

Communicative Language Teaching and Its Impact on Students' Performance

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Abstract

Communicative Language Teaching as a method of 21st century in terms of learning foreign languages undoubtedly takes a very important place, if not central place in Kosovo curriculum for high schools. In our research, we did a literature review regarding the Method of Communication, in the regional countries, Europe Union and beyond. Initially it is studied Kosovo curriculum and then application of this method in Kosovo schools. Since, CLT shows a number of advantages compared with other standard methods, its impact on students' performance and motivation. Moreover, it was conducted a research by observing some of the schools in urban and rural areas, to see how this approach is implemented in our schools. Furthermore, there was also conducted an empirical research of student performance based on the four language skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening. It was also used the experimental method to see the differences of students' performance, of those who are taught using the Communicative Language Teaching Method and those who are taught with other standard methods.

Keywords: Communication Language Teaching- Method, teaching, Motivation, Kosovo Curriculum.

1. Introduction

Method, according to Harmer is the practical implementation of approach (Harmer, 2003). The user of a method reaches a decision about the type of action, role of the teachers and students, the type of material that will assist teaching and some models for organizing a Syllabus.

Methods of teaching and learning have been written by different authors, in which, they use different names for different time periods. Some of the methods, used before are almost fallen into oblivion, but there are such others which achieved success and are still used and well known.

For our research were studied the Communicative Language Teaching as a method of Constructivism, and application of this method and its impact on motivation compared to other used methods in rural and urban area of Republic of Kosovo. At the same time it is studied the Kosovo Curriculum, especially its communicative competences.

A significant number of public school students continue to gain knowledge of English languages, at private school of foreign language courses. So, it was obvious that we should make a research about what makes these students obtain knowledge in private schools when the same knowledge, based on Kosovo curriculum, should be taken in their public schools. Teachers can use the curriculum to run it right into material selection and preparation of a syllabus in detail to achieve its goals towards a better performance of their students. However, the question arises how to make Kosovo curriculum independent in our public schools these days?

Therefore, it was necessary to investigate the theoretical aspect regarding curricula, in particular Kosovo curriculum of English language. Moreover, it was done a literature review about the Communicative Language Teaching before conducting the research on students' performance in English language classes by implementing the CLT Syllabus.

2. Kosovo Curriculum and Communicative Competences

The essence of CLT is the engagement of learners in communication in order to allow them to develop their communicative competence. The elaboration of what we know as CLT can be traced to concurrent 20th-century developments in linguistic theory and language learning curriculum design both in Europe and in North America. (Savignon, 2006). According to the Framework of Kosovo curriculum, a good curriculum is a system highly dependent on the environment. It may consist of completely different elements, such as teacher training, qualification standards,

political expectations and traditions (Ministry of Education, 2011). Kosovo curriculum strongly emphasizes the CLT and (Task - Based Learning). This relates to the (*laissez- faire*) curriculum, where the student is independent to communicate and to optimize the topic or situation to talk about, but at the same time it has a relationship with critical curriculum where specific emphasis is on learning the language with the sole purpose of using it in situations outside school, such as airports, restaurants, shops, streets.

Competencies include an integrated and coherent system of knowledge, skills and attitudes applicable and transferable, which will help students to face the challenges of the digital era, the free market economy and based on knowledge, in a world of interdependent relationships. Competences provided by the Curriculum Framework are derived from the overall goals of undergraduate education and define key learning outcomes, which should reach by students in a progressive and sustained during undergraduate education system. (Ministry of Education, 2011)

Key Competencies that students must own during the undergraduate education are:

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| 1. Competence of communication and expression | 1. Effective communicator |
| 2. Thinking competency | 2. Creative / Critical Thinking |
| 3. Learning competency | 3. Successful Student |
| 4. Competence that has to do with work, life and environment | 4. Productive contributor |
| 5. Personal competence | 5. Healthy individual |
| 6. Civic competence | 6. Responsible citizen |

(Ministry of Education, 2011)

Competence of communication and expression are:

- Communication through mother tongue
- Communication through foreign languages
- Cultural expression through symbols, signs and other artistic expressions
- Communication through Information Technology
- The commitment and contribution for productive dialogue
- Respect the rules of communication
- Giving and accepting constructive feedback
- The expression of tolerance in communication o Initiate constructive actions

The competences of communication and expression, thinking competencies and learning competencies are instrumental nature: they are the basis for other competencies, which are more related to the circumstances and with certain content, such as necessary competences to private lives, public and professional.

The competences of communication and expression ("Effective communicator"), means that children and young people should be developed as personalities, learn and participate actively in society, it is important to understand messages to who are directed and adequately expressed through languages, symbols, signs, codes and artistic forms. To communicate effectively, students are encouraged to utilize independent, critical and creative tools and possibilities of communication and expression.

Curriculum Degree 5 - General Education and Professional Education includes classes X and XI .aims to confront students with further studies and more specialized learning, in terms of academic preparation for higher education and / or to enter in the labor market. Students were faced with challenges that enable: developing self-confidence; deeper and more specialized studying, by engaging the skills to use different sources, with a critical approach to various data available; development of the desire for commitment and stamina to higher achievements in terms of learning and preparation for careers and personal, professional and public life; preparing to take responsibility for their lives, to actively participate in social life as responsible citizens and competent and successfully compete in the job market. Development as individuals and members of society, to be able and to have capacities needed for life and work to cope with the changes of the local and global economy and learn how to solve problems in different situations in personal and professional life; preparation for life, to live independently and work on the challenges and opportunities offered by modern society and take responsible actions and decisions on the situation, and to be well informed throughout their lives.

3. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Speaking about CLT characteristics (Richards, 2006), emphasis that people learn one language when they use it to do things, rather than by studying its functions, we have a lot of different examples where students learned a second foreign language because of their needs for that kind of language. According to this, we can say that the students' motivation to

learn a specific language was because of the need.

Communication method is a method which does not stress practicing the rules. According to scholars of this method it is important to speak a language but not to tell me how language works. There are a lot of people who use the language in real communication and most of them did not follow even a single foreign language course which means that they lack a significant structural and grammatical rules of the language but as Jack Richard points out, mistakes are not important so they are tolerated, the most important thing is to use communication or to speak a language and to understand each other in order to communicate.

English of twenty-first century should be the English of communication, where people want to be able to communicate among themselves and therefore researchers of English language when speaking about English language pronunciation and terminology, use different names for their English language speaking, such as: American English, British English, Chinese English, Albanian English, Russian English, etc. People are not interested in how they are stressing the word or a sentence, they want to be understood. Therefore, (Richards, 2006) states that language competence is, its usage to the purposes and functions.

4. How do Students Learn a Language?

Most authors, stated that learning a foreign language in the past considered as mechanical. They also put emphasis on precision and accuracy of a language. This means that students had to compile grammatically correct sentences without even a single grammatical mistake in morphology and syntactic. My opinion is that this method makes student highly dependent from the teacher, not giving much opportunities to students to communicate in a relaxed way, among teachers and students, as well as students themselves. Students would learn things by heart, which they can be known at present but not to be able to produce knowledge at the moment they needed.

The constructive theory with the method of communication has a different point of view compared to some other methods where the student becomes the centre of the class and where the teacher is only a facilitator.

(Richards, 2006) describes learning through Communication method as follows:

- Interactivity between language learners and speakers.
- Creating a collaborative (cooperative) meaning.
- Establish a meaningful interactivity through a language.
- Learning through a student participation feedback when they learn or use a language.
- Being carefully about the language they hear (the input) and attempt to incorporate new forms with anyone who develops communicative competences.
- Attempt of using the language and experiment with various forms the language.

The broad aim of CLT is to apply theoretical perspective of communicative approach making communicative competence a purpose of teaching and accepting interconnection of a language and communication (Diane, 2000).

(Richards, 2006) when speaking about his experience in a class where is used CLT, he speaks according to his class observations. Based on these observations he comes out with the following principles:

Whenever possible "authentic language" should be used – a language that is used in a real context.

Being able to convey the goals of speaker and writer, is part of being competent in communication.

English as (target language) is a tool for communication in the classroom, and not just the object of study.

A function may have different linguistic forms. Since the focus of the course is the real use of language, then it is presented along with a wide range of varieties of linguistic forms. We should emphasize the process of communication but not on language forms.

Games are important, as they have clear features, shared with real communicative events.

Also, the speaker takes immediate/instant feedback by the listener, no matter if he / she have made a successful communication.

As activity as a goal has the fluency of a language, the teacher does not correct the student but takes notes for the students mistakes and later discusses with the class

5. Seven Principles of the Principled Communicative Approach (PCA)

I have argued in this paper that the real challenge for language teaching methodology is to specify the nature of the optimal cooperation between explicit and implicit learning processes in a principled manner. Working out the details of a new, principled communicative approach (PCA) is clearly an ongoing process, but based on the research conducted over

the past decade, we can formulate some key guiding principles for the approach. I would like to conclude this paper by offering seven key – and somewhat overlapping – principles that are in accordance with the state of the art of our research knowledge of instructed second language acquisition.

1. *The personal significance principle*: PCA should be *meaning-focused* and *personally significant* as a whole. This has been the basic tenet of student centered, communicative language teaching for the past 25 years, and I believe that this principle is just as valid now as when it was first formulated.
2. *The controlled practice principle*: While the overall purpose of language learning is to prepare the learners for meaningful communication, skill learning theory suggests that – similar to the training of musicians or athletes – it should also include *controlled practice activities* to promote the automatization of L2 skills. The purpose of this practice should be clearly explained to the learners and the content/format should be made as motivating as possible within the tasks' inherent constraints.
3. *The declarative input principle*: To provide jump starts for subsequent automatization, PCA should contain *explicit initial input* components. This declarative input can be offered in several ways, including the potential utilization of accelerated learning techniques and rote-learning.
4. *The focus-on-form principle*: While maintaining an overall meaning-oriented approach, PCA should also pay attention to the *formal/structural aspects* of the L2 that determine accuracy and appropriateness at the linguistic, discourse and pragmatic levels. An important hallmark of good teaching is finding the *optimal balance* between meaning-based and form-focused activities in the dynamic classroom context.
5. *The formulaic language principle*: PCA should include the teaching of *formulaic language* as a featured component. There should be sufficient awareness raising of the significance and pervasiveness of formulaic language in real-life communication, and selected phrases should be practiced and recycled intensively.
6. *The language exposure principle*: PCA should offer learners *extensive exposure to large amounts of L2 input* that can feed the learners' implicit learning mechanisms. In order to make the most of this exposure, learners should be given some explicit preparation in terms of *pre-task activities* (e.g. pre-reading/listening/watching tasks or explanations of some salient aspects of the material) to prime them for maximum intake.
7. *The focused interaction principle*: PCA should offer learners ample opportunities to participate in *genuine L2 interaction*. For best effect, such communicative practice should always have a specific formal or functional focus, and should always be associated with target phrases to practice.

In sum, the essence of the principled communicative approach that I am advocating is the creative integration of meaningful communication with relevant declarative input and the automatization of both linguistic rules and lexical items. In instructed SLA, *the more is not the merrier if it is not focused*. (Dörnyei, 2009)

6. Research Methodology

The research question in this article is how much is CLT implemented in public schools in Republic of Kosovo?

We used the observation method to see the implementation of CLT, the compulsory method that teachers should be using according to Kosovo curriculum.

An experiment in urban and rural classes was conducted by applying the CLT syllabus to see the changes in student performance while teaching with CLT and with other methods that use textbooks, which are ESA and PPP.

A sample of 150 students was part of the experiment for our experimental and control groups in urban school "Hivzi Sylejmani" in Fushë Kosovo and rural school "Ulpjana" in Gadime – Lypjan.

At the beginning of the academic year the students of tenth grade were tested with KET test (Key English Test), as a transition class, from a lower middle school to an upper middle school, measuring the performance of students before applying the CLT. This testing was applied to see if the students of tenth grade have the necessary knowledge which is required for the tenth grade according to Kosovo curriculum. At the end of the academic year, students' knowledge was tested again, with PET test (Preliminary English Test) not only to measure the students' performance after applying CLT, but to compare the experimental group's performance who were taught using CLT and control group's performance, who were taught using ESA or PPP.

7. Results

The methods applied in order to realize the tasks set out in this paper, descriptive statistical methods (parameters of central tendency, dispersion and correlation), and scientific methods of condensation and transformation of the results.

Results are processed by the computer program SPSS version 17.0.

Level descriptive analysis of the variables involved in the research was conducted with the help of these methods:

Descriptive statistics parameters included:

- Arithmetic average (central tendency calculation results)
- Standard Deviation (distribution of results from their average value)
- Minimum and maximum score (range between two extreme values)
- Skewness, (normality of the distribution of results)
- Kurtosis (level of homogeneity of the group) and

8. Interpretation of Basic Statistical Parameters for KET Test

In Table .1. are presented the values of basic statistical parameters of the results of students in lower secondary schools, "Hivzi Sulejmani" and "LUARASI" as urban schools tested with KET test. The table value of central tendency analyzed the results and measurements of the distribution of results about their arithmetic average and the normality of the distribution of these results. Based on the values of the arithmetic mean can be concluded that all variables have normal distribution of results since Skewness values are smaller than 1. The high degree of heterogeneity in the outcome is shown in the variable where the value of Skewness Listening is -.651 and this distribution with negative bias means that most of the results are smaller than their arithmetic average.

Also, the value of Kurtosis which shows the level of homogeneity of the groups, which within normal limits should not exceed the value of 3 in our case shows that we are dealing with very homogeneous groups.

The average value of the results expressed in percentage was 10.9 Reading in writing 8.97, at 14:10 Listening and Speaking 14.30. From these results we can see that the students of this school as a percentage realized the best result in the test Listening and Speaking while Reading tests, especially in test Writing realized lower results.

Table 1. Values of basic statistical parameters for variables under investigation KET Urban Testing

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Reading	104	22.14	.00	22.14	10.0962	5.82943	.149	-.619
Writing	104	23.00	.00	23.00	8.9712	6.53958	.187	-1.122
Listening	104	23.00	.00	23.00	14.1058	6.00149	-.651	.067
Speaking	104	25.00	.00	25.00	14.3029	5.49113	-.051	-.141
Total	104	85.43	.00	85.43	47.4760	17.85118	-.033	-.082
Valid N (listwise)	104							

In Table .2. are shown the values of basic statistical parameters of the results of students in lower secondary school, Ulpjana "as rural school test test KET. Based on the values of the arithmetic mean can be concluded that all variables have normal distribution of results since Skewness values are smaller than 1, except for the Writing skill that has the value 1.014. High degree of heterogeneity of the outcome is shown in the variable where the value of Skewness Listening is -.825 reading value -.325 and this distribution with negative bias means that most of the results are smaller than their arithmetic average.

Po ashtu, vlera e Kurtosisit e cila tregon për nivelin e homogjenitetit të grupeve, e cila brenda kufijve normal nuk duhet ta tejkaloj vlerën 3, në rastin tonë tregon se kemi të bëjmë me grupe mjaftë homogjen.

Vlera mesatare e rezultateve të shprehura në përqindje në Reading ka qenë 8.96, në Writing 5.26, në Listening 12.07 dhe Speaking 7.92. Nga këto rezultate mund të shohim se nxënësit e kësaj shkolle në bazë të përqindjes kanë realizuar rezultat më të mirë në testin Reading dhe listening ndërsa në testet e listening sidomos në testin Writing kanë realizuar rezultate më të dobëta.

The average value of the results expressed in percentages in Reading was 8.96, in writing 5.26, in Listening 12.07 and Speaking 7.92. From these results we can see that the students of this school based on percentage realized the best result in the test Reading and listening while listening tests especially in test Writing realized lower results.

Table 2. Values of basic statistical parameters for variables under investigation KET Rural Testing

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Reading	38	17.14	.00	17.14	8.9662	4.46441	-.325	-.489
Writing	38	20.00	.00	20.00	5.2632	5.75013	1.014	-.079
Listening	38	21.00	.00	21.00	12.0789	6.31764	-.825	-.161
Speaking	38	25.00	.00	25.00	7.9276	6.95228	.774	.025
Total	38	83.14	.00	83.14	34.2359	16.99211	.362	1.193
Valid N (listwise)	38							

9. Interpretation of Descriptive Statistics for PET Testing

In Table 3. are shown the values of basic statistical parameters of the results of students in lower secondary schools, "Hivzi Sulejmani" and "LUARASI" urban schools as control group tested with PET test. The table value of central tendency analyzed the results and measurements of the distribution of results about their arithmetic average and the normality of the distribution of these results. Based on the values of the arithmetic mean can be concluded that all variables have normal distribution of results since Skewness values are smaller than 1, except for the Writing skills with the value of 1.35. High degree of heterogeneity of the outcome is shown in the variable where the value of Skewness Listening is - .568 and this distribution with positive bias means that most of the results are larger than their arithmetic average.

The average value of the results expressed in percentages in Reading is 8.52, writing 2.98, Listening 8.25 and Speaking 10.85. From these results we can see that the students of this school as a percentage realized the best result in the test Listening, Reading and Speaking while on tests conducted in Writing have worse results.

Table 3. Pet Controller Group

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Reading	51	13.57	3.57	17.14	8.5294	3.15068	.744	.752
Writing	51	14.00	.00	14.00	2.9804	3.42631	1.353	2.246
Listening	51	19.00	.00	19.00	8.2549	3.45163	.839	2.576
Speaking	51	20.00	.00	20.00	10.8578	4.50340	-.568	.045
Total	51	50.93	10.29	61.21	30.6225	9.29893	.985	2.976
Valid N (listwise)	51							

In Table 4. are shown the values of basic statistical parameters of the results of students in lower secondary schools, "Hivzi Sulejmani" and "LUARASI" as urban schools experimental group tested with PET test. The table value of central tendency analyzed the results and measurements of the distribution of results about their arithmetic average and the normality of the distribution of these results. Based on the values of the arithmetic mean can be concluded that all variables have normal distribution of results since Skewness values are smaller than 1, except for the Writing skills valued 1:00. High degree of heterogeneity of the outcome is shown in the variable where the value of Skewness Speaking is - .279 and this distribution with positive bias means that most of the results are larger than their arithmetic average.

The average value of the results expressed in percentages in Reading was 12.68, in writing 20.04, 11.71 in Listening and Speaking 18.65. From these results we can see that the students of this school as a percentage realized the best result in the test Reading, Listening and Speaking specifically while Writing tests have realized with lower results.

Table 4. PET Experimental Group

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Reading	53	14.29	6.43	20.71	12.6819	3.67142	.686	-.519
Writing	53	12.00	.00	12.00	4.2075	3.73321	1.006	-.325
Listening	53	20.00	.00	20.00	11.7170	4.04008	.011	.440
Speaking	53	15.00	10.00	25.00	18.6557	4.56556	-.279	-.969
Total	53	56.71	18.86	75.57	47.2621	12.41994	.407	-.198
Valid N (listwise)	53							

10. Discussion and Conclusion

As a conclusion we can say that the outcomes of testing the students with KET or Elementary level were slightly better in Urban rather than Rural area. This had to do with the teacher's role and the implementation of ESA (Engage – Study – Activate) method. While, in rural area the teachers used behavior theory with the direct method which did not contribute with so good performance.

On the other hand, discussing the implementation of CLT syllabus with experimental groups again was productive, as with CLT was gained much satisfied result and according to statistics both experimental Urban as well as Rural group was highly, significantly better in performance compared to controlled urban and rural groups.

Finally, we can conclude that implementation of CLT in our schools will be productive and we as teachers should implement Kosovo Curriculum as a framework of our success as teachers and the successful performance for our students.

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