

The importance of oral communicative tasks in developing communicative competence

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Abstract: The success of developing communicative competence in teaching speaking is inseparable with the materials or tasks given to the students. The speaking teachers should really pay attention to tasks given that are more focused on oral communicative ones. The tendency of relying on student-centered communicative task is strongly expected to achieve the target of communicative competence development. Absolutely, the oral communicative tasks will activate the students' interest to communicate their ideas in oral form naturally. They will enjoy their communication process created without much interference of teacher. Negotiation of meaning and management of interaction in their speaking activities will automatically occur well.

Keywords: communicative competence, CLT, communicative tasks

Brandl (2008:289) suggests that student-centered communicative task results are far more opportunities for negotiated meaning than teacher-centered activities:

- improved grammatical accuracy
- greater sociolinguistic awareness
- increased self-correction
- improved pronunciation

As a teacher, you should find most challenging about communicative oral activities in accordance with the students' need. If the teacher is currently teaching, it is better to ask the students about what they find most challenging about these kinds of activities and share the results with classmates. Then the teacher has considered the defining features of real communication and has discussed the difficulties of keeping students on task, finally the teachers and students are ready to analyze what makes some communicative tasks succeed and others fail.

It is better to begin by thinking about the demands that a communicative task places on the student: cognitive, linguistic and communicative. It is important to strike a balance when designing a task (not too hard, not too easy). Next, the teacher will look at the features that most well-designed communicative tasks have in common.

The way a communicative task is structured (or not) has a great deal to do with its ultimate success in the classroom. When considering how to structure a task, Lee (2000: 35-36) suggests that designers ask themselves these four questions:

1. What information is supposed to be extracted from the interaction by the learners?
2. What are the relevant subcomponents of the topic?
3. What tasks can the learners carry out to explore the subcomponents? (e.g., create lists, fill in charts, etc.)
4. What linguistic support do the learners need?

In other side, Haycraft (1978: 82) supports that the effective way of stimulating the students' talking is to issue materials with natural situations that consist of the exchanges such as questions and answer, suggestions, and reactions, opinions and arguments, etc. furthermore, various changes and challenges in materials encourage the students to explore their ideas that whole class is involved each with everyone.

Selecting materials according to students' need will bear the natural oral communication effectively and efficiently. The students need opportunities to develop their skills by being exposed to situations where the emphasis is on using their available resources. Littlewood (1981: 62) cites the personal interpretation of the situations is encouraging general confidence and fluency in speaking, allowing the learners to explore and exploit their communicative repertoire in any ways they wish. Moreover, Littlewood also gives considerations of some kinds of activities, situations and roles that can help the speaking teacher in developing oral communicative tasks as follows:

1. The idea of capability covers not only the level of complexity of the language forms that learners can handle, but also the degree of independence with which they can handle them. Thus, as learners increase their linguistics competence, there will be scope for both greater complexity and greater independence.

2. The teacher should remember the point made in connection with classroom interaction, that structures and functions are not bound no specific situations. Therefore, the situations that he selects do not have to be restricted to those in which the learners expect to perform outside the classroom. Communication skills can be developed in the context of, say, a classroom discussion or a stimulated detective enquiry, and later be transferred to other contexts of language use.

3. On the hand, teacher has to aim for maximum efficiency and economy in his students' learning. It therefore makes sense to engage them in a large proportion of situations which bears a direct a resemblance as possible to the situations where they will later need to use their communicative skills. In this way, he can be confident that most aspect of tha language practiced (function, structures, vocabulary, and

interpersonal skills) are relevant to learners' needs. This is particularly important with older learners, whose needs are comparatively well-defined.

4. The situations must be capable of stimulating learners to a high degree of communicative involvement. In part, this is another aspect of the point just made: learners are more likely to feel involved in a situation where they can see the relevance of what they are doing and learning. In part, however, it is a separate point. Many learners (notably younger learners) have no clear conception of their future needs with the foreign language. They may therefore find the greater stimulation in a situation that is of immediate rather than future relevance. These may be situations which arise in the course of classroom interaction. If simulation is used, they may be role-playing activities based on their familiar realms of experience (e.g., family, friends or school), rather than those which project into a less familiar future. (e.g., booking hotels).

5. Similar considerations apply to the roles that learners are asked to perform in these situations. They may often be asked to simulate a role that they are never likely to adopt in real life, such as that of a detective or waiter. This does not mean that the language they practice in that role is of no value. Each learner should be allocated a fair proportion of roles which are more directly relevant in one or both of two senses. (a) he might reasonably expect to have to perform that role in foreign language situations outside the classroom; (b) he is already familiar with the role in their native language. It is these roles that learners are likely to identify most deeply. Through them, therefore, they have the greatest chance of relating to the foreign language with their whole personality, rather than merely manipulating it as an instrument which is external to them.

COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AND CLT

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a method of second language teaching which is derived from the belief that language proficiency equals to communication ability. Thus, communicative competence becomes the main inspiration of CLT. The strong form of CLT attempts to avoid explicit grammar instruction in language teaching. Learners are expected to generalize rules from input-rich situations created by the teachers. Other than the strong form of CLT, many variations can be mentioned related to the application of CLT. This makes CLT an ideal pedagogical teaching mechanism philosophically but not easy to be converted into real classroom situations. The further application of CLT around the world has been under investigation for years, yet CLT has not yielded the result that it is expected to have. I think, CLT needs more time to prove its effectiveness (not simply because it has failed). Savignon (in Murcia 2001: 13) explains that in Communicative Language Teaching, the identification of learners' communicative needs and goals is

the first step in the development of a teaching program that involves learner as active participant in interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning.

Negotiation of meaning describes the ability viewed as variable and highly dependent upon context and purpose as well as on the roles and attitudes of all involved. On the other hand, it will develop the learner's ability to actually use the language for communication. As known that negotiation of meaning as suggested in CLT in teaching speaking becomes a lofty goal supported with materials, providing learners with a range of communicative tasks that are comfortable for them. It is also suggested to EFL teacher to encourage more the students with the language instruction that stimulate the students to use their language naturally. According to Murcia (2001: 20) making an effort to get the gist and using strategies to interpret, express, and negotiate meaning are important to development of communicative competence.

The development of communicative competence involves whole learners. The most successful teaching programs are those who take account the affective as well as the cognitive learners psychologically as well as intellectually. Of course, the communicative practice is important for the learners. Furthermore, Murcia (2001: 22) cites learners should not only be given the opportunity to say what they want to say in English, they also should be encouraged to develop an English personality with which they are comfortable.

In this model of learning, the interaction will happen in which the language made by the learners is formed of stimuli resulting a feedback. This also treats the acquisition of language as the result of an interaction between the learner's mental abilities and the linguistic environment. According to Ellis (1986: 129) claims, the interaction is a manifest in the actual verbal interaction in which the learner and interlocutor participate that results language acquisition derived from the collaborative efforts.

With reference to the statement above, it is clear that natural communication is strongly stressed in CLT. As mentioned in previous statement that CLT of English is the teaching that is focused on developing the students' communicative competence, namely, developing their ability to communicate effectively in culturally significant setting. Furthermore, Zainil (2008: 42) supports that Communicative competence in CLT is dynamic, interpersonal, context specific, and relative that it depends on the negotiation of meaning between communicators.

CONCLUSION

The process of natural communication will develop the learners' communicative competence. The teacher in teaching speaking should maximize the learners 'exposure to natural communication by providing them with appropriate materials to stimulate them to speak that focus on the use of language, not on the usage. The

students' tasks and materials applied refer to problem solving oriented that develop more their language activities to be their language creativity. In CLT, communicative competence must be the basis of teaching activities in which teacher not only pays attention to verbal communication but also nonverbal communication that is practiced well. Finally, the speaking teachers should create other innovative and creative techniques for developing communicative competence in teaching speaking.

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