Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)
Communicative Language Teaching

• (A functional approach since 1970s): it is an approach, not a method; a unified but broadly based theoretical position about the nature of language and of language learning and teaching.
This approach is found in the changes in the British language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960s. A lot of British linguists contributed to the formation of the Communicative Approach which aims to make communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) the goal of language teaching and develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication. **Communicative competence** is what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community.
Background

Richards and Rodgers (1986) described CLT as an approach rather than a method, since it represents a philosophy of teaching that is based on communicative language use. Advocated by many applied linguists, CLT in their views emphasizes notional-functional concepts and communicative competence, rather than grammatical structures, as central to teaching.
Background

The major characteristics are:

• Meaning is primary; contextualization is basic.
• Attempts to communicate in TL are encouraged in the beginning of instruction.
• Material sequencing is determined by the content, meaning, and function.
• L1 is acceptable when feasible.
• Activities and strategies for learning are varied.
• Communicative competence is the goal of instruction.
Theory of Language

Hymes

a person who acquires communicative competence acquires both knowledge and ability for language use with respect to the following:

• whether something is formally possible;
• whether something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available;
• whether something is appropriate in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
• whether something is in fact done, actually performed and what its doing entails
Canale and Swain identified four dimensions of communicative competence:

**Grammatical competence** - similar to linguistic competence by Chomsky by what is formally possible

**Sociolinguistic competence** - understanding of the social context in which communication takes place, including role relationships, the shared information of the participants, and the purpose for their interaction

**Discourse competence** - the interpretation of individual message elements in terms of cohesion and coherence

**Strategic competence** - the coping strategies to initiate, terminate, maintain, repair, and redirect communication
Halliday

Functional theory
Basic functions of language:
• Instrumental
• Regulatory
• Interactional
• Personal
• Heuristic
• Imaginative
• Representational
Widdowson
The relationship between linguistic systems and their communicative values in text and discourse
Theory of learning

Three principles

communication, task, meaningfulness

• the communication principle: Activities that involve communication promote language learning.

• the task principle: Activities that involve the completion of real-world tasks promote learning.

• the meaningfulness principle: Learners must be engaged in meaningful and authentic language use for learning to take place.
Theory of learning

- Creative construction hypothesis
- Interactional theory
- Sociocultural learning theory
Objectives

- To communicate in the target language in authentic situations.
  To achieve this goal, students need to know:
  1. Linguistic forms
  2. Meanings
  3. Functions
- To acquire knowledge of the TL system
- To acquire knowledge of rules of speaking in the TL
- To use and respond to different types of speech acts
- To use language appropriately
What is the role of the teacher?

A **facilitator**: facilitates communication in the classroom and establishes situations likely to promote communication.

An **advisor** in the activities, answering students’ questions and monitoring their performance.

A **co-communicator**, engaging in the activities with the students.
What is the role of students?

- Communicators: they are actively engaged in negotiating meaning.
- In trying to make themselves understood and
- In understanding others
- More responsible managers of their own learning.

Negotiator
Communicator
Contributor
independent learner
What are some characteristics of the teaching / learning process?

1- Students use the language a great deal through communicative activities such as games, role plays, and problem-solving tasks.

2- The use of authentic materials.

3- Activities are carried out by students in small groups.
The features of communicative activities

1- **Information gap**: one person knows something, the other one does not.

2- **Choice**: the speaker has a choice of what to say and how to say it. Think about the chain drill?

3- **Feedback**: the purpose is achieved based upon the information that is received from the listener. Think about the transformation drill?
What is the nature of student-teacher interaction/student-student interaction?

Students interact a great deal with one another, in pairs, triads, small groups and whole group. 

mostly student- student interaction
How are the feelings of the students dealt with?

Students will be more motivated to study a foreign language since they will feel they are learning to do something useful with the language.

They are given an opportunity to express their individuality by having them share their ideas and opinions on a regular basis.
How is the language viewed? How is the culture viewed?

*Language is for communication
*Communicative competence consists of
  1-Linguistic competence
  2-Knowledge of functions
Students have to know forms, meanings, functions, the social situation and the role of the interlocutor in order to convey the intended meaning appropriately.

**Culture:**
It is everyday lifestyle of people who use the language
Certain aspects of it that are important to communication: the use of nonverbal behavior.
What areas of language are emphasized?
What language skills are emphasized?

* Language functions might be emphasized over forms.
* Students work with language at the suprasentential or discourse level. They learn about cohesion and coherence.
* Students work with all four skills from the beginning: oral communication, reading the article, listening, writing.
What is the role of the students’ native language

*sensible and careful use of students’ native language is permitted in CLT.

*The target language should be used not only during communicative activities, but also for explaining the activities to the students or in assigning homework.
How is evaluation accomplished?

The teacher evaluates not only the students’ **accuracy**, but also their **fluency**.

Use an **integrative test** which has a real communicative function.

To assess students’ **writing skill**, a teacher might ask them to write a letter to a friend.
How does the teacher respond to student errors?

Errors of form are tolerated during fluency-based activities & are seen as a natural outcome of the development of communication skills.
The techniques

Authentic materials
e.x.: a recent newspaper article.
assign the homework to listen to a live radio
or television broadcast.
**Realia, menus,
timetables.
Scrambled sentences

- Students are asked to unscramble the sentences so that the sentences are stored to their original order, learning coherence and cohesive.
- To unscramble the lines of a mixed-up dialogue.
- To put pictures of a picture strip story in order and write lines to accompany the pictures.
Language games

Games are used frequently in CLT.
Pictures strip story

Prediction of the next pictures
An example of using a problem solving task as a communicative technique.
Role play

It gives students an opportunity to practice communicating in different social contexts and in different social roles.