

Tikrit University
College of Education for Humanities
English Department



MA (First Course) 2024-2025

Methodology

Communicative Language Teaching

(Ch:5)

Prof. Dunia Tahir (PhD)

Communicative Language Teaching

Introduction

In this chapter we will discuss the following questions:

Q1: What are the sources of influence that shape the field of language teaching?

Q2: In Situational Language Teaching Approach language is taught by what?

Q3: What did Chomsky demonstrate in his book Syntactic Structures?

Q4: What did British Applied Linguists emphasize? What did they see?

Q5: What is the reason behind the need for greater efforts to teach adults the major languages of the European common market?

The Development of Communicative Language Teaching

There are two interacting **sources of influence** that shape the field of language teaching, which have accounted for its recent history and which will no doubt determine the direction it takes in years to come. One comes from outside the profession and reflects the changing status of English in the world. Increasingly, essential features of contemporary societies are an English - proficient workforce in many key sectors of the economy as well as the ability of people from all walks of life to access the educational , technical , and knowledge resources that proficiency in English makes available.

The second source of change is internally initiated , that is, it reflects the language teaching profession gradually evolving a changed understanding of its own essential knowledge base and associated instructional practices through the efforts of applied linguists, specialists, and teachers in the field of second language teaching and teacher education.

CLT was the result of a questioning of the assumptions and practices associated with **Situational Language Teaching** (SLT) up until the 1960 s the major British approach to teaching English as a second or foreign language. In SLT, language was taught by practicing basic structures in meaningful situation - based activities. This was partly a response to the sorts of criticisms the prominent American linguist **Noam Chomsky** had leveled at structural linguistic theory in his influential book Syntactic Structures (1957) . **Chomsky had demonstrated** that the then standard structural theories of language were incapable of accounting for the fundamental characteristic of language the creativity and uniqueness of individual sentences. **British applied linguists emphasized** another fundamental dimension of language that was inadequately addressed in approaches to language teaching at that time - the functional and communicative potential of language. They saw the need to focus in language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures. Scholars who advocated this view of language, such as Christopher Candlin and Henry

Widdowson , drew on the work of British functional linguists (e.g., John Firth , M . A . K . Halliday) , American work in sociolinguistics (e.g ., by Dell Hymes, John Gumperz), as well as work in philosophy (e.g., by John Austin and John Searle) .

The “communicative movement” in language teaching was also partly the result of changing educational realities in Europe in the 1960 s and 1970s. With the increasing interdependence of European countries came the need for greater efforts to teach adults the major languages of the European Common Market.

Approach

Theory of language

Q6: What is the goal of CLT?

Q7: Why did Hymes coin the term of communicative competence?

Q8: Communicative competence according to Chomsky focus on what?

Q9: What Hymes point of view towards Chomsky's theory?

Q10: What is Hymes theory of communicative competence?

Q11: What is Hymes view of communicative competence?

Q12: What is the other linguistic theory of communication favored in CLT theory? Describe this term.

The Communicative Approach in language teaching starts from a functional theory of Language - one that focuses on language as a means of communication. The goal of language teaching is to develop what **Hymes (1972)** referred to as “ communicative competence .” **Hymes** coined this term in order to contrast a communicative view of language and Chomsky’s theory of competence.

For Chomsky, the focus of linguistic theory was to characterize the abstract abilities speakers possess that enable them to produce **grammatically correct sentences** in a language. It was based on a cognitive view of language. Hymes held that such a view of linguistic theory was sterile, that linguistic theory needed to be seen as part of a more general theory incorporating communication and culture.

Hymes’s theory of communicative competence was a definition of what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community.

In Hymes’s view, a person who acquires communicative competence acquires both knowledge and ability for language use.

Another linguistic theory of communication favored in CLT theory was Halliday's functional account of language use. Here the term **functional is expanded** to encompass the categories given below, **as well as** speech acts, another term for functions in the sense used by Wilkins to describe what we do with language (complain, apologize, etc.) "Linguistics . . . is concerned. . . with the description of speech acts or texts, since only through the study of language in use are all the functions of language, and therefore all components of meaning, brought into focus" (**Halliday 1975: 145**).

Halliday elaborated a powerful theory of the functions of language. The **seven basic** functions that language performs for children learning their first language:

1. The instrumental function : using language to get things
2. The regulatory function : using language to control the behavior of others
3. The interactional function : using language to create interaction with others
4. The personal function : using language to express personal feelings and meanings
5. The heuristic function : using language to learn and to discover
6. The imaginative function : using language to create a world of the imagination
7. The representational function: using language to communicate information.

Q13:What is Henry's book?

Q14:What is Henry Widdowson views on the communicative nature of language?

Another theorist frequently cited for his views on the communicative nature of language is **Henry Widdowson**. In his book **Teaching Language as communication**, Widdowson presented a view of (1)the relationship between linguistic systems and their communicative values in text and discourse. (2)He focused on the communicative acts underlying the ability to use language for different purposes. In other words, (3)Widdowson's focus was a practical one, as opposed to a purely philosophical one, and (4)emphasized that learner's use of speech acts or functions for a communicative purpose.

A more pedagogically influential analysis of communicative competence was presented in an important paper by **Canale and Swain (1980)**, in which four dimensions of communicative competence are identified : grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence refers to what Chomsky calls linguistic competence and what Hymes intends by what is "formally possible." It is the domain of grammatical and lexical capacity. Sociolinguistic competence refers to an understanding of the social context in which communication takes place, including role relationships, the shared information of the participants, and the communicative purpose for their interaction. Discourse competence refers to the interpretation of individual message elements in terms of their interconnectedness and of how meaning is represented in relationship to the entire discourse or text. Strategic competence refers to the coping strategies that communicators employ to initiate, terminate, maintain, repair, and redirect communication.

Some of the characteristics of this communicative view of language follow:

1. Language is a system for the expression of meaning.
2. The primary function of language is to allow interaction and communication.
3. The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses.
4. The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.
5. Communicative competence entails knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions as well as the following dimensions of language knowledge:

Q15: What are the dimensions of language knowledge?

- Knowing how to vary use of language according to the setting and the participants(e.g., knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication)
- Knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts (e.g., narratives, reports, interviews, conversations)
- Knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge (e.g., through using different kinds of communication strategies).

Theory of Learning

Elements of an underlying learning theory can be discerned in some CLT practices, however.

One such element might be described as the communication principle: activities that involve real communication promote learning.

A second element is the task principle: activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning (Johnson 1982).

A third element is the meaningfulness principle: language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process.

Learning activities are consequently selected according to how well they engage the learner in meaningful and authentic language use (rather than merely mechanical practice of language patterns). These principles can be inferred from CLT practices and inform the design of textbooks and courses since the 1980s that are based on CLT.

Later accounts of CLT, however, identified theories of language learning processes that are compatible with the Communicative Approach.

Savignon (1983) surveyed **second language acquisition** research as a source for learning theories and considers the role of linguistic, social, cognitive, and individual variables in language acquisition.

Johnson (1984) and Littlewood (1984) proposed **an alternative learning theory** that they also saw as compatible with CLT-a skill-learning model of learning. According to this theory, the acquisition of communicative competence in a language is an example of skill development. This involves both a cognitive and a behavioral aspect.

Other learning theories that can be cited to support CLT **are the creative – construction hypothesis**, and particularly **interactional theory** and **sociocultural learning theory**, which were referred to above and in Chapter 2.

From these perspectives language learning is seen to result from processes of the following kind:

- Interaction between the learner and users of the language
- Collaborative creation of meaning
- Creating meaningful and purposeful interaction through language
- Negotiation of meaning as the learner and his or her interlocutor arrive at understanding
- Learning through attending to the feedback learners get when they use the language
- Paying attention to the language one hears (the input) and trying to incorporate new forms into one's developing communicative competence
- Trying out and experimenting with different ways of saying things
- Learning as social mediation between the learner and another during which socially acquired knowledge becomes internal to the learner
- Learning facilitated through scaffolding by an expert or fellow learner (Vygotsky 1978)
- Learning through collaborative dialogue centering on structured cooperative tasks (Cook 2008) .

الاستاذ الدكتورة دنيا طاهر حميد/دكتوراه طرائق تدريس اللغة الانكليزية