Modern Trends for Communicative Language Teaching
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Abstract:
This research aims at investigating new trends that shed light on the fresh best and modern researches that deal with requirement of the modern period that improves Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). However, critics of CLT maintain on meaning that their are weakness in this approach. The first is that many students cannot learn language trying to pick up the grammar subconsciously. Second many language teachers either do not believe in teaching language through a communicative approach, or their language skills are not sufficiently well developed for them to do so.

This research has also encouraged a growing emphasis on teaching of strategies and form-focused which challenges communicative approaches of language learning. Eventually this research has basic critiques of CLT.

CLT is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign languages that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. It is also referred to as "communicative approach to the teaching of foreign languages" or simply the "Communicative Approach.

Current research claims that the most adults learners acquire a second language only to the extent that they are exposed to and activity involved in real meaningful communication in that language. For most students language is best acquired when it is not studied in a direct or explicit way.
1. Introduction

In "Communicative Language Teaching for the Twenty-First Century," Savignon, (1972:2) identifies five components of a communicative curriculum. She sees the identification of learner communicative needs and goals as the first step in the development of a teaching program that involves learners as active participants in the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning. (Marianne, 2001:13)

1.2. What is Communicative Language Teaching?

Communicative language teaching is an approach to teaching that is directed at developing communicative abilities in the learners either by teaching aspects of communicative competence (the weak version) or by creating conditions for learners to learn through communicating (the strong version) (Rod, 2003:340).

No long ago American structural linguistics and behaviorist psychology were the prevailing influences in language teaching methods and materials, second/foreign language teachers talked about communication in terms of our language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skill categories were widely accepted and provided ready-made framework for methods manuals, learner course materials, and teacher education programs. Speaking and writing were collectively described as active skills, reading and listening as passive skills (Marianne, 2001:14).

Today listeners and readers are no longer are regarded as passive. They are seen as active participants in the negotiation of meaning Schemata, expectancies, and top-down/bottom-up processing are among the terms now used to capture the necessarily complex, interactive nature of this negotiation. Yet full and widespread understanding of communication as negotiation has been hindered by the terms that come to replace the earlier active/passive dichotomy. The skills needed to engage in speaking and writing activities were described subsequently as productive, whereas listening and reading skills were said to be receptive.

Communicative language teaching aims to develop the ability of learners to use language in real communication. Brown and Yule (1983:18) characterize communication as involving two general purposes the international function, where language is used to establish and maintain contact, and the transactional function where language is used referentially to exchange information. Communicative language teaching then is directed at enabling learners to function internationally and transactional in L2. In this respect, however, the goal of Communicative language teaching
is not so different from that of earlier methods such as the audio-lingual or oral-situational method, which also claimed to develop the ability to use language communicatively. Communicative language teaching, however, drew on very different models of language. Whereas the earlier methods were based on view of language as a set of linguistic systems (phonological, lexical, and grammatical) (Rod 2003:27).

Communicative language teaching drew on a functional model language (Halliday’s) and a theory of communicative competence. To adopt Widdowson’s (1978) terms, of structural approaches to teaching focus on usage, i.e. the ability to use language correctly, communicative language teaching is directed at use, i.e. the ability to use language meaningfully and appropriately in the construction of discourse.

In fact, though, communicative language teaching is not a monolithic and uniform approach. Howat (1984:12) distinguishes a "weak" and a "strong" version. The former is based on the assumptions that the components of communicative competence can be identified and systematically taught. In this respect, a weak version of communicative language teaching does not involve a radical departure from earlier methods as it still reflects what White (1988:81) refers to as a Type A approach to language teaching, i.e., an approach that is interventionist. Thus, instead of ( or, perhaps. In addition to ) teaching learners the structural properties of language, a weak version of communicative language teaching proposes they be taught how to realize specific general notions such as "duration" and "possibility", and language functions such as "inviting" and "apologizing". The weak version of communicative language teaching is manifest in the proposals for notional/functional syllabuses developed by Wilkins (1976) and Van Ek (1976).

In contrast, a strong version of communicative language teaching claims that "language is acquired through communication" (Howatt 1984:279). That is, learners do not first acquire language as a structural system and then learn how to use this system in communication but rather actually discover the system itself in the process of learning how to communicate.

The strong version of communicative language teaching therefore, involves providing learners with opportunities to experience how language is used in communication. This approach reflects what White (1988) has called a Type B approach, i.e., an approach that is non-interventionist and holistic. It is evident in Krashen and Terrell’s (1983) Natural Approach and also in proposals for teaching centered on the use of tasks (Candlin 1987).

The inadequacy of a four-skill model of language use is now recognized. And the shortcomings of audio-lingual methodology are
widely acknowledged. There is general acceptance of the complexity and interrelatedness of skills in both written and oral communication and of the need for learners to have the experience of communication, to participate in the negotiation of meaning. Newer, more comprehensive theories of language and language behaviors have replaced those that looked to American structuralism and behaviorist psychology for support. The expanded, interactive view of language behaviors they offer presents a number of challenges for teachers among them. How should form and function be integrated in an instructional sequence? What is an appropriate norm for learners? How is it determined? What is an error? And what, if anything, should be done when one occurs? How is language learning success to be measured? Acceptance of communicative criteria entails a commitment to address these admittedly complex issues (Marianne 2003:14).

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The distinction between a weak and a strong version of communicative language teaching parallels the distinction between task-supported language teaching and task-based language teaching. The weak version views task as a way of providing communicative practice. For language items that have been introduced in a more traditional way. The constitute is a necessary but not a sufficient basis for language curriculum. The strong version sees tasks as a mean of enabling learners to learn a language by experiencing how it is used in communication. In strong version, tasks are both necessary and sufficient for learning. We will now explore these two ways of viewing tasks in language teaching in greater depth (Rod 2003:27).

CLT is better categorized as an emphasis or an aim rather than as an approach. Johnson and Morrow (1981) define CLT as a second language teaching in which communicative competence is the aim of the course. Johnson and Porter (1983:91) state that to qualify as being communicative, activities must "involve some element of choice by the learner."
An awareness that second-language students can know the grammar and yet be unable to activate that knowledge to communicate has led theorists and teachers to consider what activities might enable students to develop communication skills. Different authors stress different aspects of CLT. Taylor (1983) lists five characteristics:

1- Students should participate in extended discourse in real context.
2- They should share information that the others do not know.
3- They should have choices about what they are going to say and how they are going to say it.
4- They should communicate with a definite purpose in mind.
5- They should talk about real topics in real situations.

Second-language teachers may choose to develop a CLT course from one of three different bases: a grammar base, a functional notional syllabus, or the natural approach, in which students participate in real language situation without any attempt to alter the grammar content (Allen, 1984). CLT is a communicative orientation that stress affective, cognitive, and social factors, and its activities are inner directed and student centered. As Littlewood, (1981:17) says, "Language learning takes place inside the learner and, as teachers know, to their frequent frustration, may aspects of it are beyond their pedagogical control" (Hossein2000:95).

CLT suggests that grammatical structure might better be subsumed under various functional categories. In CLT we pay considerably less attention to the over presentation and discussion of grammatical rules than we traditionally did. A great deal of use of authentic language is implied in CLT, as we attempt to build fluency. It is important to note, however, that fluency should never be encouraged at the expense of clear, an ambiguous, direct communication (Brown, 1987:213).

How and Why did Communicative Language Teaching Developed?

The origins of contemporary CLT can be traced to concurrent developments in both Europe and north America in Europe the language needs of a rapidly increasing group of immigrants and guest workers as well as a rich British linguistic tradition including social as well as linguistic context in description of language behavior led the council of Europe to develop a syllabus for learners based on notional functional concepts of language use derived from neo- Firthian systemic or functional linguistics that views language as meaning potential and maintains the language as meaning potential and maintains the centrality of context of situation in understanding language systems and how they work a threshold level of language ability was described for each of the major languages of Europe in terms of what learners should be able to do with the language. (Van Ek 1975) functions were based on assessment of learner
needs and specified the end result the goal of an instructional program the
term communicative attached itself to programs that used a functional
notional syllabus based on needs assessment and the language for specific
purposes (LSP )movement was launched .

Other European developments focused on the process of communic-
ative classroom language learning in Germany for example against a
backdrop of social democratic concerns for individual empowerment
articulated in the writings of the contemporary philosopher Jorgen
Habermas (1970 )language teaching methodologists took the lead in the
development of classroom materials that encouraged learner choice
(Gandlin 1978 ).Their systematic collection of English language teaching
were used in teacher in service courses and workshops to guide curriculum
change exercises were designed to exploit the variety of social meanings
contained within particular grammatical structures. A system of chains
encouraged teachers and learners to define their own learning path through
principles selection of relevant exercises (Piepho 1974, Piepho and
Bredella 1976). Similar exploratory projects were also initiated by Gandlin
at his then academic home the University of Lancaster in England and by
Holec (1979)and his colleagues at the University of Nancy in France
Supplementary teacher resource materials promoting classroom became
increasingly popular during the 1970 (e.g. Maley and Duff 1978) .

Meanwhile in the United States, Hymes (1971 ) had re-acted to
Ghomsky`s (1965:54) characterization of the linguistic competence of the
ideal native speaker and proposed the term communicative competence to
represent the use of language in social context or the observance of
sociolinguistic norms of appropriator . His concern with speech
communities and the integration of language communication and culture
was not unlike that of Halliday in the British linguistic tradition (see
Halliday 1978 :12) Hymes`s communicative competence may be seen as
the equivalent of Halliday`s meaning potential similarly his focus was not
language learning but language as social behavior In subsequent
interpretations of the significance of Hymes` views for learners
methodologists working in the United States tended to focus on native
speaker cultural norms and the difficulty if not impossibility of
authentically representing them in a classroom of nonnative speakers. In
light of this difficulty the appropriateness of communicative competence as
an instructional goal was questioned (e.g.Paulston 1974).

At the same time in a research project at the University of Illinois
Savignon (1972) used the term communicative competence to characterize
the ability of classroom language learners to interact with other speakers to
make meaning as distinct from their ability to recite dialogues or perform on discrete point tests of grammatical knowledge. At a time when pattern practice and error avoidance were the rule in language teaching this study of adult classroom acquisition of French looked at the effect of practice on the use of coping strategies as part of an instructional program. By encouraging learners to ask for information to seek clarification to use circumlocution and whatever other linguistic and nonlinguistic resources they could master to negotiate meaning and stick to the communicative task at hand teachers were invariably leading learners to take risks and speak in other than memorized patterns. The coping strategies identified in this study became the basis for subsequent identification by Ganale and Swain (1980:18) of strategic competence which along with grammatical competence and sociolinguistic competence appeared in their work.

Three component frameworks for communicative competence (The original Ganale and Swain framework with subsequent modifications is discussed below). Test results at the end of the instructional period showed conclusively that learners who had practiced communication in Lieu of laboratory pattern drills performed with no less accuracy on discrete point tests of grammatical structure. On the other hand their communicative competence as measured in terms of fluency comprehensibility effort and amount of communication in unrehearsed oral communicative tasks significantly surpassed that of learners who had had no such practice. Learner reactions to the test formats lent further support to the view that even beginners respond well to activities that less them focus on meaning as opposed to formal features.

The concept of communicative competence was originally developed thirty years ago by the sociolinguist Hymes (1972), as a response to perceived limitations in Chomsky’s competence/performance model of language. It was then further developed in the early 1980s by Canale and Swain. According to Canale (1983:5), communicative competence refers to 'the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication'.

A collection of role play games and other communicative classroom activities were subsequently developed for inclusion in adapting the French GREDF2 materials Voix et Visages de la France. The accompanying guide (Savignon1974:112) described their purpose as that of involving learners in the experience of communication. Teachers were encouraged to provide learners with the French equivalent of expressions that would help them to participate in the negotiation of meaning such as What’s the word for? please repeat I don’t understand. Not unlike the efforts of Gandlin and his colleagues working in a European EFL context the focus here was
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on classroom process and learner autonomy. The use of games, role play, pair work, and other small group activities has gained acceptance and is now widely recommended for inclusion in language teaching programs. CLT thus can be seen to derive from a multidisciplinary perspective that includes at a minimum linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology and educational research. Its focus has been the elaboration and implementation of programs and methodologies that promote the development of functional language ability through learner participation in communicative events. Central to CLT is the understanding of language learning as both an educational and a political issue. Language teaching is inextricably tied to language policy. Viewed from a multicultural as well as international perspective, diverse sociopolitical contexts mandate not only a diverse set of language learning goals but a diverse set of teaching strategies. Program design and implementation depend on negotiation between policy makers, linguists, researchers, and teachers. And evaluation of program success requires a similar collaborative effort. The selection of methods and materials appropriate to both the goals and context of teaching begins with an analysis of socially defined learner needs and styles of learning.

3. How has Communicative Language Teaching Been Interpreted?

The classroom model shows the hypothetical integration of four components that have been advanced as comprising communicative competence (Savignon 1972, 1983, 1987, in press; Canale and Swain 1980; Canale 1983a; Byram 1997 cited in Marianne, 2001:17). Adapted from the familiar "inverted pyramid" classroom model proposed by Savignon (1983), it shows, through practice and experience in an increasingly wide range of communicative context and events, learner gradually expand their communicative competence, consisting of grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociocultural competence, and strategic competence. Although the relative importance of the various components depends on the overall level of communicative competence, each one is essential. Moreover, all components are interrelated. They cannot be developed or measured in isolation and one cannot go from one component to the other as one strings beads to make a necklace. Rather, an increase in one component produces a corresponding increase in overall communicative competence. Grammatical competence refers to sentence-level grammatical forms, the ability to recognize the lexical, morphological, syntactic, and phonological feature of a language and form words and sentences. Grammatical competence is not linked to any single theory of grammar and does not include the ability to state rules of
usage. One demonstrates grammatical competence not by stating a rule but by using a rule in the interpretation, expression, or negotiation of meaning.

CLT is not a classroom approach in the same sense as used in this text, that is no well-defined set of techniques and activities for the classroom in this "approach". CLT is better categorized as an emphasis or an aim rather than as an approach. Johnson and Morrow (1981) define CLT as a second-language teaching in which communicative-competence is the aim of the course. Johnson and Porter (1983:91) state that to qualify as being communicative, activities must "involve some element of choice by the learner." The trend toward CLT has come about as a result of the realization of how complex communication really is, Johnson and Morrow (1981:1) point out the large numbers of students in traditional grammar-based course who are "structurally competent but communicatively incompetent." Savignon (1983:58) states that "it is difficult to focus on learned rules of grammar when one has a message to get across." Taylor (1983:72) advises that although some students can transfer "intellectual understanding of structure ... into real communicative situation, most cannot do so." Savignon (1983:8) describes communication not as a certain quantity of grammatical knowledge but as "a continuous process of expression, interpretation, and negotiation."

3.1. The Role of Teaching
In the light of such findings the very possibility of teaching a second language has been questioned. But surely there is a clear difference between controlling a process and nurturing it. As an example we might consider the analogy of caring for a plant. Given a large pot, good soil, sufficient light and water, it will grow according to innate developmental processes. This analogy reminds us that even natural processes need optimum conditions to unfold. We must ask ourselves what the optimum conditions for second language learning are.

As mentioned above, one answer to this question is the strong or indirect communicative approach which represents an attempt to be as learner-centred as possible. It views language acquisition as a natural yet unpredictable process of development, and so rejects more traditional teacher-centred styles of teaching based on linguistically structured syllabuses. But, according to Swan (1985b: 77-8):

It is quite false to represent older courses as concentrating throughout on form at the expense of meaning, or as failing to teach people to 'do things
with language’ . . . Structures have meanings, and traditional courses usually made a reasonable job of teaching them.
Although Swan makes a reasonable point, these older courses are still liable to be used in ways that treat language primarily as a formal system of rules, to be learned in a mechanical or rote fashion. This may be seen in many non-English speaking countries, where older ways of language teaching are still quite dominant. The persistent reliance on the grammar-translation method in the Japanese education system has been described by Scholefield (1997) in some detail. In my own experience as an assistant language teacher in Japanese senior high schools, the opportunities for communicative practice are extremely limited, and often merely a form of extended transformation drill. As a consequence most learners have only beginner-level fluency even after many years of study. According to Shih (1999: 20-1), this state of affairs also extends to Japanese universities, where the predominance of a linguistic approach to reading and writing has produced 'slow, inefficient readers' and writers focused mainly on 'sentence-level grammar and paragraph patterns'.

As a whole the communicative turn in language teaching represented by CLT has clearly highlighted the importance of the broader discourse and sociocultural features of language. The old pedagogic obsession with formal grammar has given way to an appreciation of grammar-in-use, and now language teachers almost instinctively ask themselves: How is the language used, when, why, and by who (or whom)?

### 3.2. Applying Communicative Principles

The various pedagogical principles of a communicative approach to language teaching can be expressed in more or less detail. For example, Finocchiaro & Brumfit's detailed discussion (1983: 91-3) can be summarised as follows:
Teaching is learner-centered and responsive to learners' needs and interests.
The target language is acquired through interactive communicative use that encourages the negotiation of meaning.
Genuinely meaningful language use is emphasized, along with unpredictability, risk-taking, and choice-making.
There is exposure to examples of authentic language from the target language community.
The formal properties of language are never treated in isolation from use; language forms are always addressed within a communicative context.
Learners are encouraged to discover the forms and structures of language for themselves.

There is a whole-language approach in which the four traditional language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) are integrated.

These principles are all related in some way to the theories of language learning that were discussed above. To summarize these: language acquisition is an unpredictable developmental process requiring a communicatively interactive and cooperative negotiation of meaning on the part of learners; the subsequent integration of comprehensible input and output influences the learner's developing language system (or interlanguage).

Communicative approaches to teaching, based on the above principles, challenge our understanding of the goals of instruction. An emphasis on meaningful use over form:
...means that accuracy and acquisition of the formal features of the [second language] are less a measure of successful language learning than are fluency and an ability to get something across comprehensibly to a native speaker (Sanders 1987: 222).

In order to encourage meaningful language use, many popular communicative activities involve 'elements of puzzle-solving, role play, or simulation' (Hadfield 1990: vi). They encourage learners to do things with information such as: guessing, searching, matching, exchanging, collecting, sharing, combining, and arranging.

Although communicative games are intended to have 'a non-linguistic goal or aim' (Hadfield 1990: v) this is usually only from the learners' perspective. Most often they are designed around a key language structure (for example, comparatives, present perfect tense, question forms) or a family of vocabulary items. If we consider the communicative principle of genuinely meaningful language use (see point 3 above), then such activities are not always rich in unpredictability or risk-taking for the learner. Other criticisms leveled at nominally communicative activities have concerned lack of 'relevance and interest' (Swan 1985b: 84), and restrictions on the range of learner response (Savignon 1991: 272; Thompson 1996: 13).

A communicative approach is often seen to need a syllabus based on language functions from which the necessary forms and structures will be derived. This is in contrast to a syllabus presenting the formal elements of language in a structured way, regardless of functional use. But if we look at mainstream course books such as Headway (Soars and Soars 2000), Language In Use (Doff and Jones 2000), or Matters (Bell and Gower 1997), we find each unit organized according to grammar and vocabulary,
as well as functional language skills. It would be wrong to see course books as a reflection of actual practice, but it would seem to indicate that a strictly communicative syllabus has not been widely embraced.

It is not only in the area of classroom activities and overall syllabus that the application of a communicative approach has been problematic; for teaching to be accountable it requires the monitoring and assessment of learning. In this area communicative approaches have encouraged us to see language development as an ongoing process rather than a static product (Prabhu 1990). A qualitative assessment of communicative competence would seem to provide a more realistic view of a learner's progress than a quantitative measurement of errors or mistakes. But unfortunately, as Savignon (1991: 266) has pointed out, 'qualitative evaluation of written and oral expression is time-consuming and not so straightforward'.

The various difficulties of applying a communicative approach, as discussed above, do not require us to question its pedagogical principles as such; rather it may simply be a case of putting new wine into old bottles. A functional syllabus is 'still a series of language patterns, albeit patterns linked to semantic and pragmatic values' (Willis and Willis 2001: 174), and communication activities in the classroom are often pale shadows of genuinely engaging interaction. As Grenfell (1994: 57) observes, 'the effect of features of so-called communicative-based books'. A more successful realization of communicative principles is perhaps found in both content-based and task-based teaching programs.

4. Critiques of CLT

One of the most famous attacks on CLT was offered by Michael Swan in Henry Widdowson responded in defense of CLT. More recently other writers e.g., Bax (2003:278-87) have criticized CLT for paying insufficient attention to the context in which teaching and learning take place, thought CLT has also been defend against this change (e.g. Harmer:288-94).

The Communicative Approach often seems to be interpreted as: if the teacher understands the student we have good communication. What can happen though is that a teacher who is from the same region, understands the students when they make errors resulting from first language influence. Problems with this is that regular speakers of the target language can have great difficulty understanding them. This observation asks to rethink and adapt the communicative approach. The adapted communicative approach should be a simulation where the teacher pretends to understand only that what any regular speaker of the target language would, and should react accordingly (Hattum, 2006:10).

4.1. The Basic Finding and Conclusions
CLT is not exclusively concerned with face-to-face oral communication. The principles of CLT apply equally to reading and writing activities that involve readers and writers engaged in the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning; the goal of CLT depends on learner needs in a given context. CLT does not require small-group or pair work; group tasks have been found helpful in many contexts as a way of providing increased opportunity and motivation for communication. However, classroom group or pair work should not be considered an essential feature and many will be inappropriate in some contexts. Finally, CLT does not exclude a focus on metalinguistic awareness or knowledge of rules of syntax, discourse, and social appropriateness.

References


