

THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING
AND
UNIVERSITY STUDENT COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Approved: Richard L. Bennett Date: 5/1/09
Paper Advisor

THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING
AND
UNIVERSITY STUDENT COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

A Seminar Paper Research

Presented to

the Graduate Faculty

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Degree
Master of Science in Education

by

Vivian
(Huang Wen)

2009

Abstract

Statement of the Problem

The objective presented in the paper is to explain the relationship between Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Communicative Competence.

Methods and Procedures

In this paper, a brief review of the origin, definition and features of CLT is conducted. It is an approach to foreign or second language teaching which emphasizes that the goal of language learning is to develop communicative competence. A second review is regarding definition and features of Communicative Competence. The communicative competence is defined as the ultimate goal of CLT.

Summary of Results

In China, however, there is a problem in English education that students often remain deficient in the communication of the language. Many linguists claim that the root of the problem is in the teaching approach itself. Therefore in the early 1990s, CLT was advocated in China as an innovation in ELT classes. According to the current situation English teaching in China, there are existing problems to be solved although CLT is considered to be very effective and modern approach to ESL classes. In the end of the paper, recommendations are made to solve the problems of CLT in China.

Table of Contents

APPROVAL PAGE.....	i
TITLE PAGE.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
CHAPTER	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem	
Delimitations of the Research	
Method of Approach	
Definition of Terms	
Linkage to Theory	
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	5
Theories of Communicative Language Teaching	
Origin of CLT	
Definition of CLT	
Features of CLT	
Communicative Competence	
The Definition of Communicative Competence	
Hymes' Communicative Competence	
Categories of Competence to Be Grasped	
Integrating Four Skills to teach English	
III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	17
The existing problems of CLT in China	
IV. REFERENCES.....	23

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since China has the largest population of English learners, Chinese teachers work hard on their teaching methods to improve students' English abilities: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Among these abilities, teachers agree that speaking and listening are the most important. The improvement of students' communicative language competence should always be kept as the purpose of English teaching. In fact, there is a problem that the students often remain deficient in their ability to use the language, especially in speaking. Most students don't realize the importance of communicative competence until they go job hunting. China is developing quickly in every aspect of life and there is a large demand for talented individuals who can communicate in English very well. However, the current situation of college English teaching cannot meet the need. According to this situation, the approach of CLT was advocated by many educators and practiced in Chinese English education innovation. It has turned out that communicative language teaching (CLT) is somewhat effective although the results are still far from satisfactory at this point.

Statement of the Problem

The ability to communicate effectively has become widely accepted as the goal of English learning in China. So more and more scholars and teachers begin to implement CLT in ESL classes and look forward to the improvement of students' communicative competence. However, the implementation is not so easy and the effect is not

as satisfactory as they thought. There are some problems such as there are almost no real-life target language needs for students. Some students learn English because they have to, not because they want to and need to. In China, the College English Test is essential for college students because it decides whether they get the diploma or not. A lot of students work very hard to pass the test to get their diploma. What they focus on is only how to pass the test, not how to improve their English competence. And a lot of them don't even use English after they graduate. Therefore, some ESL teachers may overthrow the traditional method of Grammar and Translation which overwhelmingly focuses on linguistic competence and put the priority of teaching on other components of communicative competence. Students may improve a lot in their scores on the College English Test but don't have many opportunities to practice speaking or listening in class so eventually they fail to improve their English communicative competence.

Delimitations of the Research

The research will be conducted in and through the Karrman Library at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, Universal borrowing and Interlibrary loan, around a hundred (100) days. Primary searches will be conducted via the Internet through EBSCO host with ERIC, GOOGLE, and CIKI as the primary sources. Key search topics included "communicative language teaching", "communicative competence", "ELT" and "second language acquisition".

Method of Approach

A brief review of literature relating to the historic overview of CLT and features of communicative competence will be conducted. A second review of literature on the relationship between communicative language teaching and university students' communicative competence will be conducted. The findings will be summarized and suggestions made.

Definition of Terms

Communicative Language Teaching is an approach concerned with the needs of students to communicate outside the classroom; teaching techniques reflect this in the choice of language content and materials, with emphasis on role play, pair and group work, etc.

Communicative Competence refers to the ability to use the language effectively for communication. Gaining such competence involves acquiring both sociolinguistic and linguistic knowledge (or, in other words, developing the ability to use the language accurately, appropriately, and effectively).

Linkage to Theory

Grammar-Translation is a kind of teaching methodology which is different from Communicative Language Teaching. It is a method based upon memorizing the rules and logic of a language and the practice of translation.

Communicative Approaches are approaches to language teaching which aim to help learners to develop communicative competence (i.e. the ability to use the language

effectively for communication). A weak communicative approach includes overt teaching of language forms and functions in order to help learners to develop the ability to use them for communication. A strong communicative approach relies on providing learners with experience of using language as the main means of learning to use the language. In such approach, learners, for example, speak to learn rather than learn to speak. CLT is an implement to achieve the goal of improving communicative competence.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theories of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Origin of CLT

Communicative language teaching is a vitally important innovation in English language teaching. The origin of communicative language teaching can be traced back to the late 1960s in Britain. At that time situational language teaching was the main approach in foreign language teaching. The common ground of situational language teaching and former approaches, such as grammar-translation, audio-lingual approach, is that they all based on grammar systematic analysis. Situational language teaching was questioned by scholars and linguists. They began to attach importance to the functional and communicative potential of language. American sociolinguist Dell Hymes argued for focus in language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than mere mastery of structures. In the meanwhile, he raised a very important theory of communicative competence. At the same time, Halliday(1970),Wilkins(1972,1976), Widdowson (1972,1978), and Brumfit and Johnson(1979) also emphasized “the functional and communicative potentials of language. They saw the need to focus on communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures” (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.153)

In 1971, a group of experts began to investigate the possibility of developing a language course on a unit-credit system. At that time, Wilkins, a British linguist proposed a functional or communicative syllabus for language teaching. He attempted to demonstrate the

systems of meaning that lay behind the communicative uses of language. He(1976) described two types of meanings, the notional categories and categories of communicative functions. He had his idea published in Notional Syllabus.

The work of the Council of Europe, the writings of Wilkins, Widdowson, Candlin, Christopher Brumfit, Ketih Johnson and Dell Hymes, the rapid application of these ideas by textbook writers, and the equally rapid acceptance of these new principles by British language teaching specialists and curriculum development centers contributed to the emergence and outcome of CLT.

Detailed Definition of CLT

According to the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistic (1985), Communicative Language Teaching is also named Communicative Approach, which is an approach to foreign or second language teaching, and stresses communicative competence as the goal of language learning. Different theorists have different definitions of CLT or CA.

Widdowson(1979) wrote in his earlier description “In general, we might characterize the recommended approach as one which combines situational presentation with structural practice. Language items are presented in situation in the classroom to ensure that their meaning is clear, and then practices as formal structures by means of exercises of sufficient numbers to establish the structures in the learner’s memory” (p.116). In 1999, he wrote “The communicative approach concentrates on getting learners to do things with language, to express concepts and to carry out communicative acts of various kinds. A crucial element of the communicative approach to language teaching is the adoption of methodology which will encourage learners to do things with the language they are learning, the kind of things they

will recognize as purposeful and communicative and have some resemblance to what they use their own language to do” (p.159-160)

Johnson (1981) thinks, “Communicative language teaching is one that recognizes the teaching of communicative competence as its aim.” According to him, CLT has its own level of aim which is different from traditional approaches which emphasis heavily on teaching structural competence. (p. 98)

Littlewood (2000) says “A communicative approach opens up a wider perspective on language teaching.” In particular, he is more strongly aware that to teach students how to manipulate the structure of foreign language is not sufficient. They must also develop strategies for relating these structures to their communicative functions in real situations and real time. We must therefore provide learners with opportunities to use the language for communicative purpose (p. x-xi).

According to Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983), in the communicative approach, language learning is seen as “learning to communicate”(p.91), and the goal of the approach is the acquisition of communicative competence which enables language learners to use the target language for communication effectively and appropriately. Learner are expected to learn the target language through interaction with other people. (1983)

Sauvignon (1991) mentions, “Communicative language teaching has become a term for methods and curricula that embrace both the goals and the processes of classroom learning.” Since it is difficult to synthesize all of the various definitions, for the sake of simplicity and directness, Brown (1994) offers the following four interconnected characteristics as a definition of CLT. First, classroom goals are focused on all of the

components of communicative competence and not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence. Second, language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic authentic, fictional use of language for meaningful purposes. Organizational language forms are not the central focus but rather aspects of language that enable the learner to accomplish those purposes. Third, fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. Sometimes fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learner meaningfully engaged in language use. Fourthly, in the communicative classroom, students ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts. These four characteristics reveal some major departures from earlier approaches. CLT suggests that grammatical structure might better be subsumed under various functional categories.

CLT consists of a weak version and strong version. The weak version, according to Howatt (1984), “stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purpose and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such communicative processes into a wiser program of language teaching.”(p. 279) The strong version of CLT, on the other hand, “advances the claim of language teaching.” So that it is not merely a question of activating an existing knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself. Howatt describes the former as “learning to use English”, and the latter as “using English to learn it”.

From all these statements presented by applied linguists, we can find some common principles. First, the basic goal of language teaching in the CLT is gaining communicative competence. Second, CLT puts a strong emphasis on learners’ real-life language use. Third,

interaction with other people is very important for the learners and they should learn how to communicate in the target language in real time. Succinctly, CLT is a fluid and changing body of ideas, not a tightly structured method of teaching; it's a broad assembly of ideas from a range of sources.

Features of CLT

Focus on communicative and contextual factors in language use.

Language cannot be learned in isolation. The total meaning of an utterance can be deduced with an association to its social cultural context.

CLT sets communicative competence as its goal which makes teachers try to create a real life situation for students to practice languages. For example, teachers can create an imaginary market in which students can buy and sell in English. And teachers assign other tasks and students play different roles when other specific objectives should be met. In this way, languages can be grasped when it is used in the communication. CLT is a lot different from grammar-translation teaching which sets linguistic competence as its goal, and which does not consider communication as the essence of language learning.

Learner-centered and experience-based view of language teaching.

Experience is the best of all schools. The ideal curriculum consists of well-selected experiences. Individual learners possess unique interests, styles, needs, and goals, which should be reflected in the design of methods of instruction.

Teachers should guide the class instead of playing the main role in a classroom. Students play more important roles in the classroom because the one who works hardest learns most. Depending on individual difference of the students, teachers give appropriate

suggestions when they communicate with each other. It is much better to have the feedback of students and see what they need to improve.

Learning by doing.

CLT emphasizes learning to communicate through interaction in the target language. At the very beginning students should be encouraged to engage themselves in meaning communication.

On the whole, CLT provides more opportunities for authentic and creative use of the language. It focuses on meaning rather than form. It suggests that learning should be relevant to the needs of the students; it advocates task-based language teaching. Students should be given tasks to perform or problems to solve in the classrooms. CLT emphasizes a functional approach to language learning. To achieve the goal in the target language, students should acquire not only linguistic knowledge but also the cultural background of the language.

Communicative competence was put forward by Dell Hymes in 1970s, and it has been reinterpreted by Canale and Swain (1980) and others.

Communicative Competence

The Definition of Communicative Competence

Communicative competence may be defined as people's knowledge and ability to demonstrate appropriate communicative behaviors when they communicate with others. The concept of communicative competence was originally developed thirty years ago by the anthropologist and sociolinguist Hymes (1972), as a response to perceived limitations in Chomsky's competence/ performance model of language. It can be manifested in four ways: (1) the ability to understand and form grammatically correct sentences; (2) the ability to

discriminate and produce appropriate utterance in a specific situation of communication; (3) the ability to judge correctly the acceptability of utterances in relation with actual contexts, and (4) the knowledge of the usualness of occurrence of the linguistic forms. In sum, says Hymes (1971), “ the goal of a broad theory of competence can be said to be show the ways in which the systematically possible, the feasible, and the appropriate are linked to produce and interpret actually occurring cultural behavior”(p 24).

At the same time, Halliday (1970), Wikins (1972,1976), Widdowson (1972, 1978), and Brumfit and Johnson (1979) also emphasized “ the functional and communicative potential of language” (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p 153).They saw the need to focus on communicative proficiency rather than mere mastery of structures. Influenced by these views of language learning and teaching, CLT came into existence with explicit attention on “language in use”, which expanded the dimension of language form the previous linguistic forms to communicative function.

According to Hymes (1971), communicative competence is made up of four parts: possibility, feasibility, appropriateness and performance. In general, the learner acquires both the mastery of meaning and mastery of use; that is to say, learning language is learning to perform certain functions. This will be explored further in the paper.

Hymes’ (1971) theory of communicative competence has greatly affected the foreign language teaching. However, Widdowson (1978) sees communicative competence from another angle. He emphasizes the distinction between language usage and language use. He regards the first as “the citation of words and sentences as manifestations of the language system,” and the second as “the way the system is realized for normal communicative

purposes”.(p. 57) Knowledge is one of little utility on its own, which has to be complemented by knowledge of appropriate use.

Hymes’ Communicative Competence

Chomsky’s linguistic competence has had a tremendous impact on social scientists who are interested in the study of language phenomena. But as they did further study in the light of this formulation, they found it inadequate because it did not consider the relevance of social and cultural factors to a speaker-listener’s knowledge of language. Among them, Hymes pointed out his definition of linguistic competence is an idealization. It lacks empirical evidence because he limited linguistic theory only “in a completely homogeneous speech community”.(p. 134) And Hymes further argued that Chomsky also did not differentiate between the ability to use language and the actual use of language. It becomes a perplexing problem for those who were interested in studying the situational-bound communication behaviors. So it is necessary to redefine linguistic competence and performance (Hymes, p. 163). Therefore, Hymes reformulates the notion by expanding the label to communicative competence.

At first, Hymes(1972) redefines the notion “competence” as follows:

I should take competence as the general term for the capabilities of a person. Competence is dependent on both (tacit) knowledge and (ability for) use. Knowledge is distinct then from both competence (as its part) and form systemic possibility (to which its relation is an empirical matter) (p.282)

This redefinition is believed to have widened Chomsky’s notion by including competence behaviors other than sentence-bound verbal structures. Moreover, it allows for the inclusion of social and cultural factors as well as a more complete account of the process by which communicative competence is developed, Hymes (1972) states,

A normal child acquires knowledge of sentence, not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishments by others. This competence, moreover, is integral with attitudes, values, and motivations concerning language, its features and uses (p 277)

According to Hymes, communicative competence is the overall underlying knowledge and ability for language use which the speaker-listener possesses. It involves far more than the knowledge of grammatical rules proposed by Chomsky.

Indeed, if a speaker were to produce grammatically correct sentences without regard to the situation in which they were being used, he or she would be considered deranged.

Hymes observes and argues that there are, “several sectors of communicative competence, and the grammatical competence is only one of them” (Hymes, p. 281). He classified communicative competence into the following four sectors:

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible;
2. Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation on availability;
3. Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
4. Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, aurally performed, and what its doing entails (Ibid)

According to the four parts, we can see that Hymes’ communicative competence includes not only grammatical knowledge posed by Chomsky but also feasibility and appropriateness. That is to say, communicative competence includes the competence of language knowledge and the competence of language use.

Canale and Swain’s model

Hymes’ notion of communicative competence was posed against Chomsky’s linguistic competence. They were both studies in terms of theories not concerning language

teaching. However, Canale and Swain's notion of communicative competence, which was put forward in the light of the need of French Immersion Programs in Canada, is used to explain and guide or second of foreign language teaching. The framework of communicative competence proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) consists of three main components:

1. linguistic component
2. socio-cultural component
3. strategic component

Categories of Competence to Be Grasped

Non-English major undergraduate should master the following competences in an English class in order to communicate with others effectively.

Linguistic competence

It is an integral part of communicative competence. As Faerach, Haastrup and Phillipson (1984:168) point out " It is impossible to conceive of a person being communicatively competent with being linguistically competent." Learners should build a range of vocabulary, pronounce the language forms accurately, express meaning with rhythm and intonation, learn spelling rules, and achieve accuracy in syntax and word formation and so on. That is, learners must train themselves in manipulating the linguistic system, to the point where they can use it spontaneously and flexibly in order to express their intended message.

Pragmatic competence

Learners should learn the relationship between grammatical forms and their communicative functions, express attitudes and emotions with stress and intonation, learn the scale of formality, select language forms appropriate to the topics, addressees, and so forth.

Discourse competence

Learners should grasp how to perform the turns in discourse, how to use discourse markers and cohesive devices, how to maintain the conversation, how to develop the topic, and how to start or end conversations, and so on.

1. Strategic competence

Learners should be able to risk in using language, to use a range of communicative strategies such as gesture and explanation, and to learn the language needed to engage in some strategies such as the language for help, “What does this mean?”, and “How do you say...?” and the language to ask for vocabulary items, “What do you call a person who...?” and “What do you call a thing that ...?”, and so forth.

Integrating Four Skills to teach English

The aims of language teaching courses are defined in terms of four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Usually speaking and listening are said to relate to language expressed through the aural medium and reading and writing are said to relate to language expressed through the visual medium.

Considering the language use, Widdowson (1978) says the division of language skills into listening, speaking, reading and writing is “ambiguous” and “misleading.” Byrne (1976) emphasizes that students should be looking for opportunities to knit skills. In fact, in real life,

one skill can hardly be performed solely without involvement of another. It is impossible to speak in a conversation if you do not listen as well. People can't write without reading.

Since the four language skills are interrelated and interacted with each other, they should be taught inclusively rather than separately. Byrne (1976) argues that integrated skill activities are important:

1. They provide opportunities for using activities naturally, not just practicing it.
2. Many pair and group work activities need integrated skills
3. Students learn better when they take part in activities with more than one skill.

Therefore, in order to expose the students to a wide variety of language functions and practice all the essential skills of oral communication in different situations, the integrated teaching method is suggested for the teaching of spoken English in university. However, the principle of integrating skills does not imply that we can never focus on one particular skill in our classroom teaching. On the contrary, we may have to concentrate on one particular skill at a certain stage, but the focus should later shift to one or more of the other skills. Harmer (1983,) points out, "there are cases where individual skills may be treated individually; the principle of integration is thought to be important." (p52)

As is widely recognized, the distinctive feature of CLT in the classroom is that it emphasizes language learning communication. So the teacher should organize student-centered classroom activities, create a free atmosphere within the class and give the students hints to use the activities in class to integrate their skills. Since the freshmen may be shy, inexperienced, at a low level or worrying about mistakes, it may be stressed that the teacher

had better look for some easy, useful and interesting activities that will focus their attention and make them talk more in class.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Existing Problems of CLT in China

In recent years there has been a move in universities in China to adopt CLT in English teaching. However, while there is much talk about the use of communicative methodology and its value, putting theory into practice is not always easy, and teachers often feel overwhelmed by difficulties. The problems caused are as follows:

The first problem lies with the College English Test 4 (CET 4) and people's attitude toward it. This test system is, to a great extent, designed to test students' ability to choose the right answers to the question. It is highly thought of and is used to evaluate teachers' achievements by how many students have passed the test. This attitude has greatly influenced teachers. They do not handle properly the relationship between CET 4 and teaching. Some even adapt their English teaching classes to serve CET 4.

The second problem is on the part of the students and their established way of studying English. College freshmen are used to the traditional way of teaching, that is, spoon-feeding way. Some study English because they have to. They don't have the internal drive that encourages them to pursue English. Others are not involved actively in class because of psychological factors. They are afraid of making mistakes and being laughed at. They are passive in class and don't dare to speak. They are not familiar with or used to CLT,

and feel they are not learning anything from teachers. Moreover, in college English teaching, a considerable number of students have not laid a solid foundation in English. Their proficiency in listening and speaking is varied and low. If we conduct too many activities concerning communicative functions, it is obvious that the favorable results will be difficult to get. To some extent, it will restrict the effective application of the CLT. These make it difficult for teachers to practice CLT in the classrooms, and in the end, result in failure to train students' four skills of English.

The third problem consists in teachers and their teaching. Most of the teachers have been used to the traditional way of teaching ever since they were students. After they become teachers, they follow their teachers' way. Although CLT has been introduced to China for more than twenty years, a lot of teachers don't know it and still teach English as a complete language knowledge system. Their classroom teaching model is as follows: the first step, explaining new words and phrases and then asking students to read after them; the second step, giving a lecture on the grammar item specific to the text; the third step, explaining the text by analyzing sentence structures; the fourth step, asking students to answer questions related to the text; and the last step, assigning students homework such as translation and reviewing text. This teacher-centered teaching method emphasizes the importance of grammar and translation and often identifies reading with translation, trying to find Chinese equivalent for each English word and sentence. It highlights the teaching of language knowledge but neglects the language use; it stresses the analysis of sentences but neglects quantity. All those result in students' passivity in class. They do not participate in the teaching activities, but in a sense become lookers-on in classrooms.

The last but not least problem is on the part of the teaching conditions, including teaching facilities, teaching environment, course book and so on. Nowadays, college English teaching conditions have been improved a lot compared with those in the past. But it is still extremely difficult to create and establish a comparatively real context to develop students' language skills in the classroom. It needs efforts from both our government and the administrators in charge of education to pay attention to our English teaching and to make continuous improvement in teaching conditions.

Recommendations

CLT, which provides for real communicative activities in a language course, is considered to be one of the most important recent developments in the second language curriculum. Admittedly, CLT, being in current fashion in language teaching has its undeniable attractions. It makes the means teaching consistent with the ends of learning. It is not difficult to believe that such progress in course design has resulted in a real improvement in the quality of language learning. Unfortunately, CLT has failed to work wonders. It is not quite practical as a theory in most language classes, especially in China. No matter how authentic the settings are, the learning or teaching takes place in a classroom, which is far from being authentic.

The fact is that the teachers can hardly create "real settings" to provide the students with chances to do in the real world. Due to the unpredictability of communication, "real settings" are unpredictable and thus can't be created either. In addition, CLT requires a teacher of exceptional abilities. He or she must know what the real settings are; he or she must know how to perform in these setting himself or herself; he or she must be technically

skilled so as to ask down-to-earth questions. Furthermore, in CLT, it is meanings rather than structures that are given priority. So some amount of grammar that students must acquire to perform well is overlooked. Lastly, students in China must pass code-based exams anyway. Their achievement is still tested by how well they can display their ability in the usage of the language. Apart from its impracticality, some students that have looked into the effectiveness of CLT fail to prove that CLT is absolutely superior than traditional approach or that students in communicative class gain better results than those in traditional class.

So after years of the practice of CLT and from lots of reports on the practical difficulties of implementing CLT, this approach goes beyond the reality. Theoretically, it sounds good, practically it is hard to be implemented. Theorists always go to extremes. They emphasize on one methodology usually at the expense of the other. When some unsatisfying results are caused by traditional approach, they scramble for another method earnestly. Lots of problems like textbooks, teachers' beliefs and training and the needs of the students should be solved before CLT can be put into practice. If we look at the language matter more closely, we can see that it is not an issue as to which approach should be put first, but how to match the needs analysis of the students with our teaching. Thus CLT still has a long way to go; an integrated approach will benefit more in language teaching.

CLT changes the role of the teacher from a controller to a director or an organizer in the class, which is great challenge to the teachers. They should always facilitate the communication process among all participants and act as an independent participant while learning and teaching. They should always remember the students are center of learning and teaching activities. In the classroom, which may be the only place for communication

practices, there must be the need for information that can be passed to students and students have the interest and desire to receive it. Otherwise, communicative competence can't be trained. Teaching is an activity which usually exchange information and emotion. The positive emotion of a teacher will trigger students' intrinsic motivation in learning and preserve their attention and liking for studies. Successful classroom communication is based on this positive emotion exchange and information exchange. So teachers should create favorable classroom setting for communication to take place in the process of teaching.

In China, most of the students are accustomed to teachers' traditional way of teaching. They are also used to sitting passively in the classroom accepting the language points given by the teachers. If the teachers exert CLT during the course of teaching, they will not illustrate the language points expected by the students and the students will feel at a loss. According to CLT, teachers have to train the students' communicative competence. But the fact is that students are different in their English levels. In the CLT model, some students learn something in the classroom but most of them can't find something worth taking down on their notebook.

Another change should be the testing system. Although many places have adopted CLT in ESL classes, the old testing system has not changed at all. The whole process of teaching and learning is also heavily influenced by examinations. The effect of CLT is not obvious because of the exam-oriented mode. Teachers and students are very easily judged by examination results in the exam-oriented mode. They have to focus on not only communicative competence but also results of exams. When the time for teaching is limited, the teacher may tend to adopt more grammar-translation approach. As a result of all these,

more students pass the test, but their linguistic competence and communicative competence remain very low. Therefore, many scholars and teachers are managing to design a new testing system, which should cover speaking, listening, reading and writing. In conclusion, the testing system should place more emphasis on the students' communicative competence but not just memorizing grammar rules. A communication-oriented testing system is in urgent need now.

Generally speaking, the application of CLT in college English teaching has brought a new look to the ELT in China, However, the problems should not be neglected. With the literature review, this paper conducts overview of CLT and Communicative Competence, simply reveals the relationship between CLT and Communicative Competence. Problems about CLT teaching emerge and then some suggested proposals have been raised to relieve the dilemma of English teaching in China accordingly. How to make full use of CLT to reach of the goal of communicating should be attached more importance to.

REFERENCES

- Byrne, D. (1976). *Teaching oral English*. London: Longman House.
- Brown, H. D. (1994) *Principles of language learning and teaching*. New Jersey. Prentice Hall Regents.
- Clark, J. L. (1987). Classroom assessment in a communicative approach. *British Journal of Language Teaching*, 25(1), 9-19.
- Dolle, D., & Willems, G. M. (1984). The communicative approach to foreign language teaching: The teacher's case. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 7(2), 145-54.
- Harmer, J. (1983). *The practice of English language teaching*. London: Longman.
- Howatt, A.P.R. (1984) *A history of English language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hu Guangwei.(2005). Contextual Influences on Instructional Practices: A Chinese case for an ecological approach to ELT. *TESOL Quarterly: A Journal for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages and of Standard English as a Second Dialect*, v39 n4 p635-660
- Hui, Leng.(1997). New bottles, old wine: *Communicative Language Teaching in China*. Forum, v35 n4
- Hymes, D.(1972). On communicative competence. In J. B. Pride and J. Holmes (eds.), *Sociolinguistics*. Harmondsworth: Penguin
- Johnson, K. (1981). *An introduction to foreign language learning and teaching*. Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. (1985).

-
- Liao, Xiao Qing.(2004). Communicative language teaching innovation in China: Difficulties and Solutions. *ELT Journal* v. 58 no. 3 270-3
- Littlewood, W. T. (1983). *Communicative approach to language teaching methodology* (CLCS Occasional Paper No. 7). Dublin: Dublin University Trinity College, Centre for Language and Communication Studies. (EDRS No. ED235690, 23 pages)
- Morrow, K., & Schocker, M. (1987). Using texts in a communicative approach. *ELT Journal*, 41(4), 248-56.
- Pica, T. P. (1988). Communicative language teaching: An aid to second language acquisition Some insights from classroom research. *English Quarterly*, 21(2), 70-80.
- Richards, J. C. & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rosenthal, A. S., & Sloane, R. A. (1987). A communicative approach to foreign language instruction: The UMBC project. *Foreign Language Annals*, 20(3), 245-53.
- Sato, K., et. al.,(1999).[Communicative language teaching \(CLT\): practical understandings](#). *The Modern Language Journal* v. 83 no. 4 p. 494-517
- Sauvignon, S.(1991). Communicative language teaching: state of the art. *TESOL quarterly*, vol, 25, no. 2.
- Swain, M., & Canale, M. (1982). *The role of grammar in a communicative approach to second language teaching and testing*. (EDRS No. ED221026, 8 pages) (not available separately; available from EDRS as part of ED221023, 138 pages)
- Widdowson, H.G.(1978). *Teaching language as communication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wilkins, D.A. (1976) Notional syllabuses. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yu, Liming.(2001). Communicative language teaching in China: Progress and Resistance

TESOL Quarterly, v35 n1 p194-9