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# IMPLEMENTING COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

*In recent decades, teachers of second languages in many countries, including Ukraine, have been encouraged to use an approach known as communicative language teaching. This approach advocates the development of communicative competence as a primary goal through the extensive use of the second language as a means of communication during classroom lessons. The authors analyze the essence of communicative language teaching and suggest some ways of incorporating this approach into second language teaching.*

**Keywords:** *communicative language teaching, communicative competence, second language teaching, communicative activities.*

**Introduction.** Concerned with the exploration of the functions of language as a primary means of human social interaction, linguistic pragmatics offers many promising, practice oriented linguistic fields of inquiry to engage contemporary scholars. Among them, none currently enjoys more lively debate than the field of language pedagogy. Language teachers have been with us for as long as there have been languages. And their engagement with language learners constitutes a fascinating arena for the study of social interaction. This paper takes a brief look at the classroom teaching of second or 'foreign' language teaching as a backdrop to a consideration of the current phenomenon of what has come to be known as communicative language teaching.

**Review of literature.** Communicative language teaching is best understood within the broader historical spectrum of methods or approaches to language teaching. Seen from a 21st-century modernist perspective that views teaching as rather more science than art, the theoretical grounding for the epistemology of practice offered by communicative language teaching can be found in the second- or foreign language acquisition research that began to flourish in the 1970s and a long-standing functional view of language and language use as social behaviour.

The essence of communicative language teaching is the engagement of learners in communication to allow them to develop their communicative competence. Use of the term 'communicative' in reference to language teaching refers to both the process and goals of learning. A central theoretical concept in communicative language teaching is communicative competence, a term introduced in the early 1970s into discussions of language by Habermas [1] and Hymes [2] and second-language learning by Jakobovits [3] and Savignon [4]. Competence is defined as the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning and looks to second-language acquisition research to account for its development.

**Identification of the aspects of the problem which need solution and which the article is devoted to**. Language teaching in the past focused entirely on the form dominated language teaching, instead of meaning. However, mastery of grammatical forms does not necessarily mean using target language effectively in communication. As a result, communicative language teaching gained importance because its major aim is to develop learners' communicative competence. Second language acquisition is an unconscious process of using language, not directly obtained by conscious learning. Thus the major task for a teacher is to create an environment or a setting for students to acquire English by using it through activities in class. However, the main problem is how to make efficient use of the limited class time to improve students' language competence by communicating in class.

**The purpose** of this article is to analyse the essence of communicative language teaching and suggest some ways of improving students' communicative competence.

**Content.** The elaboration of what has come to be known as communicative language teaching can be traced to concurrent developments in linguistic theory and language learning curriculum design, both in Europe and in North America. With sponsorship from the Council of Europe, a Threshold Level of language ability was proposed for each of the languages of Europe in

terms of what learners should be able to do with the language. Functions were based on the assessment of learner needs and specified the end result or goals of an instructional program. The term 'communicative' was used to describe programs that followed a notional-functional syllabus based on needs assessment, and the language for specific purposes movement was launched.

Widdowson [5] claimed that an overemphasis on grammar would lead preventing the learners from developing their communicative competence. In grammar-translation classes teachers' detailed explanations and exercises of grammar might be a waste of time and in these classes there is little chance for students to communicate with language. According to Littlewood, many aspects of language learning can take place only through natural processes, which operate when a person is involved using the language for communication and the learners' ultimate goal is to communicate with others. Students learn effectively about language when they take part actively in the communication with language rather than only passively accepting what the teacher says.

Communicative language teaching thus can be seen to derive from a multidisciplinary perspective that includes linguistics, anthropology, philosophy, sociology, psychology, and educational research. Its focus has been the elaboration and implementation of programs and methodologies that promote the development of functional language ability through learner participation in communicative events.

Given the current widespread uncertainty as to just what are and are not essential features of communicative language teaching, a summary description would be incomplete without brief mention of what communicative language teaching is not. Communicative language teaching is not concerned exclusively with face-to-face oral communication; principles of communicative language teaching apply equally to literacy. Whether written or oral, activities that involve readers and writers in the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning are in and of themselves communicative.

The goals of communicative language teaching depend on learner needs in a given context. Although group tasks have been found helpful in many contexts as a way or providing increased opportunity and motivation for communication, classroom group or pair work should not be considered an essential feature of communicative language teaching and may well be inappropriate in some settings. Finally, communicative language teaching does not exclude metalinguistic awareness or conscious knowledge of rules of syntax, discourse, and social appropriateness. However, knowing a rule is no substitute for using a rule. The creative use of interpretive and expressive skills in both reading and writing requires practice. Communicative language teaching cannot be found in any one textbook or set of curricular materials inasmuch as strict adherence to a given text is not likely to be true to the process and goals of communicative language teaching. In keeping with the notion of context of situation, communicative language teaching is properly seen as an approach or theory of intercultural communicative competence to be used in developing materials and methods appropriate to a given context of learning. No less than the means and norms of communication they are designed to reflect, communicative teaching methods will continue to be explored and adapted.

The problem is that students who have received several years of formal English teaching frequently remains deficient in the ability to actually use the language and to understand its use in normal communication, whether in the spoken or the written mode. The difficulty is that the ability to compose sentences is not the only ability we need to communicate. Communication only takes place when we make use of sentences to make statements of different kinds, to describe, to record, to classify and so on, or to ask questions, make requests, give orders. Students need to be given yje opportunity to experiment with any item, to see how far they can communicate with it in any situations where all the choices of language used are made by the people speaking.

Activities set up to encourage such freely chosen language are normally known as communication activities. They are usually designed to give either:
– creative practice opportunities for predicted language areas, or
– general communicative practice, where the specific language focus is less relevant.

Activity in-groups, which stimulate all partners, tend to achieve better results than activities, which concentrate on one. Similarly, by engaging different senses in a practical activity

(touch, smell, taste as well as hearing and sight), learning tends to be reinforced. Language practice should therefore aim at activating the whole individual and not simply the intellect. Language learning involves conscious effort, using grammatical rules and exercises for example, and also subconscious acquisition.

Most people learn a foreign language better with others than on their own. Learning a language requires more than understanding of words and grammatical rules (linguistic competence). It requires the ability to put this knowledge into practice (communicative competence).

*Accuracy and fluency activities.* The aim of fluency activity is to develop a pattern of language interaction within the classroom, which is as close as possible to that used by competent performers in mother tongue in normal life. Since much language use is informal, small group conversation, this will often involve students in participating in small groups. The emphasis in fluency activity is on successful and relaxed operation with the language. Traditional teaching and teacher training have based themselves firmly on the "four skills" of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Inevitably, lots of grammar mistakes are made (native speakers make them too). However, they must be seen as part of learning to communicate. In general, being clear, fluent and convincing is more important than being grammatically accurate (although frequently you need to be accurate to be understood). And from this the question arises whether to correct students or not.

*Correcting.* "Teachers should be very careful about correcting students' mistakes". "Students' mistakes should always be corrected". There are, however, situations where "correcting" may do more harm than good. For example, interrupting a student during fluency practice or concentrating on individual errors in front of the whole class. This can create inhibitions in individual students and set standards of perfection that are difficult or impossible to live up to. Evidence also shows that constant correcting does not always lead to an improvement. On the other hand, the teacher has knowledge, skills and experience and the students need professional guidance. Much depends on *how* and *when* the correcting is done.

*Fluency rather than "correctness".* A willingness to use the language in a given situation can often be of greater importance for understanding and communication than grammatical correctness. Grammatical competence will normally develop as learning progresses. A half-developed language is an important stage in the process of language acquisition. An example of this could be *She not cares* or *she doesn't care* before *She doesn't care.* This means the teacher should not be too concerned about letting certain mistakes, which do not interfere with the communication, pass without being corrected.

There will be presented several training exercises to develop students' communicative competence.

The duration of exercises is 5-15 minutes.

1.    Guess the obiect. *Language skills:* Question forms.

Divide into groups. Each group decides on an object, for which they know the word. The others then try to guess the object by asking questions: Is it made of wood? Can you eat it? Is it expensive? Is it bigger than an apple? Can you find it in the home? Is there one in this room? Have I got one? (The objects could be selected from words encountered in previous lessons.)

2.    Similarities and différences. *Language skills:* Comparisons, using words / phrases such as *both, only one, the...has / is, but the...hasn't, isn't,* etc.

Two words on the board

COW DOG

The similarities (animais; have four legs, tame, etc.) The differences (the cow has horns, but not the dog; only the cow produces food; the dog can be a house pet; the cow is bigger than a dog, etc.)

The word may be of different kinds, but usually the same grammatical group (nouns, virbs and adjectives). Examples:

meal snack banana strawberry

friend acquaintance eye ear
beautiful attractive house flat
important valuable walk run
see watch smile laugh

3.    Respond to the situation. *Language skills:* Revision and practice of idioms and "situational phrases" in context.

What do I say when someone...- greets me; — introduces himself to me; —misunderstands me; — speaks too fast for me; says somelhing rude to me; asks me the way; — asks me to help but I can't.

4.    Behaviour. *Language skills:* Vocabulary associated with various social situations.

Discussion differences in behavior between people in the home countries whose language is being studied: Situations where people shake hands; — the use of gestures; — how people answer the phone; — What people say / do when visiting friends; — What is acceptable / unacceptable behavior when eating; — relationships between young people and adults; — bringing up children.

This activity focuses attention on cultural différences and how they affect the language.

5.    Answer an advertisement. *Language skills:* Functions of inquiring, giving information, opening and ending a telephone conversation.

Procedure: the teacher collects a number of different adverts from newspapers (e.g. job vacancies, articles for sale, personal column, accommodation wanted) and puts up notices / advertisements of their own (object for sale, wanted, to swap, lost, etc.)

6.    Situations requiring a set response.

What would you say when... a) Someone sneezes; b) You want to sit down at the table in a cafe, but are not sure, whether the seat is free or not; c) You don't understand the word "grotty"; d) You don't quite catch what someone says; e) You see that a women is about to step off the pavement right in front of a bus; f) You accidentally bump into someone in the street; g) A friend asks if he can use your phone; h) a friend says "Thank you very much for your help"; i) You are in a colleague's house and want to make a phone call; j) A friend tells you he's just passed his driving test.

Students can also try out light-hearted multiple-choice questionnaires on each other. There plenty of these to be found in magazines, which can be easily adapted or the teacher can write his own, if he wants to focus in a particular point.

a)    If vou found a fly in your soup, *would* vou... A) Complain to the waiter? B) Fish it out discreetly? C) Walk out of the restaurant?

b)    When vou last went shopping, *did* vou... A) Buy everything you meant to? B) Forget at least one item? C) Buy one or two things that you didn't really need?

c)    When you next go on holidav, *will* vou... A) Go somewhere you have been before? B) Go somewhere recommended by a friend? C) Go to Outer Mongolia?

**Conclusion.**  The results suggest that Ukrainian higher education institutions undoubtedly need to modernize and update their teaching methods. It is obvious that students in non-English speaking countries can make use of communicative language teaching if communicative activities are widely used in English classrooms. In other words, aligning the communicative approach with traditional teaching methods is beneficial for students. It is essential for the teachers to develop their teaching methods appropriate to their learners and their societies.

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**Л. М. Паніотова,    Н. В. Ревіна.    Впровадження комунікативного навчання іноземної мови у вищих навчальних закладах.**

*В останні десятиліття, у багатьох країнах, у тому числі в Україні, викладачів заохочують до застосування підходу, відомого як комунікативне навчання мови. Цей підхід передбачає головною метою розвиток комунікативної компетентності через використання іноземної мови як засобу комунікації впродовж аудиторних занять. Автори аналізують суть комунікативного навчання іноземної мови і пропонують деякі шляхи впровадження цього підходу у процес вивчення іноземної мови.*

**Ключові слова:** *комунікативне навчання мови, комунікативна компетентність, навчання іноземній мові, комунікативна діяльність.*


**Л. Н. Паниотова,    Н. В. Ревина.    Внедрение коммуникативного обучения иностранному языку в высших учебных заведениях.**

*В последние десятилетия, во многих странах, в том числе в Украине, преподавателей поощряют к применению подхода, известного как коммуникативное обучение языку. Этот подход предусматривает главной целью развитие коммуникативной компетентности через использование иностранного языка как средства коммуникации во время аудиторных занятий. Авторы анализируют суть коммуникативного обучения иностранному языку и предлагают некоторые пути внедрения этого подхода в процесс изучения иностранного языка.*

**Ключевые слова:** *коммуникативное обучение языку, коммуникативная компетентность, обучение иностранному языку, коммуникативная деятельность.*