

A Communicative Language Teaching Method as the Guiding Method for ESL Classrooms

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Introduction:

The evolution of English Language Teaching has witnessed a gradual shift from traditional form focused to learner-centered, communication-oriented approaches. This paper critically reviews major language teaching methodologies like Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, Audio-Lingual, Oral Approach, Total Physical Response, Silent way, Community Language Learning, Natural Approach and Suggestopedia to highlight their core principles, strengths and limitations. The analysis reveals that each method contributes valuable insights into language acquisition, none alone fully meets the diverse needs of Indian college students. Drawing on key theories such as Krashen's and Swain's comprehensible input and humanistic principles the paper emphasizes the importance of interaction, learners' autonomy and supportive environment. Communicative Language Teaching Method emerges as the most comprehensive and adaptable framework, offers a flexible, student centered and context appropriate framework for building effective ESL classrooms.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), English as a Second Language (ESL), Teaching Methods, Input-Output Hypothesis, Learner-Centered Approaches, Language Pedagogy.

A. The Grammar-Translation Method

"The grammar-translation method reflects a view of language teaching that emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge about language, with little regard for its use in communication." - Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011)

One can find the origins of this strategy in Latin studies. It was the conventional method of learning a foreign language in the nineteenth century. It concentrates on grammatical research with the primary translation technique, as the name implies. It sees language acquisition as memorization of morphology and syntactic rules. The purpose is to gain a better understanding of literature. The ability to communicate is consistently undervalued. Although this strategy simplifies organizing the class, its utility is severely limited. Its main flaw is that it is unconcerned about the students themselves. They're just numb path-followers. Besides, teachers teach Sentences independently. Students are unable to learn how to communicate using sentences. Furthermore, vocabulary is chosen based on reading texts rather than coverage, and translations accompany words.

B. The Direct Method

Many scholars began to deviate from the Grammar-Translation Method in the late nineteenth century. Natural learning concepts, which laid the foundation for the Direct Method, drew attention in connection with the Reform Movement. "The direct method requires the teacher to act as a language model, using only the target language in the classroom." - Brown (2001)

It is also known as "Reform Method", 'Natural Method', 'Psychological Method', was the opposite of the Grammar-Translation Method, emphasizing spoken language over literary language. One can learn language through presentation and gesture, according to its proponents. As a result, one can use the target language for instruction and communication. It is possible to learn both speech and listening comprehension. The teacher used Inductive teaching is used to teach grammar. It was "a first attempt to turn the language learning situation into one of language usage and to educate the learner to forsake the first language as the frame of reference," according to H.H. Stern (Stern, 1983, p.459). However, its overemphasis on the commonalities between first and second language acquisition has received a lot of criticism. Moreover, mother tongue is strictly prohibited, and misunderstandings arose. Finally, it is not as realistic as it implies because the teacher is overburdened. Many students' reading and writing abilities are ignored.

C. The Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching

A group of British applied linguists created the Oral Approach in the 1920s and 1930s, including Harold Palmer and A.S. Hornby. It differs from the Direct Method in that it systematically selects vocabulary items depositionally. Its main characteristic is that it introduces and practises new language principles in real-life settings. British "structuralism" is the name given to its linguistic theory. Discourse is thought to be the foundation of language, while the structure is assumed to be at the core of speaking skills. Before being provided in writing form, the material is taught orally. Language learning is viewed as habit creation in this viewpoint. As a result, precision is valued highly. On the other hand, students can never build conversational skills through the tedious process of repetition and substitution.

D. The Audio-lingual Method

"The audio-lingual method is a behaviorist approach to language teaching that emphasizes the development of oral proficiency through the repetition and reinforcement of target language patterns." - Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011)

Audio-lingual initially emerged in America in the mid-1950s as part of the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP). Although it resembles the Oral Approach in many ways, it varies in its affiliation with American structural linguistics and contrastive analysis. Language is "a system with meaningful elements that follow a set of rules. This method is a manifestation of behaviourism. Language is considered verbal conduct. Therefore habit building is important. The practise consists primarily of dialogues and drills. Before developing other skills, aural-oral training is provided. This strategy fell apart when its theoretical grounds were questioned. Its failure can also be attributed to "the tactics' ineffectiveness on the long run" (Stern, 2000).

E. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

"Communicative language teaching involves an interactive approach to language teaching that focuses on developing students' communicative competence through meaningful interaction in the target language." - Richards and Rodgers (2014)

Situational Language Teaching began to be criticized in the late 1960s. They introduced some new principles later on. They became known as the Communicative Approach in several different forms. It begins with a communication theory of language. The tasks in the classroom are meaningful and knowledge sharing. In these activities, students make significant contributions in a team-oriented environment. The instructor is both the communication facilitator and the learning-teaching group member.

This method emphasizes the use of English in real-life situations, with a focus on communication and interaction between the teacher and students and among students. This approach emphasizes communication and interaction as the primary goal of language learning. Students learn through authentic and meaningful situations and are encouraged to use language in real-life contexts. This approach has become popular in recent years.

F. Total Physical Response (TPR)

It is a structuralist perspective of language developed by James Asher. Verbs, notably imperative verbs, are considered fundamental components of language acquisition. It is categorized into three learning hypotheses. To begin with, Asher believes that the first and second learning are nearly identical. After listening comprehension has been established, speech develops. Second, Asher contends that right-brain movements teach language. Finally, it is a humanistic method since Asher thinks that the absence of stress is critical to language acquisition success. As a result, learners simply have to execute imperative drills at first. Students will undoubtedly like the classroom activities, which will aid in learning. From a psychological perspective, combining activities with memories will strengthen the possibility of accurate remembrance. It is helpful for youngsters only in the early stages of learning. We should associate it with other techniques.

G. The Silent Way

Unlike TPR, Caleb Gattegno's method advocates for the teacher to be as quiet as possible while the students produce as many words as feasible. The syllabus is similar to that of a standard method, but the manner of the organized classroom activities is unique. Learning is facilitated by the learners' discovery process, physical object accompaniment, and problem-solving. According to Gattegno's theory, a teacher should deliver an item only once and then silently direct the pupils' responses. Finally, while students are interacting, the teacher should back off. Memorization can be encouraged by these methods. Although I don't believe a complete lack of feedback would result in the best results, students develop a sense of independence, autonomy, and responsibility so they may learn to study on their own. Moreover, its informational value is insufficient.

H. Community Language Learning (CLL)

This approach is based on the Counseling-learning theory and was created by Charles A. Curran and his companions. In more modern forms, language is viewed as a social process emphasizing feedback. Moreover, they have an interactional perspective on language. Interactions between learners and experts fall into two categories. The interaction between a learner and a knower is comparable to a client and a counsellor. The students will go through five developmental stages: dependent, self-as-serious, indignant, tolerant, and self-reliant. The development of children and this procedure is identical. The learners communicate about whatever concept excites them by sitting in circles. To enable them to speak the target language, the "knower" assists them with the language they wish to utilize. . After discussion, the instructor will go further in detail on a few grammar points. Learning occurs when needed, making it easier for the learner to recall. By paying close attention to the learners' communicative intent, it will maintain their level of enthusiasm. The feelings and emotions of the students are emphasized. However, the discrepancy between needs and wants limits the amount of input. Additionally, it could result in poor command of the target language's grammatical structure. Additionally, the absence of a syllabus makes evaluation very challenging.

I. The Natural Approach

Tracy Terrell and Stephen Krashen published The Natural Approach in 1983, receiving much attention. The keyword "natural" refers to ideas comparable to those used in young children's naturalistic language learning. They argue that the primary function of language is communication and that lexicon is essential in language. According to Krashen's concept, Language acquisition is intuitive, whereas learning is explicit. Before speech capacity emerges, comprehensible input should be supplied as much as feasible. A low-effective filter will also make learning easier. It is up to the learners to select when and what to speak about to attain this goal. Students are exposed to the target language throughout the pre-production stage but are not required to reply in that language. Students answer with single words in the initial stages of development. Students engage in communicative activities during the speech-emergent phase. This strategy has the benefits of both communicative and humanistic methods. However, there is still a difficulty with how fluent speech will develop when the acquirer has received sufficient input.

J. Suggestopedia

Georgi Lozanov, a Bulgarian psychiatrist and educator, invented this method. It incorporates elements of yoga and Soviet psychology. According to him, most learning occurs in a "pseudo-passive state," which is a passive but concentrated condition. Suggestopedia is all about suggestions. While the teacher serves as an authoritative person, the students return to their immature stage. As a result, students restore their self-confidence. Because the learning environment is so crucial, the classroom is brightly adorned with cherry and comfy couches placed in a circular shape. One of its most noticeable elements is the usage of music. With a musical soundtrack, the teacher offers proper dramatic readings. Its curriculum consists primarily of discussions. The books have been chosen to meet the interpersonal needs of the students. The translation of new material is offered. Fixation, reproduction, and unique creative ability are all

patterns that the learners employ. They must also acquire a lengthy list of words. Since this method has been widely criticized, we can still use it for our purposes. The original idea of implementing music in reading can be pretty helpful to the students.

II. Objectives

People worldwide communicate more regularly than ever because of the economy's continual growth. On the contrary, they are acquiring a foreign language—especially English, the international language-gained importance. English is a mandatory subject for college students in India. According to the College English Syllabus, the course aims to give students a relatively high level of skill in reading, an intermediate level of competence in listening, and basic competence in writing and speaking. After completing the course, students should be able to utilize the English they have learned to communicate with others and find the information they need in their area of knowledge. They should also be able to use it as a solid basis for future language learning. That is to say, high achievers can communicate in English and continue to improve on their own. Even though many Indian students have acquired a variety of grammatical principles, it might be challenging for them to use the right words to communicate in everyday situations. It implies that they are unable to create cohesive conversation. In other words, they desperately need to improve their communication skills.

III. Theory of Language and Theory of Learning

There is no specific method that can assure favourable outcomes. In the preceding techniques, we must use an alternative approach based on the requirements and aims of the learners. Before we create appropriate strategies, we need to understand what language is and what aspects aid learning.

A. Theory of Language

The adherents of the communicative approach assume that a Language is a form of communication. They discussed communication skills from a variety of perspectives. Canale and Swain have a modern version (Richards, 1986, p.71). Grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence are the four dimensions of communicative competence, according to them. Grammatical competence refers to a person's grammatical and lexical abilities. Socio-communicative competence refers to the social framework in which communication occurs. The interconnection of individual messages is the emphasis of discourse competency. Communication tactics, such as how to initiate or discontinue communication, are examples of strategic competence. The communicative view of language is represented in this analysis. Language is a kind of communication. Language structures are used to execute a variety of purposes in social situations.

B. Theory of Learning

Let's start by looking at the relationship between input and output. According to Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis, people acquire language most successfully by getting sufficient I+1 input somewhat beyond their current level. Learners can communicate fluently once they have received enough input, which is given a great deal of weight. It's the same as learning a new language for the first time. It will be problematic for learners to develop native-like speech if they do not receive enough natural target

language input. On the other hand, the input is insufficient. Krashen fails to demonstrate how input can be converted into output convincingly. In reality, the learner will never achieve speech fluency if he never speaks the target language. Many Indian students who learn English as a second language, for example, who are good listeners, speak broken English. Swain proposed the Comprehensible Output Hypothesis. She maintained that speaking is necessary for learning. Learners might also become aware of their limitations by frequently using the target language. When students use their knowledge, they will become aware of their knowledge gaps and be able to fill them later. They can surely enhance in this manner. Input and output work much better together. Peter Skehan (1998, p. 16) covers six output responsibilities: 1) To produce higher helpful input. 2) To render syntactic processing mandatory 3. To examine hypotheses 4) To increase iconicity 5) To improve communication skills 6) To find one's voice.

We can see that output and input are interconnected from these six functions. In interactions, one delivers their counterpart with feedback so that he can receive more precisely adjusted information. The learner can acquire how to articulate meanings from the input. Feedback can also provide the learner with informative data for his linguistic theories. In this sense, learning is better enhanced if the learner receives sufficient information and generates enough output. The instructor should strike a balance between input and result in the classroom. In a traditional classroom, the teacher instructs constantly. It emphasizes feedback too much. The student is unable to use the target language. It has a clear disadvantage. In a perfect classroom, the teacher provides enough while giving students chances for meaningful interaction.

Furthermore, I agree with the humanistic approach that involves the entire individual. Students ought to be recognized as unique persons. Their thoughts and feelings will impact their learning. In instances, affective elements may even be more important than cognitive ones. Krashen demonstrates that learners with low affective filters acquire more information. He asserts that the three affective factors of motivation, consciousness, and anxiousness are connected to the learning of second languages. Numerous studies have demonstrated a beneficial relationship between learning effect and learning motivation. Extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation are the two types of motivation that Harmer (1991) identifies. It has a significant pedagogical impact. A teacher can assist students in becoming highly motivated by attracting them to the target culture, making the teaching process enjoyable, or providing students with a sense of accomplishment, among other things. The learner will achieve more readily if he genuinely wants to learn.

Along with motivation, anxiety and self-confidence also impact learning outcomes. Some students frequently whine that they can perform what they cannot when they are at ease in exams. In reality, the emotional filter is turned up during the assessment. The amount of information the learner processes is significantly less than the input if listening comprehension is being practised at the moment. It proposes that the teacher should foster a friendly climate to assist the learner in lowering the affective filter. The lack of stress, however, also has a negative impact. Many students report that they memorized everything before a test. They are scared of failing the examination. They make every effort to learn in this situation. As a result, students under the right amount of stress will perform at their best.

Finally, learning tactics and styles will also influence the learning rate. The idea of field dependence/independence serves as the primary framework for categorizing learning styles. Learners with greater field independence are more likely to break the whole into its parts and analyze them independently. Field-dependent students have a propensity to view issues holistically. They are friendlier. (Skehan, 1998) Alternative perspectives on styles exist. According to Peter Skehan, neither pole of the style dimension is thought to be better; instead, they merely appear to offer choices.

Additionally, it is believed that each pole offers benefits for various occupations. Learning about one's approach and attempting alternatives in multiple activities can reward students. The learner will also benefit if they are aware of effective learning techniques and use them when studying. For instance, Brown and Perry (1991) investigated three vocabulary-learning strategies: keyword, semantic, and keyword-semantic. A keyword creates a visual link between the target word and another acoustically similar term (a combination of the first two).

It was established that the third approach produced the best persistence. Some students merely memorize words. They can increase their recognition accuracy by referring to the prior recalling technique. Therefore, language learning will be more successful if students know their learning strategies and employ other effective ones.

IV. Activities

There should be a wide diversity of activities in the classroom, namely formal instruction and communicative activities. These two categories should have a variety of topics and formats. There are several causes. Moreover, communication competency includes grammatical competence. According to Widowson (1978, p.144), "the teaching of language as communication calls for an approach which brings language competence and communicative talents into intimate association with one other." Even though college students have learned a lot about the English grammatical structure, some are still puzzled by some fundamental grammatical ideas. Second, it is the most significant advantage for every student. Different learners have various learning styles and abilities. Often choose everyday activities, while some prefer formal education. If the teacher ignores their individual needs, students will feel uneasy and lack a sense of fulfilment. All the students' interests will be catered for a variety of activities suitable for various ability groups will be offered.

Additionally, students will observe various learning methodologies while participating in these activities and flourish. Finally, students can never be kept highly motivated. Only different activities can grab their attention.

A. Formal Instruction

The teacher is the only instructor who reviews texts and grammar in the traditional sense. This approach has to be rejected. However, relevant vocabulary and grammar enrichment should be retained. Knowing some essential words before students read the material or perform listening comprehension will produce good results. Sometimes, challenging sentence structures will prohibit students from comprehending the entire material. In this situation, the instructor's explanation is required. It will assist the learners in being aware of such structures so that they do not experience difficulty in the future. Some learners' grasp of

grammar is woefully inadequate. To reduce the gap, the teacher is required. However, this formal instruction shouldn't consume most of the teaching period. Grammar and vocabulary are taught in a multitude of ways. Consider the teaching of language. As Harmer (1991) stated, we should encourage intermediate-level learners to explore the meanings and usage of words. Therefore, explanation and translation should not always be used with college students. For students to understand new terms in the context, the teacher can use stories or actual events, particularly those relevant to the students' life. They will also be assisted in understanding the meaning of images and actions. To clarify their purpose, new words can also be introduced with existing related words. To emphasize grammar's importance for communication, we should describe it in discourse. Instead of being aware of strict grammatical rules, learners can employ suitable structures in different types of conversation.

B. Communicative Activities

The majority of a lesson is made up of communication exercises. For instance, role-playing, problem-solving, group discussion, and so on. Report writing and other formal communication exercises should be emphasized. We should focus mainly on three points. It is first suggested to find the right balance between input and output. The justification has previously been stated. We can share multiple macro skills in practice. For instance, we might invite students to write a comment about the news after listening to several bits of the same. Their particular structure and content should support the communication goals of the students. The subjects should cover the needs and desires of the students. Environmental preservation, the Internet, and cultural diversity are strongly advised topics for college students. The teacher should give appropriate information to support learners in dealing with the English content specific to their field of study. We can employ these modern tools, such as videotapes and films, because university facilities are considerably better now than in the past. Traditional or well-known English songs can raise students' interest level and listening comprehension. Online articles can also be used as extra stuff to read. Moreover, the teacher can recommend the student to study English books and newspapers beyond the classroom reading because the information presented in class is insufficient. Secondly, the instructor should avoid providing excessive error correction. Even if the student makes serious errors, remedies should be given after he completes his contribution. Fluency development would be challenging without this. Instead of the teacher, the students can be responsible for error correction to learn from their mistakes. For instance, following the completion of a report, the students are requested to create groups. Everyone in the group reads every word. Then they talk about whether the conversation is coherent or contains grammatical errors or improper sentences for the style. Through this process, they will grow more independent. Thirdly, it's crucial to develop their learning process. If you encourage students to consider their learning styles or discuss their learning tactics, they will be more attentive to the learning process. Chances for students should be offered to design their learning. The teacher also provides some tips on effective learning techniques concurrently. In this approach, students may effectively continue learning a foreign language after completing the session.

V. Learner roles and Teachers role

The emphasis of the class is on the learners. They play a variety of roles. They actively participate in every activity, explore the language, engage in negotiations, and assess the learning process. Their desires and opinions impact the direction. The learner is a source of information and a support system for the group. In class, students co-operate with one another. The input of the others is their output. Rather than relying on the teacher to solve difficulties, students themselves assist one another. To promote independence, we can employ group discussions to solve the issues. To put it simply, the learner is proactive in the classroom. The facilitator of the learning process is the teacher. According to Krashen and Terrel, What the students should and should not assume from a course should be clear to them. The student should have a particular objective right away. Giving suggestions on learning techniques is another aspect of the guide's duty. The instructor serves as the resource and the organizer for the communication activities. The teacher provides pertinent feedback emphasizing the activity's content when the exercise is done. The transmission of meaning is vital. Instead of focusing on grammatical errors while discussing the usage of English, it is essential to stress the appropriateness in light of the many roles that the learner plays. Furthermore, the instructor must also foster a friendly environment in the classroom so that students may quickly adopt a positive outlook on studying English.

VI. Conclusion

We may apply some of the ideas from each of the above methods. I work to create a strategy that is suitable for Indian college students. However, the particular students should determine the unique techniques and exercises. Different approaches are required for different learner groups at other times. As the course advances, more research is needed.

In conclusion, there are a variety of methods and approaches to teaching English language, and each has its strengths and weaknesses. The choice of method and approach depends on the learners' needs, goals, and contexts. Therefore, teachers should be aware of different approaches and be able to select and adapt them to suit their students' needs.

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