USE OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION: AN INTEGRATIVE COMMUNICTIVE LEARNING APPROACH

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In the present political and economic conditions across the globe, where globalization has became the mantra for all major economies, English language has become the crucial means of communication for the promotion of employment and creation of wealth. It is recognized by all academics that the future of the country depends upon creating a generation of students, who will man the key positions in the emerging corporate culture. In spite of the active promotion of professional education by both government institution and private educational management there is a drawback in terms of communications skills in English language and which should be remedied in the earliest possible time. The problem of communication skills in English language is aggravated by the fact that there is a considerable gap between the students coming from the rural areas and those from the urban areas in terms of exposure and practice in the overall repertoire of professional skills. Unless this problem is addressed with all the seriousness that it deserves there is a danger of widening the urban-rural divide in future based on professional excellence and skills of communication. The introduction of liberalization, Privatization and globalization will enhance the employment opportunity of urban group of professionals and weaken the position of those coming form rural backgrounds in spite of their equal competence as far as professional knowledge is concerned.

The present paper will give clear understanding of the various areas of learning and teaching English language in terms of exposure, exercise and expression. The purpose is to develop an appropriate teaching model focused on communication skills in English, so that it becomes a part of curriculum to reduce the deficiency of learning English language as a correlative skill to professional knowledge. The study is focused on developing suitable teaching model of communication skill in English language, so that the future professionals in all sectors will not be crippled by this crucial handicap by incorporating it into regular Syllabus taught in educational institutions.

Language Teaching – Learning Process:

Language acquisition happens at an early stage in a child's life under normal circumstances either as unilingual or multilingual skill through a necessary interplay of innate and environmental factors. Any child can learn any language under the appropriate conditions. The easiest time for someone to learn a language is before a child hits puberty.

Language being a skill has to be acquired only through constant conscious imitation and sustained practice. The use of language as a tool for communication continues since centuries and this has helped man to regulate his social behaviour. Learning to speak a language is always the shortest road to learning to read and write it. Hence, language teaching and learning should begin with oral work. This should include ear training, listening to good model, fluent speaking, and oral communication and so on.

The very essence of teaching – learning process is communication. Without communication, teaching – learning would be impossible. Fluency, accuracy and other communicative skills are probably best developed through instruction that is primarily meaning – based but where guidance is proved through from focused instruction, correction in context. Our learners are very seldom exposed to the spoken form of English. It is the teachers who are to give a good exposure of the target language to the students in the class. But the sad plight is that most of the teachers have never been so much exposed to the spoken aspect of English language themselves. Teachers need to be more aware of their own social contexts, developing methodologies appropriate to their classrooms.

In daily life, one does not realize how important communication has become to live life purposefully. Whether it is conversation, public speaking or body gestures, a message correctly delivered produces astonishing results. Samuel Johnson has opined that language is the dress of thought. Hence, to be successful in life, communication has to be excellent. A message has to be always put across candidly, correctly and cogently. Here communication play a vital role. Teaching and communication are inseparable. Learning cannot occur without communication. Good speech is the result of imitating good models. English being a second language, indeed it is very essential that the learners have good models of speech, as the exposure to English in many cases is restricted to exposure available in the classrooms.

The difficulties students encounter not so much from a defective knowledge of systems of English, but from unfamiliarity with English. Their needs can be met only by a course that develops knowledge of how sentences are used in the performance of different communicative acts. What should be taught is dialogue with structure embedded in the dialogue. Mastering a language means achieving communicative competence that includes fluency, accuracy, and appropriateness and so on. Meaning is paramount when using language for communication.

The importance of English in India is indisputable. Its role in the educational system as well as in the national life of the country is very important. It is this link language that helped in the growth of nationalism and served as a great unifying force in the struggle for independence. English is the most widely spoken language in the struggle for independence. It being the most widely spoken language in the world, a person who knows English is sure to be understood anywhere in the World. In a country like India where states are divided on the basis of regional languages, learning

English becomes a must. The vast treasure house of knowledge in the world is most accessible through English. As such, a considerable knowledge of English is highly essential.

English has the status of a second language in India. The second language learners must have the opportunity to take part in meaningful communicative, interaction with competent speakers of the language, that is, to respond to genuine communicative needs in realistic second language situation. The aim of present day communicative language teaching is social. But the language classrooms do not seem to reflect this aim of English language teaching as they are still largely governed by the ": active": input of the teacher and a rather "passive" in take of the learners who listen to repeat, memorise, reproduce and learn the rules of grammar rather than forming hypotheses and trying to mould the language resources at hand to suit their communicative needs. It has been very often seen that grammar teaching or even knowing grammar rules need not lead to correct language use. This is so because an average Indian learner does not get enough exposure to English to internalize its rules as a naïve speaker would.

In order to overcome and detract the drawbacks of such a plight, remedial measures are to be taken right from the primary level of education. The term primary applied to education implies the basic stage of educative process. This is a period in which children are ready to begin the process of intellectual and social learning and get moulded to be an educated individual. The teacher of English has the responsibility of equipping his students with the skills that they need to pursue their studies in all other subjects either immediately or in the future.

Language learning and teaching for communication requires teachers to help learners to become active participants in the classroom activities by using the language. The teacher's efforts should be directed towards facilitating learning rather than imparting learning and counseling learners when needed, rather than continually assessing them, thus causing a "high anxiety rise" among the learners. In the context of a global society and especially since the opening of Indian markets to foreign investments, competence in the use of English has become the passport not only to higher educational opportunities but also to better economic gains. As a library language it yields considerable presence in the arena of higher education. As such the emphasis has shifted from learning the content of the English lessons to trying to acquire the language skills, which will enable the learners to "use" the language.

In the present era of computers, all educational institutions have been equipped with at least as many as a pair of computers for the use in teaching-learning process. The learners have the basic knowledge in operating computers, so the present study fit to develop language skills to provide students an interactive learning environment. It has potential for personalized instruction, it is interesting, motivating and challenging. The teacher of English felt the need to provide the college learners with "an acquisition rich" environment with the help of the language skills in classroom activities and

language games in English. The would enhance communicative competence in English as the learners need to be equipped with skills that they require to pursue higher studies and face the present context of globalization for which English is a must.

Communicative approach:

(Grew, out of the work of anthropological linguists, (e.g., Hymes, 1972) and Firthian linguists, (e.g., Halliday, 1973), who view language first and foremost as a system for communication).

· It is assumed that the goal of language teaching is learner ability to communicate in the target language.

· It is assumed that the content of a language course will include semantic notions and social functions, not just linguistic structures.

· Students regularly work in groups or pairs to transfer (and, if necessary, negotiate) meaning in situations where one person has information that the other(s) lacks.

· Students often engage in role-play or dramatization to adjust their use of the target language to different social contexts.

· Classroom materials and activities are often authentic to reflect real-life situations and demands.

· Skills are integrated from the beginning; a given activity might involve reading, speaking, listening and perhaps writing (this assumes the learners are educated and literate).

· The teacher's role is primarily to facilitate communication and only secondarily to correct errors.

· The teacher should be able to use the target language fluently and appropriately.

Since 1969 there have been significant paradigm shifts in learning theory, linguistic theory and instructional models with an important movement from a primary focus on teaching and teacher – centered classroom to an increasing concern with learning and learner – centered classroom. At the same time, there has been a shift from a major emphasis on structure to an emphasis that includes attention to language function and communication. It has become apparent in recent year that there have been marked changes in the goals of language education programmes. Today, language learners are considered successful if they can communicate effectively in their second or foreign language, where as two-three decades ago the accuracy of the language produced was the most major criterion contributing to the judgment of a learner's success or lack of success.

The latest of developments in language called the "proficiency movement" by some and the promotion of "functional" or "communicative" ability by others have moved away from the goal of accurate form and towards a focus on fluency and communicative effectiveness. Thus developing communicative competence has

become increasingly important. "Communicative competence" entails not solely grammatical accuracy but also knowledge of social-cultural rules of appropriateness, discourse norms and strategies for ensuring that a communication is understood.

Communicative Approaches to Language Teaching:

The Oxford Advance Learners' Dictionary defines "communicative" as "ready and willing to talk and give information".

Noam Chomsky's communicative view of language and theory of competence has much to do with linguistic competence. According to him "competence was internalized knowledge of the system of syntactic and phonological rules of the language that the ideal speaker – hearer possesses in the native language…," communicative competence is the ability to use the language appropriate to given social context. It is the ability to say or write something which is grammatical, appropriate, fluent, formally possible, feasible and socially and contextually acceptable.

Communicative Approach focuses on message rather than medium. In it learners must be able to participate in their own learning process. This implies that the teacher must be prepared to deviate from his plan and enter into real conversation with his students. This highlights to the fact that the role of the teacher is one of facilitator and not of an instructor. A participatory atmosphere is to prevail in the classroom. Here there is a shift in focus of attention from grammatical to the communicative properties of language.

Communicative approach is based on the belief that acquiring a language means to communicate confidently and fluently in the language. The view is that the difficulties that the students encounter arise not so much from a defective knowledge of the system of English, but from unfamiliarity with English use.

There are two types of communicative language teaching. They are the Synthetic and Analytic approaches. Synthetic approach is characterized by the rigorous specification of communicative, coupled with a methodology which is not significantly unlike traditional methodology. In it the teacher isolates and orders the forms of the linguistic systems systematically present them to the student one by one thus builds up language competence. Analytic approach proposed methodological procedures that are quite often revolutionary. In this it is the student who does the analysis form data presented to him in the form of natural chunks.

Ellis identifies two kinds of communicative approach:

1) Formal and 2) Informal

The formal is based on a syllabus of language items to be learnt, selected and graded into units for teaching in the traditional manner except that the syllabus should be based on functions rather that on linguistic items and should suit the needs of the learner if it is to be truly communicative. It is concerned with the product of communication.

The informal is designed to engage the learner is the process of communication in the classroom. In this emphasis is the use of language as a means to some behavioral end. The teacher here becomes more of a participant and facilitator.

In **Littlewood's** introduction to communicative language teaching, he summarizes four broad domains of skill from the speaker's perspective which make up a person's communicative competence:

1. The learner must attain as high a degree as possible of linguistic competence. That is, he must develop skill in manipulating the linguistic system, to the point where he can use it spontaneously and flexibly in order to express his intended message.

2. The learner must distinguish between the forms he has mastered as part of his linguistic competence, and the communicative functions which they perform. In other words, items mastered as part of a linguistic system must also be understood as part of a communicative system.

3. The learner must develop skills and strategies for using language to communicate meanings as effectively as possible in concrete situations. He must learn to use feedback to judge his success, and if necessary, remedy failure by using different language.

4. The learner must become aware of the social meaning of language forms. For many learners, this may not entail the ability to vary their own speech to suit different social circumstances but rather the ability to use generally acceptable form and avoid potentially offensive ones.

Widdowson argues that language teaching should move away from an emphasis on the properties of sentences in isolation to a concern for the use of sentences in combination. He draws a careful distinction between two different kinds of meaning. One kind of meaning is that which language items have as elements of the language system, and the other is that which they have when they are actually put to use in acts of communication. He calls the first kind of meaning signification and the second kind value.

According to **Widdowson** the present approach is directed at the teaching of signification rather than value and it is for this reason that it is inadequate for the teaching of English as communication.

According to **Widdowson** it is a radical mistake to suppose that knowledge of how sentences are put to use in communication follows automatically from knowledge of how sentences are composed and what signification they have as linguistic units. Learners have to be taught what values they may have as predictions, qualifications, reports, descriptions and so on. There is no simple equation between linguistic form and communicative functions.

Widdowson suggests that one should consider ways of adapting communicative approach to the teaching of English so as to incorporate the systematic teaching of communicative value. He proposes that in the process of grading and presentation one should think not only in terms of linguistic structures and situational settings but also in terms of communicative acts.

According to **Breen and Candlin** the teacher has three main roles in the communicative classroom. The first is to act as facilitator of the communicative process between all participants in the classroom and between the participants and various activities and texts. The second is to act as an independent participant – within the teaching – learning group. The third is to act as an observer and learner.

From the above discussion some of the characteristics of the communicative view of language can be summarized as follows:

1) Language is a system for the expression of meaning.

2) The primary function of language is for interaction and communication.

3) The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses.

4) The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features but categories of functional and communicative meaning exemplified in discourse

One would get an excellent model of language use if one uses Searle's illocutionary acts to fill in Haliday's matrix of language functions. Significantly, J.A. Van Ek (1979):113), while setting up his list of language functions, has distinguished six main categories of verbal communication:

1. Imparting and seeking factual information;

2. expressing and finding out intellectual attitudes;

3. expressing and finding out emotional attitudes,

4. expressing and finding out moral attitudes;

5. getting things done (suasion);

6. socializing

Communicative competence thus rests on a set of composite skills. Emphasising the communicative aspect of language learning **Canale and Swain** (1980:27) have observed:

"Communicative competence is composed minimally of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and communicative strategies, or what we will refer to as strategic competence.   There is no strong theoretical or empirical motivation for the view that grammatical competence is any ore or less crucial to successful communication than is sociolinguistic competence or strategic competence. The

primary goal of a communicative approach must be to facilitate the integration of these types of knowledge for the learner, an outcome that is not likely to result from overemphasis on one form of competence over the other throughout a second language programme."

Communicative Language Teaching, like any other kind of language teaching, should be geared to the objectives of the course and the learners' needs. **Piepho** (1981:8) has discussed the following levels of objectives in a communicative approach:

1. interactive and content level (language as a means of expression)

2. linguistic and instrumental level (language as a semiotic system)

3. affective level of interpersonal relationships (language as a means of expressing value judgments).

4. level of individual learning needs (remedial learning)

5. level of general extra0linguistic needs.

D.A. Wilkins proposed a need-base, functional or communicative definition of language that could serve as a basis for developing communicative syllabi for language teaching. Wilkins described two types of meanings: notional categories (concepts such as time, sequence, quantity, location, frequency etc) and categories of communicative functions (requests, denials, offers, complaints etc). Wilkins's views, which he later revised and expanded in 1976, had a considerable impact on the development of Communicative Language Teaching. Wilkins (1979) groups notional categories into two sections. The first is made up of semantico-grammatical categories, which comprise time, quantity, space, matter, case and diexis, each of which may be further sub-categorized. The second set of notional categories consists of communicative functions and includes modality, moral evaluation, suasion, argument, rational enquiry/exposition, personal emotions, emotional relations, and interpersonal relations.

Rahman (2002) was particularly useful because of the clear view he gives of the ELT position on the Indian subcontinent. Especially so his clarity in the different perceptions of language learning, wherein there is a helpful enunciation of the various levels of language learning in an Indian classroom:

1. Rational language learning which is the demand for learning a language in order to empower one's self by acquiring the potential to achieve employment.

2. Resistance language-teaching that is the teaching of one's ethnic language for the purpose of resisting the domination of a language of power.

3. Extra-rational language learning is purely for the purpose of self-gratification or for other emotional or private reasons, for the pleasure of it.

Notwithsanding its limitations and variousness the communicative approach to language teaching is a stimulating and useful way of teaching language. It

presupposes that the learners are exposed to authentic materials and 'real-life' language rather than to artificial paradigms.

A useful distinction can be made between 'functional communication activities' and 'social interaction activities' (Littlewood 1981). The first kind of activities include acts such as the learner comparing sets of pictures and noting similarities/differences; working out a likely sequence of events in a set of pictures, discovering missing features in a picture or map; communicating from behind a screen to give instructions to do things, and solving problems from shared clues. The other kind of activities, i.e.< social interaction activities, would include conversation and discussions, dialogues and role playing, simulations, skits, debates, improvisations, and a so on. Learning activities, however, should be selected according to how well the teacher engages the learner in meaningful and authentic language use. The basic principle working behind all these activities would be that activities that involve real communication promote language learning; that activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks facilitate learning, and that language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process.

In communicative language teaching the teacher needs to adopt a variety of role. In it the teacher is a general overseer of his students' learning, must aim to coordinate the classroom activities so that they form a coherent progression, leading towards greater communicative ability. The teacher is responsible for grouping classroom activities into lessons and may act as a consultant or advisor and monitor the strengths and weakness of the learners as a basis for planning future learning activities. He may participate in an activity as a co-communicator with the learners. In this role he can stimulate and present new language without taking the main initiative for learning away from the learners themselves.

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