THE NECESSITY OF COMMUNICATIVE TEACHING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES

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Abstract: *The former promotes the use of communicative language by applying grammatical principles to various contexts. Actually, it's an inductive approach that encourages professors to give instances so that students can deduce rules rather than having students memorize grammar rules by heart.*

Key words: *deep-end approach, shallow-end approach, questionnaire, whole-class grouping, CBA, CLT*

Highlighting the role of grammar within the CLT can be controversial because some researchers believe that it does not include any grammar but has an exclusive focus on meaning while others think it still encompasses a strong grammar basis made of incorporated grammatical points. Thornbury to clear up the misconception distinguished two main types of approaches to CLT: the shallow-end approach and the deep-end approach. The former, encourages the use of communicative language through grammatical rules and their application in situation. In fact, it is an inductive way which does not make use of rote-learning of grammatical rules but rather encourages teachers to provide examples from which learners infer rules. Rutherford calls it consciousness-raising. The latter, the deep-end approach to CLT refers to the unconscious acquisition of grammar in communicative contexts without any previous and explicit teaching. This approach is in line with Krashen's theory of Natural Approach. Unfortunately, this model proves inadequate as learners'

competence suffers from lack of accuracy and fluency and most teachers feel uncomfortable not to teach grammar for communicative purposes.

By raising teachers' awareness to the teaching of communicative grammar that can meet students' learning goals, the current study is exploratory in nature. It first checks the challenges faced by Beninese teachers to teach EFL for real life communication, and more importantly how communicative grammar teaching can be a contributing factor to improve students' effective language use. For this purpose, quantitative and qualitative methods are used: questionnaire administration, class observation and interviews are held to the main stakeholders (teachers, students and supervisory staff) to elicit opinions and have a clear view of the teaching/learning process in relation to the issue at stake. This section is split into subsections dealing with the study sample, the research instruments, the validity and reliability of these instruments and the procedure used for data collection and analysis

There is no real limit to the way in which teachers can group students in a classroom, though certain factors such as over-crowding, fixed furniture, and entrenched student attitudes may make things problematic. Nevertheless, teaching a class as a whole group, getting students to work on their own, or having them perform tasks in pairs or groups all have their own advantages and disadvantages; each is more or less appropriate for different activities.

Whole-class teaching:

When people think of teaching and learning they frequently conjure up a picture of students sitting in rows listening to a teacher who stands in front of them. For many, this is what teaching means, and it is still the most common teacher-student interaction in many cultures. Though it has many limitations, whole-class grouping like this has both practical advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages of whole-class grouping:

- It reinforces a sense of belonging among the group members, something

which we as teachers need to foster (William and Burden 1997:79). If everyone is involved in the same activity, then we are all "in it together". Such experiences give us points of common reference to talk about and can be used as reasons to bond with each other. It is much easier for students to share an emotion such as happiness or amusement in a whole-class setting. Twenty people laughing is often more enjoyable than just two; forty people holding their breath in anticipation create a much more engaging atmosphere than just the person sitting next to you.

- It is suitable for activities where the teacher is acting as a controller. It is especially good for giving explanations and instructions, where smaller groups would mean having to do these things more than once. It is an ideal way of showing material whether in pictures, texts, or on audio or videotape. It is also more cost-efficient, both in terms of material production and organisation, than other grouping can be.

- It allows teachers to 'gauge the mood'

Of the class in general (rather than on an individual basis); it is a good way for us to get a general understanding of student progress.

• It is the preferred class style in many educational settings where students and teachers feel secure when the whole class is working in lockstep, and under the direct authority of the teacher.

Disadvantages of whole-class grouping:

• It favours the group rather than individual. Everyone is forced to do the same thing at the same time and the same pace.

• Individual students do not have much of a chance to say anything on their own.

• Many students are disinclined to participate in front of the whole class since to do so brings with it the risk of public failure.

• It may not encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning. Whole-class teaching favors the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student rather than having students discover things.

• It is not the best way to organize communicative language teaching or specifically task-based sequences. Communication between individuals is more difficult in a group of twenty or thirty than it is in groups of four or five. In smaller groups it is easier to share material, speak quietly and less formally, and make good eye contact. All of the secontribute to successful task resolution.

Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire is made up of ten items designed by the investigator. It deals with: years of learning English; level in English; type of grammar being taught; reasons for liking or not the way grammar is taught; degree of ability to apply grammar rules to oral communication and to written forms; ability to use, or adapt grammar to real life situations; involvement in interactive meaningful communication during grammar lessons; and grammar lessons help to interaction with the outside world.

Traditional Grammar Teachers' Questionnaire

Sixteen items have shed light on this questionnaire. They are as follows: teachers' length of service and training; importance and reasons for teaching grammar and mainly traditional grammar; relationship and degree of relationship between CBA (Competency-Based Approach) and CLT; ways of teaching grammar; separation or integration and their degree; approach used (inductive or inductive or both); time of teaching grammar; challenges and suggestions for improvement.

Communicative Grammar Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire consists of sixteen items designed by the researcher. Apart from question eight (8) about the way grammar is taught and question fifteen (15)

about the challenges in teaching communicative grammar, both questionnaires are the same though different answers were expected of them. No previous information was provided to the participants before they were offered the questionnaire which is nothing but an attempt to preserve their original views.

Class Observation Guide

Two teachers, a trained and a being trained ones, supposed to be teaching communicative grammar were kindly requested by the investigator to present a learning situation with a grammar lesson sequence. The objective is to have a balanced view of the problem. To avoid gathering extraneous data and taking into account the aim of the study, the following items were to be observed: type of grammar presented (traditional; Communicative;); approach (inductive; deductive;); integration or separation from classroom texts or tasks; Strategies used; Time to present the grammar sequence.

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