

Communicative approach Inteaching English as A Foreign Language

Shahrbanoo Hajian Asrami

M.A. in linguistics, Mysore University

Abstract

Communication is one of the most important skills in learning English. It's, first of all, exchanging opinions, information, notions of social, cultural and political aspects of everyday life. Communication always has associations with written and oral discourse. But communication includes a surprised face, a smile, a nervous movement, etc. Communication is also advertising the color of the plays, posters...The world around us is the world of communication in various spheres. And only at language lessons, the only means of communication are textbooks and the lecturing teacher. In the class, the teacher is the source of information. And this communication is under control rather than free. In this case, the purpose of the teacher is to transform the communication with students to a pleasant, attractive and emotional lesson. Real communication is always informative, unpredictable, and unexpected. In order to teach real and meaningful communication in the class, the teacher must apply different ways to their teaching and therefore the communicative approach is one of the most effective methods to teach English in Iran classrooms. There are many positive points in using the communicative approach to teach English in Iran and below are six main points that I want to mention. Those are roles of the teacher, roles of the students, psychological

factors in the classroom, authentic materials, student's communicative competence, focus on form and meaning, games and techniques.

Introduction

Communicative approach is an approach to language teaching that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of study. Communicative language teaching makes use of real-life situations that necessitate communication. The teacher sets up a situation that students are likely to encounter in real life. Unlike the audio-lingual method 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. Learners' motivation to learn comes from their desire to communicate in meaningful ways about meaningful topics.

Nowadays, the communicative approach has been applied in many countries in the world. This has brought positive effects on teaching English. It superseded the Grammar – Translation in the nineteenth century. The Direct methods in the twentieth century, the audiolingualism in the 1940s and 1950s, and

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the Community Language Learning and Suggestopedia in 1970s.

Roles of Teachers in English Classroom

The role of the teacher is a facilitator of his student's learning. The teacher can offer the kinds of stimulus and experience that these processes seem to require, but has no direct control over them. Since the teacher is a facilitator of learning, he may need to perform in a variety of specific roles, separately or simultaneously. These include the following:

- As a general overseer of his/her student's learning, he/she must aim to coordinate the activities so that they form a coherent progression, leading towards greater communicative ability.
- As a classroom manager, he/she is responsible for grouping activities into "lessons" and for ensuring that these are satisfactorily organized at the practical levels.
- In many activities, the teacher may perform the familiar role of language instructor; he/she will present new language, exercise direct control over the learners' performance, evaluate and correct it, and so on.
- In others, the teacher will not intervene after initiating the proceedings, but will let learning take place through independent activities. This will frequently be communicative activity.
- While such independent activities are in progress, he /she may act as a consultant or an adviser, helping students when necessary. She/he may also move around the classroom in order to monitor the strengths and

weaknesses of the learners, as a basis for planning future learning activities. She/he will sometimes wish to participate in an activity as co-communication with the learners. In this role, the teacher can stimulate and present new language.

- Teachers in communicative classrooms will find themselves talking less and listening more - becoming active facilitators of their student's learning. The teachers set up the exercises, but because the student's performance is the goal, the teacher must step back and observe, sometimes acting as a referee or monitor.

Roles of Learners in English Classroom

Learners are communicators. They are actively engaged in negotiating meaning - trying to make themselves understood - even when their knowledge of the target language is incomplete. They learn to communicate by communicating. Students do most of the speaking. Student must be able to apply this knowledge in negotiating meaning. It is through interaction between speakers and listeners or readers and writers that meaning becomes clear. Students work on all four skills. Therefore, students have chance to speak, exchange their point of view, knowledge and information.

The learners do most of the speaking, and frequently the scene of a classroom during a communicative exercise is active, with learners leaving their seats to complete a task.

Because of the increased responsibility to participate, learners may find that they gain confidence in using the target language in general. Students are more responsible

managers of their own learning (Larsen-Freeman, 1986).

Psychological factors in the classroom

Communicative ability develops by processes internal to the learners. Therefore, the teacher must subordinate his/her teaching behavior to the learning needs of the students. The development of communicative skills can only take place if learners have motivation and opportunity to express their own identity and to relate with the people around them. It, therefore, requires a learning atmosphere which gives them a sense of security and value as individuals. In turn, this atmosphere depends to a large extent on the existence of interpersonal relationships which do not create inhibitions, but are supportive and accepting.

The encouragement of such relationships is an essential concern of a communicative approach to foreign language teaching, since it involves a wide range of personality factor and interpersonal skills. However, the teacher is helped by a number of important aspects of the activities discussed in this book. For example:

- The teacher's role in the learning process is recognized as less dominant. More emphasis is placed on the learner's contribution through independent learning.
- The emphasis on communicative interaction provides more opportunities for cooperative relationship to emerge, both among learners and between the teacher and learners.
- Communicative interaction gives learners more opportunities to express their own individuality in the classroom. It also helps

them to integrate the foreign language with their own personality and thus to feel more emotionally secure with it.

- These points are reinforced by the large number of activities in the class where students are divided into groups or pairs, which interact independently of the teacher.
- The teacher's role as "co-communicator" places him/her on an equal basis with the learners. This helps break down tension and barriers between them.
- Learners are not being constantly corrected. Errors are regarded with greater tolerance, as a complete normal phenomenon in the development of communicative skills.

To conclude, communicative teaching methods leave the learner scope to contribute his/her own personality to the learning process. They also provide the teacher with scope to step out of his didactic role in order to be a human among humans.

Authentic Materials

The communicative approach use authentic language as it is used in real context. To overcome the problem that learners cannot transfer what they learn in the classroom to the outside world and to expose learners to natural language in a variety of situations, adherents of the communicative approach advocate the use of authentic language materials. Authentic materials play a very important role in teaching English in the classroom because it is easy for students to understand the aim of teaching and learning. There are many ways to teach English, but using authentic materials is the useful way. For example, the teachers can use pictures, handouts, newspaper, magazines,

advertisement, radio, television, etc. in their teaching.

Learner's Communicative Competence

The goal of the communicative approach is to improve learner's communicative competence. The aim of the communicative approach is to have one's learners become communicatively competent. It involves being able to use the language appropriately in a given social context. So students need knowledge of the linguistic forms, meanings and functions. They need to know that many different forms can be used to perform a function and also that a single form can often serve a variety of functions. They must be able to choose from among these the most appropriate forms, given the social contexts and the roles of the interlocutors. They must also be able to manage the process of negotiating meaning with their interlocutors. It is through these activities that students will be able to develop their communicative competence.

Techniques and Games

Last but not least, games and techniques play a very important role in teaching English because they have certain features in common with real communicative events. There is a purpose of exchange. The speaker receives immediate feedback from the listener or whether or not he/she has successfully communicated. Having students work in small groups, encouraging students to play games such as lucky numbers, picture strip story, scrambled sentences, role-play, etc. Besides, the teacher must also be able to apply techniques in teaching English. For example, information gap, discussion, interview, role-play...all the

games and techniques are necessary to teach English for students who want to develop their communicative competence.

Conclusion

Communicative Language Teaching is best considered an approach rather than a method. Thus although a reasonable degree of theoretical consistency can be discerned at the levels of language and learning theory, at the levels of design and procedure there is much greater room for individual interpretation and variation than most methods permit. It could be that one version among the various proposals for syllabus models, exercise types, and classroom activities may gain wider approval in the future, giving Communicative Language Teaching a status similar to other teaching methods.

Although the Communicative Approach to language teaching is one of the latest, yet it is too ambitious and the requirements for its success are difficult. This should not lead to a complete distrust of this approach, but rather to more efforts drawing its guidelines and blueprints. Again, it is suggested that it becomes part of the whole framework of language teaching which incorporates different approaches and methods, making use of the advantages of each and avoiding the disadvantages. This again requires very sophisticated syllabuses, materials and teaching aids, and, above all, competent and experienced teachers.

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