

台灣外語教學目的的新展望：溝通式語言教學

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摘要

在台灣，英文教育過度重視英文文法和考試。溝通能力模糊了本國語言和外語需求的不同，且知識技能訓練只是外語訓練的一部分，語言最重要的是人類的溝通，且溝通是語言最重要的功能。

從台灣傳統教學法的失敗和不足中得知，英文老師可在語言教學中涵蓋文化教學，了解上課中教師和學生的發言比例以激勵學生使用正確且合宜的英語。

關鍵字：TEFL（英語外語教學），TTT（教師談話時間），STT（學生談話時間）



A New Perspective on the Goals of TEFL in Taiwan :

Communicative Language Teaching

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Abstract

In Taiwan, English education was too focused on English grammar and tests. “Communicative Competence” blurs the difference between native language acquisition and foreign language acquisition, while “knowledge skills training” constitutes only part of the task of TEFL. Language is the most important means of human communication, and communication is the most important function of language.

From the failure and inefficiency of the traditional teaching method in Taiwan, English teachers can teach culture along with language, understand the ratio of TTT and STT in the class to motivate students to use correct and appropriate English.

Keywords : TEFL, TTT,STT



Introduction

For some 40 years now, discussions of foreign language teaching have been dominated by the concept of ‘communication’ and its various derivatives such as ‘communicative language teaching’ (CLT) and “communicative competence’. Hunter and Smith (2012) analyzed the keywords in articles published in one leading UK-based journal (EL Journal) and showed how communicative ideas and terminology gradually climbed to a dominant status in ELT professional discourse in the years up to 1986. Since 1986 this trend has continued. Even if much discussion now refers to “task-based language teaching’(TBLT) rather than CLT, this is not so much a shift of direction as a continuation within the same direction. As many writers have noted (e. g). Nunan, 2004, p. 10; Richards, 2005, p. 29), TBLT is best understood not as a new departure but as a development within CLT, in which communicative tasks ‘serve not only as major components of the methodology but also as units around which a course may be organized (Littlewood, 2004, p. 324).

According to the Curriculum Standards for the Nine-year Compulsory Education, there are three main objectives for children learning English in elementary schools : basic communication ability, interests in learning English, and understanding of both the native culture and the culture of the target language(施玉惠、朱惠美，民 88；戴維揚，民 88). The design of the curriculum puts emphasis on the development of basic communication abilities. The first objective is about children’s English proficiency levels. The second objective aims to motivate the students in elementary schools to learn English out of enjoyment. The third objective focuses on the cultural aspect of language learning. The students should be able to express their viewpoints about Taiwan and find out about the culture of the target language.

The Communicative Language Teaching(CLT) is selected by the Ministry of Education as the guiding principle of English teaching in elementary schools in Taiwan among various approaches of language teaching. The goal of CLT is making students become communicatively competent(Larsen-Freeman,1986).In other words, students learn linguistic forms, meanings, and functions of the target language in the classroom in order to use the language appropriately in various settings outside the classroom.

Literature Review

Definition of Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching(CLT) originated from the changes in the British Situational Language Teaching approach dating from the late 1960s(Richards& Rodgers,2001). Stemming from the socio-cognitive perspective of the socio-linguistic



theory, with an emphasis on meaning and communication, and a goal to develop learners “communicative competence, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach evolves as a prominence language teaching method and gradually replaced the previous grammar-translation method and audio-lingual method (Warschauer & Kern, 2000)

After Hymes introduced the concept of communicative competence in the mid 1960s, many researchers have helped develop theories and practices of Communicative Language Teaching approach (Brown, 1987 ; Canale, 1983 ; Hymes, 1971 ; Littlewood, 1981 ; Nunan, 1987 & 1989 ; Richards & Rodgers, 2001 ; Widdowson, 1990). Hymes coined this term in contrast to Chomsky’s “Linguistic Competence.” Chomsky indicated that underlying the concrete language performance, there is an abstract rule system or knowledge and this underlying knowledge of the grammar of the language by the native speaker is his linguistic competence.

In contrast, Hymes argued that in addition to linguistic competence, the native speaker has another rule system. In Hymes’s view, language was considered as a social and cognitive phenomenon ; syntax and language forms were understood not as autonomous, acontextual structures, but rather as meaning resources used in particular conventional ways and develop through social interaction and assimilation of others speech (Warschauer & Kern, 2000). Hence speakers of a language have to have more than grammatical competence in order to be able to communicate effectively in a language ; they also need to know how language is used by members of a speech community to accomplish their purpose. (Hymes, 1971)

Based on Hymes’s theory, Canale and Swain (1980) later extended the communicative competence into four dimensions. In Canale and Swain, “Communicative competence was understood as the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication. Knowledge refers here to what one knows (consciously or unconsciously) about the language and about other aspects of communicative language use ; skill refers to how well one can perform this knowledge in actual communication.” (Canale, 1983, p.5) From this perspective, what language teachers need to teach is no longer just linguistic competence but also socio-linguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence.

Historical Background

The origins of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) dates back late 1960s. Until then Situational Language Teaching represented the major British Approach to teaching English as a foreign language. In Situational Language Teaching, language was taught by practicing basic structures in meaningful situation-based activities. But the



linguistic theory underlying Audiolingualism was rejected in United States in the mid-1960s, British applied linguists began to call into question the theoretical assumption underlying Situational Language Teaching.(Richards&Rodgers,2001)

A famous American linguist, Noam Chomsky, had demonstrated that the current standard structural theories of language were incapable of accounting for the fundamental characteristic of language-the creativity and uniqueness of individual sentences. Then, British applied linguists emphasized another fundamental dimension of language that was inadequately addressed in current approaches to language teaching at that time-the functional and communicative potential of language. Moreover, a quotation also supports the view as following :

During the 1970s, there was a widespread reaction, in both L1 and L2 teaching, against methods that stressed the teaching of grammatical forms and paid little or no attention to the way is used in everyday situations. A concern developed to make FLT(foreign language teaching) ‘communicative’ by focusing on learners’ knowledge of the functions of the language, and on their ability to select appropriate kinds of language for use in specific situations.(Crystal,1987)

Then, it was claimed that there is a sense in which ‘using language in order to communicate’ sounds rather strange with reference to spontaneous speech. Because, people do not consciously ‘use’ language ; they communicate and language gets used in the process, which is not quite the same thing. The focus shifts away from the language and towards the user, emphasizing the effective with which communication takes place and skills which the users can gather in order to maintain and promote it. (Howatt,1984)

The current situation of the Communicative Language Teaching is summarized by Brown as follows :

Today we are benefiting from the victories and defeats of our professional march through history. But today the methodological issues are quite complex. Beyond grammatical and discourse elements in communication, we are probing the nature of social, cultural, and pragmatic features of language. We are exploring pedagogical means for “real-life” communication in the classroom.We are trying to get our learners to develop linguistic fluency, not just the accuracy that has so consumed our historical journey. We are equipping our students with tools for generating unrehearsed language performance “out there” when they leave the womb of our classrooms. We are concerned with how to facilitate lifelong language learning among our students, not just with the immediate classroom task. We are looking at learners as partners in a



cooperative venture. And our classroom practices seek to draw on whatever intrinsically sparks learners to reach their fullest potential. (1994a : 77)

Finally, Nunan offers five features to characterize the Communicative Language Teaching.

1. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
2. The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
3. The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the learning process itself.
4. An enhancement of the learner’s own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom.(cited in Brown 1994a : 78)

Change and Innovation in language teaching : 1880-1980(Stern 1991 : 113)

Period	Decade.....	Main Features
I	1880-1920	Reform/Direct method Phonetics
II	1920-	Compromise method Modern Foreign Language Study
	1940-	Reading method (U.S.A./Canada) Basic English
III	1940-1950	Linguistic approach to language teaching American Army Method Intensive Language Teaching
	1950-1960	Audiolingul(U.S.A.)and audiovisual (France/Britain)methods FLES Language Laboratory Psycholinguistics
	1960-1970	Audiolingual habit theory vs. cognitive code learning Impact of Chomsky’s theory. Sociolinguistics Method research Method Analysis
IV	1970-1980	Breakaway from method concept. New Methods
	1980	Communicative Approaches



The Features of Communication.

According to Richard's discussion on "several components of communicative competence in foreign language learning."(1983), five features of communication brief explanations are summarized below :

1. Communication is meaning-based : The first step in learning to communicate is to learn how to create propositions, for language is comprehensible to the degree that hearers are able to reconstruct propositions from the speaker's utterances.
2. Communications is conventional : Language learner's ultimate goal seems to be having native speaker syntax and usage, and be able to produce infinitive number of novel utterances by using these 'internalised' rules. Conversational openers routine formulate, ceremonial formulae and memorized clauses are features of conventionalized language.
3. Communication is appropriate : Learning a foreign language not only requires use of conventional utterance that express propositional meaning but also knowledge of different communicative strategies and styles according to the situation, the task and the roles of the participants.
4. Communication is interactional : Conversation between people has an "interactional function" which can be called as the use of language to keep open the channels of communication between people and to establish a suitable rapport.
5. Communication is structured : Another aspect of communication is its ongoing organization which can be viewed from two different perspective : a macro perspective that reveals the differences in rhetorical organization that reflect different discourse 'genres' or 'tasks' ; and a micro perspective showing how some of the process by which discourse is constructed out of individual utterances are reflected in speech.

Language Is Communication and Language Teaching Is for Communication

Language is a "vehicle for the expression or exchanging of thoughts, concepts, knowledge, and information as well as the fixing and transmission of experience and knowledge."(Bussmann,1996) And according to P.H. Mathews, language is "the phenomenon of vocal and written communication among human beings generally."(Mathews,1997) Briefly, language has been serving as a device of human communication, and the most important device for human communication, and conversely, "Communication is the most fundamental social function of language." (Liu Ling,et al,1984)

The goal of language instruction is to equip the learners with the ability to use the language for communication, namely, communicative competence. Communicative



approach has been predominating over TEFL for decades, emerges from the theory of “language communication”, and the goal of language teaching is to develop communicative competence. Rivers and Temperley (1978) stated that when selecting learning activities, we must always remember that our goal is for the students to be able to interact freely with others : to understand what others wish to communicate in the broadest sense, and to be able to convey to others what they themselves wish to share. Consequently, the orthodox “four skills” reasonably fill into the categories of vocal and written communications respectively : listening and speaking are the most important forms of verbal or vocal communication, while reading and writing are the most important forms of written communication.

Communicative Competence

CLT focuses on improving learners’ communicative competence. The concept of communicative competence was originally developed in the early 1970s by sociolinguist Hymes. According to Canale (1983), communicative competence refers to “the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication”. Canale and Swain (1980, p. 4) defined communicative competence in terms of four components:

- i. Grammatical competence: words and rules
- ii. Sociolinguistic competence: appropriateness
- iii. Discourse competence: cohesion and coherence
- iv. Strategic competence: appropriate use of communication strategies

According to Richards (2006, p. 3) includes the following aspects of language knowledge:

- i. Knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions
- ii. Knowing how to vary our 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)
- iii. Knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts (e. g., narratives, reports, interviews, conversations)
- iv. Knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one’s language knowledge (e. g.,)

Kiato and Kiato (1996, p. 1) observed that “the basic idea of communicative competence remains the ability to use language appropriately, both “receptively and productively, in real situations”.



Foreign Language Teaching Is for Intercultural Communicative Competence

In as early as 1960s, when “communicative approach” just began to prevail, a distinguished American scholar of communications in education, Confield, managed to give a new answer to the first question concerning FLT (foreign language teaching) : “Why do we teach and learn a foreign language ? ” His book, *Foreign Language Instruction : Dimensions and Horizons*, though not entitled “communicative approach”, set communication to the goal of FLT. In his book, Confield put forward a list of objectives of FLT as :

- For use in world understanding,
- For use in commerce and industry,
- For use in travel
- For pleasure and
- For greater insight into one’s own language (Confield, 1996 : 1)

Many people have attempted to find better ways to improve the teaching of foreign languages by studying the acquisition and use of mother tongue. A native speaker’s language proficiency implies the ability to act as a speaker, listener, reader, and even a writer in the diverse ways. The intuitive mastery that the native speakers possesses to use and comprehend language appropriately in the process of interaction and in relation to social context has been called by Hymes “communicative competence”, which has been widely accepted in language instruction and has been taken by communicative approach as its ultimate goal.

The teachers’ role in the communicative competence context as pronounced by Czura (2016) is to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes in their students that will help them interact with interlocutors coming from different cultural, linguistic and national backgrounds. According to Crawford (2003), “Communicative approaches to second-language acquisition are based on concepts, theories, and hypotheses that converge around the constructive paradigm”. The constructivist theory of learning is based on the notion that learners construct their own idea instead of receiving them complete and correct from the teacher or any source of authority. This process of construction is internal, individualized and unique. Constructivist teaching is based on problem-solving and inquiry-based learning activities, with which students formulate and test their ideas, draw conclusions and inferences, and pool and convey their knowledge in a collaborative learning environment. Constructivism transforms the student from passive recipient of information to an active participant in the learning process.

By “communicative competence”, Hymes means a competence of when to speak,



when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner.(Stern,1991) This apparently implies that its focus is that intuitive grasp of social and cultural rules and meanings that are carried by utterance. Furthermore, it suggests that language teaching recognizes a social, interpersonal and cultural dimension and attributes to it just as much importance as to the grammatical and phonological aspect. Intercultural communicative competence implies that to use the foreign for real intercultural communicative purposes, cultural instruction is to be implemented together with the teaching of linguistic knowledge and training of language skills, or rather, cultural instruction should be integrated into TEFL to ensure the appropriateness as well as the correctness of the use of English in intercultural communication. The task of TEFL should turn out people that are both bilingual and bicultural.

Problems with the Communicative Language Teaching

It is difficult to cope with language functions

Williams(1995)stated the following problems in case of the function insistence :

- a. An insistence on absolute authenticity :
Even with the rich and varied use of authentic language and materials in the classroom, there may be some functional restriction in the language to which students are exposed and consequently are likely to use and learn.
- b. An exclusive focus on communication :
The emphasis on fluency and communicative success may not push learners toward accuracy.
- c. A lack of focus on form in input and instruction :
There may be some forms that in the course of normal communication learners simply do not notice, either because they are not salient, or because they are similar, but not identical,to form in the first language.
- d. A lack of emphasis on form-based feedback :
Feedback is also meaning based, rather than form based, in most CLT classrooms. Error correction is based on communicative and truth value.

Grammar seems to be ignored

As a result of “function insistence” form or grammar is sometimes neglected. But we know that grammar or form is also important because focus on certain form in instruction speeds up the rate of learning, provides long term accuracy and raises the level of attainment. (Long,1991) Besides, Savignon(1991) argued that ”communication cannot take place in the absence of structure, or grammar, a set of shared assumptions about how language works, along with a willingness of participants to cooperate in the



negotiation of meaning.

There is an overemphasis on spoken language

We acquire “spoken language”, and in real life we speak more than we write. Writing requires some learnt psychomotor skills, and contrary to speaking, writing requires a pen, paper, etc. Most of the people make use of spoken language when they go abroad for many different reasons, or when they attempt to speak a visitor from a foreign country. Due to the aforementioned reasons, in linguistics there has been a primacy to the spoken language, and as earlier approaches had been, Communicative Language Teaching was influenced from this general movement. (Thompson,1994) It is important to realize that communication does not only take place through speech and that is not only the speaker who is communicating. Communication through language happens in both the written and spoken medium. Learners reading a text silently to themselves are taking part in communication just as much as if they were talking to their partner.

Cultural differences poses some problems

Widdowson(1964) noted that “communicative functions are culture-specific in the same way as linguistic forms are language specific.”(Cited in Stratton 1977 : 136) This mean that the conditions governing the appropriateness of a speech act in the learner’s first language are not necessarily the same as the conditions governing the most similar speech act in English. The following quotation from a discussion which was held at the University of Reading introduces a good question reflecting the cultural side of the issue :

Keith Johnson : So you’re saying that a communicative approach implies language teaching that focuses on what people want to say, rather than on the mechanics of how they say it ? Here is another question, completely different, from another Japanese teacher : Why is the English language accepted as the world language ? And he add : tell us the linguistic reasons, rather than the political ones ! (Johnson 1982 : 236) We well know that the reason is not linguistic. Consequently “there is a danger of cultural imperialism”(White 1982 : 240)

Places heavy demands on the(non-native)teacher

As Medgyes stated, Communicative Language Teaching places greater demands on the teacher than certain other widely used approaches. (Cited in Thompson 1994 : 13)Because he cannot predict everything clearly, he has to be ready to listens to not only what learners say but also how they say. Besides, he as to interact with them in



as natural a way as possible. These points imposes non-native teacher a higher level language proficiency. Besides, the endless-list-like definition of Communicative Language Teacher indicates the requirements are extraordinary :

The communicative classroom requires a teacher of extraordinary abilities : a multi-dimensional, high-tech, Wizard-of Oz like super person-yet of flesh and blood. He or she must be confident without being conceited, judicious without being judgemental, ingenious without being unbridled, technically skilled without being pedantic, far-sighted without being far-fetched, down-to -earth without being earth-bound, inquiring without being inquisitive-the list endless (Medgyes 1986 : 14)

A communicative teacher should also have the knowledge of “who the learners are”, “what they bring to class”, “why they attend to the lesson”, “what their expectations are.” The optimum ratio between TTT and STT (Teaching Talking Time / Student Talking Time) is also a problem for communicative language Teacher.

Conclusion.

“Intercultural communicative competence”as the ultimate goal of FLT(Foreign language Teaching) is supported by sociolinguistics, cultural linguistics, and the theory of intercultural communication. It is evident that the role of the language teacher today is not as simple as it once was. Today, knowledge of the linguistic structure of the language is not the only one of the requirements of a good language teacher. Teachers should also have a broad background knowledge of the social environment that influences their students.

For a language is much more than lists of vocabulary and sets of grammar rules, and language learning is not simply a matter of acquiring a system of linguistic formulas. Language is a form of communication among individuals in a specific social context. Now, the student is not simply a passive receptacle into which the teacher pours knowledge and he must participate actively in the learning process. Hence, a more precise and direct statement of the ultimate goal of TEFL, “intercultural competence”, is in urgent need to ensure the productivity and efficiency of TEFL. Besides, teaching methodology, course design, and teaching materials should also be adapted to cater to the accomplishment of the ultimate goal.



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