

The implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach in English Classes

Elsa Vula

University Gjakova "Fehmi Agani", KOSOVO, elsa.vula@uni-gjk.org

Abstract: It is generally known that English language is considered one of the most used foreign language in the world and there is a vast of interest in learning it. The process of learning it is closely related to the process of teaching it as well. There have been major discussions on the teaching methods of a foreign language for centuries. This paper aims in elaboration of "Communicative language teaching approach" and its implementation in primary schools, specifically, in English classes. The research aimed in researching the English teaching methodology, by finding if CLT approach is being applied during the English classes, in four primary schools in Gjakova. Firstly, this paper discusses the origin of CLT approach, its importance and activities and secondly shows findings and discussion of the conducted data, regarding the English teaching methodology. The conducted date gives a clear view of the current situation in four primary schools in Gjakova regarding English teaching methods which are discussed and elaborated later in this paper.

Key words: CLT approach, CLT activities, English teaching methodology, teacher, pupils.

1. Introduction

In the late years, there has been an increasing interest in learning "English" as a foreign language, which basically is considered one of the most important languages in all over the world. People need "English" for their jobs, career, life, travelling, studies, etc. The issues that are still being discussed in some countries are: how to learn and how teach a foreign language (including rules of grammar, pronunciation, skills, and communication).

Fifty years ago "Grammar" was a remarkable point in teaching a foreign language, the system's focus was in teaching a foreign language based just in grammar (rules, sentence formation, and definitions) which was called "Traditional Approach". Fortunately activities started to be in process of changing with other activities and soon traditional approach became outdated. What made this approach to get out of the system was a new approach called "Communicative Language Teaching" or CLT. Also stated by Richards (n.d):

With CLT began a movement away from traditional lesson formats where the focus was on mastery of different items of grammar and practice through controlled activities such as memorization of dialogs and drills, towards the use of pair work activities, role plays, group works activities and project work.

According to Richards (n.d), CLT created a great deal of enthusiasm and excitement when first appeared as a new approach to language teaching in the 1970s and 1980s. As mentioned above, the "Traditional Approach" was a set of grammar rules, thus it had a principal goal which is called "Grammar Competence". Grammar Competence is fulfilled with rule's grammar, creating sentences based on grammar and communicating with rules, whereby the feeling of natural language was absent. As a result, a new term came up named as "Communicative Competence" which is at the heart of our understanding of CLT and plays a very important role in function of CLT. CLT needs Communicative Competence in order to be useful and cannot perform without it.

2. Theoretical review

According to Savignon (1983) communicative competence is a relative not absolute and depends on the cooperation of participants and their involvement. Communication enables someone else to get involve in understanding what other say or their messages, it creates an interactive and collaborative atmosphere.

There are four aspects of Communicative Competence:

-Grammatical Competence

The first aspect of communicative competence is grammatical competence. Even though teaching “Grammar” is not so welcomed by students, cannot be avoided since grammar is one of the most significant key of well spoken and written language.

-Discourse

The second aspect of the Communicative Competence is “Discourse”. According to Michael McCarthy (n.d) discourse analysis study language in use: written texts of all kinds and spoken data, from conversation to highly institutionalized forms of talk. English teachers should engage learners with variety English texts such as: newspaper, songs, movies, etc. This promotes more motivation because they can see the authentic language than seeing as usually inauthentic language (such as: classroom books) that do not offer enthusiasm and motivation in process of learning. This could be applied in CDA (Classroom Discourse Analysis) that it enriches classrooms with different conversation and attractive activities which also help teachers to improve their own process of teaching.

-Social cultural elements.

The third aspect of Communicative Competence is Social Cultural Elements. This aspect is very attractive one; it includes interaction and context in the classroom. Via practicing social cultural elements and as well bringing cultural things during lesson hours students will have ability to communicate in more natural way the English language.

-Strategic Competence

Strategic Competence goes beyond the classroom instruction, by using strategies and learning by mistakes, in which students can communicate easily and can learn different ways of expressions.

Communicative Learning Teaching uses these four components of Communicative Competence in order to function successfully in process of teaching and in learning. Communicative Language Teaching involves different kinds of classroom activities that give students opportunity to see natural language and real communication that promotes learning.

3. CLT activities

Accuracy and Fluency activities

According to Richards (n.d) one of the goals that CLT has is to develop fluency in language use. Fluency is basically formed by classroom activities in which students use communication strategies and learn by doing or practicing things or by finding weak points and work on them in order to eliminate.

On other hand we have “Accuracy” that is distinct from “Fluency”. According to Richards (n.d) accuracy focuses on the formation of correct examples of language and does not require meaningful communication and the choice of language is controlled.

So, seeing the characteristics among Fluency and Accuracy it can be said that in fluency activities students feel freer in using a foreign language because the process of fluency gives opportunity to all students to communicate in foreign language. Whereas in Accuracy students are under the control of teacher. In accuracy activities, the rules of strategies are more strict than in Fluency and this may cause a great stress on students.

Neither Fluency nor Accuracy is less or more important than the other. They should be treated in the same way. They are equal components in classroom. For example if a teacher uses fluency activitie and finds some grammatical mistakes on students she/he can use accuracy activities to work on those mistakes.

Accuracy or fluency cannot work without one another, they are linked together and cannot be separated during English teaching.

In order to be more specific regarding CLT' activities, below are presented some of them that are considered as useful and enjoyable that contain a lot of games and provide communication during the lesson hour.

In order that these activities to function there is needed the collaboration among teacher(s) and student(s), both parts should be willing for new challenges of new strategies.

Task-completion activities: According to Richards (n.d) the focus of these activities is on using one' language resources to complete a task. Hence, these kinds of activities can be puzzles, a different kind of games, coloring, and etc. All these activities that are gathered in task-competition provide fun and enjoyable time.

Information gathering activities: This kind of activity includes searches and interviews that teacher requires from students based on their linguistic resources in order to get information.

Opinion-sharing activities: Here students share their opinions related to the topic or any situation with the classmate, these activities are interactive activities and students can discuss their opinions and compare them with each other.

Information-transfer activities: Students might see the first form of a text for example or any information and now they can try to transform it in a second form for example from the results that are written in a text they can represent in table or diagrams.

Role-plays: These activities are usually used in primary school, although, it depends on lesson/ unit but usually can be applied while students chose any character: a shop assistant, or a client and they make a dialog and like these the sense of improving communication goes on.

To sum up, it can be concluded that from accuracy and fluency activities and all other activities of CLT that have been mentioned above endow a class with interest, motivation and help students to improve English skills, communication, collaboration (among teachers-students-students), different values, intellectual thinking and knowledge.

4. Research methodology

In this research is used qualitative research method. By using qualitative research method, it has been provided a lot of information regarding methods of English language teaching and other elements during English lesson hour.

Research questions:

1. What teaching methods are being used?
2. Is student-centered during English classes?
3. What kind of CLT activities are being applied in English classes?

Research hypothesis

1. Teaching methods that are being used in primary schools in Gjakova regarding English classes are modern teaching methods.
2. Most of the time, students talking time is more than teacher talking time during the English lesson hours.
3. CLT activities that teachers use are role-plays, conversations, information gathering and jigsaw activities.

Instruments

As an instrument that has been used in this research is observation during the English lesson hour. Observation as an instrument of this research aimed in finding some significant points that will give answers to the research questions mentioned above and will verify the hypothesis of this research. The observation about the methodology of English teaching includes points such as: Teacher talking time, Teacher writes on the board, Students' activity, types of students' work, skills as reading, listening, writing and speaking and translation. And in the right of the table was an additional part of observation named "The description of each step", of how the points were being realized (see Appendix I).

Procedure

There have been observed eight English classes of ninth grade students in primary schools in Gjakova. These observations are realized in four primary schools: Three observations are realized in "Yll Morina" primary school in three English

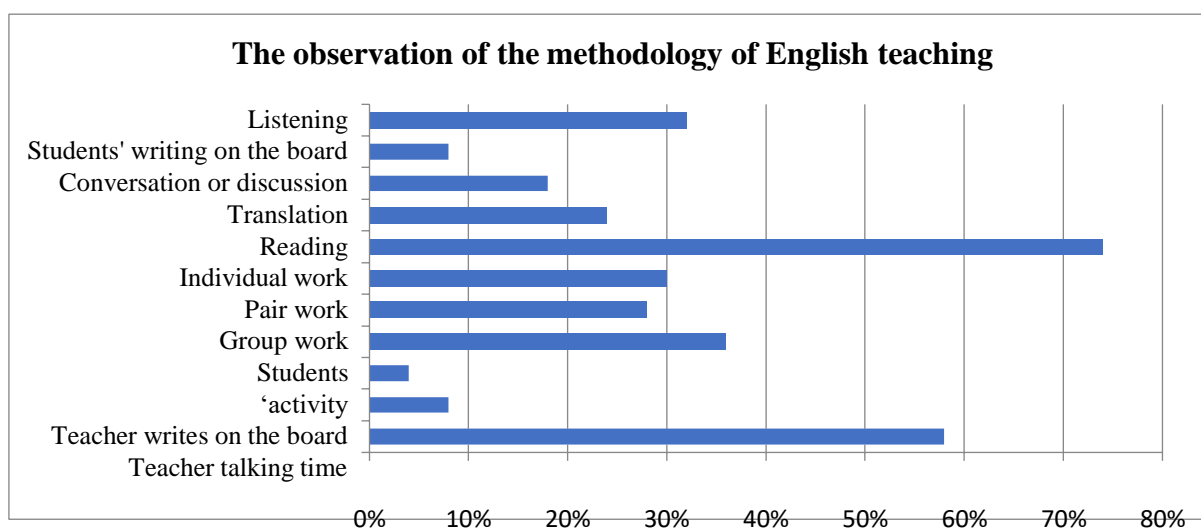
teachers, two of observations were in “Mustafa Bakija”, two others were in “Fehmi Agani” primary school, and one observation was realized in “Mazllom Kepuska” primary school.

The English hour was 40 minutes, so there was a division of those 40 minutes in twenty lines that contain by 2 minutes each line. For each point that was applied, it was given a sign and the time that was being applied. For example, if teacher started to talk, it was counted the minutes of her/his talk. Then it was counted each minute of steps that were observed in four schools and then was accumulated the % of each step.

Participants

Participants for this research have been pupils from 9th grade of four primary schools in Gjakova. In “Yll Morina” school the observation was realized in three classes, whereas in “Mustafa Bakija” and “Fehmi Agani” school were observed two classes for each school and lastly in “Mazllom Kepuska” primary school was observed only one class. Each class had 25-35 pupils during the English lesson hours.

5. Findings



The diagram from the observation regarding English teaching methodology

1. Teacher talking time

In order to run the process of learning in a successful way, the role of a teacher in the classroom is very important. Based on what “Modern CLT approach” recommends us, teacher of foreign language should not be anymore the centre of the class but a facilitator during the process of teaching. Teacher talking time should be less than students talking time, on contrary students will not be active or be engaged during the process of learning. Unfortunately, the results from the observation show the contrary; 58% of time, from 320 minutes, results to teacher talking time, and this leads us back to “Tradition approach” wherein teachers used to be in the centre of the class.

These 58 % covered things such as; teacher’s presenting a new lesson, explanations and corrections/interruptions.

2. Teacher writes on the board

Communicative language teaching demands to teachers of foreign language to make things simpler for the rest of the class in order to be the lesson more understandable for students. Writing on the board is one of the tips that teachers should use to simplify things or formulas of English grammar. By writing on the board teachers will draw the attention of students and engage them to the lesson. Unfortunately, the conducted data shows that only 8% of the time, from 320 minutes belongs to “Writing on the board” point. A lot of lessons which teachers taught had a lot of details, information and rules that could be written in black board. But as it can be seen from the result teacher (s) did not use frequently this one.

3. Students' activity

Engaging students during the teaching process should be one of the principal targets that teacher should take care about. What Communicative language teaching demands to teachers of foreign language is to work on the reaching of the involvement of students during the process of teaching and learning. It can be realized by using different activities that engage students in process of learning which ensures fun and enthusiasm. Unfortunately, what CLT demands for all things mentioned above were not applied on the classes which were observed, only 4% of time was dedicated to CLT activities. Should English teachers be pleased with this %? Surely not, there could be plenty of activities that might be used and not to rely only on the exercises of Headway books. "Discussion" was the only activity that reflected the communicative English language to students; a teacher used communicative practice which sounded more comprehensible than using only books or telling explanations for the new lesson. Students were ready to participate and they did it perfectly.

4. Group work

As it was mentioned above collaboration is one of the most important tips that should take place in the classrooms, especially between classmates. Based on the results, 36% from 320 minutes belonged to group work. Generally, they were seated based on the level of knowledge of English language; this helped correcting their classmates and themselves.

5. Pair work

Taking the control of the class might be the most difficult thing that teacher might have. The large number of students and seating on groups might cause a great noise on the classroom. Trying other methods or seating arrangements help teacher to have students in control. So, "pair work" as the fifth point on observation was practiced 28% of time, from 320 minutes in eight classes.

6. Individual work

Regarding the diagram, 30% of 320 minutes was practiced "Individual work". Students needed sometimes to feel independent in what they were doing and by working as individuals they could see themselves how well were they doing.

7. Reading

"Reading" as the seventh point on the observation it took the highest percentage, it was used **74%**, from 320 minutes. Students were not excited to read especially those who were not so good in English language. In some classes, the same students that were active in other points on the observation were the same that read and the others were inactive.

8. Translating

The findings show that from 320 minutes "Translation" covered 24%. In most of the cases pupils were afraid to raise their hands to translate texts. The reason was that they felt fear more to the teacher's feedback because in some moments when a pupil made a mistake in translating words or sentences teacher's reaction was not so polite. It is generally known that translation play a significant role in teaching a foreign language but using it in primary schools can be considered as "too much" asking from pupils of ninth grade.

9. Conversation or discussion

Conversation or discussion is what communicative practice provides and helps teachers to involve students during the process of teaching; conversations or discussions are considered as activities that ensure students' engagement. Based on the findings, 18% of 320 minutes included conversations or discussions during the English classes. The conversations that were applied on the class were taken from the book "Headway"-elementary. Those 18% of conversation or discussion were realized very well by students. By using communicative practice, it helped teachers to engage students during the process of learning and also pupils were very excited for these kinds of activities; they were ready to practice dialogs, conversations and role plays and did or acted perfectly; like in pronunciation, gestures, etc.

10. Students writing on the board

Since it was mentioned that teacher writes on the board is very important tip to get students' attention this happens also when teacher practices "Students writing on the board". Should we treat them equal? For my opinion yes, based on my experience as a pupil it can be stated that a pupil need to feel somehow like "a teacher" and they like the moments of writing on the board. But the result from the observation about this point tells the contrary; just 8% of 320 minutes was given to "writing on the board". This low percentage shows that most of the students did not have opportunity to write on the board. These 8% of this point were seen only in one class, and was realized by six students who wrote on the board and

in fact was very good because teacher attracted students' attention and continued by selecting students that rarely talked in the class so she had opportunity to see if they did properly the exercise.

11. Listening

Using modern approach (CLT) it means extending English teachers to use different methods/activities and tools in order to practise the four skills of foreign language. Each of English language skills plays an important role in process of learning or improving a foreign language. Listening as principal English skill was not planned to observe, but during the observation some classes practiced "Listening". Listening included 32% of 320 minutes based on the research results. In most of the classes, students loved listening radio tape, they were so excited listening conversations, songs and getting information from radio tape.

6. Discussions

The research shows that most of the activities which teachers practiced were "Accuracy Activities". Unfortunately in most of the points that were observed pupil (s) who participated did not have opportunity to see the natural language or learning things by doing. Fluency activities were seldom used in those classes that were observed and unfortunately students did not practice "communicative activities", they just learned rules and did not have chance to learn those English grammar rules in more natural way. The lack of fluency activities were obvious in the classroom, students needed to have fluency activities that promote; vital motivation within the classroom, seeing English language in natural way and feeling free in communication. A lot of lessons that were taught during the observation time were adequate for some CLT activities such as; Jigsaw activity, especially in those classes that were in groups seating arrangement.

Activities such as "Information gathering activities" and "Information-transfer activities" could be implemented in some lessons that were taught, like; "My favorite sport", the lesson contained two long texts and instead practicing "reading" teachers could use these two kinds of activities such as: first writing about the favorite sports and in pairs or in groups they could understand texts by gathering the information needed or by transforming that text into second form(information-transfer activity). This way they would enrich their vocabulary, they would be more creative (on transforming texts) and would have more opportunity to learn English language by doing. Research found out that there are reasons listed below why they are not working to find better ways about the methodology of teaching; the number of students was large in some classes, for e.g., in class with 30 or 35 students they could not apply many of the CLT activities because in a class with 35 students could be created a lot of noise and 40 minutes unfortunately are not sufficient for these kinds of activities.

On other hand, teachers that had opportunity (25 students in the class) to realize CLT activities were not trained or informed about the aforementioned activities. Based on the research, in eight classes, it can be stated pupils did not have chances to use the natural way of learning English language. A lot of difficulties like; a loss of interest, problems in understanding grammar and difficulties in communicating in English language came out as a consequence of the lack of CLT- activities.

7. Conclusion

Based on my results from the research and from the things were observed from each points is recommend to English teachers to work more on activities that will bring to students more enthusiasm and motivation. Also, is recommend to use CLT activities that aim activities that provide the method "learn by doing". Teachers should give opportunity to all students and try to engage all students in the class. The other thing is that teacher should reduce "**Reading**", because students are not enthusiast for it; they will not be motivated for English classes because they know what is going to happen in the class if the next lesson is full with long text. There can be plenty of activities which students can get the meaning of that text without reading it. Translating the word or a sentence directly in Albanian language is not the best method for learners, they will forget it in a minute, so it can be recommended to use dictionaries or explaining the word meaning in English language.

English teachers should engage students with activities that are not on the books because using all the time books it comes to routine and somehow students will know each step of what their teacher is going to do next.

As a recommendation is to use more "discussion", this one gives students opportunity to communicate or speak in English freely, if a teacher will select a topic that is already known from students will engage students easily during the lesson hour, for example the topic "Facebook" which is interesting topic, or opening a discussion for any singer or actor.

Teachers should increase “writing on the board” because pupils like to get in front of the class and add some new information for others and it can attract students’.

Teachers should know the worth of 40 minutes of English classes, if they will work hard or try to make English classes easier and full of interest, they will achieve goals of teaching a foreign language in the best way possible.

Therefore, it is clear that a teacher of foreign language requires different methodologies of teaching, with one word demand changes in a system. Why? Since we are talking about something different from the ordinary subjects, it means that it requires more effort, supporting, and more supervision than in other subjects. Fortunately, for these things ensures the communicative language teaching approach that has a large range of techniques, recommendations, activities and tips on how teachers can simplify things during the process of teaching and learning, as Freeman (1986) states “teachers in communicative classrooms will find themselves talking less and listening more-becoming active facilitators of their students' learning”. This is what the range of communicative language teaching provides or makes teachers; creative, flexible and facilitator in the English classes.

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