

**CRITICAL EVALUATION OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING  
IN TEACHING AND LEARNING GENERAL ENGLISH IN STATE SCHOOLS OF  
UZBEKISTAN**

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**Annotation:** *Communicative language teaching has been given emphasis in Uzbekistan in the last decade. The reason is the most important methods which have been used so far the grammar translation method has not been that much effective. In my experience of learning a foreign language article in the English language although I achieved advanced levels in grammar and vocabulary I wasn't able to communicate in English language at all. As a student of English in our education system I started the language for 6-years at school from the grade 5 to 11 and then NH I did 4 years of study in our higher education however I was not able to communicate in the language at all. I'm receiving advanced levels in grammar and vocabulary I was able to get scholarship to enter higher education. After achieving this result when I my watched BBC news for the first time I did not understand anything. I did not understand when I listened to English and I was not able to to express myself in written and spoken form the emphasis of our learning was on a sentence level. I was good at placing words in certain places I was able to place nouns adjectives adverbs properly in a sentence but I was not able to to put together the sentences in order to create a cohesive and coherent a written text or or a meaningful speech. The most interesting thing is given the the pronunciation of English was towards in lectures so we were taught how the the mouth moves the the position of the time and the leaps in pronouncing certain sounds however we did not practice it ourselves we did not listen to authentic English materials at all. In this essay theoretical and empirical description is given to the seven questions from the academic Johnson asks about a method in his book an Introduction to Foreign Language Teaching and Learning. Other important questions that arose during the lectures will also be covered. Then, the implementation of communicative language teaching method and challenges of implementation in state schools of Uzbekistan will be discussed separately in terms of teaching grammar, vocabulary, reading, listening, writing and speaking*

**Key words:** *Communicative language teaching, method, approach, authenticity, L1, L2.*

With the popularity and effectiveness of the communicative language teaching in the last decades, many governments and institutions have been trying to implement the method. Therefore, many teachers state that they use this method even though their practice do not correlate. For this reason, identifying what the



communicative language teaching in theory is important. 'Seven questions to ask about a method' (Johnson 2013) will be referred

1. What are the method's big ideas?

The big idea, as the name of the method suggests, is teaching the language so that the students are able to communicate (Duff, cited in Celce-Murcia et al., 2014, p15). The teacher plays the role of a facilitator and helps the students to learn the language, in contrast to the teachers who practice grammar translation method who act as controllers, the main source of information and the person who gives feedback (Thornbury, Harmer, 2013 -youtube). Students are not passive recipients of knowledge, but they are active learners who develop the language skills using innate natural ability and the mental and cognitive abilities they have.

2. What are the theoretical underpinnings behind the method?

Cook (2008) states that the communicative style is not connected to second language acquisition research as the other methods. It is basically based on the first language acquisition theories. Resembling to natural conditions of learning first language is created by the teacher, with the aim that the learners develop their second language similar to the way they learnt their native language. Learning is mainly based on ideas from the Universal Grammar theory. Learners try to make sentences-based on the natural-linguistic instinct. The lesson procedure is not necessarily comprised of presentation practice and production phases. As per Keith Morrow (1981) the basic underpinnings of the method consist of learning by doing, not taking all the mistakes seriously, giving importance to processes as well as to forms, considering the whole sentence more important than separate sentences and knowing what you are doing. This type of approach is resisted by many teachers and learners who are used to common presentation practice production approach, in which using the language starts after the stages of teaching and practicing. Besides this, usually in common grammar translation method, all the mistakes are taken seriously, forms are prioritised then processes and understanding English in a sentence level is more important which all contradict the communicative style of teaching and learning.

3. How much 'engagement of the mind' does the method expect?

This method can be described as the combination of both the behaviourist and mentalist views. The method is close to natural way of native language acquisition. At the same time, students minds are usually fully engaged, because they are active with the higher order skills as for the Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2016). Students create develop elaborate imagine, plan when the communicative style is used. Activities make the students fully engaged to the tasks and help them to learn the materials effectively and efficiently. From my own experience I can state that compared to the methods which are based on remembering and understanding, the

communicative style activities require the students to be involved cognitively, mentally and emotionally as well. This in turn makes the activities very engaging.

4. Is the method deductive or inductive in approach?

Communicative language teaching is inductive (Harmer and Thornbury, 2013) contrary to the grammar translation method which used to be popular all over the world. Teacher explains grammar rules deductively whenever necessary, however students are encouraged to understand the rules inductively which can be very beneficial for the comprehension as they work out the rules to find out the structure and usage of the rules.

5. Does the method allow use of L1 in the classroom?

The elements of direct method in usage of target language is similar in this method. We refer to a classroom observation in a typical communicative language teaching classroom. 'Observation: The teacher gives the students the directions for the activity in the target language. Principles: The target language is a vehicle for classroom communication, not just the object of study' (Larsen-Freeman, 2008). Monolingual native speakers of English have no choice but to use the English whereas the teachers who can speak the students native language have advantage of using L1 which can be helpful in beginner level. In intermediate and advanced levels it is recommended to use only the target language

6. Which of the four skills are given emphasis in the method?

The emphasis is given for all the four skills. Common misconception is communicative language teaching is for developing speaking competences (Harmer and Thornbury, 2013). Reading and listening are taught in the way that the student understands the information from the context. Students should be able to derive the gist from the whole information compare and contrast classify infer the meaning. Writing and speaking are also practiced the same amount as reading and listening.

7. How much importance does the method give to 'authenticity of language'?

As an answer to this question, a typical communicative language teaching classroom is referred. 'Observation: The teacher distributes a handout that has a copy of a sports column from a recent newspaper. Principles: Whenever possible authentic language as it is used in a real context-should be introduced' (Larsen-Freeman, 2008). Authentic language can be used without simplifying the language. slowing down is recommended whenever needed (Global TEFL, 2015). If authentic language is used with further explanation and slowing down when required, the learners tend to start understanding after some exposure and the learners start using the same type of language themselves.

8. Is the method structural, functional or interactive in its approach?

The method is functional and interactive (Thornbury, 2017). The main aim is teaching the functions that are used in real life as requesting apologising and the



alike. Compared to the grammar translation method which is mostly about individuals work, in communicative language classes students mostly do pair work group work and project works which are all interactive in nature. The tasks and activities usually relate to the personal life of the students therefore it is one of the biggest factors of the interactivity of the method. Although it is effective and interactive, implementing this method in the classroom is not always easy. It is challenging especially in the classrooms where the students usually work individually and use information from the textbooks even for productive skills of writing and speaking. In communicative language teaching students usually use their own personal ideas experiences and knowledge for productive skills. Personally, I studied and worked with grammar translation method initially. Then, I started implementing the communicative language teaching in my teaching and I faced real challenges. It seems rather ambiguous to most of the students because they were used to get all the ideas from the textbook and simply insert, change the form or choose one of the given options to complete the tasks. With rigorous effort after persistent practices, the students started approaching the writing and speaking tasks based on their own knowledge, experience and ideas.

Discussion. Communicative language teaching method allows that grammar to be taught for communicative purposes. The emphasis is going beyond the sentence level and moving onto the the context level to convey meaningful communication using the grammar and vocabulary in correct way. You know education system the students study grammar well, they know all the rules structures however they are are evil to use it only for or a grammar test purposes. In a sentence the students are able to insert a proper kind of word article preposition and so on, considering the main purpose of the learning a language is to communicate with colleagues to understand the reason and audio information tend to express in the written and spoken form the main focus of language teaching must be for communicative purposes. spending the same time and using the same resources with some adaptations or with a different approach on the lessons can be turned into to communication focused lessons in which the students will be able to communicate using the language they learn. 'With CLT began a movement away from traditional lesson formats where the

focus was on mastery of different items of grammar and practice through controlled

activities such as memorization of dialogs and drills, and toward the use of pair work activities, role plays, group work activities and project work' (Richards, 2006, p4). In the context of teaching English language communicatively teachers try to make the students learn some dialogues or texts and the retail them. those activities are still Beeston memorization. teachers do periodic open lessons and seminars and showcase how the English language is being taught at that certain School. if you go and observe one of those demonstrative lessons you will witness that



all the speaking activities in the lesson were pre memorized. Authors of our current books studied and worked with grammar translation method for many years therefore this has got a very strong influence in the production of the types of activities given in the textbooks. The biggest factors that the teachers tend to use the old method is the community of teachers and especially the administrative body who come to schools and check the process of lessons perceive that the students must keep calm. If any administrative personnel comes to a school and works in a corridor and here's any noise from any classroom that classroom is generally considered to be and unorganised and the teacher is perceived to be not prepared and unable to control the students. Consequently although the students want to do communicative activities doing role plays and project works the teachers do not generally organise the lessons this way. Turning the lessons into communicative based lessons do not just depend on the teachers it must depend on the administrative bodies who perceive how the lessons are being taught and who decides rewarding the teachers who keep the students calm and controlled and punishing the teachers who make much noise in the classroom by doing communicative activities.

Teaching reading skills in communicative language teaching approach is basically about being able to understand the main message of the text for Academy work other purposes in order DA2 use the information in the text for a specific purpose. Hasanova and Shadieva (2008) I researched the implementation of communicative language teaching in Uzbekistan concluded that the government of Uzbekistan got assistance from the international English Language teaching organisations as British council and American English Institute to implement the communicative language teaching in the educational system widely. There were many training seminars and the projects. However not all the English language teachers were trained comprehensively to be able to use it in their teachings. After this training's it is widely perceived that this system is used by all the teachers throughout the country. Due to the insufficient training and the lack of resources to fully implement the system the majority of teachers base their lessons on the grammar translation method which they experienced as a student and as a teacher mostly. You know what current textbooks there are reading activities in which of the students have to identify the gist of the text scan or skim to find a specific information, do true and false tasks and so on. In reality the teachers have 40 minutes time in a lesson. During this time teachers try to make sure that the students know all the new words that I used in the text. Therefore the majority of the time is spent to find the new words and the right translation, translate the text using this new words. Hence the students don't read the text for communicative purposes. Teachers try to make sure that the students have a notebook and write all the new words so that when any administrative checks are carried out the teachers can show the notebooks of the students to show the process of teaching and learning. The written exercises and

new words represent that the teachers have done their job and the students studied in the lesson. if the students really do the reading tasks outlined in the exercise book they may not right on their notebook. when administrative checks are done if nothing is written for that date the teacher is considered not to have taught that lesson. for this reason to be on the safe side the teachers prefer to be able to prove the taught lesson by showcasing the written works of the students whenever any administrative check is done. as we can see some trainings werel carried out nationwide insufficiently and the administrative body evaluate the teaching process from a different perspective. Therefore the bitter truth is although the method is in use buy all the teachers in documents it is not in practice in reality.

Support and explanation. As one of the four skills to improve communicate of competence listening activities are also done for communicative purposes in communicative language teaching method. Keeping the communicative competence in mind the listening activity is often integrated with the other skills writing and speaking most of the time and even with the reading. so when integrated the students should write or speak whether they agree or disagree to the material, to summarise the main points and so on. the skill of listening might be further described in terms of the following microskills:

- Recognizing key words in conversations
- Recognizing the topic of a conversation
- Recognizing speakers' attitude toward a topic
- Recognizing time reference of an utterance
- Following speech at different rates of speed
- Identifying key information in a passage (Richards, 2006, p4)

When do teachers are asked what method did they use for teaching the reply usually the communicative is method. public school textbooks include the above-mentioned tasks. in terms of the implementation of the tasks the challenges often technological on top of the the lack of skills. laptops and speakers will provided to the schools. but they are not sufficient for all the teachers. besides this most of the the technological devices breaks down after few years. the audio recordings which are not authentic were recorded by a few non-native speakers. all these factors Hinder Doing listening activities for communicative purposes. In spite of all the the factors that hinder teachers can use the audio material skillfully. personally I I sometimes read the the audio script myself whenever I cannot use technology to do it. when I read the audio script to the Beginner levels I just asked whether they like or dislike what they heard what they would like to change. I also instruct the students to rewrite what they heard the way they they perceive it to be right for example. By playing the first part of the audio I stop the audio and ask the students to predict the remaining part of the audio. this activity makes the students think critically, Imagine in



elaborate on the topic . another intriguing activity is Doing discussion asking the cause or the result of the event agreeing or reeing or disagreeing to a certain event

Writing for communicative purposes mainly involve Organising sentences coherently and cohesively. this is the communicative competence. it is contrary to the linguistic competence which is the basis of of which Focuses on the accuracy in a sentence level (Richards, 2013). getting a message across based on personal knowledge and experience or based another learnt material by Reading or listening. public schools the letter is is mostly used because writing based on personal experience is mostly suitable for advanced learners. Regarding the role of the teachers Richardson (2006) describe as 'Rather than being a model for correct speech and writing and one with the primary responsibility of making students produce plenty of error-free sentences, the teacher had to develop a different view of learners' errors and of her/his own role in facilitating language learning'. The teacher tries to elicit the student answers based on their own ideas, knowledge and experience. The teacher supports the students to do this.

#### Conclusion

In speaking fluency is prioritised rather than accuracy. When the accuracy is prioritised in a sentence level, teachers tend to stop and correct all the mistakes. In contrast to this, in this method the main focus is helping the students to get the message across. 'While the teacher provides some feedback and correction, this plays a much less central part in his or her classroom duties. The teacher has the role of equal and helper rather than the wise expert of the academic style' (Cook, 2008, p249). This helps to the flow of the conversation and prevents discouragement by the students. The balance of input and output is the same. There are both receptive and productive types of tasks. Due to the rather implicit nature of teaching in this method, in my lessons I found this method useful with the teenage and older learners. The reason is very young learners do not have much experience, ideas and knowledge to express themselves. Young learners react well to physical response and audiolingual methods in my experience. Having a repertoire of different methods at disposal is very good to use them in appropriate conditions (Larsen-Freeman, 2008). Using variety of materials as cards, visuals, and Integrating technologies as computers, speakers, projectors smart boards appropriately definitely helps to improve the quality of the teaching.

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