

Innovative Method of Learning English Grammar Through Communicative Language Teaching: An Overview

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Abstract

The teaching of modern vernacular languages began in England towards the end of the middle ages. English has occupied an important place in India. Modern language teaching did not adopt all the features of these methods, but they grew out of the same procedural traditional and communicative method. The communicative language teaching methods have attracted a great deal of interest and have appealed to the imagination of teachers for a very long time. This article deals with the origin, theories and objectives of CLT in teaching Grammar.

Introduction

Ronal W. Langacker makes an earnest approach in defining the word language as “a device that establishes sound-meaning correlations, pairing meanings with signals to enable people to exchange ideas through observable sequence of sound.” Language is the source of communication. It is the way through which we share our ideas and thoughts with others. There are uncountable languages in this world. English is thought to be one of the most important languages in the world. There are different kinds of English like British, Canadian, American these are not separate languages. Though English language is not the native language, with the help of developing technology, English has been playing a major role in many sectors including medicine, engineering, education and people use it for business too.

Thus English is considered as an International Language. Non- native speakers find difficult to speak English language fluently and effectively or to communicate with others as they find hard to learn the grammar rules.

Grammar is the structure of a language. It is very much important for the learners to understand the rules of grammar. When English language is taken for consideration many words have the same pronunciation but different meaning. It can be found out very easily. But understanding the rule of grammar is important because it is used incorrectly the sentence will not make sense. In order to overcome this grammar helps by telling the person how to put a sentence together and the order a sentence should have.

Definition of CLT

An English teacher plays an important role in English at all levels. When English is taught obviously, some methods have to be followed. There are five methods in English Language Teaching, such as Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, Audio Lingual Method, Situational Language Teaching and Communicative Language Teaching. Among all Communicative Language Teaching is one of the new approaches. The aim of this approach is to develop learner's four basic language skills such Listening, Speaking, Reading, & Writing in English. According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign languages that emphasizes communication or interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language". Communicative Language Teaching refers to both processes and goals in classroom learning. The central theoretical concept is "Communicative Competence". The idea of communicative competence is one of the most influential theoretical developments in language education. In Communicative Language Teaching, language learning emphasizes learning to communicate as opposed to learning a set of grammatical rules. It has been widely accepted as an effective way of teaching language in ESL/EFL context. The most recognized features of CLT by David Nunan's are an emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language, opportunity to focus on the learning management process, introduce learning situation, personal experience, and language activities outside the classroom. It often takes a form of fluency-based activities and develops language functions and pronunciation focused activities.

History of CLT

Communicative Language Teaching acquires its origin from the British language teaching tradition during Late 1960's commonly termed as situational language teaching. Linguists like Wikins, Brumfit etc., worked in addition in applying linguistics to develop Communicative approach of language teaching. Communicative Language Teaching was first proposed in 1970's in Britain, spread throughout the world within a short span of time. Communicative Language Teaching as its name shows, spotlight on speaking skills of the learners, because the central point of this method is to enable the students to communicate well in the target language. According to Brian Seaton, "Communicative Language Teaching is an approach that aims at developing the practical knowledge of how language is used". Thus the definition highlights that communicative approach enables the students to use the target language in real life situation.

Communicative Language Teaching is a powerful theoretical model in ELT and is recognized by many applied linguists and teachers as a useful approach to language teaching. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been brought under focus by many linguistics and researchers. This approach has made language learning more communicative and many researchers have conducted studies on this particular topic. Communicative Language Teaching has been widely accepted as an effective way of teaching language in ESL/EFL contexts. In Communicative Language Teaching, language learning emphasizes learning to communicate as opposed to learning a set of grammatical rules. Most teachers acknowledge the importance of adopting Communicative Language Teaching approach in the classrooms to develop the students' communicative competence in English language. Although there are still some who are reluctant to genuinely practice it, there are still those who believe of the effectiveness of CLT approach in enhancing oral competency among language learners. The literature review of this section deals with the background information on the history of Communicative Language Teaching and the views and opinions of other researchers on Communicative Language Teaching. In addition, according to Wilkins "communicative means that a language learners needs to understand and express his or her ideas. Rather than describing the core of language through traditional concepts of grammar and vocabulary (Wilkins 1972). Communicative Language Teaching approach involves participants, their behaviour and beliefs, the objects of linguistic discussion and word choice (Richards &

Rodgers, 2003). Basically, this theory emphasizes on practice as a way of developing communicative skills.

Theories of CLT

Pragmatic linguists have not focused their work on language teaching based on any specific learning theories. For example Keith Johnson and Brumfit (1979) or Littlewood (1984) have recommended many discussions on language theory. Contemporary communicative language teaching has tried to explain theories of language learning processing activities, well-matched with the communicative approach. According to Savignon (1983), second language learning research is an instrumental of learning theories. Besides he considers the role of socio-linguistics, cognitive and individual variable in acquiring a language as very important whereas the rest have got theoretical compatibility with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching. The Communicative Approach in language teaching starts from a theory of language as communication. According to Hymes (1972) the goal of language teaching is to develop communicative competence. In fact Hymes wanted to disagree with Chomsky's theory of competence. Chomsky said that linguistics theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community, and is unaffected by grammatically irrelevant conditions in applying their knowledge of the language in actual performance. Another theory on Communicative Language Teaching is Halliday's functional account of language use. He described seven basic functions that language performs for children learning their language, i.e., the instrumental function-using language to get things, the regulatory function-using language to control the behaviour of others, the interactional function-using language to create interaction with others, the personal function-using language to learn and to discover, the imaginative function-using language to create a world of the imagination and the representational function-using language to communicate information.

Littlewood (1981) distinguished the functional communication activities and social interaction activities as two major types. So the role of language learner in Communicative Language Teaching takes a role of learning process in an interdependent way. Learner takes joint responsibility to make successful communication.

Objectives of Communicative Language Approach

An integrative and context level, depicting language as a way of expression.

A linguistic and instrumental level, depicting language as a semiotic system and objective learning,

An interpersonal relationship and conduct, focusing on a language as an expression of values and judgement,

An individual learning needs, based on remedial learning on error analysis and

An extra-linguistic educational goal, based on school curriculum language learning are the five general level of objectives of Communicative Language Approach proposed by Piepho for better teaching conditions and situations. These objectives help in fulfilling the requirements of the target learners.

Assimilating Grammar for CLT

From education to leadership and social life to employment opportunity only grammar skills are useful. Communicative Language Teaching has brought a reintroduction emphasis on the role that semantics plays in the definition of language. Communicative Language Teaching is fundamentally concerned with ‘making meaning’ in the language. Viewing grammar with all of its components help the learners understand the complexity of what it means to know the grammar of a language. While teaching the grammar parts like tense, prepositions, determiners, question tags etc., in traditional method students find it hard to understand.

Most of the researchers questions or always be in debate whether the grammar should be taught explicitly or implicitly as the two methods links in teaching grammar. The two methods that link in teaching grammar are deductive method and inductive method. Of which deductive methods is traditionally associated with the dreaded grammar where the rules are presented to the learners first and the examples illustrating the rules later and the inductive method is closely link with the Communicative Language Teaching approach which present the example sentence first and then encourage the learners to discover the rules from the example.

Grammar based approaches or deductive method is built on the assumption that through teaching grammar exclusively, the learners will be able to fully master the target language. As Nassaji & Fotos depicts his positive approach on grammar based approach as One of the major assumptions that underlie traditional grammar based approaches is that

language consists of a grammatical forms and structures that can be acquires successively” (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). They stresses that students will acquire the language. So that is can be assumed that traditional method can be a source to learn grammar in well manner.

Communicative approach or inductive approach is the best method for the learners to enhance their communication level which is based on the idea. In CLT, language learning emphasizes learning to communicate as opposed to learning a set of grammatical rules. This approach is acknowledged by the teachers in the classroom to develop the student’s communication level in international language. Thus Richards and Rodgers (1986) has stated that the Communicative Approach started from a theory of language as communication and its goal has been to develop learner’s communicative competence. The Communicative Approach focuses on the meanings of the Target Language with a view to develop communication as the primary goal of learning and teaching a language.

In research work task based language teaching is implemented to find out the result of their absorption level. In order to motivate the students, to overcome their fear, and to bring interest in learning grammar real life materials are used. Real life materials are nothing but the magazines, newspapers advertisements etc., from which the small story, dialogue, reports are taken in order to make them involved to learn something which is interesting.

Conclusion

Thus it is clear that Communicative Approach represents a significant departure from the Grammar Translation and Audiolingual methods of teaching in terms of its theoretical paradigm and principle. Pica has stated that the Communicative Approach “can be much more effective than grammar-translation, audiolingualism or other earlier methods in promoting students’ confidence and their fluency in speech and writing and in accelerating the early stages of their language development” (Pica 2000). Communicative Language Teaching Approach helps to enhance oral competency among students as this approach encourages communication in the target language. As it encourages the students of low proficiency and student-centred, it might be accepted that this approach would be the best method.

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