REVIEW ARTICLE

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING ENABLE LEARNERS TO ACQUIRE SECOND LANGUAGE

[1]Nirmala, J.R. and [2]*Sugantha Ezhil Mary, E

[1]R.M.K College of Engineering and Technology, Puduvoyal, Tamilnadu, India
[2]Sathyabama University, Sholinganallur, Tamilnadu, India

ABSTRACT

Communication is the basic attribute of human life and language is the main tool of human communication. English became the language of international communication or international language. English is playing a vital role in political, social, educational, and economic concerns of the nations. Teachers in communicative classrooms will find themselves talking less and listening more--becoming active facilitators of their students. At present, in some places it has evolved into CALI or Computer Assisted Language Learning. Both CALI and CALL have not been adopted widely due to the obvious constraints of finance and the typically Indian mindset that learning cannot take place without the presence of a human teacher.

INTRODUCTION

English as an International Language

Communication is the basic attribute of human life (Thompson , 2003:1) and language is the main tool of human communication (Clark *et al.,* 1994:1). Initially this communication was within societies and communities at local level but it took a new dimension as people from various societies, communities and nations started interacting with each other. The period following the 1950s saw a tremendous increase in the need for communication among the people of the world in various spheres of international contact like politics, academics, economics, technology and culture. The world has started becoming a global village. This gave birth to the need and pressure of adopting a more practical for the people of various linguistic backgrounds (Crystal 1997:10). This led to the emergence of an international language common lingua franca for this global village to facilitate communication and make it. English was accorded this privilege and it became the language of international communication or international language. Whatever may be the political or economic reasons and factors responsible for entrenching English in this position, the reality is that these reasons and factors cannot diminish the importance of English and its pervasive use in international affairs. Presently, English is the

*Corresponding author: sugantha_prince@yahoo.co.in

language of international economic system. It is a language which has secured a place for itself alongside local languages in multilingual communities and is also learnt by all classes of the society. Its acquisition can guarantee the availability of opportunities to employment, travelling, higher education, and even better life. These are some of the characteristics which according to Brutt-Griffler (Mackay, 2002:12) make an international language. Following are some of the evidence which can be presented to support the position of English as a global language and a language of wider communication. MacKay (2002:17) states that over 85 per cent international organizations in the field of international relations make some official use of English. In Asia and the Pacific 90 percent of the organizations use only English for their official proceedings (ibid).

Thus English is playing a vital role in political, social, educational, and economic concerns of the nations. English is the language of popular culture in the form of being the language of English films and music which entertain people all over the globe (ibid). The travel and tourism industries also rely on English as a common language of communication. The knowledge of English is also essential to access printed and electronic information and higher education as higher education is dependent on English in many countries (ibid). Thus "knowledge of English is necessary for accessing many discourses at a global level from international relations to popular culture to academia" (MacKay, 2002:18).

A huge industry of language teaching exists in many countries of the world. This includes private language teaching institutions as well as private and state schools (Mackay, 2002:14).The number of the people who have some familiarity with English is growing and macro-acquisition of the language is also increasing (MacKay, 2002).Macro-acquisition means acquisition of the language by various levels of society both at individual level and in groups. Individually more and more people are learning it, and it is also finding a place in the academic curricula in various countries. The phenomenon can be explained by citing Crystal (1997:3) who states that English is

now taught over 100 countries and is emerging as the chief foreign language being learnt and displacing other language in the process.

How do the roles of the teacher and student change in communicative language teaching?

Teachers in communicative classrooms will find themselves talking less and listening more becoming active facilitators of their students' learning (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). The teacher sets up the exercise, but because the students' performance is the goal, the teacher must step back and observe, sometimes acting as referee or monitor. A classroom during a communicative activity is far from quiet, however. The students do most of the speaking, and frequently the scene of a classroom during a communicative exercise is active, with students leaving their seats to complete a task.

Because of the increased responsibility to participate, students may find they gain confidence in using the target language in general. Students are more responsible managers of their own learning (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). Nevertheless, in the debates which have arisen regarding its appropriateness or otherwise, there seems to exist a tendency of misinterpretation, essentialism and overgeneralization. Given the fact that CLT is an umbrella term and there is no standard model of CLT accepted as authoritative (McGroarty, 1984; Markee, 1997), This Study therefore adopts the viewpoint that CLT can be more constructively interpreted from an anti-essentialist perspective due to its open and flexible nature.

The Road Ahead in India: More CA Inclusive

ELT in India has come a long way from year 1880 when only 60% primary schools used English as the medium for teaching. up to 1940, the grammar-translation method flourished and the spread of English remained confined to education and office circles, yet again in a haphazard manner. By 1970, structural linguistics started making its presence felt in Indian classrooms in the shape of drills and exercises. Around this time, all professional courses began to be taught in English, which had also become established as a library language and a

subject for independent study. As compared to its establishment as an autonomous subject in other English-as-first-language countries around 1940, ELT emerged as an autonomous subject in India as late as 1980.

Similarly, the language laboratory also became a part of the ELT paradigm around 1985 as compared to the 1940 of these countries. CALL or Computer Assisted Language Instruction reached most classrooms in 1960 but it came to the Indian classrooms around 1985; at present, in some places it has evolved into CALI or Computer Assisted Language Learning. Both CALI and CALL have not been adopted widely due to the obvious constraints of finance and the typically Indian mindset that learning cannot take place without the presence of a human teacher. In the Indian context, Tickoo's distinction between CALI and CALL took on special significance. While it is true that multinationals, call centres and some private institutes are encouraging CALL, it is CALI that has gained wider acceptance. Communicative Language Teaching reached both regions (India and the West) between the years 1970 - 1980, with the difference that the Indian context was not ready for CLT. Hence, it took around two decades to gain acceptance among learners and teachers. It is true that mostly this CA is practiced in the institutes that belong to the third category above but the ripple effect created is gradually reaching the ELT classroom. Most institutes that target the language users who need proficiency in a hurry or who need to clear certain examinations invest heavily in teaching materials from publishing houses like the Cambridge University Press. Since all materials published in such places of repute are state-of-the-art in terms of methodology, teachers and learners are in a position of maximum benefit. Moreover, teachers at these centers are usually young postgraduates who are receptive to novelty and innovation.

The most significant impact of this approach is its sensitivity to learner needs and response. This sensitivity is what has been lacking in the academic aspect of ELT in India. The whole academic process is so unwieldy that it fails to respond to learner needs; learner response is too often ignored. The ELT cone of India is broadening at the base

today because of factors that have little to do with the ELT classroom in academic institutions. The irony of the situation is that while academicians label these learning centres 'shops' or 'commercial institutes' it is these establishments that are a major influence behind the changing face of the ELT paradigm in India.

Communicative Language Teaching

Influenced by Krashen, approaches emerged during the 1980s and 1990s which concentrated on the communicative functions of language. Classrooms were characterized by attempts to ensure authenticity of materials and meaningful tasks Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged as the norm in second language and immersion teaching. As a broadly-based approach, there are any number of definitions and interpretations, but the following interconnected characteristics offered by Brown (2001: 43) provide a useful overview:

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. Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Organizational language forms are not the central focus, but rather aspects of language that enable the learner to accomplish those purposes. Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use. Students in a communicative class ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom.

- Classroom tasks must therefore equip students with the skills necessary for communication in those contexts. Students are given opportunities to focus on their own learning process through an understanding of their own styles of

learning and through the development of appropriate strategies for autonomous learning.

- The role of the teacher is that of facilitator and guide, not an all-knowing bestower of knowledge. Students are therefore encouraged to construct meaning through genuine linguistic interaction with others.

- The communicative approach was developed mainly in the context of English Second Language (ESL) teaching. This construction, and the other distinctive features of Irish, are not inordinately difficult when taught in structural context, but it is different to English and other languages and requires appropriate adaptation if the communicative approach is to be adopted. The same can of course be said about other languages as well.

Conclusion

The conclusions related to interpretations about the needs of the students in language use, learning preferences, learning styles, classroom interaction and learning activities, and role relationship. Thus it can be inferred that the 'mastery of language' is considered instrumental ,making good progress in studies (thus present needs) and in getting a good job in future and also making good progress in future career (thus target situation needs) This factor suggests that the motivation for EL learning among these students is extrinsic. In the case of extrinsic motivation external factors can have an effect on students' motivation for language learning in a negative way, and language learning environment needs to be supportive and encouraging to the students in order to help students view language learning experience in a positive way and thus establishing the need for an approach which is more consistent with learning needs of the students. It was taken an in-depth look at the phenomenon of CLT adoption and adaptation among I year B.E. / B.Tech students in Engineering Colleges, the teachers with experience of various training programmes. It was investigated how CLT was interpreted, as well as the extent to which the approach was considered compatible with the I year B.E./ B.Tech. Students' in EFL context, taking into account possible constraints on its implementation.

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