

## Second Language Acquisition Through Communicative Language Teaching



### Education

KEYWORDS : : CLT, language acquisition, conscious, sub conscious

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper deals with the role of CLT in the acquisition of second language. The traditional methods of teaching English are becoming out dated as the learners are no more interested in mastering the language. Instead, they want to learn to use English for communication. For this, sub conscious language acquisition will help more than conscious language learning. Language acquisition is very similar to the process of children acquiring their mother tongue or the first language. The principles of CLT make the second language learning easy and interesting.*

#### Introduction:

English is an international language which has to be acquired rather than learnt. Acquisition refers to the unconscious learning of a language. It is similar to a child acquiring his or her first language (mother tongue). Nobody teaches the child any rule or format for the mother tongue. The child starts uttering words and sentences in the mother tongue because, in and around, the child is exposed to its mother tongue at all situations. Without any deliberate effort, the child starts acquiring its mother tongue. Such a natural way of acquiring a language can be implemented in the process of learning English as a second language. This can be done with the help of CLT.

#### Communicative Language Teaching:

CLT is an approach which attempts to teach English in a natural setting thereby making the learners feel comfortable and at home. The Grammar-Translation method and the Audio-Lingual approach were the popular methodologies of teaching English before the emergence of CLT. Repetition and memorization were involved in these methods. Later it was realized that memorizing grammar rules and studying literary texts were irrelevant in the process of learning a language. It was at this point that CLT found its way amidst other methodologies. CLT is based on the fact that the purpose of language is communication. This very theory attracted many of the learners and educators who were struggling hard to promote communication. CLT brought in a dramatic change in the method of teaching English as a second language.

#### Origin and principles of CLT:

CLT owes its origin to the famous linguists like Dell Hymes and Michael Halliday. Many other researchers and linguists have played roles in the development and practice of CLT. Some of them are Brumfit, Johnson, Littlewood, and Jack.C.Richards. It was at the time when people started realizing the importance of English, that CLT drew the attention of both the learners and the teachers. Good communication was looked upon as a symbol of social status and intellect. Moreover jobs in the mushrooming multinational companies demanded fluency in English.

The main focus of CLT is to develop communicative competence among the learners. Learners do not just learn the rules of the language. Instead, they are made to use the language through communicative activities like games, role play, group discussion etc. The Process of communication is more important than the mastery of the language forms and grammar rules. Learners are expected to be communicative and not accurate while using the language. Accuracy gets less importance in the process of implementing CLT. Learners become active participants in the process of language learning. Interaction is an important mean through which CLT is implemented. The learners are

motivated to interact in English as much as possible. Spontaneous interaction done frequently makes the learners acquire the language unconsciously. The CLT approach does not emphasize the rules of grammar or syntax. According to CLT, the main aim of the language is communication. That is, the learner should be able to communicate in such a way that the listener is able to get the meaning of the words uttered by the learner and the learner should also be able to understand the meaning of the words communicated to him. Meaning is given more importance than the structure. While implementing CLT approach, real life time situations are created and the learners are involved in role plays. Activity based lessons are dealt with so that communication takes place among the learners. CLT is a learner centred approach where the need and interest of the learners gain importance. The teaching and learning process revolves around the learner. It also requires a lot of negotiation and cooperation among the learners.

#### Role of teachers:

It is very important for the teacher to realize his or her role in the CLT classroom. The teacher should aim to make the students work on their own without much interference from the teacher. The teacher should watch and listen patiently even if some mistakes are committed in the process of interaction and if done so the students will not be always conscious of mistakes. The students should be made to feel free and comfortable while using the language. The teacher should assume the role of a facilitator and he should not act like the controller or the master of the classroom. The teacher should also become one of the participants with whom the students should feel happy to communicate and interact. The teacher should not pin point the mistakes then and there as this may discourage the students. The students will naturally develop a fear of committing mistakes and this in turn will ruin the whole learning process. The teacher should make the students understand that committing mistakes is an inevitable step in any learning process. The teacher should never forget to appreciate the effort of the students. Appreciation is like a health drink which can boost up the spirit of the learners in a magical way. The silent observers of the learners' side will also be motivated to participate.

The teacher should not restrict himself to the prescribed text book. The text book should be used as a tool with which the teacher prepares many teaching materials that cater to the needs of the students. The materials should be designed in such a way that they make the students involve in interaction and communication in an interesting way. Role plays, games and mock situations may be created where the students curiously and unintentionally involve in natural communication.

**Role of learners:**

The learner should not give an omniscient, godly image to the teacher. Learners should not entirely depend on the teacher. They should understand that teachers are their facilitators who are there to guide them in the process of acquiring the second language. They should not be conscious of the presence of the teacher. They should break the ice and come out of all inhibitions and hesitations. They should make use of the opportunities and try their best to use the language. They should also be good listeners so that they understand the instructions of the teacher and involve themselves effectively in the communication based activities. There should be lot of cooperation and perseverance among the learners. The learners should also encourage one another in the process of interaction. The learners should actively participate in all the classroom activities with inspiration and interest.

**Conclusion:**

As many experts have suggested CLT is one of the best approaches to acquire the second language. If the principles of CLT are properly understood and if both the teacher and the learners play their roles accordingly, the second language can be easily and effectively acquired through Communicative Language Teaching.

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