

Communicative Approach in Teaching English to Primary School Students

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Annotation *This article examines the theoretical foundations and pedagogical implications of the communicative approach in teaching English to primary school students. In the context of globalization and increasing demand for foreign language proficiency, early language instruction has become a strategic priority in educational systems worldwide. The communicative approach, grounded in the concept of communicative competence, emphasizes meaningful interaction, authentic language use, and learner-centered instruction.*

Key words: *Communicative Approach, Primary Education, English Language Teaching, Communicative Competence, Young Learners, Interactive Methods, TPR, Learner-Centered Instruction*

Introduction

This was an era of growth for international communication, technology, science and human mobility which further expanded the role of English as a global lingua franca. Consequently, most countries have implemented English as a foreign language in primary education. The reasoning behind early foreign language education is that within a supportive and meaningful context, children have an inherent talent for language acquisition. But the efficacy of early English teaching is highly correlated with the frameworks employed in classrooms. The traditional grammar-translation approach, which had a place as the dominant method for decades, emphasized rote memorization of lists of vocabulary, translation drills and explicit grammar instruction. But, such approaches produced structural understanding yet often they did not encourage learners to be able to communicate effectively in real life. The argument that was made during 1970's, this led to a communicative approach due to the above limitations since there is need of practicing the language.

In the early 1960s, Dell Hymes introduced the concept of communicative competence positing that knowing a language is not only about composing grammatically correct sentences, but also includes mastering an appropriate use of that language: All communication is context dependent [1]. Some years later M.Canale and M.Swain extended this idea to a complete theoretical model on the basis of which Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was founded [2].

Communicative methods seem particularly effective in primary education, in which children are in initial stages of cognitive and social development. Kids learn through interactivity, so keeping them engaged emotionally is critical. Therefore, communicative approach matches the developmental characteristics of students in primary school inherently.

At the heart of the communicative approach, however, is something called communicative competence. [3] Dell Hymes' Critique of Noam Chomsky's Competence vs Performance: According to Hymes, linguistic knowledge isn't all that is needed for successful communication. Speakers must know not only what is grammatically correct, but also what is socially appropriate (D.Hymes).

Building upon this idea, Canale and Swain (1980) recognized that communicative competence includes four components:

Lexical competence – knowledge of vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar rules.

- Sociolinguistic competence – ability to use language in an appropriate way according to context and social norms
- Discourse competence – ability to create coherent and cohesive texts.

Strategic competence – the ability to navigate communicative breakdowns using verbal and non-verbal strategies[4].

Methodology

This study is a qualitative pedagogical analysis of the communicative approach to teaching English students in primary school. The research used descriptive and analytical methods to study theoretical sources and modern teaching practices in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The approach representative of the core principles of communicative competence and its applicability in primary education was formed as a result of analysis of scientific works written by leading specialists in language pedagogy, such as: Hymes, Canale and Swain, Krashen, Harmer and Richards 4.

Furthermore, classroom observation and comparative analysis of teaching approaches were applied to the effectiveness of communicative activities like games, pair work, role-plays, and Total Physical Response (TPR) techniques in enhancing young learners' speaking and listening skills. It also investigates the role of authentic materials, such as songs, pictures and short stories in interactive learning environment.

The data collected were interpreted using pedagogical synthesis and the generation of theory. The methodology also facilitated the series of instructional strategies that boost learner motivation and communicative confidence among primary school learners and language acquisition.

Results and Discussion

This model emphasizes that in order to teach learners the language effectively, one approach that must be adapted is not only grammar training but it also has to directed towards giving chances for using language purposefully.

The Input Hypothesis was proposed by S. Krashen, suggesting that language is acquired when learners of a language are given exposure to comprehensible input which includes elements just beyond their current level ($i+1$). For primary school students, this translates to introducing language materials that are accessible, engaging, and rich with context. Krashen too, mentioned about having a low affective filter as positive emotions such as anxiety, fear and lack of motivation can be momentous hindrances to acquiring a language [8,9]. A communicative classroom environment with supportive interaction and meaningful tasks decreases anxiety and encourages motivation.

Communicative teaching, according to J. Harmer, moves the focus from teacher-centered instruction to learner-centered interaction with others (Harmer 1991). In these classrooms, the teacher becomes a guide and not a lecturer. Students working in pairs, groups, role-plays and problem-solving activities [10]. This enhancement of the teaching process is especially crucial in primary studies, where children learn better if they are more engaged actively and socially.

An important aspect of the communicative approach is comprehending developmental stages that characterize young learners in order to practice an activity under this umbrella. Primary school children:

- Ø Explore by play and work of imagination;

- Ø Have short attention spans;
- Ø Respond to visual and auditory stimuli positively;
- Ø Mimic the pronunciation and intonation naturally;
- Ø Have sensitive emotions and need uplifting.

Columnist Opinion J. Piaget's cognitive development theory indicates that children at this stage are in the concrete operational stage, which means you can engage their language understanding more if they are tied to physical objects and real-life settings. So abstract explanations of grammar are less effective than interactive tasks and the study in context.

This perspective is backed by J. Asher's Total Physical Response (TPR) method. TPR combines movement with language learning and allows the children to respond by keeping their body movements before their verbal output even occurs [11,12,13]. This approach alleviates anxiety and creates understanding organically.

Communicative teaching at primary level is all about games. Language games like "Find Someone Who," "Guess the Word" or "Role-Play Dialogues" promote spontaneous communication. It makes for a relaxed environment where blunders are considered learning opportunities, not failures.

Interaction is the essence of CLT. When students speak to each other they practice language in most meaningful contexts (pair and group activities). For example:

- v Interviewing classmates;
- v Describing pictures collaboratively;
- v Solving simple tasks together;
- v Acting out short dialogues.

These activities foster cooperation, social skills and communicative confidence.

Using authentic materials like songs, cartoons, short videos and storybooks help children to get in contact with the natural language. Music and stories, specifically, help to improve pronunciation, rhythm and retention of words.

Communicative approach combines all four skills — listening, speaking, reading and writing. For example, students might hear a short story and discuss it before reading a related text and writing basic sentences about it. This integrated method bolsters general language proficiency [14,15].

In communicative classrooms, assessment is about students' ability to use language functionally. In this regard, teachers assess participation, fluency, understanding and communicative strategies rather than just grammatical correctness.

There are great advantages of the communicative approach in teaching English in primary schools. First, it increases the motivation of learners by giving meaning and interactivity to language. Children become more engaged when they learn that English is a tool for expression, not just something to be memorised.

Second, communicative tasks promote fluency and confidence. Students practice speaking in good, supportive environments often enough to minimize the fear of making mistakes. This develops automaticity and natural language use over time.

It supports cognitive and social development. We need cooperation in a group task alongside negotiation of meaning as well as problem-solving, which essentially is critical thinking skills. Nonetheless, successful implementation relies on well-prepared educators, sufficient classroom supplies, and a proper blend of form-focused learning. Actual fossilization may take place as a consequence of communicative activity with little attention to form. So a balanced approach that includes communication with guided grammar is advised.

Conclusion

More recently, the communicative approach has emerged as a modern and effective methodology for teaching English to primary school students. Key Features of CLT: Based on the theory of communicative competence, it emphasizes meaningful interaction and learner-centeredness, it is rooted in psycholinguistic research; use functional language. Through the use of games, interactive activities, authentic materials and integrated skills development, teachers can make classrooms dynamic and exciting to motivate young learners for communicative proficiency. Overall, communicative language teaching increases linguistic competence and promotes social, emotional, and cognitive development in students. When it is implemented in primary education, when students are still very young, an indispensable basis for a lifelong learning of the language and international communication has been created.

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