

## COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING: A RESEARCH BASED APPROACH

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### Abstract

*Language is a raw material to have a fine product of education. Hence, English Language has got importance in today's education system. As far as various methods and approaches to teach English are concerned, Communicative Approach has proven to be a very important and an exciting development. It is observed that the 'structurally competent' but 'communicatively incompetent' learners know the grammar but lack the ability to be appropriate as well as fluent while speaking English. After completing school education, the students cannot converse in day-to-day situations using appropriate English. This situation is nothing but an effect of the difficulties faced by Marathi medium school teachers while using Communicative Approach to teach English. Therefore, the present research paper explores the practical problems faced by the teachers while using Communicative Approach to teach English, their strengths and weaknesses in teaching English by Communicative Approach and remedial ways for improving teaching English by Communicative Approach.*

**Keywords:** *raw material, education, communicative approach, converse, day-to-day situations, Marathi medium teachers, practical problems, remedial ways.*

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### INTRODUCTION:

English is an important language for a worldwide communication. As the researcher is in the field of education, she has noticed problems in teaching of English in Marathi Medium Schools (at Higher Primary Level). She also had discussion with the teachers and experts about teaching English language. It was observed that the learners cannot use English in normal spoken or written communication. They have got the ability to compose sentences but cannot use them to perform various acts of social nature like a request, permission, order, suggestion, question, etc. The 'structurally competent' but 'communicatively incompetent' learners know the grammar but lack the ability to be appropriate as well as fluent while speaking English. After completing school education, the students cannot converse in day-to-day situations using appropriate English. They cannot express their likes, dislikes, inquiries, agreements, disagreements, feelings, ideas, thoughts and about personal information in English. They fail to communicate, not because they lack ideas, thoughts but because they have not been taught so far how and when these communicative tasks and acts are to be performed.

Many a times, second language learners think in their mother tongue and translate sentences into second language. So, naturally it takes time to communicate properly. Students are not motivated to develop a habit of thinking in English especially in Marathi medium schools even though English from the first standard is being taught from 2000. Expectations from English teachers are not fulfilled due to various problems in teaching English by Communicative Approach. This is the problem selected for the study.

### STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH:

A study of problems faced in teaching English in Higher Primary Schools of Nashik district, by Communicative Approach.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH:**

The following are the objectives of the research-

- (1) To study background characteristics of teachers of English, their views and opinions about training, qualifications and practices followed by them to teach English by Communicative Approach.
- (2) To identify the present status of teaching English by Communicative Approach through observations of teachers' performance in the class.
- (3) To identify the practical difficulties of teachers and schools in teaching English by Communicative Approach.
- (4) To study strengths and weaknesses in teaching English by Communicative Approach.
- (5) To try out effectiveness of teaching English by Communicative Approach.
- (6) To suggest remedial ways for improving teaching English by Communicative Approach.

**HYPOTHESIS:**

A well designed programme arranged to teach English by Communicative Approach makes a significant difference in teachers' performance.

**METHOD USED FOR THE STUDY:**

Following two methods were used for the present research:

**(1) Descriptive Survey Method-**

Aim – to study the present problems faced by the teachers while teaching English by communicative approach.

**Sample Selection-**

Selection of Schools- A sample of 15% schools (i.e. 92 schools) was selected from the population. Each stratum was given equal representation. Fifteen percent schools were selected from each stratum by random sampling method. The lottery method was implemented to select the schools. Hence, the sample was selected by stratified random sampling method.

**Table: Schools selected from the strata:**

Area	Total No. of School	No. of schools selected (15%)
Urban	149	22
Rural	357	54
Tribal	106	16
Total	612	92

TOOLS USED FOR SURVEY:

(i) Questionnaire (ii) Interview

(i) Questionnaire: All 507 teachers were selected for the study. Teachers were selected from the three strata to give proper representation to each stratum.

**Table: Teachers selected from different strata:**

Area	Total No. of School	No. of teachers selected
Urban	22	189
Rural	54	270
Tribal	16	048
Total	92	507

(ii) Interview: 15 Headmasters and 10 experts in the field of English language teaching were interviewed. The headmasters were from Nashik, Dindori & Igatpuri. Information collected through the survey was further used to prepare a CLT package for the teachers.

**(2) Experimental Method:**

A single group design was used for the study: It was decided to select 30 teachers from urban, rural and tribal area, for experimental part of the research. It was very inconvenient to select teachers from all 92 schools of Nashik district. Therefore, the researcher selected three tahasils viz. Nashik, Dindori and Igatpuri. Then 5 schools were randomly selected from each tahsil. Then 2 English teachers were selected randomly from the selected schools. It means 10 English teachers were selected from each tahasil. Hence, there were 30 English teachers in the sample for the experiment.

VARIABLES:

Teachers' performance - Dependent variable

CLT package - Independent variable

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA:**

The data collected with the help of tools used for survey part (i.e., questionnaire and interview) was analyzed and interpreted by the researcher from which interpretations and conclusions were drawn.

The data collected through the lesson observations which was related to the experimental part of the research, was calculated by the use of statistics. Means, standard deviation were calculated. Then 't' value was calculated to test the significance of difference of means of pre-test and post-test.

### **VERIFICATION OF HYPOTHESIS:**

As the calculated 't' value (21.41) is greater than table 't' value (2.76) at 0.01 level. The difference between the means of pre-observation and post observation of the lessons is significant. Therefore, the hypothesis of the research i.e. 'A well designed programme arranged to teach English by Communicative Approach makes significant difference in teachers' performance' is proved to be right and therefore, it is accepted.

### **CONCLUSIONS:**

Conclusions drawn from the findings are presented in following four categories as follows:

- (A) The conclusions drawn from the teachers' questionnaires.
- (B) Conclusions derived from the lesson observations.
- (C) Conclusions drawn from the discussion with headmasters.
- (D) Conclusions derived from the experts' interviews.

#### **(A) Conclusions Drawn from the Teachers' Questionnaires.**

- i) 53% teachers use grammar translation method along with Communicative Approach to teach English.
- ii) Teachers are not much aware of Communicative Approach and they don't have adequate knowledge about CLT
- iii) According to 80% teachers Communicative Approach is useful for developing listening, speaking and talking (interacting) skills.
- iv) 71% teachers did not get adequate pre-service training.
- v) 56% teachers do not get adequate in-service training.
- vi) Effectiveness of in-service training is very less.
- vii) More than 90% schools don't have any other teaching material than pictures, charts and tape recorders to teach English.
- viii) More than 60% teachers seem to be very pessimistic while using Communicative Approach for teaching English.
- ix) According to more than 60% teachers the basic English teaching is ignored at primary level which is why they face difficulties at higher primary level.
- x) In tribal areas, students cannot speak even their mother-tongue properly, as they have their own tribal dialect. Therefore, using English for their teaching is a very hard task.

#### **(B) Conclusions Derived from the Lesson Observations**

Conclusions derived from lesson observations are divided in three parts-

- B-1: Remarks on lessons' pre-observation (Drawbacks in teaching)
- B-2: Changes observed in post observations of lessons.
- B-3: Effect of training package on the teachers' performance.

##### **B-1: Remarks on Lessons' Pre-observation**

Followings drawbacks were noticed in pre-observation of lessons-

- i) Classes were mostly teacher centered.
- ii) The teaching process was one-way.
- iii) Most of the teachers used translation method for teaching.
- iv) Pupils' participation was taken very less in teaching learning process.
- v) No communicative activities were undertaken by the teacher.
- vi) It was noticed that teachers did not use teaching aids.
- vii) Teachers did not use any real material (realia) in the class.

- viii) In some rural and tribal schools, it was noticed that the teachers taught English through Marathi.

### **B-2: Changes Observed in Post-observation of Lessons.**

After the training programme, guidance and counselling to the teachers, following improvements were noticed in post-observation of lessons:

- i) It was observed that teachers' interest and confidence in teaching English was developed to some extent.
- ii) Some of the teachers used more communicative activities like pair work, group work, role play and some language games.
- iii) Use of translation method was reduced to some extent and teachers started using English for classroom teaching.
- iv) Teachers used different teaching aids.
- v) The development was observed in the level of pupils' participation.
- vi) The post observation suggested that teachers started motivating the students to use English language.
- vii) Post-observation also denoted the positive change among the teachers towards using Communicative Approach for teaching English.

### **B-3: Effect of Training Package on the Teachers' Performance**

Due to the training programme of CLT the teachers showed significant change in their performance of lessons. The lessons conducted after training programme were more effective than the previous one. The lessons' post-observation were based on CLT. As these lessons showed remarkable achievement in their performance, it was considered to be a positive step towards the use of CLT.

### **(C) Conclusions Drawn from the Discussion with the Headmasters.**

Head masters' remarks were as follows –

- i) Most of the headmasters expressed that the teachers of English follow traditional translation method and a very few know about Communicative Approach.
- ii) Teacher-training should be arranged at school level. In fact, it is not arranged.
- iii) The teacher himself is a barrier in CLT as he does not want to change his typical traditional mindset.
- iv) Schools don't have adequate teaching aids to provide them to the English teachers.
- v) Sometimes teachers feel themselves inferior to speak English.
- vi) In urban area teachers can use English while teaching English.
- vii) In rural area teachers can't use English due to the maximum impact of mother-tongue upon the students and the teachers.

### **(D) Conclusions Derived from the Experts' Interviews**

The experts' remarks were as follows –

- i) Teacher should accept his changed role as a manger, organizer, guide, planner in CLT.
- ii) Traditional, one-way classroom teaching is a barrier in CLT.
- iii) Teachers are reluctant to increase pupils' participation because they feel it as if inviting trouble to them.
- vi) Proper equipments and audio-visual aids should be used for in-service training.
- vii) Teachers should develop their own reference material.

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