Pedagogy and Curriculum Innovations
Third Year 2020-2021
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First Semester
Lecture 14:
Communicative Language Teaching
- **Techniques**

Using Authentic Materials

To overcome the typical problem that students cannot transfer what they learn in the classroom to the outside world, and to expose students to natural language in a variety of situations, adherents of CLT advocate the use of authentic language materials. The teacher might use a newspaper article. He might also assign the students homework, requiring that they learn about two political candidates who are running for election.

For students with lower proficiency in the target language, it may not be possible to use authentic language materials such as newspapers. Simpler authentic materials (for example, the use of a weather forecast when working on predictions), or at least ones that are realistic, are most desirable.

Using Authentic Materials

Another possibility for the use of authentic materials with a lower-level class is to use items of realia that do not contain a lot of language, but about which a lot of discussion could be generated. Menus in the target language are an example; timetables are another.

Using Scrambled Sentences

The students are given a passage (a text) in which the sentences are in a scrambled order. This may be a passage they have worked with or one they have not seen before. They are told to unscramble the sentences so that the sentences are restored to their original order. This type of exercise teaches students about the cohesion and coherence properties of language. They learn how sentences are bound together at the suprasentential level through formal linguistic devices such as pronouns, which make a text cohesive, and semantic propositions, which unify a text and make it coherent.

In addition to written passages, students might also be asked to unscramble the lines of a mixed-up dialogue. Or they might be asked to put the pictures of a picture strip story in order and write lines to accompany the pictures.

Using Language Games

Games are used frequently in CLT. The students find them enjoyable, and if they are properly designed, they give students valuable communicative practice. Games that are truly communicative have the three features of communication: *information gap*, *choice*, and *feedback*. Suppose we introduce a card game about practicing sport to our students, we should make sure that these three features are manifested in the card game in the following way: *An information gap* should exist by choosing something that the speaker do not know what his classmate is going to do the following weekend. The speaker has *a choice* as to what he would predict (which sport) and how he would predict it (which form his prediction would take). The speaker is to receive a *feedback* from the members of his group. If his prediction is incomprehensible, then none of the members of his group would respond. If he got a meaningful response, he could presume that his prediction is understood.

Using Picture Strip Story

Many activities can be done with picture strip stories. Students might be introduced to such an activity as follows. One student in a small group is to be given a strip story. He is to show the first picture of the story to the other members of his group and asks them to predict what the second picture would look like. An information gap exists —the students in the groups do not know what the picture contains. They have a choice as to what their prediction would be and how they would word it. They are to receive feedback, not on the form but on the content of the prediction, by being able to view the picture and compare it with their prediction.

Using Role-play

Role-plays are very important in CLT because they give students an opportunity to practice communicating in different social contexts and in different social roles. Role-plays can be set up so that they are very structured (for example, the teacher tells the students who they are and what they should say) or in a less structured way (for example, the teacher tells the students who they are, what the situation is, and what they are talking about, but the students determine what they will say). The latter is more in keeping with CLT, of course, because it gives the students more of a choice. Notice that role-plays structured like this also provide information gaps since students cannot be sure (as with most forms of communication) what the other person or people will say (there is a natural unpredictability). Students also receive feedback on whether or not they have communicated effectively.