

Communicative Language Teaching And The System Of Exercises

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Abstract

Communicative language teaching (CLT), or the communicative approach (CA), is an approach to language teaching that emphasizes interaction¹ as both the means and the ultimate goal of study. Learners in environments using communication to learn and practice the target language by interactions with one another and the instructor, the study of "authentic texts" (those written in the target language for purposes other than language learning), and the use of the language both in class and outside of class.

Key words: communicative, language, learner, addition, target language

Introduction

Learning the Second Language is important as it is essential to every aspect and interaction in our everyday lives. Every sentence we use has the purpose of enabling second language learners to move beyond vocabulary and grammar to the functional aspect of communication. **Being able to communicate with each other form bonds, teamwork, and it's what separates humans from other animal species. Communication drives our lives and better ourselves.**

The topics and the exercises of this text aim at enhancement of the learners' communication skill. Let's begin with 'Self-introduction' as **"You only get one chance to create a first and best impression"**.

The arrival of a new academic year brings a lot of energy and enthusiasm to students, teachers and parents (although in a different way) and it is high time to practise self introductions. Here, two ways of introducing oneself - in educational atmosphere and for career, are presented for practice as both are indispensable in one's life.

Take the following communication as an example.

Model 1: Here, Shiva is introducing himself at a volleyball camp:

Hi! My name is Shiva. I am 19 years old. I live in Sattur with my parents and brothers. I am a first year Computer Science student. I am pursuing a Certificate Course in Communicative and Functional English after my college hours to improve my language skills. I like Programming and Mathematics. During weekends, I take dancing lessons, swimming and veena. I like puppies. My favorite colour is pink. My favourite food is masala dosa. I want to learn how to play volleyball better. Thank you.

Each of the sentences in this self introduction has a grammatical structure. But, the message of Shiva is more than just subjects, verbs and objects. Each sentence has a purpose or topic.

The topics are:

- Hi - **GREETING**
- My name is Shiva. - **NAME**
- I am 19 years old. - **AGE**

- I live in Sattur with my parents and brothers – **WHERE YOU LIVE & FAMILY**
- I am a first year Computer Science student.
I am pursuing a Certificate Course in Communicative and Functional English after my college hours to improve my language skills – **CLASS & DISCIPLINE**
- I like Programming and Mathematics. – **SUBJECTS**
- During weekends, I take dancing lessons, swimming and veena. – **HOBBIES**
- I like puppies. – **ANIMALS**
- My favorite colour is pink- **COLOUR**
- My favorite food is masala dosa. - **FOOD**
- I want to learn how to play volleyball better. – **PURPOSE FOR BEING AT CAMP**
- Thank you.- **CLOSING**

Once the students are clear about the purpose or topic of each sentence, they can choose which words to say by using the topic as cues to CHOOSE their own words to deliver the message.

Self-introduction during an interview is a crucial one in any networking situation. It is both a personal and professional communication skill that is needed in your everyday life. Think about how you can use this short period of time to not only introduce yourself but also convey something about who you are and what you do.

When you introduce yourself, it is not for anyone else's benefit but YOURS! In brief, self-introduction is marketing your skills. First impressions count a great deal in an interview. A job interview is a tough competition with one or a few winners. And the manner in which you introduce yourself in an interview will be remembered so much so that it might be the deal breaker. Self introductions are a natural oral form that help to assess the workers' confidence, vocabulary, grammar and attitude, and also help the employers get to know them. Here are some tips for introducing yourself.

- 1. Dress appropriately and be perfectly groomed.** These are things over which one can have control, so make the most of them. Since first impressions count, introduce yourself with style before you even open your mouth.
- 2. Walk into an interview confidently.** Avoid slouching, slumping or crossing your body with your arms. You are going to win, so face them with confidence.
- 3. Greet your interviewers immediately.** Offer your hand for a handshake, make eye contact and smile.
- 4. Open your interview with a comment about being pleased to have the opportunity to be interviewed by the firm or organization.** Thank the interviewers for the opportunity. This should be brief, genuine and not flowery.
- 5. When asked to sum up who you are, be ready for such a question.**

How would you describe yourself? Write a list now and remove non-job related qualities to arrive at your list for a job interview. Craft this into a neat, short reply that sums up who you truly are.

- **When asked questions at the start about why you want the job, be prepared with an interesting and genuine statement.**

6. Enjoy the rest of your interview. If you've made a good impression by this point, the rest is simply about displaying your knowledge and your confidence level should be boosted.

Points to remember before you attend this interview question i.e. introducing yourself:

- Assume, now you are sitting in front of the HR manager.
- Take the initiative to attend this question and tell your real answers.

Prepare your answer as per THE USUAL PROCEDURE -

1. Your name (spell out your name clearly) and place (where you are living)
2. Your current educational status (PG / UG with the name of the institution and percentage you have scored)
3. Your Plus Two and Tenth (place where you studied) with percentage
4. Your co-curricular activities (related to your Subject)

5. Your extra-curricular activities (apart from regular class hours)
6. Awards / trophies / distinctions won by you for academic excellence if any
7. Reasons for choosing the discipline in your education
8. Your interests and hobbies
9. Family particulars (Father, Mother, Brothers, Sisters, Spouse, Children)
10. Employment history and reasons for leaving each employment.
11. Achievements in each employment.
12. Reason for quitting employment now.
13. The languages you know (speak, read and write)

Answer 9 only if asked (Details of family). If you are asked to tell them about your family, then say about your family members. Otherwise, there is no need.

Answer 10 to 12, only if you have previous working experience.

Caution

1. Do not talk ill of your family members, faculties in institutions, past employers.
2. Do not sit on the edge of the chair while answering.
3. Look into the eyes of the interviewer while answering.
4. Remember to say 'sorry' if your opinions or answers are rejected.
5. Don't say anything about the field which you are not interested. For example, if you have no interest in technical skills, don't make a mention of it in self-introduction.
6. If you have finished your presentation, just hang up. Do not answer beyond what you have already said even if the interviewer has not shot his next question.
7. Say 'Thank you' at the last part of the interview to every interviewer before leaving the room.
8. Don't look back and walk out confidently after shutting the door gently behind you.

Before you attend the interview, thoroughly make enquiries of the organization, their business, special matters etc. as they may ask for what you know about their company. Just feel free and be at ease. Display assertiveness while introducing yourself. Do not use very difficult English words. Make it plain and simple. Be honest and truthful because you can be grilled on any word uttered by you.

Rehearse "self-introduction" in front of mirror everyday till you achieve mastery.

Role-play

Role-play is an oral activity usually done in pairs, whose main goal is to develop students' communicative abilities in a certain setting.

Example:

1. The instructor sets the scene: where is the conversation taking place? (E.g., in a café, in a park, etc.)
2. The instructor defines the goal of the students' conversation. (E.g., the speaker is asking for directions, the speaker is ordering coffee, the speaker is talking about a movie they recently saw, etc.)
3. The students converse in pairs for a designated amount of time.

This activity gives students the chance to improve their communication skills in the TL in a low-pressure situation. Most students are more comfortable speaking in pairs rather than in front of the entire class.

Instructors need to be aware of the differences between a conversation and an utterance. Students may use the same utterances repeatedly when doing this activity and not actually have a creative conversation. If instructors do not regulate what kinds of conversations students are having, then the students might not be truly improving their communication skills. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communicative_language_teaching_-_cite_note-0-5

Interviews

An interview is an oral activity done in pairs, whose main goal is to develop students' interpersonal skills in the TL.

Example:

1. The instructor gives each student the same set of questions to ask a partner.
2. Students take turns asking and answering the questions in pairs.

This activity, since it is highly structured, allows for the instructor to more closely monitor students' responses. It can zone in on one specific aspect of grammar or vocabulary, while still being a primarily communicative activity and giving the students communicative benefits.https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communicative_language_teaching_-_cite_note-:05-11

This is an activity that should be used primarily in the lower levels of language classes, because it will be most beneficial to lower-level speakers. Higher-level speakers should be having unpredictable conversations in the TL, where neither the questions nor the answers are scripted or expected. If this activity were used with higher-level speakers it wouldn't have many benefits.^[11]

Group work

Group work is a collaborative activity whose purpose is to foster communication in the TL, in a larger group setting.^[11]

Example:

1. Students are assigned a group of no more than six people.
2. Students are assigned a specific role within the group. (E.g., member A, member B, etc.)
3. The instructor gives each group the same task to complete.
4. Each member of the group takes a designated amount of time to work on the part of the task to which they are assigned.
5. The members of the group discuss the information they have found, with each other and put it all together to complete the task.

Students can feel overwhelmed in language classes, but this activity can take away from that feeling. Students are asked to focus on one piece of information only, which increases their comprehension of that information. Better comprehension leads to better communication with the rest of the group, which improves students' communicative abilities in the TL.

Instructors should be sure to monitor that each student is contributing equally to the group effort. It takes a good instructor to design the activity well, so that students will contribute equally, and benefit equally from the activity.^[11]

Information gap

Information gap is a collaborative activity, whose purpose is for students to effectively obtain information that was previously unknown to them, in the TL.^[12]

Example:

1. The class is paired up. One partner in each pair is Partner A, and the other is Partner B.
2. All the students that are Partner A are given a sheet of paper with a time-table on it. The time-table is filled in half-way, but some of the boxes are empty.
3. All the students that are Partner B are given a sheet of paper with a time-table on it. The boxes that are empty on Partner A's time-table are filled in on Partner B's. There are also empty boxes on Partner B's time-table, but they are filled in on Partner A's.
4. The partners must work together to ask about and supply each other with the information they are both missing, to complete each other's time-tables.

Completing information gap activities improves students' abilities to communicate about unknown information in the TL. These abilities are directly applicable to many real-world conversations, where the goal is to find out some new piece of information, or simply to exchange information.^[12]

Instructors should not overlook the fact that their students need to be prepared to communicate effectively for this activity. They need to know certain vocabulary words, certain structures of grammar, etc. If the students have not been well prepared for the task at hand, then they will not communicate effectively.^[12]

Opinion sharing

Opinion sharing is a content-based activity, whose purpose is to engage students' conversational skills, while talking about something they care about.^[12]

Example:

1. The instructor introduces a topic and asks students to contemplate their opinions about it. (E.g., dating, school dress codes, global warming)
2. The students talk in pairs or small groups, debating their opinions on the topic.

Opinion sharing is a great way to get more introverted students to open up and share their opinions. If a student has a strong opinion about a certain topic, then they will speak up and share.^[12]

Respect is key with this activity. If a student does not feel like their opinion is respected by the instructor or their peers, then they will not feel comfortable sharing, and they will not receive the communicative benefits of this activity.^[12]

Scavenger hunt

A scavenger hunt is a mingling activity that promotes open interaction between students.^[11]

Example:

1. The instructor gives students a sheet with instructions on it. (e.g. Find someone who has a birthday in the same month as yours.)
2. Students go around the classroom asking and answering questions about each other.
3. The students wish to find all of the answers they need to complete the scavenger hunt.

In doing this activity, students have the opportunity to speak with a number of classmates, while still being in a low-pressure situation, and talking to only one person at a time. After learning more about each other, and getting to share about themselves, students will feel more comfortable talking and sharing during other communicative activities.^[11]

Since this activity is not as structured as some of the others, it is important for instructors to add structure. If certain vocabulary should be used in students' conversations, or a certain grammar is necessary to complete the activity, then instructors should incorporate that into the scavenger hunt.^[11]

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