The Importance of CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) Method in Teaching Different Age Groups of Students

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Abstract: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has become one of the most common methods in classrooms around the world with students of all ages and at all levels of ability. It is generally believed that the goal of English language learning is to develop communication skills, and to accomplish this communicative approaches to language teaching are widely advocated. However, it is not clear whether approaches to communicative language teaching (CLT) used for adult learners are suitable for younger learners of English. Therefore, this article seeks to critically examine communicative language teaching with the intent to identify appropriate classroom practice for different age groups of learners.

Keywords: communicative language teaching, approach, method, young learners, adults, role playing, pair working.

INTRODUCTION

Communicative language teaching (**CLT**), or the **communicative approach (CA)**, is an approach to language teaching that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of study[5]. That method also claims to encourage learners to incorporate their personal experiences into their language learning environment and to focus on the learning experience, in addition to the learning of the target language [4]. Interaction takes crucial part in English language teaching and learning. It could determine whether the learning objectives in each meeting in the classroom can be achieved or not. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is one of the teaching methods that is in line with student-centered approach. CLT sustains the students to be able to interact with the target language, by overwhelmingly promote communicative events to be learned in the classroom.

MAIN PART

It was Noam Chomsky**'s** theories in the 1960s, focusing on competence and performance in language learning, that gave rise to communicative language teaching, but the conceptual basis for CLT was laid in the 1970s by the linguists Michael Halliday, who studied how language functions are expressed through grammar, and Dell Hymes, who introduced the idea of a wider communicative competence instead of Chomsky's narrower linguistic competence [3].

The starting point for the CLT method is to consider what people actually do with language outside the classroom. Every day, people use language to provide and to ask for information, to make requests, to give and to ask for permission, and for a long list of other functions. In other words, they use language to communicate. *The aim of Communicative Language Teaching* is to give students the skills they need in order to be able to communicate effectively in English. CLT aims to develop communicative competence by extensive use and practice of the target language in the learning process, frequently in situational contexts. Furthermore, a social constructivist perspective informs that for truly effective communicative competence to be achieved the learning process needs to incorporate social and cultural aspects of interaction. The social and cultural world of the young learner is a very different one from that of the adolescent and adult learner, a

difference with important implications [1]. For children play occupies a pivotal role in the learning process and language development.

There are some benefits and importance of CLT method in teaching different age groups of students in the following:

➢ Some of the interaction in the CLT classroom consists of the teacher talking to the whole class while the students listen or respond to the teacher's questions, particularly when the teacher is explaining a language point. CLT makes use of roleplays, pair work and group work tasks. These forms of interaction provide some important benefits. Pair and group work provide opportunities to focus more on fluency and on content than on accuracy, which often means that students are able to speak more freely than when they are asked to respond to direct questions from the teacher in front of the whole class;

➢ Another benefit is a better use of time. When students are divided into pairs or groups and given a task that each pair or group carries out at the same time, it is a far more efficient and effective use of classroom time than other forms of classroom interaction [2];

➢ With students at an intermediate level of English, teachers using CLT methodology might ask them to work in pairs with a short text related to a topic they are currently covering in class, such as the environment. At an advanced level of English, teachers might put students into groups and give them a roleplay situation;

➢ Appropriate tasks for young learners might be classroom activities such as the singing of songs and taking of the register in English, both examples of authentic language use, though for some the former might not be perceived as communicative even though it is authentic. Children in both their L1 and L2 often engage in imaginative talk, play, singing songs, repetition of verses in stories and nursery rhymes. It is required to construct a specific model of communication and CLT for young learners incorporating such elements, a model that will be different from a model for adult learners.

CONCLUSION

Analysis conducted in this work suggests that, in seeking to develop better communication skills among different age group of English learners, conceptions of communicative competence need to be reconsidered. Communicative Language Teaching prepares students for communicative demands outside the classroom using techniques that develop communication skills. In its pure form, some teachers may feel that there is not enough focus on accuracy and language structure to meet their needs and the needs of their students.

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