

ОБУЧЕНИЕ КОММУНИКАТИВНОМУ ЯЗЫКУ

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Аннотация: В этой статье очерчены и описаны восемь основных принципов обучения второму языку, соответствующих смене парадигмы коммуникативного обучения языку. Последующая статья посвящена одному из восьми основных моментов и завершает обсуждение. Вот эти восемь основных принципов: поощрять самостоятельность учащихся, подчеркивать социальную природу обучения, развивать интеграцию учебной программы, сосредотачиваться на значении, отмечать разнообразие, расширять навыки мышления, использовать альтернативные методы оценки и продвигать учителей английского языка в качестве соучеников.

Ключевые фразы: автономия учащегося, социальная природа обучения, интеграция учебной программы, значение, разнообразие, навыки мышления, альтернативные методы оценки, учителя английского языка как соученики

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract: This article outlines and describes eight essentials of second language education that fit with the Communicative language teaching paradigm shift. The subsequent of the article focuses on one of the eight essentials and concludes the discussion. These eight essentials are: encourage Learner Autonomy, emphasize the Social Nature of Learning, develop Curricular Integration, Focus on Meaning, celebrate Diversity, expand Thinking Skills, utilize Alternative Assessment methods, and promote English language Teachers as Co-learners.

Key phrases: *Learner Autonomy, Social Nature of Learning, Curricular Integration, Meaning, Diversity, Thinking Skills, Alternative Assessment methods, English language Teachers as Co-learners*

Since the 1970s communicative language teaching has been one of the most popular teaching methodologies around the world in second language education. Before that, the more traditional teaching methods (e.g., Audio-Lingual Method; Grammar-Translation Method) that were employed focused more on producing accurate, grammatically correct target language. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) however began to change the emphasis to where learners produce the language with a focus on fluency and where errors are seen as being a part of development. In usual classes, teachers were seen as the knowledge providers and sole controllers of the class. In the approach English language teachers share this control and “facilitate” learning rather than dispense knowledge. So CLT represents a major change and is considered one of the main approaches to second language education today. [1] Jacobs and Farrell label this major change in teaching and learning a second language a *paradigm shift* because in order to successfully implement the CLT approach we must shift our thinking about teachers, students, learning, and teaching a second language. The idea of the shift in focus is illustrated by the story of the “Cricket and the Coin.” [2]

One pleasant summer day at lunch time two colleagues, A and B, were walking along a busy street in Atlanta when A turned to B and said, “Do you hear that cricket across the street?” to which B replied, “How could I possibly hear a cricket with all this traffic.” Her colleague confidently said, “Let’s cross the street and I’ll show you.” They carefully made their way through the traffic to a flower box on the other side where, sure enough, there was a cricket. B was astounded. “How could you hear a little cricket amid all this noise? You must have super-human hearing!” “The key,” A explained, “is not how well we hear but what we listen for.” To illustrate, she took a coin from her purse, threw it in the air, and let it drop on the sidewalk. Soon, the sound of braking vehicles filled the air, as cars came to a halt. Drivers and pedestrians

turned to look for the rattling coin. As A reached to retrieve her coin, B smiled and said, “Now, I see what you mean; it’s all a matter of focus.”

CLT can be seen as a set of “principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom”.[3]

CLT has been the “in” approach to second language education since its beginning in the early 1970s, and has now become the driving force that affects the planning, implementation, and evaluation of English Language Teaching (ELT) throughout the world. That said, not many English language teachers or second language educators are in agreement or even clear in their own minds as to what exactly CLT is, and there exist as many diverse interpretations as there are language teachers and second language educators. This wide variation in implementation of CLT is not, as we discuss in the article on celebrating Diversity, necessarily a bad thing. Rather, it is a natural product of the range of contexts in which second language learning takes place and the range of experiences that students, teachers, and other stakeholders bring with them.

In its early inception CLT was seen as an approach to teaching English as a second or foreign language for the purposes of enabling second language learners to be able to use language functionally, meaningfully and appropriately, instead of the previous emphasis on correctness. However, over the years ESL and EFL teachers have interpreted a CLT approach to language teaching in many different ways with many thinking that the teacher just forms groups in their classes and let the students practice speaking the second language. The end result that teachers using this approach were seeking was that their students become competent in speaking that second language. Richards calls this *phase 1* of the CLT movement and he says it continued until the late 1960s. In phase 1 the previous traditional approaches that gave priority to grammatical competence as a foundation for language proficiency gave way to functional and skill-based teaching that had a “fluency over accuracy” pedagogical purpose. The next phase of CLT according to Richards was the classic CLT period from the 1970s to the 1990s.

In this phase, the place of grammar in instruction was questioned because it seemed to result only in grammatical competence that produced grammatically correct sentences under controlled conditions but did not, according to many, improve oral production or aid the communicative use of language. So what was really called for at that time was communicative competence where students could actually be in touch orally in the second language; for example, Hymes suggested that Chomsky's ideal native speaker with linguistic competence include the sociolinguistic component of communicative competence of *knowledge of* and *ability for* language use with respect to four factors: "possibility, feasibility, appropriateness and accepted usage". [4]

More recently, Richards suggests that communicative competence includes the following aspects of language knowledge:

- knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions
- knowing how to vary our use of language according to the setting and the participants
- knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts
- knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge.

Since the 1990s CLT has continued to evolve by drawing from different educational paradigms and diverse sources with the result that as Richards maintains, there is still "no single or agreed upon set of practices that characterize current communicative language teaching." Rather, he suggests that CLT these days refers to "a set of generally agreed upon principles that can be applied in different ways, depending on the teaching context, the age of the learners, their level, their learning goals." In addition, Brown has maintained that CLT should include the following:

- Classroom goals are focused on all the components of communicative competence and not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence.
- Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes.

- Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques.
- In the communicative classroom, students ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts. [5]

Richards maintains that if we ask ESL/EFL teachers today who say they follow the CLT approach what exactly they do, or what they mean by “communicative,” their explanations will vary widely, from an absence of grammar in a conversation course, to a focus on open-ended discussion activities. In our view, the key problem lies in the fact that not enough teachers are implementing CLT and some of those who do implement it have done so too infrequently, too often returning to the traditional paradigm.

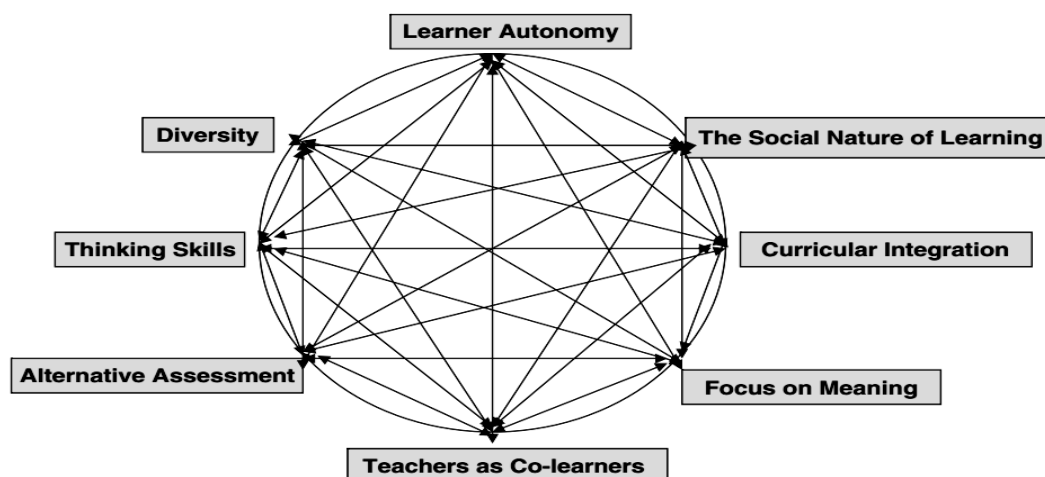


Figure 1.1 Eight essentials for successful second language teaching

Figure 1.1 provides an illustration of the interdependence of these eight essentials of the paradigm shift in second language education. The circular nature of the figure emphasizes that all the changes are parts of a whole and that the successful implementation of one is dependent on the successful implementation of others.

This article focuses on these eight essentials in second language education, the links between the eight, and, most importantly, how these essentials are being used and can be implemented. The eight essentials are briefly explained as follows.

Learner autonomy Within a CLT approach to second language education we focus more on the role of learners rather than the external stimuli learners receive from their environment, such as from teachers and materials. In other words, then center of attention in learning English as a second/foreign language has shifted from

the teacher and materials (the external) to the student (the internal). This shift is generally known as the move from teacher-centered instruction to learner (or student)-centered instruction. Learner Autonomy is a key concept here: learners have an important share of the responsibility for and control over their own learning.

The social nature of learning As the name suggests, to be social in learning we mean some form of interaction and cooperation is necessary within a CLT approach to second language education. We focus greater attention on the Social Nature of Learning English as a second/foreign language rather than on students as separate, decontextualized individuals. To understand and promote learning, we look not only at individuals but also at the people who make up their world and the connections between them. These people include not only teachers but also peers and others such as administrators and people in the outside community. Cooperation is valued over competition without excluding the latter completely. When students collaborate they all play leadership roles.

Curricular integration Curricular Integration refers to a second language pedagogical approach which fuses knowledge from different disciplines to create more meaningful contexts for overall learning. The traditional fragmentation of content by disciplines assumes that students will recognize the links between the disciplines on their own, but this can be difficult for second language students whose main focus may be the language rather than the content. However, with a CLT approach to teaching and learning English as a second/foreign language the integrated approach purposefully and systematically guides second language students toward discovering these connections and processes; connections and processes that help ESL/EFL students better understand themselves and the world around them. In the highest form, this student-centered approach uses real-life issues and varied resources to bring students as close to the “real thing” as possible. Furthermore, integration can also include integrating the various language skills, as well as integrating the academic with the social and emotional. [6]

Focus on meaning For this essential we focus on learning English as a second/foreign language for purposes other than just passing an exam. Education is

not just preparation for life; it is also participation in life. Students understand the purposes of learning and develop their own purposes for learning regardless of the subject. Within learning English as a second/foreign language we suggest that understanding also involves our students' comprehension of what they are learning rather than learning by rote learning methods such as drills so that they can be educated as complete human beings.

Diversity First of all, we celebrate Diversity among our second language learners and we see this diversity as a plus in our English as a second/foreign language classes. We focus on discerning, taking into account, and appreciating differences among our second language learners within a CLT approach to language education; thus we consider all second language (indeed all students) to be unique. This uniqueness includes differences not only in first language backgrounds, but also in intelligence profile, personality, and such other background factors as race, ethnicity, social class, religion, sex, and sexual preference. We suggest in this CLT concept that no standard, one-size-fits-all way of teaching a second language exists, and that differences of opinion and perspective offer opportunities for learning rather than being cause for winner-take-all conflict.

Thinking skills For this CLT essential we focus on how students learn by a process of expanding their Thinking Skills rather than looking only at what they produce. This emphasis on process rather than just on end-product encourages second language students and teachers to promote reflection on one's thinking, to encourage deeper critical thinking, and more varied ways of solving problems, and to gain sense of greater questioning of how things are done. With an appreciation of the complexity, uncertainty, nonlinearity, and instability of knowledge in learning a second language, students not only come to see change as a constant but also that learning a second language (and learning in general) is a life-long process; indeed, we suggest that disruption and surprise are to be welcomed while learning.

Alternative assessment We should point out immediately that when we say alternative we are not "throwing out the baby with the bathwater" because we still see the place of more traditional testing; it is just that now we want to suggest that

English as a second/foreign language teachers and administrators take into account that not all our second language learners may respond to such testing in a manner that compliments their different cultural backgrounds and that we have alternative means of assessment that may be more suitable. So within a CLT approach to second language education we recognize that while standardized, objective-item tests do provide relevant information, sole reliance on such measures blinds us to a great deal of what is important in education. We suggest that more Alternative Assessments connect closely with real world purposes. Furthermore, this type of assessment is done not mainly by outsiders but more importantly by those actually in the classroom (peers) who grasp the particular context in all its complexity. Thus Alternative Assessment includes students assessing themselves, peers, and the “how” and “what” of their English as a second/foreign language learning. Additionally, Alternative Assessment focuses on what second language students can do rather than on what they cannot do.

Teachers as co-learners The final concept within the eight essentials for successful implementation of CLT focuses on language teachers not principally as possessors of knowledge that is to be passed on to students; instead, teachers learn along with second language students because knowledge is dynamic and learning is a life-long process. Teachers learn with their students, and they learn along with their fellow teachers. Based on this learning, teachers join students in playing a greater role in such matters as materials design and institutional governance.

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