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An Overview of the Communicative Approach to Teaching English as a Second Language

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Abstract: In the broader evolution of language acquisition, particularly when it comes to learning English as a second language, educators have been working nonstop to investigate an increasing number of useful strategies, ranging from traditional approaches like the Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, and Situational Languages Teaching, among other things, to the most recent method of Communicative Approach. Because it was believed that the teaching-learning process was mechanical and the students were passive, the traditional teaching methods the failed outcomes of the prior language theories were shown to be ineffectual. Thus, in the 1960s, a novel approach to teaching languages called Communicative Language Teaching entered classrooms and has received widespread praise from educators today. This paper provides a brief overview of the rise of the learner-friendly Communicative Approach to teaching English as a second language, as well as its depth and focus in making teaching-learning a tremendous success in contemporary Indian classrooms.

Keywords: Principles of the Communicative Approach, emphasis, transformation, and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

INTRODUCTION

One of the most widely used approaches in modern classroom today is communicative language teaching (CLT). This method places a strong emphasis on communication and helping pupils become more adept at effectively expressing their ideas. CLT assists students with using the target language (L2) in a range of settings and circumstances in order to accomplish this goal. Instead of pressuring students to master the foreign language's syntax, its main goal is to assist them in developing meaningful conversation. Without a doubt, the level at which

learners acquire communicative competence determines their capacity to acquire a non-native language. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a method used to describe a teaching strategy that focuses on helping students apply their language skills to successfully communicate. The ability to utilize and manage the language in a variety of situations in both formal and informal settings is the key to developing communicative competence. This can be accomplished through a variety of classroom activities that organically foster genuine conversation as well as the application of communication techniques specifically used in CLT.

A Brief History of the Communicative Approach's Development:

Numerous authors have described Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes the semantic components of the language and fluency in the acquisition of the target language (Cannale, 1983; Cook, 1991; Littlewood, 1981; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Richards and Rodgers 2001; Rivers (1987). Communicative Language Teaching is a mixed approach to language teaching, primarily "progressive" rather than "conventional" Wright (2000). It relies on the idea that communication is the primary purpose of language acquisition. In order to achieve ease in oral expression and correctness in linguistic features, the most basic premise of the communicative approach is to put the students in real-life situations that require communication. Thus, the development of "communicative competence" is its main objective (Hymes, 1971).

The levels of goals in a communicative approach are as follows (Piepho, 1981):

- an integrative and content level, when language is viewed as a tool for communication;
- a linguistic and technical level, when language is viewed as a learning object and a semiotic system;
- an emotional level of behavior and interpersonal relationships, when language is seen as a way to convey opinions and values about oneself and others;
- a degree of personal learning requirements (error-analysis-based remedial learning);
- extra-linguistic objectives at the general educational level (where language acquisition is part of the school curriculum).

The Communicative Approach's Main Goal in L2 Instruction:

It is now generally acknowledged that communicative language instruction is the only way to develop communicative competence. The following aspects of language knowledge are included in communicative competence, which is the intended result of the communicative approach:

- Using language for a variety of objectives and uses
- Adapting language use to the individuals and the context
- Creating and comprehending various kinds of texts
- Sustaining and overseeing communication despite having minimal language proficiency.

The core principles of Communicative Language Teaching differs significantly from that of other methods.

- It emphasizes: authentic communication to foster education.
- Giving worthwhile assignments to encourage comprehensive learning.

Thus, with a well-defined set of classroom activities, CLT is thought to be the finest teaching method. According to David Nunan (1991), the primary five characteristics of CLT are:

- A focus on interacting in the target language orally.
- The transformation of language texts into theories of learning.
- Giving students additional space to concentrate on their studies.
- An improvement of the students' individual experiences as crucial components of classroom instruction.
- An effort to connect language learning in the classroom with extracurricular language activities.

Therefore, any teaching philosophy that supports learners in developing their communicative skills within a practical context is appropriate and advantageous in CLT. Therefore, activities including group and pair projects that demand for cooperation and negotiation between students, fluency-based exercises that boost students' self-esteem, role-plays where students practice and develop language functions, as well as careful use of grammar and pronunciation-focused exercises are conducted in a CLT classrooms.

The transformation essential for a CLT teacher:

In CLT, the instructor maintains constant communication with the students while they participate in a variety of carefully planned individual and group activities. This approach allows for spontaneous acquisition of the language, vocabulary and concurrent usage of variety of circumstances are very likely. Here, the instructor must show the students how to complete each task, guide them in the proper direction to achieve the learning goal, and assist them as needed. Additionally, the teacher participates actively in each learning group as a participator, leading the group of students with appropriate direction. When the instructor joins the group, the students feel considerably more at ease while learning, and the teacher's dominance is avoided. Additionally, the CLT approach makes students aware of the careful usage of language structures during the continuous language activity by having the teacher identify and address their language requirements.

Conclusion:

Compared to earlier conventional approaches, pupils speak the L2 with far greater interest and enthusiasm while using the modern communicative approach. The communicative technique makes it easier for the learner to utilize the target language in semi-

authentic circumstances than memorizing grammatical rules mechanically. The exercises used in this method set the stage for their language acquisition outside of the classroom. Experiences and data make it clear that improving fluency is the main result of teaching communicative languages. Through the interactive exercises, the method also results in the development of communicative, sociolinguistic, and grammatical competence. This gives the learners greater self-assurance while interacting with others in both formal and informal contexts in everyday life, and as a result, the CLT technique yields the most anticipated result of language learning fluency from the L2 learner.

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