



Current Communicative Approaches

-Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers

(2001) *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, Cambridge University Press: New York.



Approaches/Methods

- **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**
- **The Natural Approach**

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

- CLT was created as a response to Situational Language Teaching in Britain and Audiolingualism in the USA.
- Applied Linguists saw a need to focus on communicative proficiency rather than on a mastery of structures
- The Council of Europe promoted further research into communicative methods

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Howatt (1984: 279) distinguishes between a "strong" and a "weak" version of Communicative Language Teaching:

- **The 'weak' version**

...stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching....

- **The 'strong' version**

...advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not merely a question of activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself. If the former could be described as 'learning to use' English, the latter entails 'using English to learn it.'

Theory of Language

(CLT)

- Interactive – Communicative
- Functional: 7 basic functions
 - (1) **Instrumental**: using language to get things
 - (2) **Regulatory**: using language to control the behavior of others
 - (3) **Interactional**: using language to create interaction with others

Theory of Language

(CLT)

- (4) **Personal:** using language to express personal meanings and feelings
- (5) **Heuristic:** using language to learn and discover
- (6) **Imaginative:** using language to create a world of imagination
- (7) **Representational:** using language to communicate information

Theory of Learning

(CLT)

Not a great deal has been written about the learning theory behind the communicative approaches, but here are some principles that may be inferred:

- activities that involve real communication promote learning
- activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning
- language that is meaningful to the learner promotes learning

Design

(CLT)

- **Objective:** use language as a means of expression, as a means of expressing values and judgments, and to express the functions that best meet their own communication needs
- **Curriculum:** Functional Syllabus
- **Activities:** unlimited – need to engage learners in communication
- **Learner Roles:** Negotiator
- **Teacher Roles:** Facilitator, Needs Analyst, Counselor, Group Process Manager, Organizer of Resources, Resource, Researcher, Learner
- **Materials:** Text-based, Task-based, Realia

Procedure

(CLT)

- Communicative Language Teaching is best considered an approach rather than a method.
- As communicative principles can be applied to the teaching of any skill, at any level, and because of the wide variety of classroom activities and exercise types, description of typical classroom procedures used in a lesson based on CLT

Communicative Methodology

5 Core Characteristics of Communicative Methodology:

- (1) **Appropriateness:** Language used reflects the situations of its use and must be appropriate to that situation depending on the setting, the roles of participants, and purpose of the communication.
- (2) **Message focus:** Learners need to be able to create and understand messages, that is, real meanings. Hence the focus on information sharing and information transfer in CLT activities.

Communicative Methodology

- (3) **Psycholinguistic processing:** CLT activities seek to engage learners in the use of cognitive and other processes that are important factors in second language acquisition.
- (4) **Risk taking:** Learners are encouraged to make guesses and learn from their errors. By going beyond what they have been taught, they are encouraged to employ a variety of communication strategies.
- (5) **Free practice:** CLT encourages the use of “holistic practice” involving the simultaneous use of a variety of sub-skills, rather than practicing individual skills one piece at a time.

The Natural Approach

Terrell and Krashen (1983)

- Traditional Approach - “based on the use of language in communicative situations without recourse to the L1”
- No reference to grammatical analysis, grammar drilling or a particular theory of grammar

The Natural Approach

Different than the Natural Method (Direct Method)

- Less emphasis on teaching monologues, repetition and accuracy
- More emphasis on exposure or input, rather than practice
- Optimizing emotional preparedness for learning
- Willingness to use written and other materials as a source of comprehensible input.

Theory of Language

(NA)

- Interactive - Communicative
- Vocabulary is stressed – grammar is inconsequential
- Believes in a linguistic hierarchy of structure

Theory of Language Learning

(NA)

Krashen's Language Acquisition Theory

Acquisition/Learning Hypothesis

- Acquisition is unconscious
- Learning is the conscious development of rules about language
- Learning cannot lead to acquisition

Natural Order Hypothesis

- Acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable manner.

Language Acquisition Theory

(NA)

Monitor Hypothesis

- We call upon learned knowledge to correct ourselves
 - Three conditions limit this process
- (2) **Time** – There must be sufficient time for a learner to choose and apply a learned rule.
 - (3) **Focus on form** – The learner must be focused on correctness or on the form of utterance.
 - (4) **Knowledge of rules** – The learner must know the rules.

Language Acquisition Theory

(NA)

The Input Hypothesis

- Explains the relationship between comprehensible input and acquisition
- (2) Relates to acquisition – not learning
 - (3) People acquire language best by understanding input that is slightly beyond their level
 - (4) The ability to speak fluently cannot be taught; it emerges over time
 - (5) If there is sufficient quantity of comprehensible input, $I+1$ will be provided automatically (Foreigner Talk)

Language Acquisition Theory

(NA)

Affective Filter Hypothesis

- Emotional state is an adjustable filter that freely passes, impedes or blocks language acquisition
- There are 3 affective variables
 - (1) **Motivation** – Learners with high motivation do better
 - (2) **Self-confidence** – Learners with high self-confidence are more successful
 - (3) **Anxiety** – Low anxiety is more conducive to learning

Design (NA)

- **Objective:** “...for beginners and is designed to help them become intermediates” - Stresses realistic goals and expectations
- **Curriculum:** *A priori* – Basic communication and academic skills. *A posteriori* – individual student need assessment
- **Activities:** Command-Based (TPR), Mime/gesture to elicit questions and answers (Direct Method), Group work (CLT)
- **Learner Roles:** Processor of Comprehensible Input
- **Teacher Roles:** Generator of I+1, Atmosphere creator, Conductor of a rich mix of activities
- **Materials:** Realia, games



Procedure

(NA)

Constant flow of I+1 using appropriate gestures, context, repetition and paraphrase to ensure the comprehensibility of the input.