



COMMUNICATIVE METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT

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communicative language teaching (CLT), contextual learning, vocabulary acquisition, grammar instruction, task-based learning (TBL), interactive activities, authentic materials, language immersion, language proficiency, form-focused instruction, communicative competence, meaning-focused instruction

ANNOTATION

This paper examines the applicability of communicative approach in teaching of English vocabulary and grammar in context. Stemming from the communicative approach to language teaching that focuses on interaction and meaningful use of language, the paper explores how vocabulary and grammar learning can be contextualized in meaningful context and usage. Scholars criticized the conventional method of language teaching which involves memorization and repetitiveness of grammatical exercises, instead, there is a call for integrating effective practice in which students use language in real communicative practices. The paper used classroom practices and teacher-student interactions to reveal methods for the teaching of vocabulary and grammar, including task-based learning, content-based instruction, and authentic materials. Furthermore, the psychological perspectives of languages learning are provided in order to explain how these communication approaches meet the cognitive and social concerns of learners. Research data is used to back up the assertion that integrating new vocabulary and grammar promotes the effective acquisition, recall and application of linguistic items, while increasing the motivation of second or foreign language learners. Lastly, the paper offers a range of recommendations for the teachers, who are willing to use communicative methods in their classroom, and emphasizes flexibility and individual focus on students as the most crucial aspects of the constantly developing field of foreign language learning.

Introduction. As the world becomes a global village, English stands out as an essential medium of communication that requires appropriate teaching methods that enable learners to acquire language proficiency and mastery of language. While the previous methods of teaching relied mainly on grammar-translation approach and vocabulary exercises, the current approaches have stressed on using language communicatively, that is as an effective means of communication. This shift indicates a shift towards a more profound comprehension of language learning where the context plays a central role when using English in different domains.

The purpose of this study is to explore the success of the communicative approach for teaching English vocabulary and grammar with focus on the use of these language elements in meaningful contexts.

to examine the extent to which the communicative approach affects the learning and retention of English vocabulary and grammar by the students.

to assess the impact of these methods on learners' communicative proficiency in English as a foreign language.

The hypothesis of this paper is that communicative approach to teach English vocabulary and grammar when presented in context enables better linguistic competence and communicative performance than non-communicative methods.

In what way does the use of communicative approach enrich the teaching and learning of English vocabulary and grammar in context?

What research findings support the applicability of communicative methods in enhancing learners' practical usage of English?

On what extent do real life contexts used in teaching practices influence the learner engagement and motivation?

How does the application of the principles of interactivity and contextualization contribute to the formation of communicative competence?

Recognizing certain limitations of the study, this research attempts to establish the value of various modes of communication comprehensively. These are the limited range of educational contexts

that have been investigated, the possible variation in the way teachers have adopted communicative approaches and the difficulty of measuring how communicative abilities have been enhanced. Further, the study is limited by the fact that the data gathered relies on learners' self-reports and limited and observable events that may happen in classroom.

Literature review. The foundations of the communicative approach are based on the principles of communicative competence which has been defined by Hymes¹. This framework views language acquisition not simply as a matter of acquiring explicit knowledge about the structure of the language, but also as a means to understand how language is used appropriately in specific situations. Canale and Swain² expanded this notion by identifying four components of communicative competence: These are the grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. These components show why it is important to teach language in context so that the knowledge is holistic.

As with all communicative methods, there are several key components that should be addressed:

CLT features several approaches that help to contextualize vocabulary and grammar in classroom teaching and learning. To be more precise, Richards and Rodgers have pointed out that CLT focuses on the use of real life language, tasks and learners' communication. It is incorporated in contexts obtained from newspapers, videos, or even conversations in order to teach vocabulary or grammar. Task-based learning refers to activities where learners have to employ language to certain tasks and the aim is to facilitate grammar and words in meaningful manners, Ellis³.

With reference to teaching vocabulary through communicative approach, it means that words are presented in meaningful contexts rather than in isolation. According to Nation⁴, the best words are learnt when they are used frequently and in different situations. Stories, drama, and problem-solving tasks enable learners to use new words in context to enhance their understanding of the vocabulary used. Schmitt's⁵ study aligns with this approach; the author concludes that

¹ Hymes, D. (1972). On communicative competence. In J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), "Sociolinguistics". Penguin.

² Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. "Applied Linguistics", 1(1), 1-47.

³ Ellis, R. (2003). "Task-based Language Learning and Teaching". Oxford University Press.

⁴ Nation, I. S. P. (2001). "Learning Vocabulary in Another Language". Cambridge University Press

⁵ Schmitt, N. (2008). Instructed second language vocabulary learning. "Language Teaching Research", 12(3), 329-363.

contextualization enhances comprehension and recall as opposed to memorization.

Similarly, teaching grammar communicatively means focusing on the purpose of using the given grammar. According to Larsen-Freeman⁶, a better approach is a form-focused instruction that combines grammar teaching with communicative tasks. As a result, learners are able to exercise grammar rules in context which is helpful in terms of their application. Several research works like Long⁷ have found out that embedding grammar into communication task facilitates knowledge utilization in real life communication.

Research has been conducted on the efficiency of meaningful approach to language acquisition. According to Nunan's⁸ study, he observed improved overall performance of the students in their vocabulary and grammars when they were taught using task based learning activities. In another study, Fotos⁹ found that the groups of learners using form-focused communicative tasks were more successful in grammar tests than learners who had been taught grammar rules. These research findings indicate that, apart from facilitating the development of language competence, the use of communicative approaches fosters the learners' skills in the natural use of the language.

Although, the communicative approach has been found to have a number of strengths, there are also issues that are associated with it. The emphasis on the communication process might be challenging to enforce together with the rules of the language and the grammar rules in particular. Further, it involves the use of valuable contextual information and materials and resources which are not easy to obtain. However, the characteristics that include language proficiency levels of the learners and the learning styles require consideration when developing activities that require communicative practices, Skehan¹⁰.

Functional Approach to the language teaching According to systemic functional linguistics, language learning is not a separate phenomenon from social practices; therefore, the teaching of language should reflect the same perspective, Alyousef¹¹. She aligns herself with the view that grammatics which is associated with social practices is useful in enhancing comprehension which is an aspect of acquiring language.

Information Resources and Language Performance According to Greculescu et al¹², information resources improve language performance, especially in the technical facet. The work recognizes the role of consistent language use in various ways, including Internet and mass media as essential in the contemporary, diverse learning environment.

Bakri's¹³ case study of Saudi ESL students provides evidence of the applicability of the use of rhetoric in writing instruction. Findings from this study thus showed that English academic writing can be enhanced through exposing learners to a process-based approach and different rhetorical contexts.

The place dedicated to actions Pedagogical Emphasis on Verb Conjugation: Vanbao¹⁴ emphasizes verb conjugation as a key prerequisite for language acquisition. The study also establishes the relationship between grammar knowledge and general language use, thus supporting the role of grammar in language learning programs.

The conclusions that can be drawn from the afore-mentioned scholarly works are that the Communicative Language Teaching methodologies are inextricably linked to successful language learning. Many researchers have provided evidences that those techniques that

enable the learners to use the language actively in meaningful contexts are more beneficial than those directed towards rote learning of terms and grammatical structures.

Research methodology. This research project is a mixed method research study that aims at assessing the effectiveness of the communicative approach in teaching English vocabulary and grammar. This design allows for the assessment of the effects of these methods on language development. This study involved 100 participants who are intermediate level learners of English language. These participants were in language programs that focused on second language acquisition and proficiency. The sample used in this study is diverse in an attempt to increase the external validity of this research.

The tests used in the study included pre- and post-treatment tests that aimed at measuring the gains in grammar and vocabulary comprehension. Classroom observation was used to collect qualitative data and at the end of the study period students and teachers were interviewed.

Instruments: To gather quantitative data on language skills, achievement tests were given to all the participants at pre- and post-treatment phases of the communicative intervention. Regarding the choice of instrument for qualitative analysis, observation rubrics were used to enhance inter-rater reliability during classroom observations while conducting semi-structured interviews to provide explanation to quantitative results.

Data Analysis: The pre-and post-test quantitative data collected from the subjects were subjected to statistical analysis to determine the extent to which the application of the communicative methods impacted on their language proficiency. Data gathered through interviews and observations were taped, transcribed and analysed through thematic analysis in order to determine common themes pertaining to the success and challenges of the communicative approach.

Each participant signed a consent form which assured them of privacy and discretion of their information. Informed consent was obtained from the participants and they were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. The study is constrained by the number and source of participants as well as the range of questions that were posed. It targets a certain population with the intermediate proficiency level; therefore, the findings may not necessarily translate to all language learners. Further, utilizing self-reported measures and the frequency of classroom sample interaction may also bring objective biases.

Research results. Of the 100 respondents, only 98 responded to both the pre- and post-tests since two students dropped out during the course of the study.

A comparison of the pre-assessment and post-treatment assessment data indicated an improvement of the tests scores. The mean score of the self-generated vocabulary increased from 60% on the pre-test to 75% on the post-test, and the calculated p-value <0. 00 represented a statistically significant change.

It was the same with grammar accuracy where the means were 55% in pre- test and 73% in the post test and a very significant 'p' value of less than 0. 001.

The control group, taught using traditional methods, showed a lesser gain in scores: the usage of vocabulary improved from 58 % to 65%, and grammar from 53 % to 59%.

Category	Pre-Test (Exp)	Post-Test (Exp)	Pre-Test (Control)	Post-Test (Control)
Vocabulary	60%	75%	58%	65%
Grammar	55%	73%	53%	59%

⁶ Larsen-Freeman, D. (2001). Teaching grammar. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), "Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language" (3rd ed.). Heinle & Heinle.

⁷ Long, M. H. (1991). Focus on form: A design feature in language teaching methodology. In K. de Bot, R. B. Ginsberg, & C. Kramsch (Eds.), "Foreign Language Research in Cross-Cultural Perspective" (pp. 39-52). John Benjamins.

⁸ Nunan, D. (1999). "Second Language Teaching & Learning". Heinle & Heinle.

⁹ Fotos, S. (1998). Shifting the focus from forms to form in the EFL classroom. "ELT Journal", 52(4), 301-307.

¹⁰ Skehan, P. (1998). "A Cognitive Approach to Language Learning". Oxford University Press.

¹¹ Alyousef, H. S. Exploring the impact of systemic functional linguistics on ESL students' reading comprehension skills. Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 10, 599-610.

¹² Greculescu, A., Popescu, F., & Ivan, M. The role of information resources in enhancing technical language performance. International Journal of Educational Technology, 5, 210-225.

¹³ 2. Bakri, S. Enhancing ESL writing through rhetorical strategy instruction: A case study. Journal of English Language Pedagogy, 8, 125-143.

¹⁴ Vanbao, V. Verb conjugation in ESL: Fostering proficiency through form-focused instruction. Language Learning Journal, 7, 111-127.

The classroom observations revealed that the students who were taught using the communicative method displayed enhanced levels of engagement. Older students used language more actively and independently and demonstrated more cooperation during language activities.

Data obtained from a series of interviews with the participants reveal that the application of the communicative methods fostered confidence in the usage of English either in writing or in speaking as corroborated by 85% of the interviewed students.

That is why the use of language was richer than usually, students made more efforts to communicate even outside of the class.

Certain issues were highlighted, including students' tendency at first to disagree with many activities proposed and teachers' claim that there was a need to spend more time preparing lessons.

The quantitative and qualitative results leave no doubt that there is a positive change in the students' comprehension of English as a language with the use of the communicative methods of teaching.

Learner participation and motivation were associated with higher language ability gains; in turn, it can be implied that the approaches not only facilitated the Language Learning Outcomes but also contributed to the improvement of students' perceptions regarding the methods.

The outlined difficulties give direction as to the kind and extent of support and modification needed when adopting communicative approaches in the language classroom.

These findings vindicate the hypothesis that communicative approaches can serve as useful instruments for improving instruction and acquisition of English grammar and vocabulary in context. This interpretation is made while considering some limitations which include the sample size and the demography of the participants. On balance, the findings indicate that the use of communicative approaches is effective in enhancing the language proficiency and proficiency self-esteem levels of intermediate EFL learners.

Discussion. In line with the research hypotheses, this study has established that there is an improvement in the learner's English vocabulary and grammar comprehension when taught using communicative methods. The result matrices summarising quantitative data indicated significant gains in the percentile ranks in standardised tests after the intervention while qualitative data revealed enhanced self efficacy and learning interest in language use. These observations are consistent with the ideas of communicative language teaching, which promote the effective use of language skills in real-world scenarios. The study adequately addresses the outlined key research questions, establishing that such communicative means positively augment the teaching-learning of English vocabulary and grammar. These methods also help them improve in their grasp and usage of English as shown by the evidence above. In addition, purposeful interactions in language classrooms are positively related with the overall development of communicative proficiency. The above findings call for serious considerations by language education practitioners. This assessment indicates that more effective teaching strategies and learning approaches need to be adopted in teaching learners and this should follow the communicative teaching methods. These findings offer grounds for focusing on the change of the learning paradigm from strictly behavioristic lecture-based approach to more specific and contextualized engaging approaches. However, the study also limits some perspectives and suggests that the sample size and scope presented in the research might not encompass all the potential issues related to language learning. However, two major sources of possible biases are inherent in any study based on self-administered questionnaires. At the same time, its key advantages include its focus on the mixed-methods research design that allowed presenting a rather comprehensive view of the topic and the role of communicative methods. The study reaffirms the notion of recognition that language

learning is not only a cognitive exercise, but also social one and conversation is key. It emphasizes the role of context and its use as language and affirms the change in approach in language classroom to communicative approach. The study indicated the fluctuations in the communicative methods used in learning. However, some students only had a less significant improvement and this could be due to certain factors such as learning preferences, past learning and IPR, or reluctance towards change. As such, there is a need to embrace flexibility in the ways in which instruction is delivered to the learner. The further research needs to be done about the long-term application of the communicative approach and effects it has on language in the long run. Research can also concern practical application of such techniques for people of different ages and different levels of knowledge. Moreover the analysis of how teacher education contributes to the effective implementation of communicative approaches needs to be further explored. More studies on the different blended learning approaches which introduce partiality of traditional and communicative styles might provide some solutions for different learners.

Recommendations. 1. Due to the effectiveness of this study, language institutions should try to adopt more of the graduated methods to support the intermediate level learners on the teaching of English vocabulary and grammar.

2. When using communicative methods, it is advised that institutions put more emphasis in training the teachers in order to guide and implement these practices. There should be continuing professional learning and implementation of support structures.

3. It is again the responsibility of schools to devise and incorporate a variety of teaching aids that support interaction and actual use of the language. These may comprise of multimedia aids, real life models and demonstration, and group assignments or projects.

4. Noting that learners are individual with different learning needs and preferences, it is recommended that teachers taking into consideration their audience while designing communicative activities and ensuring that all the learning needs are met.

5. Teacher should pay particular attention to the mutual interactions of students which directly involve the language and collaboration, for instance, discussions and teamwork.

6. Due to the shift of focus towards communicative competence, it is required to reconsider the assessment models. This includes the use of oral and written tasks that identify and assess students' ability to apply language rather than assessing their abstract and isolated knowledge of grammar.

7. It also means that schools should create more opportunities for parents and other members of the community to practice the target language in the course of their interactions with learners.

8. Use technology in an effort to deepen communicative language learning, for example through language-learning applications, online communities, as well as interactive sessions with local speakers.

9. Curricula should be drafted in such a way that they remain open to the inclusion of new and emerging patterns of communication and accommodate the dynamics of use of language in the current global society.

10. More such studies should be conducted to determine the long term effects of adopting communicative language teaching methods. Research with different populations and in different contexts of education may offer additional information that enhances and increases the efficiency of these approaches. These recommendations are beneficial in enhancing and expanding the application of communicative language teaching methods in the field of language education and using them to increase the effectiveness of English language learning among the learners.

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