

Communicative language Teaching – A Standard Method to Teach Language Globally

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Abstract

Communicative language learning surpasses all the other methods of teaching like audio – lingual, grammar translation, direct method which concentrates mainly on grammar, theory and rote learning. It gives emphasis to student's active participation in the classroom, hence it is student – oriented with less interference of the teacher. It gives importance to the function (use of language) than the form (structure of language). The role of the teacher, the difference between audio-lingual and CLT method and the importance of CLT is discussed.

Key Words: Modern-day language teaching, approaches, methods, communication, practical oriented, Communicative Language Learning, real –life simulations.

Communicative language teaching popularly called as CLT has become one of the standard methods of teaching English language. Unlike, the previous methods which concentrated on rote learning, grammatical structures, pronunciation, vocabulary etc., CLT emphasizes on the communicative abilities, wherein the learners communicate the real meaning. The students learn how to use the language practically rather than just learn it by rote. It concentrates on the skills more than the grammatical structure, syntax, vocabulary and pronunciation.

Unlike the other methods which is teacher oriented, CLT is student – centered. The teacher acts as a facilitator and not a tutor. In the other methods, especially audio – lingual method, students usually learnt the basics of the language through rote,

drills or repetition. Whereas in CLT they use expressions, gestures, social behavior to communicate. This is very important as they face similar situations in real life wherein the students are ready to react and respond to the given situation.

The teacher becomes an observer who acts as a monitor during an activity. He / she has to be inculcate good listening skills rather than speaking. According to Larsen – Freeman, in this approach “Students are more responsible managers of their own learning”. 1986

Language should be relevant to the real world, real life. Real-life simulations are used. Contexts like asking for information, ordering in a restaurant, and asking for directions are some of the activities used.

Students learn to use the language spontaneously and communicate with each other.

Activities are challenging and enjoyable for students. CLT focuses on the function of the language than the form of the language. Focused practice is given in CLT. Students discover grammar on their own through activities.

This approach concentrates on the functional aspects of language. It gives importance to personal feelings, socializing, and talking about events, and enhances the creativity and imaginative skills of the students. Role play group discussion, Just A minute (JAM) sessions, dialogue telling, conversation, ordering at a restaurant, booking as railway ticket, information gaps, presentations, and completing the story are the few activities done in this approach.

A student in CLT method learns from the environment of his class, along with his team members. There is constant scope for individual thinking, and freedom of expression of thoughts, and there is less interference of the teacher. Unlike the audio lingual method which is confined to the norms set by the teacher, CLT method makes the students go beyond the horizons by breaking the shackles of the four walls there by learning language practically through their own experience.

CLT involves the students’ participation in various activities wherein they learn to interact with people, how to behave, take independent decisions, involve in team work, time management & problem solving.

Role of the Teacher

A teacher assumes several roles in a communicative language teaching class. The teacher is the organiser, a guide, a means of support who through one's experience chooses and provides a proper channel to the students wherein they learn the concepts practically. The teacher becomes just the observer wherein he/she guides the students by giving an idea of the concept. The rest is purely student-oriented.

The teacher responds to the needs of the CLT students by giving personal attention through series of sessions focusing on the students' receptivity, their learning styles and the aid they use during the process of learning. The teaching also motivates the students by testing them time and again through assessments. This will help them to boost their self-confidence.

Apart from this, a teacher creates an atmosphere wherein the classroom becomes solely a student-oriented one. He/she organises a group discussion/ role play or any such activity where the contribution of the students is more. The teacher gives an outline, organises, create the settings, encourages and guides them whenever needed. The teacher creates a setting, a platform for the students and it is the duty of the student to run the show. They perform each activity according to their thinking and understanding capabilities. Such activities that has less involvement of teachers when the activity is taking place encourages the students to develop their behaviour, attitude, cognitive thinking capabilities, team work and how to face a critical situation. At the end a teacher tells them their setbacks and measures to improve them. A teacher also counsels the students by giving extra attention to the area in which a student is lagging behind in, it may be reading or writing. It is the duty of a teacher to accept the students warmly and solve their problems by talking to them, getting feedback from them. A teacher should also check the students' time and again whether they have understood the concepts. These are some of the roles played by a CLT teacher that will be beneficial for the effective usage of the communicative methodologies and activities wherein the students gain knowledge and become proficient in communicative language.

Difference between Audio-lingual and CLT method

Audio-lingual student needs to be an expert in the language unlike a CLT student who needs language only for communicative purpose. A student in CLT method learns from the environment of his class, along with his group members. There is constant scope for individual thinking, freedom of expression of thoughts and it is much of student-oriented, there is less interference of the teacher. Even though a student commits mistake, it is taken casually and it is the combined responsibility of the entire group for a successful communication. There is no steadfast rules in a CLT class. It comprises of various communicative activities wherein there is direct involvement and participation of the students who enjoy learning as there is no one particular text or rules for learning.

The students have to interact with each other, express their opinions, share their views and participate in the sessions. The teacher assumes the role of a spectator in CLT class. Unlike a CLT class, students in audio-lingual class have to follow certain rules and regulations. They have to imitate the teacher by listening, and then performing certain tasks wherein there is the interference of the teacher. Basically it is teacher-centered class. The teacher controls and monitors the entire class and makes the students listen or do the activity as per the instructions given by him/her. There is no scope for interaction by the students with their fellow mates, nor the freedom to express their views. They should abide by the rules and order of the teacher. They have to follow a certain text and be precise in grammar and cannot afford to commit any errors in language. Hence a student of audio-lingual method is confined to the norms set by the teacher whereas a student of CLT method goes beyond the horizons by breaking the shackles of the four walls thereby learning language practically through their own experience.

Importance of CLT

It concentrates and gives exposure on how to face practical and real -life situation. By being engaged in such activities, the students do not get distracted and feel enthusiastic to learn the language. The students involve themselves in role play, group discussions, JAM sessions (Just a Minute) which creates a lively and jovial

atmosphere for learning. It gives practical exposure to the students which improves their cognitive thinking, capacity to tackle and handle critical situations, consult their fellow mates, work together to get to a conclusion, handle stress, anxiety, difference of opinions, how to communicate fluently.

This method doesn't focus on the accuracy of the structure of the sentence or its syntax but it gives emphasis on the communicative aspect of the student. If the student is able to convey the meaning to the entire class, the grammatical structure, pronunciation is ignored. Communication plays a vital role wherein students are given an opportunity to learn by themselves despite creating errors, they are encouraged to continue and not stopped abruptly in the middle of the discussion. The teacher at the end conducts the feedback session where he/she explains their shortcomings and guides them in the area of improvement. The teacher has the freedom to plan the activities and games based on the syllabus. He/she has to plan in such a way that it is both educative and entertaining. A teacher should also keep in mind the mood, fluctuation, mentality, their age i.e., teenage, their way of receptivity while planning and executing a communicative activity. It should be interesting as well as students have to learn the language. Such activities not only teach them the language but also prepares them to face the global world- to face the challenges, to solve problems, interact with people, team spirit and responsibility. Overall this method moulds the entire personality of the students and strives them to be capable enough to face the real competent world.

Hence, CLT method of teaching is very useful to teach communicative skills in the present scenario.

Work Cited

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