

THE PPP APPROACH TO COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract

This article examines the communicative approach in English teaching as one of the most successful in providing confident students who are able to make themselves effectively understood in the shortest possible time. The basic principles are aimed at teachers and students, affecting classroom activities and styles of learning. Further there are some guidelines for teachers, and even a critique of communicative language teaching, proposed in this article.

Keywords: Communicative Approach, Communicative Language Teaching, Presentation, Practice, Production, PPP Approach.

INTRODUCTION. Language education may take place as a general school subject or in a specialized language school. There are many methods of teaching languages. Some have fallen into relative obscurity and others are widely used; still others have a small following, but offer useful insights. While sometimes confused, the terms "approach", "method" and "technique" are hierarchical concepts. An approach is a set of correlative assumptions about the nature of language and language learning. It does not involve procedure or provide any details about how such assumptions should translate into the classroom setting. Such can be related to second language acquisition theory.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), also known as *the Communicative Approach*, emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. Despite a number of criticisms it continues to be popular, particularly in Europe, where constructivist views on language learning and education in general dominate academic discourse. Although CLT is not so much a method on its own as it is an approach [1].

METHODOLOGY. In recent years, task-based language learning (TBLL), also known as task-based language teaching (TBLT) or task-based instruction (TBI), has grown steadily in popularity. TBLL is a further refinement of the CLT approach,

emphasizing the successful completion of tasks as both the organizing feature and the basis for the assessment of language instruction. Dogmatic language teaching shares a philosophy with TBL, although differs in approach. Dogma is a communicative approach to language teaching as it encourages teaching without published textbooks and instead focuses on conversational communication among the students and the teacher [2].

ACHIEVEMENTS. Nowadays English language teaching reforms have been carried out in schools. Some teaching reforms have been succeeded, but there are still some problems to be solved.

The students who have had several years of training in English are still unable to actually use the language. For example, the students can't understand what the teachers have said and therefore they can't express themselves – their ability to listen and to speak is not up to standard. They can't communicate with others in English and what they have learned is only used in examination. Many people believe that this situation exists because the teachers do not do their job properly. Actually, many teachers ignore the importance of the students' ability to listen and to speak. Now the teachers have been faced with the need to solve these problems.

English teaching reform is carried out on a nation-wide scale, so how do we evaluate it? Most of headmasters and teachers only pay attention to the marks of the entrance examination. It seems that some students have got high marks in examination, but their listening and speaking are very poor. They cannot communicate using what they have learned. Secondary school students have taken six years to master the essentials of English and still are not able to speak the language adequately in many cases. In essence, the students' linguistic ability is incomplete.

"PPP" (or the "3P's") stands for *Presentation*, *Practice* and *Production* – a common approach to communicative language teaching that works through the sequential progression of its three stages.

Presentation represents the introduction to a lesson, and necessarily requires the creation of a realistic (or realistic-feeling) "situation". This demands the target language to be learned and can be achieved through using pictures, dialogs, imagination or actual

"classroom situations". The teacher checks to see that the students understand the nature of the situation, then builds the "concept" underlying the target language to be learned using small chunks of language that the students already know. Having understood the concept, students are then given the language "model" and practice using choral drills to learn the target language's forms of statement, answer and question. This is a very teacher-orientated stage where error correction is important.

Practice usually begins with what is termed "mechanical practice" – open and closed pair work. Students gradually move into a more "communicative practice" involving procedures like information gap activities, dialogue creation and controlled role plays. Practice is seen as the frequency device to create familiarity and confidence with the new language, along with a measuring stick for accuracy. The teacher still directs and corrects at this stage, but the classroom is beginning to become more student-centred.

Production is seen as the culmination of the language learning processes, whereby the students have started to become independent *users* of the language rather than just *students* of the language. The teacher's role here is to somehow facilitate a realistic situation or activity where the students instinctively feel the need to actively apply the language they have been practicing. The teacher does not correct or become involved unless students directly appeal to him/her to do so.

The PPP approach is relatively straight forward, and structured enough to be easily understood by both students and new or inexperienced teachers. It is a good place to start in terms of applying good communicative language teaching in the classroom. It has also been criticized considerably for the very characteristic that makes it the easiest method for "beginner" teachers, that is, it is far too teacher-oriented and overcontrolled [3].

CONCLUSION. Out of the many approaches and methodologies available to the language teacher, the Communicative Approach has proven one of the most successful in providing confident students, who are able to make themselves effectively understood in the shortest possible time. It is therefore the teacher's responsibility to create

situations which are likely to promote communication, and provide an authentic background for language learning.

References

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