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RESEARCH PAPER

Refusal Strategies among Pakistani ESL Learners

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
	Communication is the purpose of language and the basic principle of communicative approach to language teaching. The main objective of CLT is to develop "communicative competence" as Hymes (1972) called it. Hymes' model was expanded by Canale and Swain (1980) who tried to "determine the feasibility and practicality of developing what we shall call the 'communicative competence' of students" (Canale& Swain, 1980, p.1). The aim of this study is to find out the features of Communicative Approach to Language Teaching from the textbook of English of grade 3 (2019-20) published by the Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board, Lahore (Pakistan). The amount of communicative language teaching (CLT) features in a book usually varies depending on how the CLT principles are conceptualized by the textbook designers. Some of the previous checklists (e.g. AbdelWahab, 2013: Aftab, 2011; Arshad & Mahmood, 2019; Kausar, Mushtaq & Badshah, 2016; Litz, 2005) were consulted to prepare a comprehensive checklist for the study. On the basis of this checklist the data was evaluated qualitatively. It was observed that the book lacks certain features of CLT such as equal proportion of language skills, pronunciation activities, integrated language skills, original and independent use of language. The findings of the study suggest a revision of the book and the activities it include if it has to be according to the CLT principles.

Introduction

Teaching of foreign language has always been a topic of hot discussion among the theorists and educationists. There are different ways to teach a language. First of all language was taught for the purpose to transmit culture of the target language (TL) that gave birth to grammar translation method (GTM) because only the transmission of information and rules was required there. With the passage of

time, there was shift towards the product oriented approach to the teaching of language that led to the construction of audio-lingual method (ALM). The rejection of Chomsky's (1965) linguistic competence to communicative competence put forward by Hymes (1971), led to the language use in the context. Therefore, the progressive view led to the use of language related to real life situation. This was the point where there was a shift from product oriented approaches of syllabus design to process oriented approaches.

According to Richards and Rogers (2001), CLT is usually taken as an approach of language teaching. In itself CLT displays a specific research paradigm or model, or a theory

(Celce-Murcia, 2001). The basic notion of this theory is that the basic function of the use of a language is communication. According to Hymes (1971), the basic objective of this approach is to develop a communicative competence in learners or simply to enable them to communicate. It means that the aim of this approach is to make use of situations that are related to real life in which communication is necessary.

Communicative competence can be defined in the words in which a learner is expected to adopt appropriate social behaviour and required as active participant of the language production (Canale & Swaine, 1980; Hymes 1972). This notion contains number of linguistic abilities that consist on linguistic, socio-linguistic, discourse and strategic competence. One thing that should be kept in mind is that CLT is not a method of language teaching, it is rather an approach on the basis of which many methods can be developed (Richards & Rogers, 2001). It gave importance to the needs of the students that they should be able to communicate in a variety of situations and in this way gave a type of guideline for the curriculum developers.

CLT is not restricted to one particular method or theory. Its theories are based on cognitive science, educational psychology and SLA (second language acquisition). Therefore, it collects a wide range of theories that enables the learners to acquire competence on the basis of learners' needs and preferences. Among the major characteristics of CLT are, first of all, the primacy of meaning and the understanding of these meanings according to the context. Secondly, students are encouraged to communicate in target language from the very start. Thirdly, L1 can be accepted when needed. Fourthly, various types of activities and strategies are used. Last but not the least communicative competence is the major goal of CLT(see Brown, 2001; Richards & Rogers, 2007).

The main purpose of textbook development is the professional development and growth of teachers; it is very important and useful. Cunningsworth (1995) and Ellis (1997) suggest that to move beyond the impressionistic assessments, textbook evaluation helps the teachers a lot and to acquire systematic, accurate and contextual insights into textbook material.

The evaluation of material is done for the purpose to know about the fulfilment of objectives that were set in the curriculum. It is very important to have the ability to evaluate English language teaching (ELT) goals that were set for learning of language. Madkhali (2005) restates Richards (2001) words that the important issues that curriculum implementers should consider are whether the curriculum is able to attain its goals, and, secondly, are the teachers and learners satisfied with it.

For the success of any material of curriculum, trialling and evaluation are important. To give the justification or the improvement of the curriculum, this type of evaluation may contribute. Williams and Burden (1994) gave remarks that the evaluation process is a very important part of syllabi design and its implementation as it gives "valuable information to guide our actions, methodology, materials, and all aspects of syllabus innovation" (p. 18).

According to Cunnings worth (1995) there are four general guidelines with a specific focus on the utilized methodology and syllabus. Guidelines suggested by him are that the course book should be according to the needs of the language learners, it should show how the language learners will make use of the content they are studying in their real life, it should be prepared on the basis of the needs of the students and should encourage the process of learning and it should contain vivid role to support learning process where success of the student is measured by the criteria of mastering the rules of the grammar, structure and the skills that are gained by the learners. Therefore, the arrangement of the content should be based on two things that are grammar and vocabulary. About 1/4 to 1/3 of the textbook material of every unit specified to vocabulary and grammar related activities that are practiced in the class. The selection of vocabulary, its gradation directly related to the aspect of word knowledge, i.e. word having different meanings, rules of how to form words and collocation. The section that includes topics, communicative functions, communicative and cognitive skills and themes is called postscript, a lexical set of time expressions section and discourse features of conversation section in the textbook.

There are also some cross-cultural elements that are used in one unit of the book.

Ahour and Ahmedi (2012) emphasized on their socio-cultural evaluation that have appropriate content as they agreed upon the reality that textbook of English is the major source of information. Bahar and Zaman (2013) pointed out that the evaluation of the textbook is important in the context of second language like Bangladesh, Japan and Pakistan for syllabus design and curriculum development. The inclusion of the knowledge of socio-cultural side as important feature is felt by Williams (1983) and he proposed a criterion for this.

For the purpose to make the functional use of language for the learners of the rural areas, teachers should also be included in the team of textbook developers as

Mahmood (2011) recommended that if the respective teacher of the subject prepares material it would be functional and practical rather than those who have general theoretical knowledge of the textbook. Zarar and Mehmood (2016), for example, highlighted that in English language textbooks in Pakistan, the international culture is understated and suggested that international culture should be included in the textbooks so that the learners can get awareness of national as well as international culture.

A multidimensional study was conducted by Aftab (2011) and she did a complete evaluation of Pakistani textbooks of English and the curriculum through a survey. She came to the conclusion that the requirements of Pakistani English language learners are fulfilled by teaching English through the books of that time. Naseem, Shah and Tabassum (2015) evaluated an English textbook of 9th class and they concluded that the English textbook should be revised. Ahmad, Ismail and Saba (2019) evaluated an English language textbook recommended by Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board (PCTB) for the students of grade-2 in some private and all public schools in Punjab, Pakistan employing content analysis approach. The focus of the study was to evaluate the textbook by its alignment with CLT principles. A breech between the CLT principles and the textbook material was observed. Therefore, certain revisions (as suggested by the researchers(see Aftab, 2011;Akram& Mahmood, 2011;Kausar, Mushtaq & Badshah, 2016; Khan, 2007; Naseem, Shah & Tabassum, 2015; Shah, Hassan & Iqbal, 2015) were proposed. Another study by Arshad and Mahmood (2019) evaluated a PCTB's book for grade-11 students from content and language integrated learning (CLIL) perspective employing Coyle's (1999) conceptual framework of 4Cs (i.e. content, cognition, communication and culture). Cognition was explored by developing a corpus from the textbook's questions whereas, the rest of the Cs were explored through the checklist. The study reported a mismatch of the textbook's material with CLIL features. Listening and speaking skills were ignored. The exercises did not appear to foster critical thinking. Nothing was observed to facilitate interaction practices. The questions, in the textbook's exercises, covered only first two levels of Bloom's taxonomy (i.e. knowledge and comprehension). The study also suggested revisions in the textbook. The study by Hassan, Ghani, Masood and Saba (2019) observed that the English courses, taught to the graduates, did not fulfil the communicative needs of the learners.

In the whole previous scenario, the present study is focusing the English textbook of grade 3 children studying in Public sector schools. The main objective of the study is to evaluate whether the material of the textbook of class 3 by Punjab textbook board is appropriate and adoptable according to the rules of CLT.

Material and Methods

Research Design

A qualitative way was adopted to carry out the study by developing a checklist to evaluate the data. The principles of communicative language teaching exploited in English textbook for the grade 3 were analysed. The text contents were evaluated in a systematic way to identify the CLT features.

The checklist method is very systematic in the sense that the listed criteria are checked off in particular order. It is easy and less time consuming to analyse different materials. It helps in selecting, ordering and categorizing data according to the research design.

The items of the checklist are selected in a way to cover the principles of CLT. The review of the relevant literature helped in establishing the criteria of establishing a checklist to evaluate the textbook. The present checklist was derived from the checklists of Author's own compilation derived from Brown (2001), Kausar, Mushtaq and Badshah (2016), Litz (2005), Richards and Rogers (2001). The checklist was designed after reviewing all the studies mentioned here.

Checklist

1   Activities and Tasks   No   Yes

    1.1   Does the book contain activities for information sharing, role play and problem solving?

    1.2   Do the activities facilitate individual, pair and group work?

    1.3   Do the activities introduce grammar points as well as vocabulary items in realistic contexts?

    1.4   Do the communicative tasks facilitate grammar learning?

    1.5   Do the communicative tasks facilitate independent and original responses?

    1.6   Do the activities involve learners' cultural practices?

2   Skills   No   Yes

    2.1   Does the textbook facilitate the development of all the four language skills for the purpose of real life communication?

2.2 Does the textbook provide practices for natural pronunciation (e.g. stress intonation) required for communication?

2.3 Does the practice of individual skills facilitate in the integration of other skills?

3 Language Type No Yes

3.1 Is the language, used in the textbook, suitable to the real and life like use?

3.2 Does the textbook provide sufficient vocabulary items to be use in different situations for communication purpose?

3.3 Is the vocabulary, used in the book, related to the students' culture and background?

3.4 Does the textbook facilitate functional use of language?

4 Content and Subject No Yes

4.1 Does the textbook contain a variety of subjects and contents?

4.2 Does the content, presented in the textbook, relate to the students' life and interests?

5 Topics and Themes No Yes

5.1 Does the textbook contain diverse themes and topics?

5.2 Are the themes and topics, presented in the textbook, relevant to the needs of the students as English language learners as well as users?

6 Overall Perception No Yes

6.1 Is the textbook suitable to provide opportunities for communication and interaction?

6.2 Does the textbook facilitate the use of language in as well as outside of the classroom?

6.3 Is the textbook suitable from communicative language teaching perspective?

Source: Author's own compilation derived from Brown (2001), Kausar, Mushtaq and Badshah (2016), Litz (2005), Richards and Rogers (2001).

The textbook, under analyses, is taught in all the public sector institutions and some of the private institution. The textbook contains 153 pages. There are essays, paragraphs, poems, dialogues, and social and religious topics with exercises. The material of the book is developed on the basis of CLT principles, therefore it provides the researcher with sufficient data for research work. The salient feature of the textbook is task-based learning. As Nunan (2005), argued that there should be various tasks for effective communicative language teaching process. The tasks are designed to improve language skills, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. These tasks also helped the researcher to describe CLT learning process.

The data was analysed on the basis of the checklist. The data of the textbook was analysed chapter wise to point out the features of communicative language teaching and described qualitatively. The features and sub features, the categories and sub categories of the main principles were described to know how the contents are helpful for CLT.

Results and Discussion

Activities and Tasks

Information transfer, role play, and problem solving are some of the important activities that should be in the content of the textbook according to the principles of communicative language teaching. But by the careful evaluation of the book, it was observed that the book contained activities and tasks related to role play (i.e. in unit 13, activity 3, there is an activity regarding role play in which the students are asked to greet each other while meeting), whereas there is no activity of problem solving and information transfer.

Individual work, pair work, and group work are the important task to learn a language communicatively. As far as the individual work is concerned, there are a lot of exercises in which the tasks are assigned to the students individually. For example, in unit 21, activity 6, the students are assigned tasks to arrange the sentences as they appeared in the story. Similarly, as mentioned earlier pair work is assigned to the students in the form of role play in unit 13, activity, but as far as the group work is concerned, there is no activity that is assigned to the students to do in group.

The activities related to grammar are presented in a realistic context e.g. in unit 10, preposition is presented by realistic context. Similarly, unit 15, activity 5 shows that the vocabulary presented is in realistic context in which vocabulary of daily use is practiced, such as stall, screen, scrub etc.

Though the tasks presented in the activities facilitate grammar learning but these tasks are not communicative completely because majority of the tasks are controlled and guided. This is the reason why do not completely match the principles of CLT. All the responses in the dialogues as mentioned above are

controlled and they do not facilitate the learners to be independent in communication like the conversation can turn to any theme/direction or the person who is responding may answer contrary to expectations while the tasks given here are controlled and the speaker will have to speak only those words that are written in the activity and they are also not original because it is performed in a mechanical way that may not be supported by gestures and facial expressions.

Through the careful evaluation of the content, it can be deduced that the cultural representation of learners is involved to a greater extent in the activities and tasks e.g. in unit 17, (Horse and Cattle Show) and in unit 19(Doing Your Own Work) are based on the cultural background and activities cultural practice of the learners own culture.

Skills

Communicative language teaching facilitates four language skills i.e. speaking, listening, reading, and writing while teaching language to the learners. The evaluation of the book shows that the focus of the most of the activities and tasks is on reading and writing, on speaking to some extent while on listening, no attention is paid. The development of these skills i.e. reading and writing is based on material based on real life of students and in this way fulfils the purpose of CLT.

The material presented in the textbook for the practice of pronunciation is according to the sounds of syllables and words (i.e. unit 13, activity 4) but it does not contain the elements of stress and intonation that are the actual part of real life communication because with the stress and intonation the meaning of the words can be changed. Language skills cannot be learnt in isolation. These are integrated. For example, the activities of comprehension used in textbook employ both reading and writing skill. Similarly, in a role ply or dialogue, speaking activity is entertained but there is no activity of listening in the book. Therefore, we can say that the language skills are not integrated in a proper way in the recommended activities.

Language Type

Language used in the textbook is of various types that can be used in the real life situations and different topics such as cultural, religious, national and ethnic background are included in the book. These topics provide language that is authentic. Similarly, the use of vocabulary also contains all these features due to which students feel easy not only to learn these words because they feel affiliation to these words but also these vocabulary words help them to remember for a long time to use in their real life situation. As discussed earlier, Pakistan is country with multicultural society. We have a religious background that is also present in our culture. The unit No. 8, 13, 17, 24, and 25, for example, cover not only cultural background but the norms of our society. Similarly, chapter 24 has religious rituals and in unit 25 national culture of Pakistan is depicted. Because all these lessons have a specific background, the vocabulary and language used here has a functional value in Pakistan.

Content and Subject

The content and subject of different lesson varies from one another. There is a lesson on religion while the other is on national identity of Pakistan. There is a lesson of self-description while the other is on cultural background of the province. The basic principles of CLT are to teach to the students the content that may enable them to communicate themselves in the society in which they are living. For this purpose, we need to have vocabulary of those cultural words and there is variety of vocabulary on the different topics that leads to a successful communication. The content presented in the book is according to the age and culture of the students therefore, it is related to the life and interest of the students.

Topics and Themes

There are different themes and topics included in the content of the textbook presented by the Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board. These topics cover all the diversity required for a good book. But, as far as the requirements of the learners are concerned, it is not according to the requirements of the communicative language teaching and learners. If we analyse the needs of the learners, it doesn't cover all of them. For example, collaborative learning is an important feature of CLT which is not present in the book. Similarly, the listening, and speaking skill is not given appropriate place in the content of the book.

Overall Perception

The textbook by PCTB is suitable to some extent but not completely because the first thing that is missing in the book is a lack of focus on reading and writing, and not on listening and speaking. There is a lack of interactive activities and tasks which are very important to improve the communicative competence of the learners. Group work is not emphasized while pair work activities are very few in number. It facilitates the learning of only reading and writing whereas speaking and listening are controlled and guided; not independent.

Discussion

CLT textbooks usually contain different activities such as information sharing, role play and problem solving activities and task. Among these activities, information sharing and problem solving activities are not given in the textbook which is not according to the principles of CLT. These activities enable the learners to have communicative competence as Hymes (1971) advocated that the basic objective of this approach is to develop a communicative competence in learners or simply to enable them to communicate.

To develop the ability to communicate in the target language, there is a need to practice the target language by the learner in pair and group work. In this textbook there is individual and pair work in some activities but there is no group

work in any activity which ignores the principles of CLT. After practicing these activities, the learners will have competence to communicate. Communicative competence is a type of competence in which a learner is expected to adopt appropriate social behaviour and s/he is required to be an active participant in classroom language activities (Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972).

The difference between speaking and communication is that in speaking one is uttering the words that may not be understood by the listener while in communication one conveys his/her message to the listener with the help of language, body language and facial expression. Therefore, it means while communicating you need to give original responses. The activities in this textbook are not facilitating the learner to give independent and original responses because the activities that are in the textbook are either controlled or guided and there is no free practice of language that is the hallmark of communicative language teaching.

These activities do not open new horizons for the students which is contradictory to Chambliss and Calfee (1998) who claim that educational activities of a textbook should provide the learners "a rich array of new and potentially interesting facts, and open the door to a world of fantastic experience" (Chambliss & Calfee, 1998. p.7).

Here is a controversial point as well. We have discussed the whole book with the objective in mind that whether it is making the children communicatively competent in English. But, we still have not developed a clear idea about communicative competence. If we follow Hymes (1972), then we have to make children linguistically and communicatively functional like the native speakers of English. Then the topics, and themes of the units will have to be changed. I f we are making them linguistically proficient in English using our own social and cultural values then things would be different. Therefore, the syllabus designers must be clear in their objectives.

It has long been a hot debate among the researchers whether there should be the inclusion of foreign culture or local culture in the English language textbook. Ahour and Ahmedi (2012) emphasized on the evaluation of the content that it should be appropriate as the major source of information for the learners of English is their textbooks. But, which culture is appropriate, it is a matter of controversy. There are many researchers who favour the inclusion of foreign culture in the books to understand the language well. Zarar and Mehmood (2016), for example, highlighted that in English language textbook in Pakistan, the international culture is understated and suggested that international culture should be included in the textbooks so that the learners can get awareness of national as well as international culture. There are a lot of researchers who favour local culture in the textbook. If we evaluate the textbook published by Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board for the grade 3, we can see that there is representation of both of the culture, but that of English culture is far less than the local one.

According to Cunningsworth (1995) there are 4 general guidelines with a specific focus on the utilized methodology and syllabus. Guidelines suggested by him are that the English course book should be according to the needs of the learners, it should show how the language learners will make use of the content they are studying in their real life, it should be prepared on the basis of the needs of students and should encourage the process of learning and it should contain vivid role to support learning process where success of the students is measured by the criteria of mastering the rules of the grammar, structure and the skills that are gained by the learners. Therefore, the needs of the students is to enable them to communicate in the target language and it is also the focus of the CLT that the four language skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing is the main requirement to be mastered by the learners. By the evaluation of the book, it can be found that the main focus in this book is on reading and writing activities. There are some activities regarding speaking but there are hardly any activities on listening. Therefore, in this way this book is not appropriate for the development of the four language skills (Ahmad, Ismail & Saba, 2019; Arshad & Mahmood, 2019).

Similarly, if we examine the tasks of pronunciation, there are a very limited number of activities that are assigned for the pronunciation. The integration of the skills is not in such a way that it can exploit all the four language skills. Therefore, we can say, this book is not according to the principles of communicative language teaching as far as the language skills are concerned.

The language used in the book is related to the real life of the students. There are many types of topics that are related to the real life of the students. The vocabulary used in the book can also be used in the practical life. For example, there are lesson regarding the greeting communication of the two people in the form of dialogue. There is the representation of the vocabulary in routine of our daily (cf: Richardson, 2005). The vocabulary used in the textbook is quite related to culture and background of the students. There are several topics and activities that are related to their culture and in this way, the textbook fulfils the principles of communicative language teaching. The functional use of language means that the language should be used in the daily routine of the students. Usually, the people who develop the material of the text do not have experience of teaching especially in the institution of public sector in rural areas. Therefore, they are not able to give functional language required for the students of rural areas. The material in the book is functional to some extent but not in completely. For the purpose to make the functional use of language for the learners of the rural areas, teachers should also be included in the team of textbook developers (Mahmood, 2011). If the respective teacher of the subject would prepare material it would be functional and practical rather than those who have general theoretical knowledge of the textbook.

As far as the textbook for class 3 is concerned, there are certain rules that are followed by the material developers but not completely and it is communicative to a greater extent but it cannot be said to be developed on the principles of CLT

completely (Ahmad, Ismail & Saba, 2019; Arshad & Mahmood, 2019). The vocabulary used in the book is related to the real life of the learners, but as the tasks and activities in the book are controlled and guided, it does not provide the learner complete autonomy to communicate independently and in natural environment. Therefore, these activities do not encourage the learners to communicate in their real life.

Conclusion

Through the overall evaluation of the book, it is found that the book lacks certain features of CLT. Language skills are not given equal proportion i.e. reading and writing are given more importance than speaking while listening is completely ignored. Pronunciation activities need to be improved. The language skills are not integrated and their practice is either controlled or guided but not free due to which it does not enable the learners to use that language in their real life. The given activities and tasks do not facilitate the learners to use language independently. Though the textbook lacks certain features of CLT yet the book have many features which are according to the principles of CLT. For example, use of authentic language, cultural representation of the learners, meaningful vocabulary, variety of topics and themes, dialogues and games. To conclude, it can be said that the book is according to CLT principles with some deficiencies that need to be addressed and revised.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the book should be revised with these recommendations

i. All the language skills could be given equal proportion.
ii. All the four language skills could be integrated in tasks and activities.
iii. Pronunciation activities could be improved.
iv. There could be proper activities for the free practice of communicative skills.
v. Activities such as information sharing, role play, problem solving, group work, collaborative learning could be included.
vi. Communicative tasks that can facilitate independent and original responses could be included.
vii. There should be a clear policy if we have to produce linguistically competent English speakers or communicatively competent English speakers, because it would affect the content selection.

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