

A modern approach to communicative language teaching in English classes in high school

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Abstract. In this article we observe various methods of teaching foreign language in oral form within a certain situation. We claim, that when learning a second language, in addition to phonological and lexical-grammatical knowledge, students need to master the ways of communicating with other people. We stress on the need to form an integrated approach in the preparation and realization of classes and tasks for the effective development of students' oral speech skills. We also examine the methodology known as Communicative Language Teaching or CLT and explore its origins and evolution since it was first proposed in the 1970s, and how it has influenced approaches to language teaching today. The research consists of the 6 main sections (abstract, introduction, materials and methods, results, discussion and references).

1 Introduction

Nowadays the English language has got the status of a global language due to globalization and general computerization. Modern English language teaching aims to lingual and social adaptation of pupils to contemporary life. The ever-growing need for good communication skills in English has created a huge demand for English teaching around the world. Millions of people today want to improve their command of English or to ensure that their children achieve a good command of English. And opportunities to learn English are provided in many different ways such as through formal instruction, travel, studying abroad, as well as through the media and the Internet. The world-wide demand for English has created an enormous demand for quality language teaching and language teaching materials and resources. A modern experienced professional should possess skills to express their thoughts in English, i. e. he should possess communicative competence which includes speech, language and cultural levels. For its part, language learning requires motivation. Getting motivation is possible only due to transformation of each pupil from the passive contemplator into the active and creative participant of learning process; i. e. pupils should be involved into communication.

The objective of this research paper was to try to reflect the specifics of language teaching for students, as well as to consider some new methods of language teaching that are suitable for children of different ages and that do not disturb the educational process.

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The specificity of a foreign language as an educational subject is that it is both a goal and a means of learning. The GEF of primary General education contains requirements for knowledge about the socio-cultural specifics of the country/countries of the target language and the ability to build speech and non-speech behavior adequately to this specificity; the ability to identify common and different in the culture of the motherland and the country/countries of the target language [1].

There is no doubt, that in learning a second language it is necessary for students to acquire ways to communicate with others.

The purpose of teaching a foreign language at the present stage is the acquisition of communicative competence, the components of which are:

- Language competence – involves mastering a certain amount of formal language knowledge and relevant skills related to various aspects of the language – vocabulary, phonetics, grammar.

- Sociocultural competence – the willingness and desire to interact with others, self-confidence, the ability to put yourself in the other's place and cope with the situation – social; the ability to choose language forms, use them and transform in accordance with the context – sociolinguistic.

- Speech competence is one of the leading components of the characteristics emerging in the development process. By speech competence we understand the ability to adequately and appropriately, practically use the language in specific situations (to Express their thoughts, desires, intentions, reasoning, etc.), to use for this both linguistic and non-linguistic means (non-verbal sign system) and intonation means of speech expressiveness [2].

- Compensatory competence — further development of the skills to get out of the situation in the conditions of a shortage of language means, in the receipt and transmission of foreign language information [3].

- Educational and cognitive competence — the development of General and special educational skills, allowing to improve educational activities for mastering a foreign language, to satisfy with its help cognitive interests in other areas of knowledge [4].

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged as the norm in second language and immersion teaching. Communicative language teaching began in Britain in the 1960s as a replacement to the earlier structural method, called "Situational Language Teaching". The term was coined by Dell Hymes, reacting against the perceived inadequacy of Noam Chomsky's distinction between *competence* and *performance* [5].

2 Materials and Methods

It could be said that the communicative approach is the product of educators and linguists who had grown dissatisfied with the audiolingual and grammar-translation methods of foreign language instruction. They felt that students were not learning enough realistic, whole language. They did not know how to communicate using appropriate social language, gestures, or expressions; in brief, they were at a loss to communicate in the culture of the language studied.

Communicative competence is acquired through 4 main aspects of learning or 4 types of speech activity: receptive (reproducing) – listening and reading, and productive (creative) – speaking and writing. As well as related 3 aspects of the language – vocabulary, phonetics, grammar.

Currently, teaching oral communication, in which speaking plays a primary role, is one of the most important aspects of language. Oral speech and speaking, as an integral part of it, come to the fore. First of all, students want to learn how to speak the language. Learning outcomes are measured by the ability to communicate, in particular the ability to Dialogic

speech. Creating a motivational base for learning a foreign language is a necessary condition for the quality and success of learning and the formation of communicative competence.

So CLT can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom. Let us examine each of these issues in turn [6].

CLT is usually characterized as a broad *approach* to teaching, rather than as a teaching *method* with a clearly defined set of classroom practices. As such, it is most often defined as a list of **general principles or features**. One of the most recognized of these lists is David Nunan's five features of CLT:

1. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
2. The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
3. The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the Learning Management process.
4. An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom [7].

These five features are claimed by practitioners of CLT to show that they are very interested in the needs and desires of their learners as well as the connection between the language as it is taught in their class and as it used outside the classroom. Therefore, we can conclude that CLT sets its goals as the teaching of communicative competence. What does this term mean?

Perhaps we can clarify this term by first comparing it with the concept of grammatical competence. Grammatical competence refers to the knowledge we have of a language that accounts for our ability to produce sentences in a language. It refers to knowledge of the building blocks of sentences (e. g. parts of speech, tenses, phrases, clauses, sentence patterns) and how sentences are formed. Grammatical competence is the focus of many grammar practice books, which typically present a rule of grammar on one page and provide exercises to practice using the rule on the other page. The unit of analysis and practice is typically the sentence. While grammatical competence is an important dimension of language learning it is clearly not all that is involved in learning a language since one can master the rules of sentence formation in a language and still not be very successful at being able to use the language for meaningful communication. It is the latter capacity which is understood by the term communicative competence [6].

According to Gower R., Philips D., Walters S. communicative approach is based on ten principles.

1. Interactivity: the most direct route to learning is to be found in the interactivity between teachers and students and amongst the students themselves.

2. Engagement: students are most engaged by content they have created themselves

3. Dialogic processes: learning is social and dialogic, where knowledge is co-constructed

4. Scaffolded conversations: learning takes place through conversations, where the learner and teacher co-construct the knowledge and skills

5. Emergence: language and grammar emerge from the learning process. This is seen as distinct from the 'acquisition' of language.

6. Affordances: the teacher's role is to optimize language learning affordances through directing attention to emergent language.

7. Voice: the learner's voice is given recognition along with the learner's beliefs and knowledge.

8. Empowerment: students and teachers are empowered by freeing the classroom of published materials and textbooks.

9. Relevance: materials (e. g. texts, audios and videos) should have relevance for the learners.

10. Critical use: teachers and students should use published materials and textbooks in a critical way that recognizes their cultural and ideological biases [8]

Communicative competence includes the following aspects of language knowledge:

- knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions
- knowing how to vary our use of language according to the setting and the participants (e. g. knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication)
- knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts (e. g. narratives, reports, interviews, conversations)
- knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge (e. g. through using different kinds of communication strategies)

3 Results

Our perceptions of the processes of the second language learning have changed considerably in the last 30 years and CLT is partly a response to these changes. Earlier views of language learning focused primary on the mastery of grammatical competence. Language learning was viewed as a process of mechanical habit formation. Learning was very much seen as under the control of the teacher.

The type of class activities proposed in CLT also implied new roles in the classroom for teachers and learners. Learners now had to participate in class activities that were based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning. Students had to become comfortable with listening to their peers in group work or pair work tasks, rather than relying on the teacher or a model. They were expected to take on a greater degree of responsibility for their own learning. And teachers now had to assume the role of facilitator and monitor. Rather than being a model for correct speech and writing and one with the primary responsibility of making students produced plenty of error free sentences, the teacher had to develop a different view of learners' errors and of her/his own role in facilitating language learning [6].

In planning a language course decisions have to be made about the content of the course, including decisions about what vocabulary and grammar to teach at the beginning, intermediate and advanced levels and which skills and micro skills to teach and in what sequence. Decisions about these issues belong to the field of **syllabus design** or **course design**. Decisions about how best to teach the contents of a syllabus belong to the field of **methodology** [9].

Language teaching has seen many changes in ideas about syllabus design and methodology in the last 50 years and CLT prompted a rethinking of approaches to syllabus design and methodology. We may conveniently group trends in language teaching in the last 50 years into three phases:

Phase 1: traditional approaches (up to the late 1960s) – (gave priority to grammatical competence as the basis of language proficiency. Once a basic command of the language was established through oral drilling and controlled practice, the four skills were introduced, usually in the sequence of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Techniques that were often employed included memorization of dialogs, question and answer practice, substitution drills and various forms of guided speaking and writing practice. Great attention to accurate pronunciation and accurate mastery of grammar). Methodologies based on these assumptions include **Audiolingualism** (in north America) (also known as

the Aural-Oral Method) and **the Structural-Situational Approach** in the UK (also known as **Situational Language Teaching**). Syllabuses during this period consisted of word lists and grammar lists, graded across levels.

Phase 2: classic communicative language teaching (1970s to 1990s) – (The centrality of grammar in language teaching and learning was questioned, since it was argued that language ability involved much more than grammatical competence. attention shifted to the knowledge and skills needed to use grammar and other aspects of language appropriately for different communicative purposes such as making requests, giving advice, making suggestions, describing wishes and needs and so on. What was needed in order to use language communicatively was communicative competence.)

Phase 3: current communicative language teaching (late 1990s to the present)

Since the advent of CLT, teachers and materials' writers have sought to find ways of developing classroom activities that reflected the principles of a communicative methodology. This quest has continued up to the present day. The principles on which the first generation of CLT materials are still relevant to language teaching today, so we will briefly review the main activity types that were one of the outcomes of CLT [6].

4 Discussion

One of the goals of CLT is to develop fluency in language use. According to J. C. Richards, fluency is natural when a speaker engages in meaningful interaction and maintains comprehensible and ongoing communication despite limitations in his or her communicative competence. Fluency is developed by creating classroom activities in which students must negotiate meaning, use communication strategies, correct misunderstandings and work to avoid communication breakdowns. Fluency practice can be contrasted with accuracy practice, which focuses on creating correct examples of language use [6].

Another useful distinction that some advocates of CLT proposed was the distinction between three different kinds of practice - mechanical, meaningful, and communicative. ***Mechanical practice*** refers to a controlled practice activity which students can successfully carry out without necessarily understanding the languages they are using. Examples of this kind of activity would be repetition drills and substitution drills designed to practice use of particular grammatical or other items. ***Meaningful practice*** refers to an activity where language control is still provided but where students are required to make meaningful choices when carrying out practice. For example, in order to practice the use of prepositions to describe locations of places, students might be given a street map with various buildings identified in different locations. They are also given a list of prepositions such as across from, on the corner of, near, on, next to. They then have to answer questions such as "Where is the book shop? Where is the cafe?" Etc. The practice is not meaningful because they have to respond according to the location of places on the map. ***Communicative practice*** refers to activities where practice in using language within a real communicative context is the focus, where real information is exchanged, and where the language used is not totally predictable. For example students might have to draw a map of their neighborhood and answer questions about the location of different places in their neighborhood, such as the nearest bus stop, the nearest cafe, etc [6].

4.1 Information-gap activities

An important aspect of communication in CLT is the notion of information gap. This refers to the fact that in real communication people normally communicate in order to get information they do not possess. This is known as an information-gap. More authentic communication is likely to occur in the classroom if students go beyond practice of

language forms for their own sake and use their linguistic and communicative resources in order to obtain information. In so doing they will draw available vocabulary, grammar, and communication strategies to complete a task.

4.2 Jig-saw activities

These are also based on the information-gap principle... Typically the class is divided into groups and each group has part of the information needed to complete an activity. The class must fit the pieces together to complete the whole. In so doing they must use their language resources to communicate meaningfully and so take part in meaningful communication practice.

4.3 Other activity types in CLT

Many other activity types have been used in CLT, among which are the following:

task-completion activities: puzzles, games, map-reading and other kinds of classroom tasks in which the focus was on using one's language resources to complete a task.

information gathering activities: student conducted surveys, interviews and searches in which students were required to use their linguistic resources to collect information.

opinion-sharing activities: activities where students compare values, opinions, beliefs, such as a ranking task in which students list six qualities in order of importance which they might consider in choosing a date or spouse.

information-transfer activities: these require learners to take information that is presented in one form and represent it in a different form. For example, they may read instructions on how to get from A to B, and then draw a map showing the sequence, or they may read information about a subject and then represent it as a graph.

reasoning gap-activities: these involve driving some new information from given information through the process of inference, practical reasoning etc. For example, working out a teacher's timetable on the basis of given class timetables.

role-plays: activities in which students are assigned roles and improvise a scene or exchange based on given information or clues.

It is also worth noting that an effective tool in teaching students is a didactic game, and, as practice shows, the age of students does not depend on their enthusiasm for the gameplay [6].

We will review only some of these types of activities. For example:

- It is worth noting that an effective tool in teaching students is **a didactic game**. The age of students does not depend on their enthusiasm for the gameplay. Games can be divided into two sections. The first section consists of grammatical, lexical, phonetic and spelling games that contribute to the formation of speech skills. This will help teacher to make boring work in lesson more interesting and exciting. Grammar is followed by lexical games that logically continue to "build" the Foundation of speech. Phonetic games are aimed to correct pronunciation at the stage of formation of speech skills. Finally, the formation and development of speech and pronunciation skills to some extent contribute to spelling games, the main purpose of which is the development of spelling of the studied vocabulary.

The second section is called "Creative games". The purpose of these games is to contribute to the further development of speech skills. In the course of such speech games, students have the opportunity to show independence in solving speech-thinking problems and work out the speed of reaction in communication.

Thus, we see that during the game the participants of the educational process are in different conditions than in the traditional training. Students are given maximum freedom

of intellectual activity, limited only by certain rules of the game. They can choose their own role, make assumptions about the further development of events, create a problem situation and look for ways to solve it, take responsibility for the chosen solution.

- **Internet usage.** The Internet has enormous information capabilities and no less impressionable services. First of all, it is necessary to remember the didactic tasks. In preparing a lesson, it is important for the teacher to remember the didactic properties and functions of each of the selected learning tools, clearly imagining solving a methodical problem a particular learning tool can be most effective. If we keep in mind the subject of our discussion — the Internet, it is also important to determine for what purposes we are going to use its capabilities and resources. Using information resources of the Internet, it is possible, integrating them into educational process, to solve more effectively a number of didactic tasks at a lesson:

- a) improve ability of listening comprehension on the basis of authentic sound texts of a network the Internet;
- b) replenish vocabulary, both active and passive vocabulary of the modern language;
- c) form a stable motivation of foreign language activity.

We can also agree with the following statements of E. S. Polat about didactic possibilities of the Internet in the educational process:

- develop reading skills using online materials with different degrees of complexity;
- improve listening skills based on authentic sound texts of the Internet;
- develop skills of monologue and dialogue statements based on the discussion of the network materials;
- improve writing skills;
- replenish vocabulary;
- form a stable motivation of foreign language activity on the basis of the Internet [10].

The inclusion of network materials in the content of the lesson allows students to better understand life on our planet, to participate in joint research, scientific and creative projects.

- **The project-based learning or project method.** Project methodology assumes a high level of individual and collective responsibility for the implementation of each task for the development of the project. The joint work of a group of students on the project is inseparable from the active communicative interaction of students. The project method is one of the forms of organization of research cognitive activity in which students take an active subjective position.

Work on the project is carried out in several stages and is usually beyond the scope of educational activity at lessons: a choice of topics or problems of the project; formation of group of executors; working out of the plan of work on the project, definition of terms; distribution of tasks among pupils; fulfilment of tasks, a group discussion of the results of the execution of each task; the design of the joint result; the report on the project; assessment of the implementation of the project.

So, the main idea of the project method is to shift the focus from different types of exercises to the active mental activity of students in the course of joint creative work [13].

- **The movie tutorial.** It is very important for teacher to create real and imaginary situations of communication in a foreign language lesson using different methods of work. This method will help students to master communicative competence in English. The introduction of students to the cultural values of the native speaker is equally important. For this purpose, teachers should use authentic materials, including movie tutorials. Therefore, attention should be directed to the formation of students' personal attitude to what they saw. Movie tutorials also help to develop various sides of mental activity of students, above all, attention and memory [11].

- **Song-and-dance lessons.** The use of foreign literature in foreign language lessons improves the pronunciation skills of students, ensures the creation of communicative, cognitive and aesthetic motivation. Preparation of the performance is a creative work that contributes to the development of language skills of children and the disclosure of their individual creative abilities. This type of work activates students' mental and speech activity, develops their interest in literature, as well as deepens the knowledge of the language, by the process of memorizing vocabulary [12].

The point to note is that teachers should make an emphasis on pair work and group work. Most of the activities discussed above reflect an important aspect of classroom tasks in CLT, namely that they are designed to be carried out in pairs or small groups. Through completing activities in this way, it is argued, learners will obtain several benefits:

1. they can learn from hearing the language used by other members of the group
2. they will produce a greater amount of language than they would use in teacher-fronted activities
3. their motivational level is likely to increase
4. they will have the chance to develop fluency [6]

5 Conclusions

Teaching and classroom materials today consequently make use of a wide variety of small group activities.

To sum it up, approbation has shown that all these methods and techniques promote students' learning and academic achievement, increase students' retention, enhance students' satisfaction with their learning experience, help students develop skills in oral communication, develop students' social skills, promote student self-esteem, help to promote positive intercultural relations, and the problem of using effective methods of teaching English is extremely important. Also, it can be concluded that the ability of the teacher to properly organize the lesson and expertly choose a particular form of training depends largely on the effectiveness of the educational process.

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