

الطريقة التوافقية نظرية وتطبيق

د. حسين علي بالحاج الشويهدى - كلية التقنية الطبية - جامعة مصراتة

المخلص :

هذه الورقة تستعرض إحدى الطرق الحديثة في مجال تدريس وتعليم اللغة الأجنبية ، وهي طريقة التواصل بين الطلاب والمعلمين وتبادل النقاش والحديث دخل الدرس وفي الفصل ، وتسلب الضوء على الجانب التاريخي ، وعلى العناصر التي تطبق في عملية التدريس باستخدام هذه الطريقة أثناء التعليم والتعلم ، وخاصة اللغة الأجنبية أو اللغة الثانية ، وأخذت بعين الاعتبار معايير وأسس التطبيق وكذلك تنوع النشاطات والتمارين المختلفة داخل الفصل مع التركيز على دور المعلم أثناء كل أنواع الأنشطة.

وعلى الرغم من أن هذه الطريقة في مجال التدريس تُعتبر جيدة من الناحية النظرية ؛ ولكن قد توجد بعض المشاكل والصعوبات في تطبيقها بالشكل المثالي بحيث يكون لها الأثر الفعال الذي يعود بالفائدة على الطلاب، ولقد تطرقت هذه الورقة إلى استعراض بعض هذه المشاكل التي تؤثر على هذه الطريقة ومناقشتها.

THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH THEORY AND PRACTICE

By

Dr. Husain A. Bellhag Ashwehdy; Faculty of Medical Technology/

Misurata

Abstract:

This paper deals with one of the modern approaches in teaching a foreign language, ‘The Communicative Approach’, which is concerned with language teaching.

In this paper sheds the light on the historical background and elements in which this approach applied in the way of teaching in particular second language. Taking in consideration the main application and various activities used inside the classroom and the role of the teacher.

In spite of the fact that this approach seems perfect in theory, there are some weaknesses may come up when it is put into practice. These demerits are also briefly discussed.

INTRODUCTION

This paper is an attempt to discuss how the communicative approach is changing the face of foreign language teaching and why it is useful in producing foreign learner with native-like mastery of the foreign language.

The Historical Background of the Communicative Approach

The Communicative Approach has been developed by British applied linguists Littlewood in the early 1970 as a reaction to the grammar-based approach (audio – lingual method). This approach considers language not only in terms of its structures grammar and vocabulary, but also in terms of communicative functions and performs and what people do with these forms. It indicates how language should be used to communicate in real meaningful messages.

The communicative approach is defined as the ability not only to apply the grammatical rules of language in order to form grammatically correct sentences, but also to know when and where to use these sentences and to whom it is used. It includes knowledge of grammar and vocabulary and knowing how to use language appropriately (Canale, 1983, p.6).

A communicative approach is organized on the basis of communicative function that a learner needs to know the ways in which a particular grammatical form may be used to express the functions appropriately. As (Littlewood, 1980, p. 1) states

“One of the most characteristic features of communicative language is that it pays systematic to functional as well as structural aspects of language”.

Structural and Functional Views of Language:

The structural view of language focuses on the grammatical system, describing the procedures in which linguistic items can be used. Littlewood (1981, pp, 1-2) points out that the learner should know several linguistic facts and operations which develop his/her linguistic competence to enable him to produce new sentences that expresses his/her intended message. The learner must also attain the functional view of language. S/he must be able to interpret

the written or spoken sentences within the total context in which they are used.

Understanding and Expressing Functional Meaning:

The learner should be able to understand linguistic structure and vocabulary also to know the communicative function of linguistic forms in order to interpret the specific functional meaning. The learner must be given chances to develop strategies for interpreting language in actual use. (Littlewood, 1981, p.2).

When people speak, they should choose language forms that will be interpreted according to their intended meaning, taking into account the hearer's knowledge and assumptions of the subject, for instance, if they assume that people in a room know that they have been invited for a meal, the hostess may say, "Come and get in" or "it's ready" as a directive to come to the table, but if they do not know that she has been preparing a meal, she must express her meaning in greater details such as; "would you like to come and have something to eat?", in this case, the hostess takes into account the knowledge shared between herself and the others and she selects a language form that expresses her communicative purpose in a particular situation. So, the learner needs to attain not only a repertoire of linguistic items, but also a repertoire of strategies for using them in appropriate situations (ibid, pp. 3-4)

Understanding and Expressing Social Meaning:

Language carries not only functional meaning, but also carries social meaning.

Lyons, (1981) pointed out that,

since man is a social animal and the structure of language is determined by its use in society self-expression in general and self-expression by means of language in particular is very controlled by socially imposed and socially recognized norms of behaviors and categorized. Most of our attitudes, feels and beliefs – most of what we think of as the personality or self – are the product of socialization (p.144).

The learner must become aware of the social meaning of language forms, that is, s/he must be able to vary his/her speech to suit different social circumstances. For example, a student might say "shut the door, will you?"

to a classmate or a friend, but to a stranger on a bus it would be more appropriate to say, "Excuse me, would you mind closing the door?"

Guiding Principles for Communicative Approach:

In order to apply the theoretical framework to second language teaching, certain principles should be taken into account. These principles are as following:

Coverage of Competence Areas

Communicative competence includes four areas of knowledge and skills; grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence.

Grammatical competence is mainly concerned with one's knowledge of the features of vocabulary, rules of word and sentence formation, rules of morphology and syntax. In addition, it also includes knowledge of the semantic meaning, pronunciation and spelling (Canale and Swain, 1980, pp.29-30)

Grammatical competence will be an important concern for any communicative approach whose goals include provides learners with the knowledge of how to determine and express accurately the literal meaning of utterance (ibid).

Sociolinguistic competence includes both sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse in different contexts. Canale and Swain (1980) pointed out that component included both socio-cultural rules of use and rules of discourse. Sociolinguistic competence thus addresses the extent to which utterance are produced and understood appropriately in different sociolinguistic contexts depending on contextual factors such as status of participants, purpose of interaction and norm or conventions of interaction.

Discourse competence is the knowledge of combine grammatical forms and meaning to achieve unified spoken or written texts. Unity of a text is achieved through cohesion in form and coherence in meaning (Canale, 1982, p. 9).

Cohesion is the grammatical and lexical relationships between the different elements of a text. It is the relationship between different sentences or between different parts of a sentence. While coherence is the relationship which links the meaning of utterance in a discourse or a sentence in a text. These links are based on the speakers' shared knowledge.

Strategic competence is knowledge of verbal and non-verbal communicative strategies that may be needed to compensate for breakdowns in communicative (Canale and Swain, 1980, pp. 30-1)

These strategies are two types; one relates to grammatical competence e.g., how to paraphrase a sentence or the ability to recall a specific lexical item, the other relates to sociolinguistic competence, e.g., how to address strangers when unsure of their social status. The learner should be encouraged to use such strategies rather than remain silent (Canale, 1983, pp. 10-11)

According to *ibid* (p.18) who states that the primary goal of a communicative approach must be to simplify the unity of these kind of competence (grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse and strategic competence) without emphasizing on one area over the other through a foreign language program.

Meaning and Realistic Interactions

Communicative language teaching makes use of real-life situation. The teacher sets-up situations that students are likely to face in real life and the following section will deal with much detailed about the principle and how teachers can institute these principles in their classrooms.

The Roles of the Teacher

Language learning is the acquisition of a set of skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. A teacher should begin training his students to listen before he teaches them how to speak or write.

The teacher can vary the factors in the spoken texts in order to help the learner to understand the speech situation such as using a tape-recorder, where communication is as a physical factor in communication. The teacher should vary the type of text, dialogues, reports, descriptions, instructions, etc. At first it is difficult to understand recorded material, but continual practice and the teacher's encouragement can dramatically improve the students in acquiring the language. There are students who are afraid of listening recorded material; the teacher should reassure them by playing the tape several times in order to practice such skill.

Littlewood (1981, p. 92) points out that if we look at foreign language learning as it occurs in the natural environment, it appears that this process

can work without any teacher at all. But this does not mean that teacher's role is not necessary because the classroom is not a natural environment.

The teacher must have a fairly high level of communicative competence in the foreign language in order to carry out his/her role effectively. S/he presents new forms of the language throughout the activities, s/he will have to take on an activity role as the initiator of situation in which the students develop communicative skill (Canale and Swain, 1980, p. 33). Moreover, a successful lesson is planned in advance and it is essential that the teacher studies thoroughly the material of the lesson before giving it.

Learners may imagine themselves in situation which could occur outside the classroom; like (meeting a friend in the street) so the teacher can change the classroom from an artificial environment of learning a language to a real social context where the learners and their teacher can enter into equally real social relationships with each other.

Writing requires more accurate use of the target language than other skills and for this reason it is left until the end. The teacher gives his/her student a chance to produce an accurate piece of writing, the type of writing is usually something that will be of practical use as letters.

According to the communicative approach, the teacher helps his/her students to acquire linguistic forms and relate them to communicative function, non-linguistic reality and social contexts. The teacher must have knowledge and pursuit of knowledge as well. S/he must remain a student all life and find happiness in furthering his/her knowledge of the subjects s/he teaches. This is important because the more varied and profound his/her knowledge, the more variety depth s/he will be able to introduce into his/her teaching.

How to deal with mistakes

Making mistakes is a part of language learning process. Since the teacher is the cornerstone of the process of language learning, s/he should be on alert for the errors of his/her students. The students need to know the correct form to develop their language and progress. There are several ways of dealing with mistakes. In pairs or group work where students express their opinion or discuss their answers together, the teacher should not correct too much. The reason for this is to encourage fluency and confidence. The teacher can write down notes of common mistakes and deal with them after they finish. But in

repetition, the teacher should correct more when he is presenting a new piece of language and wants his students to repeat it or use it in a vary controlled ways to achieve accuracy (Doff, 1988, pp. 187-188). If an individual student makes a mistake, the teacher should always indicate the mistake and give him a chance to correct himself. If he could not, he should ask help from other.

The teachers supposed to be keen with their students in the way of correcting, and they should often praise their students for giving a correct answer. This is because, it encourages the students and gives them self-confidence.

Communicative Activates

In classroom activities, teachers can produce a similar need to communicate by giving reason to talk and ask questions such as introducing information gap, identifying pictures, some students have information that others do not have. The teacher's overall purpose is to prepare the learner for communicative activity by providing him/her with the necessary linguistic forms and the necessary links between forms and meanings (Littlewood, 1981, p. 16).

The learners use the linguistic repertoire they have learnt in order to communicate specific meaning for specific purpose. Emphasis should be placed on activities that are interesting and enjoyable.

The teacher must be sure that his/her students understand what are required to do in the activities, s/he can equip them specifically with the language form they need for the activities.

Types of Communicative Activity:

Littlewood (1981, p. 20) suggests that there are two kinds of communicative activities; functional communicative activities and social interaction activities. The main purpose of the functional communicative activity is that the learners should be able to find language which will convey an intended meaning effectively in a specific situation. The activity would be more interesting if the teacher could create a reason for asking questions.

The activity can work in various ways such as identifying picture, discovering identical pairs, discovering sequences or locations. Discovering missing information, following directions, reconstructing story-sequences, etc.

The learners enjoy the greatest amount of foreign language practice when all pairs or group performs at the same time (discuss with each other, a team asks

and the other answers). The emphasis on communicative interaction provides more chances of interpersonal relationships between learners and their teachers and between the learners themselves. It also gives the learner more opportunities to express his/her own individually in the classroom. (Doff, 1988, pp. 137- 41).

Working in pairs or groups gives the students far more chances to communicate in a foreign language. It also encourages the students to share ideas and knowledge and help to communicate.

The next type of activities is the social interaction activities. Through it the learners have to pay greater attention to the social meaning as well as the functional meaning of communication. (Littlewood, 1981, p.20).

Conversations and discussions between students provide them with chances to express their own personality and experiences through the foreign language. They also give them valuable experience in using the language as means of handling their social relationships.

Role plays activity is one of the ways of bringing situation from real life to the classroom. In it the teacher asks a student to imagine a role and this student pretends to be a different person, for instance, one student imagine that he is a farmer, other students ask him some questions about his daily routine as farmer. In role playing technique the learners are asked to behave as if the situation really existed in the real life.

The teacher has to use a wider range of communicative functions that are likely to occur, for example; greeting, inviting, asking permission or making offers.

Through all these activities the learners can increase their ability to produce language forms in acceptable way.

The Evaluation of the Communicative Approach

The advocates of the communicative approach give the students much practice in how to say things and pay more attention to contexts of real and meaningful situations. The key of the high morale of the students and their teachers is that no language except the foreign language is to be used in the classroom.

Learning a word in our native language is not mere memorization the lexical description of it, but to use in thinking. It is believed that the same should

happen in learning a new word of foreign language. The learner should use it correctly to express his own thoughts. The communicative approach involves sufficient emphasis on oral practice, repetition, memorization and imitation which are the basic techniques used in this approach. It is noted here that memorization does not mean memorizing lists of words and their meaning, but it means gaining automatic control over the basic patterns of the language, in other words, extensive use of pattern practice. (Doff, 1988, p. 71)

A communicative approach consists of wonderful techniques in teaching a foreign language, its activities add fun and excitement to the climate of the classroom. A communicative approach opens up a wider perspective on language learning. In particular, it makes us more strongly aware that it is not enough to teach learners how to manipulate the structures of the foreign language. They must also develop strategies for relating these structures to their communicative functions in real situations and real time. (Littlewood, 1981, pp. x – xi)

A communicative approach is perfect in theory but it will have some problems after being put into practice.

One of those problems is how to correct the students' mistakes in pronunciation and grammar. The major task of teachers who use this approach is to enable their students to communicate in the foreign language, they believe that constant corrections usually interrupt the pupils' flow of communication. (Littlewood, 1981, p. 31).

But there is another point of view which says that it is important to enable the student to know immediately when his answer or performance is correct or incorrect. But according to my personal experience, I think that a good teacher has to know how and when he corrects the mistakes of his students. The teacher has to correct the errors immediately when he wants his students to produce accurate language in repetition for example, but when he wants his students to express their thoughts as fluently as possible, he should be careful not to correct too much or he will interrupt the activity. He should correct only the most serious mistakes and has to leave the others until the students finish their activity.

According to this approach the relationship between the teacher and his students should be a natural friendliness that the teacher should give them a

chance to learn in a cheerful, happy atmosphere, but a problem might appear when some students may misinterpret this and try to conduct undesirable behavior such as talking during the lesson, not doing their homework or coming late to class.

To avoid this the teacher must tell his students from the beginning that he will not accept any late homework or poor attendance, the teacher must consider and respect the opinions of his students and the students should show the same respect to their teacher.

Another problem is that the limited time especially in our secondary schools which is about forty-five minutes for each lesson (three hours a week) seems to be the main problem. The teaching – learning process will be more effective if more time is given to teaching and practicing inside the classroom. In this limited time the teacher will not be able to arrange his/her students into groups or pairs and give them some instructions before engaging in the activity. Another thing is that the desks which are not movable consume the time of the lesson when the teacher wants to divide the students into teams or groups.

The communicative activities need special arrangements inside the classroom, in addition the application of these activities require long time which is not possible with the limited time allocated to the completion of the syllabus. Sometimes the activities take longer time than which is expected by the teacher or the students do not respond to the activity or confused. In such circumstances the teacher should be intelligent enough to handle the different problems as they arise.

We may come to the question of why teachers are often hesitating to use communicative approach within their classrooms. The main reason for this question seems to be that this approach is not as easy for the teacher as other traditional methods. This paper attempts to deal with one of the techniques for teaching the structures of a foreign language “A Communicative Approach” which presents the language through situations. The focus of this paper is on practice rather than on the theory of foreign language teaching, however, if the practice of teaching were completely divorced from theory it would merely be random activity.

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