

2007 Symposium Debriefing

Introduction

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CLT finds its theoretical framework in the work of American sociolinguists like Hymes and British linguists like Halliday in the 1970s. With a rapid increase of immigrant workers due to political and economic interdependence of European countries as a social background, their language needs were socially recognized and a language teaching approach that puts emphasis on language use in real-life situations was advocated by the Council of Europe. In short, this is the origin of CLT.

At the symposium entitled “Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) since the 1970s: Further Tasks and Solutions” in the 2007 annual conference, four teachers presented their actual teaching practices based on their language teaching principles, particularly relating them to the concepts of CLT. Kaga Naoko sensei, who worked at Yamada Junior High School at the time this symposium was held and is now a teacher at Minase Junior High School, has been attempting to make her class dynamic with diverse and spontaneous use of English by her students with a well-planned procedure. Asari Hiroshi sensei at Akita Nishi Senior High School has been conducting learner-centred class with belief in his students’ potential and effects of classroom English. Kitajima Yayoi sensei at Odate Kokusai Joho Gakuin carefully considers her students’ language ability development during the six years from the start of junior high school and stresses the importance of integrated and balanced ways of teaching four skills. Sugita Michiko sensei at Yuri Senior High School reported on her teaching in an educational research programme in the national project called SELHi when she taught at Akita Minami Senior High School and her communicative way of teaching at the present school, applying the findings from the SELHi project, intended to foster both linguistic and communicative competence.

You may be wondering if CLT works well also in Japanese junior and senior high school. The background of Japanese educational settings is different from that of the European society in the 1970s, but the goal is the same: for language use, i.e. communicative language ability. When the fundamental teaching principles of CLT are correctly and fully understood by teachers, its specific teaching will be further devised, adjusted and transformed into one fine-tuned to each English class context. We would like to extend our gratitude to the four “communicative” teachers and wish this symposium will be of some help for your teaching.