

Communicative Language Teaching Approach

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Annotation. *the article under discussion describes the roles of teachers and learners in CLT. The author of the article suggests different interesting techniques to improve the language competency and enhance motivation of the learners. facilitate. Communicative Language Teaching is a language teaching that starts from a communicative model of language and language use, and that seeks to translate this into a design for an instructional system, for materials, for teacher and learner roles and behaviors, and for classroom activities and techniques.*

Keywords: *CLT, traditional, interactive, method, improve, competency, independent, interdependent, contribute, communicative.*

Over the last four decades, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been recognized as an ideal approach to help learners acquire a foreign language. This approach stemmed from the changes of the British language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960s. A lot of British linguists contributed to the need for creating the Communicative Language Approach which seeks to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching (Hymes, 1972). This approach aims to put into practice procedures for the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) that recognize the interrelation of language and communication.

Richards and Rodgers described Communicative Language Teaching as an approach rather than a method. For this theorist the CLT is a philosophy of teaching based on the communicative use of the language. In addition, the CLT approach has been advocated by many linguists as it promotes functional concepts and especially communicative competence, term which creates an interdependence when talking about a communicative language approach, rather than grammatical structures, as central to teaching. First of all, it is necessary to know the meaning of the CLT. Different researchers have presented their understandings in relation to communicative language teaching. For example, Larsen-Freeman (2000) argues that CLT refers to a theoretical view of a communicative approach by promoting communication. The author also states that communicative competence is the main objective of teaching any language, by recognizing the interdependence of communication and language. In this sense, Savignon (1971) had already defined communicative language teaching as purposes and procedures in classroom learning, which is built on the theoretical concept: “communicative competence, basically means expression, interpretation and negotiation of meaning” (Savignon, 1971, p. 9).

The Communicative Language Teaching started from a theory of language as communication proposed by Hymes (1972) who stated that the objective of language teaching was to develop as he referred to communicative competence. This theorist, who was the initiator of the concept of communicative competence, defined the theory of communicative competence as: “the language knowledge a speaker needs to have in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community” (Hymes, 1972, p. 282).

In a few words, a person who acquires communicative competence acquires both knowledge and ability for language use.

According to Richards (2006) the approach appeared during the 1970s and its main principles at that time were the following ones:

- Make real communication the focus of language learning.

- Provide opportunities for learners to experiment and try out what they know.
- Be tolerant of learners' errors as they indicate that the learner is building up his or her communicative competence.
- Provide opportunities for learners to develop both accuracy and fluency.
- Link the different skills such as speaking, reading, and listening together, since they usually occur so in the real world.
- Let students induce or discover grammar rules (Richards, 2006, p. 13).

In the application of these principles in the classroom, Richards (2006) asserts that there were needed new techniques and classroom activities, as well as new roles for teachers and students in the classroom. Instead of using activities, which required memorizing the exact phrases and repetition, there were required activities in which students could negotiate meaning and interact significantly. In relation to this, Larsen-Freeman (1986) stated that in a communicative language class students are actively asked to participate in negotiating meaning and in trying to make themselves understood even when their knowledge of the target language is not as complete as their own language. In doing so, students are more motivated to learn a language since they can see the immediate relevance of the language in a given social context. If they can see how classroom learning is achieving the main goal, their interest to learn is more likely to increase.

Moreover, this approach mainly focuses on the development of communicative competence as its main objective through the foreign language as a means of communication in the class sessions.

In this sense, Canale and Swain (1980) explained the communicative competence based on four dimensions which assembled importance in the Communicative Language Teaching approach. These dimensions were defined as follows:

- Grammatical competence: it refers to the ability to make good use of grammar rules established in order to produce and understand a message.
- Sociolinguistic competence: it consists in the ability to use language in any social context.
- Discourse competence: it refers to the ability to connect a set of ideas correctly to understand, interpret and exchange messages.
- Strategic competence: it consists of being able to use abilities and communication strategies as a result of a lack of language (vocabulary, grammar complex, etc.).

The main goal to be achieved when using these skills is to be able to understand and being understood at the time.

Having said that, it should be clear that communicative competence needs to be the core issue when it comes to teaching a language. That is, not only grammar should be considered when teaching a language, but it is also important to pay attention to the language used and their respective function. Moreover, nowadays the CLT has become an important approach sufficiently recognized when teaching a language. This is because when referring to foreign language learners, they cannot really learn the target language well without paying close attention to this competence.

References

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