



Exploring The Practices of Communicative Language Teaching in Telangana Residential Schools.

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Abstract

This paper attempts to highlight the problems encountered in the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching approach for teaching and learning English language in Telangana Residential Schools. It has been reported that Communicative Language Teaching is a widely used approach in the teaching and learning of language in India, especially in the Telangana Residential Schools. Many scholars also hold the view that out of all existing approaches, Communicative Language Teaching is the best approach to implement in the classroom. However, since it's beginning this approach encountering numerous problems that needed to be addressed and dealt with possible strategies. Though most of the schools and colleges in India have been following the CLT approach for many years in their classrooms, yet they are facing problems while implementing it successfully. There may be many reasons for this. This paper attempts to find specifically one aspect that whether there are any issues related to syllabus which is followed and its implementation in the classroom. For this purpose, English text book of high school students will be analysed and it is found that text book is based on the principles of communicative approach and to check whether teaching the text book is in congruence with the teaching learning.

Key words: Communicative Language Teaching, approach, methodology, analysis.

Introduction

English language teaching has undergone a lot of changes from the beginning to till date. Many changes took place in the language teaching and learning and in this process many approaches have been developed, among these approaches communicative language teaching is one of the approaches which found its place in English teaching curriculum and education policy statements. Among all approaches, the communicative approach is considered to be the most effective theoretical model in English language teaching since early 1970. In the year 1970 European council of experts introduced communicative approach to make up the drawbacks of traditional methods of language teaching,



from there it has been gradually disseminated to many parts of the world. The spread of the communicative approach to the rest of the world therefore had a significant influence on the ELT instruction. Since then, the approach carries not only the functional meaning but also social meaning. So, it is not only important to learn the linguistic forms but also to understand their potential communicative functions and their social meaning. The most important characteristic feature of communicative language teaching (CLT) is that it pays systematic attention to functional and structural aspects of language. Besides, it combines these units into a more fully communicative view (Littlewood, 1981).

Communicative language teaching is based on Hymes's (1966) concept of communicative competence, which is an extension of Chomsky's (1965) concepts of linguistic competence and performance. Hymes pointed out that linguistic or grammatical competence alone is not enough to be able to use language in a given cultural and social set up. Thus, the situation in which language has to be used has become relevant to language teaching. He, further, emphasizes that a normal child's acquisition of knowledge of sentences is not only grammatical but also appropriate because of communicative competence Hymes (1972). So, it is important to mention here that communicative language teaching is needed strongly.

Review of literature

The article suggested by the EFL/ESL researchers found a few problems which are identical in all research issues. Principles of CLT as Savignon (2007) states, that the principles of CLT is involving learners in communication to allow them to develop their communicative competence. Mangubhai et al. (1998, p.4) list the principles of CLT as follows: CLT approach gives prominence to how to use language instead of focus on knowledge of language. Fluency and appropriacy is given more importance on structural correctness. Classroom exercises are based upon trial-and-error method and more emphasis will be on learner's spontaneity, promoting interpersonal interactions of the learners, intra personal interactions will not be encouraged. Methods of learning will be based on group work and pair work, these methods are effectively presented in small classes, authentic material will be employed for the purpose of material usage in the classroom. Communicative abilities can be developed with the integration of form-focused exercises with meaning -focused experience. Tasks are prepared keeping in mind teachers and learners' goal of making input comprehensible to participants. The teacher takes turns as facilitator and director transmitter. The teacher creates a less formal and interactive environment. The teachers encourage students to communicate in target



language in the classroom. Focus is on the learner – centered. However, researchers have found out that there is a gap between policy and practice apart from that there is extensive evidence reported that teachers are facing difficulty in the implementation of CLT. (Burnaby & Sun, 1989), reported that there is a problem of the context of wider curriculum, and one more problem is lack of trained teachers (Anderson, 1993), too much preparation time required (Chau & Chung, 1987) and learner resistance (Shamin,1996). English language education has seen much progress during the last 50 years, and CLT has led to revision of the approaches to design syllabus and methodology. Richards (2006) stated that English language teaching trends may be grouped into three phases: Phase I: In the first phase of language teaching, traditional approaches ruled, up to late 1960. The Origins of Communicative Language Teaching As defined by Richards & Rodgers (2001), Communicative Language Teaching is an approach to language teaching rather than a method. It began in the late 1960s at a time when language teaching ideas, methods, and practices were shifting from traditional focuses on grammar and vocabulary to communicative uses of language. Educators began to notice that students were able to produce sentences accurately in lessons, but were unable to do the same when they entered authentic situations outside of the classroom (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). In an attempt to rectify this problem and make language learning more ‘real’, CLT was born. According to Howatt & Widdowson (2004, p.326), “the notion at the heart of the ‘communicative movement’... after 1970 was the conviction that language teaching should take greater account of the way that language worked in the real world and try to be more responsive to the needs of learners in their efforts to acquire it.” Since its introduction, CLT has spread and developed into the current dominant approach to language teaching worldwide (Knight, 2007). The Communicative Approach over the course of time, ‘communicative’ has become somewhat of an umbrella term covering a wide variety of different classroom techniques, drills, and activities. Due to the dynamic variables in the implementation of communicative techniques, there is no single definitive model (Markee, 2001; McGroarty, 1984), therefore; many different approaches and techniques tend to fall under the label of communicative. Brown (2007, p.241) offers a definition of CLT based on the following four interconnected characteristics: 1. Classroom goals are focused on all of the components of communicative competence and not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence 2. Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes 3. Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use 4. In the communicative classroom,



students ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts. Innate to CLT is the fundamental belief that being able to communicate requires more than just knowledge of the language itself (linguistic competence), it requires knowing when and how to say what to whom (communicative competence). Thus, communicative approaches focus on what individuals can do with language rather than what they know about language. In the contemporary age of high professional requirements such as excellent communicative skills, there is a tremendous pressure on the learners that they should develop their communicative skills, because the need for successful learning of communicative skills of English language suggests communicative ability to be the goal of language teaching. In other words, to teach English language using the communicative approach becomes essential. Communicative language teaching is based on Hymes's (1966) concept of communicative competence which is an extension of Chomsky's (1965) concepts of linguistic competence and performance. Hymes pointed out that linguistic or grammatical competence alone is not enough to be able to use language in a given cultural social set up. Thus, the situation in which language has to be used becomes relevant for language teaching. He, further, emphasized that a normal child's acquisition of knowledge of sentences is not only grammatical but also appropriate because of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972). So, it is important to mention here that communicative language teaching is needed strongly. Few researchers have found that they have traced out the reasons behind the failure of implementation of this method and the language learning outcomes. The researcher has found out that the common problems such as social and educational problems, problems in the text books, materials, resources, large classrooms, cultural differences, and lack of interest faced by all the teachers and learners are the same across the world. However, the present paper focus whether there is any on the problems in the text book, material and resources. This apart, the researcher has focused on the other problems which are said to be the hindrances for the implementation of communicative language teaching. And also, they have traced out the reason behind the failures of implementation of this method and the language learning outcomes

The following are the characteristics of CLT. According to Halliday, there are two versions of CLT i.e. Weak version and strong version of the characteristic of weak version as follows a communicative functions is the prime focus of CLT, language teachers focus on implementing meaningful task in the classroom instead of focussing on grammar and vocabulary, genuine and realistic situation will be given to students which are relevant to them, the use of authentic material based on lives of inspiring people and according to him the strong version students do not practice the form of language is how language works in discourse is given more prominence that practicing



the language course input is language data in text form, and communication is more of a signal for students to communicate with text, instead of communicating with each other the student focus on problem solving and work in collaboration by helping each other Holliday (pp. 171-172). Stated that teachers do not need to closely monitor group work and pair work. In fact, activities do not need to be conducted in groups or pairs. As long as students use rich text to communicate and make useful assumptions about the language, what they are doing is good at socializing.

The new textbooks incorporate a communicative perspective and incorporate material related to listening, speaking, reading, writing and vocabulary and teachers are expected to involve children in activities related to these. According to (Markee, 1997; McGroarty, 1984; Savignon, 1983; Savignon & Bers, 1984). There is no large and rigid way of teaching which we can claim as a universally accepted way of teaching, however, the introduction of a textbook, based on the communicative approach improved students' communicative competence. As communicative language teaching has expanded and been used by different educators in various ways, (Markee,1997; McGroarty,1984; Savignon, 1983; sauvignon &Bers,1984), stated that there is no single identity or single model which can be accepted as authoritative. In order to find out Effective implementation of CLT teachers' perception should be evaluated by conducting proper research.

Research questions

1. How effectively are teachers implementing the CLT approach in their classroom?
2. What are the difficulties they are facing while using CLT in the classroom instruction?

Background of the study

The study investigated teachers' perception in the implementation of CLT in Telangana residential schools, and whether the text book which is used by teachers is sufficient to meet the needs of the students. and whether the agenda of these schools is to ensure that the students enrolled in these schools got accomplished in achieving competence on par with private schools which are in the state.

Research Design

This exploratory research is focused on finding out the ways teachers teach students English at school level. For this purpose, a questionnaire was adapted from sauvignon and wang's (2003 pp.241-247) for the teachers asking them about their experience of teaching English at school level and their attitudes and belief about English as communicative language teaching. The questionnaire



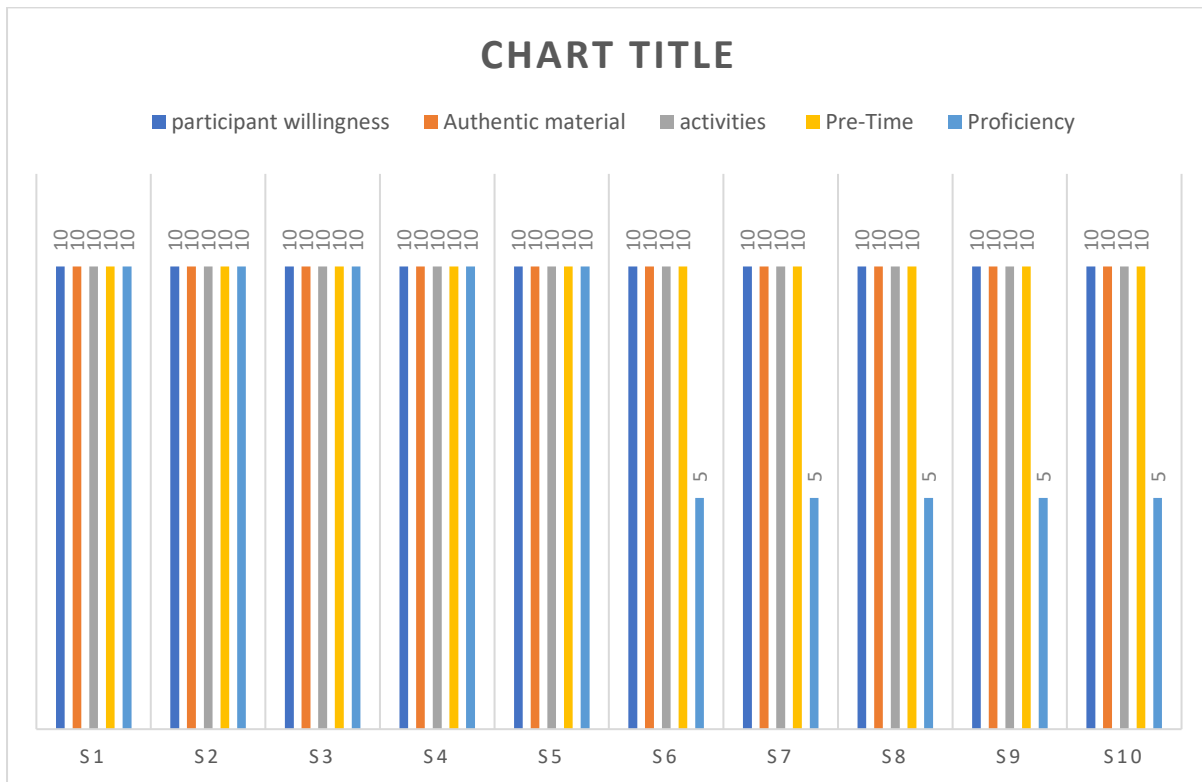
consisted of four sections: English practice in the classroom in the school, Teacher's attitude towards the instructional practice in school, the data was collected from ten teachers who are teaching high school, and the data was analysed using linear scale and classroom observation. The final questionnaire included both open-ended questions and questions with fixed alternatives generated, and the questionnaire was administered to 10 secondary school teachers teaching in the school. The participants were urged to read the questionnaire, and they asked questions for clarification. All 10 questionnaires distributed were sent back. Following the survey, I did classroom observation to further understand their difficulties in using CLT. While formulating interview questions, I made sure that the questions were clear, precise, and motivating (Denzin, 1989).

Details of the Participants involved in the survey

The above table illustrates, the participants in the formal questionnaire survey were 10 TRS secondary school English teachers who are teaching in the school. 3 male and 7 female participants participated in the survey.

The above table illustrates, the participants in the formal questionnaire survey were 10 TRS secondary school English teachers who were teaching in the school. ranged from 25 to 50 years in age, with the majority in their 40s. Their experience in teaching English varied from 2 to 20 years, with an average of over 10 years. At the time of the study, participants were teaching in high schools. Many had taught at both middle and high schools, as secondary school teachers in private institutions before joining these schools.

Analysis and Discussion



Data collected through a questionnaire having three sections. For each statement, there were five options: agree, strongly agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. And the data was analysed on a linear scale, using Likert scale based online questionnaires. The above table illustrates that all the respondents are of the view that they have enough time to prepare additional material relevant to the theme in the textbook. The above table illustrates that out of 10 respondents 5 hold the view that the students joined in these schools have English proficiency. However, around 5 respondents reported that one important difficulty preventing them from using CLT was their students' low English proficiency. by this it is understood that class is a heterogeneous and students proficiency varies from student to student in the class. They usually have a small English vocabulary and a limited command of English structures. As, students did not have the necessary proficiency in English, the teachers found it hard to do oral communicative activities with them. According to 5 respondents the average secondary school students have a very small English vocabulary. They know limited number of English structures. So, they have great difficulty to express themselves in English when they are assigned to do communicative activities. Gradually they lose interest in trying to speak English and become too discouraged to speak English any more. (In-Ran, July 24, 1995) As it was informed in the earlier, the teachers believed that CLT necessarily involved speaking activities. The above table illustrates that, six participants identified students' lack of motivation to participate in activities and



their communicative competence as a great limitation when oral activities are conducted in the classroom, the kids struggling to express themselves in as a result, they resist communicative activities while learning language.

According to Richards & Rodgers (2001); Mangubhai, Howard & Dashwood (1999); Williams (1995) and Chastain (1988) lesson should be based on 1. Task oriented 2. Learning - centred 3. Authentic 4. Contextualised 5. Recursive 6. Needs based. The above table illustrates that teachers use authentic material in the classroom. Because, the textbook is based on the above said characteristics thus it can be said that the text book is based on communicative approach and each unit is specifically prepared to cater the need of students.

In the above table illustrate that group work and pair work activities should be conducted in the classroom Every young learner can become independent in their learning provided they need to be guided and motivated as it helps learners to grow into independent in their learning and they will grow into autonomous and successful language learners these activities give more time speaking time to students.

When the respondent is given a asked a question stating that any other reasons, they have encountered during the teaching apart from the above mentioned they stated that students lack of exposure to language in the immediate surroundings, lack of proper infrastructure, students with less language competence, lack of interest, and rural areas are the reasons that are the barriers for the successful implementation of CLT.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The issues discussed by the teachers in the residential schools in Telangana Hyderabad region are similar to other places across the globe, contradictions apparently exist between theory and its implementation, however, it should be resolved. Though the classroom practices are not of text-centered and grammar-centered practices in these schools, though they are the student-centered, fluency-focused, and problem-solving activities-based class, the low competence of the student in target language, lack of motivation, is the problems they are facing in the classroom. Therefore, teachers should also have assistance and encouragement in trying out new ideas and materials to overcome hurdles in the process of teaching.

Conclusion



The main objective of the present study was to explore the practice of communicative language teaching in Telangana residential schools. In order to do so, the present paper reviewed the papers based on ESL and EFL teachers' perception of their attitude and how it is implemented in various places.

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