

Valuable Guidance of Communication Theory to The Language Teachers & Learners

Dr.Malathi.P¹, B.Porselvi²

^{1,2}M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Assistant Professor, J.J.College of Engineering and Technology

Abstract: Communication theory is an orderly system which involves all the possibilities to exchange a message and it is the nature of the communication process. Erving Goffman says that the presentation of self is most valuable element to understand the process of communication. He also highlights the significance of expression as the appearance of an individual is necessary to support the receiver to understand the message. He try to convey the meaning that the sender likely to present. Of course the truth underlying in both cases is that the expression of the thoughts needs to reach the receiver with the same context. Therefore, anyone who looks into communication theory should include the possibilities drafted by the great scholar Erving Goffman. Communication theory explains the theoretical perspectives and reveals the fundamental changes and consequences of the happening while speakers change their communication approaches. It also describes how the situation and expression together make changes in style and nature of communication. This article depicts the significance of communication theory and how it helps the learners to attain the proficiency in target language.

INTRODUCTION

Griffin's book 'A First Look at Communication Theory' in 1997 summarizes the communication theories in which every theory has its own experience and named by its nature (pp. 230-496). Few of these theories of communication are related to teaching and learning of the language with which a teacher must be acquainted with the profession. The communication theories and their process are explained with the origin.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT THEORY

This theory postulates on 1975 by Jean Piaget, who has wide ranges of impact on learning theories and teaching methods in the language classroom. It has some fundamental theme of teaching reform movements too. The concept of this theory says that human beings have understanding power to know the meaning of a language through an interaction between their own experiences

and ideas. But at the infancy stage, it is an interaction with the familiarity of the sounds and the caring with love. Author named these structures of understanding is schemata. His famous postulation is 'A truth learnt is only a half-truth; the whole truth is reconstructed and rediscovered by the individual himself/herself' (pp.35). He also recommended that individual creates new information from their experiences through the processes of accommodation. When individuals assimilate, they include the new practices into an existing structure without altering that frame. He insists the value of action as action presume prior research, but current research has worth only with a view to real action (pp. 28).

Social constructivism views each learner as a unique character with varying requirements and settings. The student is also taken as a complicated and multidimensional personality. The responsibility of learning must be residing progressively more with the students. The social constructivism thus insists the significance of the students' enthusiasm/interest concerned in the process of learning. But earlier educational viewpoints insist more about the duty and responsibilities of the teachers which must be in their hands and the students played a passive or receptive role. This theory also emphasizes that learners create their own understanding and from that they do not just mirroring and reflect what they understand. Students give importance to the meaning and they try to match with the regularity order in the events of the humankind. Knowledge is not passively acquired, but actively built up by the understanding of the subject/concept (pp. 162).

According to Von Glasersfeld a famous theorist motivation to learn can be sustained strongly dependent on the learner's confidence on the potential for learning (pp. 121-123). This feeling of ability and faith in potential provides confidence to resolve new problems which are derived from real task learning experience.

These first hand experiences are much more influential than any other learning processes, though they have much room for innovation and motivation. This is accomplished with the zone of proximal growth where students are challenged within close proximity which makes them to feel slightly above than their expected progress level. He insists the role of capable peers in the actual development as the span of distance between the level of real developmental and the level of potential development under the expert's guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. At this point, what have to be understood is the students gain more self-confidence to face with more complex challenges. This confidence again helps them to gain the experience of success when working hard and complete the difficult task. It is easy to know about the underlying notion of the learner. An active processor Di Vesta suggests an assumption that 'there is no one set of universal learning laws and no one such a law applying to all learning domains' (pp.208). What has to know is that knowledge which is decontextualised does not give the skills which will help to understand the authentic tasks. It is well experienced by the researchers that the people cannot work with the concept in the difficult situation. In this situation people have to practice the complex interrelationships that determine how and when the concept is used. A social constructivist notion of education is that of situational learning, where the student/ learner gets involved in activities straightly related to the application of learning. While applying these rules they have to keep in mind that it takes place within a culture similar to the applied setting. Piaget an educationist state that the effort which is taken by the student should come from his potential and not by the situation/outside compulsion. Students' intelligence is agreeing to undertake the authentic work with cent percent and they are not showing interest on accepting pre-tested information from external resources. Hence he is suggested by his evidence that the laws of all intelligence are taken be considered and respected. (pp. 159). Moreover, as noted above, he insists on the importance of student's interests on handling the situation which he called as the 'fuel' of the constructive process. The student's interest is sustained and lead to prolonged effort when the activities are intellectually satisfying their expectations. Appealing for interest is especially important for students because there is a chance of more distractions. Even for teachers, efforts on teaching are more productive when the students

involved in the learning process. This involvement among the students fuel the interests of the teacher as thoroughly engaged system and delivers their in-depth knowledge on that topic. Interested students learn fundamentally in different ways to gain a new concept in a particular context. There are quite a lot of processes that are essential for teaching to the interested learners. They show interest in each and every step of the learning process.

The effective teaching plan has different stages such as the mechanisms for mutual planning, diagnosis students' need, learning environment, setting objectives, formulation of purposes, selection of resources, and evaluation of learning. Interested student show keen attention to the purpose of learning a concept or they want to know the importance of learning and wants to express themselves. The subject that is taught in-depth may be valuable and relevant to the learners' experiences. Once these students satisfied with the learning processes, then they show sustained motivated to learn any complex concept. They need help only to overcome the inhibition behaviour and advance about learning. Teachers' application of the content, involvement of the students in the process, and deeper understanding of the fundamental concepts are some of the intersections among emphases in constructivism. Most of the learning process that has grown on the fundamentals of constructivism recommends that learning is consummate by best using a hands-on approach. Students comprehend and learn most of the concept by experimentation, and not by just verbal explanation. They used to tie a relevant action to all information, and knowing an object or an event is to use it by incorporating it into an action plan. Students are left free hand to make their own understanding, innovations and conclusion. In addition to this it insists that the process of learning never done with perfection or done with nothing procedure. Actually, while learning, students start to learn a new idea that is offered to them by the improvisation of knowledge they already possess or they compare the new concept with the knowledge they already acquired and add new concepts to their own understanding. Therefore, it is the important responsibility of teachers that they have to evaluate the standard/knowledge of their students continually to make sure that the students' observations of the new concept are depends on what the teacher most likely to projected. Piaget not only gives importance to the interest of the students, but also to the intellectualized

affectivity. The mutual affection brings effective interaction and the elements of observation make the expected level, which in turn motivates the elements of understanding to the highest level. The teacher has to build a mutual affection to bring out the effective interaction and provide the expected observation atmosphere to reach the higher level, which in turn motivates the understanding power to the highest level for better learning. The uniqueness of a constructivist classroom teaching is that it more concentrate on the learners/students who are being actively involved in the democratic environment with the synergistic activities with the guidance of a teacher who facilitates a process of learning. By this, students are getting actively involved in the learning activities and give value to their responsibility. Henceforth constructivist classroom is suitable for language learning, because it provides more importance to the interactive and student-centred atmosphere. Interactive is possible only if the student is comfortable with the process of learning, including all the aspects of nonverbal communication with the teacher.

COORDINATED MANAGEMENT OF MEANING THEORY

Pearce developed the coordinated management of meaning theory in 2000. According to this theory, when persons interrelate to convey the social system, they have a tendency to construct the meaning of their conversation. Every human being has the quality of comprising these kinds of interpersonal compositions which guides to elucidate their actions and reactions. It is a practical theory that sees communication has a responsibility to do things completely on its commitment as of discussion about them. But when looking at the communication perspective consists of a two-sided process. Communication occurs only when a person coordinates with others, and by that coordination they construct the meaning. Hence, these interwoven threads of the process and actions involve in the texture of that particular concept. This theory consists of heuristic models and concepts that enable the communicator to recognize and a large amount of progress has taken place to explain the ongoing method of communication. All in whole, this theory has significant three basic processes which decides the features of it likely coordination, consistency in delivery of meaning, and obscurity. Independently or sometime

in combination, these processes help to clarify and explain the way of the creation of social realities and who they emerge from the conversation.

This theory is one of an increasing number of theories that view the communication process is based on 'performative' i.e. doing things relevant to nonverbal communication and not just talking about the work and 'constitutive' that tell the material substance of the social world. This theory speaks about the communication perspectives and means which looks at the deliverance of information rather than seeing through it. It denotes that communication is understood as the means by which one makes the objects and events of the social world (pp. 34-42). It is obvious from this theory that the language teacher has to follow performative and constitutive communication progression to create the learning process which is necessarily comfortable with the multi aspects of nonverbal communication to the students.

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE THEORY

Leon Festinger in 1957 postulates the theory of cognitive dissonance. This theory basically deals with the cognitive dissonance which is understood as the upsetting/stressed state of mental process when people do things that they wouldn't normally familiar to do (pp. 1-3). In other words, they have an attitude that never wants to go along with their opinion that they already hold. This theory also explains that the experience of dissonance or incompatible beliefs and actions are reluctant and people are highly motivated to avoid it. The best way to avoid or change the mind from the feelings of dissonance is to avoid hearing views that oppose their own believe. In addition to that these people are ready to change their beliefs to match their actions or attitudes. After making a hard decision they will convince themselves and seeking a right /matching reassurance for that view. The theory also tries to give different statements that dissonance is an uncomfortable feeling caused by holding contradictory ideas simultaneously. This theory also proposes that people have a motivational drive and influence by a positive approach to reduce dissonance. All these kind of mind change is possible after taking a hard decision to change their attitudes, beliefs, and actions (pp. 25). Of course dissonance is also reduced by all means of mitigating, censoring, and refusing. It is one of the most influential theories of social psychology and people extensively

studied about it. One angling something, finds it unattainable, and lessens the disagreement by criticizing it. A powerful reason for the dissonance is that when an idea is conflicting with a fundamental element of the self-concept. Cognitive dissonance is nothing but the feelings/emotions of painful tension which comes from getting disturbed by two conflicting thoughts/ view in the mind at the same time. On the other side of the cognitive dissonance works as a very powerful motivator and will often lead to change one or other of the conflicting beliefs or actions. This discomfort of dissonance often makes to feel like tension/ stress between the two opposing thoughts (pp. 32). This feel of dissonance increases with the importance and effect /impact of the decision, go serious along with the difficulty of reversing it. In the language classroom, if the teacher or the students experience the dissonance, then the students will be distracted from their concentration or will get annoyed and show indiscipline which will disturb the other students' concentration. Hence dissonances will a barrier to the success of a teacher's career and the students' academic performance. It affects the progress and result of the institution which in turn affects the name and fame of the institution. Students should avoid dissonance and if it is unavoidable then they should go away from the place to avoid the situation and should change attitude / show less involvement. This change of attitude has different levels according to the nature of the student. This is explained by the self perception theory and the emotion of the human, and many times dominates the nature of the human and his behaviour will take the colour of his level of emotion. If a teacher is able to change the dissonance and persuade them to perform in the expected way, then, the student will learn and acquire the language with communicative competence.

COGNITIVE APPRAISAL THEORY OF EMOTION

It is also known as Lazarus Theory. In the paucity of physiological arousal people are not able to decide the idea and not to express them after interpreting or explaining. Actually, they take part in the happening, but the paucity of physiological arousal makes the different opinions. Two things are important in this whether people interpret the event as good or bad for them, and what people believe is the cause of the event (Lazarus et.al pp. 819-821). This challenges the two-factor separation of arousal and emotion and this is supported

by addition of thinking steps. For example, when a colleague gets promoted one might feel resentful if one thinks he deserves the promotion more than they do. It is very well suited in the classroom behaviour too. If a teacher gives a reward to one of the closest competitors, the other person will feel resentment. Hence, teachers should know how to handle the situation and eradicate resentment among students. Students are highly emotional and expressive characters which make them sensitive even for plain comments. Hence the teacher is the people who has arisen the positive cognitive emotion to uninteresting students and guide their intellectual towards the learning process.

THE COMMUNICATION ACCOMMODATION THEORY

It is developed in 1971 by Howard Giles which deals with some of the code-switching and cognitive reasons for these impacts. Other cognitive changes in speech as individuals try to find emphasize on the social disparities between themselves and their listener. When speakers look for a consent/agreement in a social status, they are likely to congregate their communication to that of their listener. This can be included by varying aspects of communication as the choice of language which matches with the communicator, and its relevant accent related to the situation, nature of talk with paralinguistic features used in the interaction. Though the speaker comes out with all necessary aspects to get the approval they may also commit on deviating speech (Giles et.al pp. 179-180). Through divergent speech individuals insist the social detachment between themselves and their listener. This detachment is done by using linguistic features as the characteristic of their own group When two different persons talks with each other, they will tend to subconsciously change the style of speech in the direction of the style which is used by the listener or speaker. Not only the style gets matched with listener, but also the speaker tends to go with the listener's nonverbal communication.

CONCLUSION

All the communication theories encourage the positive conversation among the people and extend the interaction to build a smooth social interaction. The changes in interaction reveal the attraction, concurrence and liking between the speakers. In other words, it

creates a greater rapport between them so that they accept each other and extend the interaction with some more information. The teachers and the learners must understand the nuances of communication process and make an effort to extend the interaction in the academic environment. This kind of knowledge will direct both the teachers and learners to achieve the expected result. They have to recognise the possibility of overturn of the speaker. Some of the speakers are strong about their personality or character to maintain the state of individuality than the speaking and responding differently from the other person even though has a strong influence. This theoretical perspective also examines the underlying shift in the communication styles when two speakers by means of inspirations and consequences happening during the communication. Language learning is art of acquiring the unknown language by its all means with communication skills.

REFERENCE

- [1] Giles, Howard, Donald m. Taylor and Recharad Bourhis, "Towards a theory of Interpersonal Accommodation through Language. Some Canadian Data." *Language in Society*. (1973): 2(2), 177-192.
- [2] Griffin, E. A first look at communication theory (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill. (1997): 230, 337, 375, 387-398, 476, 484, 496.
- [3] Lazarus, Richard S. Progress on a cognitive-motivational-relational theory of Emotion. *American Psychologist*, (1991): 46(8), 819-834.
- [4] Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, Stanford University, Stanford, Calif., (1957): 1-32.
- [5] Pearce, W.B., "The Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM)," in *Theorizing about Intercultural Communication*, William B. Gudykunst (ed.), Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, (2005): 35-54.
- [6] Piaget, J. *The Origin of the Idea of Chance in Children*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1975.
- [7] Von Glasersfeld, E. (1995). *Radical constructivism: A way of knowing and learning*. London: Falmer Press