Role Of Competency Based Language Teaching (Cblt) In English Language Teaching (Elt) At The Under Graduate Level

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Abstract

Competency-based language teaching (CBLT) is a language teaching focused aspect of competency-based education. In brief, competency-based education is focused on having students' master specific skills that are related to real world task. CBLT takes this approach and applies it to the learning of language. Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) focuses on what "learners are expected to do with the language" (Richards & Rodgers.141). This approach emerged in the United States in the 1970s and can be described as "defining educational goals in terms of precise measurable descriptions of the knowledge, skills, and behaviors students should possess at the end of a course of study" (Richards & Rodgers 141). Its initial idea was adopted from the so-called generative grammar by N. Chomsky who declared in 1965, "…fundamental difference between the competence or knowledge of language and the application or actual use of language" (Chomsky 172). In Competency-Based Education (CBE) the focus is on the

"outcomes or outputs of learning" (Richards & Rodgers 141).

Introduction

Competency-based language teaching (CBLT) is an application of the principles of CBE to a language setting. Its earliest applications were probably in adult survival-language programs for immigrants. CBLT demands that language be connected to a social context rather than being taught in isolation. CBLT requires learners to demonstrate that they can use the language to communicate effectively. According to Docking (1994), CBLT:

> …is designed not around the notion of subject knowledge but around the notion of competency. The focus moves from what students know about language to what they can do with it. The focus on competencies or learning outcomes underpins the curriculum framework and syllabus specification, teaching strategies, assessment and reporting. Instead of norm-referencing assessment, criterion-based assessment procedures are used in which learners are assessed according to how well they can perform on specific learning tasks. (16)

The major basis of CBLT is the "functional and interactional perspective on the nature of language" (Richards & Rodgers143) which means that language learning always needs to be connected to the social context it is used in. Therefore, language is seen as "a medium of interaction and communication between people" who want to achieve "specific goals and purposes" (Richards & Rodgers143). This especially applies to situations in which the learner has to fulfill a particular role with language skills which can be predicted or determined for the relevant context (Richards & Rodgers143). In connection to this Competency-Based Language Teaching shares the behaviorist view of learning that "certain life encounters call for certain kinds of language" (Richards & Rodgers143). The learning activities used in CBLT can be described as systematically designed activities to achieve a

certain competence. These activities are real-world tasks which "may be related to any domain of life" (Richards & Rodgers 144) but especially to survival-oriented and work-related situations in a new environment (Richards & Rodgers 144).

Description of the topic:
The title of the mini project is "Role of Competency Based Language Teaching (CBLT) in English Language Teaching (ELT) at the Under Graduate Level" which discuss about the importance of Competency based language teaching in the English classes. The role of the teacher in a competency-based framework is not defined by specific terms. The teacher has to provide positive and constructive feedback in order to help the students to improve their skills. She/he needs to be aware of the learners' needs so that everybody feels welcome in class. The different competencies dealt with in class require specific instructions for the various learning activities. Thus, the teacher has to give clear orders and explanations to make sure that every student understands the task they are going to deal with. But the teacher does not push the students because the instructions are not time-based; instead, the student's progress is most important. The materials the teacher chooses are mainly "sample texts and assessment tasks that provide examples of texts and assessment tasks that relate to the competency" (Richards & Rodgers 147). These materials are used to provide the students with "the essential skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors required for effective performance of a real-world task or activity" (Richards & Rodgers 144). A great variety of competencies should be improved by these tasks. On the one hand, knowledge and learning competencies as well as oral competencies are dealt with. On the other hand, "the materials include tasks to improve the reading and writing competencies" (Richards & Rodgers 147).

The role of the learner in a competency-based framework is to decide whether the competencies are useful and relevant for him/her. This shows that the learner has an active role in the classroom which is underlined by the fact that the students are expected to perform the skills they learned. The competencies the students will learn are clearly defined and present in the public so that "the learner knows exactly what needs to be learned" and for which purpose he/she has to use the competencies" (Richards & Rodgers147). In this

regard it is vital that every competency "is mastered one at a time because this makes sure that the learners know what they have already learned and what the next steps will look like" (Richards & Rodgers 147). Moreover, the students have to stay in the actual program until they improve. After they mastered their skills, they move into a more proficient group of students. The main goal of the learner in Competency-Based Language Teaching is to be able to adapt and transfer knowledge from one setting to another.

CBLT is gaining popularity in the whole world. It is argued that through the clearly defined outcomes and the continuous feedback in CBLT, "the quality of assessment as well as the students' learning and the teaching are improved" (Docking 15). These improvements can be seen on all educational levels, "from primary school to university, and from academic studies to workplace training" (Docking15). Rylatt and Lohan point out that "the business of improving learning competencies and skills will remain one of the world's fastest growing industries and priorities" (18) in the future.

ELT Scene in India

English is one of the most important Global languages. It is well-known that English has served as a powerful instrument of thought and communication during the days of struggle for independence and also as an aid to support the upsurge for social and economic growth. After independence the importance of English did not diminish, despite sporadic attempts to decry it as a vestige of the British imperialism Instead, the country responded to the changed situation in a mature way and evolved a correct perspective on the value of English. One can clearly observe that the attitude towards the role of English in our society has now more or less stabilized after the initial turmoil and there are signs of fresh and proper efforts to view it and to use it as a means of serving our national interests.

Pre-colonial period

Vasco da Gama's discovery of the sea route to India also paved way for the introduction of English in the sub-continent in 1498. However, it was only in the 18th century, when the Mughal Empire was on the decline and the English East India Company had secured a foothold in India that India's tryst with the English language began. During this period, English was the language of communication of the elite people and was not the lingua franca of the people.

Colonial period

With the consolidation of the activities of the East India Company in eighteenth century, began the efforts of teaching English in the South Asian subcontinent. As far back as 1759, Christian missionaries entered India and the 1787 dispatch welcomed the efforts of Rev. Swartz to establish schools for the teaching of English. Another significant effort was the publication of the first book, 'The Tutor', to teach English to the non-Europeans by author John Miller in 1797. This book was published in Serampore in Bengal. Thus the socio- historical stage for the role of English in education was set by the end of the 18th century.

T.B. Macaulay, in the Minutes of 1835, for the first time, formally introduced the teaching of English in the South Asian subcontinent. In his Minutes he mentioned the importance and usefulness of the education that would be given to the natives through the medium of English. There were primarily two objectives of such education. The first was to create through this education a class of natives who, despite their blood and colour, would be English in culture and be able to "interpret" between the rulers and the subjects. The second was to create a "demand" for the European institutions. Although both the objectives were designed to serve the interest of the Masters, not of the subjects, but it provided the framework of formal English education to India which to a large extent is followed even today.

Thus by the middle of the nineteenth century the aims and objectives of teaching English were very clearly laid out For the remaining period of colonial rule there were a few landmarks in the development of English such as:

- The establishment of universities in Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai in 1857 and in Dhaka in 1920
- Selective education and training in administration, imparted through English, the Indian University Act (1904)
- The Resolution on Educational Policy (1913).

For the entire period of British rule four broad developments with regard to English education took place:

1600 -1800: During the early years the variety of English used was imitative and formal. It was the language of the rulers and the elite class.

1850 -1947: During the later years more varieties (from very high to very low) appeared. Indian intellectuals and freedom fighters effectively used English as tool to for political awakening and resurgence.

Interaction with vernacular languages: As the use of English penetrated the different sections of the educated Indians, a new variety of English emerged. This variety of English had a very distinct Indian flavour and a number of words of vernacular origin were absorbed in English, e.g., Brahmin. Coolie, jungle, and so on.

English also played a critical role in India's struggle for independence as it became the language of political awakening and resurgence. Even Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948), although a strong advocator of use of national language, used English language effectively to put forth his message to the British Government.

Post colonial period

Post independence, the perception of English as having an alien power base changed. English now has national and international functions that are both distinct and complementary. English has thus acquired a new power base and a new elitism. For most part of the twentieth century, it remained a language used by a select few. English primarily remained the language of law and administration.

The Present State

Twentieth century witnessed great advancements in science and technology and this enabled many new ways of sharing information and doing business. India's international commercial activities led to the need for acquiring proficiency in English as an international language. Now, English was not just the language of the administrators and policy makers but also became the language of the business and professional class.

In India, the English-speaking population is only about 3-4%, but with India's massive population, India is among the top three countries in the world with the highest number of

English speakers. In terms of numbers of English speakers, the Indian subcontinent ranks third in the world, after the USA and UK. Most English speakers in India are second language speakers, in 1971, it was estimated that the rate of bilingualism in India was 13% and 99% of English speakers are second-language speakers. It is this small segment of Indian population that heads India's economic, industrial, professional, political, and social progress. Most interactions in the above spheres of life take place in English.

English is used in both public and personal domains and its functions extend far beyond those normally associated with an outside language, including the instrumental, the regulative, the interpersonal and the innovative, self-expressive function.

English language in Indian Education System
English is taught as a second language at every stage of education in all states of India and has been accepted as the main medium of instruction in higher education. English is also the state language of two states in eastern India, Meghalaya and Nagaland. In India, English has become an integral part of the curriculum almost at all levels of education. However there are various social, political and cultural factors that affect the position of English in different boards, universities and other institutions. Even the curriculum offered and evaluation tools employed are very diverse across the country. The model of English offered to the learners lacks uniformity and it is this question that continues to challenge the policy makers and education planners. While most States accord English the position of second language, some others treat is as the third language; the regional language and the national language getting precedence.

Objectives

a) To practice English Language Theories among the English Language Learners.
b) To understand the role of an alternate approach in English Language Teaching.
c) To bridge the gap between the theories and practices in English Language Teaching.
d) To practice Competency Based Language Learning among the English Language learners.

e) To blend Competency Based Language Learning with other method of learning in English Language Teaching at the Under Graduate Level.

Hypothesis

i) Innate Language Learning can be achieved through contextualization process in English Language class room.

ii) Contextualization can be brought inside the English Language class room through
Competency Based Language Learning.

iii) Competency Based Language Learning in English Language class room can effectively be practiced through a specifically designed prototype course.

Methodology

The researcher befriended the Undergraduate students and conducted various types of activities for testing their English proficiency. The activities were given on the basis of CBLT techniques such as Warm up, Introduction, Presentation of new information, Check for understanding, Guided practice and Unguided practice. Each activity contains five tasks. The result of the entry behavior test gave an idea to the researcher to perform the project well. After analyzing the result the researcher had formed a course prototype and given practice to the students with regular interval.

Methodological tools

Methodological tools used for this study are, writing activities such as general topic, dialogue writing, developing the hints, finding the new vocabulary and reading the passage etc. with the aim of developing the language skills of students , the researcher has decided to use learner centered activities to train the Under Graduate students of Nanjil Catholic College of Arts and Science. Competency based language teaching is used in the classroom. More freedom is given to the students for writing and expressing their ideas. The researcher motivated the students to actively participate in all the writing activities.

Entry Behaviour Test

Activity I

Activity	I	II	III	IV	V

Language use	Lack of clarity	Poor ideation	Lack of coherence	Poor vocabulary	Wrong sentence structure
Coherence	Wrong use of pronouns	Lack of coherence	Wrong use of sentence pattern	Missing the natural flow of writing	Lack of knowledge in the topic
Content	Lack of imagination	Lack of knowledge in social issues and related topics	Lack of reading	Lack of content	Lack of ideas
Grammar	Wrong use of tense	Wrong use of subject verb agreement	Wrong use of pronouns	Wrong use of articles	Wrong use of plural
Vocabulary	Use of inappropriate words	Limited exposure to words	Poor vocabulary	Spelling mistakes	Confusion in words
Accuracy	Wrong use of tenses	Lack of fluency	Lack of connection between sentences	Improper ideas	Irregular arrangement of ideas

Fluency	Fear of grammar mistakes	Lack of words usage	Fear of mistake	Phonological errors	Lack of general knowledge
Pronunciation	Limited vocabulary	Unfamiliar with certain words pronunciation	Wrong use of stress and intonation	Influence of mother tongue	Confusion in the sounds of /k/, /g/,/d/, /t/, /z/,/s/, /r/

Entry Behaviour Test

Activity II

Activity	I	II	III	IV	V
Grammar	Wrong sentence structure	Wrong use of punctuation marks	Wrong use of verb	Wrong use of article	Wrong use of tenses
Accuracy	Sentence formation errors	Lack of ideas	Punctuation mistakes	Improper arrangement of ideas	Lack of knowledge in current affairs
Fluency	Repetition of words	Fear of phonological errors	Repetition of words	Lazy to write	Fear of grammatical errors
Content	Wrong use of verb	Lack of idea	Lack of imagination	Lack of connection between ideas	lack of social awareness

Coherence	Grammatical errors	Lack of natural flow of writing	Wrong use of two verbs in a sentence	Lack of coherence	Repetition of ideas
Vocabulary	Irrelevant plural forms	Wrong spelling	Use of short forms of words(ok)	Use of inappropriate words	Poor vocabulary
Choice of words	Use of limited words	Failed to understand the meaning of words	Limited vocabulary	Poor choice of words	Use of unsuitable words

Entry Behaviour Test

Activity III

Activity	I	II	III	IV	V
Grammar	Unsuitable preposition	Wrong use of plural form	Inappropriate verb tense	Wrong sentence pattern	Wrong use of tense, article and preposition
Coherence in sentences	Tried to complete the hints	Ideas are not in order	Lack of coherence	Repetition of words	Lack of coherence

Pronunciation	Improper tone	Mispronounced the words	Mother tongue slang mixed sounds	Use of stress in wrong places	Confused with words and its pronunciation
Vocabulary	Use of wrong words	Spelling mistake	Use of irrelevant words	Lack of vocabulary	Spelling mistake
Use of new ideas	Lack of words to convey new ideas	Repetition of ideas	Lack of new ideas	Fear of grammar mistake	Failed to generate new ideas
Fluency	Missing the natural flow	Repetition of words or sentences	Over thinking of grammatical errors	Lack of imagination	Obstruction in the natural flow of thinking
Generating own sentences	Wrong sentence pattern	Meaningless sentences	Incomplete sentences	Grammatical errors	Deviating from the topic

Entry Behaviour Test

Activity IV

Activity	I	II	III	IV	V
Content	Lack of imagination	Ideas are in improper order	Lack of idea	Ideas are not in order	lack of social awareness

Usages	Wrong use of preposition	Unable to explain ideas	Wrong sentence structure	Poor vocabulary	Unable to generate own ideas
Grammar	Unsuitable preposition	Two verbs in a sentence	Inappropriate article	Use of broken sentences	Wrong use of tense, article and preposition
Choice of words	Wrong use of homophones	Use of irrelevant words	Lack of vocabulary	Unaware of the meaning of words	wordiness
Generating own sentences	Lack of imagination	Meaningless sentences	Fear of grammatical errors	Generated broken sentences	Lack of idea in the topic
Coherence in sentences	Wrong sentence pattern	Lack of coherence	Repetition of words	Introduction, body and conclusion order is missing	Lack of natural flow of writing
Mother tongue interference	Wrong use of words without knowing the meaning	Incorrect pronunciation	Direct translation of mother tongue	Sentences generated based on the rules of mother tongue	Wrong sentence structure

Fluency	Poor pronunciation	Lack of natural flow	Wrong sentence structure	Afraid of mistakes	Obstruction in the flow of language

Entry Behaviour Test

Activity V

Activity	I	II	III	IV	V
Accuracy	Wrong use of tenses	Lack of fluency	Lack of connection between sentences	Improper ideas	Irregular arrangement of ideas
Fluency	Missing the natural flow	Repetition of words	grammatical errors	Lack of ideas	Obstruction in the natural flow of thinking
Vocabulary	Spelling errors	Spelling mistakes	Inappropriate words	Use of irrelevant words	Repetition of words
Coherence in sentences	Wrong sentence pattern	Lack of coherence	Ideas are not clear	Lack of clarity	Repetition of ideas
Grammar	Wrong verb form	Wrong use of articles and	Wrong sentence	Confusion in the use of singula	Mixed usage of present tense

		preposition	structure	r and plural	and past tense
Generating new ideas	Lack of imagination	Lack of vocabulary	Meaningless sentences	Incomplete sentences	Grammatically wrong sentences
Language use	Grammatical errors	Lack of connection between sentences	Improper interpretation	Poor vocabulary	Lack of clarity

Area of Study

The researcher has selected twenty Under Graduate students of Nanjil Catholic College of Arts and Science, Kaliyakkavilai, for conducting the present study. This college offers almost fourteen Under Graduate Courses self- financed scheme in various Departments. The researcher selected English major students for research.

Significance of the Study

Based on the study conducted, the researcher identified that the students have lot of limitations and they need extra care to acquire their second language. Students made grammatical mistakes, phonological errors, wrong sentence pattern, wrong vocabulary, repeated words and contextual errors. Students have lot of problem in studying their second language. They are not getting proper chance to improve the language skills. The researcher gave opportunity to the students with the method Competency Based Language Teaching, which helped the students to acquire English Language skills.

Period of the study

This study "Role of Competency Based Language Teaching (CBLT) in English Language Teaching (ELT) at the Under Graduate Level" was carried out for a period of six months with regular time schedule.

Conclusion

In the linguistically plural settings of India, English often acts as the link -language among people of different dialect. For many educated Indians English is virtually the first language. Thus, in the present context English is playing a vital role in bringing together people from different regional languages for a closer exchange of social, educational and administrative network of India. For that the Competency Based Language Teaching in English can provide a linguistic tool for the administrative cohesiveness of a country.

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