**Communicative Languge Teaching**

1. **What is Communicative Language Teaching**

You may have noticed that the goal of most of the methods we have looked at so far is for students to learn to communicate in the target language. In the 1970s, though, educators began to question if they were going about meeting the goal in the right way. Some observed that students could produce sentences accurately in a lesson, but could not use them appropriately when genuinely communicating outside of the classroom. Others noted that being able to communicate required more than mastering linguistic structure, due to the fact that language was fundamentally social (Halliday, 1973). Within a social context, language users needed to perform certain functions, such as promising, inviting, and declining invitations (Wilkins, 1976). Students may know the rules of linguistic usage, but be unable to use the language (Widdowson, 1978). In short, being able to communicate required more than linguistic competence; it required communicative competence (Hymes, 1971)—knowing when and how to say what to whom. Such observations contributed to a shift in the field in the late 1970s and early 1980s from a linguistic structure-centered approach to a Communicative Approach (Widdowson, 1990 & Savignon, 1997).

Applying the theoretical perspective of the Communicative Approach, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) aims broadly to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching. What this looks like in the classroom may depend on how the principles are interpreted and applied. Indeed, Klapper (2003) makes the point that because CLT lacks closely prescribed classroom techniques, as compared with some of the other methods we have just looked at, CLT is ‘fuzzy’ in teachers’ understanding. This fuzziness has given CLT a flexibility which has allowed it to endure for thirty years. However, its flexibility also means that classroom practices differ widely even when teachers report that they are practicing CLT. It is probably fair to say that there is no one single agreed upon version of CLT. Nevertheless, we will follow our usual way of understanding the theory and associated practices by visiting a class in which a form of Communicative Language Teaching is being practiced.

**2.Purposes of Communicative Language Teaching**

The goal is to enable students to communicate in the target language. To do this, students need knowledge of the linguistic forms, meanings, and functions. They need to know that many different forms can be used to perform a function and also that a single form can often serve a variety of functions. They must be able to choose from among these the most appropriate form, given the social context and the roles of the interlocutors. They must also be able to manage the process of negotiating meaning with their interlocutors. Communication is a process; knowledge of the forms of language is insufficient.

**3.Principles of Communicative Language Teaching**

**4.Techniques of Communicative Language Teaching**

**5.Nature of Student-teacher Interaction**

The teacher may present some part of the lesson. At other times, he is the facilitator of the activities, but he does not always himself interact with the students.

**6. Nature of Student-student Interaction**

Sometimes he is a co-communicator, but more often he establishes situations that prompt communication between and among the students. Students interact a great deal with one another. They do this in various configurations: pairs, triads, small groups, and whole group.

One of the basic assumptions of CLT is that by learning to communicate students will be more motivated to study another language since they will feel they are learning to do something useful. Also, teachers give students an opportunity to express their individuality by having them share their ideas and opinions on a regular basis. Finally, student security is enhanced by the many opportunities for cooperative interactions with their fellow students and the teacher.