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Approaches and Significance of Communicative Language Teaching

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ABSTRACT   In English language, communication plays a vital role and this is one basic feature of expanding relationships beyond horizons and enriches the language ability in view of what learners should be able to do with the language. Language, functions based on an assessment of the communicative means of learners specified the end result or goal while learning a language with specific purposes.In subsequent interpretation for learners, methodologists working intended to focus on the cultural norms of the native speakers and the difficulty, if not impossibility of duplicating them in a native class room of non-natives. In light of this difficulty the appropriateness of communicative competence as an instructional goal was called into question. The present paper is an attempt to highlight the approaches and significance of communicative language teaching in the present trend.

KEYWORDS :

DETAILED PAPER

The term Communicative Language Teaching is an approach to the Second and

Foreign languages that emphasize interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning languages. It is also referred to as the "communicative approach to the teaching of foreign languages" or simply the "Communicative approach"

Relationship with other methods and approaches:

Historically, CLT has been seen has a response to the audio-lingual method (ALM) and as an extension of the development of the notional functional basis. Task based language learning, a more recent refinement of CLT has gained popularity in the present trend.

The audio lingual method:

This method has had a greater need for foreign language proficiency in listening and speaking skills during and after world war II .It is closely tied to behaviorism, drilling, repetition, habit formation, etc. Proponents of this ALM feel that this emphasis on repetition needed a corollary emphasis on accuracy, claiming that continual repetition of errors would lead to the fixed acquisition of incorrect structures and non-standard pronunciation. In the class room, lessons were often organized by grammatical structure and presented through short dialogues. Students listen repeatedly to recordings of conversations like in language labs and focused on accuracy, mimicking the pronunciation and grammatical structures in these dialogues.

Critics of ALM asserted that this over emphasis on repetition and accuracy ultimately did not help students achieve communicative competence in the target language. Language is not a habit structure alone. Ordinary linguistic behavior characteristically involves innovation, formation of new sentences and patterns in accordance with the rules of great abstractness and intricacy. They looked for new ways to present and organize language instructions and advocated the notional functional syllabus and eventually CLT as the most effective way to teach second and foreign languages. However, audio-lingual method is still prevalent in many text books and teaching materials. Moreover, advocates of audio-lingual methods point to their success in improving aspects of language that are a bit driven in the most notable pronunciation.

The Notional functional syllabus:

A Notional functional syllabus is more a way of organizing the language learning curriculum than a method or an approach to teaching. In a notional functional syllabus, instruction is organized, not in terms of grammatical structure as had often been done with the ALM, but in terms of notions and functions. A notion is a particular context in which people communicate and a function is a specific purpose for a speaker in a given context. As an example, the notion has a particular context shaping requires numerous language functions including,

asking about prices or features of a product and bargaining. Similarly, the notion party would require numerous functions like introduction and greetings and discussing interests and hobbies. Proponents of notional-functional syllabus claimed that addressed the deficiencies they found in the ALM by helping the students developed their ability to effectively communicate in a variety of real -life contexts. **Learning by teaching:** This is a wide spread method. The students take the teachers role and teach their peers. CLT is usually characterized as a broad approach to teaching rather than a clearly defined set of class room practice. As such it is most often defined as a list of general principles or features.

1. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
2. The introduction of authentic text into the learning situation.
3. The provision of opportunities for learners to focus not only on language, but also on the learning management process.
4. An enhancement of the learners own personal experiences as an important one, in contributing it as a major element to classroom learning.
5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom.

These five features are claimed by CLT practitioners to show that they are very interested in the needs and desires of their learners as well as the connection between the languages, as it is taught in the class and used outside the classroom. Under this broad umbrella definition, any teaching practice that helps the students develop their communicative competence in an authentic context is deemed an acceptable a beneficial form of instruction. Thus in the classroom, CLT often takes the form of pair and group work, requiring negotiation and practice, and develop language functions as well as judicious use of grammar and pronunciation focused activities.

In the mid 1990's, the 'Dogma '95' manifesto', influenced language teaching through the "dogma language teaching movement", which proposed that the published materials can stifle the communicative approach. As such, the aim of the dogma approach to language teaching is to focus on the real conversations about real subjects so that, communication is the engine of learning. This communication may lead to explanation, but this in turn will lead to further betterment in communication.

Classroom activities used in CLT:

The major activities used in CLT are role play, interviews, information gap, gamut language exchanges, surveys, pair work learning by teaching etc. However not all courses that utilize the communicative language approach will restrict their activities solely to these. Some courses will encourage the students in taking occasional grammar quiz, or prepare at home using non-communicative drills for instance.

Criticism on CLT:

Many critics have offered famous attacks on CLT. More recently, other writers have criticized CLT, for paying insufficient attention in which teaching and learning take place. Though CLT has also been defended against this charge often, the communicative approach is deemed a success, if the teacher understands the student. But if the teacher is from the same regions of the students, the teacher will understand the errors resulting from the influence from their first language. Native language speakers may still have the difficulty in understanding the target language. The observation may call for new thinking on the adaptation of the communicative approach. It should be a stimulation where the teachers pretend to understand only what any regular speaker of the target language would really want and react accordingly.

Conclusion:

CLT is best considered as an approach rather than a method. It refers to a diverse set of principles that reflect a communicative view of language learning which can be used to support a wide variety of classroom procedures.

- Learners can learn by knowing, how to use it to communicate.
- Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.
- Fluency is an important dimension of communication
- Communication involves important dimensions like appropriateness, message focus, psycho linguistic process risk management and free practice.
- Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error method.

With all these procedures, outcome is another dimension in the process of communication and is the main one in competency- based language teaching. Today, CLT thus continues in its "classic form". Influencing many other language teaching approaches, that subscribe to a similar philosophy of language teaching.

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