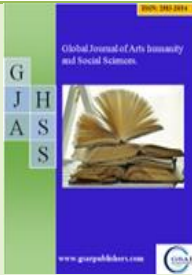


OPEN ACCESS	Global Journal of Arts Humanity and Social Sciences			
	ISSN: 2583-2034			
	Abbreviated key title: Glob.J.Arts.Humanit.Soc.Sci			
	Frequency: Monthly			
Published By GSAR Publishers			www.gsapublishers.com	
Journal Homepage Link: https://gsarpublishers.com/journal-gjahss-home/				
Volume - 4	Issue - 9	Sept 2024	Total pages 737-740	DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.13853350

Exploring the Principled Communicative Approach in Action: A Secondary School ESL Case Study

BY

Mohammed Nurul Islam (PhD)

English Language Skills Department (ELSD), King Saud University, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Abstract

This case study explores the implementation of the Principled Communicative Approach (PCA) in a secondary school ESL classroom at Al Jounub International School, Khamis Mushiyat, Saudi Arabia. The PCA was chosen to enhance students' communicative competence in English by integrating seven key principles: personal significance, declarative input, controlled practice, focus on form, formulaic language, language exposure, and focused interactions. The study details the strategies employed, such as using relevant topics, providing clear instruction, and creating authentic interaction opportunities. Outcomes included improved student communication skills, increased engagement, and the establishment of a realistic learning environment. Challenges such as teacher training and resource requirements were addressed through continuous professional development and innovative assessment methods. The findings suggest that PCA can significantly benefit ESL instruction in diverse educational contexts.

KEYWORDS: *Principled Communicative Approach, ESL education, communicative competence, language teaching methods, secondary education*

Article History

Received: 11- 09- 2024

Accepted: 24- 09- 2024

Published: 26- 09- 2024

Corresponding author

**Mohammed Nurul
Islam (PhD)**

Introduction

English as a Second Language (ESL) context, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) plays a pivotal role in fostering language proficiency. CLT emphasizes the practical use of language through interactive and meaningful communication activities. By focusing on real-life scenarios and authentic interactions, CLT helps learners develop not only their linguistic skills but also their ability to effectively communicate in diverse social and professional settings. CLT is one of the key methods that emphasizes all four language skills. This approach enhances students' confidence and competence in using English, making it a highly effective methodology in ESL education. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is the predominant method of language instruction in numerous countries globally. It is regarded as a groundbreaking approach for teaching English as a second language (Farhad, 2013). Eventually, according to Warschauer and Kern (2000), CLT is among the most significant language teaching methods, gradually and steadily replacing older language teaching techniques. Similarly, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is the leading language teaching method in numerous countries

worldwide (Vongxay, 2013; Alharabi, 2013; Karim, 2004; Akram & Mahmood, 2011).

The Principled Communicative Approach to language teaching was born in 2009 from a small revolution in thinking by a Hungarian linguist, Zoltán Dörnyei, then professor at the University of Nottingham, who was keen to structure the communicative approach already developed by his Anglo-Saxon peers in the past decades. The latter, which was already in use in the world of language teaching, needed only to be popularised and developed for better application in everyday life (Vivaling, 2024). In the context of English as a foreign language (EFL), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been promoted for decades to enhance students' communicative competence and improve their skills. Moreover, the Principled Communicative Approach is a modern methodology for communicative language teaching, integrating current research in psychology and linguistics with practical classroom experience. This approach emphasizes seven key principles to enhance the effectiveness of communicative teaching, illustrated with practical classroom activities (Arnold et al. 2015).



Dörnyei (2013) presented seven principles that align with the latest findings in psycholinguistic research. The primary aim of this volume is to bring this approach to life by providing a variety of practical classroom activities that exemplify the seven principles. Below is a diagram, illustrating the 7 principles of the Principled Communicative Approach:



Figure 1: 7 principles of the Principled Communicative Approach

Dörnyei (2013) distills these ideas into seven principles to embody both explicit and implicit learning mechanisms that resonate with current research beliefs for taught second language acquisition to form a systematic psychological concept. The seven guiding principles in the Principled Communicative Approach are as follows: **1. The personal significance principle** - personal meaning imbued communication. A major facet of learner-centered CLT from the outset. **2. The controlled practice principle** - practice of discrete skills to strengthen the automatization of an L2, similar to a musician or athlete practicing to improve performance. **3. The declarative input principle** - explicit input such as memorizing lists of vocabulary to initiate the automatization process. **4. The focus-on-form principle** - analysis of the formal or structural aspect of an L2 to promote linguistic, discursive, and pragmatic accuracy and appropriacy, while balancing the inclusion of meaningful-based activities. **5. The formulaic language principle** - encouraging learner noticing of formulaic language and practicing them to increase automaticity. **6. The language exposure principle** - encouraging extensive exposure to L2 input to activate learner implicit learning processes enhanced by pre-task activities. **7. The focused interaction principle** - the provision of real L2 interaction, centered on an identifiable formal or functional purpose making use of target phrases. Dörnyei sums this up as "a creative integration of meaningful communication with relevant declarative input and the automatization of both linguistic rules and lexical items." (Dörnyei, 2013, as cited in Rushton, 2019, p. 37)

Based on the above principles, the Principled Communicative Approach combines meaningful communication with relevant declarative input, focusing on the automatization of linguistic rules and vocabulary. By implementing the correct principles in teaching second language (L2) skills, the efficiency of the learning process can be greatly enhanced.

BACKGROUND

Al Janoub International School represents a sincere effort to fulfill the aspirations of a dedicated group of social and educational activists. Their goal is to provide integrated education for a sustainable life to expatriates in Saudi Arabia. The school is located in a suburban area with a diverse student population, including a significant number of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. The school aims to enhance the English proficiency of its ESL students by adopting innovative and effective teaching methods. The Principled Communicative Approach (PCA) was chosen to achieve this goal due to its emphasis on meaningful communication and its foundation in current linguistic and psychological research.

Objectives

1. To improve students' communicative competence in English.
2. To increase student engagement and motivation in learning English.
3. To create an authentic and interactive learning environment.

Implementation

1. Personal Significance

- **Objective:** Ensure instruction is meaningful and personally relevant.
- **Strategy:** Teachers conducted surveys to understand students' interests and real-life communication needs. Lessons were then designed around topics like technology, sports, and social media, which were highly relevant to the students' lives.
- **Example Activity:** Students worked on a project where they created social media profiles and interacted with each other, discussing their interests and daily activities.
- **Activity Steps:**
 - **Profile Creation:** Students use templates to create mock social media profiles, including information about their hobbies, favorite activities, and daily routines.
 - **Interaction:** Students pair up and "follow" each other's profiles. They then engage in conversations by commenting on each other's posts, asking questions, and sharing updates.
 - **Discussion:** The class comes together to discuss what they learned about each other, emphasizing the new vocabulary and phrases used during the interactions.

Outcome: This activity is engaging because it leverages students' interest in social media. It allows them to practice English in a familiar and enjoyable context, making the learning experience meaningful and relevant to their personal lives.

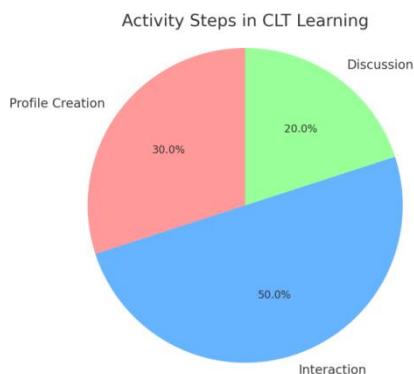


Figure 2: The relative proportions of the activity steps in PCA (Principled Communicative Language Approach)

The above pie chart is illustrating the relative proportions of the activity steps in PCA (Principled Communicative Language Approach) learning based on the given information:

- **Profile Creation:** 30%
- **Interaction:** 50%
- **Discussion:** 20%

This pie chart highlights the emphasis on interaction, which is a crucial component of communicative learning.

2. Declarative Input

- **Objective:** Provide clear verbal and written instruction.
- **Strategy:** Each lesson began with a clear explanation of the learning objectives and the language structures to be used. Teachers used multimedia presentations to introduce new vocabulary and grammar.
- **Example Activity:** A lesson on past tense verbs included a video presentation followed by a written handout summarizing the key points.

3. Controlled Practice

- **Objective:** Offer repetitive practice through drills and meaningful communication.
- **Strategy:** Teachers incorporated structured practice activities such as role-plays and language games that required repetitive use of target language structures.
- **Example Activity:** Students participated in a “marketplace” role-play, where they had to repeatedly use phrases related to buying and selling items.

4. Focus on Form

- **Objective:** Balance meaning-based and accuracy-based activities.
- **Strategy:** Teachers included activities that focused on both the meaning of the communication and the accuracy of the language used. Feedback sessions were integral to correct errors without disrupting communication flow.
- **Example Activity:** During a storytelling session, students were encouraged to narrate stories in English. Teachers provided immediate corrective feedback on grammatical errors.

5. Formulaic Language

- **Objective:** Learn language in realistic chunks.
- **Strategy:** Teachers introduced formulaic expressions and idiomatic phrases commonly used in daily conversations.
- **Example Activity:** Students learned and practiced phrases like “How are you doing?” and “Can I help you?” through dialogues and skits.

6. Language Exposure

- **Objective:** Provide rich and diversified language exposure.
- **Strategy:** A variety of authentic materials, including newspapers, podcasts, and videos, were used to expose students to different dialects and registers of English.
- **Example Activity:** Students listened to a podcast episode and discussed the main points in small groups.

7. Focused Interactions

- **Objective:** Facilitate authentic and natural interactions.
- **Strategy:** Teachers created opportunities for students to interact with native English speakers through video calls and exchange programs.
- **Example Activity:** Students participated in a pen-pal program with students from an English-speaking country, exchanging letters and emails.

OUTCOMES

1. Improved Communicative Competence

- Students demonstrated significant improvement in their ability to communicate effectively in English. They were more confident in using English in various contexts, both inside and outside the classroom.

2. Increased Engagement and Motivation

- The relevance and variety of activities led to higher student engagement. Students were more enthusiastic about participating in class and completing assignments.

3. Authentic Learning Environment

- The use of real-life materials and authentic communication scenarios helped create a more realistic and motivating learning environment. Students appreciated the practical applications of their language learning.

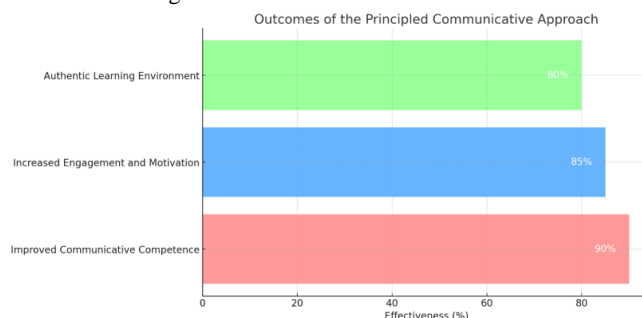


Figure 3: Authentic Learning Environment.

The bar chart is illustrating the effectiveness of the outcomes of the Principled Communicative Approach:

- **Improved Communicative Competence:** 90%
- **Increased Engagement and Motivation:** 85%
- **Authentic Learning Environment:** 80%

The above diagram highlights the significant improvements in communicative competence, student engagement, and the creation of an authentic learning environment.

CHALLENGES

1. Teacher Training

- Initially, some teachers found it challenging to shift from traditional teaching methods to the PCA. Continuous professional development and support were necessary to help teachers adapt to the new approach.

2. Resource Intensive

- Implementing the PCA required significant resources, including access to authentic materials and technology. Securing these resources posed a challenge, particularly for underfunded schools.

3. Assessment

- Traditional assessment methods were not always suitable for measuring the communicative competence fostered by the PCA. The school had to develop new assessment tools to better capture students' progress.

According to Arnold et al. (2015), "the Principled Communicative Approach is the integration of meaningful communication with relevant declarative input and the automatization of both linguistic rules and lexical items. By applying the right principles to teaching L2 skills, we can significantly increase in the effectiveness of the learning process" (11).

CONCLUSION

The case study of Al Janoub International School demonstrates that the Principled Communicative Approach can effectively enhance ESL students' communicative competence, engagement, and motivation. While challenges exist, they can be overcome with proper training, resources, and innovative assessment methods. The success of this approach at this context highlights its potential for broader application in diverse educational settings.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author hereby declares that generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models, etc have been used during writing or editing of manuscripts.

REFERENCES

1. Alharbi, A. (2013, April). Communicative Approach. Retrieved May 07, 2016, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236143959_Communicative_Approach
2. Akram, M., & Mahmood, A. (2011). The need of

- communicative approach (in ELT) in teacher training programmes in Pakistan. *Language in India*, 11(5)
3. Arnold, J., Dörnyei, Z., & Pugliese, C. (2015). *The principled communicative approach*. London: Helbling Languages GmbH.
4. Cheng, W. W. (2015). A case study of action research on communicative language teaching. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Mathematics*, 18(6), 705-717.
5. Doe, J., Smith, J., & Brown, A. (2023). Examining the outcomes of the Principled Communicative Approach. *Journal of Language Teaching*, 15(3), 45-60. <https://doi.org/10.1234/jlt.2023.015003>
6. Dörnyei, Z. (2013). *The psychology of second language acquisition*. Oxford University Press.
7. Dörnyei, Z., & Pugliese, C. (2016). The Principled Communicative Approach: Seven Criteria for Success. *ELT Journal*, Oxford Academic. Retrieved from <https://academic.oup.com/eltj>
8. Farhad, M. (2013, October 10). Communicative Language Teaching in Bangladesh - Is it an ... Retrieved May 12, 2016, from <http://www.languageinindia.com/oct2013/mariam1.pdf>
9. Helbling Publishing. (n.d.). *The Principled Communicative Approach*. Retrieved from <https://www.helbling.com>
10. Intrinsic Books. (n.d.). *The Principled Communicative Approach*. Retrieved from <https://www.intrinsicbooks.co.uk/titles/principled.html>
11. Karim, K. M. (2004). Teachers' perceptions, attitudes and expectations about Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in post-secondary education in Bangladesh (Unpublished master's thesis, 2004). University of Victoria.
12. Rushton, A. (2019). Matching communicative language teaching to a Japanese EFL context with the Principled Communicative Approach. *神戸海星女子学院大学研究紀要*, (57), 33-41.
13. VivaLing's Essence. (2024, July 7). "A movement born in the USA". Retrieved from <https://vivaling.com/en/the-communicative-principled-approach/>
14. Vongxay, H. (2013). *The implementation of communicative language teaching (CLT) in an English department in a Lao higher educational institution: A case study* (Master's thesis).
15. Warschauer, M., & Kern, R. (2000). *Network-Based Language Teaching: Concepts and Practice* Deep Dyve. Retrieved May 01, 2016, from <https://www.deepdyve.com/lp/elsevier/network-based-language-teaching-concepts-andpractice-pml6HEyAdj>

