

Communicative Approach: An Alternative Method Used in Indian English Students' Academic Communication Achievement

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Abstract

An approach is based upon certain interconnected assumptions about the nature of language, its teaching and learning. The communicative approach to language teaching is based on the idea that mastering a language implies to communicate spontaneously and confidently in the language. The basic components of language are not only its structural and grammatical features, but categories of communicative and functional meaning as exemplified in conversation. Quantitative increase of knowledge of the second language is aimed in the conservative approaches, whereas in the communicative approach learning a language is considered a developmental process that must essentially go beyond quantitative increase to qualitative progress. Even the best have their faults and the communicative approach is no exception in this respect. It is alleged that the approach can not be applied at all levels in a language programme. It is also doubtful whether an average English teacher can make a success of this approach. However, since the approach is primarily oral, the best possible use of the foreign-tongue could be made possible teaching through the communicative approach.

Keywords: ESL, EFL, Functional Language Teaching, Ethnography.

Introduction

Communicative Approach to language teaching is based on the idea that mastering a language implies to communicate spontaneously and confidently in the language. The fundamental theory that communicative competence is the target of Second language learning is not a new one. According to Robert Lado: "Learning a second language is... acquiring the ability to use its structure within a general vocabulary under essentially the conditions of normal communication among native speakers at conversational speed."

Language Teaching: A Scientific Approach (Bombay: Tata McGraw Hill, Indian ed., 1983), p. 38.

Through such concepts as 'communicative' or 'Functional' language teaching or 'communicative ability' as a target language teaching educationists have tried to include in language teaching concepts that they have traced from discourse analysis, speech act theory and ethnography of communication. Communicative approach in teaching has been adopted, developed and followed in the countries of the far East, especially in Japan and China. It is also known as methodically based communicative language teaching in Japan. At present, perhaps China has the largest English learning population in the world. Foreign Language Institution at Canton has been working on the project- Communicative English for Chinese Learners, and they have produced a great deal of material for English learners. While in Japan, the Communicative Teaching Society was established in 1977 to meet the objectives of the communicative teaching of English.

The Communicative Approach introduces a broader prospect of language. It considers that language is a system for the expression of meaning. The basic components of language are not only its structural and grammatical features, but categories of communicative and functional meaning as exemplified in conversation. The chief function of language

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rests upon communication and interaction. The structure of language reflects its communicative and functional uses.

Review of Literature

This paper originates from an intensive study from one of my research projects in problems and possible solutions of ELT in India have explored. With this idea this research article has been come up with. Use of communicative Approach has been previously studied by a number of researchers as it one of the most learner friendly. Indian subcontinent (Bakshi, Raj N. "Indian English." *English Today* and Kuhn, Melanie R., and Lorell Levy. 2015) found that Communicative Approach has found to be helpful in language teaching in India as it emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goals of study. Similar observation has also been reported by Alexander Peterman, MA, and wikiHow June 2020. The findings were closely related with the findings of Maria, Anna Jan 2020 and Hornby, A.S., et al. June 2020 i.e., appropriate use of language is emphasized rather than accuracy making communicative functions more important rather than linguistic structures.

The Aim of the Study

The objective of the study is to establish that the Communicative approach is, of course communicative ability that can be divided into communicative skills. The four primary skills are-listening, speaking, reading and writing. In the learning tasks they are firmly united and integrated in use. Hence, they are not four distinct skills but rather integrated skills, involving one, or two, or more at a time. The present study also aims to indicate that ways must be sorted out to deal with language skills integratively within their psycho-linguistic as well as socio-linguistic context.

Hypothesis

Table Respondents on Approach Preferred

Inst.	Structural Approach (%)	Communicative Approach (%)	Situational Approach (%)	None of these (%)	Total (%)
Degree College	34.72	51.39	11.11	2.78	100
Inter College	52.94	34.03	13.07	1.97	100
Jr. High School	22.39	55.22	13.43	8.96	100
Primary School	34.43	50.82	13.11	1.64	100
Total	39.29	44.94	12.47	3.29	100

Discussion

The basic theory of communicative approach is to acquire the English language through 'use'. Use implies communication. Communication includes unpredictability and freedom. In so-called conversation drills students are given pre-written sentences or made to utter a pre-written dialogue. There is no freedom, no selection and no unpredictability. Teachers never impart them a chance and deprive students of freedom by giving them the correct response or interpretation. On the contrary, when a student learns a language through use, he instinctively comes into contact with a language that is real, original, proper, and global.

There are two versions of communicative approach: weak and strong. The weak version that has become about standard exercise in the last twenty-five years or so, emphasizes the value of

The following working hypothesis were formulated on the basis of previous observations and objectives of the study-

The communicative approach has provided something of immense importance in the sphere of teaching English as a second language. In this approach students gain more language practice. But Indian classrooms are overcrowded with students. Thus, it is very difficult to manage teaching through this approach.

Research Methodology and Tools

A survey was made across a section of teachers from Degree Colleges, Inter Colleges, Junior High Schools and Primary Schools situated both in urban and rural areas. Total 25 teachers (10 from Degree colleges, 5 from Inter Colleges, 5 from junior high Schools, 5 from primary schools) responded to the questionnaire provided to them.

Chief Findings and Analysis

In the communicative approach learners definitely get more language practice. As much of the task is done in pairs and groups, they get better chances to converse in the target language. The time-honoured principle of proceeding from easy to complex is also adopted in this approach. However, easiness or difficulty is not decided on the basis of grammar and vocabulary. It depends upon how challenging the task is for the student. As learners pay a great deal of attention to speaking English, they become fluent speakers. It may be added that as many as 44.94 per cent of the respondents comprising 51.39 Degree College Teachers, 34.03 per cent Inter College Teachers, 55.22 per cent Jr. High School Teachers and 50.82 per cent Primary Schools Teachers prefer communicative approach to structural and situational approach.

giving opportunities to students to use their English for communicative goals and tries to integrate such activities into an extensive programme of language. On the other side, the strong version of communicative approach vigorously claims that language is learnt through communication, therefore, it is not only a question of activating an existing but sluggish knowledge of the language, but exciting the progress of language system itself.

The communicative language teaching has provided something of immense importance in the sphere of teaching English as a second language. This approach is learner-friendly. The teacher does not hold the central position in the class as in the conventional text-analysis syllabus. Learning occurs according to the requirements of the student. In a communicative class the teacher is no more a director. The learner is free to perform whatever is

required to fulfil the presented communicative task. The teacher's duty is merely to present situations. To learn the language the learner has to take part in the process, a judicious and conscious process that is patterned by the individual way a learner acquires the language. The learner is redressed from a passive role and he accomplishes a task full of life, creativity, interest and potentialities.

In teaching through communicative approach, the teacher is required to embrace a number of roles. As a general observer of his student's performance, the teacher must seek to co-ordinate the activities in order to ensure their coherent development, leading towards better communicative competence. In several activities he may perform the well-known role of a language instructor. He may give new language exercise, evaluate and correct them and so on. In this role, he can stimulate and present new language without taking the chief initiative for learning away from the students themselves.

However, it is not sure whether an average teacher of English can utilize this approach effectively. Some teachers themselves cannot speak English fluently. Whatever happens the teacher has to be reoriented to make a successful use of this new approach. Nonetheless Indian classrooms are overcrowded with students. Thus, it is very difficult to seat them properly for pair work and small group work. Moreover, with its over-stress on oral work this approach avoids reading. This shortcoming needs to be removed. It is also argued that the communicative approach cannot be employed at all stages in a language programme. This approach is not equally fit for ESL and EFL. Even then the value of the communicative approach cannot be neglected. If the teacher wants to do away with these problems, he must keep in mind certain points. In context, there are some conditions which must be met before any task can be called 'communicative'. The situation must be real, and the role of the teacher as well as the learner must be real. Just to speak a few sentences is not communicative ability that involves the capability of reacting mentally as well as verbally in communication situation. The mental reaction is the basis of the verbal reaction. Keeping the learner out of the real situation is like keeping the plant out of soil, and expecting it to flourish.

There is always a need and an objective for communication and something to be communicated, that gives rise to communication in real life. Putting questions like, "Who is John" or "Is there a table" is not actually communicating anything. This type of empty talk is to divorce language from real communication. The need compels the child to invent the language.

Conclusion

Language learning is an active growth process, that needs a greater degree of initiative from students. Mechanically acquired habits are superficial, while on the other hand communicative ability is something which involves the creative functioning of the brain giving enough credit to the student's mental ability. The conservative approaches aim at quantitative increase of knowledge of the foreign

language. Whereas in the communicative approach learning language is considered as developmental process that must essentially go beyond quantitative increase to qualitative process.

Limitations of the Study

Definitely some remarkable limitations have been realized in the study carried out. The study is based on the views of English teachers of various schools and colleges, yet the data could have been more statistically sound covering comparatively larger group of teachers.

Future Scope

The limitations of this research paper points towards topics to be addressed in the future. Additional tools should be designed to ensure exact findings about changing scenario of teaching English as a second language in India and relevance of the communicative approach. Quality research should be done and it must aim towards devising correct methodology and proper survey.

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