

Enhancing Sudanese Undergraduate Students' Communicative Competence through Translation

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Abstract

Purposes of communication vary quite remarkably. People usually communicate with others to pass on information and do this intentionally. Light sets up four functions of communication: Initially, we talk to express our wants and needs. Then, we talk to achieve social closeness. Moreover, people talk to express their changeable goals and share information. Finally, we talk to achieve social etiquette (Light 62). Notwithstanding how efficient people are in achieving the four purposes listed above, they just talk. Efficiency and appropriacy differ from an individual to another. The more that an individual is competent in communication, the more likely that such purposes will be achieved. However, Light and Mcnaughton state that an individual's competence in communication may differ from one setting to another depending on the partners, environments, and communication goals.

Keywords: communicative competence, information, intentionally, functions, appropriacy

1. INTRODUCTION

Quite a big number of countries across the globe do offer overseas students scholarship for immersion learning in their midst in order to have a fuller grasp of their culture and acquiring competence in their languages (Jackson). Therefore, such students would come back to their countries largely acquainted with the culture of the host

countries they lived in for some times. Moreover, communicative competence narrow the gap of cultural understanding with remote nations, different religious creed, cultural diversity (Bin-Hady and Kanade; Chen) and participating in resolving political, economic, humanitarian and environmental obstacles.

As for EFL/ESL students, communicative competence in English most probably provide them with chances to express themselves fully (Al-magid 17) and improve their foreign language level to follow their study in whatsoever fields they are interested in whether in their countries or abroad. Many universities set tests for students to ensure that such students could pursue their lectures (Avineri et al. 254) when joining high study programs like Master's and PhD's. Such universities recommend students to pass tests like: Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (NUS). Even doing the Master or Ph.D. in any fields of study in many Arabian countries requires passing the Proficiency Test in English or the TOEFL test.

The TOEFL/ IELTS/ or the proficiency test is aimed to test individuals' repertoire in communication. Passing such tests requires; therefore, competence in linguistics, sociolinguistics, discourse and communicative strategies that are responsible for keeping communicative channel open when facing any problems or misunderstandings. So, how important is it to build such competencies in our students from earlier stages of education! By doing so, we guarantee their dreams to be fulfilled and accomplish their higher education in various fields of sciences, arts, economics, medicine, politics, education, etc.

Hence, this paper attempts to explore to what extent is communicative competence potential to help undergraduate students achieve the set goals of their English language programs.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) originated from the changes in the British Situational Language Teaching approach dating from the late 1960s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Stemming from the socio-cognitive perspective of the socio-linguistic theory, with an emphasis on meaning and communication, and a goal to develop learners' "communicative competence", Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach evolves as a prominent language teaching method and gradually replaced the previous grammar-translation method and audio-lingual method (Warschauer & Kern, 2000).

2. DEFINING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Communicative Language Teaching is a set of principles about teaching including recommendations about method and syllabus where the focus is on meaningful communication not structure, use not usage. In this approach, students are given tasks to accomplish using language instead of studying the language.

Earlier view of language learning focused primarily on the mastery of grammatical competence. Errors were to be avoided through controlled opportunities for production (either written or spoken). In recent years, language learning has been viewed from a very different perspective. It is seen as resulting from processes such as:

- Interaction between the learner and users of the language
- Collaborative creation of meaning.
- Creating meaningful and purposeful interaction through language.
- Negotiation of meaning as the learner and his or her interlocutor arrive at understanding.
- Learning through attending to the feedback learners get when they use the language.
- Paying attention to the language one hears (the input) and trying to incorporate new forms into one's developing communicative competence.
- Trying out and experimenting with different ways of saying things.

3. INCORPORATING TRANSLATION TASKS INTO CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

To further help students get along with their language learning and achieve communicative language learning translation activities can be included as part of their language learning With CLT began a movement away from traditional lesson formats where the focus was on mastery of different items of grammar and practice through controlled activities such as memorization of dialogs and drills, and toward the use of pair work activities, role plays, group work activities and project work.

Teachers in communicative classrooms will find themselves talking less and listening more and becoming active facilitators of their students' learning (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). The teacher sets up the exercise, but because the students' performance is the goal, the teacher must step back and observe, sometimes acting as referee or monitor. A classroom during a communicative activity is far from quiet, however. The students do most of the speaking, and frequently the scene of a classroom during a communicative exercise is active, with students leaving their seats to complete a task. Because of the increased responsibility to participate, students may find they gain confidence in using the target language in general. Students are more responsible managers of their own learning (Larsen-Freeman, 1986).

4. TRANSLATION BASED SYLLABUS

Rather than simply specifying the grammar and vocabulary learners needed to master, it was argued that a syllabus should identify the following aspects of language use after incorporating a translation element as an essential part of the overall learning operation in order to be able to develop the learner's communicative competence:

1. As detailed a consideration as possible of the **purposes** for which the learner wishes to acquire the target language; for example, using English for business purposes, in the hotel industry, or for travel.
2. Some idea of the **setting** in which they will want to use the target language; for example, in an office, on an airplane, or in a store.
3. The socially defined **role** the learners will assume in the target language, as well as the role of their interlocutors; for example, as a traveler, as a salesperson talking to clients, or as a student in a school.
4. The **communicative events** in which the learners will participate: everyday situations, vocational or professional situations, academic situations, and so on; for example, making telephone calls, engaging in casual conversation, or taking part in a meeting.
5. The **language functions** involved in those events or what the learner will be able to do with or through the language; for

example, making introductions, giving explanations, or describing plans.

6. The **notions** or concepts involved, or what the learner will need to be able to talk about; for example, leisure, finance, history, religion.
7. The skills involved in the “knitting together” of discourse: **Discourse** and **rhetoical skills**; for example, storytelling, giving an effective business presentation.
8. The **variety** or varieties of the target language that will be needed, such as American, Australian, or British English, and the levels in the spoken and written language which the learners will need to reach.
9. The **grammatical content** that will be needed
10. The **lexical content**, or vocabulary, that will be needed
(van Ek and Alexander 1980).

5. PROPOSAL FOR A TRANSLATION-BASED SYLLABUS

Primarily to bid the required success, this program should take into account heavily inclusion of translation from English into Arabic and vice versa. A traditional language syllabus usually specified the vocabulary students needed to learn and the grammatical items they should master, normally graded across levels from beginner to advanced levels. But what would a translation based syllabus look like in order to help students come to grips with communicative language and what are the elements to be included in that program to achieve the intended purposes. This focuses on the four skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and breaks each skill down into its component micro skills. For example, the skill of listening might be further described in terms of the following micro skills:

- Recognizing key words in conversations
- Recognizing the topic of a conversation
- Recognizing speakers’ attitude toward a topic
- Recognizing time reference of an utterance
- Following speech at different rates of speed
- Identifying key information in a passage

Advocates of CLT however stressed an *integrated-skills* approach to the teaching of the skills. Since in real life the skills often occur together, they should also be linked in teaching, it was argued.

While our main purpose is to improve quality in communicative competence translation, it must be remembered that this quality requires the translator to have an adequate command of English as well as Arabic. Assuming that this is the case, translator training normally focuses on translation into the mother tongue, because higher quality is achieved in that direction than in translating into a foreign language. Hence the almost exclusive focus on translation into English in this course. By its very nature, however, the course is also useful for Arab students seeking to improve their skills in translation into English: this is a staple part of English studies throughout the Arab world, and Thinking Arabic Translation offers a new methodology and plenty of practical work in this area.

In this study the student is progressively trained to ask, and to answer, a series of questions that apply to any text given for translation. Pre-eminent among these are: 'What is the purpose of my translation, and what are the salient features of this text?' No translation is produced in a vacuum, and we stress throughout the course that the needs of the target audience and the requirements of the person commissioning the translation are primary factors in translation decisions. For this same reason, we always include a translation brief in the assignment. As for the salient features of the text, these are what add up to its specificity as typical or atypical of a particular genre or genres. Once its genre-membership, and therefore its purpose, has been pinned down, the translator can decide on a strategy for meeting the translation brief. The student's attention is kept focused on this issue by the wide variety of genres found in the practical: in addition to technical, legal and consumer-oriented texts, students are asked to work on various sorts of journalistic, literary, and academic texts, political speeches, tourist brochures, students are more confident and successful in responding to genre requirements after working on semantic and formal properties of texts and on language variety than before. This is particularly true of texts with hybrid Genre-features.

Question to ask about the text	Matrix Features	Examples of Typical Features
What genre does this text belong to	Genre Matrix Genre types: literary Religious Philosophical	Short story Qur'anic Commentary Easy and good evil, etc Scientific paper , balance sheet,

	Empirical Persuasive Hybrid Oral VS. Written	etc sermon, parody, job contract, etc. Law advertisement, etc. Sermon , parody , job contract, etc Dialogue , sub-title,song,etc
Are there significant features presenting a choice between:	Cultural Matrix Exoticism Calque Cultural borrowing Communicative translation Cultural transplantation	Wholesale foreignness Idiom translated literally Names of historical movement Public notices, proverbs Romeo recasts as قيس
Are there significant instances of:	Semantic Matrix Denotative Meaning Attitudinal Meaning Associative Meaning Affective Meaning Allusive Meaning Reflected Meaning Metaphorical Meaning	Synonymy Hostile attitude to referent Gender stereotyping of referent Offensive attitude to addressee Echo of proverb Collective Clash Play on words Original Metaphor
Are there significant features on:	Formal Matrix Phonic/graphic level Prosodic level Grammatical Level Sentential level Discourse level Intertextual level	Alliteration , onomatopoeia
Are there significant instances on:	Varietal Matrix Tonal register Social register Sociolect Dialect	Islamist intellectual

6. STRATEGIC DECISIONS

The first set of reasoned decisions taken by the translator. These are taken before starting the translation in detail, in response to the following questions: 'What is the message content of this particular ST? What are its salient linguistic features? What are its principal effects? What genre does it belong to and what audience is it aimed at? What are the functions and intended audience of my translation? What are the implications of these factors? If a choice has to be made among them, which ones should be given priority?'

CONCLUSION

Since its inception in the 1970s, communicative language teaching has passed through a number of different phases. However, the issue of translation is a completely novel idea. Its inclusion can help a lot in promoting the standards of the students quite remarkably. In its first phase, a primary concern was the need to develop a syllabus and teaching approach that was compatible with early conceptions of communicative competence. This led to proposals for the organization of syllabuses in terms of functions and notions rather than grammatical structures. Later the focus shifted to procedures for identifying learners' communicative needs and this resulted in proposals to make needs analysis an essential component of communicative methodology.

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