

An Evaluation of C L T's Use in English as a Second Language Instruction in India

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Abstract: *The history of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the rationale for its introduction in America and Europe, its philosophy, and its introduction in India are all covered in this article. The factors that contribute to CLT's popularity are examined and assessed critically. The success and failure of CLT implementation in India are examined. There is discussion of ideas for ensuring the success of CLT in India.*

I. Introduction

The approaches that were popular prior to CLT were the Situational Language Teaching approach, the Audio-Lingual approach, and the Grammar-Translation technique. These techniques required form memorization and practice. Learning a language during World War II was done for practical reasons. Studying literary works and just learning grammatical rules were deemed insignificant. The ability to utilize language for pragmatic purposes became crucial. To put it another way, the capacity to communicate effectively is a prerequisite for learning a foreign language. At this moment, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) replaced these approaches. The introduction of CLT caused a significant shift in the way that second language instruction was conducted. The primary cause of this shift is that teachers started to understand that the major objective of teaching foreign languages is to help students become more communicative.

A large number of immigrants arrived in Europe in the 1970s, and in order to find work, they had to pick up English fast. The employees were unable to communicate with their bosses using the Grammar-Translation and Audio-Lingual technique drills. According to Jack C. Richards (1953), "British applied linguists started to question the theoretical assumption underlying the Situational Language Teaching." The scope of CLT has grown since the mid-1970s. It is currently viewed by both American and British supporters as an approach (rather than a technique) that seeks to: (a) make communicative competence the purpose of language instruction; and (b) provide methods for teaching the four language skills that recognize the connection of language and communication. Richards, Jack C., 155.

The beginning of CLT

Around this same period, American sociolinguist Dell Hymes created the phrase "Communicative competence" in opposition to Noam Chomsky's linguistic competence and performance paradigm. In CLT, the capacity of a learner to construct proper utterances in the second language and understand how to utilize them correctly is referred to as communicative competence. Linguists like Dell Hymes and Michael Halliday, who saw language primarily as a means of communication, are credited with giving rise to the CLT method (Hymes, Michael A.K. Halliday, 1973). Many researchers have helped to develop the theory and practice of CLT. To name a few, Dell Hymes (1973), Brumfit & Johnson (1979) and Little Wood (1981).

Acquiring Knowledge via Action

The acquisition theorist Krashen emphasizes that communicative language use is the key to language learning. This anti-structural method to learning is commonly known as the "experience approach" or "learning by doing." He believed that speaking in contexts where meaning is the primary emphasis leads to the subconscious acquisition of a second language. The learner develops the ability to communicate in an unconscious way. The method a toddler uses to learn his first language is comparable to this subconscious procedure. Conversely, task success requires less than linguistic competence because, strictly speaking, language must only be understood for a specific purpose (thus, to a certain degree) and an outcome must only be formulated in language to the extent required to convey its meaning-content. (N.S. Prabhu, 69)

An Overview of Communicative Language Teaching

The philosophy of language as communication serves as the foundation for the communicative approach to language instruction. Communicative language teaching takes into account language's communicative purpose in addition to its grammatical structures and lexicon. Understanding grammatical rules by themselves is insufficient. Equally, if not more, crucial is the capacity to use these guidelines correctly in order to communicate in a meaningful way. "There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would

be useless," stated Dell Hymes. According to Dell Hymes (1973), "communicative competence" refers to the knowledge that speakers and listeners possess when they communicate with awareness of appropriateness in various social contexts. It goes beyond simply knowing a language's lexical, phonological, or syntactic forms.

Successful Foreign Language Communication

Understanding how individuals use language and what they do with language forms when they wish to communicate with one another is the main focus of CLT. By adjusting the linguistic structures, one may communicate effectively in the other language. In order to successfully communicate meaning, the learner employs techniques to modify the structures of a discussion. The capacity to employ language forms correctly is more important than the forms themselves.

The Notion of Strategic Competence

To put it another way, language structures are learned and used to efficiently convey meaning. The emphasis is on language use rather than language usage itself. This is what Canale and Swain (1980) call Strategic Competence. Instead of learning grammatical rules by heart, someone who wishes to become a highly competent, fluent English speaker would be better off cultivating an interest in the proper use of language functions. This is an example of higher-level language use.

Objectives of Communicative Language Teaching

In second language learning, CLT places a strong emphasis on interaction as the method and the end aim of language acquisition. Grammar and syntax norms are not emphasized in the CLT method. When weighed against the learner's verbal fluency, grammatical accuracy is given less weight. The capacity of the learner to communicate his thoughts to the listener and comprehend those of other speakers is crucial to the success of CLT. Real-life scenarios are created and role-played by the students to foster communication in the classroom. To guarantee that learners communicate with one another, task-based activities are created. The student has access to the language's social, cultural, and pragmatic facets through these exercises. If learners achieve communicative competence, it means the success of CLT.

Advent of CLT in India

In the 1980s, the English curriculum was modified by the Central Board of Secondary Education. Language functions were valued more than literature. This was comparable to the Activity Based Learning that the State Boards had included into the curriculum. CLT therefore began to infiltrate Indian schools gradually. Although English has always been acknowledged as a worldwide language in India, when globalization processes started to take over the Indian commercial landscape, English was viewed as a crucial tool for success. Demands for improved English instruction changed significantly along with the political views on learning and using the language.

Every English language user wants to enhance their language proficiency as the standing of the language changed. The face of education underwent a dramatic shift, especially in India with regard to English. Every student began to see the importance of functional English. Good communication was seen as a sign of pride and social standing. Multinational corporations entered the market as a result of economic liberalization, creating a plethora of work possibilities that required fluency in English. Students began studying the language in order to fulfill practical requirements, particularly those related to their job quest. There were spoken English institutions everywhere. There are now more Communicative Language training facilities. The academics reexamined the English curriculum due to the proliferation of these establishments.

Within the Syllabus Level

As the demands of learners changed, CLT began to infiltrate Indian classrooms. It became necessary to implement need-based and task-based courses to meet the demands of the learners when they began gauging their progress in terms of fluency. The entire system of teaching languages was changed and reorganized as a result. The demands of the students were taken into consideration when creating the syllabus. The students were aware of the necessity of acquiring a second language as well as the usefulness of what they had learned. The curriculum was learner-centered and concentrated on the perspectives of the pupils. It served as the justification for the modification. The curriculum became much more democratic. Its premise is that when creating the curriculum, the demands of the students must be taken into account.

At the Level of Methodology

A new methodology was developed to teach English for communication. Various factors had to be considered.

- a) LSRW skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing)
- b) Instructional materials

- c) Role of the teacher
- d) Role of the learner

a) LSRW skills

In terms of language proficiency, the four competencies are prioritized while creating the CLT curriculum. The activities in the classroom are planned to support the development of each of the four competencies. By combining various language skills, the activities utilized in the CLT classroom improve communication and encourage students to adopt the trial-and-error technique.

b) Instructional materials

The purpose of the teaching resources created for CLT classes is to encourage the use of communicative language. The textbook-based exercises pique students' interest and are enjoyable and pertinent. To support Communicative Language Learning and Teaching, the class engages in real-world communication exercises and activities where language is utilized to accomplish important goals. This approach is known as "learning by doing." Here, the student is always involved, and as they work on any communication-related task, they naturally get interested in the communication process. Through these activity-based learning methods, classroom knowledge is applied outside of the classroom and experiences from outside the classroom are brought into the classroom. As a result, these activities take on a truly meaningful quality, and as a result, lifelong active learning occurs. The learners' language interaction skill is developed through these exercises.

C Role of the teacher and the learner in CLT

The objectives of CLT must be kept in mind by both teachers and students during the early phases of second language acquisition using this method. The pedagogical function of the teacher was reformulated in CLT. Both professors' and students' responsibilities evolved. The instructor adjusts their teaching strategies based on the requirements of the students and the teaching situation. The new approach enhances the qualitative lecture style but does not replace classroom instruction. Grammar rules are taught in relation to language functions. Learners now play a very different role than they did in traditional classrooms.

He or she no longer listens passively. He or she participates in the classroom's communication exercises. In addition to providing the experience and stimulation needed for this language acquisition process, the instructor occasionally needs to participate independently in the group. Any language learning setting can offer the experiences and stimuli necessary for Communicative Language Learning to occur, even when the instructor is not there. Learner-centeredness characterizes the majority of task-based and need-based courses. Learner-centered education gives students confidence in their capacity to acquire and utilize the language and empowers them to take charge of their own language skill development.

Teachers assist students by allocating a portion of class time to non-traditional activities, such as teaching them how to use accessible tools and resources, learning methodologies, and self-reflection. Under the past, instructors used the chalk-talk lecture format, but under CLT, students speak most of the time. The teacher serves as a buddy, coach, facilitator, and guide in a CLT classroom.

Practical Problems Encountered

We must keep in mind that the use of CLT in India does provide a number of real-world issues with the teaching-learning process. When talking about this topic, it is important to take into account the many issues that arise when learning a second language with CLT.

- CLT – a theory, not a methodology
- Role of the teacher and the learner
- Grammar d) Infra structure
- Heterogeneous classrooms
- Instructional materials

Theory of Communicative Language Teaching

CLT is not a methodology; it is a theory. There is no standard way to use it in a classroom since its interpretation for practice can be implemented in many different ways. It is challenging to assess communication abilities using conventional assessments. As of the now, there is no standard technique for testing CLT. There is still a lot of effort to be done in creating tests that assess communication. The current test system in real life is primarily memory-based and seeks to achieve high exam scores, which do not always result from knowledge. Because exam results are the sole indicator of a teacher's effectiveness, they tend to focus more on exam scores than on teaching information. Passing the exam means much more to the student's life and future.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER AND THE LEARNER

The Gurukula System is where India's educational legacy began. The instructor was viewed by the students in this system as a representation of knowledge. They function according to the conventional wisdom that the instructor is an expert in everything and will teach him all he knows. However, CLT does not support the idea that a teacher needs to be an expert in order to use CLT in the classroom. In CLT, the instructor facilitates. Thus, CLT contradicts the conventional wisdom of education in India. Because the learner-centered approach calls for greater student participation, students used to more conventional teacher-centered education may be resistant.

The instructor serves as a guide in the learner-centered approach, creating the ideal setting for his pupils to acquire the language for communication. He or she merely puts them on the path of self-learning or self-discovery rather than "telling" them. Only when the instructor assigns a variety of learning activities to the students rather than just having them listen to him or her talk passively will this endeavor be feasible. The majority of pupils in Indian classrooms are accustomed to passive listening and believe that the teacher's role is to assist them in learning rather than to provide them with resources and problems to solve.

In order to foster student autonomy and strategic engagement, educators should take into account each learner's unique learning process. Only when the instructor is aware of each student's unique learning preferences, talents, and weaknesses can they create effective teaching tactics. There are no opportunities to comprehend the uniqueness of each student in a huge Indian classroom. CLT takes into account the teacher's friendship role. However, the Indian student is completely unfamiliar with the environment. Students become confused and frustrated when there is no buffer between their expectations and those of the teacher.

GRAMMAR – DEDUCTIVE AND INDUCTIVE

The deductive method of instruction is used in traditional Indian classrooms. "This is a traditional teaching method where students are taught grammatical structures or rules first." (Temperley and Rivers, 110). Only after being presented to the rules can the pupils learn them and put them into practice. For instance, "Today we are going to learn how to use the present perfect structure" would be the teacher's opening statement if the Present Perfect was to be taught. Following an explanation of the current perfect structure's laws, the students would try using the structure through a variety of tasks. (Walters, Goner, and Phillips, 135) In this approach, the teacher is the center of the class and is responsible for all of the presentation and explanation of the new material.

But CLT follows the inductive method of teaching. "The inductive approach represents a more modern style of teaching where the new grammatical structures or rules are presented to the students in a real language context" (Goner, Phillips, and Walters, 135). The students learn the use of the structure through practice of the language in context, and later realize the rules from the practical examples. In CLT, teaching of grammar has been integrated with teaching the functions of the language.

Prescriptive rules of grammar are taught in the contexts where they arise. In this way the learner internalizes the rule rather than when the rule is taught in isolation. When the learner makes an effort to express themselves clearly they think through the rule. For example, if comparative form is to be taught, the teacher would begin the lesson by drawing a figure on the board and saying, "This is Jim. He is tall." Then, the teacher would draw another taller figure next to the first saying, "This is Bill. He is taller than Jim." The teacher would then provide many examples using students and items from the classroom, famous people, or anything within the normal daily life of the students, to create an understanding of the use of the structure. The students repeat after the teacher, after each of the different examples, and eventually practice the structures meaningfully in groups or pairs. (Goner, Phillips, and Walters, 135-136)

"With this approach, the teacher's role is to provide meaningful contexts to encourage demonstration of the rule, while the students evolve the rules from the examples of its use and continued practice." (Rivers and Temperley, 110).

The inductive approach has the benefit of allowing students to concentrate on language usage without being constrained by grammatical rules and terminology that might impede fluency. Additionally, the inductive approach encourages more students to participate in class and learn the target language in relevant circumstances. The inductive technique has been shown to be successful in EFL/ESL classrooms across the world, but it has a drawback in that Indian students, who are used to a more traditional teaching style, may find it challenging to learn language principles from context. In a CLT classroom there is a need to design tasks to provide meaningful contexts. However, here in India, the importance of grammar is lost. The Indian classrooms have conveniently thrown grammar outside the CLT classroom. The learners though communicate in English, are not communicating in grammatically correct English.

INFRA STRUCTURE

The conditions of the classrooms in Indian schools and colleges are not conducive because of the huge number of students in each classroom which make it impossible for initiating any novel method in teaching and providing individual attention to learners. Fixed desks, six students in a desk and not less than 60 in a classroom are a common sight in India. In such a situation it is always difficult to bring them to the learning situation, using CLT. The varied social, economical and cultural backgrounds of the students who pursue higher studies make it impossible to adopt any single method to improve their skills. The learner's social and economic status is also poles apart. There is a wide gap among the students in their basic education, which prevents any teacher to adopt any uniform method.

The mixed type of learners pose the problem of having to adapt to different methods of teaching and it is very difficult to make the learners shed their inhibitions. As learning occurs inside the learner, a crucial factor in helping or hindering learning is the learner's psychological state. They should be able to express their identity and relate with the peer group. Supportive interpersonal relationships that do not create inhibitions among the learners must exist for carrying out the activities which involve pair work and collaborative-learning. Learner's individuality must be respected. A learning atmosphere which gives a sense of security and value as individuals must be created in the classroom for effective Communicative Language Learning to take place. In large classrooms this is impossible to achieve.

CLASSROOMS THAT ARE HETEROGENEOUS

The lack of a uniform language policy in the educational system in India is a severe setback for practicing Communicative Language Teaching in India. There is a large difference between the two sets of people entering colleges after their schooling. One is a set of students who were taught in the English medium schools right from their kindergarten and the other set who took their education through their vernacular. 70% of the students who get admitted to the Indian Universities hail from the rural populace. They are not taught English properly because of the poor infrastructure facilities. Most of the rural and government schools are not fully equipped with libraries, laboratories and good classrooms. Sometimes they are even without teachers.

This poor learning environment becomes a handicap for the learners of English. While the former has an exposure to English for fourteen years and hence somewhat fluent in the language, the latter has learnt the language for ten years and that too as a second language. These factors implicitly or explicitly influence the later stage when they enter the college for higher studies, when they need to learn the language for survival. The teacher who practices CLT in the Indian classroom has to bring out a balance by integrating the students from English medium and other non-English medium students.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

We must acknowledge that traditional classroom instruction is insufficient to satisfy the demands of our clients. In India, the entire idea of "facilitating" in a CLT classroom is misinterpreted. In the CLT classroom, the teachers assign assignments without providing the proper "input." The content provided by input helps students become more proficient in using the language independently. The input need to correspond with each learner's present level of comprehension. Teachers ought to assign students the content they are already familiar with.

As students improve their language skills, the instructor should offer a scaffold for them to climb, meaning they should build on their prior knowledge. This should be taken into consideration while selecting the educational approach and resources. The scaffold may be taken down after the student is capable of handling things independently. It is important to teach the student to rely less on the teacher and more on themselves. Communication outside of the classroom should be encouraged via classroom activities. This is where CLT's success resides. English instructors in India must receive adequate training to modernize their teaching approaches in order to meet the objectives of CLT. But they are still following the conventional lecture method at all levels of teaching.

II. Conclusion

CLT is regarded as an English teaching approach. However, its implementation in India has shown a number of challenges. Many issues began to surface. For CLT to be successful, the learner must feel as though they can really use the language. The effectiveness of CLT depends on several unrelated aspects, as the research examines. When it comes to the learner's success in life and their work, none of the above mentioned variables may be used as an excuse. Given the significance of English in today's world, we must establish a supportive learning environment where students may acquire the language in order to accomplish certain goals, at least at the tertiary level. The teacher-centered approach is prevalent in Indian education as a result of the previously mentioned considerations. For Communicative Language Teaching to succeed in India, learner-centered learning must replace this teacher-dominated information transmission method of instruction.

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