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## COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH TO TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES



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### ABSTRACT

*The origin of the Communicative Approach as a combination of different methods is clearly explained, as such as the role of the teacher and the students in a communicative English as a Second or Foreign Language class. In this article has given the importance of Communicative Approach to learning and teaching foreign languages as well as the objectives of communicative activities that can be developed in a class from the communicative point of view.*

**Keywords:** *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), communicative competence, teaching strategies, approach, interaction, linguistic context.*

### INTRODUCTION

The worldwide increasing demand for good communication in the English language has significantly enlarged the responsibility of both the English language teacher and learners. The application of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has faced problems in the as a Foreign Language context. A positive relationship between communicative competence and language learning strategies have been discussed several times.

### DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

In our daily communication, there exist no ideal speakers or hearers of a language. Without doubt, in the process of communication, we may come across a great number of problems. In order to overcome these problems, we should use some communicative strategies. Communicative strategies play a significant role in foreign language acquisition. Communicative strategies can help to keep communicative channel open encourage hypothesis formation and automatization.

The successful language use for communication assumes the development of communicative competence in the users of that language and the use of language is required by the socio-cultural norms of the society where the language is used. It has

been over three decades since the communicative approach to language teaching first appeared in English language teaching. In various types of language programs, language educators and curriculum researchers have implemented communication-oriented teaching syllabuses to seek for more effective ways for improving students' communication skills, to replace the traditional, grammar-oriented approach in the past.

This article will take a look at the communicative approach to the teaching of foreign languages. It is intended as an introduction to the communicative approach for teachers, learners and specialists who want to provide opportunities in the classroom for their students to engage in real-life communication in the target language. Questions to be dealt with include what the communicative approach is, where it came from, and how teachers' and students' roles differ from the roles they play in other teaching approaches.

Communicative language teaching makes use of real-life situations that demand communication. The teacher sets up a situation that students are likely to encounter in real life. Unlike the traditional methods of language teaching, which relies on repetition and drills, the communicative approach can leave students in suspense as to the outcome of a class exercise, which will vary according to their reactions and responses. The real-life simulations change from day to day. Students' motivation to learn comes from their desire to communicate in meaningful ways about meaningful topics.

The experts in the field of communicative language teaching, writes in explaining views that "language is interaction; it is interpersonal activity and has a clear relationship with society. In this light, language study has to look at the use (function) of language in context, both its linguistic context (what is uttered before and after a given piece of discourse) and its social, or situational, context (who is speaking, what their social roles are, why they have come together to speak)" [Larsen-Freeman, 1986]

In a communicative classroom for beginners, the teacher might begin by passing out cards, each with a different name printed on it. The teacher then proceeds to model an exchange of introductions in the target language: "Good afternoon". What's your name?" Reply: "My name is ... ," for example. Using a combination of the target language and gestures, the teacher conveys the task at hand, and gets the students to introduce themselves and ask their classmates for information. They are responding in English to a question in English. They do not know the answers

beforehand, as they are each holding cards with their new identities written on them; hence, there is an authentic exchange of information.

Teachers in communicative classrooms will find themselves talking less and listening more becoming active facilitators of their students' learning. The teacher sets up the exercise, but because the students' performance is the goal, the teacher must step back and observe, sometimes acting as referee or monitor. A classroom during a communicative activity is far from quiet, however. The students do most of the speaking, and frequently the scene of a classroom during a communicative exercise is active, with students leaving their seats to complete a task.

Because of the increased responsibility to participate, students may find they gain confidence in using the target language in general. Students are more responsible managers of their own learning [Larsen-Freeman, 1986].

Given below are some of the characteristics of CLT.

Communicative competence and fluency is the objective or goal: The primary objective of CLT is communicative competence. "Communicative competence is the desired goal (i.e. the ability to use the linguistic system effectively and appropriately)".

"Fluent and acceptable language is the primary goal: accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context".

"... the ability to use real, appropriate language to communicate and interact with others is the primary goal". [D. Nunan, 1991]

To provide a unifying framework for stages which resulted in defining the key principles to be considered when organizing activities focused on the development of speaking. Two principles have been suggested:

1) firstly, each speaking activity comprises three stages – pre-activity stage, during activity stage, and conclusion stage;

2) secondly, each of the stages involves several focus areas that should be taken into consideration when organizing speaking activities, these involve – engage-instruct-initiate sequence, and grouping students (pre-activity stage);

3) the role of the teacher, feedback during the activity, and the use of mother tongue (during-activity stage); and, stopping the activity, feedback after the activity (conclusion stage). [Krashen, S., 2008]

Communicative activities help children learn English easily. They pick up language by taking part in an activity shared with an adult. They firstly make sense of the activity and then get meaning from the adult's shared language.

The age at which this change occurs depends greatly on the individual child's developmental levels as well as the expectations of their society.

When children learn English, there may be a similar 'silent period' when communication and understanding may take place before they actually speak any English words.

Gradually children build up phrases consisting of a single memorized word to which they add words from their vocabulary ('a cat', 'a black cat', 'a white and black cat') or a single memorized language to which they add their own input ('That's my chair', 'Time to play'). Depending on the frequency of exposure to English and the quality of experience, children gradually begin to create whole sentences.

Understanding is always greater than speaking. They may not understand everything they hear in their native language, children grasp the gist – that is they understand a few important words. With encouragement, they soon transfer their 'gist' understanding skills to interpret meaning in English.

Children should not be told they have made a mistake because any correction immediately demotivates. Mistakes may be part of the process of working out grammar rules of English or they may be a fault in pronunciation. 'I goed' soon becomes 'went' if the child hears the adult repeat back 'yes, you went'; or if the adult hears 'zee bus' and repeats 'the bus'. As in learning their native language, if children have an opportunity to hear the adult repeat the same piece of language correctly, they will self-correct in their own time.

Parents are in an ideal position to motivate and so help their children learn, even if they have only basic English themselves and are learning alongside their young children.

## CONCLUSION

Finally, it is more than obvious that there are many other aspects or focus areas that should be taken into consideration when organizing activities that aim at developing speaking skills. Children are still using their individual, innate language-learning strategies to acquire their native language and soon find they can also use these strategies to pick up English.

CLT has allowed teachers to introduce purposeful communicative activities and principles within the classroom while retaining the best components of other methods and approaches rather than confining them to the linguistic waste bin. The approach therefore claims the best from both worlds as exemplified in its weak approach which

has been the model from which classroom practice is based on and the recommended version for the EFL classroom.

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