

PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN MODERN LINGUISTICS

Rasulov Dilshod

Master's Degree in English Philology, Karshi State University
(Karshi, Uzbekistan)

ABSTRACT

Linguistic competence, communicative competence, and interactional competence have had profound impact on second language teaching, learning, and testing. Although a significant number of studies have been conducted on these three competences, they have not been conflated for discussion in a single study. Adding this piece to the jigsaw, the current article explores all the three competences in more depth. This article had a twin purpose of 1) providing a historical account of the linguistic, communicative and interactional competences, and 2) reviewing of the literature on them in order to identify gaps, if any, with the intention to propose new research ideas pertinent to the three types of competence. In order to achieve the study aims, intensive literature survey was conducted. Based on the review of the related studies on linguistic, communicative and interactional competences, this article provides recommendations for effective classroom practice and future research.

Keywords: *Modern linguistics, communication, linguistics, grammar.*

АННОТАЦИЯ

Лингвистическая компетентность, коммуникативная компетентность и интерактивная компетентность оказали глубокое влияние на преподавание, изучение и тестирование второго языка. Хотя по этим трем компетенциям было проведено значительное количество исследований, они не были объединены для обсуждения в одном исследовании. Добавив эту часть в мозаику, текущая статья более подробно исследует все три компетенции. Эта статья преследовала двоякую цель: 1) дать исторический отчет о языковых, коммуникативных и интерактивных компетенциях и 2) провести обзор литературы по ним, чтобы выявить пробелы, если таковые имеются, с намерением предложить новые исследовательские идеи, относящиеся к три вида компетентности. Для достижения целей исследования был проведен интенсивный обзор литературы. На основе обзора соответствующих исследований лингвистических, коммуникативных и интерактивных

компетенций в этой статье представлены рекомендации для эффективной практики в классе и будущих исследований.

Ключевые слова: Современное языкознание, коммуникация, языкознание, грамматика.

INTRODUCTION

The field of second and foreign language teaching and learning has been an issue of debate for a long time. Various theories and methods of language learning have been introduced. Grammar translation method occupied the field of foreign and second language teaching for many decades and is still of use today. The field has also been dominated by the behaviorist theory and the idea that language is nothing but a social behavior that can be learned as any other behavior through the process of habit formation; and many language drills have been designed for this purpose. Learners may share the same aim of learning a language which is ‘being able to use it effectively’; but which ability is required for that? and how to achieve it? have been questions for both linguists and methodologists!!

With the later trends in language teaching approaches and methodology and the rise of CLT in 1970s, communicative competence has become the main aim for second and foreign language learning. Such competence should be reflected in language syllabi and teachers’ training, teaching and learning methodologies...etc. Many courses have been changed to employ these new trends in teaching to fulfill the learners’ needs in learning a language. In the context of Yemen, the course ‘*Crescent English Course for Yemen*’ introduced in 1990s has been designed to achieve students’ communicative competence in English.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Communicative competence means having ‘a competence to communicate’. This competence can be oral, written or even nonverbal. It is an inclusive term that refers to possessing the knowledge of the language as well as the skill to use the language in real life situations for fulfilling communicative needs. Language, according to many researchers, is a means of communication, and it comprises four main skills; vis, listening, speaking, reading and writing. To acquire these language skills, one needs not only to learn grammatical rules but to practice such skills till he gets used to all of them. Whenever s/he acquires the skills of the language and manages to use them effectively and appropriately according to the context in which s/he is involved, we can say that s/he achieves the required level of the communicative competence.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methodologies does not provide an specific method or theory of language teaching, but rather an approach that prioritizes communication. Historically, those methodologies come from alternative methods and approaches from the 1970s and 80s; methods such as the Total Physical Response (TPR), Natural Approach, Silent Way and Suggestopedia contributed for the field of language teaching, incorporated in other methods.

CLT primary goal is for learners to develop **communicative competence**, which, according to Brandl (2008), is the “ability to interpret and enact appropriate social behaviors, and it requires the active involvement of the learner in the production of the target language” (p. 5). It also involves the following abilities (p. 6):

- linguistic competence (knowledge of grammar and vocabulary)
- sociolinguistic competence (ability to say the appropriate thing in a social situation)
- discourse competence (ability to start, enter, contribute to, or end a conversation)
- strategic competence (ability to communicate effectively and repair problems in communication)

CLT methodologies have in common the fact that they are based on activities that require exchanging information and solving problems, communication activities with “real-world” situations, and by taking into account the learner’s background, needs and goals.

Doughty and Long (2003) define a series of principles that can be used as a guideline for implementing CLT.

1. **Using tasks as organizational principles** has to do with the focus on meaning by giving learners “a purpose to use grammar in a meaning context” (p. 8). A task can be defined as an activity in class that involves learners interaction with language and focuses on meaning rather than form.

2. **Promoting learning by doing** refers to how new knowledge can be better retained in long-term memory if it is tied to real-world events and activities.

3. **Input needs to be rich**, since the learner needs to be exposed to the language from various sources to develop native-like language skills. That input, however, must be comprehensible to the students.

4. **Input needs to be meaningful, comprehensible and elaborated.** The assimilation of new knowledge heavily depends on how easily it can be attached to already existing knowledge.

5. **Promoting cooperative and collaborative learning** by pairing or grouping students together so that they can work cooperatively on a task. This practice promotes communicative interaction in the target language.

6. A **focus on form** approach emphasizes a form-meaning connection, teaching grammar through communicative contexts.

7. **Providing error corrective feedback** is important for the learner, but it is a long term process. It depends not only on how the teacher provides the feedbacks, but also on individual learner factors.

8. Finally, **recognizing and respecting affective factors of learning** is essential for teachers to understand and provide learners with an environment where they can feel motivated.

The fact that CLT does not provide a specific method or curriculum allows it for the inclusion of strategies from other theories and adapt them to its goals. It seems to me that having an eclectic approach to language teaching, especially if focused on real-life situations, is beneficial for both the teacher and the student, since it can also be adapted to different kinds of learners. However, as Brandl (2008) points out, the quality of the teaching also depends on the quality of the material, and the teacher needs to be able to identify what better suits their classroom.

CONCLUSION

Communicative Language Teaching is an approach which provides opportunity to the learners to communicate in the target language. The use of functional aspect of language makes them able to communicate in the target language in their day to day life. The activities which are used in CLT approach such as dramas, role plays and games make learning enjoyable.

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