

THE MISAPPREHENSION OF TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE CLASSES

Sudha Singh¹, Dr. Preeti Pankaj Gupta²
Associate Professor, HOD, Department of Arts²
¹Department of English

^{1,2}Mangalayatan University, Beswan, Aligarh, UP, India

Abstract

Due to its emphasis on fostering students' communicative ability, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has gained the support of many language educators. This essay aims to explain communicative language education, common misconceptions about it, and the causes of instructors' misunderstandings. It demonstrates two widely held misconceptions about how communicative language instruction should be carried out: communicative skills and the role of the teacher in communicative activities. The following section lists three causes for teachers' potential misinterpretations of CLT practice. The resources and training available to teachers are insufficient.

Key Words: *ELT (English Language Teaching), Misperception, Misinterpretation, CLT (Communicative Language Teaching).*

INTRODUCTION

The popularity of English has an effect on English language instruction all over the world. Different teaching techniques have entered the current trend and subsequently left it. There is little doubt that a broader range of demands becomes apparent when more people decide to learn English. The need for novel approaches or methods in English language instruction increases as conditions become more diverse. In other words, students learn English for a variety of reasons. Therefore, English language education should advance to keep up with the shift. As is evident, English language instruction has seen a significant transformation in methodology just in the last

fifty years, moving from the direct technique, the audio-bilingualism approach, the grammar-translation method, and various variants (Leung, 2005). In other words, this alteration is implemented to meet the diverse needs of students.

Additionally, various procedures, resources, and viewpoints on instruction and learning—such as communicative methodology, collaborative language and constructivist activities in language teaching—have contributed to the most significant change in English language instruction (Richards and Rodgers, 1986). Thus, many linguists and English teachers have been hard at work diligently to determine the ideal way to teach English to accommodate learners' demands. Because of this, the methodology for teaching English is currently undergoing another change. Above all, because it strongly emphasizes fostering learners' capacity to use the language effectively in context, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has gained the support of many language educators as a successful methodology. CLT has been regarded as the best practice in English language education (ELT) among all approaches used and put into use thus far since it provides “communication” ways enabling students to increase their communicative capacity (Power, 2003). Similarly, Nunan (1999) asserts that “the most significant shift in the practice of English language teaching has been brought about by communicative language teaching.”

COMPETENCE IN COMMUNICATION

First, students are taught target language communication skills “(Larsen-Freeman, 2000)”. According to this initial assumption, teachers should provide students with instruction in the four areas of communicative language proficiency: grammar, discourse, sociolinguistics, and strategy. Spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, word construction, and grammatical structure are all aspects of grammatical competence. The ability to deal with the installation of larger written and spoken texts is a requirement for discourse competency. The capacity to select the right words or expressions in a spoken or written context of a situation is known as language skills. For example, when learning the formal and informal greetings and letter-writing styles.

Learners' capacity to retain communication even with incorrect language usage is known as a strategic competency, such as when they are unable to articulate their thoughts clearly or when they need to clear up a misunderstanding “(Beale, 2002; Brown, 2000; Leung, 2005; Richards and Rodgers, 1986)”. In general, this idea emphasizes that teachers should not only teach

students how to master one competency, such as grammar but also how to utilize that ability to communicate in everyday situations. However, when CLT is implemented in the classroom, teachers misapply this theory by omitting teaching grammar. According to Prabhu (1987), “grammar education is difficult because the skills that a speaker needs to master to utilize a language are simply too complex” (quoted in Thomson, 1996, p. 10). There are various reasons for not imparting such competence.

Lack of English communication skills among teachers is one potential contributing issue. As a result, two possibilities are available for teachers who lack sufficient communicative competence. The first choice is to forgo including grammar instruction in their lesson plan. In other words, teachers avoid grammar and focus exclusively on communicative activities. Another alternative is to teach grammar separately from the rest of the course; for instance, after teaching principles refer, you may continue with the lesson by giving instructions by making a recipe. A student must have certain beliefs, perceptions, and emotions to succeed. These elements influence how students respond to education and may make the difference between success and failure. Positive and negative aspects both play a role in success and failure. If the methods are flawed, positive things could become negative and vice versa.

Students’ attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions towards English language instruction are crucial factors because they affect their commitment to and perseverance with language acquisition in the classroom. Therefore, it was essential to comprehend students’ attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs to identify the difficulties, obstacles, and problems they encountered while studying in a classroom. (Hiew, 2012) Any method of language learning’s efficiency is closely tied to students’ attitudes, perceptions, and convictions (Ganjabi, 2011). The students’ perspectives, ideas, and research into these attitudes show that attitudes are related to how people perceive and respond to English language instructions. Regarding the relationships between students’ thoughts, perceptions, and other opinions of SA and CLT, respectively. As a result, students’ attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs can be credited as crucial and decisive elements in successful language teaching.

TEACHERS’ PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

The second idea is that teachers play an important part in “communicative activities”. In CLT, the teacher is a facilitator and a guide rather than the classroom expert. This idea has superseded

the traditional function of the teacher as a source of information. In addition to receiving the knowledge that teachers impart, students should be encouraged to create their expertise with the help of teachers. Through language engagement with others, knowledge is gained via constructing meaning (Brown, 2001). Additionally, according to Littlewood (1981, referenced in Larsen-Freeman (2000), a teacher's job description occasionally includes serving as a communication partner for students in the classroom. Similar to this, teachers might be independent members of the learning-teaching group, according to Richards and Rodgers (1986). This principle results in two unfavourable perceptions in the classroom when CLT is used. The first misconception is that professors don't pay enough attention to students' behaviour and performance in class.

Teachers, however, frequently overlook that students can occasionally come from diverse backgrounds, which can provide diversity to the classroom. For instance, some students may feel at ease and fine participating in activities without instructor supervision. However, some students still require close monitoring from teachers, especially in classes with diverse skills. Thus, in addition to assisting and directing students, a teacher's job also involves supervising or keeping an eye on those students' behaviour while in class.

Additionally, some educators think they successfully create activities when they see pupils engage in them with joy and enthusiasm. As a result, they gauge the effectiveness of the activities they have designed by the level of loudness in the classroom. The ability to practise communicative skills in a classroom setting is made possible because learners will participate in activities if they are interested. Teachers should abandon the notion that the class will be more entertaining if it is louder in this situation.

Teachers must check to see if the noise still contributes to students participating and having fun while working toward the lesson's goal. Another drawback is that professors now consider that openly teaching goes against the CLT principle since they believe students should build meaning on their own through interaction. Teachers avoid using handouts, worksheets, or other practice tools because they worry that doing so will make the teachings lack context and lose their purpose. On the other hand, because some students may have diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, education will not be beneficial for all students. These variations would influence how different learners would react to the pedagogical strategy used by CLT in ELT. For

example, students from cultures where teachers are seen as the source of all information will not be used to the concept that children should be autonomous and empowered to construct their significance via language use and contact with others.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is accurate that there are several misunderstandings regarding the use of CLT by instructors in the classroom. It is also thought that both internal and external factors contribute to these misconceptions. The internal reasons come from the instructors themselves, such as certain teachers' unwillingness to enhance their specific educational talents and poor communication competency. In contrast, the external ones might come from insufficient classroom instruction, inadequate classroom supplies, or low pay for teachers. Overall, it was necessary to strengthen CLT in ELT in an inclusive manner that entails the support and participation of everyone in the school or establishment where CLT has been used.

REFERENCES

- Beale, J. 2002. Is communicative language teaching a thing of the past?. *TESOL*, 37 (1), 12-16.
- Brown, H.D. 2000. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. (4th ed.). New York: Pearson Education.
- Brown, H.D. 2001. *Teaching by Principles: An interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* (2nd Ed.). New York: Pearson Education.
- Ganjabi, M.2011. Grammar Instruction and Error Correction: A Matter of Iranian Students' Beliefs. *EJREP*. 9(3): 1285-1308
- Hiew, W. 2012. English Language Teaching and Learning Issues in Malaysia: Learners' Perceptions via Facebook Dialogue Journal. *Journal of Arts, Science & Commerce* .Vol 3(1): 11-19
- Larsen-Freeman, D. 2000. *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. (2nd ed.). UK: Oxford University Press.
- Leung, C. 2005. Convivial communication: recontextualizing communicative competence. *International Journal of Applied Linguistic*, 15 (2), 119-143.
- Littlewood, W. 1981. *Communicative Language Teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. 1999. *Second Language Teaching & Learning*. Massachusetts: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Power, T. 2003. *The Appeal and Poverty of CLT*. Retrieved June 11, 2013, from <http://www.btinternet.com/~ted.power/esl0404.html>

Richards, J.C., & Rodgers, T.S. 1986. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. USA: Cambridge University Press.

Sato, K., & Kleinsasser, R.C. 1999. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): Practical Understandings. *The Modern Language Journal*, 83 (4), 494-515.

Thomson, G. 1996. Some misconceptions about communicative language teaching. *ELT Journal*, 50 (1), 9-15.