

The Strategy of Inclusive Classroom Learning (ICL) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) for Class X Students in the Govt. High Schools under Khagarijan Block of Nagaon District, Assam

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KEYWORDS

Inclusive classroom, Communicative Language Teaching, Diverse Learners, strategic learning

ABSTRACT

Inclusive Classroom Learning (ICL) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) are the challenging inclusions in the educational disciplines to standardize, modify, and universalize the ongoing education system, directed by NEP 2020 recently. According to this policy, inclusive classrooms may provide equal opportunity to every child irrespective of their physical, mental, social, and emotional capabilities. On the other hand, CLT will provide interactive and spontaneous learning and foster a joyful and productive educational environment. In high schools, especially the students of class X need special attention for their physical and mental growth, educational competence and maturity so that they can smoothly transact themselves from the secondary level to a higher level where hurdles and life challenges are waiting for them. In this paper, the researchers aim to highlight the activities or practices on the mentioned ground done for class X students in the Govt. schools of Nagaon Town (Khagarijan Block). An Interactive Method is selected to process this minor research paper. However, observation would also be done wherever possible within a limited time.

1.1 Introduction

Inclusive Classroom Learning (ICL)

International efforts have been made to integrate children with special needs into the general education system. A major approach to this educational development process is inclusive education, which aims to decrease the exclusion rate of children from mainstream education and increase their involvement in it. (Das, 2010)

The term "inclusive education" is relatively contemporary, and it refers to an approach to teaching and learning that challenges the old ideology of education. The special education system and inclusive education are different from each other. It attempts to reorganize the classroom or school environment to meet every child's learning needs. (Ainscow, 1995)

Differentiated instruction is crucial for building inclusive classrooms. Several educational institutions have emphasized the importance of differentiated instruction regarding inclusive classroom strategy. It is one of the major concerns to consider the perception, attitude and

awareness of the teachers regarding differentiated instruction in connection to inclusive classroom practices. Creating and arranging an effective inclusive classroom requires a lot of meaningful thoughts and collaborative efforts. It is a day-to-day refined process. The design of schools, teacher preparedness, curriculum, classrooms, programs and policies regarding the successful implementation of inclusive education, and daily school and classroom activities are the major features of inclusive classroom strategy. (Sachu, 2024)

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) or Communicative Approach emerged after the closing up of situational language teaching and audio-lingual approach in the late 1960s. The scholars who advocated this approach were mainly Christopher Candlin and Henry Widdowson who urged the need to focus in language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures. (Richards & Rodgers, 1986)

In India, English is taught as a compulsory subject from class one to twelve. Though students have completed twelve years of continuous English study, they are still unable to grow their confidence to speak English properly. Educationists and policymakers felt the urgent need for modification in the contemporary language teaching style. They took a fresh look at the methods and techniques that apply to Indian classroom situations in a multilingual set-up. It was a challenging task for Indian Govt. to organize and systematize the foreign language teaching tradition in different cultural settings. However, the language experts of the country forwarded some basic principles and teaching guidelines suitable for Indian classrooms. The basic principles of CLT are: (a) language learning should focus on communication, (b) emphasis should be given on functional language use, i.e. introducing self and others, asking for information, giving directions, etc., (c) task-based language using activities should be encouraged, (d) knowledge of grammar should be applied in different communicative functions, (e) collaborative learning should be organized, e.g.: interaction in pair work, group work, etc., (f) other teaching materials than a textbook can be used to develop communicative skills. The general guidelines for teaching CLT are: (a) active participation by all students is compulsory while completing the lesson, (b) students should be the central focus in the classroom, (c) language speaking opportunities should be given to each student, (d) lesson should be made interesting by adopting different techniques such as role-play, language exchange, discussion, language game, pair work, group work, and so on, (e) prepare students to be confident communicators, (f) teacher should not scold or punish students for making mistakes. They should be corrected and engaged in repetitive oral practice, (g) inspired to use more student-student activities with cooperation than teacher-student activities. (Sarma & Mahapatra, 2009)

1.2 Setting

The inclusive strategy in learning and communicative language teaching are challenging inclusions in the educational disciplines especially in school education in India. The history records, many sustainable initiatives taken from time to time for the development of these fields since the late 20th century. However, their growing importance touches the air in the 21st century when globalization and networking systems knock every nook and corner of the world.

The New Education Policy (2020) has a specific vision for an inclusive classroom setting to provide equal opportunity to every child irrespective of their physical, mental, social and emotional

capabilities, and at the same time, communicative language teaching to provide interactive and spontaneous learning in a joyful and productive environment.

The high schools have especially been asked to take responsibility of every child and pay greater attention to the development of knowledge and communicative skills. This research project investigates the current strategies and relative difficulties of ICL and CLT for class X in the high schools of Nagaon Town under Khagarijan Block, Assam.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Inclusive education demands an inclusive society in the general school environment. Qualitative education is more beneficial than quantitative education. In this manner, inclusive education under an inclusive classroom strategy as the adoption of communicative language teaching is necessary to bring quality education in general classroom settings.

Therefore, the present study is designed to describe the existing status of the strategy of Inclusive Classroom Learning (ICL) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) for class X students. The study's findings will help to develop a better understanding of the approaches of inclusive classroom strategy and communicative language teaching. It is hoped that it will act as a path for the head teachers, teachers and all the school administrators to adopt a positive strategy when offering different support to children with special needs and children without special needs.

1.4 Research Questions

- What are the major challenges in creating an inclusive classroom strategy with special reference to the Government High Schools of Khagarijan Block of Nagaon District, Assam?
- What are the current plans/strategies for CLT in class X with special reference to the Government High Schools of Khagarijan Block of Nagaon District, Assam?
- What are the major challenges faced by class X students in CLT classrooms in the visited schools?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

- To study the major challenges in creating an inclusive classroom strategy in the studied schools.
- To highlight the current strategy/plan for CLT in class X of the studied schools.
- To find out the major challenges faced by students of class X for CLT in the visited schools.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

- The study was conducted in only the Government High Schools of Khagarijan Block of Nagaon District, Assam.
- The study was restricted only to the class X students of the Government High Schools of Khagarijan Block of Nagaon District, Assam.
- The study was conducted in the session of 2023-2024.

1.7 Methodology

Table: 1.1 Schematic Presentation of the Survey Design

Sl. No.	Type	Sources
1.1.1	Nature of Research	Narrative Research Method
1.1.2	Variables of the Study	Independent Variables - ICL and CLT
1.1.3	Population of the Study	The total Government High Schools of Khagarijan Block of Nagaon District, Assam
1.1.4	Sample of the Study	A sample of 6 numbers (20% of the total population) of the Govt. High Schools of Khagarijan Block of Nagaon District, Assam
1.1.5	Tools and Techniques	Self-made tool:
		1. One Observation Schedule
		2. One Information Schedule
1.1.6	Sources of Data	1. Primary Sources
		2. Secondary Sources
1.1.7	Sampling Technique	Simple Random Sampling Technique

The investigators have personally visited the Government High Schools to verify the data. After obtaining the necessary permission from the school authority the investigators collected the information and responses for the present study.

Table 1.2

Name of the selected schools

Sl No.	Name of School
1	Barpathory Bapuji HSS
2	Barpathori Binapani Girls HS
3	Bebejia PKS HS School
4	Bhogeswar Hazarika Girls HS

5

Jamuguri Bapuji HS

6

Senchowa Amar Borkakoti HS

1.8 Analysis and Interpretation of Data

1.8.1 Objective wise Analysis and Interpretation of Data

1.8.2 Objective-1

To study the major challenges in creating an inclusive classroom strategy with special reference to the Government High Schools of Khagarijan Block of Nagaon District, Assam.

To analyze the first objective, the information schedule is applied by the investigators.

Theme 1. Parents Attitude: The parents' role is the most crucial factor in the successful implementation of the inclusion process since a negative attitude has a negative effect. From the collected data for the present study, the investigators have found that most of the parents are not properly aware of the concept of inclusive education, and they showed a negative attitude towards the better education process for their children with special needs. The awareness of parents regarding the process of inclusion for children with special needs is very important for the successful implementation of inclusive education.

Theme 2. Lack of Trained Teacher: The teacher's negative attitude and unawareness regarding children with special needs also negatively impact both personality development and inclusive strategy in the classroom teaching-learning process. Children with special needs who feel inadequate will not benefit from it. In this concern, it is an urgent requirement to appoint special teachers to teach children with special needs. One of the significant obstacles to successful inclusion is a teacher's lack of accountability.

Theme 3. Infrastructural Facilities: One of the major obstacles to the effective and successful implementation of inclusive education is infrastructural barriers. According to the needs of children with special needs, the infrastructure that is now available in the Government High Schools does not meet their special needs.

Theme 4. Inadequate Resources and Supporting Materials: The successful implementation of inclusive education for children with special needs can be seriously hampered by a lack of resources and supportive materials. Their ability to engage in educational activities may be hampered by the absence of these needful resources and supportive materials.

Theme 5. Insufficient assessment or evaluation methods for CWSN: Since each student is different, they should each receive a personalized assessment and evaluation that takes into account

their particular qualities. But due to the slow and limited access of the evaluation procedure to serve children with special needs, it remains a significant barrier regarding the successful implementation of inclusive strategy in the classroom teaching-learning process. The Government High Schools of Assam lack adequate policy guidelines for evaluating and assessing children with special needs is one of the major barriers to the successful implementation of inclusive education in the present perspective.

1.8.3. Objective-2

To highlight the current strategy/plan for CLT in class X of the studied schools.

To analyze the second objective, the information schedule is applied by the investigators. From the collected data, the following results are found:

- I. **Separate objectives for CLT:** For oral/spoken English, the Board of Secondary Education (SEBA), Assam prepared a syllabus for class IX and X to help the learners develop a habit of speaking English. They prepared objectives to enable the learners to produce English sounds, stress, rhythm, etc. appropriately. Students must use appropriate words, phrases, and sentences at the spoken level. They must use proper pauses in speech and use expressions, thoughts, feelings and ideas. They must acquire reasonable speed and flow in language. (SEBA, Doc., 2021)
- II. **Text-book for practice:** The Board of Secondary Education, Assam with a team of ELT experts develop a separate spoken English practice book for class IX and X students. The book provides knowledge on the sounds of letters, words and sentences to help learners have a strong base in pronunciation, their speaking habits and develop communication skills. The units of the book are divided into two parts. Part I is for class IX (Unit I-XI), and Part II is for class X (Unit XII-XXI). All the units provide beautiful conversations on the main topic, some of them are greetings, meeting people, asking for help, expressing joy and sorrow, and so on. The book significantly follows the maxims of teaching and the topics are organized in a simple to complex manner.
- III. **CD:** To help the students, a free CD along with the textbook is also provided so that they can listen to recorded conversation and use that properly in their conversation.
- IV. **Phonetic Drills:** Up to class X, students must know about the 44 sounds (20 vowels and 24 consonants) in the English language. They should follow stress and rhythm while uttering sentences. They might be able to count syllables in a word and follow intonation patterns.
- V. **Facial Expressions:** Depending on linguistic situations, students are instructed to learn formal (official conversation, public speaking, broadcasting, and so on) and informal (conversation with friends, fellow workers, family members, etc.) expressions in their speech.
- VI. **Online App:** An online App is also introduced to play language games of different levels. The assessment or examinations of spoken English is taken through this App.

1.8.4 Objective-3

To find out the major challenges faced by students of class X for CLT in the visited schools.

To analyze the third objective, an observation schedule is applied. From the collected data, the following results are identified:

- I. **Lack of Experts:** As stated by Richards (2006), the CLT teachers' role should be like a facilitator who can create a classroom climate conducive to language learning and provide language opportunities for students to use and practice the target language properly. From the collected data, it is found that the CLT teachers are either from English literature backgrounds or from another subject background. The CLT teachers should be from an English Language Teaching (ELT) background because an ELT teacher has better knowledge of the linguistic contents like phonetic aspects and so on. From the study, the researchers also came to know that no ELT training for the teachers is arranged for this purpose. As a result, English is not practiced in the way how it should be.
- II. **Limited Time:** CLT needs lots of time to make learners fluent. They learn by making mistakes. The teacher needs to provide constant support by correcting their mistakes. In a 45-minute class, it is impossible to supervise all the students together. They need more classes to cover one unit. On the other side, class X is a crucial year for students. They have many core and difficult subjects to prepare for board exams. In that sense, this course at this level may over-burden them.
- III. **Large class:** The study finds out that the schools do not follow the teacher-student ratio of 1:30 as per NCTE/NEP2020 norms. They have more than 30 students in a class. In some schools, they have more than 70 students. The teacher finds difficulties in maintaining a conducive classroom environment and practicing CLT in such situations.
- IV. **Lack of Proper Device:** The SEBA launches an online App 'SEBA Spoken English' where different levels of language games are available. To play those games, students need smart mobile phones. Many poor students cannot afford to buy that at a high rate. Moreover, they also need laptops to run the CD provided to them for practice. The govt. of Assam facilitates ICT rooms in govt. schools. But, how much they are operative that is the thing to be everyone's concern. Students also need a computer operator to facilitate them with technical issues, especially during their spoken English examination, conducted in online mode.
- V. **Network Problems:** The study finds out that students and teachers face lots of troubles due to frequent cut down of electricity in rural areas and network issues. It hampers the smooth running of the course.
- VI. **Lack of Motivation:** As per NEP2020, the educational curriculum gets a new look. Certain modifications are done in the CLT field also. Students especially from poor socioeconomic categories are found inattentive in learning spoken English due to various shortages in their lives and livelihoods. They need proper motivation to sustain education despite having odds and obstacles in their day-to-day life.

1.9 Conclusion

Inclusive classroom learning and communicative language teaching are different entities, they have to work together for a common educational goal. It is not impossible to have a better classroom environment if teachers and students work together with cooperation and understanding. The drawbacks can be corrected with proper initiatives taken by the school authority, teachers, students, parents, policymakers and the government itself.

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