

# Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

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Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a way to teach English through real communication. The main goal is to help students speak and understand English in daily life. Students talk in pairs or groups. They play games, ask questions, and solve problems. Grammar is not the main focus. Fluency is more important than accuracy. Teachers guide, not just give rules. Students learn by using English in real situations. CLT makes learning more fun and useful.

## Key concept

- An Approach to Language Teaching
- Emphasis on interaction
- Studying “authentic texts” in the Target Language (TL)
- Use of the TL both in class and outside of class
- Much more clinical methods depend on direct communication.

## Brief history

Noam Chomsky's theory of 'communicative competence' gave rise to CLT. The CLT was the product of the dissatisfaction of the educators and linguists for earlier GTM, SLT, and ALM. It was developed especially by the British linguist Michael Halliday in the 1970s as an approach to communicative language teaching based on interaction. To Put it differently, it is also an interactional process or style of TL teaching.

## Objectives or goals

- Developing oral or verbal skills before reading and writing
- To face the changeable situations of real life,
- Discovering meaningful teaching ways about meaningful topics
- Achieving perfect communicative competence

## Pillars of CLT

British linguist Michael Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) was one of the pillars of CLT. Halliday identifies seven functions that language has for children in their early years.

- **Instrumental:** Children use language to express their needs in this stage. For example, water, want juice, etc.
- **Regulatory:** Children order others to work in this stage, such as 'go away'.
- **Interactional:** In this stage, language is used to contact others and form relationships. For example: Love you, mummy.
- **Personal:** The personal stage of CLT focuses on expressing feelings, opinions, and individual identity. For instance: Me, good girl.
- **Heuristic:** This is called the knowledge-gaining stage through observation and questioning. In that place: What are you doing?
- **Imaginative:** In this stage, language is used to tell stories or jokes. To put it differently, it means creating an imaginative environment.
- **Representational:** The representation stage refers to conveying facts and information.

### Principles of The Communicative Approach:

- Language learning is learning to communicate using the target language.
- The language used to communicate must be appropriate to the situation, the roles of the speakers, the setting, and the register. The learner needs to differentiate between a formal and an informal style.
- Communicative activities are essential. Activities should be presented in a situation or context and have a communicative purpose. Typical activities of this approach are games, problem-solving tasks, and role-play. Information gaps, choices, and feedback should be involved in the activities.
- Development of the four macro skills — listening, speaking, reading, and writing — is integrated from the beginning since communication integrates the different skills.
- The topics are selected based on age, needs, level, and students' interests.
- Motivation is central. Teachers should raise students' interest from the beginning of the lesson.
- The role of the teacher is that of a guide, a facilitator, or an instructor.
- Trial and error are considered part of the learning process.

- Evaluation concerns not only the learners' accuracy but also their fluency.

### **Main Features and Techniques:**

- Meaning is paramount. That means meaning is the most important thing.
- If dialogues are used, they focus on real communication and are not just memorized.
- Understanding meaning depends on context. Teachers teach grammar with real examples.
- The goal of learning a language is to communicate well.
- Sometimes drilling is used, but it is not the main focus.
- Clear and understandable pronunciation is important.
- Translation can be used when students need it.
- Reading and writing can start from the first day.
- The main goal is to be able to communicate well.
- Teachers support students in ways that encourage them to learn.
- Students should talk with others in pairs or groups.

### **Classroom activities or teaching procedure**

CLT teachers choose classroom activities based on what they believe will be most effective for students developing communicative abilities in the target language (TL). They promote collaboration, fluency, and comfort in the TL. The six activities listed and explained below are commonly used in CLT classrooms.

**Role-play:** Role-play is an oral activity usually done in pairs to develop students' communicative abilities in a certain setting.

**Interviews:** An interview is an oral activity done in pairs, with the main goal of developing students' interpersonal skills in the TL.

**Group work:** Group work is a collaborative activity that aims to foster communication in the TL in a larger group setting.

**Information gap:** Information gap is a collaborative activity whose purpose is for students to effectively obtain information previously unknown to them in the TL.

**Opinion sharing:** Opinion sharing is a content-based activity that aims to engage students' conversational skills while discussing something they care about.

**Scavenger hunt:** A scavenger hunt is a mingling activity that promotes open interaction between students.

### **Teachers' role in CLT**

A teacher has specific roles to play in CLT:

- To facilitate communication for students,
- To play the role of an independent participant
- Monitoring the class with attention and motivation
- Talking less but being a listener mostly.
- Maintaining an appropriate classroom environment without being autocratic rather than being a process manager and counsellor.

### **Role of learners**

As CLT is an approach based on interaction, the learners must perform the following duties in CLT class.

- To be an energetic participant
- Not to be showy by using unusual and bombastic words while interacting in groups and pairs but to focus communicative skills in a simple and general way
- Following self-reliant process

### **Advantages and disadvantages of CLT**

#### **Advantages or benefits**

- The communicative approach is much more pupil-orientated because it is based on pupils' needs and interests.
- The communicative approach seeks to personalize and localize language and adapt it to the interests of pupils. Meaningful language is always more easily retained by learners.
- Seeks to use authentic resources. And that is more interesting and motivating for children.
- Children acquire grammar rules as necessary to speak, making them more proficient and efficient.

#### **Disadvantages or limitations**

- It pays insufficient attention to the context in which teaching and learning occur.
- The Communicative Approach is often interpreted as: "If the teacher understands the student, we have good communication." Still, native speakers of the target language can have difficulty understanding students.
- Another disadvantage is that the CLT approach focuses on fluency but not accuracy. The approach does not focus on error reduction. Instead, it creates a situation where learners are left using their devices to solve communication problems. Thus, they may produce incoherent, grammatically incorrect sentences.
- CLT demands improved training for the teachers.
- CLT also demands small classes, which is impossible in developing countries.

There is nothing in the world that is over criticism and does not possess any limitations. CLT is no exception to this universal concept. It is still a popular approach rather than a method for Target Language (TL) teaching. It will remain effective and acclaimed even in the most developed stage of post-method pedagogy.