

College of Education for Humanities
English Department



M. A. Studies/ Methodology

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Methods of Teaching

“Syllables Design”

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An Introduction:

Objectives in CLT courses and materials may relate either to very general language learning goals, or to those linked to learners with very specific needs. In the case of the former, objectives will reflect the type of syllabus framework used, such as whether the course is organized around a topic-based, function-based, or skill-based syllabus. In either case objectives will normally seek to operationalize the notion of communicative competence into more specific descriptions of learning outcomes. The syllabus also specifies the grammar, vocabulary, functions, and other skills used to achieve these learning outcomes. In the case of courses developed for learners with more specific needs, objectives will be specific to the contexts of teaching and learning. These needs may be in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, or writing, each of which can be approached from a communicative perspective.

The syllabus

We have seen that one of the first, and ultimately influential, syllabus models was described as a notional syllabus (Wilkins 1976), which specified the semantic grammatical categories (c.g., frequency, motion, location) and the categories of communicative function that learners need to express. It was argued that a syllabus should identify following aspects of language use in order to be able to develop the learner's communicative competence:

1- As detailed a consideration as possible of the purposes for which the learner wishes to acquire the target language. For example, using English for business purposes, in the hotel industry, or for travel.

2- Some idea of the setting in which they will want to use the target language. For example in an office, on an airplane, or in a store.

3- The socially defined role the learners will assume in the target language, as well as the role of their interlocutors. For example as a traveler, as a salesperson talking to clients, or as a student in a school setting.

4- The communicative events in which the learners will participate: everyday situations, vocational or professional situations, academic situations, and so on. For

example, making telephone calls, engaging in casual conversation, or taking part in a meeting.

5- The language functions involved in those events, or what the learner will be able to do with or through the language. For example, making introductions, giving explanations, or describing plans.

6- the notions or concepts involved, or what the learner will need to be able to talk about. For example, leisure, finance, history, religion.

7- the skills involved in the "knitting together" of discourse: discourse and rhetorical skills. For example, storytelling, giving an effective business presentation.

8- the variety or varieties of the target language that will be needed, such as American, Australian, or British English, and the levels in the spoken and written language which the learners will need to reach. 9- the grammatical content that will be needed.

10- the lexical content or vocabulary that will be needed.

English for Specific Purposes

Advocates of CLT also recognized that many learners needed English in order to use it in specific occupational or educational settings they needed English for Specific Purposes (ESP). For such learners it would be more efficient to teach them the specific kinds of language and communicative skills needed for particular roles (eg, that of nurse, engineer, flight attendant, pilot, biologist, etc.) rather than just to concentrate on more and more general English) This led to the process of needs analysis The focus of needs analysis was to determine the particular characteristics of a language when it is used for specific rather than general purposes. Such differences might include:

- Differences in vocabulary choice.
- Differences in grammar.
- Differences in the kinds of texts commonly occurring.
- Differences in functions;

- Differences in the need for particular skills.

Munby's Communicative Syllabus Design (1978) presented a detailed model for conducting needs analysis in ESP course design. ESP courses soon began to appear addressing the language needs of university students, nurses, engineers, restaurant staff, doctors, hotel staff, airline pilots, and so on.

Types of learning and teaching activities

Activities were needed that reflected the following principles:

- make real communication the focus of language learning.
- Provide opportunities for learners to experiment and try out what they know.
- Be tolerant of learners' errors as they indicate that the learner is building up his or her communicative competence.
- Provide opportunities for learners to develop both accuracy and fluency.
- Link the different skills such as speaking, reading, and listening together, since they usually occur together in the real world.
- Let students induce or discover grammar rules.

One of the goals of second language learning is to develop fluency, accuracy and appropriacy in language use. Fluency is natural language use occurring when a speaker engages in meaningful interaction and maintains comprehensible and ongoing communication despite limitations in his or her communicative competence.

In CLT fluency was addressed through classroom activities in which students must correct misunderstandings and work to avoid communication breakdowns. Fluency practice can be contrasted with accuracy practice, which focuses on creating correct examples of language use.

The differences between these two kinds of activities may be summarized as follows :

- Activities focusing on fluency reflect natural use of language,

- Concentrate on achieving communication through negotiation of meaning:
- Require meaningful use of language,
- Require the use of communication strategies,
- Produce language that may not be predictable,
- Seek to link language use to context. Activities focusing on accuracy.
- Reflect classroom use of language.
- Concentrate on the formation of correct examples of language.

Activities focusing on accuracy

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- Reflect classroom use of language.
- Concentrate on the formation of correct examples of language,
- Practice language out of context;
- Practice small samples of language:
- Do not require meaningful communication;
- control choice of language.