

Document Analysis as a Tool in the Evaluation of an English as a Foreign Language Grammar Course

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Abstract

The present article reports on an evaluative study undertaken on a language course so as to indicate its strengths and weaknesses with the purpose of improving future ones. Third-year undergraduate students of Applied Linguistics at the Higher Institute of Languages of Tunis are supposed to receive grammatical instruction from a course labelled 'Communicative Grammar' (CG) following the theory of Communicative Language Teaching. In order to provide an account of the extent to which the current teaching practice conforms to the theory behind it, the main research instrument used in this study is document analysis. Analysis of the aims stated in the syllabus and the objectives of the course book revealed a significant mismatch between theory and practice. It showed that discrepancies exist especially in terms of content as the linguistic information specified in the syllabus and contained in the course book are not consonant with the type of content postulated by Communicative Grammar. Inadequacies exist also at the methodological level, mainly because the activities used throughout the course include linguistic activities instead of communicative tasks. Since this mismatch is attributed mainly to the teachers' academic ability, the article ends with some recommendations of suggestions that can be adapted to meet the daily challenges of improving learning in the classroom.

Keywords: course, evaluation, mismatch, practice, theory

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1. Introduction

The place that grammar should occupy in a language classroom has been one of the most hotly debated issues by language teachers, applied linguists, and language teaching specialists (Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Rutherford, 1987; Harmer, 1987; Prabhu, 1987, etc...). In fact, with the failure of traditional approaches to language teaching (The Grammar-Translation Method and The Audio-lingual Method) which were replaced by the Notional/Functional Approach developing later into Communicative Language Teaching, the place retained by grammar in language classes became unsure.

Some second language acquisition researchers and supporters of Communicative Language Teaching suggest teaching in which language learning is concomitant (Krashen, 1988; Prabhu, 1987). According to them, teachers should not teach grammar but should rather conceive circumstances to enable their students to acquire language rules. Accordingly, grammar came to be regarded as a language component that can be acquired naturally without any formal instruction. This entails that all students receiving such teaching can take time to assimilate the language through use.

However, while this approach might attain good results with language programs where teaching hours are spread all along the students' timetable, with students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), like the Tunisian ones who generally do not have enough time for the gradual acquisition of language, overt instruction of grammar remains prerequisite. In that respect, many teachers and researchers wonder if it is enough to provide students with rich and varied input and opportunities for practice and interaction with no clear teaching of grammar.

There are even strong proponents of Communicative Language Teaching like Celce-Murcia (1991), Ellis (1993), and Long & Crookes (1992) who stress the need to review the question of form-focused teaching in classrooms where the main focus is on communication. They consider that it is important to give prominence to form within task-based curricula. The results of the debate were summarized in the following statement by Thompson (1996): "In the consensus view of CLT [...], it is now fully accepted that an appropriate amount of class time should be devoted to grammar" (p. 9).

However, while the question of whether to teach grammar explicitly or not was settled with the view that Communicative Language Teaching is flexible enough to allow for that, there is still an inquiry on how much of the communicative approach is actually discerned in the classroom. Remaining doubtful about the shift that has genuinely transpired in language classrooms as a result of Communicative Language Teaching, Whitley (1993) says:

"Despite its active promotion in journals, conferences, and teacher training, most teachers have only a vague notion of what it entails, and visits to their classrooms often reveal a continuing reliance on earlier or idiosyncratic approaches, and even a determined preference for them" (p. 137).

Conjointly, Rivers (1987) admits the strong emphasis on teaching language for communication since the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching "but whether this has brought about a change in the average classroom is another question" (as cited in Rehorick, 1990, p. 285)

The present study is conducted within the framework of Applied Linguistics (AL), the study of language and linguistics in relation to practical problems. Lynch (1996) defines AL as “research and practice concerned with the application of knowledge and methods from a variety of disciplines (e.g., anthropology, sociology, linguistics, psychology, and education) to the range of issues concerning the development and use of language” (p.1). AL concerns itself, among other things, with ensuring the success of the learning/teaching process. In so doing, it makes use of evaluation, which consists in the systematic gathering of information for purposes of decision making. Johnson (1989) calls for the need to provide feedback and information on all that may contribute to the construction of a language course (materials, syllabus, performance, teaching and learning roles, etc....). Nunan (1988) quotes Candlin and Widdowson advancing that “if language teaching is to be a genuinely professional enterprise, it requires continual experimentation and evaluation” (p. 9).

In order to provide an account of the extent to which the current teaching practice conforms to the tenets of Communicative Language Teaching, the following research questions were addressed:

- Is the syllabus designed according to the communicative needs of the learners?
- To what extent do the materials teach grammar with an emphasis on its use for communication? These questions should be highlighted briefly in the abstract.

1. Research Methodology:

This section describes the methodology used to answer the research questions asked above. It presents the data gathering instruments as well as the procedure followed for the data analysis.

1.1. Document analysis:

Because as Sheldon (1988) suggests, “whether we like it or not, these represent the visible heart of any ELT programme” (p. 237), the primary research tool in this evaluative study consisted in analyzing the course materials. Going in the same direction as Sheldon (1988), Patton (1987) argues that program documents can provide valuable information because they allow the evaluator to learn directly as he/she reads them.

Analysis of program documents in the present study involved analysis of the course description, that is the syllabus (Appendix A), and the textbook used in the classroom, as these are perceived to be the “route map of any ELT programme, laying bare its shape, structure and destination” (Sheldon, 1988, p. 238). The syllabus and course book were analyzed using a simplified version of Sheldon’s (1988) and Hutchinson and Waters’ (1987) checklists of evaluation criteria (Appendix B).

Hutchinson and Waters’ (1987) checklist was originally designed to evaluate English for Specific Purposes (ESP) materials. However, the evaluation framework was deemed to be applicable to this study since the criteria could be used in any ELT situation. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) themselves argue that this type of evaluation should be a feature of any kind of ELT course as “there is nothing specific about ESP methodology. The principles which underlie good ESP methodology are the same as those that underlie sound ELT methodology in general” (p. 142).

1.2. Evaluation checklist:

The checklist is divided into three major sections; Aims, Content and Methodology, under which a number of questions was asked and answered. The main question under the category 'Aims' seeks information on the purposes for which the syllabus and the materials were written in the first place and on the gaps they are intended to fill.

There are three questions under the category 'Content'. The first question asks about the nature of the linguistic items introduced both in the syllabus and in the course book. The second question asks whether there is a discernible system at work in the selection and grading of these items. Question three checks the extent to which the linguistic items presented are appropriate for the purposes of the course.

The third section; 'Methodology', comprises three questions. Question one asks about the theory of learning the materials are based on. Question two seeks information on the kinds of tasks/exercises included in the materials (e.g. guided or free, problem-solving, role-play, simulation, drama, games, tasks involving visuals, or some other kinds). Question three asks about the teaching/learning techniques to be used with the materials (e.g. pair-work, small-group work, student presentations, 'lockstep', or some other kinds).

2. Results and Discussion

This section reports the results of the evaluative study. It consists of a discussion of the findings yielded by the research instruments and the methodology presented in the second section. The findings generated from document analysis are presented using the headings employed in the evaluation checklist (*Aims*, *Content*, and *Methodology*). The results of the materials analysis activity are interpreted qualitatively in the form of commentaries upon the answers to the questions asked in the checklist. That is, the activity consisted mainly of a description and a discussion of the content of the syllabus and the course book.

3.1 Aims:

The main question under this category focuses on the purposes for which both the syllabus and the course book were written in the first place and on the gaps they were intended to fill. More precisely, it seeks information on whether or not the course objectives as spelt out in the syllabus and in the course book are congruent with the overall goal of a CG course, which consists in the teaching and study of English grammar with an emphasis on the use of grammar for communication (Leech & Starvick, 1975).

The title of the syllabus suggests that the course is intended to teach 'Communicative-Functional Grammar' to third-year students of AL. However, what the curriculum committee has assigned for such students is a course labeled 'Communicative Grammar' only. This looseness at the level of terminology is indicative of inconsistencies within the course as a whole, for the title of the course should reflect its content and approach. In other words, it should be either 'communicative' or 'functional' as the difference between the two adjectives is not merely a matter of terminology but suggests differences at the conceptual level as well. Each of the two labels derives from a separate underlying theory and thus should adopt its own teaching approach.

The syllabus designers do not seem to be equipped with the necessary theoretical background which would enable them to make scientific and correct decisions regarding the exact language points to teach and the precise aims to focus on. The fact that they claim that the course is teaching ‘communicative-functional’ grammar suggests that they do not fully understand the essence of each of the two theories, that CG is something and Functional Grammar (FG) is something else, and that the two cannot be taught together because each one implies a separate method of teaching.

Reading the title of the course book, one can notice another major source of inconsistency. In fact, the course book is entitled Functional English Grammar (Graham Lock, 1996); it preserves only one of the two labels appearing on the syllabus (communicative-functional); and makes no reference whatsoever to CG. Thus, there is a clear departure from the instructions of the curriculum committee. Originally, what the curriculum designers have assigned for third-year students of AL is a communicative grammar course. However, from ‘communicative’ in the curriculum, to ‘communicative-functional’ in the syllabus, the students ended up attending to a course that teaches only FG since the course book used is only about functional grammar, and as Sheldon (1988, p. 238) suggests, course books are “the visible heart” of any teaching program.

Besides, the aims stated by the existing syllabus and materials appear to be highly opposed to the objectives of CG. The syllabus stipulates that the major aim the course seeks to fulfill is to introduce students to FG where the focus is on the “meaningful functions of grammatical forms and structures”. Going in the same direction, the author of the course book states that the primary concern of the book “is with the functions of structures and their constituents”. Thus, the approach implied in the syllabus and dictated by the course book is one which seeks to introduce students to *analysis* rather than *use* of language.

Analysis of the way the term ‘function’ itself is employed can be very revealing in this regard. In the course book, it refers to what the different classes of phrases and groups are doing in particular clauses. Accordingly, the main task of learners should be to try to identify the functions of grammatical structures (whether they are subject, finite, adjunct, etc). The functions meant by CG, on the other hand, are the ones developed by the Council of Europe (1972), and refer to the social purposes of a piece of language (describing, requesting, asking for information, introducing oneself, etc). Consequently, what students need to learn is how to use the structures of language in order to perform these functions.

It is clear, thus, that the aims of FG are not consonant with those of CG. FG deals with the functions of grammatical structures within clauses and sentences where the task of students is to analyze language in order to identify these functions. The CG advocated by the curriculum committee, on the other hand, should aim at teaching the social purposes for which language might be used, where the task of students is to relate the structures to their communicative purposes.

This section has focused on the course aims; namely, on the extent to which the objectives the existing syllabus seeks to fulfill on completion of the program are congruent with the ones a CG course should teach. It has been found out that the syllabus aims first and foremost at teaching FG which is very different from CG in terms of both content and methodology. This

difference will be further investigated in the subsequent sections which address more thoroughly the two questions of *content* and *methodology*.

3.2. Content:

3.2.1. Language Description:

This section focuses on the particular language points that the course is teaching. Reading the syllabus, one can see that there is no specification of particular grammatical points for students to learn. There is no discernible indication of particular structures or communicative functions in the syllabus, nor is there any demonstration of how students can relate particular structures to particular functions in order to use them for communication.

The syllabus cannot be said to be structural as well, for it does not lay out what structures are to be taught (e.g., present, past, present progressive, past progressive, etc). Nor can the syllabus be compared to the kind of functional syllabus in which students are taught how to express language functions (e.g., describing, introducing oneself, asking for permission, suggesting, requesting, etc). The syllabus is not communicative either; it does not tell how learners should relate particular structures to their communicative uses and meanings. Had it been so, it would have specified how various functions of language and different concepts can be expressed showing what particular structures are related to them.

The syllabus at hand focuses rather on the mechanisms that govern the different ways in which speech acts can be made. The syllabus is about functional grammar; the term 'functional' is used here not as a reference to that approach of language teaching that seeks to teach the social functions for which language is used, but rather relating to the functional approach to language itself. This linguistic approach seeks to describe and analyze sentences and texts applying Halliday's systemic functional linguistic theory where people analyze and explain how meanings are made in everyday linguistic interaction. Accordingly, what the syllabus and the course book are about is the functional interpretation of the linguistic system.

The students' task, according to this approach, is to understand, describe and analyze how language is structured for use. This type of content adopts a functional view of language. That is, the primary question it seeks to answer is how language is used. Students are called to learn how to explain the way in which a word or a phrase is employed in a sentence and what they learn here is not how to use specific words and phrases in particular communicative situations, as the claim is, but rather how to explain the internal relationship between linguistic units.

3.2.2. Content Selection and Grading:

The purpose of this section is to seek whether there is any discernible system at work in the selection and grading of the new linguistic items to be taught to the students.

The syllabus consists of five units which are presented in the way the chapters in the course book are organized. However, it selects only five chapters of the adopted book; which originally contains thirteen chapters. The syllabus designers do not mention the reasons for choosing those particular chapters to teach. In other words, the selection and grading of the course content do not seem to have been done on the basis of any predetermined needs analysis. Rather, it is the content of the course book that seems to have imposed what the syllabus should specify.

All the units that appear in the syllabus correspond respectively to the chapters figuring in the course book, except that there is a slight modification in the titles. Unit one in the syllabus, which represents the introductory unit and in which some basic concepts about functional grammar are introduced and illustrated, appears in the opening chapter of the book (pp. 1-21). The original title of the unit (i.e., title of the chapter in the book) is “Some Basic Concepts”; in the syllabus, it is “Introduction”. The second unit stated in the syllabus, “Interaction or the Study of Interpersonal Meaning”, is the ninth chapter of the book (pp. 174-191), and was originally entitled “Interaction: Speech acts and Mood”.

The third unit, “Expressing Judgments and Attitudes: Modal Auxiliaries and Adjuncts and Modality”, corresponds to the tenth chapter of the book (pp. 192-218), and was initially entitled “Expressing Judgments and Attitudes: Modal auxiliaries and Modality”. Unit four corresponds to the eleventh chapter of the book. In the syllabus, the title is “Clause as Message: Thematic and Information Structure of the Clause”; in the course book, the chapter is entitled “Organizing Messages: Theme and Focus” (pp. 219-245). The last unit specified in the syllabus, “Combining Messages: The Clause Complex” corresponds to the last chapter in the course book, which was originally entitled “Combining Messages: Complex Sentences” (pp. 246-264).

The syllabus designers do not state on which basis the content of the course is to be organized. What could be noticed, instead, is that the grading of the content was dictated by the readily printed organization of the adopted book. In other words, both the selection and grading of the content throughout the course were imposed by the already existing materials. The syllabus designers do not seem to have selected and organized content from most needed to less needed for learners, nor from the general to the specific, but rather according to the questions addressed by the course book’s author in each chapter.

3.2.3. Appropriateness:

It is beyond the scope of this study review the literature on FG; however, it would be useful for the purposes of elucidating the difference it has with CG to try to define briefly what it consists of. FG is a theory of the organization of language deriving from Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics theory which centers on the notion of *language function*. While accounting for the syntactic structure of language, Halliday’s theory places the function of language as central (what language does and how it does it), giving priority to more structural approaches, which place the elements of language and their combinations as central.

In Functional Grammar (Halliday, 1994), functional notions play an essential role at different levels of grammatical organization. These functional notions which represent the rules and principles of FG can be distinguished as follows:

- ❖ Semantic functions (Agent, Patient, Recipient, etc) which define the roles participants play in the states of affairs.
- ❖ Syntactic functions (Subject and Object) which define different perspectives through which states of affairs are presented in linguistic expressions.
- ❖ Pragmatic functions (Theme and Tail, Topic and Focus) which relate to the embedding of the expression in the ongoing discourse, that is, are determined by the status of the pragmatic information of Speaker and Addressee as it develops in verbal interaction.

FG offers a platform for both theoretical linguists interested in representation and formalism and descriptive linguists interested in data and analysis. It is a theory in at least three interrelated senses; first, because it takes a functional view of the nature of language; second, because it attaches primary importance to functional relations at different levels in the organization of grammar; and third, because it wishes to be practically applicable to the analysis of different aspects of language and language use (retrieved from <http://www.functionalgrammar.com/>).

There is a clear difference between the type of content of a CG course and that of an FG one. CG should aim at showing its students how to use specific structures in order to achieve particular communicative functions in specific situations. The syllabus and textbook made use of in the course under study, however, only teach the students how to analyze sentences and texts and to explain how they are internally structured.

So far, the researcher has analyzed the content of the syllabus and the course book comparing it with the type of content suggested by the curriculum. She/he ended up with the conclusion that they have divergent objectives and different linguistic content. It is clear that the top down instructions of the curriculum were frustrated by the syllabus and probably by the actual teaching practice. The curriculum stipulates that the course is to teach CG; but what the course is teaching, however, is FG.

To conclude the content section, it has been found that the content that is being taught does not match the one postulated by the curriculum. A thorough examination of the content has shown that it is essentially based on FG. The language description does not reflect aspects of communicative grammar, nor does the selection and grading of content throughout the course take into consideration the students' needs and preferences. This certainly represents a shortage since the prevalent theories on second and foreign language acquisition and Communicative Language Teaching suggest that students should have a say in what they should be learning.

3.3. Methodology:

3.3.1. Theory of Learning:

The first item under this category seeks information on the theory of learning the syllabus and the course book are based on. The aim behind integrating this point is to check the degree with which the learning theory of the materials is consonant with the one advocated by Communicative Language Teaching.

Starting with the syllabus, one can see that it does not clearly mention what theory of learning it is based on. The only clearly stated aspect of learning is that "the method is both deductive and inductive". Inductive learning is one characteristic of the communicative approach and suggests that learners are to be involved in genuine communication in order to find and understand how the system works on their own. Inductive teaching expects the learners to take responsibility for their own learning and makes their role in the classroom center while reducing that of the teacher. The more the course incorporates features of inductive learning the more communicative it can be said and vice versa.

As for the underlying theory of learning, the materials should be based on a theory that involves the learners in the learning process. That is, the learning must take place through natural

processes, which operate when the learners are involved in using the language for communication. However, the syllabus does not specify the kinds of techniques that will be relied on in the course. The claim that the method incorporates features of inductive teaching can be confirmed only after focusing on the kinds of tasks and techniques to be used by the teachers, which will be dealt with in the subsequent sections.

3.3.2. Tasks/Exercises:

This item evaluates the kinds of tasks the materials are based on and compares them with the ones suggested by the theory of Communicative Language Teaching. Tasks will be analyzed mainly as they figure in the book, that is, as a work plan (Nunan, 1989) to see the extent to which they are designed in such a way to foster natural communication in the classroom.

The syllabus does not specify the types of tasks that will be used throughout the course. However, one can still go through the tasks as they appear in the course book and try to assess their theoretical value. Besides the fact that they are based on content that does not teach communicative grammar, the activities do not seem to be designed in such a way as to allow for interaction in the classroom. Analysis of tasks revealed that most of them are of the type which asks students to identify the functions and the internal structures of sentence constituents, where students have to engage in controlled practice and work individually to answer the questions of the textbook. Following is a list of examples of tasks existing in the course book:

- Identify the Subject and Finite of each finite clause in the following sentences.
- Identify all the Adjuncts in this sentence from Extract 3.
- Look at Extract 6 in the Appendix :
 - Find at least one example of each of the following (declarative statement, Wh-interrogative question followed by a full declarative answer).
 - Identify expressions of likelihood in the following examples.
- How would you categorize the modal auxiliaries in the following examples in terms of high, mid, and low likelihood?
- Identify the Modal Adjuncts of likelihood in the following sentences and rank each according to likelihood: high, mid, or low.
- Identify the expressions of requirement in the following examples.
- The following three versions of a text are identical in their experiential and interpersonal meanings. Which version reads best? Can you suggest why?

The above types of tasks cannot be compared to the ones suggested by Communicative Language Teaching theory both at the content and the methodological levels. In a CG course, the tasks must be based on content that places the learners in situations where they must use language as an instrument for satisfying immediate communicative needs. In terms of methodology, the course should make most use of free exercises such as role-play, simulation, games, tasks involving visuals, etc. The above kinds of tasks, however, which are almost all identical, only expect the learners to analyze and identify the functions of constituents of the language and do not reflect the communicative aspect of the course.

The activities are not designed in such a way to encourage genuine communication and exchange of information in the classroom in pairs and small groups. Communicative activities

require the design of real situations and real roles, and real needs and purposes for communication. It seems that the teachers do not distinguish real communicative activities from false ones. The tasks students are to work on can merely be described as linguistic activities, in which the students have to work each on his own in order to apply Halliday's systemic functional linguistics theory on sentences, and can by no means be compared to communicative tasks.

Besides, the course book, only source of input in the classroom, contains activities which are neither presented nor likely to be exploited in such a way as to keep the students motivated throughout the lessons. It is one that seems unenjoyable to use, with exercises and tasks that do not seem to give the students the opportunity to express their own ideas and opinions.

3.3.3. Techniques:

This section focuses on the techniques used with the tasks in the classroom. In Communicative Language Teaching, such techniques as pair and group work are features of a good communicative lesson. It is important at this point to notice that the textbook both students and teachers are supposed to work with is a teacher's textbook. As indicated on the cover paper, the subtitle of the book is "an introduction for second language teachers". The fact that the textbook relied on in the course is not a textbook for learners but one for the teacher is an additional factor that could explain much of the overlap surrounding the course. The book does not state how learners have to work either; whether individually, in pairs or groups, or in some other way beyond working out the linguistic tasks contained therein.

What can be deduced so far is that neither the teachers nor the learners were playing the roles assigned to them by the Communicative Language Teaching theory according to which the role of the teacher in the classroom reduces and that of the learner centres. In Communicative Language Teaching, the teacher is only a facilitator of learning. It seems from the materials analysis undertaken that the main role the teachers were performing is the traditional role of the language instructor which suggests that the teacher dominates classroom interaction. Students, on the other hand, seem to be passive recipients who do not contribute in the learning process.

Like with the aims and content of the course under evaluation, analysis of the methodology dictated by the book revealed that it represents another major source of discrepancy with the theory of Communicative Language Teaching. The materials to be used in the classroom only include linguistic activities rather than communicative tasks. The techniques to be used with the book seem to be old ones, which do not foster, and which even hinder, the creation of a positive communicative atmosphere in the classroom.

3. Conclusions and recommendations:

This section presents the main conclusions regarding the course under evaluation. Then, it moves on to a presentation of the main contributions of this work. A third major part is devoted to suggesting some recommendations for improving future courses based on the evaluation findings. The thesis concludes with a presentation of the limitations as well as the implications of this work.

4.1. Conclusions

Analysis of the aims stated in the syllabus and the objectives of the course book revealed that there is a significant mismatch between theory and practice. The existing syllabus aims

mainly at teaching FG dealing with the functions of grammatical structures within clauses and sentences and where the task of students is to analyze language in order to identify these functions and to understand how language itself functions. The aim of communicative grammar advocated by the curriculum committee, on the other hand, is the teaching of the social purposes for which language is used, where the task of students is to relate the structures to their communicative purposes.

Discrepancies exist especially in terms of content. The linguistic information specified in the syllabus and contained in the course book are not consonant with the type of content postulated by CG. The content is essentially based on the functions of sentence structures and their constituents. CG, on the other hand, departs from the question of how to teach the students a language so that they use it in real communicative situations.

Inadequacies exist also at the methodological level for at least three reasons. First, the *materials* made use of only include linguistic activities instead of communicative tasks. Second, the *teachers* seem to use old techniques which do not enhance the creation of a positive communicative atmosphere in the classroom. Third, the *syllabus* does not specify how teaching time is divided among the lesson phases, as the biggest proportion of time seems to be devoted to the presentation of new input through lecturing.

4.2. Contributions:

The main contribution of this work directly relates to curriculum development. The conducting of such an evaluative study was necessary in order to pinpoint the existing mistakes in the third-year Applied Linguistics curriculum. The evaluation findings have shown that the course clearly falls short of following the curriculum instructions. The benefit of such work is that it helps detect shortcomings in the course in order to overcome them and improve future practices. The results of such work are more fruitful if the recommendations made in the following section are followed by future teachers of the same course.

4.3. Recommendations:

An examination of the evaluation findings brought us to the conclusion that it is the teachers' academic ability that is at the heart of the discrepancies existing in the course. Therefore, the following recommendations can be made:

- ❖ Teachers should realize the importance of Communicative Language Teaching and try to catch up with the new trend.
- ❖ Teachers should systematically study linguistic theories and theories of second language acquisition in order to keep up with developments in Communicative Language Teaching. In fact, if teachers have understood the essence of Communicative Language Teaching and its scientific modification, they will acquire a positive attitude towards Communicative Language Teaching and teach more scientifically, avoiding errors.
- ❖ Teachers should spend time analysing learners' needs and designing their own syllabi. Since Communicative Language Teaching is concerned with the development of autonomy in the learner, teachers need to learn that learners should have a say in what they should be learning and how they should learn it.
- ❖ Teachers should collect suitable materials to create communicative tasks and activities.

- ❖ Teachers need to learn that teacher-dominated classrooms cannot by their nature be interactive; “interaction can be two-way, three-way, or four-way but never one-way” (Rivers, 1987, p.9). Real interaction in the classroom requires the teacher to cede a full role to the student in developing and carrying through activities.
- ❖ Teachers should draw students out and build up their confidence and enjoyment in what they are doing. An atmosphere of excitement and trust can be created where confident students initiate and cooperate in imaginative activities, sharing with each other real messages in authentic and exhilarating interaction.
- ❖ Teachers should realize that learning grammar is not listening to expositions of rules but rather inductively developing rules from living language material and then performing them.

In summary, teachers can be qualified in making creative decisions related to Communicative Language Teaching only if equipped with sufficient knowledge of linguistics. Accordingly, the most effective means of cultivating teachers’ academic awareness is through proper in-service and pre-service teacher training courses, which should be organized to promote teachers’ theoretical as well as linguistic abilities.

4.4. Limitations:

This section of the article addresses the limitations of this work; two main ones could be noted:

- The study relied only on document analysis and did not use systematic classroom observation in order to detect what actually goes on between teachers and learners in the classroom. But since the conditions under which instruction proceeded were clear from the document analysis activity, the materials analysis activity was deemed fairly reliable to understand and describe actual classroom practice. We hope that future researchers will increase the reliability of the findings by using classroom observation as an additional research tool.
- The course shortcomings were mainly attributed to the teachers’ misunderstanding of the essence of Communicative Language Teaching. Yet, other possible constraining factors, such as the fast pace of lessons, the crowded classrooms, the unavailability of resources, may exist. Such administrative factors can prevent the teachers from appreciating the deserved value of Communicative Language Teaching and make teaching preparation a painstaking process. Thus, it is hoped that further research will take these factors into consideration.

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APPENDIX A

Communicative–Functional Grammar: A Course Description

Course Objectives:

This course has been designed for the 3rd Year students who are assumed to have acquired enough traditional, formal, and structural grammar in their secondary education and in the first cycle of higher education. They are ready at this level to be introduced to communicative-functional grammar which focuses on the relation of form to meaning. Therefore, students should make most use of their background knowledge of structural-formal grammar in order to be able to delve into the meaning conveyed by such a grammar and understand *how* messages are organized. It follows that this course seeks to fulfill the following aims:

1. It introduces students to language in use “ by placing meaning firmly in the context of grammar ” (Downing, 1995 : ix) and by “ stressing the meaningful functions of grammatical forms and structures ” (ibid : xii).
2. It introduces the students to the exploration of functional grammar where the focus is on semantic roles and information categories.
3. This course also serves as a bridge to courses in 4thYear and postgraduate courses namely those dealing with text linguistics, discourse analysis, genre analysis and pragmatic values and intentions in the framework of the speaker-hearer relationship.

Syllabus:

Introduction:

1. Formal and functional grammar
2. Levels of analysis : lexis, grammar, semantics
3. Some basic concepts: Subject, Finite, Rank, Class, Complement, Predicator, etc...

Interaction or the study of Interpersonal meaning:

1. The nature of dialogue : Questions, Directives, Exclamative and Imperative clauses
2. Speech acts and Mood
3. Mood structure of the clause including the structure of the Residue
4. Polarity and Modality

Expressing judgements& attitudes: Modal auxiliaries & Adjuncts and Modality

1. Likelihood
2. Requirement
3. Other areas of Modality

Clause as Message: Thematic and Information structure of the clause:

1. Theme & Rheme
2. Given & New
3. Theme and Mood
4. Markedness

Combining Messages: The Clause Complex:

1. Complex sentences & clausal relationships: Parataxis & Hypotaxis or Linking & Binding
2. Semantic relationship between clauses: Expansion & Projection
 - 2.1. Expansion
 - 2.1.1 Elaboration
 - 2.1.2 Extension
 - 2.1.3 Enhancement
 - 2.2. Projection
 - 2.2.1 Direct Speech
 - 2.2.2 Indirect Speech

Teaching Method:

Following the functional approach, the method is both inductive and deductive. It enables students to recognize and produce patterns of language. They have to perceive the relationship between what is said and the context of situation of the utterances. Authentic texts will be used for the purpose.

Reading Material and Practice Tasks:

The students' textbook is taken from Lock (1996), but further readings are selected from Halliday (1994), and Downing (1995). Exercises are selected from Lock and other various authentic sources.

APPENDIX B**Materials Evaluation Checklist**

The checklist is adapted from Sheldon (1988) and Hutchinson and Waters (1987). Only the criteria that were felt relevant to the materials under evaluation were chosen and employed.

Aims:

1- Why were the syllabus and the materials written in the first place and what gaps are they intended to fill?

Content:

- 1- What new linguistic items are introduced in the syllabus and in the course book?
- 2- Is there a discernible system at work in the selection and grading of these items?
- 3- Are the linguistic items presented appropriate for the purposes of the course?

Methodology:

- 1- What *theory of learning* are the materials based on?
- 2- What kinds of *tasks/exercises* are included in the materials (e.g. guided or free, problem-solving, role-play, simulation, drama, games, tasks involving visuals, some other kinds)?
- 3- What *teaching/learning techniques* are to be used with the materials (e.g. pair-work, small-group work, student presentations, 'lockstep', some other kinds)?