Communicative Language Teaching Approach

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Background

- The Communicative Approach emerged in the early 1970s as a result of the work of the Council of Europe experts.

- A group of experts saw the need to focus in communicative proficiency rather than mastery of structures.

- D.A. Wilkins (1972) proposed a functional or communicative definition of language that served as a basis for developing communicative syllabuses for language teaching.

- Wilkins's contribution was an analysis of the communicative meanings that a language learner needs to understand and express, rather than describe the core of language through traditional concepts of grammar and vocabulary.

Introduction

- Several linguistic theories combined to initiate a Communicative Language teaching Approach

Chomsky's Theory of Innate Competence

- Chomsky argued that there are "infinite number of sentences" for expressing indefinitely many thoughts and for reaching appropriately in an indefinite range of new situations. What enables a speaker to be creative in his **"innate competence."** Chomsky held that such competence is the primary source of language behavior.

Dell Hyme's Socio linguistic Competence

- Dell Hymes argued that Chomsky had missed some very important information about a native speakers' knowledge about his language. He thus wrote: **There are rules of use without which rules of syntax would be useless.** His socio linguistic competence involves the ability to produce and understand utterances which are appropriate in the context in which they are uttered.

Dell Hyme's Socio linguistic Competence contd.

- This necessarily involves sensitivity to factors as:

- **Participants** – Who are taking part in the conversation?

- **Purpose** – What is the purpose of the speaker? (Complain, apologize,   explain or demand)

- **Channel** – Are the words conveyed face to face or over the telephone, in a telegram or letter?

- **Topic** – What are the words about?

All these factors influence a native speaker in his choice of words.

For example,

- Sit down please. (Spoken to a distinguished guest)
- What would you like to eat? (a waiter in a five star hotel)
- How old are you? (addressed to a lady)

Canale and Swain Theory

- Canale and Swain were in general agreement with Hymes, but they felt a need for more detailed analysis. They introduced two new categories.

Canale and Swain Theory contd.

- **Discourse Competence:** It concerns the ability to combine meaning into a unified and acceptable spoken or written texts in different genres. For example,

- Q. What did the rains do?
- A. The crops were destroyed by the rain.
- The above reply is grammatically and socio linguistically acceptable, but in discourse terms, the answer does not fit with the question. **"It destroyed the crops."** Would obviously better match the question.

- **Strategic Competence:** Strategic competence enables the speaker to use a substitute expression or a paraphrase in a place of word immediately forgotten – be referring to 'platform' as a place where trains halt.

Approach

- Another influential analysis of communicative competence was found in Canale & Swain (1980), in which four dimensions of communicative competence are identified:

Grammatical Competence

Sociolinguistic Competence

Communicative Competence

Discourse Competence

Strategic Competence
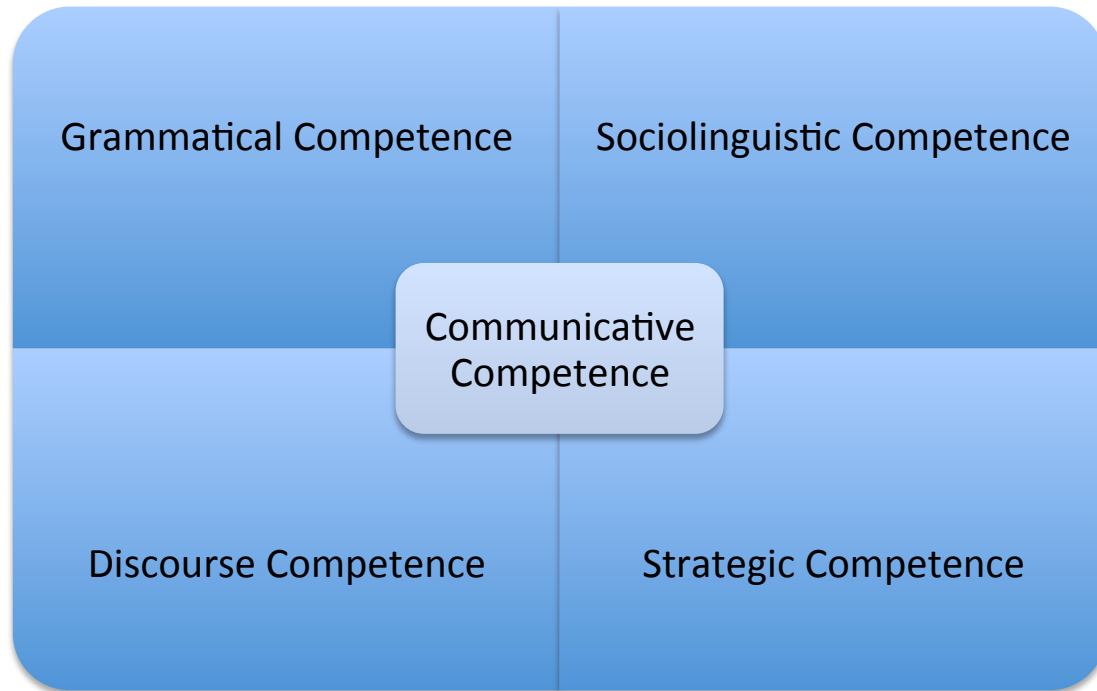
To sum up, A language user is said to have communicative competence when :

- He has innate competence
- He is grammatically correct (grammatical competence)
- Socially appropriate (Socio linguistic competence)
- He can express himself coherently and effectively (discourse competence)
- He can cope up with unexpected situations (strategic competence)
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- Such a language user has communicative competence.

Ten Core Assumptions of Current Communicative Language Teaching

1. Second language learning is facilitated when learners are engaged in interaction and meaningful communication.

2. Effective classroom learning tasks and exercises provide opportunities for students to negotiate meaning, expand their language resources, notice how language is used, and take part in meaningful interpersonal exchange.

3. Meaningful communication results from students processing content that is relevant, purposeful, interesting, and engaging.

Assumptions contd.

4. Communication is a holistic process that often calls upon the use of several language skills or modalities.

5. Language learning is facilitated both by activities that involve inductive or discovery learning of underlying rules of language use and organization, as well as by those involving language analysis and reflection.

6. Language learning is a gradual process that involves creative use of language, and trial and error.

Assumptions contd.

7. Learners develop their own routes to language learning, progress at different rates, and have different needs and motivations for language learning.

8. Successful language learning involves the use of effective learning and communication strategies.

9. The role of the teacher in the language classroom is that of a facilitator, who creates a classroom climate conducive to language learning and provides opportunities for students to use and practice the language and to reflect on language use and language learning.

10. The classroom is a community where learners learn through collaboration and sharing

Aims/ Objectives of Communicative Language teaching Approach (CLTA)

- to develop "*communicative competence*" among the learners.

- The focus is on the *meanings and functions* of the language.

- the *learner is more important* than the language.

- to help the students in acquisition of language through *problem solving activities*.

- aims at *ensuring the participation of the pupils* in the process of learning a language.

- equal treatment to *all the four language skills* namely LSRW.

Basic Principles of CLT

- People learn a language by using it to communicate meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.

- Learning to communicate is a process that involves trial and error.

- Learner errors are often not corrected immediately but can be corrected later.

Basic Principles of CLT

- Emphasis on learners' needs and interests.
- Every teacher should modify the syllabus to fit the needs of the learners.

Features of Communicative Language Teaching Approach

Language learning is *learning to communicate.*

Learning in proper context or situation is stressed.

Dialogue is important technique.

Good pronunciation is stressed.

CLTA accepts *judicious use of the learners' first language.*

Reading and writing go hand in hand with listening and speaking.

CLTA *accepts errors.*

Features of Communicative Language Teaching Approach contd. ………

- *Linguistic variation* (varying according to their age, interest etc) is accepted.

- Teachers help learners in any way that *motivates them* to work with the language.

- *Fluency and acceptable language* is the primary goal.

- Students are expected to interact with other people, through *pair and group work*, or in their writings.

Features of Communicative Language Teaching Approach
Contd…………

- The teacher cannot *know exactly* what language the student will use.

- Language is created by the individual after thorough *trial and error.*

Procedure

- The teacher presents a brief dialogue or several mini dialogues preceded by a motivation and the discussion of the function and situation.

- The teacher allows oral practice of each utterance (Chorus, individual and group)

- The teacher sets questions based on the dialogue practised and elicits answers.

- The teacher sets questions on the students personal experiences that centers around the dialogue theme.

Procedure

- The teacher reads out the basic communicative expressions in the dialogue or one of the structures which illustrates or exemplifies the functions.

- The teacher gives more examples of the function, using pictures, real objects, or dramatization to clarify the meaning of the functions.

- The teacher helps the learners to discover the rules underlying the function expression or structure – its form in speech and writing.

Procedure

- Makes the pupils recognize and interpret the utterances. In other words, he gives activities that would encourage and recognize the function and interpret it.

Practical Application of CLTA (Procedure and techniques)

- There are three kinds of material currently used in CLT

- **Text based materials**
- **Task Based Materials**
- **Realia**

Stages in the tasks

- **There are usually three stages in which the tasks are completed:**
- **Stage I – Warm – up Task**
- **Stage II - While Task**
- **Stage III – Post Task**

Text-based materials

There are numerous textbooks designed to direct and support CLT. Their table of contents suggest a kind of grading and sequencing of language practice.

Task-based materials

A variety of games, role plays, simulations, and task-based communication activities have been prepared to support CLT classes. They are in the form of exercise handbooks, cue cards, activity cards, and interaction booklets.

tasks / activities

- **Group Work**
- **Dialogue**
- **Role Play**
- **Pair work**
- **Dramatization**
- **Miming**
- **Poetry recitation and songs**
- **Reporting**
- **Observation**
- **Work on pictures and models.**

Realia

Many proponents of CLT have advocated the use of "authentic," "from life" materials in class. These include: signs, magazines, advertisements, newspapers, pictures, symbols.

Learner roles

- The learner is a negotiator (between himself, the learning process, and the object of learning). The implication is that the learner should contribute as much as he gains, and learn in an interdependent way.

- Ss are expected to interact primarily with each other rather than with the teacher.

- Ss give and receive information.

Teacher roles

Needs analyst

- CLT teacher assumes a responsibility for determining and responding to Ss language needs.
- CLT teacher administer a needs assessment instrument to determine an individual's motivation for studying the language.
- Based on needs assessment results, CLT teacher plan instruction and activities that respond to Ss needs.

Counselor

- The CLT teacher-counselor, as in the Community Language Learning, is expected to exemplify an effective communicator seeking to maximize the speaker intention and hearer interpretation, through the use of paraphrase, confirmation, and feedback.

Group process manager

- CLT procedures require teachers to acquire less teacher-centered classroom management skills.
- CLT teacher organizes the classroom for communication and communicative activities.

Merits of Communicative Language Teaching Approach

- CLT is a holistic appraoch.

- CLT provides vitality and motivation within the classroom.

- CLT is a learner-centered approach.

- The communicative approach to language teaching stresses the importance of communication and interaction rather than repeating mechanically dialogues or grammar rules learnt by heart

Merits contd…….

- This approach also values the pupils' personal experiences outside the classroom.

- Most of the tasks of this approach demand that pupils work in pairs or in groups and discuss different aspects of their lives.

- it makes students speak the language even at a beginner level and they are usually enthusiastic about this.

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Criticism/Demerits

- The various categories of language functions are overlapping and not systematically graded like the structures of the language.

- The communicative approach focuses on the use of language in everyday situations, or the functional aspects of language, and less on the formal structures. There must be a certain balance between the two.