_____

USING COMMUNICATIVE METHODS TO IMPROVE NARRATIVE ESSAY WRITING

_____

Dr. Sudeepthi Dondapati

Institutional Affiliation: The English and Foreign Languages University, Tarnaka, Hyderabad, India

_____

Abstract

This article aims at presenting communicative views on language teaching in classroom contexts. It discusses the outcomes achieved in the classroom context after applying the communicative method in the regional medium context. The article brings up several possible applications that could be implemented in the classroom context. It argues it is time to replace traditional methods of language teaching with communicative methods. It also conveys the paradigm shift in language teaching that has already taken place, and the signs of communicative methods that have started showing up in the recent day language teaching ambience.The article also presents learners' beliefs and parental encouragement regarding language learning. Furthermore, the article banks upon the positive repercussions of communicative methods, for sensitizing the role of CLT. Its usefulness and fruitfulness in the academic context are sketched in the article. The article begins with the introduction of CLT and Traditional methods. It then moves to various sections in the article like the problems, confusions of traditional methods, the improvement achieved in the areas of narrative writing with the application of communicative methods.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching, Traditional Language Teaching Methods, Methods of Teaching, Task-based Language Teaching

Introduction

There have been many methods of teaching sprouted and mushroomed in the language teaching world. Though the traditional methods were extensively in practice in the language field, they enjoyed success for a tentative period. Soon, the other methods like CLT methods came into vogue, sweeping away the traditional methods by their success. Students will not only be able to feel comfortable with the teacher but also with one another (Kasumi, 2015**).** Breaking away from fetters of the rule-bound teaching methods, the CLT emerges to be an updated teaching method. There are copious examples and situations to confirm the reliability and flexibility of CLT. CLT shuns the prescriptive approach and also the imposition of Latin style.). CLT not only aims at developing general communication but also purposeful communication or activities (Mitchell, 1994). It also promotes teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction. It focuses mainly on interaction as its central focus so that the learners would become fluent communicators (Littlewood, 1981).

_____

_____

Fads and Fashion of Traditional methods

Change is a natural phenomenon in all streams of life. Sufficient allowance of eminent teaching methods is a mark of progressive field. The second language teaching widened its spheres by giving a room for all kinds of the language teaching method. The traditional methods were born to be from the minds of arm-chair grammarians and seemed to be digressing from the language teaching context. The reasons for this are several; highly stimulating methods mushroomed everywhere, yielding positive outcomes. The ramifications of traditional methods, teacher-dominated methods were ended in the emergence of communicative methods. The conventional, handed-down methods, historical methods were reestablished in the form of communicative methods. Mechanical drills were replaced with oral skills and communicative activities. Nevertheless, traditional methods still prevail in many countries.

Consideration and Confusion in Traditional Methods

Before the study of linguistics, as a specific discipline in its own strength, the study of language as a specific need was the need of the hour of grammarians and philosophers. The focus of language teaching emerged as a primary concern of these philosophers and language experts. The concerned issues were the language learning, significance of methodology, connection between language concepts and methodology. Though the traditional methods were considered the only knowledge-enhancing methods in the past, they were swept away by the communicative waves. Though these methods posed a great challenge to the post-traditional methods, in many parts of the country, they were eroded eventually, as CLT and other contextual methods reigned over them. In the traditional methods, learners confronted with several challenges on language use. They failed on the practical grounds as there was much emphasis on the learning of language than using it. As the rules of these methods were exhaustive, it was difficult for the learners to rise above the existing standards.

In Folds of Criticism: Traditional methods

Empiricism and positivism affected the movement against traditional grammar, which eventually, led to the battle against traditional methods. The common criticisms against traditional methods of teaching grammar were its induction and deduction methods besides empiricism and rationalism in language teaching (Vijaya, 1989). The logical conventions and prescriptive rules of grammar and other language components drove learners to neither perfection nor considerable standards of language. Consequently, the learners met with frustration without communicative competence. The absence of imagination, creativity, and interaction with fellow learners was apparently missing in the traditional methods. Learners got confined to the fetters of language conventions without inviting the new fashions of language teaching.

_____

According to Paulo Freire, a traditional method of teaching has been criticized as a 'banking' model of education (Freire, 1982). The learners are said to be similar to the bank accounts where knowledge is deposited and used later for the examination and other purposes. This analogy has been used specifically to refer to the traditional system of teaching. The teacher is virtually like a roadmap or the deposit of knowledge. The learner's role is merely passive but not central. The change of paradigms in the present times, place the learner in the centre of learning.

The Emergence of CLT

CLT starts with posing several challenges and in-depth investigations into the issues like; what led the old linguists to the state of discontentment in language teaching, the obvious reasons for the emergence of new methods, the ways to relook at the old teaching methods from perspectives of the twentieth century and several other concerns. Reflecting on the causes for the failure of old methods, provides, a panoramic view of communicative methods of teaching (Johnson, 1982).

Communicative language teaching has contributed much to the language teaching profession, substituting the traditional methods like grammar translation method, direct method, audio-lingual method, and so on. There are several reasons for the emergence of communicative methods in the language teaching scenario.

Discussion on the outcomes of CLT methods

This research study was an attempt to receive the feedback on students' experiences with the intervention study using TBLT, an offshoot of CLT for improving narrative essay writing. It was also an attempt to explore their beliefs regarding English language learning and parental encouragement provided to them. The questionnaire had 5 categories of themes.

Q. No	Question (Theme)	Yes	No
1	Parents' encouragement to study English	30	0
2	Parents' encouragement to study English during free time	27	3
3	Encouragement to take opportunity to use English (speaking & reading)	30	0
4	Encouragement to practice English (parental encouragement)	27	3
5	Encouragement to attend extra classes in English after regular classes	23	7
6	Pressure to study/learn English	28	2
7	Parents' belief about English that it would bring honour and fame to their	29	1

_____

	family		

Category 1--Parental Encouragement and Family Influence

The results of the first category questions show that parents are very much in favour of English language learning and give good support to their children. The data shows that these students had a good support and parental encouragement regarding English.

Category 2--Students' Interest/Preference for Learning, Practicing English and Narrative Writing

No.	Question Theme	Not at all	Not So much	A little	Very much
1	Liking towards the environment of English classes	2	4	12	12
2	Looking forward to English classes	4	6	7	13
3	Interest in learning and using English	3	3	6	18
4	Enjoyment in learning English	0	2	16	22

The results give us an impression that not all of them look forward to English classes. It also suggests that students are not properly motivated by teachers. It seems that students are not totally aware of the necessity of learning English in the present-day world where ample opportunities are readily available.

Category 3-Learners' Attitudes toward Learning and Using English

No	Question Theme	Not at all	Not so much	A Little	Very much
1)	Ability to speak and write in English on daily life	6	8	12	4
2)	Ability to converse and speak on general matters of life	8	8	10	4
3)	Ability to read and write about simple greetings in basic English	9	8	10	3

The results of all sub-questions under category 3 give us an overall impression about students' ability and also inability to speak, read and write on their daily matters of life. This warrants effective strategies and sources of inspiration to develop learners' communication in English as well as interest to use in day-to-day contexts.

Category 4- **Learners' Responses on Methods of Teaching English (TBLT) for improving Narrative Writing**

The final question of the questionnaire focuses on the central aim of the researcher's study; TBLT and the effect of the 'Task-cycle' on learning English. The main theme has five important sub-sections and each section gathers responses from students on what TBLT left on their learning. The following table gives us an overview of students' reaction to TBLT.

Category-5 Learners' Responses on Methods of Teaching English

No	Question Theme	Yes	No	Sometimes
a)	Enjoyment in doing tasks	25	1	4
b)	Interest/liking towards the tasks	25	1	4
c)	Want teachers to use tasks in English class	25	0	5
d)	Learnt English through tasks	25	1	4
e)	Usefulness of tasks in language learning	26	1	3

They responded that they benefited a lot from using tasks. Majority of the responses of the students favour using tasks and the task-cycle in the language class.
Overall, the analysis of students' questionnaire reflects on students' learning behavior, beliefs, background information about their language learning, attitudes regarding learning English, impressions on TBLT approach, and benefits of using the tasks for successful learning.
Conclusion

This paper gently emphasizes the positive effects, applications, and implications of CLT methods on the other hand; it also highlights the causes and reasons for the fall of traditional methods. This paper begins with the problems and criticism of traditional methods and ends with the practical implications of CLT in teaching-learning contexts. It concludes with a positive note about CLT and its positive results in the classroom learning context. It appeals to the learners to form their perspectives about the appropriate teaching methods.

References:

- Kasumi, H. (2015). Communicative Language Teaching and Its Impact on Students' Performance. Rome-Italy, Journal of Educational and Social Research. 10.5901/jesr.2015.v5n1s1p155.

- Little wood, W.(1981). Communicative Language Teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vijaya, k.(1989). The communicative approach to language teaching theoretical limits. Delhi: Reliance publishing House.
- Johnson, K.1982. Communicative Syllabus Design and Methodology. Newyork :Pergamon press.
- Friere,P. 1982. Pedagogy of the oppressed.Trans. M.B Ramos. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Mitchell, R. (1994). The communicative approach to language teaching.In A.Swarbick o(Ed)., teaching Modern Languages(pp.33-42).New York: Routledge.