

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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Annotation: This article analyzes the stages of historical development of the communicative approach (Communicative Language Teaching - CLT), which is considered one of the most influential methodologies of foreign language teaching. The purpose of the research is to reveal the process of gradual development of CLT, formed on the basis of linguistic, psycholinguistic, and sociocultural theories. The method of retrospective analysis was used to study the evolution of this approach from its emergence in the 1970s to the period known today as "Post-CLT."

Keywords: communicative approach, foreign language teaching, linguistic competence, pragmatics, methodology, historical analysis, evolution.

1. Introduction

One of the most significant changes in the field of foreign language teaching at the end of the 20th century was the emergence and spread of the communicative approach (CLT), which placed the development of communicative abilities at the center of learning. This approach radically changed not only methodologically, but also philosophical views on language learning and teaching. Initially, CLT, based on the idea that "language is not just a system, but a means of social communication," was formed as a reaction to the limitations of the traditional grammar-translation method and the audio-linguistic method (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

The development of CLT is not the result of any single discovery, but the result of the complex interaction of various linguistic (for example, Dell Hymes' concept of "communicative competence"), psychological (for example, constructivism), and social factors. However, systematic analysis of the history of its development has not yet been carried out sufficiently. While many studies are focused on the practical aspects of CLT, it is necessary to study more deeply how it has gradually evolved. From this point of view, the purpose of this article is to clarify and analyze the theoretical foundations of the communicative approach and the historical stages of its practical application. The article attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What linguistic and pedagogical factors contributed to the emergence of CLT?
2. What main stages of development did CLT go through from its initial form to its current modern form?
3. What were the specific characteristics of each stage and its limitations?

The significance of the research lies in the fact that it allows teachers and software development specialists to gain a deeper understanding of the essence of CLT, see how it adapts in various contexts, and create a foundation for future methodological innovations.

2. Methods

In accordance with the purpose of this study, the method of retrospective historical-analytical review was applied. This method allows for a systematic review and analysis of the historical development of a particular phenomenon or process.

Data collection

Two categories of sources were used as data sources for the study:

Primary sources: main theoretical works that directly influenced the formation of CLT (for example, Hymes, 1972; Halliday, 1973; Wilkins, 1976; Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 1983).

Secondary sources: monographs, scientific articles, and methodological manuals devoted to the history, principles, and practice of CLT (e.g., Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Howatt 2004; Kumaravadivelu 2006).

Analysis methods

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis and chronological analysis methods. Initially, through the literature, the main topics and trends related to CLT (for example, "reaction to traditional methods," "functional-notional programs," "critical stage") were identified. Then, these topics and related facts were arranged in chronological order, and specific stages of development were identified. Each stage was analyzed from the point of view of its specific features, strengths and weaknesses.

3.Results

Analysis of the data showed that the development of the communicative approach occurred in five specific stages. This section presents the main characteristics of each stage.

Stage 1: Reaction and generation stage (early - mid-1970s)

This stage includes the period when CLT was formed as a reaction to the limitations of the direct audio-linguistic method and the grammar-translation method. Key factors:

- Linguistic factor: The development of the concept of "communicative competence" by sociolinguist Dell Hymes as a counterpart to Noam Chomsky's concept of "linguistic competence." Hymes argues that knowledge of language is not only knowledge of grammatical rules, but also knowledge of how, when, and with whom to communicate in a particular cultural context (Hymes, 1972).

- Yevropa omili: Kengaygan Yevropa Ittifoqi doirasida tillar o'rtasida amaliy aloqa qobiliyatini rivojlantirishga bo'lgan ehtiyoj. Britaniyaligi lingvistlar (masalan, Wilkins, 1976) "notions" (tushunchalar, masalan, vaqt, makon) va "functions" (vazifalar, masalan, so'rash, taklif qilish) asosida yangi dasturlarni ishlab chiqdilar. Bu "funktional-notional yondashuv" CLTning dastlabki ramziga aylandi.

- Xarakterli xususiyat: Ushbu bosqichda diqqat tilning tizimli jihatidan ko'ra, funktsional va ma'noli jihatiga qaratildi. Asosiy vazifa o'quvchilarni haqiqiy hayotiy vaziyatlarda muloqot qilishga tayyorlash edi.

Stage 2: Formation and Distribution Stage (late 1970s - 1980s)

This is the period of CLT's theoretical consolidation and worldwide dissemination.

Theoretical basis: Canale and Swain (1980) proposed a theoretical model of communicative competence, dividing it into four components: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discursive, and strategic competencies. This model helped the practitioners set clear goals.

Pedagogical innovations: interactive exercises such as "role-playing games," "simulations," "pair and group work" have been widely implemented. The principle of tolerance towards students' mistakes and accepting them as a natural part of the communication process was established.

Characteristic feature: based on the principle of "priority of meaning." Situations and tasks are designed to force students to exchange meaning.

Phase 3: Expansion and Adaptation Phase (1990s)

After CLT spread throughout the world, it began to be adapted for use in different cultures and educational systems.

- Cultural and contextual criticism: Many teachers and researchers have noted the difficulty of applying CLT models developed in the West in regions such as Asia and the Middle East. For example, high school classrooms, an examination-oriented education system, low teacher qualifications, and students' traditional reading styles where the teacher was central hindered the full implementation of CLT (Li, 1998)

A distinction emerged between "strict" and "soft" CLT: "strict" CLT (only oral communication, bypassing grammar) and "soft" CLT (integrating precise grammar instruction with communicative tasks). At this stage, the "soft" approach became widespread.

Characteristic feature: understanding that CLT is context-dependent, not universal, and adopting a flexible approach to it.

Phase 4: Criticism and revision phase (early 2000s)

At this stage, CLT was criticized for some of its limitations and practical difficulties.

Main criticisms:

- The risk of insufficient grammar instruction and, as a consequence, the training of "semi-linguistic" students.
- The new role of teachers (coordinator, consultant) and their lack of necessary skills.
- Difficulty of an individual approach in large classes with different interests and needs.
- Answers: In response to this criticism, new forms of CLT, such as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), have been further developed. In TBLT, attention was focused on performing synonymous functions rather than grammatical structures.

Stage 5: Stage of integration and synthesis (2010 - present) - "Post-CLT" period. The modern CLT is the era of harmonizing its principles with other approaches.

Eclectic approach: Modern teachers do not completely reject CLT, but add other methodological elements to it, such as precise grammar teaching, a lexical approach, content-based learning.

a) The role of technology: Digital technologies have created new opportunities (online exchanges, virtual worlds) that ensure genuine communication and cooperation.

b) Intercultural communicative competence: Attention was focused on developing the ability to effectively participate not only in language but also in intercultural communication (Byram, 1997).

c) Characteristic feature: No single method is the best. The goal is to find a balanced mix of principles and strategies that align with learners, their needs, and the context of learning.

Discussion

The research results show that the development of the communicative approach is not a linear and complete process, but a dialectical and repetitive one. Each new stage was formed in response to the limitations of the previous one and while preserving its positive aspects.

1. The development of CLT is directed from its initial radical ideas (completely excluding grammar) to the modern pragmatic and integrated approach. This confirms that it is a living methodology that can adapt and develop in practice.

2. The success of CLT lies not in the strength of its theoretical foundations, but in how it is implemented. There is no "unified correct CLT"; what exists is the spectrum of principles and practices applied in different contexts.

3. Criticisms of CLT often arise as a result of its misinterpretation or misapplication, in particular, due to insufficient attention to teaching grammar. Practical alerts

For teachers: Avoid "strict" interpretation of CLT. The teacher can combine specific instructions with communicative exercises, depending on the context of their class, students' age, interests, and needs.

For program developers: Textbooks and curricula should contain systematically proposed grammatical structures along with communicative tasks. This "syncretic approach" could be the most effective way.

Future research may focus on the following areas:

Strategies for the effective application of CLT principles in the digital environment. Specific models for the successful implementation of CLT in various cultural contexts (for example, Uzbekistan).

5. Conclusion

The communicative approach is one of the fundamental changes that shaped the field of foreign language teaching and changed its direction. Its development represents a complex process consisting of five stages - reaction, formation, expansion and adaptation, criticism and revision, integration and synthesis. This process shows that CLT is not a static methodology, but a constantly evolving dynamic paradigm in response to changing educational requirements and the global linguistic landscape. Currently, the legacy of CLT lies not in its specific practices, but in the idea of placing meaningful communication and communicative competence at the center of language teaching. Future success depends on finding flexible and creative ways to implement this central idea in different learning environments while preserving it.

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