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RESEARCH ARTICLE



IMPLEMENTING CLT TECHNIQUE IN THE ESL CLASSROOMS:

A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH IN ELT

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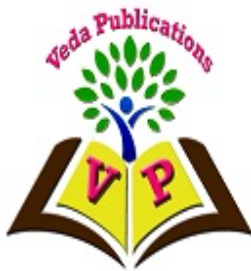
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ABSTRACT

The English language has, nowadays, become the language of international communication. Taking this to account, English language lessons have acquired more significance than in the past. In today's globalized world, communicative English skills are in high demand. English is useful because it is widely spoken in business and academia, as well as the language of science and technology. Economic and technological forces play their part in keeping English at the center of communication.



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INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, grammar-translation (GT) method was prevalent in English Language Teaching. It is a way of learning a language through a detailed study of its grammar through translation mode. This method put emphasis on grammar and translation as a major tool to learn the target language. The learner then applies the rules of grammar in translating sentences and parts of texts from the mother tongue into target language and vice versa. This method was widely used in European and foreign-language teaching from the 1840s to the 1940s, and in a slightly modified form it is used in some parts of the world even today. In this method, grammar is taught prescriptively – through the presentation and study of rules and practice is provided through translation exercises from the mother tongue to the target language and again from target language to mother tongue. Communication skills are neglected, with little attention to correct pronunciation. The learner is not actively involved in using the target language. His/her role is rather passive.

Finally, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged in the 1980s in response to the growing demand for a language curriculum that would allow learners to use the second language in real-life situations, and it is now a very popular technique for second language acquisition around the world. Previously, foreign language teaching emphasized grammatical proficiency instead of strengthening students' ability to use the language in communication. At last, language is used practically in communication. CLT approaches are primarily concerned with interaction in a classroom-based foreign language class or online

language learning session, in which students create speech and engage in discussions in the target language most of the time in the classroom.

The primary goal of communicative Language Teaching approaches is to train students to be confident communicators in various real-life circumstances through repetitive oral practice and student-student collaboration. In CLT, the goal of teaching is the use of the language in communication. Role playing and collaborative projects are two common CLT approaches used in ESL courses.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nowadays, there is a need to fit into a world increasingly globalized, in which communication especially in foreign languages like English have more importance than some years ago. Among the various second or foreign languages are spoken all over the world, English, as we all know is the lingua franca of the world. Though more people speak in their mother tongues, yet few would disagree that English is a global language. A language becomes a global language because of the power of the people who speak it. Eventually the role of English as the language of science, industry, finance and economics further amplified its power and impact. After the emergence of CLT from the 1980s, much importance has been given all over the world. Likewise, in India and Odisha state, its implementation and researches have gained much popularity.

D.A Wilkins, a pioneer in this discipline, characterized language in terms of "notions" and "functions," rather than traditional categories of



grammar and vocabulary, and emphasized the necessity of analyzing the established systems of meanings in linguistic communication. These meanings are of two types according to him. They are 'notional categories' (time, location, sequence, frequency, etc.) and 'communicative functions' (requests, offers, complaints, etc.). His publication *Notional Syllabuses*, was widely regarded as a very important text as it significantly contributed in the development of CLT approach.

Richards and Rogers claimed that "CLT approach is based on the theory of a communicative model of language education. They again divided that model into three levels. They are approach, design, and method. The approach level emphasised the importance of developing foreign language proficiency as well as communicative ability. The Design level stated that the design of syllabus should be notional-functional and it should focus on basic understanding of learners' needs and expectations. Finally, the lat level of Procedure stated that the target language should be the only medium of communication in a CLT classroom and the learners should be engaged in various role play activites. "It is important to recognize that language teaching is a theoretical as well as a practical occupation" (Widdowson 163). Many other critics and linguists claimed that a person's usage of the target language in communication shows his competence in the language. Widdowson gave importance to the ability of a speaker to transfer the linguistic knowledge into practical usage that is communication. He has also differentiated 'usage' and 'use'. According to him,

'usage' denotes the linguistic ability of a learner and 'use' means ability of a learner to use that knowledge in effective communication. "The teaching of language as communication calls for an approach which brings linguistic skills and communicative abilities into close association with each other" (Widdowson 144).

Theorists and critics working on this field, have their varied views in developing the Communicative Competence. Some sugested a skill-based learning model of learning English, acquiring language skills, and claimed that practice of Communicative skill enhancement can enhance one's communicative competence. Another linguist Savignon claimed that one's linguistic proficiency can be developed better in using that language practically in communication than practicing only the language skills. Savignon further said that just memorizing the linguistic rules and mechanical practice without communication cannot enhance one's ability to use the language in communication.

Savignon again reported that the main aim of CLT approach is to enhance the communicative competence of the learners in engaging them actively in communication. Some theorists like him opined that as CLT puts a specific importance on learners and their different needs in learning the language, the ESL classroom should be 'learner-centred'. But others argued that CLT should be 'learning-centred' instead of 'learner-centred'. They also criticized the very term 'learner-centred' by stating the notion as too vague to transfer into communication, because 'learner-centred' can be baised with the stereotype image



of the learners and this can be an obstacle for the teachers in understanding very well various cultures of learning and understanding various needs of learners.

India has not been left in the race of research in CLT. A lot of works have been conducted and a lot in progress too. "The prime focus of the communicative approach in ELT is on the learner. The teacher is just a facilitator – a person who manages the environment and the materials which will help the students become autonomous learner" (Nagaraj 47). P. Srihari has conducted a study on this field in the undergraduate colleges in Andhra Pradesh state, and reported that teachers should lay great emphasis on skill development rather than subject knowledge and follow more learner centred ways of instruction, and provide language expressions, which can help the learners in their daily life. They should use more communicative activities for enhancing their students' listening, reading and writing abilities. "Learning the skills of a language can be divided broadly into skill-getting and skill-using" (Nagaraj 152). Srihari further stated that the administrators should conduct programs such as the Retraining Program of the teachers continuously so that they can share their challenges and effectiveness in the implementation of CLT principles.

Mousumi Das has opined her views after conducting a study on CLT in West Bengal. She reported that the teachers should teach in a pragmatic way to enhance and nurture the learners' competency in English inside and outside the classroom. Teachers are not adequately trained even after so many years of training in

West Bengal. Even the in-service teachers should get the opportunity of training after long years of service. This causes deterioration in teaching. The teachers should be well-trained so that they can motivate the learners in all respects of this matter.

"CLT has not been availed of a good practice in India and a great deal of attempt is to be made to emancipate the condition of CLT in India, a great portion of which is easily accomplishable by language policy makers in India" (7-8), said M. Montazeri and H. Hamidi. They have also felt a need for a better teacher education in India to make the teachers up to date and well acquainted with the major principles underlying the practice of CLT. They further opined that a better improvement in the economy of this country will pave the way for the prosperity of CLT in India. A better economy stands for a better international trade and merchandise which make the ability to communicate in a lingua franca, English, much more palpable and necessary.

A.R Awadh Al Asmari pointed out that lack of proper training for CLT approach in learning English Language in schools and colleges underlying challenges in accessing resources to implement the approach, learner's poor proficiency, lack of motivation among students, examination system and instruments to assess communicative competence of the students are the major issues that ESL learners and teachers are facing in EFL University. He further said that a nation's education system has a very significant role in providing the needs of learners in respective fields. The Government of Saudi Arab has taken significant roles in implementing the



English language as an international language by declaring a very huge budget and engaging properly trained teachers and providing suitable and authentic materials. Furthermore, the common challenges faced in implementing the CLT approach are large number of students in a classroom, lack of authentic materials, lack of technology in the classroom etc. are stated and reported by researchers.

Therefore, from the above reviews, I reached at the conclusion that so many works have been done on CLT techniques in various ESL and EFL countries. The issues and challenges have been identified and suggestions were given in the context of many ESL and EFL countries. Works on this field have also been done in India, but implementing CLT technique in the ESL classrooms in Odisha is an unexplored area. No work has been done on implementing CLT technique in the ESL classrooms of Odisha to identify the issues and challenges that prevent the ESL learners to enhance their communicative proficiency.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this research study will be as following:

- Assessing the application of CLT and its success rate in the ESL classrooms in India and then in Odisha.
- To make a thorough study analysis of the curriculum designed for the ESL learners in Odisha.
- To analyse the characteristics of CLT from teachers' perspectives, how they take it

and use it.

- To make a thorough analysis of how is it adopted by the students in Odisha and try to find out the possible measures in the light of the problems, if any, how to bridge the gap between the actual and the ideal situation.
- The study will try to find out the challenges of CLT approach in Odisha, its reasons and solutions.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology shall consist of Questionnaires, Interviews of teachers and students, Observation etc. Data samples will be collected initially from the teachers and 11th and 12th standard students of model high schools (OAVs) and then from the degree students and teachers of Odisha in order to analyse the CLT methods used there and collect their views, opinions and suggestions. Besides, theoretical approaches and descriptive analysis are to be used to make a comparative study between the already established CLT theories and the practical usage in ESL classrooms in Odisha to know the gap between the ideal and actual situations.

FINDINGS

The issues and challenges that hinder the effective implementation of CLT in the ESL (English as Second Language) classrooms in Odisha and in this way the gap between the actual and the ideal situation of CLT in the ESL classrooms will be identified. The communicative skills and competence are not sufficient for successful



communication; it needs something more. The Communicative proficiency of the ESL students in Odisha reflects the influence of their mother tongue. Since they use English as a second language, their mother tongue plays a vital role in their communicative proficiency in English.

CONCLUSION

This study will help to enhance the communicative proficiency of the ESL learners of Odisha. It will help in refining their communicative performance and making them efficient in their academic and professional career. In the globalized era, a greater number of students of Odisha can participate in the world level competitions in job, academic and other fields. The fear of English language will disappear from their mind. Ultimately, this research will take the state Odisha one step ahead in creating an aura where students will be representing their state and country in the international level making them strong in effective communication.

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