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## TYPES OF SPEECH ACTIVITIES IN THE PROCESS OF LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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**Abstract:** This article examines the issue of increasing the importance of reading as a type of speech activity in the process of learning a foreign language, in our case - English. Despite the significant potential of reading, the latter is not so actively used by teachers in the course of classes due to a number of problems that arise in this process.

**Key words:** Communication, symbols, pronunciation and grammar, signs, audio-lingual method, language and learning theory, vocabulary.

For most people communication is simply talk. It is a natural event. Students enrolling in an introductory undergraduate communication course will quickly reference a convenient and aging dictionary when asked to define communication and provide the following:

“Communication is a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior.” (Webster, 1983, p. 266).

Linguistic competence knows how to use the grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of a language. Linguistic competence asks: What words do I use? How do I put them into phrases and sentences?

Sociolinguistic competence knows how to use and respond to language appropriately, given the setting, the topic, and the relationships among the people communicating. Sociolinguistic competence asks: Which words and phrases fit this setting and this topic? How can I express a specific attitude (courtesy, authority, friendliness, respect) when I need to? How do I know what attitude another person is expressing?

Discourse competence knows how to interpret the larger context and how

to construct longer stretches of language so that the parts make up a coherent whole. Discourse competence asks: How are words, phrases and sentences put together to create conversations, speeches, email messages, newspaper articles?

Strategic competence knows how to recognize and repair communication breakdowns, how to work around gaps in one's knowledge of the language, and how to learn more about the language and in the context. Strategic competence asks: How do I know when I've misunderstood or when someone has misunderstood me? What do I say then? How can I express my ideas if I don't know the name of something or the right verb form to use? [4]

To understand better this approach let's use Rhalmi Mohammed's description of the approach. He says that the objective of the audio-lingual method is accurate pronunciation and grammar, the ability to respond quickly and accurately in speech situations and knowledge of sufficient vocabulary to use with grammar patterns. Particular emphasis was laid on mastering the building blocks of language and learning the rules for combining them as it was believed that learning structure or grammar was the starting point for the student.

Rhalmi gives the following characteristics of the method:

- language learning is habit-formation;
- mistakes are bad and should be avoided, as they are considered bad habits;
- language skills are learned more effectively if they are presented orally first, then in written form;
- analogy is a better foundation for language learning than analysis;
- the meanings of words can be learned only in a linguistic and cultural context.

Following this objective it could be said that the main activities include reading aloud dialogues, repetitions of model sentences, and drilling. Key structures from the dialogue serve as the basis for pattern drills of different kinds. Lessons in the classroom focus on the correct imitation of the teacher by the students. Not only are the students expected to produce the correct output, but

attention is also paid to correct pronunciation. Although correct grammar is expected in usage, no explicit grammatical instruction is given. It is taught inductively. Furthermore, the target language is the only language to be used in the classroom.

As a teacher with big experience Rhalmi made an overview of the approach. So the advantages are:

- It aims at developing listening and speaking skills which is a step away from the Grammar translation method;
- The use of visual aids has proven its effectiveness in vocabulary teaching.

These dimensions are important in order to make teachers understand what communicative competence teaching is and in which direction the abilities of language use must be developed.

To understand the value of communicative competence let's begin with its origin explored by Carl Rogers, the founder of Humanistic psychotherapy who says that the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) are to be found in the changes in the British language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960s. Until then, Situational Language represented the major British approach to teaching English as a foreign language. The language was taught by practicing basic structures in meaningful situation-based activities. British applied linguists saw the need to focus in language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures. [1]

That's why we can agree with Ann Galloway from the Center for Applied Linguistics who proposes another version of CLT history according to which the communicative approach could be said to be also the product of educators and linguists who had grown dissatisfied with the audio-lingual and grammar-translation methods of foreign language instruction. They felt that students were not learning enough realistic, whole language. They did not know how to communicate using appropriate social language, gestures, or expressions; in brief, they were at a loss to communicate in the culture of the language studied.

Talking about CLT itself we can refer to Mrs. Galloway. She specifies that communicative language teaching makes use of real-life situations that necessitate communication. The teacher sets up a situation that students are likely to encounter in real life. Unlike the audio-lingual method of language teaching, which relies on repetition and drills, the communicative approach can leave students in suspense as to the outcome of a class exercise, which will vary according to their reactions and responses. The real-life simulations change from day to day. Students' motivation to learn comes from their desire to communicate in meaningful ways about meaningful topics.

Margie S. Berns, an expert in the field of communicative language teaching, writes in explaining Firth's view that "language is interaction; it is interpersonal activity and has a clear relationship with society. In this light, language study has to look at the use (function) of language in context, both its linguistic context (what is uttered before and after a given piece of discourse) and its social, or situational, context (who is speaking, what their social roles are, why they have come together to speak)".

Mr. Rogers points out the following elements of an underlying learning theory. 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. 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, he suggests, can be inferred from CLT practices. They address the conditions needed to promote second language learning, rather than the processes of language acquisition.

Finally, Mr. Rogers concludes that Communicative Language Teaching is best considered an approach rather than a method. Thus although a reasonable

degree of theoretical consistency can be discerned at the levels of language and learning theory, at the levels of design and procedure there is much greater room for individual interpretation and variation than most methods permit. It could be that one version among the various proposals for syllabus models, exercise types, and classroom activities may gain wider approval in the future, giving Communicative Language Teaching a status similar to other teaching methods. On the other hand, divergent interpretations might lead to homogeneous subgroups.

CLT appealed to those who sought a more humanistic approach to teaching, one in which the interactive processes of communication received priority.

Now that the initial wave of enthusiasm has passed, however, some of the claims of CLT are being looked at more critically. The adoption of a communicative approach raises important issues for teacher training, materials development, and testing and evaluation. [2]

### **Literature**

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