



POSSIBILITIES OF BYPASSING THE LIMITATIONS OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING AND POST-METHOD CONDITIONS – AN APPROACH TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, authenticity of English language teaching methods is evaluated with and Without Post-Method Condition. Some defining Communicative Language Teaching are mentioned along with the origin, theoretical background and major characteristic features. Although Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is one of the best and a recent approach in teaching English as foreign / second language and already brought under focus by many linguistics and researchers. This paper also explains the limitations of language learning with reference to many researchers conducted studies on this approach along with and Post-Method Conditions. This paper tries to explain the disadvantage of CLT and Post-Method Conditions in implementation and further possibilities to overcome the limitations of CLT and Post-Method conditions. This paper will discuss the basic setup of CLT and Post-Method Conditions and their limitations and will discuss further possibilities to improve classroom English Language teaching with a synthesized technique by exploiting these two techniques. Finally the conclusion is drawn as per the review of the literature indicated.

Key Words: *CLT, limitations, Post-Method Conditions, possibilities, synthesized*

I. INTRODUCTION

A teaching method comprises the principles and methods used for instruction to be implemented by teachers to achieve the desired learning. There are various Language Teaching methods that have been quite prominent in Language teaching. All these methods have been widely and extensively analyzed, criticized and evaluated by researchers with a different focus, perception, weak points as well as strong points and they are based on different theories. Methods are developed based on theories such as behaviorism, structuralism, constructivism and universal grammar. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is no exception with this regard (Larson – Freeman, 1986; Ellis, 1994). The CLT method, which is originated in Britain, is widely used in English as Second Language (ESL) classrooms around the world. According to Barnaby and Sun (1989) and Ellis (1996), CLT is recognized as powerful theoretical model in ELT by many linguists and language teachers as a useful approach to language teaching. Confronted with “the complexity of language, learning, and language learners every day of their working lives in a more direct fashion than any theorist does,” teachers have developed the



conviction that “no single perspective on language, no single explanation for learning, and no unitary view of the contributions of language learners will account for what they must grapple with on a daily basis” (Larsen-Freeman, 1990, p. 269). Henry Widdowson (1990, p. 50) observes: “It is quite common to hear teachers say that they do not subscribe to any particular approach or method in their teaching but are ‘eclectic’. They thereby avoid commitment to any current fad that comes up on the whirligig of fashion.” Educationist Donaldo Macedo (1994, p. 8) called for an “anti-methods pedagogy,” declaring that such a pedagogy “should be informed by critical understanding of the sociocultural context that guides our practices so as to free us from the beaten path of methodological certainties and specialisms.” Seeing the methods going through endless cycles of life, death, and rebirth, B. Kumaravadivelu talked about a state of heightened awareness that has emerged and called as “post-method condition”. Post-method pedagogy allows us to go beyond, and overcome the limitations of, method-based pedagogy. The post condition cannot be considered to be an alternative technique to CLT or any other method, there is a better scope in the synthesis of Post method conditions and CLT.

II. MACRO-STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK VS CLT

English Language Learners (ELLs) are a large and growing population in our country and physical education is in a unique position to help as it has characteristics that are supportive of these students, with conditions similar to those in which children acquire their first language (Clancy, M. & Hruska, B., 2005). The origins of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) are to be found in the changes in the British language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960s. Until then, Situational Language represented the major British approach to teaching English as a foreign language. In Situational Language Teaching, language was taught by practicing basic structures in meaningful situation-based activities. British applied linguists emphasized another fundamental dimension of language that was inadequately addressed in current approaches to language teaching at that time - the functional and communicative potential of language. They saw the need to focus in language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures.

In general, CLT advocates go beyond teaching grammatical rules of the target language, and propose that, by using the target language in a meaningful way, learners will develop communicative competence. The communicative approach is concerned with the unique individual needs of each learner. By making the language relevant to the world rather than the classroom, learners can acquire the desired skills rapidly and agreeably. Kumaravadivelu (2001) argues that the Postmethod Condition has two current dimensions the first one is Effective Teaching, in which applied linguists should theorize and teachers should practice those theories. In this regard, Effective Teaching follows top – down processes where teachers’ ideas, contributions, experiences and context particularities are not taking into consideration. And the second one is Reflective Teaching, on the contrary, considers that theorizing should not be only an applied linguists’ task, but it can has a mediation responsibility upon the teachers’ shoulders. Kumaravadivelu (2001) suggested that one way of conceptualizing a postmethod pedagogy is to look at it three-dimensionally as a pedagogy of particularity, practicality, and possibility. The parameter of particularity seeks to facilitate the advancement of a context-sensitive, location-specific pedagogy that is based on a true understanding of local linguistic, sociocultural, and political particularities. The parameter of practicality seeks to rupture the reified role relationship by enabling and



encouraging teachers to theorize from their practice and to practice what they theorize. The parameter of possibility seeks to tap the sociopolitical consciousness that participants bring with them to the classroom so that it can also function as a catalyst for a continual quest for identity formation and social transformation.

The ten macro strategies stated by Kumaravadivelu (2001) includes Maximize learning opportunities, Facilitate negotiated interaction, Minimize perceptual mismatches, Activate intuitive heuristics: , Foster language awareness, Contextualize linguistic input, Integrate language skills, Promote learner autonomy, Raise cultural consciousness, Ensure social relevance. Teachers who are really interested in becoming Postmethod teachers should hold some principles which are important for them such as trusting their intuition, relying on their experience, never stop learning, taking into account the input of specialists, but being their own guide and looking objectively at their own teaching practice and do not be afraid of change. They must feel encouraged to formulate their own methods of teaching based on their classroom situations; nevertheless, they may be based on other approaches or methods. To do this possible, I am convinced that the ELT community needs training about this condition in order to assure the results expected by applying it. Thus, teachers could avoid an unsystematic mixture of methods, in other words, they do not confuse a Post Method use desire with a bad conceived eclecticism. The Postmethod Condition is a good option for teaching. It is also an instrument to contribute in the process of linguistic decolonization, as well as the vehicle to “colonize” our context and culture perspectives.

III. LIMITATIONS OF CLT AND POSTMETHOD CONDITION

Some disadvantages are that they create a barrier between researchers and teachers; they do not allow variation and ignore local particularities. But it is considered as an old model of teaching and often criticized but should not be underestimated. As it is still very useful and valid in teaching English Language. Macro-strategic Framework seeks to transform classroom practitioners into strategic thinkers, strategic teachers, and strategic explorers who channel their time and effort in order to reflect on the specific needs, wants, situations, and processes of learning and teaching; stretch their knowledge, skill, and attitude to stay informed and involved; Understanding post-method pedagogy Design and use appropriate micro-strategies to maximize learning potential in the classroom; and Monitor and evaluate their ability to react to myriad situations in meaningful ways. There have been various criticisms on the principles of the communicative approach to teaching and learning language:

- a) Priority to meanings and rules of use rather than to grammar and rules of structure.
- b) The CLT approach focuses on fluency but not accuracy in grammar and pronunciation.
- c) The CLT approach is great for intermediate student and advanced students, but not beginners.
- d) Crowded classes diminish the monitoring ability of the teacher.
- e) The lack of sources and equipment’s like authentic materials and native speaker teachers, teaching aids and materials.
- f) Notional syllabus was criticized as merely replacing one kind of list, namely a list of grammatical structures, with another list of notions and functions.



- g) The various categories of language functions are overlapping and not systematically graded like the structures of the language.
- h) The communicative approach focuses on the use of language in everyday situations, or the functional aspects of language, and less on the formal structures
- i) The approach relies extensively on the functional-notational syllabus which places heavy demands on the learners.
- j) A major principle underlying this approach is its emphasis on learners' needs and interests. This implies that every teacher should modify the syllabus to fit the needs of the learners.
- k) The requirements are difficult. Not all classrooms can allow for group work activities and for teaching aids and materials.
- l) They are easy to implement, they are based on reliable principles and different researches, a number of them work for some learners.

Communicative Language Teaching is best considered an approach rather than a method. Thus although a reasonable degree of theoretical consistency can be discerned at the levels of language and learning theory, at the levels of design and procedure there is much greater room for individual interpretation and variation than most methods permit. It could be that one version among the various proposals for syllabus models, exercise types, and classroom activities may gain wider approval in the future, giving Communicative Language Teaching a status similar to other teaching methods. On the other hand, divergent interpretations might lead to homogeneous subgroups.

It is quite evident from the statement of Liu (1995) that Kumaravadivelu should use the word "principle" instead of "macro-strategy" because "macro-strategies" should not and cannot replace methods" (p. 175) I think that this macro-strategic framework does not pretend to replace methods. From the language teaching point of view, this framework presents a solution to cover all the students needs that methods cannot. Since I become aware about it, I started to include some of this macrostrategies into my pedagogical practice. The Postmethod is not a method itself, it is the linking of diverse solutions to language teaching difficulties. These solutions are not static but dynamic because teachers and their learners can take advantage of them as better as possible. Moreover, a review of literature shows that supporting ELL students' use of their native language helps them comprehend and learn English. It develops greater brain density in areas related to language, memory, and attention (Moughamian et al, 2009; Protheroe, N., 2011). Use of mother tongue in teaching learning process is very important while teaching along with all prescribed methods of teaching.

IV. SYNTHESIS OF CLT AND POSTMETHOD CONDITIONS

Here it is very important to mention that CLT can easily cover the Effective Teaching and Reflective Teaching under the umbrella of language teaching in classroom if it is not seen as orthodox and old model of English Language teaching. Classroom activities used in communicative language teaching (CLT) include the following: Role-play, Interviews, Information gap, Games, Language exchanges, Surveys, Pair-work, Learning by teaching.



It will be quite convenient if both the concepts are synthesized to form a new concept of teaching. Role play scenarios are designed to help you encourage your students to interact more in the language learning classroom and post method conditions can be easily applicable on negotiating interaction. Interviews can easily minimize perceptual mismatches in classrooms when every individual is put under the interviewer and interviewee. Information gap can be easily bridged by contextualizing linguistic input in the classroom with better instruction. Games and fun activities are a vital part of teaching English as a foreign language, the scope of games and activities can be further broadened with Maximize learning opportunities by following bringing new methods and techniques in them. Language exchange is always helpful in raising cultural consciousness and also foster language awareness in students who want to learn a new language. Pair work can further explored and helps teacher to promote learners autonomy. Learning by teaching can explored by activate intuitive heuristics where the students takes the role of a teacher. Kumaravadivelu's principle about the search of an alternative to method is not the real requirement; I believe that it is better to attempt towards an alternative perspective for renewing our understanding in order to encourage ourselves to accept and recognize the nature and importance of method. CLT model lay foundations for Post Method Conditions but both of them cannot separated from each other. CLT, here, can further exploited by Post Method Condition but it cannot be called a different method at all.

Role-play- Facilitate negotiated interaction, Ensure social relevance

Interviews- Minimize perceptual mismatches

Information gap- Contextualize linguistic input

Games- Maximize learning opportunities, Foster language awareness

Language exchanges- Raise cultural consciousness, foster language awareness

Surveys- Integrate language skills

Pair-work- Promote learner autonomy

Learning by teaching - Activate intuitive heuristics

V. FIGURES

Here fig.1 is trying to show a modified version of both CLT and Postmethod Conditions for better teaching learning process.

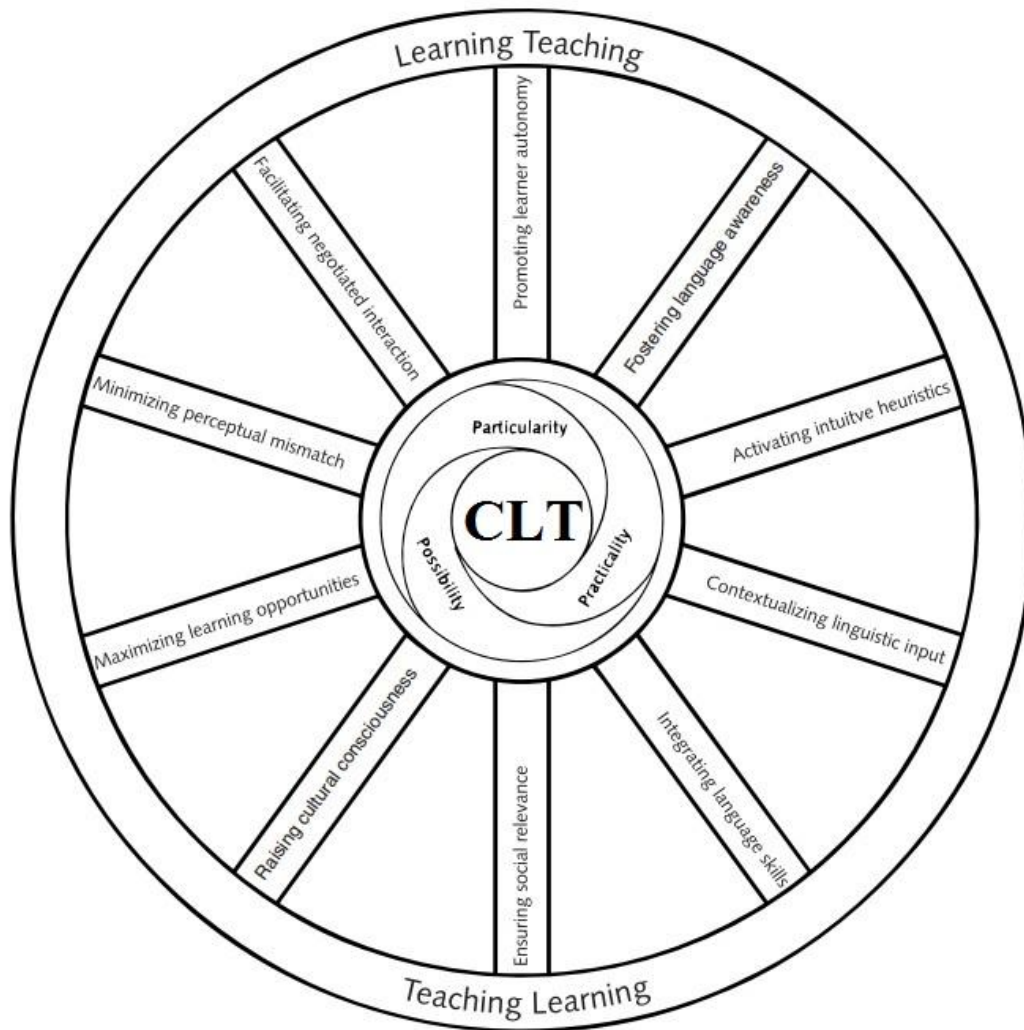


Fig 1

VI. CONCLUSION

It is Important to bridge the gap of learning process, how to implement CLT and increase performance in learning a foreign language. It is important to bear in mind that the real change depends on the Teacher who is teaching in classroom and his capacity and capability to transform and to develop the understanding of a foreign language in student's mind. Principled Eclecticism is a new technique which is fitting the method to the learner, not the learner to the method. The synthesis of both ELT and Post Method Conditions are heading towards Principled Eclecticism. As Post method is not a method and CLT is considered to be an old method, these synthesis can do wonders in English Language teaching. As mentioned above, the modern language teacher doesn't follow one rigid method, but applies the Principled Eclecticism approach.

There is no superior method. Then what's the point of the Principled Eclecticism method if it only tells us to use a method we thing might work best. The effectiveness of Principled Eclecticism is bound to show no correlation with improved learning too. The newer approaches and methods have tried to accommodate learning styles and personalities, but the amount of time or exposure to productive and receptive skills of a language will always be



varied for each learner. Principled Eclecticism is an approach rather than a method. The fundamental importance of teaching strategies is to make it easier to implement a variety of teaching methods and techniques. Here you will find a variety of teaching strategies to help students take more responsibility for their own learning and enhance the process of teaching for learning. The key is to create learning environments that are more interactive, to integrate technology where applicable into the learning experience, and to use collaborative learning strategies when appropriate.

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