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## **Chapter 2**

# **COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING FRAMEWORK**

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## 2.1 Review of Literature

Notwithstanding the fact that English is one of the compulsory subjects taught in Haryana at Primary, Secondary and Tertiary level, the learning outcome of the students has not been very appreciative. The poor communicative competence of undergraduate students is one of the key reasons for their being unemployed. There have been academic and research based attempts to analyze the reasons for the ineffective status of ELT particularly in rural parts of the State. In order to preface and understand the problem in entirety, the researcher closely observed the following research attempts undertaken by various individuals and institutions for examining the prevailing status of ELT at tertiary level and employability of CLT as a pedagogical framework.

- Nutan Yadav has done doctoral work on Effective Interactive Pedagogy of ELT at the Tertiary level in Hisar district of Haryana. The researcher in her research work has analyzed the pedagogical shortcomings rendering ELT ineffective in Hisar region of Haryana.
- Ms. Rajni Devi on Learner Autonomy with reference to BPS Mahila Vishwavidyalaya. In this particular research work, the researcher has been making attempts to study the problems of rural students while learning the skills of English language. She has laid emphasis on learners' participation in English classrooms. Learner autonomy is one of the key areas of concern for effective ELT as it promotes learners' engagement in the whole process.
- A major research project by Ravi Bhushan on Status of ELT at Primary, Secondary and Tertiary level in Sonapat district of Haryana. The researcher in this project work has made an empirical study of the status of ELT at all the three

levels of education with reference to Hisar district of Haryana. The outcome of the project does raise pertinent questions about the efficacy of methods of ELT in use and recommends feasible suggestions for promoting communicative competence of learners particularly rural learners.

- David Gradoll's *English Next India*. This is a seminal book on the status and role of English in India. The book covers various aspects of life vis-a-vis English and elaborates on the role English will play in deciding the future of youth. The book recommends the use of local resources as teaching learning material for making ELT effective. The book proved to be of immense use to the researcher in structuring the hypothesis and thesis of her research work.
- Staff Training and Research Institute for Teaching of English (STRITE): It is an autonomous training institute for ELT at BPSMV. During the research work, the researcher visited STRITE and studied its activities. It offers training to teachers of English teaching at primary, secondary and tertiary level. The training modules are structured to provide pedagogical efficacy for teaching both language and literary items. The feedback obtained from the participants of programs offered by STRITE is appended as an appendix to corroborate the efficacy of the project.

Besides the aforesaid references, the researcher read the following articles and research papers for gaining insight and thoughts about her area of research. The articles, by and large, talk about ELT and issues related to it. A majority of articles do talk about CLT and viable methods for effective ELT leading to the communicative competence of undergraduates.

*“Teaching of English in Post-Independence India: Search for Alternatives”* published in the journal OASIS, Vol. 1, No. 1 discusses the historical aspect of ELT in India since 1947. The article presents the prevailing methods of ELT and argues the need for having alternative methods and approaches for making ELT effective in the Indian context.

*“The teaching of Speaking Skill, Grammar, and Vocabulary of English Language”* published in the newsletter ELT Weekly, Vol. 1, Issue 27 discusses pedagogical perspective on the speaking skill, grammar, and vocabulary of English language. The article recommends an integrative approach while teaching the skills of English language.

*“Communicative Language Teaching: An Overview”* published in an international journal Language in India, Vol. 10 presents a theoretical perspective on CLT and argues its merits in comparison with other frameworks for ELT. The historical origin of CLT as one of the approaches of effective ELT is also being talked about in this article.

*“Mother Tongue! The Neglected Resource for English Language Teaching and Learning”* published in the journal Language in India makes a befitting case for using L1 (learners' mother tongue) as a useful resource for learning and teaching L2 (second language). The article has pedagogical implications for teachers of English language and exhorts them to use learners' mother tongue as a facilitator and not a hindrance to their learning outcome.

*“Challenging but Enjoyable Teaching of English in Rural Areas”* published in the Journal ELT Voices, Vol. 1, Issue 4 argues for making ELT in rural areas more challenging and a fruitful exercise. The article recommends the use of indigenous narratives as texts and activities in ELT classrooms. It also presents a comparative perspective on ELT for rural and urban learners. *“Continuous Professional Development Through Interaction and Collaborative Action Research”* published in International

Journal of English and Education, Vol. 1, Issue 2 is of pedagogical nature. It argues for CPD being an inbuilt mechanism for sustainable and effective training of English teachers through various ways mentioned in the article. Action research has been promoted as a tool in ELT classrooms.

*“Bringing One Language to Another: Multilingualism as a Teaching Resource in an English Classroom”* published in the edited book Translation, Bilingualism and Pedagogy: Possibilities, Potentials, Pitfalls by Creative Books, Delhi recommends for bringing learners’ own languages as a good resource for effective learning of communication skills of English language. It argues that multilingualism enhances critical thinking abilities of a learner.

*“Multilingualism as a Teaching Resource in an ESL Classroom”* published in the Journal Labyrinth, Vol. 3, No. 4 once again talks of multilingualism as an asset for ELT particularly in ESL context. It argues that multilingualism of Indian students should not be seen as a hindrance to their learning abilities of English language and its communication skills.

*“Unfolding Communicative Language Teaching”* published in the edited book CLT: The Changing Face of ELT by Gautam Books, Jaipur presents a historical and chronological perspective of CLT vis-a-vis other approaches and methods of ELT.

*“Ethnography of Communication”* published in the edited book Interfacing ELT with Culture & Technology: Direction for New Classroom by Jain Brothers, New Delhi traces the sociolinguistic aspect of ELT and argues for braining in socio-cultural traits of a learner while engaging in ELT. The learner differences do impact linguistic learning

ability of a learner, so shall be accounted for while teaching communication skills of a second language.

*“Indigenous Literature: Effective Teaching Resource in ELT Classroom”* published in the refereed journal *Critical Space* Vol.2.Issue 2 strongly recommends the use of indigenous narratives and texts as ELT classroom activities and teaching material. The article puts forth the argument that learners' own narratives of culture and life are pro learning and appropriating a second language. Also, use of such narratives fosters critical thinking and hastens the learning process.

*“Technocriticism and Hypertext: a Pedagogical Perspective”* published in the edited book *Exploring Modern / Postmodern Critical Theory* by Omega Publications, New Delhi discusses the use of technology and technological texts in ELT classrooms. It argues for maximizing the use of digital texts for faster and effective inculcation of communicative competence of undergraduates.

*“Colonial Amnesia: Need to Strengthen Indian Multilingualism”* published in *Literary Insight* Vol. 5 once again supports the idea of having multilingualism as a pedagogical tool for effective ELT in ESL context. The article exhorts to come out of the colonial hangover and juxtapose Indian languages with English as a pedagogical exercise.

*“Understanding Language Teaching: An Educational Perspective”* published in the *Journal of Advances in Linguistics* Vol. 2, No. 1 presents a theoretical perspective on ELT in terms of its educational nuances.

The review and reference of aforesaid research works/ initiatives by various individuals and institutions helped the researcher to formulate the hypothesis for the research problem under investigation. Notwithstanding the heterogeneous nature of references

referred by the researcher; pedagogy, curriculum, and evaluation emerge to be the common areas of concern for strengthening ELT particularly for undergraduate students in rural areas. Based on the referred literature, the researcher decided to focus on CLT as the viable and relevant framework for fostering communicative competence.

## **2.2 Introduction**

English language, in its initial phase, was introduced as a foreign language in India, therefore, the different methods adopted for its teaching to Indian students were imported from the English background and environment. The suitability and viability of different methods of teaching English to Indian students were always in question. Linguistic and communicative competence which were the key objectives of teaching English to speakers of other languages could not be achieved even with the application of various teaching methods and approaches.

Post-independence, the Indian learner gained awareness about the functionality and opportunity that English language offered for social, cultural, academic and professional purposes. There was an urgent need for the ELT practitioners to revisit their pedagogical strategy and consequently, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach was introduced in India.

One can mark the origin and evolution of CLT by looking at the changes that started happening in the 1960s. Situational Language Teaching along with Audio Lingualism ceased to be recognized as effective methodologies. There has been a perpetual quest for better methods throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, before having a discussion on CLT framework, it is pertinent to discuss the other methods of ELT.

### 2.3 Grammar Translation Method

The roots of Grammar Translation Method are planted firmly in the formal teachings of Greek and Latin which prevailed in Europe for many centuries. The Grammar Translation method was a product of German scholarship propounded by leading exponents like J. Seidensticker, Karl Plotz, H.S. Ollendorf and J.V. Meidinger. It was popularly known as the Prussian method in the United States and was widely used for teaching European languages in 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Grammar Translation method took into account the grammatical rules of the language; it's detailed study, making use of the technique of translation of the text of the first language into the target language and the reverse. The main emphasis is on learning of grammar rules by heart so that the student can understand, convert and use the structure, form, and content of the target language. H.H. Stern in his book *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching: Historical and Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Applied Linguistic Research* (1983) says, "The first language is maintained as the reference system in the acquisition of the second language" (Stern 1983, p. 455). A few of the key assumptions of Grammar Translation Method are as following:

- Grammar is taught prescriptively- through the presentation and study of rules.
- Emphasizes completeness of sentences and accuracy.
- Reading and writing are given importance at the cost of speaking and listening skills.
- Practice is provided through translation exercises from mother tongue to the target language and vice versa.
- The native language of the learner is treated as the point of reference.

- Accuracy is constantly stressed upon. The learners should be able to do a good job in translation.
- Vocabulary is taught with the help of lists which have comparisons in both the languages, reference to dictionaries and by memorizing of words and their meanings.

The application of this method did bring a couple of advantages to the forefront like explicit understanding through translation, saving time in the process and making ELT effective.

Notwithstanding the benefits, Grammar Translation Method advocated an unnatural order of learning a foreign language. Thus students who are taught English with the aid of this method feel hampered in expressing themselves in the target language. Even when they reach college, they are conscious of speaking in English. A big disadvantage of Grammar Translation Method is that the students are not able to pay much attention to the target language but keep their attention fixed on their mother tongue. There are instances where translation can lead to confusion as the contextual usage of English language cannot be overlooked. A perfect word to word translation is never exactly possible and besides, there are multitude factors like socio-cultural background, behaviors, traditions and so on of a community that helps form its language. The in-equivalency of lexical items in the two languages (source & target) proved to be another barrier to effective ELT through Grammar Translation Method.

There is a structure, syntax, usage, and vocabulary distinct to each language which might not have exact translations or synonyms in another language. Therefore, to be able to switch codes is a mark of proficiency in communication and should not be

taken as a sole pedagogical base. In order to learn a language, one should be able to gradually start thinking in that language; he has to fit its patterns into his system, his habits, and his behavior. But unfortunately, Grammar Translation Method does nothing of the sort. It only focuses on memorization of rules and does not do anything to enhance usage. Language acquisition is a matter of acquiring the skill of using the language efficiently and contextually. It has to be practiced just like one's native language laying enough emphasis on practice and vocabulary building. Rote learning or memorization will not work. These factors contributed to the questioning and rejection of the Grammar Translation Method and led to the birth of Direct Method.

## **2.4 Direct Method**

The roots of Direct Method can be traced back to the nineteenth century. Francois Gouin, in his book *The Art of Teaching and Learning of languages* (1880), says that a foreign language could be taught using a series of simple events. The teacher describes each event in the foreign language and set reading and writing tasks on these lessons. The teacher used complete sentences, rather than words and phrases, in the foreign language as input. The key features of Direct Method are:

- Exclusive use of target language was made in the classrooms.
- Everyday vocabulary and sentences were taught.
- Oral introduction of new teaching points.
- Emphasis on the building of oral communication skills with the help of question answer sessions between the learner and the teacher in smaller class units.
- Emphasis on correct pronunciation and grammar.
- An inductive approach to the teaching of grammar.

- Memorization of word-lists, grammar rules etc. was discovered. Since the syntax is the most important part of grammar, grammar should begin at the sentence level and not at the word level.
- The definite, direct and focused vocabulary was initiated through role plays, objects, and visuals.
- Repetition in the case of reinforcement of ideas and associations was recommended.
- The teaching of speech and listening comprehension.

Direct method was criticized on the grounds that it was impractical and far removed from reality or the real situations and challenges of a classroom. It required a teacher to have a certain level of fluency in the foreign language, which was difficult to find. This method largely relied on the teachers' skill and not the text book. There was a scarcity of teachers who were conversant enough in the target language to be able to do justice to this method. It was also criticized due to the fact that since teachers had to avoid the use of native language, sometimes they had to go to great lengths to make a point understood, while a simple, lucid explanation in the students' native language would have done the needful.

British applied linguist Henry Sweet (1845-1912) first pointed out the limitations of this method. He said that Direct Method lacks structural base and advocated the need for the development of a foolproof methodology which could lay down the foundation for teaching techniques. Sweet observed that sentence rather than word should be the unit of a language and both shall be bound by the context of their use; language shall be learned through connected texts followed by grammatical analysis, and language learning shall be

governed by a law of associations (forming associations). Subsequent developments led to some other methods of English Language Teaching; like Audiolingualism in the United States and Situational Language Teaching also known as Oral Approach in Britain.

## **2.5 Audiolingualism**

Based on American psychologist William Moulton's (1893-1947) slogan 'Language is speech, not writing', Audiolingualism lays stress on the importance of communicative skills required in day to day existence, particularly those of listening and speaking. Its main features are:

- Each language skill is treated separately.
- The focus was primarily on acquiring the skill of listening and speaking.
- Writing and reading gained secondary status.
- The audio-lingual syllabus was replete with dialogues which became the chief means of presenting language items.
- Pattern drills were the mainstay of this method.
- The introduction of language laboratory.
- Discouraged the use of the mother tongue to an extent.
- The technique of graded structured practice was made use of and graded passages from literary texts were introduced at an advanced stage.

The Audio-Lingual method did not burden the intellect of the students with problem-solving as in the case of the Grammar Translation method. The demerit of Audiolingualism was that speech took a back seat as Audiolingualism promoted mimicry and memorized the pattern of learning English language.

## **2.6 Humanistic Approaches**

A humanistic approach to language teaching & learning has for its base, not linguistic theories but has evolved through research into the matter of learners and the philosophical conclusions drawn from these investigations. It developed into something basic and intrinsic to every human being; the sensitivity of the minds of the learners. There were people like Charles. A. Curran, roman catholic priest and professor of clinical psychology, Caleb Gattegno, a teacher of mathematics, Georgi Lozanov, a psychiatrist and James Asher, a clinical psychologist who felt that it was important to retain and boost the self-image and esteem of the learners and not burden or damage it by displaying absolute linguistic power. They advocated that learning should be as stress-free as possible and that the qualities of independence, autonomy, and responsibility should be nurtured and not thwarted through the learning process. The learning atmosphere should thrive with positivity and should be free from negative suggestions. Learning should be joyful, easy and natural. These approaches wanted teaching & the learning process to be learner centric. The following methods are generally considered to reflect the philosophy of the humanistic approach:

### **(a) The Silent Way**

This method was evolved by Caleb Gattegno, a teacher of Mathematics in the 1960s. It is based on the following concept:

- The teacher must be subordinated to learning.
- The teacher is almost silent.
- Learners do all the talking

This method failed because of its lack of practicality, the size of the classrooms, lack of evaluation basis, its impracticability in regular school work etc.

**(b) Suggestopedia**

Advocated by Georgi Lazanov, a Bulgarian doctor of medicine, psychiatrist and parapsychologist, Suggestopedia is based on the principle of easy and joyful learning. Learners need to be relaxed and happy. Only this will initiate the learning of a foreign language. It is important for the learner to be involved in meaningful activities. Prerequisites of this method are:

- Aids such as posters, charts, and music are used.
- Classroom equipped with comfortable chairs.
- A semi-circular arrangement of the class to gain access to the charts and visuals.
- Lighting of the classrooms.
- Role-play by students.
- Extensive use of mimicry, mother tongue, music, active participation of the learner etc.

Unfortunately, this method proved to be a total failure in the context of government run educational institutions in India because of infrastructural & curriculum related constraints and of course bigger classrooms in terms of student strength.

**(c) Total Physical Response**

This method was evolved by James Asher, an experimental psychologist. Listening comprehension forms the basis of this method. It is founded on the conviction that a child learns the target language in exactly the same way it learns his native tongue, that is, by following directions and obeying commands. The

teacher gives commands and orders and the learners perform the action. It is based on the following strategy:

- It is believed that the target language can best be understood with the help of actions, therefore, lots of commands are given out by the teachers not only verbally but also demonstratively.
- Learners are expected to speak in the early stages as this method is based on the principle that listening comprehension should precede other skills.
- Learners are given enough time to absorb the new language before they are asked to speak. But since commands by their very nature are autocratic and authoritative, it is certainly not a very pleasant way to teach. Another concern that also arises is, whether an entire language can be taught through commands and if reading & writing, which form important components of learning, be taught similarly.

## **2.7 Lexical Approach**

In this approach to language learning, vocabulary and lexical units are considered focal to the process of teaching and learning. The seminal works on this approach include Dave Willis's *Lexical Syllabus: A New Approach to Language Teaching* (1990), James R. Nattinger & Jeanette S. DeCarrico's *Lexical Phrases and Language teaching* (1992), and Michael Lewis's *Lexical Approach* (1993). The lexical approach in the teaching of language stems from the belief that grammar cannot be relied upon for language learning and communication. It is most untrustworthy and inadequate a source. It is not practical. Instead, to learn how to communicate, Lexis, which means a combination of words, has to be employed. Lexicon has to be central to learning a language and the syntax should be

at the periphery. We can say that in the Lexical Approach, competent use of language to communicate meaning is the main aim. The corpus of authentic English (for the first time, a book of computers at the University of Birmingham was used to collect and analyze a corpus of authentic English) consisted of samples of 'real' English, as it is spoken and written by native speakers of the language. The pattern that emerged showed that the lexicon of English consisted of mainly multi-word items of different types that were collected in a fairly fixed way and occurred in fixed expressions such as the following:

### **Multi-word items**

- Polywords: by and large, nevertheless
- Arbitrary combinations: black and blue, hither and thither

### **Collocations**

- fixed: running a fever
- fairly fixed: with a limited number of possibilities
- strong
- weak
- black tea (but not powerful or brown tea)
- white

Other fixed expressions could be seen in usage of social language, politeness phrases, idioms etc. But again, according to Lewis (2000), the Lexical Approach lacks a coherent learning theory. It remains to be convincingly demonstrated how a lexically based theory of language and language learning can be applied at the levels of design and procedure in language teaching.

## **2.8 Communicative Language Teaching**

It was in the 1970s, that the traditional language teaching approaches met with severe criticism all over the world and started falling apart. Grammatical competence could not be the sole determinant of language competence and it became a subject of debate and discussion all over the world. Language broke free from the clutches of grammar being the focus and fulcrum of language teaching and learning. The role of Grammar was important but only for producing grammatically correct sentences. Language learning needed certainly more than that. Skill and knowledge were required to manipulate grammar and various other dimensions of language. The focus of ELT shifted towards achieving communicative competence.

Linguistics as a discipline had now started developing and contributing to the notion of communicative competence. Linguists started pondering over the subject how a syllabus could be framed; what parameters could be adopted to integrate communicative competence in the university syllabuses and how effective it could prove in developing a language teaching methodology. All these questions had a common answer and that was the development of CLT. This approach was received with a lot of expectation and fervor when it first made its presence as a fresh approach to the learning of language in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The existent methods of teaching were debated upon and looked upon as being redundant by teachers and institutions of language learning worldwide. William Littlewood in his book *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction* (1981) writes that the Communicative approach makes us more strongly aware that it is not enough to teach learners how to manipulate the structures of the foreign language. They

must also develop strategies for relating these structures to their communicative functions in real situations and real time. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) made its entry at a time when the world was getting ready to look at language teaching in a new way, as a change or a retreat from the ineffective prevalent methodologies. Situational Language Teaching and Audiolingualism had been declared as inappropriate. There was a restlessness to come back to the traditional concept. Anthony Philip Reid Howatt in his book *A History of English Language Teaching* (1984) says that utterances carried meaning in themselves and expressed the meanings and intentions of the speakers and writers who created them.

Noam Chomsky, the famous American linguist was instrumental in evoking such an anti- Situational Language Teaching response. In his famous book *Syntactic Structures* (1957), Noam Chomsky had demonstrated that the prevalent structural theories of language did not capture the true and basic essence of the characteristics of language; they missed out on the creative appeal and the unique properties of the sentence. Besides Chomsky, British applied linguists and researchers like Brown (1987), Brumfit and Johnson (1979), Hymes (1972), Nattinger (1984) and Nunan, (1987) to name a few can be credited with developing the theoretical part and the practice of this approach which focuses on functional and communicative potential of language. While in a grammar centric methodology, the thrust is on grammatical rules and syntax, in a Communicative Approach, the stress is on how to make use of grammar in order to usher a meaningful utterance. It was concluded that attaining control of structures alone does not suffice. Communicative proficiency has to be focussed upon in language teaching.

The familiarity with the traditional language syllabus was in place. It laid stress on vocabulary building, most often memorizing it and specifying the grammatical structures and compositions to be mastered. The testing mechanism would test the levels from preliminary to higher. But the details and nuances of CLT needed to be outlined from the start. There were various syllabuses proposed all of which reiterated the need for a skill-based program or syllabus. The focus in CLT is on the development of the four basic skills of learning a language that is; reading, writing, listening and speaking. CLT examines all these skills and disintegrates them into simpler and smaller components or what may be called micro skills.

For example, listening as a skill could be demonstrated as the following micro skills:

- To be able to point out and recognize key words in conversations.
- To be able to understand the topic of conversation.
- To be able to identify the speaker's attitude.
- Recognizing time reference of an utterance.
- To be able to understand speech when spoken at varying speeds.
- To understand the crux of the matter.

However, an eclectic, well-known approach to the learning and teaching of communication skills was recommended to be included in the syllabus, which came to be known as Functional Syllabus. This syllabus is developed keeping in view the functionality of the language. The functional activities which the learner is expected to carry out in English have to be included. This may include expressing opinions, thanking, apologizing, introducing, basic conversation etc. The basic idea is to harness the functions which would enable communication in varied situations. Vocabulary and

grammatical rules can follow later and be interspersed with the chosen function of the language being taught. Functional syllabuses often proved helpful for speaking and listening courses. Another syllabus called Notional syllabus was also devised during the same time, which centered around the notions and subject matter which the learner might feel comfortable expressing. Task syllabus which included various activities and tasks to be carried out in the classroom by the learner was also invented as part of CLT. But the problem with all these syllabuses was that they were isolated and stand-alone kind of programs which somehow were unsuccessful and unable to treat the language as a whole. The first vastly accepted communication centric syllabus which was developed within the confines of CLT was termed *Threshold Level* (Van Ek & Alexander 1980). It clearly outlined the minimum or the threshold level of proficiency which a learner needed to attain in order to begin to communicate. This syllabus clearly states core topics, functions, notions, situations, as well as grammar and vocabulary.

CLT has its origin in Britain. It focused for the first time on an all encompassing conception of a syllabus and has widened its scope since mid 1970s. It became an approach to reckon with and no longer suffered the limitations of a methodology. The idea of CLT is to make communicative efficacy the primary focus of language teaching and to devise procedures for the teaching of four skills of English language. It accepts the mutual dependence of language and communication. William Littlewood says, "One of the most characteristic features of CLT is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language" (1981). CLT is usually described as a holistic approach to teaching and not just another method of teaching. It has well-pronounced series of classroom practices which can be summarised as follows:

- To bring communication to the realistic level as it happens in the real world.
- To give freedom of experiment to the learner.
- To let the learner falter, rise and learn. To give communication the leverage of building and rebuilding itself.
- To help the learner to develop both accuracy and fluency.
- To create an atmosphere congenial for the learner.
- To let students discover the underlying grammar through instinct.

In order to apply the core principles of CLT in the classroom, there was a need for revised classroom strategies and techniques. The job of teachers and learners had to be redefined. Traditional activities like drills, repetitive vocal exercises aiming at memorization of the rules of grammar and translation had to be replaced and substituted with a new radical technique where the learner could ponder over, reflect and infer the meaning and make an effort to communicate. This proves that language teaching is hugely learner-centric and must cater to the diverse needs of the learner. And also teaching of language will be effective only when connected with realia. The real life situations and the situations created inside the classroom have to be similar and connected.

In a CLT classroom, learners are put together in pairs for group activities. The main focus is to build vocabulary, fluency, and confidence which can take place only if the learner is an active participant; he is taught negotiation and cooperation and given enough opportunity and freedom. There should be constructive language games and activities planned for them such as role plays where they get an insight into functions of

language and can also learn the correct way of using grammar and pronunciation. Some of the activities adopted for CLT classrooms are role-played, interviews, information gap activities, games, language exchange, surveys, pair work, and learning by teaching.

After having seen how CLT has evolved over a period of decades, we can actually divide its evolution into three parts. The first or the primary period of evolution stressed the need for developing a syllabus that was in sync with the demands of fostering communicative competence. This syllabus had to be the one free from the stress laid on grammatical structures and had to shift focus on the notional and functional aspects of language learning. The second stage of Communicative Language Teaching focused on developing processes for identifying learners' needs and laid much emphasis on learner being at the center of the whole teaching learning process. Thus Communicative Approach in language teaching laid substantial stress on need analysis. In the third phase, CLT focused on the kinds of classroom activities such as group work, task work and information gap activities (Prabhu 1987).

## **2.9 Theories of CLT**

### **Dell Hymes**

According to Dell Hymes, the goal of language teaching is to develop communicative competence. He was in disagreement with Chomsky's theory of competence. According to Chomsky, the speaker and the listener were perfect and ideal; ready to strike a flawless conversation. They spoke a common language, their social situations and backgrounds were similar or inconsequential and they at any point of time were not affected by any limitations be it of grammar, any other distractions or lack of attention and were almost always error free. These were certainly abstract abilities which enabled the learner to

manufacture completely correct grammatical structures in a language. According to Hymes, this view of linguistic theory is not practical and is unrealistic and unattainable. No linguistic theory can sustain if communication and culture are looked at separately. They have to be interlinked and should complement each other. According to Hymes, communicative competence essentially means the skill, ability, knowledge and knowing the art of how to use a language.

### **M.A.K. Halliday**

Halliday gives another theory on CLT which speaks about language and its functional use. He described seven basic functions that language performs.

- The instrumental function- using language to get things.
- The regulatory function- using language to control the behavior of others.
- The interactional function- using language to create interaction with others.
- The personal function -using language to express personal feelings and meanings.
- The heuristic function- using language to learn and to discover.
- The imaginative function- using language to create a world of the imagination.
- The representational function -using language to communicate information.

### **Henry Widdowson**

In his book *Teaching Language as Communication* (1978), Widdowson, the well-known theorist establishes a relationship between 'linguistic systems and their communicative values in text and discourse'.

### **Canale and Swain**

Canale and Swain (1980), identified four more pedagogically effective aspects of communicative competence.

1. Grammatical Competence: essentially talks about linguistic competence.
2. Sociolinguistic Competence: Sociolinguistic competence takes into account the constraints or flavors of the social milieu in which communication is likely to occur. This includes the context, relationship and shared information of the speakers and the purpose of communication.
3. Discourse Competence: Discourse competence talks about the interaction between individuals, how they connect and how do they interpret and perceive messages and meaning with relation to the discourse or the text in question.
4. Strategic Competence: Strategic competence refers to creating strategies that are adopted by the speakers while initiating a communication or terminating it, stabilizing it, maintaining its flow or consistency or changing its flow.

Therefore, when looked at from the theoretical perspective, CLT is an eclectic approach to language learning. It propagates the following assumptions:

- Language is a system where meaning and expression are important.
- Interaction and communication are the two most important functions of language.
- The communicative efficacy of language depends on its structure and functional ability.
- Grammar and Structure, though, are two important tenets of language; it's functional and communicative aspects are indispensable.

## **2.10 CLT Activities**

There is a varied and extensive spectrum of exercises and activities which are incorporated in a CLT curriculum. The scope of CLT is unlimited only if these are extensively used to make the learner communicatively competent. According to

Littlewood (1981), there are two kinds of activities which help in fostering communication.

### **Functional Communication activities**

Functional communication activities include tasks of comparison which highlight similarities and differences; arranging pictures in a sequential order; tracing gaps or missing features; hidden communication by one learner to the other on how to draw a map or a picture; how to give and follow directions; how to read cues and solve problems.

### **Social Interaction Activities**

Social interaction activities comprise of conversation, discussions, interactive sessions, dialogues, role plays, skits, and debates etc.

The nature of activities proposed in CLT classrooms demands that the teachers and learners be given new roles and responsibilities. Breen and Candlin (1980) discuss these roles which according to them could be of two types:

1. To involve all the learners into active participation in the class, to encourage communication between them through various tasks and activities.
2. To become one of the participants or to pose as one and involve as a learner.

The learners are no more at the passive end. They are enthusiastic participants and work in close connection and coordination with each other. The approach is not individualistic where the learner is left to himself; it is rather holistic and inclusive. Students are no longer dependent on the teacher alone for the understanding of the text or the language. They are constantly active and learn to work in groups with their peers. The teacher is

only a facilitator or an initiator. The real learning happens when the onus falls on the learner to cope up and catch the skill. The material needed for inducing this kind of learning is of paramount importance. Materials play a major role in promoting the use of communicative language and also define the hours needed for classroom interaction and language use. There are three kinds of materials used in CLT.

**a. Text-based**

A textbook based on a CLT syllabus focuses a lot on language practice which is graded according to the difficulty level of the learner. It has at its core a fixed structure and the exercises are designed around it. The subject material has a definite theme followed by tasks which aim at thematic development. These might have multiple choice questions, objective questions, comprehensive questions, imaginary situation questions, paraphrasing exercises etc. The aim is that the student should be occupied with some kind of thinking activity at all times. The brain should remain active.

**b. Task-based**

Task based material involves a lot of games, activities, dialogues, role plays, simulations etc. These have, as support material, hand outs, cue cards, activity sheets and materials that involve pair communication activities etc.

**c. Realia**

Communication essentially has to relate to the real world. There can be nothing theoretical or fake about communication. It has to have the ability to connect to the learner because it involves real people and real situations. Therefore, in CLT, the classroom activities are so designed that there is a definite connection to real

life. The classroom must prepare the individual to sustain in the real world. Authentic real life situations will not only make learning easy and interesting; it will also make the learner uninhibited and less hesitant in the class. Clarke and Silberstein (1977, 51) argued that classroom activities should parallel the “real world” as closely possible. Since language is a tool of communication, methods and materials should concentrate on the message and not the medium. The purpose of reading should be the same in class as they are in real life.

CLT is a holistic approach to Situational Language Teaching. In fact, it is a juxtaposition of old and new methods of ELT. Many of the practices and exercises used in CLT are similar to structural-situational and audio-lingual principles. Traditional procedures are also not abandoned but are revisited and restructured. It is an all- inclusive approach.

### **2.11 Prevalent Trends in Communicative Language Teaching**

The communicative approach has been in vogue and is being widely practiced since 1990. The sole target or goal is fostering communicative competence of a second/ foreign language by following a syllabus/ methodology designed on these lines. Communicative language teaching as we understand it today is based on a number of different educational foundations and traditions. And because of having such a diverse, wide base, there is no set or standard design or structure that it follows. The question, therefore, that arises is that how can the activities and exercises pertaining to CLT be defined so as to enable the teacher to cater to the varied needs of a learner. The core assumptions of CLT are:

1. Second language learning can take place only when the students or learners interact, communicate or exchange ideas with each other.

2. Teaching techniques in the classroom which include learning tasks and exercises need to be effective. They should be able to create opportunities for students to comprehend meaning, build vocabulary, foster understanding of language, learn the usage of language so that the learner can interact meaningfully.
3. Meaningful interaction takes place when the topics chosen for conversation are relevant, stimulating, engaging and educating.
4. Communication is a multifaceted, all- encompassing activity that most of the times make use of more than one skill of language learning.
5. Language learning is fostered by two kinds of processes or activities. One is that which induces an inquiry into the rules of language and the pattern in which it is organized, the other being one which involves analysis and reflection of language.
6. Learning a language is a slow and steady process that involves the correct and creative use of language and allows trial and error. It is understood that errors will happen, but they can be rectified till the ultimate goal of language is achieved, which is to be able to use language fluently and flawlessly.
7. Learners, by hit and trial and also by effort, construct their own path to language learning. They may have their respective speed, ability, progress – graphs, needs and different levels of motivational requirements for learning a second language.
8. The strategies involved for a good grip of language must be effective, interesting and communicative in nature.
9. The teacher plays a vital role in a language classroom. His role is that of a motivator and a facilitator who makes the entire teaching learning process simpler. He makes the

aura of the classroom conducive to learning and creates enough opportunities for the learner to understand, learn and practice the nuances of language learning and usage.

10. A classroom is all about collaborative effort, interaction, sharing and caring where everyone helps the other to learn.

### **2.12 Process Based CLT Approaches**

There are two more methodologies which have evolved as extensions of CLT. They follow a slightly different route but aim at the same desired goal of attaining communicative competence of a learner. These focus on creating, developing and using certain classroom processes which will foster language learning.

#### **Content Based Instruction**

It focuses on the following areas:

- Close interactive association between the learner and the fluent user of the target language.
- To create a desirable, meaningful collaboration.
- To create sensible and meaningful contextual conversation with the help of language.
- Arriving at a mutual understanding of the text by the learner and his facilitator.
- Relying on the feedback or follow up the learner gets when he uses the language.
- Paying careful attention to the words or sentences heard and then try to put them to use while speaking.
- To try out different ways of saying the same thing.

But the main concern and challenge are to create these processes in a classroom setting. The main plea or emphasis of CBI is to make classroom teaching heavily content based. All classroom activities including Grammar should be linked to content.

Content means the core subject matter or the information that we get to learn when we attempt to communicate through language. The language used to convey this is secondary. A language lesson certainly binds the class together. Whether it is prose, poetry or any other form, content is primary. However, in the old orthodox approaches to language teaching, content took a back seat and figured in the end only after other factors like grammar, text, skills, functions and so on were chosen. Grammatically, for example, it may be decided in the beginning what tense will be taught that day and the content might be chosen accordingly. Once this has been decided and agreed upon, a context is chosen and the content needed to understand tenses will be practiced. In this whole exercise, content takes a back seat. Whereas content based teaching starts from a reverse angle. Decisions about content are taken first, and other things to be employed in grammar, skills, functions, etc., are made later.

Content-based instruction has certain assumptions that it follows:

1. People can grasp a language more easily when it is used for the purpose of gathering information and not the other way round.
2. The learners need for learning a second language is better catered to by CBI.
3. Content-based instruction is the aptest and organized available framework that can connect and develop all the four skills of language learning.

The content-based syllabus can justify as the basic module for an entire course which will prepare the learner to become communicatively competent. It could serve as the reason

for employing English medium to teach most subjects at school level where English is used in an EFL setting, and also as the basic structural coursework for EFL/ESL materials for commercial purposes.

Content-based instruction gives rise to a multitude of concerns. One of the primary concern is how much or to what extent can one rely on content being central to language learning. How much should be the sufficient quotient? For example, while trying to master the content, it is likely that grammar is totally or largely ignored and, therefore, accuracy can be jeopardized. Another major cause for concern is whether our language teachers are qualified and trained enough in the concerned subject matter so as to be able to handle core subject- centric content areas such as marketing, engineering, archeology etc. Lastly, there will be a major issue regarding assessment or evaluation. Will evaluation or testing be based on the knowledge of only the content or also the use of language or both of these?

### **Task-Based Instruction**

TBI claims that language learning can take place only when there are instructional tasks specially designed to be taught in a CLT classroom. A conventional and a traditional syllabus with its base in Grammar will not usher language use. Only if the learners will be engaged in instructional, interactive tasks, communication will set in. Grammatical accuracy will be developed steadily and automatically. Many teachers employ various kinds of tasks in their regular regime as a part of classroom activities. But the definition of what exactly is a task and what it does not remain dim. These could be some of the main characteristics of a task:

- Existing language resources are used by the learner to carry out the prescribed task.
- One can acquire a new language if the learner carries out the task, though the process as such cannot be seen as linked to language learning.
- Meaning is at the center.

If the task involves two or more learners, their use of communication strategies and interactional skills actually matter. Some of the activities which were suggested when CLT was still very nascent can be seen as tasks as per the definition above. These are the information- gap activities and information- sharing activities which are now an integral part of course books prescribed and the ELT materials proposed in the classrooms today.

In Task Based Instruction, there are two kinds of tasks discussed:

### **Pedagogical tasks**

Such tasks are carefully and specially designed classroom tasks that are expected to make use of certain strategies which employ a lot of interaction and could also make use of language skills, grammar, and vocabulary. Here, the task in itself is nothing like one would ever come across in the real world but the process of interaction certainly contributes to language development. For e.g., two learners presented with a similar picture each and asked to point out the differences. This is a pedagogical task.

**Real-world tasks** are tasks that are picked up from real life and make use of the daily day to day vocabulary, situations, and parlance. They are real-world tasks, making use of real-world language which would prepare the learner to operate in the real world conversation. For e.g., a student asked to read the railway timetable and guide a friend accordingly is an apt example of real world task.

Willis (1996) proposes six types of tasks as the basis for Task Based Instruction:

i. **Listing tasks**

For example, students might have to make up a list of things they would pack if they were going on a beach vacation.

ii. **Sorting and ordering**

Students work in pairs and make up a list of the most important characteristics of an ideal vacation.

iii. **Comparing**

Students compare advertisements for two different supermarkets.

iv. **Problem-Solving**

Students read a letter to an advice columnist and suggest a solution to the writer's problems.

v. **Sharing personal experience**

Students discuss their reactions to an ethical or moral dilemma.

vi. **Creative tasks**

Students prepare plans for redecorating a house.

However, the fact is that many of the characteristics of tasks shared above do not match with activities that take place in the classrooms because their success rate is negligible. Therefore TBI doesn't consider them as tasks and therefore doesn't take them into account. These are, to name a few, drills, controlled writing, cloze exercises and various other traditional, old fashioned techniques. Despite so much of research that has gone into devising tasks that should hold good and could be an effective tool in language

acquisition, unfortunately, there is no published referential material available where tasks proposed in TBI could be used as a yardstick by teachers. TBI, therefore, is unsuccessful for two reasons. One that it is not practical and two that it doesn't reflect an understanding of second language acquisition. The practical application of this approach is still a matter of concern. In CLT, there are a few basic things that we have to understand. The first thing that CLT takes into account is the curriculum which along with the academic also involves social and cultural aspects of learning. It is much more than a structured technical prescribed teaching material. And equally important is the execution of this curriculum in an Indian classroom.

The flaws of the earlier prevailing systems were that they did not permit an open receptive atmosphere in the class. The syllabus was heavily structured and rigid. The teacher would monotonously follow the instructions and would not make any deviation in the method employed for teaching. There was absolutely no opportunity for innovation. There was no experimentation done. It suited the Indian classroom. In a CLT classroom, a lot of autonomy is granted to the teacher and the learner. To prevent a chaotic situation, the curriculum and activities are designed in such a manner that the students find themselves learning in situations that are not alien or strange. It escapes the trappings of traditional teaching methods and connects the learner to the real world.

Teaching and learning become more effective when the situations are native and there is enough background information for the student to start a dialogue. For instance, asking them to relate the conversation between the parents that might have taken place at home or to enable them to read the railway timetable; the idea is to generate interest in the

learner. CLT thus has brought 'realia' or real-life situations in the class. This has made the learner more comfortable in his surroundings. Therefore, we can say that CLT is uniquely different from the traditional and old teaching methods like the Grammar Translation or the Audio Lingual mainly because it juxtaposes the external and the internal. Teaching and learning a language in CLT especially in the Indian milieu is not possible if not made real enough for the learner to connect with.

CLT dismisses the hierarchical barrier between the teacher and the learner. Therefore, in a CLT classroom, there is no use of dais. The teacher moves around in the class to establish a rapport with the learners and bond with them individually on a personal level. This helps the learner to shed all inhibitions and openly participate in the class without any baggage. This also brings about a positive energy in the class. The idea is to make the autonomous learner more important than the autonomous teacher. For this to happen, the learner has to actively participate in the 3Ts of Teaching, Testing, and Technology. One of the ways of doing this is to have some student representatives on the panel which decides the syllabus in devising the testing techniques. Thus, CLT calls for a learners' centered classroom.

Considering the emerging trends of globalization, multiculturalism and the linguistic plurality (Englishes), the importance of communicatively competent prospective workforce is an absolute necessity. The teachers of English entrusted with the tedious responsibility of making learners, particularly from rural areas communicatively competent, need to reorient the pedagogy of ELT. Though 'no methods stage' has come to be a reality in our classrooms, CLT could be one of the most effective and sustainable approaches to ELT in general and in fostering Communication Competency in particular.

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