traditional didactic position; and students are actively involved in interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning. Accordingly, the teacher is an analyst and task designer whereas the students are improvisers and negotiators. Moreover, the teachers must correct the learners' mistakes immediately. Otherwise, once the wrong patterns and rules become fixed in students' minds, then they will result in habits difficult to change, and accuracy is therefore much more emphasized than fluency. If learners make errors during speaking, the errors are tolerated to encourage fluency. However, it does not mean that errors are ignored and the teacher may not give learners feedback. Error correction should be applied during teaching rather than while students are practicing in the target language. Otherwise, it causes a permanent habit in which students hesitate every time they use the target language.

Thus, the students learn how to learn, and as a result, they take responsibility for their learning. In CLT activities, students are supposed to interact with each other through the "group work activities, which allows the students to be exposed to purposeful and authentic language use rather than the mechanical practice of language drills. According to Deckert, based on student-centeredness, the CLT requires low profile teacher roles, constant pair work or small group problem solving, students responding to authentic texts, extended exchanges on versatile topics, and the implementation of the four basic skills, namely speaking, listening, reading, and writing.25 The CLT discourages teacher-centeredness, quizzing of memorized material, and detailed commentary on forms of English. Consequently, CLT often demands teachers to use less teacher-centered activities and skills. Instructors are responsible for organizing the classroom as a setting for communication and communicative activities. Besides, CLT activities have shifted language classrooms' focus from the function and the teacher to the learner. Unlike traditional and teacher-centered approaches, CLT is against teacher dominance in the classroom and supports a more equal relationship among the teachers and the students. The CLT teacher assumes responsibility for determining and responding to learner language needs. The teacher is the manager of classroom activities. In this role, one of his major responsibilities is to establish situations likely to promote communication. A classroom during a communicative activity is far from quiet; therefore, the teacher has to be aware of classroom management issues.

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CONCLUSION

Considering the research questions we aimed at the beginning of the study upon which our study is based, we conclude that Communicative Language Teaching is teaching a language for communicative purposes. The techniques used for language teaching, thus, are based on communicative and authentic means. The target language, or L2, is regarded as the ideal and final purpose of the method, which has been set as perfect as the native language. It presents many advantages for foreign learners to acquire L2 by using the language itself and being exposed to the authentic language as much as possible. This leads to more accurate pronunciation and larger vocabulary memory for foreign language learners during its long teaching period. It is one of the latest teaching methods, yet it is too ambitious and the requirements for its success are too idealistic to reach. Much as CLT is still claimed to be the best method of language teaching, our study reveals that it should not be regarded as perfect and relied on alone in all aspects of language acquisition.

In this study, the author tried to understand the effectiveness of CLT and whether it was an appropriate and yielding method in language learning in High Schools. The data were obtained from a sample test prepared to measure the qualifications of the participants in common and creative situations at theoretical, analytical, and synthetic levels. These expressions were intentionally asked to understand whether the participants would behave naturally or automatically when encountering such expressions.

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