

Communicative Language Teaching : Heretofore and Hereafter

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In the midst of rapid and radical change of language teaching methodology, it is notable that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has gained great currency. Its basic premise lies in the insightful reasoning that learning a second language successfully embraces the mastery not only of linguistic knowledge but of the functions and sociolinguistic factors that the language serves in a myriad of communicative settings. Despite its widespread reputation, however, it is true that a host of criticism has arisen on its theoretical basis as well as practical issues on its application. To settle those problems, much stress appears to be placed on a more direct, systematic approach to improving second language learners' communicative language abilities. In this paper the author is to diagnose the recent theoretical and pedagogical climate in language teaching methodology created by serious criticism about CLT, by reviewing the concept of communicative competence, holding up people's blind faith in CLT to critical analysis, and present some alternatives, which may lead to further development of CLT framework in English education.

I. INTRODUCTION

For more than one hundred years, English education history has gone through rapid and radical changes in theoretical rationale and its applicable methodology. The most notable development in the teaching of English as a second/foreign language was the introduction of the teaching methodology of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) into the English education arena based on the concept

of communicative competence. Its popularity rapidly spreads throughout the world and has been maintained.

Despite CLT's world-wide reputation, a host of criticism has arisen regarding its theoretical basis as well as practical problems on its application. Though CLT should be understood as an approach, not a method¹⁾ (Richards & Rogers, 1986), a number of researchers, teachers, and students are disposed to the myth that CLT is a "cure-all" for those afflicted with the chronic disease of learning and/or teaching English. However, it is time to dissolve the fantasy of CLT and face its reality. It should be regarded as a powerful approach but not the essence of English language education.

The primary concern of this paper is with the recent theoretical and pedagogical climate in language teaching methodology created by serious criticism and/or skepticism about communicative language teaching. The matter bears immense significance in relation to taking appropriate and insightful actions to cope with education developments and further to putting forward the substantial development of teaching methodology in English education.

Accordingly, the current paper will review the concept of communicative competence, the cornerstone for the structure of CLT; hold up people's blind faith in CLT to critical analysis; and present some alternatives, which may lead to further development of CLT framework in English education.

II. COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Before tackling communicative language teaching in detail, it is in order to offer a brief account of the term, "communicative competence," and its counterpart, "linguistic competence," which is generally seen as casting a theoretical shadow over the concept of communicative competence. Then, 5 models explaining in a rather different manner the components of communicative competence will be canvassed.

1) According to Brown (1994), approach, "theoretical positions and beliefs about the nature of language, the nature of language learning, and the applicability of both to pedagogical settings," is different from method, "a generalized, prescribed set of classroom specifications for accomplishing linguistic objectives" (p. 159).

1. Linguistic Competence

Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence, deeply rooted and widely spread in language pedagogy, as well as in pure linguistic research, arises from the insight that "being structurally correct" is what we have to strive to reach. He and the transformational grammarians view language competence very much grammatical so that, they believe, native speakers' perfect knowledge of their language system enables them to produce grammatically correct sentences. Paulston (1974) summarizes linguistic competence as knowledge "about" language forms.

2. Communicative Competence

"Communicative competence," as a technical term, was coined by Hymes (1972), and has prevailed for a couple of decades in the field of second language education. It is well documented in the literature because of its popularity and importance in language education. Communicative competence, unlike linguistic competence, emphasizes more the interpersonal and sociocultural aspect of the knowledge and ability which native speakers possess regarding their native language. Hymes pointed out that Chomsky and his followers' somewhat naive view of competence ("rule-governed creativity") would be thought of as a "Garden of Eden" to those whose chief concern in teaching and learning language is to use the language as a living thing in societies. According to Johnson (1981), communicative competence "includes knowledge of grammaticality and ability to be grammatical" (p. 10). That is, it refers to both underlying knowledge about language and also communicative language use and skill (Hadley, 1993). Therefore, to achieve such knowledge, second language (L2)² learners should be equipped with competence that makes them convey and interpret messages and negotiate meanings among two or more individuals in specific contexts (Brown, 1994).

Furthermore, communicative competence is not an absolute but rather a relative notion, swayed by the interpersonal cooperation among the participants employed in a specific context (Savignon, 1983). She espouses, therefore, that the quintessence

2) In the current paper, the terms, "second language," "foreign language," and "L2" will be used interchangeably for convenience, although I'm quite aware that differences definitely exists between second language and foreign language situations in real classrooms.

of communicative competence lies in the negotiative nature of communication.

3. The Components of Communicative Competence

Considering the popularity of CLT in research field and real classroom settings, few attempts except Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) have been made to pin down the content specification of communicative competence for a well-defined and comprehensive construct. To clarify the concept of communicative competence, I will draw on 5 models of communicative competence formulated by Canale and Swain (1980), Canale (1983), Bachman (1990), Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995), and Bachman and Palmer (1996).

1) Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983)

The major components of Canale and Swain (1980) elaborated further by Canale (1983) consist of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence refers to the knowledge of the language code such as vocabulary, morphology, syntax, phonology, and semantics. It is compatible with Chomskyan linguistic competence.

Sociolinguistic competence addresses the knowledge of sociocultural aspects of language. Grammatical competence (knowledge) should be used appropriately in various contexts to convey specific communicative functions. This type of competence lends itself to "the appropriateness of a particular utterance" in a given context (Savignon, 1983, p. 37).

Discourse competence involves the ability to combine sentences into a meaningful whole to achieve cohesion and coherence. Thus, sentence-based relationship in grammatical competence extends to an intersentential one in discourse competence.

Strategic competence refers to the verbal and nonverbal communication strategies which improve the effectiveness of communication as well as compensate for deficiencies in communication. It is the competence that spurs us to keep going on in our communication through "paraphrase, circumlocution, repetition, hesitation, avoidance, and guessing, as well as shifts in register and style" (Savignon, 1983, pp. 40-41).

2) Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996)

Bachman (1990) advanced a model for a theoretical framework of "communicative language ability" hinged on empirical findings in language testing research. The framework accessed and addressed the concept in a somewhat different fashion, incorporating some of the same components manifested by Canale and Swain. The major components of communicative language ability are language competence, strategic competence, and psychophysiological mechanisms, which have been re-subcategorized as language knowledge (language competence) and strategic competence (a set of metacognitive strategies) under the category of language ability in Bachman and Palmer (1996).

A salient difference between the model of Canale and Swain and that of Bachman and Palmer lies in the categorization of strategic competence. The models of Bachman and Palmer, and of Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell deal with strategic competence as an independent component working outside the language domain. I will encapsulate language knowledge, the language-related aspect, setting aside strategic competence, regarded as a processing ability.

Language knowledge consists of organizational competence and pragmatic competence. Organizational competence bears on the structural system of language, namely "the organization of the linguistic signals" (Bachman, 1990, p. 89). It again consists of two subcomponents: grammatical competence and textual competence. The former relates to the knowledge controlling sentence-level formal structure of language such as vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and phonology/graphology, while the latter relates to the knowledge of connecting sentences to construct a cohesive and rhetorical organization of discourse.

Pragmatic competence, the relationship among sentences and texts in a communicative setting to fulfill the language user's communicative goals, is composed of illocutionary competence in Bachman (1990) or functional knowledge³⁾ in Bachman and Palmer (1996) and sociolinguistic competence. Illocutionary competence pertains to the functional use of language, such as the ability to express ideas and emotions (ideational functions), to get things done (manipulative functions), to use language to teach, learn, and solve problems (heuristic

3) Bachman (1990) in his schematization of communication competence prefers the term "competence" to "knowledge," for example, organizational competence, pragmatic competence, etc. and vice versa in Bachman and Palmer (1996).

functions), and to be creative (imaginative functions). Sociolinguistic competence is knowledge of appropriate language use in a specific context. It comprises sensitivity to dialect, register, and naturalness, and understanding of cultural referents and figures of speech.

3) Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995)

Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) propose a "pedagogically motivated construct" of communicative competence, which involves 5 components: discourse competence, linguistic competence, actional competence, sociocultural competence, and strategic competence. A newly conceptualized competence is added here, which they call actional competence. It is competence of "conveying and understanding communicative intent by performing and interpreting speech acts and speech act sets" (p. 9). The components including the new one will be outlined in brief.

Discourse competence relates to organizing language factors (words, sentences, and utterances) sequentially and systematically to reach the integrative whole of a text. It consists of cohesion, deixis, coherence, generic structure, and conversational structure. Linguistic competence, well-established in the literature of the components of communicative competence, includes the primary features of communication, such as sentence-structural information, morphological inflection systems, lexicogrammatical resources, and phonological and orthographic knowledge.

Actional competence, closely connected to "interlanguage pragmatics,"⁴⁾ concerns the knowledge of how to match actional intent with linguistic form. It is only available within oral communication. Actional competence has been dealt with under sociolinguistic competence in the milieu of applied linguistics, whose proponents have divorced actional intent from sociocultural features, since the linguistic repertoire of conventionalized forms, sentence stems, formulaic expressions, and strategies in actional competence can be carried out efficiently without being contextually appropriate. Actional competence generally comprises two components: knowledge of language functions and knowledge of speech act sets.

Sociocultural competence concerns the knowledge of conveying messages appropriately in the given sociocultural context. It is another thorny concept to be

4) The term "interlanguage pragmatics" was addressed in Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) as "the study of nonnative speakers' use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns in a second language" (p. 3).

identified properly because complex pragmatic factors of communication with personal features are incorporated in the given context. There are several subcomponents conducive to sociocultural competence: social contextual factors, stylistic appropriateness factors, cultural factors, and non-verbal communicative factors.

Strategic competence is conceptualized as "knowledge of communication strategies and how to use them," taking its contribution to CLT into consideration, notwithstanding several other types of strategies concerning language learning, processing, and production (*ibid*, p. 26). Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) introduce 5 main components of strategic competence: avoidance or reduction strategies, achievement or compensatory strategies, stalling or time-gaining strategies, self-monitoring strategies, and interactional strategies.

To identify communicative competence in as much detail as possible, 5 models of communicative competence have been offered, yet still leaving some inconsistencies and limitations behind. Many a concept supposedly defined in the models still requires sophisticated elaboration and pedagogical application. Besides, those theoretical frameworks should be regarded as relative, not absolute ones because the definition of communicative competence is contingent on the learners and the goals of learning in a given context.

III. COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

A number of attempts to discover or create an ideal means for teaching second/foreign language with a high degree of success appear to have anchored in the harbor of CLT for quite some time. The enthusiastic wave of CLT impinged dramatically on almost every language classroom, especially as a result of teachers' and sometimes students' overwhelming inclination towards the communicative orientation.

What is CLT, then? In short, it is a second language teaching approach in which communicative competence is the goal of the course. Its basic premise lies in the insightful reasoning that learning a second language successfully embraces the mastery not only of linguistic knowledge but of the functions and sociolinguistic factors that the language encompasses in a myriad of communicative settings (Lightbown & Spada, 1993).

It is conceivable that considerably favorable results were reaped from the studies on CLT in terms of humanistic, student-centered approaches to language teaching. Nevertheless, it is now safe to say that some of the claims of CLT warrant scrutiny. In what follows, I will first explicate what major features of CLT have been enticing researchers, practitioners, and classroom teachers to duplicate or adapt it vigorously; then present several pervasive misconceptions about CLT; and finally, exhibit some fatal drawbacks undermining the still powerful myth of CLT.

1. Major Features

Different researchers profess different aspects of CLT (Brown, 1994; Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Li, 1998; Morrow, 1981; Nunan, 1991; Taylor, 1983; Williams, 1995). Here I will encapsulate several major features to capture the characteristics of CLT. First, the target language should be a vehicle in the communicative classroom where learners can learn to communicate through interactions in the target language. Thus, attempts by learners to communicate with the language are encouraged from the beginning of instruction. One caveat should be noted here that judicious use of the native language should be available when it is necessary or beneficial.

Second, in CLT, meaning is of primary importance. Larsen-Freeman (1986) maintains that "almost everything that is done is done with a communicative intent" (p. 132). Meaningful communication takes place when learners share information with a definite purpose in mind. To encourage learners to communicate more and better, when their communicating, errors should be tolerated with little explicit instruction on language rules. The classroom goal of instruction, accordingly, needs to be focused on all of the components of communicative competence, with an emphasis on fluency and acceptable language use, and not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence. "Accuracy is judged not in the abstract, but in context" (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983, p. 92).

Third, participating in extended discourse in a real context, learner's own personal experiences should be enhanced as important contributing elements to classroom learning. It is an attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom. It is another facet of CLT well coupled with the "learner-centered and experience-based view of second language teaching" (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 69).

The fourth pronounced feature of CLT is the introduction of authentic materials into the learning situation (Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Long & Crookes, 1992; Nunan, 1991; Widdowson, 1996). It is of much importance to provide learners with opportunities to cope with genuine communicative needs in unrehearsed contexts. Sequencing of those materials needs to be tailored by the content, function, and/or meaning that will maintain students' interest.

Last, language teaching techniques need to be designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, and functional use of language for meaningful purposes. In other words, tasks, techniques and/or activities should be selected to encourage the negotiation of meaning between learners, and between learners and the teacher, presumably with the goal of making input comprehensible to participants. CLT is, therefore, prone to employ many information-gap activities, problem-solving tasks, and role-plays in the fashion of pair/group works.

2. Misconceptions

During the course of the rapid development of CLT, many questions arose. What exactly is CLT? Is it really possible to put CLT, as an approach not a method, into practice in the real classroom situation? What must teachers teach in the CLT classrooms? As they struggled with those questions, very often failing to achieve plausible solutions, a large number of teachers and teacher trainers felt lost in the midst of a maze fraught with a heap of theoretical claims and practical suggestions. In the vortex of such confusion lie false conceptions about CLT which deserve to be mentioned here.

Thompson (1996) poses four main misconceptions. Delineating the reasoning behind them, it may be possible to determine whether they are really misconceived, and if so, why. The first and "the most persistent and most damaging-misconception" is that CLT means not teaching grammar (p. 10). Taking into consideration the long dispute on teachability/learnability of grammar by explicit instruction (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Fotos, 1994; Krashen, 1988; Prabhu, 1987), the statement may look plausible at first glance, especially to classroom teachers. However, explicit and direct instruction of grammar should not be ruled out in CLT classroom, for grammar plays a definite role for effective communication. CLT has to employ "harmony between functional interpretation and formal appropriacy" (Nunan, 1998). Fluency needs to go hand in hand with accuracy.

The second mistaken belief reflects the widespread movement in language teaching which grants primacy to spoken language: CLT means teaching only speaking. This primacy is partly justified for those whose reason and goal of learning language is oral-bound, which naturally derives the emphasis on speaking and listening skills. As will become clear, however, communication through language takes place in the written mode as well as in the spoken mode. It stands to reason that we can and should communicate while reading and writing to enhance the accuracy of receiving and producing messages.

Only with a rough look at what is called CLT classrooms laden with games, songs, and role plays performed in pairs or groups, does the third misconception look persuasive, that CLT means pair work, which is further reduced to role play. Is it, however, really a misconception? Pair/group work is a very much useful technique, usually taking quite a little class time. So, the real misconception does not relate to pair/group works per se, but to the degree of control in and the choice of activities. It is witnessed with ease that a teacher chooses and controls the roles learners play in a pseudo-natural setting, one usually proposed by her. To make the best use of pair/group work, I suggest that learners should be involved in choosing and controlling some elements of the activities.

The last CLT misconception concerns the tremendous demands placed on the teacher. We've heard a lot that CLT means expecting too much from the teacher. One reason is drawn from the fact that there is no "communicative language syllabus" for CLT itself. Instead, we are quite familiar with the "notional-functional syllabus," which has been proven to deal only with the components of discourse, not with discourse itself. That is, the syllabus cannot cater to the chief claim of CLT whose goal is "the elaboration and implementation of programs and methodologies that promote the development of L2 functional competence through learner participation in communicative events" (Savignon, 1990, p. 210). Another reason is that lessons are prone to be less predictable, which dampens as well as threatens the attempt of most teachers of less proficient non-native English speakers to adapt themselves to the newly developing classroom atmosphere. On this matter, there seems to be no clear-cut solution at this point.

3. Drawbacks

Let me ask again whether the above reasoning regarding some misconceptions

of CLT is definitely the case. You might be more inclined to vote NO! because we've already too much exposed to overriding criticism on CLT. It is time now to rummage the magic box of CLT for drawbacks underlying its theoretical construction and practical guidelines.

The mainstay of CLT theory boils down to mastering the functional aspects of linguistics (Halliday, 1973) and achieving a degree of appropriateness in language use upheld by sociocultural sensitivity (Berns, 1990). The introduction of language functions in various sociocultural contexts, however, was not enough to thoroughly tackle the totally confounding business of communication. Theoretical and applied linguistics relevant to the CLT framework could not provide methodologists with a manifest description of communicative competence and explicit guidelines for communicative language use on which language teaching programs and individual lessons could be built. As a result, teachers in real classroom situations have come to browse here and there, where they might encounter an exquisite package of CLT-oriented ideas, materials, and guidebooks, relying solely on the general theoretical axiom of "prepar(ing) learners for real-life communication rather than emphasizing structural accuracy" (Celce-Murcia et al., 1997, p. 143).

The best reason for the CLT proponents and practitioners to set aside grammar instruction stems from the proposition that knowledge of linguistic forms should emerge as communicative ability improves. Unfortunately, this is mostly not the case. According to cognitive psychology, language use, in itself, is not conducive to the development of an analytic language system since effective language learning necessitates purposeful attention on and practice of the learning objective to merge it into the automatic processing realm from the controlled processing realm (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Skehan, 1998). In addition, the goal of language pedagogy is to make a "long and rather inefficient business" of "natural" language acquisition an easier and more effective one (Widdowson, 1990). Such slow but sure change in theoretical trends has borne the conceptual frameworks concerning direct instruction of structures and forms of the target language: "consciousness raising" (Fotos, 1993, 1994), "language awareness" (van Lier, 1996), and "focus on form" (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Williams, 1995).

One more serious problem of CLT theory surfaced in evaluation. If pausing to think of the history of evaluation coupled with teaching approaches, we feel bewildered by the stark fact that nothing except some hackneyed interviews and observations comes to mind about how to measure the learning outcomes

forwarded by CLT programs. More insightful studies and experiments in classroom contexts are called for.

IV. ALTERNATIVES OF CLT

As Thompson (1996) has alluded to, there is an upcoming change in language teaching methodology: theorists have been aware that the CLT framework needs to embrace explicit, direct instruction, ultimately for the development of communicative competence (Johnson, 1981; Morrow, 1981; Wilkins, 1976). Richards (1990) provides a useful conceptual building block of an indirect and a direct approach to the teaching of conversation. The indirect approach, "in which conversational competence is seen as the product of engaging learners in conversational interaction" (p. 76), is a theoretical underpinning of the CLT framework. According to this approach, language classes should just offer learners as many chances as possible to be exposed to lifelike communicative situations through various activities: interactive language games, information sharing activities, task-based activities, social interaction, functional communication practice (Richards & Rogers, 1986), language analysis activities, content-based activities, personalized language use, simulations, role-plays, social interaction games, and language use beyond the classroom (Savignon, 1983).

On the other hand, the direct approach, which "involves planning a conversational program around the specific microskills, strategies, and processes that are involved in fluent conversation" (Richards, 1990, p. 77), focuses on direct, explicit grammar teaching, which, of course, has to go beyond traditional form-focused methodological practices. What we need to keep in mind in language learning classrooms is to strike a balance between appropriate and various exercises that help learners acquire grammatical forms, and tasks for making the best use of those forms for effective communication (Nunan, 1998). This approach also incorporates providing learners with specific language input such as fixed expressions, formulaic phrases, or conversational routines that keep cropping up in natural settings of conversation (Celce-Murcia et al., 1997; Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1994; Richards, 1990).

Based on a succinct overview of two contrasting approaches, much stress appears to be placed on the more direct, systematic approach to enhancing second

language learners' communicative language abilities. So, I will go over "form-focused instruction" as a modified alternative of CLT in brief, and then, ponder over the drastic evolution in the language teaching methodology domain, heralded by Kumaravadivelu (1992, 1993, 1994).

1. Form-Focused Instruction

An increasing number of studies, having tried to test the effectiveness of direct, grammatical intervention in conjunction with CLT, found that paying attention to grammatical forms by making them salient in the input has a positive effect to the rate of second language learning (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Robinson, 1996; Williams, 1995). Spada and Lightbown (1993) contend that "form-focused instruction and corrective feedback provided within the context of a communicative program are more effective in promoting second language learning than programs which are limited to an exclusive emphasis on accuracy on the one hand or an exclusive emphasis on fluency on the other" (p. 105). Accordingly, the need to restore form-based instruction and error correction as part of language teaching/learning seems to be brought into consciousness.

One thing to remember here is that teaching which is principally form-based, teacher-centered, metalinguistic, and decontextualized will not be compatible with teaching which is principally meaning-based, learner-centered, experiential, and contextualized (Lightbown, 1990). Since focus on form does not necessarily exclude attention to meaning, and focus on message does not necessarily lead to communicatively rich interaction in the classroom, a simultaneous dual focus appears to be highly desirable, in that it would offer a concise and economical way of avoiding the disadvantages caused by an extreme focus on either direction (form or meaning) (Seedhouse, 1997; Stern, 1990). Lightbown and Spada (1990) report the results that form-focused instruction within communicative contexts lends credence to the development of linguistic knowledge and performance. That is, accuracy, fluency, and overall communicative skills are conceivably well built through primarily meaning-based instruction with timely form-focused activities and feedback on errors in contexts (Cadierno, 1995; Ellis, 1995). Such trend witnessed the emergence of a new approach, "principled communicative approach," which aims at incorporating "direct, knowledge-oriented and indirect, skill-oriented teaching approaches," which postulates the theoretical premise of a task-based

methodology⁵⁾ (Celce-Murcia et al., 1997, p. 148).

Based on these theoretical paradigms and experimental underpinnings, Paulston (1990) advances the implications for curriculum and materials development. Language learning situations need to involve the following features: (1) comprehensible input with the focus on form; (2) activities for learning these forms accurately; (3) functional guidelines for appropriate use of forms; and (4) genuine communicative use of linguistic forms (p. 197).

Incrementally, existing research does strongly indicate, while not yet conclusive, that a certain degree of focus on form and some modified activities used in meaningful contexts, may well contribute to promoting the development of communicative ability, which will, in turn, boost learners to achieve accuracy as well as fluency in their second language acquisition (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Fotos, 1998; Long, 1983; Rutherford & Sharwood Smith, 1988).

2. Principled Pragmatism

In a recent second language situation, one particular method has not only been pervasive but also theoretically and experimentally proven to teachers and practitioners. But methods actually used in the language classrooms are another thing, since teachers derive satisfaction in teaching methodology from tangible outcomes (Larsen-Freeman, 1991; Long, 1991). At this moment, the most remarkable attempt to overcome this long-standing dilemma including CLT's role came from Kumaravadivelu (1992, 1993, 1994), who strongly defined the current language teaching situation in theory and practice as a "postmethod condition."

The postmethod condition attacks the conventional relationship between the theorists and the practitioners of methods. Introducing, developing, and even implementing knowledge-oriented theories of pedagogy has centered upon the theorists up to now; whereas the postmethod condition entitles teachers and practitioners to establish classroom-oriented theories of practice. Kumaravadivelu's reasoning behind this framework is an attempt to look for an alternative to method rather than an alternative method; to enhance teacher autonomy over methods teachers exploit or are directed to use in their classrooms, based on their experience and tacit knowledge about language teaching; and to set up a new theory, "principled pragmatism" which "focuses on how classroom learning can be shaped

5) See Willis (1996) for a methodological framework of a task-based approach in detail.

and managed by teachers as a result of informed teaching and critical appraisal" (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, p. 31).

To fulfill this condition, he suggests two concepts for L2 teaching: *macrostrategies*, "general plans derived from theoretical, empirical, and pedagogical knowledge related to L2 learning/teaching," and "situation-specific, need-based" *microstrategies* which teachers can generate in their own classrooms (ibid, p. 32). The 10 macrostrategies, theory neutral and method neutral, are as follows: maximize learning opportunities, facilitate negotiated interaction, minimize perceptual mismatches, activate intuitive heuristics, foster language awareness, contextualize linguistic input, integrate language skills, promote learner autonomy, raise cultural consciousness, and ensure social relevance.

No matter what trends in language teaching methodology come and go, the newly emerging trend must not be misunderstood as total rejection of CLT, but as a forward-looking challenge to CLT to accomplish the ultimate goal of language teaching: "the development of learners' communicative competence."

V. CONCLUSION

As mentioned elsewhere in this article, CLT is not a method but an approach, which permits a wealth of possibilities for classroom application, though many different kinds of communicative purposes may make complicate the tailoring of the activities or techniques to satisfy each learner's communication needs. To cross-check viability of CLT, and to confront the impending shipwreck caused by several poignant theoretical and practical problems, a profusion of research, following different tacks, has accumulated to define, substantiate, evaluate, and sometimes criticize it. There seems to be no clear-cut, comprehensive solution at the present moment. As long as we are aware that there exist many possible versions of CLT, CLT appears to still merit further theoretical refinement and practical application.

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