

Analysis of Problems and Countermeasures of Communicative Approach in English Teaching

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Abstract

Communicative language teaching approach is a kind of teaching method which has been introduced into our country for many years and it plays an outstanding contribution role in the English learning and teaching. This kind of teaching approach is beneficial to cultivate students' basic communication skills and let students learn how to use the language creatively. Communicative language teaching approach takes people as the foremost. It takes the targeted and individualized teaching according to the different types of students to make the students give full play to the enthusiasm and initiative of communicative language teaching approach. However, there are still some problems existed in the practical use of the approach. And this paper will mainly give an evaluation about communicative approach, discuss those problems that appeared in the use of communicative language teaching and give their corresponding solutions.

Keywords

Communicative Language Teaching; Communicative Approach; English Teaching.

1. Introduction

With the continuous development of educational reform, the traditional teaching method has been unable to meet the needs of society for students' English communication ability. Thus, the communicative language teaching approach which at improving students' English language communication skills is becoming more and more popular with English teachers. This kind of teaching approach breaks the traditional teaching model that is teacher-centered and where teachers dominate the classroom. Communicative pedagogy takes the student as the center of classroom teaching, and students can learn and acquire the basics of language communication in authentic situations which teachers created in the classroom. Through this way, the disadvantage that students only emphasize on reading and writing, but ignore listening and speaking can be changed. Although communicative approach has received wide attention, there are still some problems in the process of using it, and this paper will analyze the current situation and problems of communicative pedagogy and gives corresponding countermeasures.

2. The Definition of Communicative Approach

Communicative Approach, known as Communicative Language Teaching or Notional Approach, Functional Approach, some people also take it as a second language or foreign language teaching in general ideas. In the 1970s, basing on the reflection of structuralist language teaching approach, British applied linguists proposed communicative approach, the fundamental concepts of which are notion, function and communication. Among them, the notion refers to the ideas and thoughts used for expression in people's minds, such as time and space, interval and place, commonly known as thought; Function refers to the use of language in expressing ideas; Communication is the process and result of using language. Communication also refers to the exchange of thoughts, messages and information as by speech, signals, writing or behavior.

The reason why the term-communicative approach is used more and more widely is related to the theory of communicative competence put forward by Hymes after sociolinguistics became an independent discipline. In 1971, Hymes proposed the concept of communicative competence in his article. He thinks that the general language theory should also include the communicative and cultural aspects, which should emphasize both the language knowledge and the ability to use language, both the accuracy of structure and the appropriateness of use. To sum up, the author believes that communicative approach is a teaching method system based on sociolinguistics and aimed at cultivating communicative competence. It allows students to use and learn language in communication, test their own language in communication, and then correct it in communication, and finally achieve true accuracy in communication.

3. Evaluation of Communicative Approach

Communicative approach takes the cultivation of communicative competence as the main purpose of foreign language teaching and is characterized by communicative teaching process. The communicative teaching process not only overcomes the disadvantage of grammar-translation method, but also overcomes the disadvantage of audio-lingual method that only stays in sentence pattern practice. However, there doesn't exist a perfect teaching method. Communicative approach also has some problems especially in our country's teaching situation.

3.1. Advantages of Communicative Approach

Firstly, it pays attention to pragmatic competence and cultivating awareness of learning to apply. Communicative approach holds that language is essential for human interaction, and its purpose is to enable both parties to achieve understanding and communication. The only way to accurately represent the communicative function and usefulness of language is to let students exercise their language skills in authentic context (Pei Yaoshi, 2004). As it is close to students' life and learning experience, communicative approach teaches students some language knowledge and skills which can be used in real life. With the deepening of learning and the continuous improvement of students' language ability, language learning process is becoming more and more automatic, and students can express their ideas more creatively.

In addition, it stimulates students' learning interest and motivation. According to K. Morrow (1981), instructors should involve students actively in language learning through engaging classroom activities. The goal of student-centered language teaching is achieved by giving students access to a variety of teaching resources and aids, which boosts their passion for involvement and naturally expands their opportunities for training in language learning. The adoption of communicative approach not only enables students to participate in learning activities with a positive attitude but also has the inner motivation for learning. Moreover, the teacher designs a series of activities and creates a variety of backgrounds, which add interest to students' learning.

What's more, it cultivates students' team spirit and self-learning ability. Communicative approach not only provides students with a lot of opportunities for oral practice, but also is a process of learning from each other. Students can get different kind of information from each other through using information gap in communicative activities. It helps to cultivate students' ability to cooperate, analyze and solve problems, and is beneficial to develop students' personality and improve their intelligence level.

3.2. Problems of Communicative Approach

Firstly, how to apply communicative approach to real classroom teaching situation is a problem. Chang and Beaumont argue that teachers' trade-offs between pedagogical approaches are

mainly conflicting in two ways: on the one hand, they are reflected in the conflict with traditional cultural concepts; on the other hand, there is conflict between the application of communicative pedagogy and the practical challenges that may meet in the process of adopting it in Chinese teaching contexts. In traditional Chinese education, most students are passive in the classroom, not daring to speak or ask question freely, and have little awareness of active participation in communication. However, the communicative approach advocates more interactive communication between teachers and students, and values the independence and individuality of students (Chu Huijie, Qiao Rui, 2019). Thus, there will be some challenges when using the communicative teaching technique in foreign language classes in China because of the cultural diversity in education. What's more, as the classroom activities are mostly centered on language communication, so there is a problem of choosing the authentic teaching materials. Meanwhile, there are problems to be solved, such as the combination of teacher's teaching and learner's independent learning, and the content and emphasis of grammar knowledge teaching in language.

Secondly, it is difficult to deal with grammar knowledge in teaching process. The emergence of communicative teaching method negates grammar teaching based on structuralism. It believes that language learning should focus on the acquisition of communicative competence rather than grammatical knowledge. However, successful language communication is inseparable from the expressing language correctly. The mastery of language knowledge is the foundation and important component of communicative competence acquisition. It has been proved that proved that grammatical knowledge cannot be replaced by communicative competence. However, there is no good way to deal with linguistic knowledge in language.

Thirdly, it is difficult to evaluate the use of communicative approach in class. Classroom activities guided by the communicative approach are linear and transitory. What the evaluator sees and hears is the students' excitement to engage in language activities and the teacher's ability to organize classroom activities (Zhu Xiaohua, 2012). However, as communicative language skills do not happen overnight, in the early stages of using the communicative approach, the dominance of scholars' inherent learning habits can make them uncomfortable with this method of teaching, resulting in a lack of objectivity in assessment. At the same time, during the implementation of communicative approach, the learners' perceived language skills are adjusting constantly, making it difficult for teachers to assess the effectiveness of the learners' learning. More importantly, as teachers organize their teaching activities with the aim of providing more communicative opportunities, the circumstance that students are able to speak but are unable to produce meaningful information may occur when assessing teaching

4. Countermeasures to Problems of Communicative Approach

4.1. Effectively Design Class and Enrich Teaching Forms

For large-scale class teaching, teachers should do good preparation and effectively design the class before it starts when using communicative pedagogy. Teachers should pay attention when use the model of hierarchical teaching to ensure that students can better participate in teaching activities. Meanwhile, English teachers should constantly enrich their teaching forms. Many students often avoid expressing themselves in English in the classroom because they are afraid of making mistakes. In order to eliminate the nervousness and fear of embarrassment of students, teachers can adopt the mode of group discussion. In addition, teachers can also use speech competitions, individual presentations and other ways to enrich their teaching forms. These patterns can both enhance students' motivation and self-confidence, and also allow every student to learn English in the process of speaking the language. Adopt this model in the classroom can also allow every student to have the opportunity to communicate and speak, which is very compatible with the communicative teaching method. This can make the

communicative teaching method fully play its role to improve students' English comprehensive ability.

4.2. Create Authentic Language Situations to Increase Students' Interests in Learning

Language subjects should be based on listening and speaking, and English teachers should create a specific listening and speaking environment for students. English teachers can create authentic language situations for students when teaching in the classroom so that students can learn language in their own language perception. When creating situations, teachers can extend them to the examples that may actually happen in their real lives. This will not only increase students' interests in learning English, but also improve the overall efficiency of the class. Once students become interested in English, they will learn English actively and then flexibly apply the knowledge learned in the textbook to real situational communication. In English classes, teachers should take the initiative to build a harmonious English learning atmosphere so that every student will dare to speak. English is not just a combination of vocabulary and grammar; it has something in common with Chinese. Students should perceive and experience themselves in different contexts. Therefore, English teachers should guide their students to learn English in authentic communication.

4.3. Teachers Improve Themselves and Interact Closely with Students

Communicative pedagogy requires teachers to have a high cross-cultural awareness. Teachers must not only understand English culture but also fully understand Chinese culture so as to avoid the situation that students wrongly use the culture when communicating in English. Therefore, English teachers should continue to learn, strengthen professional skills training, and improve their own ability. Only in this way, can teachers correctly guide students to tolerate cultural differences and reasonably use English to communicate. When using the communicative teaching method, teachers should pay attention to the conversion of teaching mode and close interaction and communication with students. Instead of letting teachers dominate the entire classroom, let students have a sense of participation, actively participate in classroom activities, and take the initiative to communicate and interact with teachers. Teachers' interaction with students in the classroom will directly affect the final quality of teaching, therefore, when using communicative teaching methods to teach, teachers should pay attention to strengthen interaction and communication with students and improve their communication skills.

5. Conclusion

Learning language in communication not only enables students to firmly grasp and flexibly use knowledge, but also improves their ability to communicate in English. Communicative teaching approach puts student as center, guides students to learn independently, improves students' interests in learning English, and also improves students' ability to use English comprehensively. However, due to the lack of teaching methods and the lack of clear teaching objectives, there are still various problems in the application of communicative methods in English teaching. In order to cultivate English talents with comprehensive communicative skills, schools still need to solve those problems in the application of communicative teaching methods in a targeted manner.

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