



CLT- AN APPROACH TO TEACH EFL AND ESL LEARNERS.

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ABSTRACT

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign languages, emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. It is also referred to as "Communicative Approach". Historically, CLT has been seen as a response to the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), and as an extension or development of the Notional-Functional Syllabus. Task-based language learning, a more recent refinement of CLT, has gained considerably in popularity.

KEYWORDS : CLT, Syllabus, learning, Approach, Second or Foreign Language.

INTRODUCTION:

The increasing interdependency between the European countries necessitated a need for a greater effort to teach adults the principal languages of the continent. New goals were set in language teaching profession:

- The paramount importance of communication aspects of language.
- The increasing interest in meaningful learning.
- The growing centrality of the learner in teaching processes.
- The subordinate importance of structural teaching of language.



Literature Review- As the language theories underlying the Audio-Lingual method and Situational Language Teaching method were questioned by prominent linguists like Chomsky (1957) during the 1960s, a new trend of language paved its way into classrooms. A lot of British Linguists contributed to the formation of the communicative approach which aims to make communicative competence. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which is an approach to the teaching of second or foreign languages, emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. Historically CLT has been seen as a response to the Audio-lingual Method (ALM) and as an extension or development of the Notional- Functional Syllabus. Task- based language learning, a more recent refinement of CLT, has gained considerably in popularity.

Academic Influences- The development of communicative language teaching was bolstered by new academic ideas. Before the growth of communicative Language teaching the primary method of language teaching was situational language teaching. This method was much more clinical in nature and relied less on direct communication. In Britain applied linguists began to doubt the efficacy of situational language teaching. This was partly in response to Chomsky's insights into the nature of language. In addition, applied linguists such as Christopher Candlin and Henry Widdowson observed that the current model of language learning was ineffective in classrooms. They saw a need for students to develop communicative skill and functional competence in addition to mastering language structures.

Objectives- CLT has some objectives –

- To communicate in the target language in authentic situations

- To achieve this goal, students need to know:
- Linguistic forms
- Meanings
- Functions

Role of the Teacher-

A facilitator- Teacher facilitates communication in the classroom and establishes situations likely to promote it.

An advisor – Teacher plays a role of **co- communicator** as engaged with the students in activities, answering student's questions and monitoring performance.

Role of Students – Communicators- In CLT classroom students are more responsible manager of their own learning, as communicator they are actively engaged in negotiating meaning and trying to make themselves understood.

Classroom Activities- CLT teachers choose classroom activities based on what they believe is going to be most effective for students developing communicative abilities in the target language. (TL) Oral activities are popular among CLT teachers, as opposed to grammar drills or reading and writing activities, because they include active conversation and creative, unpredicted response from students. Activities vary based on the level of language class they are being used in. They promote collaboration, fluency and comfort in the TL. The six activities listed and explained below are commonly used in CLT classrooms.

Role Play- Role play is an oral activity usually done in pairs, whose main goal is to develop students communicative abilities in a certain setting.



1. The instructor sets the scene where is the conversation taking place (e.g. in a café, in a park etc.)
2. The instructor defines the goal of the students' conversation (e.g. the speaker is asking for directions, ordering coffee, talking about movie that recently saw.
3. The students converse in pairs for a designated amount of time. This activity gives students the chance to improve their

communicative skills in the TL in a low pressure situation. Most students are more comfortable speaking in pairs rather than in front of the entire class.

Instructors need to be aware of the differences between a conversation and an utterance. Students may use the same utterances repeatedly when doing this activity and not actually have a creative conversation. If instructor do not regulate what kinds of conversations students are having, then the students might not be truly improving their communication skills.

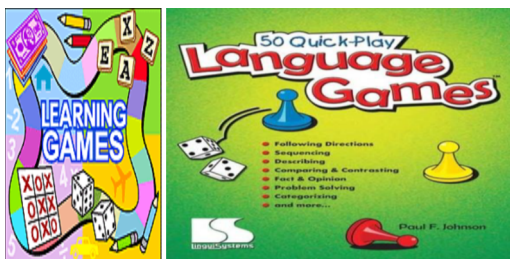
Pictures strip story- Prediction of the next pictures

An example of using a problem solving task as a communicative technique.



Language games-

- Games are used frequently in CLT.



Interview- An interview is an oral activity done in pairs whose purpose is to develop interpersonal skills in the TL.

Example- 1. The instructor gives each student the same set of questions to ask a partner.

2. Students take turns asking and answering the questions in pairs.

This activity, since it is highly structured, allows for the instructor to more closely monitor students responses. It can zone in on one specific aspect of grammar or vocabulary, while still being a primarily communicative activity and giving the students communicative benefits. This activity should be used in the lower levels of language classes, because it will be most beneficial to lower level speakers. Higher level speakers should be having unpredictable conversations in the TL, where neither the questions nor the answers are scripted or expected. If this activity were used with higher level speakers it wouldn't have many benefits.

Group Work- Group work is a collaborative activity whose purpose is to foster communication in the TL, in a large group setting.

Example-

1. Students are assigned a group of no more than six people.
2. Students are assigned a specific role within the group (e.g. Member-A, Member-B etc).
3. The instructor gives each group the same task to complete.
4. Each member of the group takes a designated amount of time to work on the part of the task to which they are assigned.
5. The members of the group discuss the information they have found, with each other and put it all together to complete the

task. Students can feel overwhelmed in language classes, but this activity can take away that feeling. Students are asked to focus on one piece of information only which increases their comprehension of that information. Better comprehension leads to better communication with the rest of the group, which improves student's communicative abilities in the TL. Instructors should be sure to monitor that each student is contributing equally to the group effort. It takes a good instructor to design the activity well, so that students contribute equally, and benefit equally from the activity.

Information Gap- Information gap is a collaborative activity, whose purpose is for students to effectively obtain information that was previously unknown to them, in the TL.

Example: The class is paired up. Partner A and Partner -B. Each group has to fill the information in empty boxes. They can help each other also to complete gap of each table. Completing information gap activities improves students' abilities of communicate about unknown information in the TL. These abilities are directly applicable to many real-world conversations, where the goal is to find out some new piece of information. If the students have not been well prepared for the task at hand then they will not communicate effectively.

Opinion Sharing is a content-based activity, whose purpose is to engage students' conversational skills, while talking about something they care about.

Example: The instructor introduces a topic and asks students to contemplate their opinions about it. (e.g. dating, school dress codes, global warming etc.) Opinion sharing is a great way to get more introverted students to open up and share their opinions. If a student has a strong opinion about a certain topic, then they will speak up and share. Respect is key with this activity.

Scavenger Hunt- It's a mingling activity. That promotes open interaction between students.

Example- 1. The instructor gives students a sheet with instructions on it. (e.g. find someone who has a birthday in the same month as yours)

2. Students go around the classroom asking and answering questions about each other.
3. The students wish to find all of the answers they need to complete the scavenger hunt. In this activity students have the opportunity to speak with a number of classmates in a low pressure situation and talking to only one person at a time.

Since this activity is not structured as some of the others, it is important for instructor to add structure.

Syllabus-CLT syllabus organizes the teaching according to the notional and functional categories of language rather than according to its structures. It concentrates on the following –

Interactions- Using language to communicate.

Tasks- using language to perform meaningful tasks.

Learner- putting the learners' interests need in the forefront.

Merits of CLT- There are many advantages in teaching according to the communicative approach.

CLT is a holistic approach. It does not focus only on the traditional structural syllabus. It takes into consideration communicative dimension of language. CLT provides vitality and motivation within the classroom. CLT is a learner centred approach. It capitalizes on the interacts and needs of the learners. In a world where communication of information and information technology have broken new considerable ground, CLT can play an important role in

education.

Criticism- The various categories of Language functions are overlapping and not systematically graded like the structures of the language.

- The communicative approach focuses on the use of language in everyday situations, or the functional aspects of language, and less on the formal structures.
- A major principle underlying this approach is its emphasis on learner's needs and interests. This implies that every teacher should modify the syllabus to fit the needs of the learners.
- The requirements are difficult. Not all classrooms can follow for group work activities and for teaching aids and materials.

In spite of its critics, CLT has gained widespread acceptance in the world of language study. CLT can succeed, as long as teachers don't completely reject the need for the structure provided by grammar. CLT, in the hands of balanced teacher and trained, can bring new life and joy to the classroom. Its vitality makes it an important contributor to language learning approaches.

CONCLUSION- CLT is best considered an approach rather than a method. Thus although a reasonable degree of theoretical consistency can be discerned at the levels of language and learning theory, at the levels of design and procedure there is much greater room for individual interpretation and variation than most methods permit. It could be that one version among the various proposals for syllabus models, exercise types, and classroom activities may gain wider approval in the future, giving communicative language teaching a status similar to other teaching methods. On the other hand, divergent interpretations might lead to homogeneous subgroups. Today CLT can be seen as describing a set of core principles about language learning and teaching, as summarized above, assumptions which can be applied in different ways and which address different aspects of the processes of teaching and learning.

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