

Maia Alavidze

Akaki Tsereteli State University, Kutaisi, Georgia

Why do I Consider Teaching to Be an Art?**Abstract**

In a teaching/learning environment, it is important to assist a learner to develop self-confidence, enjoy his/her own progress and succeed in the field. Effective teaching should be process- and not result-oriented, for this, teaching strategies are essential. All teachers need to remember an inspirational quote by Albert Einstein: “I never teach my pupils, I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.” That will make a teacher a motivational energizer for his/her students inspiring them wanting to learn and hoping to succeed. That requires a tremendous effort from a teacher. In a well-planned lesson every student has to produce the language independently without any preparation, which is a good practice for them and which enables them to become a motivated, self-confident learners and succeed easily. Here are some examples of my favourite activities that can make a lesson fun and encourage students speak out loud.

One of my favourite tasks is **PowerPoint presentation**. This so called performance task asks students to *perform* to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and proficiency. At the end of a topic that we cover during the lessons I ask my students to prepare a PowerPoint presentation on a related topic. That gives them the chance to produce their own language. Consequently, if you tell your students that they do not have to worry about their mistakes (this is a controversial question, though) that will boost their self-confidence and lead to success.

Another motivating activity I use with my students is **Questioning/Interview**.

The questions could be about anything but the only condition is that an interviewee could not say just yes or no. S/he needs to speak expand the answer and describe the situation or express his or her feelings. For example: 1. Do you remember the first day you met your best friend?

2. What three adjectives can you use to describe yourself? or something like that.

To make the activity a bit more difficult, you could ask the students work in pairs, think of a situation and ask his/her partner give **argumentative response to the situation**. For example: Your brother is a school-leaver and wants to go to University. He cannot decide whether to enter the University in your hometown or go to another city. Where would you advise him to go and why? Use arguments in your response.

At the initial stage, you can bring ready-made situations for them but afterwards they will manage to think of the situations themselves. There is one more recommendation I'd like to share with you. Remember, almost all activity could be turned into a communicative, motivational one. To make the case more challenging, I can say that there is no ready-made recipe with special ingredients that will make you a good teacher to help students become successful learners. That is why I consider teaching to be an art. Why do I think that a teacher must be a good actor/actress? To answer the question, I will share what I have learned during 25 years of teaching.

Key words: *motivation, communicative language teaching, presentation, accuracy, fluency.*

Introduction

Most motivation theorists assume that motivation is involved in the performance of all learned responses; in other words, a learning will not take place unless it is energized. The major question among psychologists, in general, is whether motivation is a primary or secondary influence on behavior. There are a lot of scientific discussions whether the changes in behavior could be better explained by principles of environmental influence, cognitive development, emotion, or personality or are concepts unique to motivation more pertinent.

Modern society is in need of people who not only read English well but also speak it fluently. As for beginners, they must have a solid foundation in English, which is primarily, though not solely, built on accuracy. It is believed that once bad language habits are formed, they are difficult to break. Moreover, for the students who are learning English in a non-English-speaking country, there is little chance for them to learn an acceptable form of

English outside the classroom. So, in order to achieve accuracy, students need rigorous language training in their classes.

However, accuracy does not mean 100% error-free, an impossible achievement. But during the controlled and semi-controlled language practice periods for beginners, a high degree of accuracy should be required. Not only are the students encouraged to make as few errors as possible, but they are expected to manipulate the language system as spontaneously and flexibly as possible.

Of course, fluency in language learning goes far beyond that. Soon after the students have mastered the language forms, they ought to be given intensive fluency practice. Then, as control is withdrawn, students can use the language more freely. At this stage, errors should be tolerated, and the teacher should emphasize that error-making is not at all disgraceful but a natural and common practice. Teachers assess the students' performances at the end of each fluency practice so that the students are aware of their weaknesses and

become more and more conscious of their errors. In this way, accuracy and fluency are practiced almost simultaneously. Accuracy and fluency are not mutually exclusive, but are interdependent.

Literature Review

On Wikipedia we can read that traditional education refers to long-established customs found in schools that society has traditionally considered to be appropriate. Education reform promotes the adoption of progressive education practices which focuses on individual students' needs and self-expression. In the eyes of reformers, traditional teacher-centered methods focused on rote learning and memorization must be abandoned in favor of student-centered and task-based approaches to learning. However, many parents still think that the maintenance of objective educational standards based on repetition, testing and memorization is time-tested and well-designed.

Historically, the primary educational technique of traditional education was simple oral recitation. In a typical approach, students sat quietly at their places and listened to one individual after another recite his or her lesson, until each had been called upon. The teacher's primary activity was assigning and listening to these recitations; students studied at home. A test might be given at the end of a unit, and the process, which was called "assignment-study-recitation-test", was repeated. In addition to its

overemphasis on verbal answers, reliance on rote memorization (memorization with no effort at understanding the meaning), and disconnected, unrelated assignments, it was also an extremely inefficient use of students' and teachers' time. It also insisted that all students be taught the same materials at the same point; students that did not learn quickly enough failed, rather than being allowed to succeed at their natural speeds.

Traditional education is associated with much stronger elements of coercion than seems acceptable now in most cultures. It has sometimes included: the use of corporal punishment to maintain classroom discipline or punish errors; In terms of curriculum there was and still is a high level of attention paid to time-honoured academic knowledge.

With the rapid development of EFL teaching in non-English-speaking countries, English teachers have become more aware that the exclusive use of either the communicative approach or grammar-translation method does not suit all English teaching situations. Teachers have also discovered that no single teaching method deals with everything that concerns the form, the use, and the content of the target language. The overall situation is probably still as Roberts (1982) described: "The communicative approach, and we will now use the term to refer to the British tradition, is in many ways a commitment to eclecticism in practice and cannot be otherwise." Harvey

(1985) states: "What might be called traditional methods and skills are not necessarily unworkable alongside modern EFL teaching methods. The idea that the two are mutually exclusive is absurd."

The above mentioned approach to teaching has completely changed the teachers' role. Instead of being the dominating authority in the classroom, the teacher facilitates the communicative process among all the learners and between the students and the various tasks, giving guidance and advice when necessary. Furthermore, teachers act as independent participants within the learning-teaching group. Any unnecessary intervention on the teacher's part may prevent learners from becoming genuinely involved in the activities and thus hinder the development of their communicative skills.

Discussion

Traditionally we are used to the idea that a teacher is always right; and s/he knows everything and has the answer to any question. But we do not need to forget that the world is changing and the values and approaches are also changing. In the past, knowledge was the most important criteria for a specialist to evaluate. But now we realize that knowledge needs to constantly updated; it should to be combined with skills to apply your knowledge to real life needs. We must remember that no matter how well-educated a teacher is, no

matter how well-designed a textbook is, they both need to upgrade.

We can never be sure how well our students learn when we teach them. It is misleading to believe that our students learn when we keep explaining them some rules and constantly trying to teach. There is a great difference between teaching and learning. Teachers have to remember: teaching does not necessarily mean learning. Very often, a teacher might put all his/her energy to teaching but his/her students might not learn. Being at the lesson and attentively listening to a teacher will never make a good student. That is why the teaching experts began to find a new way of teaching to help the students learn.

Communicative approach to teaching implies student-centered approach to second language teaching. It means that all activities should be designed in a way to focus on having students use authentic target language in order to complete meaningful tasks, i.e. situations they might encounter in real life. These situations include visiting the doctor, making a phone call, going shopping, buying tickets for a plane or a train, or conducting a survey to find answers to specific questions. Such kind of activities could be united in a group called task-based teaching. Such kind of activities do not focus on grammar. However, that does not mean that students imitate the sentences or learn the phrases by heart without knowing the meaning. You have to introduce your students

to necessary constructions earlier as well as to the vocabulary they will need to complete the task. Because the emphasis is on creative language use, whether spoken or written, rather than on absolute accuracy, assessment is based on task outcome.

Teaching is a part of learning. Teaching is not as important as it used to be. A teacher cannot learn instead of a student; s/he will never be able to think for them and do what students are supposed to do. All the teachers can do is to create an atmosphere at the lesson that will enable students to master the material. That could be done by making students become part of a lesson; by giving them right instruction; by encouraging them to participate into the learning process, by interaction and so on.

The other day my 16-year old boy was complaining that most of his lessons were boring. When I asked him what he would like his lessons to be like, he said that teachers must make all students get involved into the lesson by asking them to give their own opinion about an issue or by asking them to present a topic in their own way or by discussing a controversial issue rather than inviting a student to come in front of a class and retell the lesson. I was listening to him and I realized how important and difficult it is to keep students busy at the lesson.

It is interesting how the teacher's explanation helps the students study the issue. Language learners cannot use complex or

detailed information "from long lectures". The ability to use language in practice could only be mastered by learners' involvement in more experiments; by an attempt to put the material studied in practice rather than by accumulating a lot of linguistic information.

Language learners need more than a simple explanation. They need a chance to play, interact in a foreign language and get involved into different communicative activities. If that all happens at the lesson it means that different learning activities are employed at the lesson and subsequently there is a great possibility that teaching will equal learning. We all understand that a teacher will have to give talk at the lesson while explaining a new material but that should not happen permanently without encouraging the students get involved.

Communicative language teaching approach means that the teacher is no longer so-called "instructor", but rather, it is a "facilitator", a helper or a supporter. At communicative language lessons a teacher's main aim is to control the communication process and to encourage the students work in groups. At communicative language lessons, a teacher may have other roles as well. In particular, s/he may be an analyst, a consultant, a manager and even a learner.

However, this does not mean that once a teaching activity is in progress, the teacher should become a passive observer. It is still the teacher's obligation to develop the students'

potential through external direction (Zhenhui, R. 1999).

Communicative language teaching makes a teacher less prevailing but not less important. S/he might be an organizer, a consultant, a manager, a conductor or even a learner. Communicative approach to language teaching/learning, of course, implies that the main focus is made on the communication and not on the language forms. Therefore, the role of a learner is different from the role of a student when the focus was made on the construction of a grammatically correct sentence. At communicative lessons a learner is actively involved at the process that takes place at the lesson- s/he tries to understand what s/he is told and tries to make others understand what s/he says. However, very often his/her knowledge might not be sufficient enough and can make mistakes while expressing himself/herself.

As for the students, they are communicants. They do their best to understand and to be understood even when/if their language competence is limited. They can make mistakes and be sure that learning takes place. Students are asked to use the language patterns they have learnt in communication within interaction.

And how can we achieve the goal and turn our students into good English speakers. One of the crucial issue to consider while introducing communicative language teaching into practice

is the relationship between linguistic **competence** and communicative competence. If you refer to the Oxford dictionary, linguistic competence is defined as follows: a person's subconscious knowledge of the rules governing the formation of speech in their first language. As for the **communicative competence** it is defined as **Communicative competence** is a term in linguistics which refers to a language user's grammatical knowledge of syntax, morphology, phonology and the like, as well as social knowledge about how and when to use utterances appropriately. To make it clearer we can refer to free encyclopaedia and share the opinion that at the initial stage, linguistic competence is the correct manipulation of the language system. Communicative competence involves principles of appropriateness and a readiness on the part of the learner to use relevant strategies in coping with certain language situations. However, experts agree that linguistic competence is the basis of communicative competence. Without linguistic competence, there is no communicative competence. But communicative competence does not automatically result from linguistic competence. Forms of classroom activities such as role playing, simulations, and real-life interactions should be used to provide as much practice as possible for students to develop communicative competence while practicing linguistic competence /https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traditional_education/

When you enter the classroom of students majoring in English, it is much easier to work with them and succeed than with the students of other faculties where they do not see the direct connection between their future career and English. All Georgian students do understand the importance of English but it is noteworthy to say that English is taught as a foreign (not second) language, and there is no environment of English beyond the educational institutions. In this situation, it is crucial for English teachers to do their utmost to motivate the students and push them to success. How can the task be achieved? I think one of the best ways is give interesting tasks to your students. One of my favourite tasks is PowerPoint presentation. This so called performance task asks students to *perform* to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and proficiency. That gives the students the chance to produce their own language. Consequently, if you tell your students that they do not have to worry about their mistakes that will boost their self-confidence and lead to success. One might disagree with me saying that we cannot ignore the students' mistakes. I would not like to go to a deep discussion what is more important - accuracy or fluency. I just want to say that there might be some mistakes while speaking as communication does not always employ correct grammar but teachers should help the students to minimize the mistakes.

We were all accustomed to the practice that the teachers were always right. Teachers were people who stood in the center of a lesson being the only authority. But Communicative Language Teaching has dramatically changed the approach. Instead of being the dominating authority in the classroom, the teacher has become a facilitator to direct the communicative activities among the students, giving them various tasks, guidance and advice when necessary.

Let me go back to PowerPoint presentation. What I do is that at the end of every chapter in the coursebook, I ask my students to make a PowerPoint presentation on the related topic. They are absolutely free in their choice. For example, we covered on "Offbeat Jobs". At the end of the chapter they are asked to give the presentation on the related topics like: what is my dream job, what are most popular jobs in my country or choose one of the offbeat jobs, look on the internet or interview someone who does the job to get the information about it. The topic should include the information why the job is interesting, what the person in this job has to be like and so on. My students find the activity very interesting, stimulating and enjoyable.

One more motivating activity I use with my students is **Questioning/Interview**.

Questioning encourages higher order thinking and forms the basis of enquiry. Good questioning enhances understanding, as it

provides opportunities to explain, clarify, probe, make connections and identify problems and issues. Questioning encourages dialogue between students and influences student's use of questioning to promote their own learning. Interviews provide an authentic context for questioning. At an interview, students purposefully practice asking questions and develop the skills to listen critically. This is a very good practice for both: an interviewee and the interviews. At the end of the lesson I often use that activity to help the students master their questioning skills as well as produce the language unprepared. What I do is that I ask a volunteer to be an interviewee. S/he sits in front of the class and the rest of the class are absolutely free to ask him/her questions. The questions could be about anything but the only condition is that an interviewee could not say just yes or no. S/he needs to speak expand the answer and describe the situation or express his or her feelings. For example:

1. Do you remember the first day you met your best friend?
2. What three adjectives can you use to describe yourself?
3. What are your plans for the nearest 3 years?
4. What made/ influenced you choose your profession?
5. Who is your favourite actor/actress and what do you know about him/her?

These are exemplary questions however, you can understand that the questions could range from food to politics. To make the activity a bit more difficult, you could ask the students work in pairs, think of a situation and ask his/her partner give argumentative response to the situation. For example:

Situation One: Your friend has a good salary and is saving money for the future. She wants to buy a car and also, a small apartment, but the money is not enough for both. She cannot decide what to do. Which one would you advise her to buy and why? Use arguments in your response.

Situation Two: Your friend is invited to spend his summer holidays at the seaside with her relatives. At the same time, his close friend invites him in the mountains where his friend's family have a small house. Your friend cannot decide where to go. Where would you advise him to go and why? Use arguments in your response.

Situation Three: Your brother is a school-leaver and wants to go to University. He cannot decide whether to enter the University in your hometown or go to another city. Where would you advise him to go and why? Use arguments in your response.

I keep telling myself and my young colleagues that we must not miss the chance to make our students express themselves in English. Let us take an example: imagine there is a gap filling listening activity in a text-book.

Students have to listen to 4 people presenting their projects to a State Lottery Commission. They have to persuade the commission to finance their project, for, let us say for \$ 10 million. Students have to listen carefully and fill in the gaps with the missing information. After the activity is finished you can ask the students sit in groups of 4 students and design their own project. If you think it is very time-consuming, you can give them the task as a homework and listen to them at the next lesson. Two or three students might act as a jury, design the criteria to who they will give the money and why and have contest/competition at the lesson. That will help the students produce their own language and practice use different language functions for their arguments.

The same could be said about grammar questions. For example, if I teach the second conditionals, I usually ask my students to make up their own conditional questions and ask each other. For instance, one student might ask the other student: *if you could eat the only food for the rest of your life, what would it be? Or what would you do if all your classmates decided to play truant?* And so on and so forth.

There are some more communicative activities to make you lessons enjoyable and fun.

One- minute talk

What I do is that I write different topics on the piece of paper, roll them up and put them into box, asking students to pick any. They

have 20 seconds to think about the topic and then start talking about it one minute non-stop. The topics can vary from favourite seasons to global warming. Consequently, while testing oral production you can use the abovementioned technique and test a student's pronunciation, vocabulary, accuracy and fluently simultaneously.

Talking about yourself

People usually like to talk about oneself. The feature could be used as an activity to encourage communication. I can share the simplest activities that will create a warm and friendly atmosphere in your class:

a) the name

Divide the class into groups and ask them talk about their own names –whether they like it or not; what name would they choose for themselves if they could and why.

As you can see the activity is very easy to arrange, however it encourages students speak about their feelings and emotions.

b) what do you have in common

This is a wonderful icebreaker. Put the students into groups and ask them find out at least 5 things they have in common. Definitely, they have to talk about themselves and ask questions about the likings and disliking to each other.

My Ideal School

Before you ask your students to design their ideal school, you can give them the questions to consider:

- What will you name your school?
- What will the building and rooms look like?
- Can students choose the subjects and the teachers?
- Whom will your school serve?
- What mission, purpose, and core values will animate and unify your school? Create a description (text, charts, other) that illustrates the mission, purpose, and main values.
- What roles will teachers, leaders, and other adults play in your school? What specialized knowledge and skills will they need?
- How will you measure growth in every student's learning? How will you identify problems, challenges, and opportunities? What tools and procedures will you use to gather this information, and how often?
- How can your school use time, space, and technology in innovative ways that enhance opportunities for students to learn and grow and for teachers to thrive and succeed?
- How will your students spend their time during the day and throughout the school year?
- What technologies will help you create the best possible learning experiences for your students?

- What barriers do you anticipate, and how will you overcome them?
- Create some special rules for your ideal school

Afterwards. You can ask the students design a poster of their ideal school in groups. That will make them think in English and speak in English.

Conclusion

According to the above-given discussion, I can say that language acquisition is a subconscious process evoking the practical usage of a language; language learning, on the other hands, is a conscious attempt to comprehend grammatical and lexical forms of a language.

Communicative language teaching is the best way to help your students master the language and be able to speak. I cannot stop agreeing with Chomsky, who separates competence and performance; he describes 'competence' as an idealized capacity that is located as a psychological or mental property or function and 'performance' as the production of actual utterances. In short, competence involves "knowing" the language and performance involves "doing" something with the language. The difficulty with this construct is that it is very difficult to assess competence without assessing performance. As we have learned, competence and performance involve "knowing" and "doing". In recent

years, many language instruction programs have focused more on the “knowing” (competence) part of learning a language where words and sentences are presented and practiced in a way to best help learners internalize the forms. Having been trained to learn the language through “knowing”, learners have difficulty reversing this training and actually “doing” something with the language. In short, it is difficult to assess whether the learners’ poor proficiency is due to limited of competency or a lack of performance. For example, if a learner says: “he goes to school every day”, does it mean that s/he does not know how to say a verb in a third person singular or has a little practice of producing sentences of his/her own.

In order to focus learners more on the “doing” part of learning, which allows a more accurate measure of learners’ language proficiency, a more communicative approach to teaching should be used. This type of approach concentrates on getting learners to do things with the language. By encouraging students to gradually “learn through the language” as opposed to strictly learning the language, there is a more balanced focus on both competence and performance. It is proved, that very often a language learner can make grammatically accurate sentences at the lesson but they find it very difficult to use the language

outside the lesson unless s/he practices speaking at the lesson.

I hope the recommendations given in the work will slightly contribute to the development of English language teaching. The sample activities as well as teaching tips could be used at the lessons. I think the material is kind of in-variant according to which a teacher could design his/her individual variants appropriate for his/her students taking into account the students age, language level, aims and objectives.

As we can see, in the above-mentioned examples, every student has to produce the language independently without any preparation, which is a good practice for them and which enables them to become a motivated, self-confident learner and succeed easily. At the initial stage, you can bring ready-made situations for them but afterwards they will manage to think of the situations themselves. There is one more recommendation I’d like to share with you. Remember, almost all activity could be turned into a communicative motivational activity.

To sum up what I have been discussing above, whether you like it or not, we can see that there is no ready-made recipe with special ingredients that will make you a good teacher. I agree with the statement that teaching is art rather than a science and we all need to find our own ways to master the art.

REFERENCES

- Alavidze, M. 2017. *Teaching and Assessing Spoken English*. Saarbrücken, Germany, LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing.
- Chambers, F. 1997. *What do we mean by fluency?* Southampton, S017 1BF, UK University of Southampton, School of Modern languages, Faculty of arts, Avenue Campus.
- Douglas, D. (1997) *Testing Speaking Ability in Academic Context-* Monograph Series
- Fillmore, C. J., Kempler, D., & Wang, W. S. (Eds.) 2014. *Individual differences in language ability and language behavior*. Academic Press
- Harvey, P. 1985. *A lesson to be learned: Chinese approach to language class*. *ELT Journal*, 39, 3, pp. 183–186
- Hartmann, R.R.K.&Stork, F.C.1976. *Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*. New York: Wiley
- Huitt, W. 2011. *Motivation to learn: An overview*. *Educational Psychology Interactive*. Valdosta, GA: Valdosta State University
- Roberts, J. L. 1982. *Recent developments in ELT*. In *Surveys 1 and 2* ed.V. Kinsella. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zhenhui, R. 1999 *Modern vs Traditional*. *Forum*, vol 37 No 3, July-September pg 27. dosfan.lib.uic.edu/usia/E-USIA/forum/vols/vol37/no3/p27.htm