

# Communicative Language Teaching Teacher's Perception in India at Secondary Level

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## ABSTRACT

Communicative Language Teaching at the Secondary level (CLT) has been a popular and much practiced methodology in classrooms worldwide for sometime now. Even our national Board of Education has incorporated CLT in its curriculum. The purpose at this research was to examine teacher's attitude towards communicative language teaching in India at the Secondary level being taught in rural and urban areas. The overall findings at the interviews showed that there have been some positive and negative opinions regarding communicative language teaching. This study will also hypothesize that raising English teacher's awareness is likely to help them to teach communicative language teaching in the classroom properly.

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## INTRODUCTION

An English teacher plays an important role in teaching English at all levels. When they teach English, obviously they have to follow some methods. There are fine methods in English language teaching namely, Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, Audio Lingual Method, Situational Language Teaching and Communicative Language Teaching. Of all these, Communicative Language Teaching is one of the new approaches because at present most of the teachers of our country at the secondary level are trained through Grammar Translation Method (GTM) being trained through Grammar Translation Method, they are teaching English using Communicative Language Teaching. At present English has achieved the prestige of being an international language.

It is considered as the global language. In this age of globalization it is essential for every citizen to know a global language its stay connected in the global village. The students of our country have no option but to study English as a subject. But it is painful that most of the students of our country are unable to use English language effectively in different circumstances. English teachers, who are teaching at school level, are largely responsible for their miserable condition. If the teacher had taught them English properly, the students must have been benefited. It largely depends on the teacher's attitudes and perception at the method by which they are teaching English language.

Different linguists and educators define CLT in different ways. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign languages that emphasizes communication or interaction as both the means and ultimate goal of learning a language. It refers to a diverse set of principles that reflect a communicative view of language and language learning and that can be used to support a wide variety of classroom procedures. Communicative Language Teaching involves being able to use the language appropriately in a given social context. Communication competence refers to the ability to use a language appropriately in different circumstance. According to William Little wood, "Communicative Language Teaching means systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language, combining these into a more fully communicative view." Communicative Language Teaching means that the emphasis is on language in use rather than language as structure.

It concentrates largely on the spoken form of English. Even though spoken put is an important one reading, writing and listening skills are also to be focused on. Practice of pronunciation, stress and information is a vital component Language is based on real life situations. Hence the students communicative competence is the objective rather than linguistic competence (Teaching Quality Improvement in secondary education project Module-1, 2006). Communicative Language Teaching makes use of real life situations which necessitate communication. The teacher sets up a situation that students are likely to encounter in real life. Unlike the audi-lingual method of language teaching, which relies on repetition and drills, the communicative approach can leave students in suspense as to the outcome of a class exercise, which will vary according

to their reactions and responses. The real life simulations change from day to day. Student's motivation to learn comes from their desire to communicate in meaningful way about meaningful topics. From the above definitions it can be said that CLT means to teach a language in such a way so that the learners can communicate with the people around the world.

The history of CLT is not so long like other teaching methods. It has been developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. CLT has been in vogue for almost three decades in England and certain western countries. Communicative Language Teaching originated from the changes in the British situational Language Teaching approach dating from the late 1960's (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The concept of Communicative competence was first introduced by Hymes in the mid-1960's and many researchers have helped to develop theories and practices of communicative language Teaching approach. Hymes coined this term in contrast of Chomsky's linguistic competence. Chomsky indicated that underlying the concrete language performance, there is an abstract rule system or knowledge and this underlying knowledge in the grammar by the native speaker is his linguistic competence. In the 1960's and 1970's a number of new approaches developed. Although they were different in many ways they all stressed the importance communication.

The roles at the teacher and the students are very important in communicative language teaching. Since the teacher's role is less dominant in a teacher-centered method, students are very important in communicative language teaching. Since the teacher's role is less dominant in a teacher centered method, students are seen as more responsible managers at their own learning. Larsen Freeman says that in communicative language teaching, the teacher is the initiator of the activities but he does not always himself interact with the students. In case of urban high school English teachers, it can be said that their perceptions and attitudes towards CLT are clear, positive and supportive.

The reason behind it is that most of the urban teachers are highly educated and they have English background and they are also getting enough teaching materials. As a result, they can apply CLT approach properly in the classroom. Besides the students of the urban area do not hesitate to do activities such as role play and pair works in the classroom. Sometimes classroom activities are not carried out because of time constraints and the size of the classroom. However, the teachers in the urban areas are more conscious and encourage their students to communicate in the class by making the classroom atmosphere congenial and by allowing the students to speak freely. In case of rural high school English teachers, it can be said that their perceptions and attitudes towards communicative language Teaching are not clear and positive.

Though, they claim that they appreciate the role of CLT approach for modern times. The reason behind it is that most of the rural English teachers are not highly educated and most of them have no English background and they are not getting enough teaching materials. Because of their rough idea about CLT they cannot apply this approach properly in the classroom. It is true that the rural teachers have desire and intention to provide the best service to the students if they get proper support from the authority.

We think their perceptions and attitudes towards CLT can be become positive if they get proper facilities and proper training and good salary. In case of secondary School English teachers can be said their perceptions and attitudes towards CLT are also not clear and positive. The reason behind it is that most of the school teachers are also not qualified and their English background is not so strong. They blame the students as well as the government. As a result, they can not apply CLT approach properly in the classroom. Even the concept of CLT approach is not clear to them. They can neither understand CLT nor can they teach properly in the classroom.

## **CONCLUSION**

Finally it can be said that English language teachers should have the knowledge at the communicative language teaching to create confidence in their students. In learning and teaching English language, motivation is an important factor. Teachers should be very eager to encourage students to view their learning and experience positively. It is teacher's responsibility to motivate students and to create positive attitude towards English language and be supportive and encouraging to the students. We cannot blame our students for their miserable situation in English.

If they get good teachers and good facilities, obviously they will be able to communicate with the people. However, the government should take some effective steps to create a number of good English teachers and provide teaching aids and train the teachers who are at present teaching English at different schools. It is certain that if necessary steps are taken for the improvement of teaching ability of the teachers, their perception and attitudes will change. Only then communicative English language teaching will be successful.



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