Communicative Language Teaching:

Problems and Prospects

A Thesis

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PREFACE

Communicative Language Teaching, viewing communication as the major aim of language learning, is receiving widespread attention among the language teachers.

Many dogmatic theories have risen and fallen in the twenty-five centuries of language instruction. Communicative Language Teaching has recently come to be considered as more varied and less dogmatic than any other theories that have appeared. It comprises all the competing strands of language learning, and can be called as a converging point for Teaching English As Communication.

This thesis is based on the conviction that it is an urgent task to realize the basic principles of Communicative Language Teaching in the language classroom in Japan. We are fully aware that there is no solution to get over all the problems in the way of language learning in Japan. Communicative Language Teaching, however, is sure to add to the language classroom communicative dimensions that have been neglected for a long time.

Finally, I am very grateful to all the staff of the section of English language study. I especially thank Prof. Tanaka for his thoughtful advice and goodwill without which this thesis would not have been completed.

December 1984
CHAPTER I

THE IMPLICATIONS OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

1.0 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT, henceforth) has recently been a key-concept in language learning program. It seems that CLT is regarded as a panacea to get over obstacles in the way of language learners and teachers. A move toward communication will win more popularity among those who are interested in language instruction under the influence of socio-economic demands. It has been pointed out that there is no precise definition of CLT, but there seems a general agreement that the major aim of CLT is to let the language learners acquire the so-called communicative competence to communicate effectively in the target language in real situations. In this section, our major concerns are (1) to make clear what the target competence, or communicative competence is, and (2) to recognize the implications of CLT for the language classroom.

1.1 Brief Backgrounds of Communicative Competence

As Newmark points out, it is rather easy to find the foreign language learner with a considerably comprehensive knowledge of language structures who cannot know the way to get his cigarette lit by a native when he needs matches in a real situation.\(^1\) With

regards to this indication, language teachers are fully aware of this sort of learners, and one of our major aims is to get over this communicative incompetence.

Johnson suggests that a reason for communicative incompetence lies in the predominant emphasis on "teaching the students how to 'form' correctly.... The result of this emphasis has been - in the best of cases - students who knew their grammar but lacks the 'something else'."¹ The question of what the 'something else' consists of is of interest to the language teachers.

'Something else' may include the social rules of language use. Hymes, Campbell and Wales, and Trudgill give us an answer to the question from the sociolinguistic point of view.² Chomsky who brought the concept of competence in the field of linguistics, views competence as the internalized grammatical knowledge of an ideal hearer-speaker in homogeneous community.³ To put it another way, he delimited his competence theory to the linguistic competence (i.e., phonology, lexicon, and syntax). The narrow definition of competence is questioned by sociolinguists, for

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² Trudgill points out that language, like other social behaviours must be appropriate to particular occasions and situations, in Peter Trudgill, Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 100.
the reason that it cannot provide a sufficient account of real competence of normal human beings in social context. In Hymes terms, "there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless."¹ Hymes regards the linguist's problem as:

to account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others.²

Thus, Hymes is mainly concerned with "the ability to produce or understand utterances which are not so much grammatical but, more important, appropriate to the context in which they are made ..."³, [emphasis original] that is, with the integration of rules of linguistic codes with those of communication and society. His competence theory referred to as 'communicative competence' includes, but is not limited to the linguistic code grammar. His theory is related to four parameters shown below:

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible;
2. Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available;

3. Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
4. Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails.¹

[emphasis original]

Communicative competence proposed by Hymes is concerned with the integration of grammatical, psycholinguistic, sociocultural, and probabilistic systems of competence.² It is certain that the impact of sociolinguistics leads to the recognition that communicative competence includes the social rules of speech along with linguistic rules.

'Something else' may also include a knowledge of discourse as an integral part of it. Widdowson suggests that communicative competence is strongly connected to "a knowledge of how sentences are used in the performance of communicative acts ..."³ as well as a knowledge of sentences isolated, that is, grammatical competence. His suggestion means that there exists a component of communicative competence that cannot be accounted for by traditional linguistic code rules alone. Oller admits the same kind of aspect of language use:

A major aspect of language use that a good theory must explain is that there is, in Lashley's words, 'a series of hierarchies of organization.' That is, there are units that combine with each other to form higher level units.... Words make phrases and the phrases carry new and different meanings which are not part of the separate words of which they are made.¹

It cannot be denied that a speaker of English have an ability to "decide whether it [a passage of the language which is more than one sentence in length] forms a unified whole or is just a collection of unrelated sentences"² as well as whether a sentence is a grammatical one or not. The recent study of discourse leads us to know that communicative competence is inescapably interrelated to a knowledge of discourse.

'Something else' may be further integrated with nonverbal features of real communication. It is often said that a traveller without any knowledge of a foreign language can buy something, get on a train, book a room at a hotel, and so on, in a foreign country. It is apparent that we can transmit our intentions a great deal to others without language - linguistic codes. The old sayings also tell us this fact; 'the eye is the window of the mind', and 'the eyes have one language everywhere', etc.


How do gestures and other paralinguistic features of communication fit into the framework? ..., gestures, distance, posture, and facial expressions communicate meaning along with the words we speak. Our use of these paralinguistic features may be conscious or unconscious. There is a gesture code just as there is a linguistic code; decisions to use a particular gesture along with or in place of words are made by each of us.1

[emphasis original]

It is a universally accepted idea that paralinguistic features have the same attributes as linguistic features in the framework of communicative competence.

As discussed above, the view has received gradual support among language teachers that the theory of communicative competence is a coalescence of knowledge of grammatical rules, knowledge of language use in sociocultural context, knowledge of how communicative functions can be realized according to the principles of discourse, and others.

1.2 On Communicative Competence in Language Instruction

It is Savignon who first incorporated the concept of communicative competence in the field of foreign language instruction. She proposes, in her pioneering book, that we must know "the value of training communicative skills from the very beginning of FL program ...",2 and defines communicative


competence as the "ability to function in a truly communicative setting...."¹ To acquire competence to process communicative tasks, she shows us what components of communicative competence make contributions as follows:

Success in any of these communicative tasks depends largely on the individual's willingness to express himself in the foreign language, on his resourcefulness in making use of the lexical and syntactical items which he has at his command, and on his knowledge of the paralinguistic and kinesic features of the language - intonation, facial expression, gestures, and so on - which contribute to communication. Linguistic accuracy in terms of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary is but one of the major constituents in this complex interaction.²

The account above appeared too rudimentary to apply it to the foreign language classroom, and the more sophisticated hypothesis of communicative competence was set up in Savignon (1983). It contains four major components, illustrated in Fig.1.

![Diagram](image)

FIGURE 1

The Components of Communicative Competence ³

After Savignon's pioneering hypothesis, Zelson (1976), Canale and Swain (1980), Hammerly (1982), Canale (1983), Stern (1983) and others proposed various kinds of hypotheses of communicative competence - language proficiency.¹ In contrast with communicative competence theories that view proficiency of learners as divisible into subcomponents, Oller and his associates claim that all language skills are based on a unitary, indivisible proficiency construct, described as 'expectancy grammar'.² The problem, however, remains to be proven of whether language proficiency consists of divisible components or it is an indivisible unity.

1.3 Types of Communicative Competence - Language Proficiency

The varieties of communicative competence theories can be summed up in the diagram as shown in Fig. 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single concept</th>
<th>Expectancy Grammar (Oller: 1979)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twofold concept</td>
<td>Linguistic Competence + Communicative Competence (Zelson: 1976)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linguistic Competence + Pragmatic Competence (Chomsky: 1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threefold concept</td>
<td>Grammatical Competence + Sociolinguistic Competence + Strategic Competence (Canale and Swain: 1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linguistic Competence + Communicative Competence + Cultural Competence (Hammerly: 1982)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Some theorists regard 'language proficiency' in the same light with 'communicative competence'.

² The results of language tests lead them to the conclusion that language proficiency is unitary, in J.W. Oller, Jr., (1979), pp. 428-429.
Though researches are being made into the global profile of communicative competence, "we still have but a very fuzzy picture of an empirically-based working model of the factors composing it." However, given the fact that language is multidimensional, it seems reasonable to see competence in a language as multifaceted, being comprised of more than two subcomponents, as Stern suggests.  

1.4 The Implications of CLT

The theory of communicative competence has tempted us to look for theoretical developments as the basis for communicative approaches to language learning. It should be noted here, however, that the trend of viewing communication as a major aim of language instruction is neither new nor innovative, though

\footnotesize

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fourfold concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal Mastery + Semantic Mastery + Communicative Capacity + Creativity (Stern: 1983)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{1} This diagram is mainly adapted from Stern's, in H.H. Stern, \textit{Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching}, (London: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 356.


they did not become influential in the past except among insightful linguists and teachers. Jespersen, for example, states an object of language learning as follows:

What is the object in the teaching of modern languages? Well, why have we our native tongue? Certainly in order to get the most out of a life lived in a community of our fellow-countrymen, in order to exchange thoughts, feelings and wishes with them, both by receiving something of their psychical contents and by communicating to them something of what dwells in us. Language is not an end in itself, just as little as railway tracks; it is a way of connection between souls, a means of communication.¹

[emphasis original]

The present tendency is simply that more emphasis has come to be placed on aspects of language as communication than ever. It is innovative, however, in the sense that all the areas of language learning are being reconsidered, and will be reexamined in a systematic way both theoretically and empirically from a new angle, that is, from a perspective of CLT.

Following Savignon (1972), Valdman (1978), Canale and Swain (1980), Canale (1983), and Savignon (1983), the respects required to be revised can be summarized in the following way, by way of summary of this chapter.

(1) Integration of each parameters of communicative competence
   1. Avoidance of exclusive emphasis on linguistic competence
   2. Optimal use of the learners' communicative competence in L1
   3. Responsiveness to the learners' communicative needs

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(2) Meaningful communicative interaction
1. Development of communicative activities
2. A great proportion of time devoted to communicative activities
3. Emphasis on discourse
(3) Revision of syllabuses
1. Development of communicative texts
2. Development of communicative testing
3. Reinterpretation of the teacher's role and teacher training
(4) Restructuring of the classroom environment

We can understand that all the areas of language instruction are required to be revised, and converge on *Teaching English As Communication*. This is why CLT is called "a rallying point" for all different strands of language teaching.¹

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEMS OF NOTIONAL-FUNCTIONAL APPROACHES

2.0 In this chapter, the attempts to develop communicative competence will be mainly dealt with from a standpoint of syllabus design. It is well-known that Wilkins tried to propose a "teaching content" solution\(^1\) to the problem of foreign language learning in Notional Syllabuses. His attempt has been generally called notional-functional approaches (NFA, henceforth) to language learning, because his principles of syllabus design are comprised of the two main factors; one of the two is notions of time, space, quantity, etc., referred to as semantico-grammatical categories, by which the traditional grammatical categories (i.e., noun, verb, adjective, etc.) can be rearranged on semantic principles, and the other is communicative functions, in brief, functions, which claim to describe language learners' linguistic behaviours in such a way that learners do requesting information, greeting, and inviting, and so on, in language.\(^2\)

Wilkins' proposal is considered as remarkably noteworthy and is giving a new dimension to syllabus design, as Brumfit

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\(^1\) Johnson points out that there are two types of CLT; one is a "teaching content" solution, characterized by the semantic specification of teaching items, and the other is a "methodologically-based" solution that proposes revolutionary procedures in the classroom, in Keith Johnson, "Two approaches to the teaching of communication," in his Communicative Syllabus Design and Methodology, (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982), p. 121-127.

admits that "there can be no question about Notional Syllabuses being an important book for language teachers." However, the argument for the potential superiority of NFA to grammatical approaches (GA, henceforth) is questioned for the reasons discussed in detail below. Especially, its suitability for general language courses in secondary schools has been in controversy among language teachers. Wilkins himself expresses doubts as to the validity of NFA for language learning in secondary schools in the recent paper, though his standpoint still seems in line with the fundamental principles of NFA.

He advocates that the standard NFA should be added a structural dimension. This shift from functionalism to structuralism is considered from three angles; (1) whether communicative functions are the highest priority for language learners in secondary schools, (2) whether teaching contents should be based on communicative functions, and (3) whether NFA is in harmony with the developmental stages of language learners.

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4 The near-abandonment of the original notional-functionalism is referred to as "a return to the structural syllabus" by Johnson, in Keith Johnson, "Syllabus design: Possible future trends," in K. Johnson and D. Porter (eds), (1983), p. 49.
2.1 Are Communicative Functions the Highest Priority?

It is well-known that certain linguistic forms are strongly linked to the performance of a given act. As often pointed out, 'the structure, Would you mind ...?' functions as requesting, and 'interrogative structures' as asking questions. It is also of absolute truth that there are a number of formulaic utterances which contain specific illocutionary forces. For example, 'good morning / afternoon / evening', in most cases, works as greeting people. This fact is one of the main theoretical bases for NFA, along with needs analysis.¹

In spite of this conventional aspect of language use, the careful analysis of real communication leads Wilkins to the statement as follows:

If we take a transcription of a spoken text with a view to making an analysis of the illocutionary acts performed, we will find few linguistic devices present to facilitate the task of identifying those acts. The reason why communication can take place in spite of this failure to express linguistically all that it is intended to communicate is fairly clear. Not only will the preceding text have made available a good deal of information pertinent to the interpretation of the utterance in question. The participants will also share a whole universe of knowledge, values, beliefs and attitudes. What is communicated in any one of instance will be the product of the relationship between meaning normally carried by the linguistic forms of the utterances and the "pragmatic" features which are perceived to be relevant by the participants. The importance of both of these elements in communication cannot be overemphasized.²

¹ NFA is based on the assumption that teaching contents that are suitable for a particular group of learners can be defined by the analysis of the communicative needs of them.

Wilkins maintains that real communication takes place even if the utterances expressed by communicators do not include what is called the direct markers of illocutionary forces, as long as carried out in meaningful contexts. What is more, in most cases, it is not uncommon that utterances are used without any markers of communicative functions. Participants in communication can without difficulty understand the communicative functions performed by the combination of referential meanings with the help of contexts involved. And we are well aware of the fact that abilities to perceive the interrelationship of contexts and referential meanings have already been internalized in language learners in the previous language experience.

Of course, certain aspects of the appropriateness conditions for a given communicative function will not be universal; our point, however, is that second language learners may already have acquired an adequate knowledge of appropriateness conditions for their basic communicative needs in the second language just by having acquired such knowledge for communicative needs in the first language.¹

Wilkins also admits that much in the experience of the first language "will remain relevant in the second language."² Paradoxically speaking, it would be easier for the learner with sufficient grammatical competence to understand sentences with the direct markers of communicative functions. Thus,

he arrives at the conclusion that "teaching the devices for expressing a wide range of illocutionary forces does not have the highest priority", and that "provided one understands the meaning of the sentences, in the nature of things one has every chance of recognizing the speaker's intention."¹ This is equivalent to saying that for language learners, especially at the elementary stage, grammar is the highest priority, not communicative functions. [emphasis added.] What the foreign language learner needs most should be "linguistic forms he himself can generate to clothe his communicative intent."² And "propositional meaning ... is central in most language use and particularly in the exploratory discourse which is the target of many learners."³

It is possible - even perhaps desirable - to avoid the teaching of specific linguistic devices for the expression of particular functions because in the vast majority of cases functional meaning is not signalled by such devices, but is inferred from the situation. Thus functional meaning is not language-dependent and will be recognized by most language learners from the way their mother tongue functions in society (though there may be occasional difficulties where there are cultural differences). Hence the major problem for the most language learners will not be one of how to express a wide range of illocutionary forces - these will be inferred by the reader or listener - but will be that of making the necessary

linguistic generalizations. In short, don't worry about functions: they will take care of themselves.¹

2.2 Should Teaching Contents be Based on Functionalism?

In this section, the selection of teaching contents is mentioned in terms of functionalism. What kind of teaching contents are recommended by the proponents of NFA? In relation to the selection of teaching contents, van Ek states as follows:

The basic characteristic of the model used in our definition is that it tries to specify foreign language ability as skill rather than knowledge. It analyzes what the learner will have to be able to do in the foreign language and determines only in the second place what language-forms (words, structures, etc.) the learners will have to be able to handle in order to do all that has been specified.²

[emphasis original]

van Ek tries to specify linguistic behaviours themselves rather than linguistic forms that the learners can use as the means of accomplishing a given linguistic behaviour. But it is clear that a given act can be expressed by a great, if not infinite, number of linguistic forms. Then, the problem arises of which linguistic forms can be taken as teaching items. As for this respect, Wilkins mentions as follows:

In the case of the functional aspects of language,


one looks for a recurrent association between a given function and certain linguistic features. It proves that, in spite of the fact that particular functions may be realized in almost any way that suits the context, there are conventional interpretations that would be put upon sentences in the absence of contextual information that would contradict them.... Conventions of use do exist and it is these that would be exploited in the construction of a notional syllabus. [emphasis original]

In short, NFA is an attempt to specify teaching contents on the assumption that there exists to some degree the linkage between linguistic form - how learners say and communicative function - what they do in language.

A close examination of real communication, however, would reveal that this view is rather limited and rigid. In particular, Brumfit is skeptical concerning the validity of functionally-based teaching contents for learners in general language programs.

These categories [of communicative functions] are descriptions of the interaction between language and the world. The biggest difficulty is that, since the world as reflected in, and influenced by, language is always changing, particularly in matters which it is most urgent to talk about across linguistic barriers, it is hard to see how the kind of idealization which is produced by the description can help a learner who has to operate in a situation which is constantly fluid and negotiable. Meaning are certainly maintained by convention, but conventions are constantly being negotiated - if they were not we could scarcely say anything original at all.  

1 D.A. Wilkins, (1976), pp. 56-57.
It is ironical that Wilkins himself makes us recognize the limitations of NFA more convincingly than anyone by a tactful example, illustrated in Fig. 3.

I bought these shoes here last week. The heel has come off this one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>REPORT</td>
<td>DESCRIPTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>COMPLAINT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 3

The Hierarchy of Communicative Functions

Wilkins explains that, as shown in the example, in real communication communicative functions are fulfilled by the combination of simple utterances, or the accumulation of propositions, namely, discourse. And it is quite often pointed out that there exist an infinite number of combinations of propositions. It is evident, thus, that an attempt to specify teaching contents only by conventions of language use can cover a very small part of language.

From a more revolutionary standpoint, Breen et al. make strong claims that the nature of communication is "inherently creative and potentially dynamic ...", and "cannot be reduced

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1 Wilkins claims that the most fundamental functions at Level 1 can be categorized into the three (i.e., statement, question, and order/request), and to learn the three basic functions would lay the foundation for learning at a later stage, in D.A. Wilkins, (1983), p. 32.
to some predictable or finite systems of rules."¹

The 'problem' is that of trying to relate function and form in some systematic way when, in authentic language use, systematic or predictable relationships between speech acts or utterances and their grammatical realization very rarely exist, except in the most routine or ritualistic acts.²

It seems impossible at present to present the systematic specification of the relationship between 'function' and 'form', as long as communicative functions are mainly defined by contexts. Allen and Widdowson also point out this limitation of NFA, saying that "not only is there a difficulty in establishing how many contexts to consider when specifying the range of appropriateness of utterance, but there is the problem of knowing how much of the context is relevant."³ [emphasis original]

To sum up, the interrelationship of form and function can be summarized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposition A +</th>
<th>Proposition B +</th>
<th>Proposition C +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language-specific</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONTEXT

LINKAGE

Functions

Context-specific

FIGURE 4
The Interrelationship of Form and Function

¹ Michael P. Breen, Christopher Candlin, and Alan Waters, "Communicative materials design: Some basic principles," RELC Journal, 10-2 (1979), p. 3. (Continued on the next page.)
GA is an attempt to let learners acquire an ability to realize these propositions linguistically on the assumption that they have already acquired a knowledge of understanding 'LINKAGE' between form and function in the previous language experience. This is to say that they just need the grammatical rules for creating these propositions, because functions will take care of themselves. In contrast to this, there is a real danger in the principles of NFA as follows:

More seriously, we may be constraining our learners in the potentially creative use of the formal system in the expression of varied and various speech acts by compartmentalizing it for them within some prescribed set of functions.¹

[emphasis original]

It is certain that there is a relationship of form and function, but it is merely "a statistical relation (of probability), for example, between an interrogative sentence and the function of asking question."² It is one of the most remarkable characteristics of language use that language users often deviate from conventions of use. The role of language teachers

is to help learners acquire an ability to produce sentences that are not only convention-following, but convention-creating.

It should be borne in mind that in applying NFA to general language courses there is a danger of confining the generative use of language to a rather rigid package of conventions of use.

Language uses which do not require improvisation are really demanding language-like behaviour rather than true linguistic behaviour, for improvisation is a characteristic of any human interaction.¹

2.3 Is NFA in Harmony with the Developmental Stages of Learners?

In this section, NFA is dealt with in terms of the developmental stages of learners. Higgs and Clifford propose an interesting model of language proficiency profile. They set up the hypothetical language proficiency shown in Fig. 5, assuming that relative contributions five subskills (i.e., vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and sociolinguistics) of global language proficiency makes to the whole are not constant. This is to say that their relative importance is variable according to the developmental stages.

To verify the hypothesis, about fifty experts engaged in teaching foreign languages in the CIA Language School were asked to judge the contributionary importance of subskills for each proficiency level. And their judgements were illustrated

in the graph in percentages.¹

![Graph showing language proficiency levels](image)

**FIGURE 5**

Higgs and Clifford's Language Proficiency Model²

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² The rating scales are used of the Foreign Service Institute Oral Proficiency. See, Appendix I.
This model is quite different from others in focusing on the dynamic and changing process of learners' abilities. Higgs et al. claim that the implication of the hypothesis for the language classroom is that "the ultimate goal of instruction is thus the deciding factor in establishing the factor mix for a particular curriculum."¹ In language programs in Japan, it seems realistic to decide that the ultimate goal is at best Level 3 or 2 learners of English. If the goal of the classroom in Japan is to produce Level 3 or 2 learners, grammar would play an important role in instruction. It cannot be overemphasized, therefore, that the hasty application of NFA should be under careful consideration, for the reason that NFA includes the intrinsic tenets of leading to the disorganization of grammatical rules.²

With the consideration above in mind, the problem is discussed of whether language learners with zero or little proficiency of the target language, as in Japan, should be exposed to structurally-diversified materials at the early stage. There is, as often pointed out, a tendency of fossilization in the early exposure to natural language environment without guiding instruction. As to this respect, Omaggio, who regards

¹ T.V. Higgs et al., (1982), p. 73.
² As for this respect, Breen et al. criticise NFA, saying that NFA at present has resulted "in providing learners with a far less accessible and consistent framework than that provided by a pedagogic grammar," in M.P. Breen et al., (1979), p. 2.
the Higgs et al.'s hypothesis as very interesting and significant, suggests as follows:

The implications for curriculum, methodology, and testing are clear: a concern for accuracy seems to be vital to the eventual "linguistic health" of learners who wish to progress beyond the survival level in their skill development. A decision to strive for linguistic accuracy from the beginning of language instruction does not imply a de-emphasis of communicative language use in the classroom.  

Omaggio states explicitly that NFA for communicative use, and GA for accuracy are not incompatible with each other, and both are indispensable to the successful CLT. It should be noted that it is impossible to give solutions to all the problems of language instruction by only one approach, however it may be NFA or GA.

2.4 Types of Modified Syllabuses

For the reasons discussed so far, Brumfit (1981a, 1981b), Allen (1983), Stern (1983), and Yalden (1983) propose the modifications of the standard NFA, which can withstand the classroom test, aiming for the integration of structuralism and functionalism. Their modified syllabuses, in principle, place 'grammar' in the core of syllabuses with communicative aspects added. This trend, as Johnson indicates, seems to be

winning gradual popularity in the field of syllabus design.¹

1 Brumfit' Model

Brumfit considers the structural syllabus as "the least unsatisfactory way of organizing the syllabus in light of present knowledge and experience", while admitting that Wilkins' proposal gives a new dimension to syllabus design.² His theoretical grounds to support the structural syllabus are (1) that "'syntax' is the only generative system so far described for language, and ... a generative system will be more economical than a non-generative taxonomy of items ...", and (2) that a variety of functions and notions can be accessible to learners by the contextualization and situationalization of grammatical items.³ His model, nicknamed as 'Snake', is the syllabus "as a grammatical ladder with a functional-notional spiral around it," illustrated in Fig. 6.


(2) Allen's Model

Allen argues that the three-level view of language learning (i.e., structuralism, functionalism, and experientialism) "can be converted into an instructional sequence." Because the theories that appear contradictory are not mutually exclusive, and they are different just in the roles they may play in the whole language instruction. As for this, he states as follows:

The main difference between structural language teaching and functional language teaching is that the former tends to take the rules of use for granted, while the latter specifically sets out to identify these rules and to demonstrate how they work.

He maintains that the urgent task is "to develop a more varied and less dogmatic approach to second language education" for an effective reconciliation between competing theories. His model, thus, is described as "A Three-Level Curriculum Model."  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural</strong></td>
<td><strong>Functional</strong></td>
<td><strong>Experiential</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on language</td>
<td>Focus on language</td>
<td>Focus on the use of language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Formal features)</td>
<td>(discourse features)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Structural control</td>
<td>(a) Discourse control</td>
<td>(a) Situational or topical control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Materials simplified structurally</td>
<td>(b) Materials simplified functionally</td>
<td>(b) Authentic language use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Mainly structural practice</td>
<td>(c) Mainly discourse practice</td>
<td>(c) Uncontrolled, free practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 7

Allen's Model

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(3) Stern's Model

The characteristic of Stern's model lies in the socio-cultural aspect of language use on which more emphasis is placed than Allen's model. According to him, no recent approach to CLT "has paid sufficient attention to the sociocultural element in language use," in spite of recent sociocultural awareness.¹ His model implies that language learning can be approached "objectively and analytically through the study and practice of structural, functional, and sociocultural aspects...."² It is referred to as "A Fourfold Curriculum Framework for Second Language Teaching."³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural aspect</th>
<th>Functional aspect</th>
<th>Sociocultural aspect</th>
<th>Experiential aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mainly analytical</td>
<td>(involving language study and practice)</td>
<td>mainly non-analytical (involving language use in authentic contexts)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 8  [emphasis original]

Stern's Model

(4) Yalden's Model

The main features of Yalden's model are that emphasis is laid on both formal components and functional components of language use, and that the proportion of them is variable according to the proficiency development of learners. Her model is based on the conviction that the teaching of communicative function should not be postponed for very long, though for complete beginners "it seems essential to provide some basic knowledge of the systematic or categorical side of language. . . ."¹ It is described as "The Proportional Syllabus."²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural phase</th>
<th>Communicative phase</th>
<th>Specialized phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic form</td>
<td>Formal component</td>
<td>Specialized content and surface features of language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Functional, discourse rhetorical components</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 9

Yalden's Model

2.5 The foregoing accounts may be summed up as follows:

(1) The hasty and overall application of NFA to general language courses should be under careful consideration for the reasons mentioned earlier.

(2) NFA and GA should be considered not as incompatible, but as supplementary to each other.

(3) NFA is to give new dimensions to syllabus design, and language learning.

In this chapter, the problems of NFA have been treated. However, the new dimensions to be provided by NFA are acknowledged as remarkably noteworthy. For example, it may be that in the case of GA the varieties of the structures of the same meaning are liable to be scattered over the whole syllabus. The learners, as a consequence of it, have few opportunities to learn the interrelationships of grammatically or syntactically different structures. It seems meaningful that at a given stage of language learning they are provided with semantically-based materials.

A notional approach allows us to regroup the structures in a different way from that in which they were originally introduced. This not only adds a desirable element of novelty to the learner's activity but enables him to recognize his knowledge of the language in a meaningful way by reference to semantic principles. He is still given structural practice; however, he is not making sentence patterns in isolation but in relation to the more basic patterns of meaning in language.¹

Finally, let us consider the limitations inherent in any syllabuses. Widdowson levels criticisms at both NFA and GA, by arguing, "In both cases the essential design is an inventory of language units in isolation and in abstraction.... Neither

is centered on the language user."¹ This argument appears one-sided to me.

A syllabus is by definition pre-determined as to content and sequence whereas communication is in essence open-ended and unpredictable. The items contained in any syllabus are finite and a syllabus can only claim to be communicative by suggesting that this finite number of features are able to meet a potentially infinite number of communicative demands. This would indeed be a strong claim for any syllabus to make.²  

As suggested implicitly in the quotation above, the interests of the methodologists seem to show a gradual shift from syllabus design to the development of communicative activities. Johnson makes strong claims that adoption of a grammatically-based syllabus does not automatically presuppose endless structural drills which have no communicative value.³

It must be borne in mind that there is a real danger of even functional materials failing to be merely elaborate phrase books.⁴ In my opinion, the clue to make the language classroom more communicative should be sought in the activities in the classroom. This will be discussed in chapter 4.

CHAPTER III

THE PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATIVE METHODOLOGIES

3.0 In chapter II, CLT was discussed in relation to syllabus design. This chapter is mainly concerned with the fundamental principles of how to construct language instruction in the classroom, namely, 'methodologies'. The interests of CLT, as mentioned in chapter II, have gradually shifted from syllabus design - "teaching content solutions", to the development of communicative activities - "methodological solutions".

As to methodological solutions, it seems possible to draw a distinction between traditional methodologies and revolutionary ones; the traditional methodologies view the learning process of the learners as the phased-development to the target, and the revolutionary ones regard language learning as an inseparable organism.

3.1 Traditional Methodologies

(1) River's Scheme

Rivers takes a conservative standpoint that the language learners' competence progresses through the stages shown in Fig. 10 to the stage of "spontaneous expression”.¹ Her scheme of language learning mainly consists of the two phased processes; the skill-getting stage where the learner is engaged in the

¹ The stage of "spontaneous expression" represents the stage where a learner can spontaneously use language to express personal meaning, in Wilga M. Rivers, Teaching Foreign-Language Skills, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981) pp. 228-231.
manipulation of grammatical items, and the skill-using stage where he (or she) is provided with opportunities for autonomous interaction.¹

![Diagram of Language Learning Stages]

**FIGURE 10**

Rivers' Scheme of Language Learning

The responsibility of language teachers is to let the learners get to the stage of using freely the knowledge stored at the skill-getting stage without the help of others in real and unpredictable situations. And her scheme implies that linguistic knowledge is essential to the skill-using stage, and must be acquired for ability to communicate and interact verbally.²

According to her, at the skill-using stage, learners must be provided with the opportunities to communicate by using all

---


the means available including nonverbal gestures when communication breaks down.

In this way they [students] will learn to draw on everything they know at a particular moment in their acquisition of the language, and fight to put their meaning over, as they would if they suddenly found themselves surrounded by monolingual speakers of of the language.¹

[emphasis original]

The role the skill-using stage would play is to activate and expand linguistic knowledges stored at the skill-getting stage. Rivers claims that it is urgent to incorporate skill-using activities in the language classroom, because they are, "if not completely neglected, at least given insufficient place in our programs."² In case the learners fail to assume positive attitudes toward spontaneous expression,³ "most of what is learned will be stored unused, and we will produce learned individuals who are inhibited and fearful in situations requiring language use."⁴ Thus, she concludes that some genuine interaction must be a part of every lesson.⁵

(2) Paulston's Scheme

Paulston as well as Rivers acknowledges that the framework

1 W.M. Rivers, (1983), p. 47
of language learning for communicative competence should be constructed on the basis that "linguistic competence forms a part of communicative competence, so our students need to acquire a basic knowledge of linguistic forms, the skill-getting stage in Rivers' model."\(^1\)

She is well-known for her three-level classification of drills in the classroom (i.e., a mechanical drill, a meaningful drill, and a communicative drill). The features of three types of drills may be described graphically as follows:\(^2\)

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c}
\text{Mechanical} & \text{High} & \text{Low} \\
\text{Meaningful} & \text{Teacher's control} & \text{Creativity} \\
\text{Communicative} & \text{High} & \text{Low} & \text{Demands on imagination}
\end{array}
\]

FIGURE 11

However, even a communicative drill is still a drill.\(^3\) To put it another way, "this later stage of practice must be student-centered rather than imposed by the teacher, if we are to succeed in establishing a genuine motivation to communicate."\(^3\) Paulston also suggests that communicative drills do not involve free communication, and that "if

---


\(^2\) C.B. Paulston, (1976), pp. 3-10.

that is the ultimate goal of the class, then these drills should be followed by interaction activities, situations so structured that the students learn through free communication with their peers."¹ She stresses that the learners need to go beyond the stage of communicative drills.

She points out that the mere emphasis on "spontaneous expression" is not enough to go beyond the stage of communicative drills.

It is rather typical of language teachers that they tend to equate communicative competence with ability to carry out linguistic interaction in the target language... But efficient communication requires also that speakers share the social meaning of the linguistic forms, that they have the same social rules for language use.³

Paulston's framework of language teaching is different from that of Rivers in such a sense that Paulston considers the social rules of language use in Hymes terms as essential to language instruction.

Now, let us explain her scheme of language teaching, illustrated in Fig. 12. Strategy II as well as Strategy I, she claims, fails to acquire communicative competence, resulting in linguistic competence, and language learning might not

² See, p. 32.
deserve the name of language learning without communicative competence activities combined with the social rules of language use.

Linguistic performance¹ Communicative performance²

I II III

Linguistic competence Communicative competence

FIGURE 12
Paulston's Scheme of Language Teaching

Thus, Paulston regards the ultimate goal as follows:

I suppose you say they [students] were wasting time, they weren't studying grammar or vocabulary or learning reading skills, but I would say that all the study of English skill is a waste of time if we don't also teach our students how to function in our culture with these skills.³

3.2 A majority of methodologists can be included in the same camp, referred to as 'traditional'.⁴

¹ "Linguistic performance" is the term which means traditional activities that place emphasis on linguistic knowledge, in Christina Bratt Paulston, "Linguistic and communicative competence," TESOL Quarterly, 8-4 (1974), p. 350.


⁴ Brumfit, Allen, Stern, and Yalden can be included in this camp in the sense that language learners progress through the phased developmental stages, as discussed in chapter II, in their frameworks.
The basic principles of this camp are based on the assumptions (1) that the learner's ability consists of hierarchical constructs to some degree, (2) that language learning should proceed from the structural stage to the communicative stage, and (3) that formal teaching process in line with the grammatical syllabuses may be consequently considered as being prerequisite or necessary to language learning.

3.3 Revolutionary Methodologies

(1) Process Approach

"The communicative curriculum", proposed by Breen et al., "defines language learning as learning how to communicate as a member of a particular socio-cultural group."¹ Therefore, to master conventions that regulate linguistic code and behaviour is essential to language learning. It can be said that their attempt is a strong version of teaching language as communication, not as form.²

According to them, communication in everyday life is the synthesized unity of ideational, interpersonal, and textual knowledge.³ The interrelationships of them are so complex that they cannot be reduced to explicit itematization, and cannot be presented to learners in a systematic way. Thus, the abil-


ity to communicate can be acquired only through interactional process.

Language learning within a communicative curriculum is most appropriately seen as communicative interaction involving all the participants in the learning and including the various material resources on which the learning is exercised. Therefore, language learning may be seen as a process which grows out of the interaction between learners, teachers, texts, and activities.¹

The process approach is also characterized by viewing the learner's competence as "changing and developing communicative knowledge and abilities as the learner moves from initial competence towards the target competence."² The learner is not viewed as being ignorant of the target repertoire, and a premature communicator. "We have often seen the learner primarily in terms of the first language, and we have often assigned to it 'interference' value alone - again taking a narrow textual knowledge as our criterion."³ It is important to develop the target competence by utilizing the relevant aspects of the learner's initial competence, because the learner is already a mature communicator. "Language learning need no longer be concerned with 'linguistic competence'," as long as taught as communication.⁴

² The competence of this kind is termed as the "process competence", in M.P. Breen et al., (1980), p. 93 and p. 109.
Another characteristic of the process approach is to view teaching contents as "the carrier of his [the learner's] process competence and as the provider of opportunities for communicative experiences," not as "a specifier of curriculum content" in a traditional sense. The process approach "would place content within methodology and provide it with the role of servant to the learning-teaching process."¹ Thus, Breen et al. claim that teaching contents are variable, and can be predicted in a very short term.² It is distinct from the traditional one in negating the "external syllabuses" selected or sequenced by the teachers.³

The tenets of the process approach are summarized to be (1) the exclusive emphasis on interaction, (2) the overall dependence on the learner's process competence, and (3) the abolition of external syllabuses in a traditional sense.

(2) Brumfit's "Deep End" Strategy

Brumfit suggests that the feasible change as an impact of CLT may be the reversal of the traditional classroom procedures,⁴ referred to as "deep end" strategy by Johnson.⁵ As illustrated in the following diagram, it is innovative in the sense that

the learner is first involved in production, and only later stages in reception.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional:</td>
<td>Drill</td>
<td>Practice in context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative:</td>
<td>Present language items shown to be necessary to achieve effective communication</td>
<td>Drill if necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate as far as possible with all available resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 13**

Brumfit's Deep End Strategy

In other words, it "reverses the sequence of "atomic to holistic language practice" since in it the student first practices the entire behaviour and only later (Stage 3) drills items in isolation."¹

The theoretical background of this strategy is mentioned as follows:

A general principle of most education is to proceed from the known to the unknown by defining language as knowledge, a deficit view of the learning process has been established for all the second language learners. But all learners come to a second language with knowledge of a first language, and with understanding of communicative strategies.²

---

The implications of this strategy are (1) that Stage I works as a predictor to help the learners, thrown into the "deep end" state, to learn what is needed for communication, and it functions as diagnostic role for teachers, and (2) that through the process of escaping the "deep end" the learners avail themselves of opportunities of acquiring the abilities "to search for circumlocutions ... to perceive when the listener has not understood what was said and to struggle to rephrase it; to search for the memory for items learned long ago...."  

According to Brumfit, the strategy of this type does not fit well with all the circumstances of language learning, but can provide a broad perspective for teachers who aim for communicative competence.  

(3) Other Revolutionary Methodologies

Other methodologies classified as 'revolutionary' are, what is called, the 'interactional' approach suggested by Allwright, and the 'procedural' syllabus advocated by N.S. Prabhu.  

Allwright sees 'interaction in the classroom' not just as an effective technique of language learning, but as "the fundamental fact of classroom pedagogy - the fact that everything

---

that happens in the classroom happens through a process of live person-to-person interaction."\footnote{R.L. Allwright, (1984), p. 156.} \footnote{emphasis original}

The procedural syllabus is based on the hypothesis that "form can best be learned when prime attention is focused on meaning,"\footnote{K. Johnson, (1983), p. 53.} Thus, in the procedural syllabus, there exist no linguistic syllabuses, and no formal teaching procedures in a traditional sense. There exist the internal syllabuses intrinsic to the learners, and communicative tasks to solve alone.\footnote{K. Johnson, (1982), p. 136.}

3.4 The basic principles of revolutionary methodologies are summarized as (1) to negate the traditional linguistic syllabuses, (2) to lay overall emphasis on the learner's competence to process communicative tasks ('process competence', in Breen et al.'s terms), (3) to see the learning process as indivisible unity, and (4) to focus on the interactional activities in the classroom.

3.5 With the considerations made so far in mind, let us seek for the effective converging principles useful and applicable to the classroom between traditional methodologies and revolutionary ones.

There is an undeniable fact that the language learners would make rapid progress, and the internalized knowledge would
get to the level of "acquisition" (in Krashen's terms), if exposed to authentic language of sufficient quantity and appropriate quality.¹ We also agree that the traditional language education that places exclusive emphasis on grammatical items has been disposed to "choking "exponential power available in learning in natural chunks"²- or, in more general terms, the learner's own strategies for language acquisition."³ Widdowson also points out that "it would seem to be the case that an overemphasis on drills and exercises for the production and repetition of sentences tends to inhibit the development of communicative abilities."⁴

However, there seems to be a strong resistance against overall application of implicit learning to the classroom among language teachers. One of them is Hammerly, who argues as follows:

Random exposure to the second language is very insufficient. Careful grading, organization, and presentation of the teaching materials, ... are some of the shortcuts available in second language teaching.⁵


It is a recurrently discussed problem which of explicit learning and implicit learning should be emphasized in the classroom. This problem is referred to as "explicit-implicit option; the choice between deliberate, conscious, or relatively cognitive ways of learning a second language and more subconscious, automatic, or more intuitive ways of learning it."\(^1\) It is reasonable to think that the traditional methodologies are classified as explicit learning that considerably, if not exclusively, depends on the learner's cognitive capacity, and the revolutionary ones as implicit learning, being dependent on the learners's intuitive capacity.

Now, let us consider the limited role implicit learning plays in the classroom. According to Krashen, requirements of input for "acquisition" are:

(1) optimal input is comprehensible,
(2) optimal input is interesting and/or relevant,
(3) optimal input is not grammatically sequenced,\(^2\)
(4) optimal input **must** be in sufficient quantity.\[^{emphasis added}\]

It is apparent that the (4) of the requirements is most difficult to be satisfied in the classroom. Hammerly's conservative estimate suggests that "the five years of exposure to the language preschool children get are equivalent to about 90 years of language instruction!"\(^3\) We can easily imagine that a great deal of instructional

time must be in need, even though implicit learning in schools cannot be equated with random exposure to language.

It follows from the considerations above that we cannot exclusively depend on implicit learning at least in the classroom. It is realistic to arrive at the conclusion that explicit learning and implicit learning respectively play different roles in language learning, and they should not be viewed as mutually exclusive; the former as mediator to make input more comprehensible to the learners, and the latter as facilitator to accelerate the transfer of language learning to language acquisition. This interrelationship may be illustrated in the diagram as follows:

```
Context as Facilitator
Grammar as Mediator
Input -----> Acquisition
```

FIGURE 14

Stern supports this standpoint, and says as follows:

Since the language learning process lasts a long time, the learner (and correspondingly the teaching curriculum) may choose to enter into a new language through an emphasis on any one or more than one of the four aspects of language proficiency, and in the course of time the emphasis may shift.

There has been a tendency of dividing the teaching methodologies into two categories; "grammatical" vs "communicative", "synthetic" vs "analytic". and "pre-communicative" vs "communicative". "There is", however, "no clear dividing line in reality between these different categories ... : they represent differences of emphasis and orientation rather than distinct divisions."

It is of my opinion that language instruction should make an inevitable attempt to integrate the 'structural' stage with the 'communicative' stage; for example, a communicative-structural approach suggested by Johnson.

It should be remembered here that the development of CLT is only at the initial stage especially in Japan where 'communicativity in the classroom' has been neglected. To meet the current socio-economic demands, the teacher in the classroom must give an empirical answer to the question of how the principles of CLT can be realized in the language classroom.

the relative contribution of formal and communicative strategies to effective language learning is another question that has remained largely unsolved.

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CHAPTER IV

THE PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATIVE-STRUCTURAL ACTIVITIES

4.0 In this chapter, the principles are discussed of how communicative-structural activities, as suggested earlier by Johnson,\(^1\) can be put into practice under the severe constraints in secondary schools in Japan. Practically speaking, the main aim is how "the concepts of information gap and selection (choice, in Morrow's terms)", depicted by Johnson\(^2\) and Morrow,\(^3\) can be embodied in the activities in the classroom.

Recently the so-called communicative activities have appeared on the market. Yet, it seems that "they often fail to withstand the classroom test."\(^4\) They need to be modified to adjust themselves to the circumstances. The suggestions of how they should be modified are also the main issues in the chapter.

4.1 Basic Tenets of Communicativity in the Classroom

\(^{1}\) See, p. 47.


\(^{4}\) Sandra J. Savignon points out that teachers are the ones who make the communicative activities written for general audiences work for the needs of a particular L2 class, in S.J. Savignon, (1983), pp. 137-138.
First, let us consider the question of what is 'being communicative' in the classroom in the light of an example given by Widdowson.¹ We often give the learners a structural practice of the following:

EXAMPLE

Situation: The teacher points out objects one by one on the table, and asks them what it is.

Teacher: What's on the table?
Learner: There is a book on the table.
Teacher: That's right. Next, what's on the table?
Learner: There is a vase on the table.

According to him, the practice of this type does help improve linguistic competence but does not help facilitate communicative competence, because it is "not fulfilling a normal function since in ordinary circumstances we do not ask questions about something we already know."² This is to say that learners should be given the opportunities of the learning of not only "usage", but "use".³

Next, let us have a look at the characteristics of real

¹ This example is adapted from Widdowson's, in H.G. Widdowson, (1978), p. 6.
³ "Usage" is defined as an aspect of performance which indicates to what degree "the language user demonstrates his knowledge of linguistic rules," and "use" is as another aspect of performance which shows to what degree "the language user demonstrates his ability to use his knowledge of linguistic rules for effective communication," in H.G. Widdowson, (1978), p. 3.
communication to obtain the useful perspectives for 'communicativity' in the classroom. Following Canale (1983), Wesche (1981), and Widdowson (1978), the main features of communication can be summarized as follows; communication is (1) interactive, (2) unpredictable, (3) creative, (4) to take place in discourse and sociocultural context, (5) carried out under limiting psychological and other constraints, (6) purposive, and (7) judged as successful or not on basis of actual outcomes.

These communicative features, 'Communicative', being at one end of the continuum, and 'Non-communicative' at the other end of the continuum can be shown in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-communicative</th>
<th>Communicative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No interaction</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predictability</td>
<td>Unpredictability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No creativity</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items in isolation</td>
<td>Discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No context</td>
<td>Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No communicative purpose</td>
<td>Communicative purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form not content</td>
<td>Content not form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Contrastive Framework of Non-communicative vs Communicative

FIGURE 15

Then, should all the conditions above for communicativity be met in the classroom? Not necessarily. It seems definitely impossible to satisfy all of them. In fact, there exist various kinds of factors which regulate language learning in Japan. They must be taken into account for effective language learn-
ing. They are:

(1) The time available for language instruction is limited. The so-called communicative activities are rather time-consuming, and difficult to evaluate.

(2) The teachers are non-native, and cannot always handle authentic language, and do not necessarily have a perfect understanding of appropriateness conditions in language use.

(3) It is obligatory to use the authorized textbooks mainly based on the grammatical syllabuses.

(4) The size of class is large. Most of the communicative activities are fit for a small class.

(5) The learners learn English as a foreign language. This being so, in most cases, they are not exposed to additional input, so they can only understand the vocabulary and structures taught in the classroom.

We have now principles for constructing the communicative-structural activities relevant for the language classroom in Japan. The considerations can be summarized as follows:

### Non-communicative

- No interaction
- Predictability
- No creativity
- Items in isolation
- No context
- No communicative purpose
- Form not content

### Communicative

- Interaction
- Unpredictability
- Creativity
- Discourse
- Context
- Communicative purpose
- Content not form

(1) Not time-consuming
(2) Usable even by non-native teachers
(3) Structurally controlled
(4) Manageable in the large class
(5) Easy to evaluate

#### FIGURE 16

The Principles of Communicative-Structural Activities
4.2 Examples of Communicative-Structural Activities

In this section, suggestions are proposed, from a classroom teacher's standpoint, to add communicatvity to structural activities which has dominated in the classroom.

In constructing communicative-structural activities, the concepts of information gap and selection are regarded as the useful guidelines to make the classroom communicative. Johnson points out that one of the main reasons for the classroom being non-communicative is the absence of element of doubt which information gap creates, in most of the activities.\(^1\) Lyons says that "if the hearer knows in advance that the speaker will inevitably produce a particular utterance in a particular context, then it is obvious that the utterance will give him no information when it occurs; no 'communication' will take place."\(^2\)

The concept of selection is another factor that should be considered to make the classroom communicative as pointed out at the beginning of this chapter. The concepts of information gap and selection are strongly interrelated in such a sense that the listener cannot predict what is said to him if the speaker is allowed to select a wide range of options to say.\(^3\) This is equivalent to saying that the learners are free to select what to say when a meaningful number of words are


given, even if they know only one structure.¹

It can be said, thus, that we can escape the code-communication dilemma in language instruction to some degree by the expansion of vocabulary given to the learners, even if constrained by grammatical syllabuses. Allen also points out as follows:

As we move ahead, vocabulary is likely to receive more attention than in the recent past. It was once quite common in ESL programs of two decades ago, to see a class hour go by little perceptible expansion of vocabulary. Often the stepchild status of vocabulary teaching was condoned in the belief that words could wait until the grammar has been mastered. But the students themselves have always intuitively felt they needed "more words"; and research (e.g., Johansson, 1978) is beginning to show that their intuition was not far too wrong.²

Allen's opinion shows that communicativity in the classroom can be facilitated by the expansion of vocabulary.

Activities that follow are examples that can be used in the classroom. The activities are organized in pairs.

EXAMPLE 1

TARGET STRUCTURES: Do you have ...? Yes, I do./No, I don't.

SITUATION: Student A has a picture of familiar things (i.e., a book, a watch, a camera, etc.). Student B has also a similar picture, but different in content (i.e., a bat, a pencil, a vase, etc.). They ask each other, "Do you have ...?", and must find out what and how many they have in all.

¹ The term "meaningful" means that the learners should be given the words that encourage meaningful activities.

EXAMPLE 2

TARGET STRUCTURES: What is Mr. X doing? He is ... ing.

SITUATION: Student A has a set of drawings of Mr. X doing something (i.e., swimming, running, writing a letter, etc.). Student B has an identical set of drawings, but different in sequence. B asks A, "What is Mr. X doing?", and must discover the sequence of drawings A holds.

EXAMPLE 3

TARGET STRUCTURES: What time (Why, When, How, etc.) did Mr. X do ...? He did .../ He didn't do ...

SITUATION: Student A has information of several day's activities of Mr. X, say, written in English. Student B must find out when, why, and how, etc., Mr. X did something, by asking,"What time did Mr. X do ...?", according to the instructions.

EXAMPLE 4

TARGET STRUCTURES: There is ...

SITUATION: Student A has a picture of a room. Student B has an identical picture, except that a number of features are deleted from it. Thus, A must let B complete the picture of a room, by saying, "There is a book on the sofa. And there is a cat near the chair. And Father is reading a newspaper, and so on.

EXAMPLE 5

TARGET STRUCTURES: Infinitive with to as adverbial

SITUATION: Student A has a map of a town, which indicates the locations of buildings (i.e., a school, a station, a post office, a library, and so on.). Student B also has the same map, except that the names of buildings are deleted from it. B asks A, "Why did you go to Building A?". A must answer the question to let him know the name of building A, for example, "I went there to get on a train." In this way, B must find out the names of all the buildings.
The examples shows that a little imagination would change fully-structural activities into communicative ones. As mentioned recurrently in this thesis, the integration of 'structural' with 'communicative' should be pursued if we wish English class be communicative. The success of CLT largely depends on whether the language teacher can create the activities that encourage and facilitate communication in the classroom, as Tanaka suggests.¹

APPENDIX I

The Rating Scales of

the Foreign Service Institute of Oral Proficiency

Level 1

Able to satisfy routine travel needs and minimum courtesy requirements. Can ask and answer questions on topics very familiar to him; within the scope of his very limited language experience can understand simple questions and statements,....

Level 2

Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements. Can handle with confidence but not with facility most social situations including introductions and casual conversations about current events, as well as work, family, and autobiographical information....

Level 3

Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics. Can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease....

Level 4

Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs. Can understand and participate in any conversation within his range of experience with a high degree of fluency and precision of vocabulary; would rarely be taken for a native speaker, but can respond appropriately even in unfamiliar situations....

Level 5

Speaking proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker. Has complete fluency in the language such that his speech on all levels is fully accepted by educated native speaker in all of its features, including breadth of vocabulary and idiom, colloquialisms, and pertinent cultural references.

1 These rating scales are quoted in Oller, (1979), pp.320-321.


ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this thesis is to seek the effective ways to put into practice the basic principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT, henceforth) in the language classroom in Japan.

CLT has recently been a key-concept in second language instruction. Chapter I makes attempts (1) to clarify the characteristics of communicative competence that has been one of the key-terms in CLT, and (2) to make clear what CLT implies for language learning.

The competence theory proposed by Chomsky, which delimits 'competence' to grammatical competence, has come to be viewed as too limited to account for real competence in communication, that is, communicative competence. It is Savignon who first brought the concept of communicative competence in the field of FL programs. After her pioneering attempt, the recent studies of communicative competence lead to the recognition that exclusive emphasis on teaching how to form correctly is not enough to develop the ability to take part in real communication, and other aspects of language use (i.e., discourse, sociocultural rules, paralinguistic rules, etc.) should be included in second language programs.

The theory of communicative competence has tempted us to look for theoretical developments as the basis for CLT. It is
not innovative to regard 'communication' as the major aim of language learning. It is, however, innovative in the sense that all the areas of language learning are being reconsidered, and will be reexamined both theoretically and empirically under the influence of CLT. CLT can be, thus, considered as a "rallying point" for all the different strands of language learning.

Chapter II discusses the problems of Notional-Functional Approaches (NFA, henceforth) proposed by Wilkins. This proposal is referred to as "teaching content" solutions to communicative incompetence. The problems dealt with are (1) whether communicative functions are the highest priority for language learners in secondary schools, (2) whether teaching contents should be based on communicative functions, and (3) whether NFA is in harmony with developmental stages of language learners. Many researchers express doubts concerning the validity of NFA for general students, in spite of Wilkins' claim that NFA is potentially superior to Grammatical Approaches (GA, henceforth). As a consequence of it, they propose varieties of modified syllabuses that try to integrate 'structuralism' with 'functionalism'.

The chapter III is mainly concerned with teaching methodologies, - "methodological solutions" to communicative incompetence. It is possible to classify teaching methodologies into two categories; traditional methodologies depend on the cognitive capacity of learners at a given stage of language learning -
explicit learning, and revolutionary methodologies are exclusively dependent on the intuitive strategies of learners - implicit learning.

As often pointed out explicit learning and implicit learning should not be considered as exclusive mutually. They are different in the roles they may play in language learning. Thus, the present author agrees with the standpoint that language learners progress following the process of developmental phases to the target; from the 'structural' stage to the 'communicative' stage. This is to say that linguistic competence at the structural stage must be acquired for the higher-level ability to communicate effectively.

Chapter IV discusses the principles of how communicative-structural activities can be put into practice under the severe constraints in secondary schools in Japan. Practically speaking, the major aim is how the concepts of information gap and selection can be embodied in the activities in the classroom.

The claim of this chapter is that the activities usable in the classroom in Japan must satisfy the five requirements; (1) not to be time-consuming, (2) to be usable even by non-native teachers, (3) to be structurally controlled, (4) to be manageable in the large class, and (5) to be easy to evaluate.

A little imagination on the part of teachers would change fully-structural activities into communicative activities.
That is to say that it is an urgent task to seek an effective reconciliation between structural dimensions and communicative dimensions, and teachers are the ones who can create the activities that encourage and facilitate communication in the classroom.