



Dr. Mahdi M. A. Ibrahim

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Part Two)

In CLT, it is common to use the term “learner” instead of “student”.

While the term “student” implies youthfulness and a lack of status and power, the term “learner” de-emphasizes social status but stresses the self-made individual since people learn things throughout their lives, not only in classroom and not only from teachers. The verb “teach” is often replaced by “facilitate”, which also de-emphasizes power by making it invisible. The word “facilitator” carries a history that is tied to a particular group management style. In addition, teachers in communicative classrooms will find themselves talking less and listening more- becoming active facilitators of their students learning.

A decade ago, the writer of this article visited some Primary, Middle and High schools in Pittsburgh, PA USA, and observed some of the communicative classes at these schools. Observations showed that exercises and activities are set by the teacher and conducted by the students. The teacher’s role is to facilitate and monitor what students work on. Moreover, students spoke more, played more and moved more in order to have a certain task done. Furthermore, as students had to use the target language within the different activities they had in the classroom, they gained confidence and became more comfortable in using the target language. Students can be described as “responsible managers” of their own learning.

The role of the learner and that of the teacher as pupils interact both with each other and the teacher. The teacher is a facilitator of the communicative process in the classroom. S/he is need analyst, counselor and group manger. In other words, what happens in the classroom does not revolve around the teacher; it revolves around the students and their needs and abilities as individuals. The teacher does not prescribe the language forms that the students use, but helps them to acquire what they need. Therefore, the teacher must know the background, interests, and goals of his or her students in order to choose

the best way to approach them as well as the materials that he or she is going to use to teach the language.

Main Elements/Features of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT):

There are various elements of CLT that can be summarized as follows:

1. Language learning is learning to communicate and the attainment of communicative competence is the main goal.
2. Fluency and acceptable language is suggested rather than accuracy. This means that the goal is to create an atmosphere in which students can talk and write freely without being too concerned with the production of error-free sentences. Students learn from their mistakes when they receive feedback periodically, but this feedback should be supportive. It is worth mentioning here that errors are very useful to the teacher in telling something about whether the teaching has been effective.

Therefore, learning from errors is more important in CLT than constantly trying to prevent them.

3. The individual creates language often through trial and error, or dealing communicatively with forms and errors. In addition, there is a focus on meaning, context, and authentic language. The four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are integrated with each other.
4. The teacher is viewed as a facilitator of communicative process along with the role of analyst, counselor, or group manager in order to help students’ needs. On the other hand, the learners are viewed as creative participants in the learning process rather than passive recipients of information and they are expected to interact cooperatively with other people through paired and group work in terms of social context of language learning.
5. Classroom activities center round communicative functions, so dialogues are not normally memorized and these activities should be organized by topic, rather than by grammatical structures.
6. Any device, including grammatical explanation that helps learner language development is accepted according to age and interests; and the language is used as a means of expressing values and judgments.
7. The evaluation process takes into account that communication is based

on interaction and thus is creative and also unpredictable. Therefore, the evaluation is carried out gauging whether a student can get something done through the use of language, and with what degree of efficiency and appropriateness to a given situation. Besides, exams are not tricks, students are told about what contents are going to be tested (Bias-for-Best).

8. Culture is taught together with the language. Therefore, the content should be related to the place where the language is taught. Students do not just learn the basic language to get by; they also learn the culture, customs, and context in which they are going to be using the language.
9. Positive reinforcement from the teacher and even from the classmates should be shown. This is essential in motivating the students. Languages are always changing and so are the methods to teach them.

However, the following features characterize CLT:

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 learners’ own personal experiences as important contributing elements to the classroom learning;
5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom.

It is clear that communicative language teaching uses almost any activity that engages learners in authentic communication. However, it is worth mentioning that there are two major activity types.

Functional communication activities: ones aimed at developing certain language skills and functions, but which involve communication, and

Social interaction activities, such as conversation and discussion sessions, dialogues and role-plays.

The dream of success

Success in life means fulfilling everything that is good and makes you comfortable. Everyone wants to be successful in his/her life. You must know how to be successful and what to do to achieve success. As a student I wish to enumerate steps which I find to be useful. These will enable students to be successful in life.

Learning needs encouraged and consequently students must keep in mind that his/her responsibility, so they have to work hard to it. Students should consolidate themselves in order to have enough encouragement to be successful. Up to now, I mention success in whole life but now I am going to specialize in order to succeed in your studies. I am a student thus; I am able to write about study life as I see it. To be sure, I used to try all these steps therefore; I consider them as a little student experience.

It is known that learning takes time but practice makes one perfect. I am very interested in helping other students to achieve success in their studies. From this point, students must be aware that everything big starts little, so no one can achieve success from the beginning. Also, as the saying goes “If there is a well, there is a way”. Then as a student it is not a good habit to dream of success but they do not work hard to be successful. Indeed, success is a lovely theme for students who care and want to reach their goals in life.

Hopefully, you will agree with me that each house has its own design and at the same time it has a foundation. It is similar to the way of success. For instance, one student may follow a different way to achieve success but others may use various ways. In fact, the matter is not about the contrasting goals but it is about how much everyone does and tries because in the end serious students will succeed.

The door cannot be opened without its key but success has different keys which enable you to open the door and being a successful person in your studies. Now, I would discuss the most important steps for being a successful. First of all, you have to write your aims because it is the first phase to realize them and you will control your life. Second, organize your time and try to do everything in its time, as scheduled. Do not postpone. Personally, I always say that “my time is made of gold” so, see how much expensive gold is? Third, you have to be ambitious with strong determination. Furthermore, you have to change your way of thinking because if you can do that, you will be able to change your whole world. Fourth, you have to be optimistic with high motivation. In addition, be confident and hopeful with working hard. Finally, practice your favorite hobbies and enjoy them. Remember that positive thinking is the success language. Also, there is no greatest power in the universe than the power of knowledge thus, study, study and study because it is your way to success.

All in all, I cannot conclude my article with a simple strategy. The only way which suits my words is the important ingredient from the beginning is CRITICAL THINKING. It is your mission readers to sitting in a quiet place, holding a paper with a pen and answers these questions.

1. Have you thought of being successful in life?
2. What is your attitude about success?
3. Are you a person who dreams of success without thinking and trying?
4. Are you ready to change your ways which are not good?
5. Do you believe in success?
6. If you are a successful person, HOW will you advise your colleagues who want to be successful?

Imagine that you are a significant successful person and everyone wants to be like you...

Imagine your life bright and full of light... Surely, you will be proud of your accomplishments and you will carry on achieving more and more...

Laila Al- Gharbi