

Communicative Approach to Teaching English at Military School

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Abstract: *The article deals with the communicative approach to teaching English at military school. The constituents of the communicative competence are presented. The main attention of the article is paid to the aim, key characteristics and principles of the approach in question, as well as to advantages and disadvantages of the communicative approach use at the English language lessons.*

Keywords— *communicative approach, CLT, the English language, principles, explicit and implicit learning, communicative competence.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The communicative approach to teaching the English language was presented in the 1970s by British and American scholars in order to increase the effectiveness of communicative skills development of non-native English speakers [4, p. 162]. Often the above-stated approach is called “CLT” (communicative language teaching) or “communicative approach”.

The communicative approach to teaching English is of current importance, so many scholars investigate various aspects of it. Among them are K. Brandl [2], M. Canale and M. Swain [3], Z. Dörnyei [4], T.V. Hattum [7], B.B.N. Prasad [9], S.J. Savignon [11], M. Tsinghong [12], and many others, who devoted their works to relevant innovations, concerning development of students’ communicative skills with the help of CLT, although the issue of its use at higher military educational establishments still remains an active area of pedagogical research.

2. MAIN PART

The foremost purpose of the CLT is to develop students’ communicative

The foremost purpose of the CLT is to develop students’ competence with the help of building the educational process around interaction in

the foreign language, so that in perspective they could converse well and appropriately [12, p. 42].

Communicative competence comprises [3; 9, p. 2-3]:

Grammatical competence (the main goal is not to demonstrate the

- Grammatical competence (the main goal is not to demonstrate the knowledge of grammar rules but a grammatical competence – using a rule in the negotiation of meaning, expression or interpretation);

- Discourse competence (understanding the nature of correlation between certain words or phrases in a text, and the ability to interpret the overall meaning of the text properly);

- Sociolinguistic competence (comprehension of the social context in which

Language is used);

- Strategic competence.

There are two types of language learning: implicit and explicit.

1. Explicit learning constitutes a conscious and deliberate endeavour to master

some material. This learning type is peculiar to most school instructions.

2. Implicit learning is getting more and more popularity at the English lessons,

turning them into communicative ones. The basis of this type is the maximal approximation of a natural language acquisition environment, crucial element of which is provision of abundant authentic materials for students in order to facilitate their implicit learning processes.

The advantages of the teaching approach in question, problems with its use still exist. Namely, the communicative approach to language teaching, especially at military specialities at military school, often tends to be interpreted as: if the teacher understands the student, the communication is acceptable. The difficulty lies in that this teacher, in most of the cases, is also a speaker of student’s L1 and so understands the student even with his mistakes,

resulting from the influence of the first language. But native speakers of the studied language do not have the same way of thinking, hence can easily and completely misunderstand, what has been said by that non-native speaker. This observation needs rethinking and adjustment of the CLT. The altered communicative approach will only be efficient, when the teacher pretends to comprehend only that what any regular speaker of the target language would, and should react in accordance [7, p. 10].

3. CONCLUSION

In order to achieve positive results with teaching students of technical specialities, certain precise recommendations of the proper CLT implementation at the

lessons of English for Specific Purposes should be given. Among them are to [2, p. 14-16]:

1. Use the target language at the maximum during instructions giving. The more students hear the TL, the better, since the larger the studied language input, the greater the students' advances.

2. Serve as an example to your students of a proper, high-class foreign language use. Never switch back and forth between the TL and the learners' native language. Do not expect students to use the English language, or any other non-L1, if you, as their mentor, cannot use it consistently yourself.

3. Motivate students; give multiple arguments for using the TL at present and in time to come, i.e. in their future profession.

4. Give clear instructions.

5. Develop four traditional skills – listening, reading, speaking, and writing – in correlation.

6. Organize maximum interaction between people, who are studying English. Considering the above-mentioned recommendations, classroom activities typically should have at least some of the following distinctive features [9, p. 5-6]:

– Enhancement of students' communicative competence through combination

of grammatical knowledge and communicating ability. Grammar rules are not taught separately but quite the contrary – arising out of a communicative assignment, and so producing a necessity for particular elements of grammar.

– Stimulation for intercourse and discussion with the help of such tasks as a role play, problem solving, or information sharing.

– Providing opportunities for both inductive and deductive study of grammar.

– Incorporation of educational materials, which would include content related

to students' interests – both in (future) professional sphere and personal.

– Usage of authentic materials (audiovisual or written) to stimulate attention

and provide models of the real, "living", target language, for instance English. This is imperative in the process of English for Specific Purposes acquisition.

To sum up the foregoing information on the communicative

approach to language teaching at military school, it must be pointed out that

among advantages may be: 1) faster and more efficient results (in comparison to the traditional methods and approaches) of the foreign language acquisition by students due to the use of communicative tasks, 2) bigger involvement of students in the studying process (student-centring), and therefore their higher responsibility for the achievement of the lesson's goal, 3) contextualization of the educational information, including lexis and grammar, for better understanding of meaning, 4) indissoluble connection

between the real-life language and situations of its use, and the ones presented and studied at the English language lessons, concerning everyday life, as well as students' (future) professional field.

Disadvantages may be represented by the following situations: 1) possible prioritizing of fluency over accuracy, 2) lack of authentic materials, representing native speakers' 'living' language, and equipment authentic materials, representing native speakers' 'living' language, and equipment

for their demonstration, 3) impossibility of implementation of the teaching approach in question fully due to large sizes of academic groups, 4) low-quality professionalism of teachers resulting in ineffective organization of teaching process.

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