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COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE: EFFECTIVENESS AT MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GOVERNMENT MIDDLE SCHOOL OF UJJAIN CITY IN THE STATE OF MADHYA PRADESH, INDIA)

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Abstract

Effective communicative activities are inseparable to the successful achievement of English language teaching objectives. The communicative approach in language teaching begins from a theory of language as communication and its goal, therefore, is to develop communicative competence. For effective communication in the classroom of English language, there is a great need of congenial social climate, varied activities, opportunity for participation, feedback and correction. Teaching activities based on communicative approach encourages the learners to use the target language. The present paper aims to study the effectiveness of the communicative approach in learning English language at Middle School Level in the context of Indian heterogeneous classroom milieu.

Keywords: *communicative, approach, method, effectiveness, middle school, T-test*

Rezumat

Activitățile comunicative eficiente sunt inseparabile de atingerea cu succes a obiectivelor predării limbii engleze. Abordarea comunicativă în predarea limbilor străine pornește de la o teorie a limbajului ca comunicare. Date fiind aceste lucruri, scopul său este de a dezvolta competența comunicativă. Pentru o comunicare eficientă în sala de clasă de limba engleză, există o mare nevoie de un climat social prietenos, activități variate, oportunități de participare, feedback și corecție. Activitățile didactice bazate pe abordarea comunicativă încurajează elevii să utilizeze limba țintă. În acest articol, ne propunem să studiem eficacitatea metodei comunicative în învățarea limbii engleze la nivel de gimnaziu, în contextul mediului eterogen al clasei din India.

Cuvinte-cheie: *comunicativ, abordare, metodă, eficacitate, gimnaziu, test*

1. Introduction

Communicative Language Teaching began in the mid sixties as replacement to the earlier structural method, known as situational language teaching. Until then, situational Language Teaching was the major British approach to teaching English as a foreign language. In this method the services of the teacher for students are always available as friends, philosopher, guide and sometimes psychologist.

2. Literature Review

S. Menking (2001) in his research study revealed that the communicative approach focuses mainly upon:

- greater attention on the role of the learners than on the external stimuli learners;
- greater attention on the learning process rather than on the products;
- greater attention on the social nature of learning rather than on students as separate, decontextualized individuals; and so on (Jacobs & Farrell, 2001). G. Hu remarked that in China, Ministry of Education was impressed by Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as the methodology enjoyed internationally and was convinced that it would provide the best solution for the wide spread problem of students' low competence in using English for communication even after years of formal instruction in the language (Hu, 2005).

C. Lindsay and P. Knight commented that "CA is very widely used all over the world. It has shifted the focus in language teaching from learning about the language to learning to communicate in the language" (Lindsay & Knight, 2006). M. Akram and A. Mehmood examined a study conducted to know the importance of introducing the communicative approach in ELT in teacher training programs in Pakistan and found that CLT enhanced the learners' confidence and it provided a sense of satisfaction to the teacher as well in the sense that she/he is successful in making the students use the foreign language in their conversation (Akram & Mehmood, 2011).

Kh. B. Chowdhury opined that Communicative Language Teaching is highly advocated by many applied linguists and English language teachers as an effective language teaching approach. But, the implementation of CLT in English as Foreign Language (EFL) contexts has encountered and has been encountering a huge number of difficulties. These difficulties vary widely from country to country (Chowdhury, 2012).

A. Behera remarked that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was introduced in India in the 1980s as the traditional approaches were failing to fulfill the current demands of English language learners (Behera, 2013). R. Mittal in her research study concluded that CLT may be one of the best solutions to all the problems of English learning [8]. CLT seems to be boon in this respect. But to implement it at +2 level means to educate or trained teachers for this. One major problem is large no of classes which also restrict teacher's one to one interaction with students.

3. Research Methodology and Objectives of the Study

A pre-test of the learners of the selected Government Middle School of Ujjain city at class VIII level was conducted and then the result was evaluated. After this, the researcher conducted fifteen working days experimental teaching and compared and analyzed the results of post-test with Pre-test. The statistical test (t-test) was applied to obtain results. The objective the present study was to study the effectiveness of communicative approach in learning English at Middle School level learners in Indian Context, to find

out whether the learners were able to perform better after learning by communicative approach, to evaluate, compare and analysis the role of communicative approach in the development of language learning among the learners, to study the obstacles in the application of a successful communicative approach and to find out effective techniques for improvement in language learning through communicative approach.

4. Hypothesis

The learners achieve higher level of performance in using English language in the given social context through communicative approach.

5. Sampling

50 students, studying General English in the VIIIth form in the selected Government Middle School of Ujjain city, were chosen for sampling. Pre and Post-tests were conducted. After conducting a pre-test, an experimental teaching of fifteen working days was conducted by the researcher. The performance of the learners based on the pre and the post-test was evaluated, compared, analyzed and interpreted.

6. Data Collection

- A Pre-test was conducted. It contained 20 questions of 50 marks, based on their prescribed syllabus.
- After conducting a pre-test, an experimental teaching of fifteen working days was conducted by the researcher. The researcher prepared lesson plans based on communicative activities. The researcher also prepared some play cards and teaching tools and organized group/peer/pair activities among his learners.
- Next, the researcher administered post (final) test, based on the communicative approach.

The data in present study was calculated by receiving answer from the students of the VIIIth form through test papers (Pre and Post Test) given to 50 students, studying in the selected Government Middle School of Ujjain city.

7. Evaluation and Analysis of Test Papers (Pre and Post Test)

The collected data was organized and analyzed by editing clarification and tabulation etc. to draw proper inference to serve worth while the purpose of the tabulated material was to determine inherent facts or meanings.

The researcher conducted Pre and Post Test for obtaining final results of the study, he and analyzed the Pre and Post Test results. The collected data for the present study were analyzed and evaluated by applying 't'-test. Pre & Post test results were computed in the term of drawing out the final result of the study:

(After Application of Communicative Method)

	Pre Test	Post Test
Mean	13.5	22.7
Standard Dviation	8.48	9.053
S.Ed.		1.74
Critical Ratio (t-value)		5.28
Degree of Freedom		98
Value of 't' table at 0.05 level		1.98

Table 1: Comparative Table showing Mean and Standard Deviation of Marks Obtainedby Learners during the Pre test and the Post test

8. T-test Results

1. Highly significant and enthusiastic.
2. The communicative approach is highly effective in improving the students' performance in learning English language.

The obtained value of 't' (5.28) is highly significant and larger than the single-tailed value expected for positive result at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Thus, assumed hypothesis conveys that the learners achieve higher level of performance in using English language in the given social-context through Communicative Approach. *Therefore, on the basis of Post test score it is found that the students have achieved significant proficiency in learning English language through the implementation of the communicative approach and thus the positive hypothesis is accepted.*

9. Concluding Remarks and Suggestions

The overall research study reflects a considerable and significant change in the achievement level of learners in teaching-learning through the implementation of the communicative approach. The researcher observed a remarkable difference in the learning English language at Middle School level after the application of communicative approach. The Students could express their ideas after having attended the communicative class of the researcher. Results indicated that the students also achieved success in listening, speaking, reading and writing skill after the application of communicative approach. Even in the field of grammatical items, the ability of learners improved after induction of the communicative approach. This is a common case amidst most of the Indian English learners as they are backed up with poor grammatical knowledge. In Communicative driven English language classroom, the students felt more comfortable right from the beginning as they got ample opportunity to develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skill through language games and other activities that they enjoyed very much. The present research study revealed that the student can achieve communicative competence comparatively in short span of time.

In communicative classroom teaching students become more enthusiastic and energetic as they take part in each and every activity with full interest.

In the communicative classroom, the learners developed their language skill in free environment. Teacher tolerates their mistakes considering them as natural outcome of communicative skills. The present research revealed that the teachers of English at Middle school level do not take interest in organizing activities like debate, extempore speech and group discussion. The language classes doing communicative activities achieve higher levels of performance than the traditional classes. The teacher should plan out communicative teaching for the whole year and organize it in such a manner that can be accomplished in stipulated time frame without keeping extra burden on learners.

A language teacher should go to his/her classroom with full preparation along with the technical arrangement of communicative methods. He/she must also have information about the syllabus, the prescribed text book, reader, work book and the available learning aids (flash cards, charts, LCD Player and language labs). Audio-visual aids should be used by the teacher in his communicative classroom to improve the standard of English language among the learners. Audio-visual aids enable the teacher to make his lesson effective and interesting.

Group work should be introduced. The problem of lack of time and over crowded classes can be tackled effectively through debate, group discussion. These techniques should be adopted in oral lessons as well as reading lessons. Textbooks based on the communicative approach should be prepared by experienced and expert teachers of English language after having organized workshops/seminars at district, division and state levels. A strict ban should be imposed on cheap notes flourishing in the local market. In a communicative language classroom, the teacher-student relationship should be fair, just and sympathetic. This will create good environment for learning.

Most of the English teachers are trained with conventional method. Majority of them are not aware of the concept of new methods and approaches, so this lacuna should be overcome by facilitating and adopting innovative and IT driven training pedagogy. A teacher should act as a guide, philosopher and friend of the students.

Teachers should improve their teaching by showing active participation in the refresher, need-based, ten-day, other training courses organized by government and non-government agencies. All the four basic skills LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) should be taken care in the evaluation system. At present, only two skills RW (Reading and Writing) are included directly and other two skills LS (Listening and Speaking) are ignored.

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