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**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE
TEACHING (CLT) IN PROMOTING COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

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INTRODUCTION.

Language teaching methods have undergone significant transformations in the last few decades, with a growing emphasis on approaches that prioritize communication and real-life language use. One of the most influential methods to emerge is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Developed in the 1970s, CLT has become a dominant method in language education, particularly for teaching English as a second or foreign language. Its central goal is to enable learners to communicate effectively in real-world situations, thus enhancing their communicative competence.

This article explores the effectiveness of CLT in promoting communication skills. It examines the core principles of CLT, evaluates how they are applied in classroom contexts, and assesses the method's impact on language learners' ability to use language effectively in various settings.

Core Principles of CLT. CLT is built on the idea that the ultimate goal of language learning is communication. Unlike traditional approaches, which often focus on mastering grammatical rules and language structures in isolation, CLT emphasizes language use for meaningful interaction. The following principles are at the heart of CLT:

1. **Focus on Communication:** CLT prioritizes communication over formal accuracy. The primary objective is to help learners convey meaning and engage in real-world communication, rather than merely producing grammatically correct sentences.

2. **Task-Based Learning:** In CLT, classroom activities are structured around communicative tasks that reflect real-life language use. Examples include group discussions, role-plays, problem-solving tasks, and simulations of everyday situations like ordering food or asking for directions.

3. **Learner-Centered Approach:** CLT promotes learner autonomy by encouraging active participation. Students take charge of their learning through interaction and collaborative tasks, while teachers act as facilitators rather than authoritative figures.

4. **Integration of Language Skills:** CLT views language as a holistic system, integrating the four language skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—within communicative activities. This reflects how language is naturally used in day-to-day interactions.

PROMOTING COMMUNICATION SKILLS THROUGH CLT.

1. Enhanced Oral Proficiency. One of the most significant outcomes of CLT is the development of learners' speaking and listening skills. Since communication is at the core of CLT, activities like role-plays, group work, and pair discussions create opportunities for learners to practice speaking in an interactive and meaningful way. These activities mirror real-life language situations, helping learners become more fluent and confident speakers.

Research shows that students in CLT-based classrooms demonstrate improved oral proficiency and are better able to engage in spontaneous conversation. Unlike traditional grammar-based methods, which often prioritize written accuracy, CLT allows students to develop fluency, a crucial component of effective communication.

2. Building Communicative Competence. Communicative competence, a concept popularized by linguist Dell Hymes, refers to the ability to use language appropriately in different contexts. It includes linguistic competence (mastery of grammar), sociolinguistic competence (understanding social rules of language), discourse competence (the ability to maintain coherent communication), and strategic competence (the ability to overcome communication breakdowns).

By incorporating real-life contexts into classroom activities, CLT ensures that learners not only develop their grammatical knowledge but also their ability to use language flexibly in different social situations. For example, students might practice negotiating in business scenarios, holding casual conversations, or writing formal emails.

These tasks help learners understand how language varies depending on the context, enhancing their sociolinguistic competence.

3. Developing Listening and Interaction Skills. CLT also places a strong emphasis on listening as a core skill. Listening tasks in CLT classrooms are designed to expose learners to authentic language input, from informal conversations to public speeches. Through exposure to a variety of spoken texts, learners improve their ability to comprehend spoken language in different accents and contexts.

Moreover, the emphasis on interaction helps learners develop essential communication strategies such as clarification requests, confirmation checks, and rephrasing. These skills are crucial for overcoming misunderstandings in real-life conversations and are an essential part of developing strategic competence.

4. Encouraging Learner Autonomy. Another key strength of CLT is its promotion of learner autonomy. Unlike teacher-centered methods where learners passively absorb information, CLT encourages students to take control of their language learning. Group work, discussions, and project-based learning allow learners to explore language on their own terms and practice communication in a supportive environment.

Learners become active participants, using language to solve problems and complete tasks. This not only boosts their confidence but also allows them to experiment with language, make mistakes, and learn from them in real-time—an essential aspect of developing effective communication skills.

Challenges in Implementing CLT. While CLT has proven to be effective in promoting communication skills, it is not without its challenges. In certain educational settings, especially in countries where classrooms are large or resources are limited, implementing the interactive, task-based activities that CLT

requires can be difficult. Teachers may also face difficulties transitioning from more traditional teaching roles to the facilitator role required by CLT.

Additionally, some critics argue that CLT's focus on fluency over accuracy may result in fossilization, where language learners develop entrenched errors that persist over time. To mitigate this, some educators advocate for a balanced approach that incorporates explicit grammar instruction alongside communicative activities.

CONCLUSION.

Communicative Language Teaching has proven to be an effective method for developing communication skills in language learners. By focusing on real-life communication, task-based learning, and learner-centered approaches, CLT provides students with the tools to use language in authentic contexts. It enhances oral proficiency, builds communicative competence, and fosters learner autonomy, all of which are critical for effective communication.

Despite the challenges associated with implementing CLT in certain contexts, the method remains a powerful tool in modern language education. As the global demand for language proficiency continues to grow, CLT will likely remain an essential approach for promoting communication skills in the classroom.

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