

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT) IN IMPROVING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract: *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has become one of the most influential approaches in modern foreign language education due to its emphasis on meaningful communication and practical language use. In higher education, improving English speaking skills among university students is considered an essential objective because English functions as an international language of communication in academic, professional, and social contexts. This article examines the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching in improving English speaking skills among university students. The study analyzes the principles of CLT, its classroom implementation, and its influence on students' fluency, accuracy, confidence, and communicative competence. Special attention is given to interactive teaching methods such as pair work, group discussions, role-playing, problem-solving activities, and real-life communication tasks. The article also discusses challenges associated with CLT implementation, including large class sizes, limited language exposure, lack of teacher preparation, and students' anxiety in speaking activities.*

Keywords: *Communicative Language Teaching, CLT, English speaking skills, university students, communicative competence, language education, speaking proficiency, interactive learning, foreign language teaching, higher education.*

Introduction

English has become the dominant international language in education, business, science, technology, and intercultural communication. As globalization continues to strengthen international interaction, university students increasingly require strong English communication skills to participate successfully in academic and professional environments. Among the four major language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—speaking is often considered the most challenging skill for foreign language learners because it requires immediate language production, confidence, fluency, and interaction with others. Traditional language teaching methods frequently focused on grammar memorization, translation exercises, and teacher-centered instruction. Although such methods contributed to grammatical knowledge, they often failed to develop students' communicative competence

and speaking fluency. As a result, many learners experienced difficulties using English effectively in real-life communication situations. To address these limitations, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged as an innovative approach emphasizing interaction, meaningful communication, and learner participation.

Communicative Language Teaching is based on the idea that language is primarily a tool for communication rather than merely a system of grammatical rules. CLT encourages students to use language actively in authentic situations through discussions, role-playing, interviews, collaborative tasks, and problem-solving activities. Researchers emphasize that communicative activities increase learner motivation, confidence, and speaking competence by creating opportunities for meaningful interaction. (britishcouncil.org) University students particularly benefit from communicative teaching approaches because higher education increasingly requires participation in international academic discussions, presentations, conferences, and intercultural communication. Effective speaking skills contribute not only to academic success but also to future professional opportunities in globalized labor markets. Despite the advantages of CLT, implementing communicative methods in university classrooms may involve several challenges. Teachers may face difficulties related to large class sizes, insufficient teaching materials, limited classroom time, and varying levels of student proficiency. In some educational contexts, students may also feel anxious or reluctant to participate actively in speaking activities due to fear of making mistakes. The purpose of this article is to examine the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching in improving English speaking skills among university students, analyze the major principles and classroom practices of CLT, and evaluate challenges and strategies associated with communicative language instruction in higher education.

Main Body

Communicative Language Teaching has become one of the most widely used approaches in English language education because it focuses on developing students' ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations. Unlike traditional grammar-centered methods, CLT emphasizes interaction, meaningful language use, and learner participation. The primary objective of CLT is to develop communicative competence, which includes grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence.[1]

One of the major advantages of CLT is its learner-centered nature. In communicative classrooms, students actively participate in discussions, pair work, group activities, interviews, and role-playing exercises. These activities encourage students to practice speaking in authentic communication contexts rather than simply memorizing grammatical structures. Learners become more confident and motivated because they use language for meaningful purposes. Pair work and group discussions are among the most effective CLT

activities for improving speaking skills. Through interaction with classmates, students practice expressing opinions, asking questions, negotiating meaning, and responding spontaneously in English. Such communication activities help learners develop fluency and reduce fear of speaking in front of others. Researchers note that communicative interaction promotes natural language acquisition and increases speaking confidence. (researchgate.net)

Role-playing and simulation activities also contribute significantly to speaking development. Students participate in real-life communication scenarios such as job interviews, business meetings, travel situations, or academic presentations. These activities help learners practice vocabulary, pronunciation, and communication strategies appropriate to different social contexts. Moreover, role-playing encourages creativity and spontaneous language use.[2] Problem-solving tasks and collaborative projects are additional features of CLT classrooms. Students work together to exchange ideas, analyze information, and find solutions using English as the medium of communication. Such activities develop both language competence and critical thinking skills. Collaborative learning also creates supportive classroom environments where students feel more comfortable participating in communication activities.

Pronunciation and fluency development are important outcomes of communicative teaching. Frequent speaking practice enables students to improve pronunciation accuracy, intonation, and speech rhythm. Unlike traditional teaching methods that prioritize grammatical correctness, CLT encourages learners to communicate ideas even when errors occur. This approach reduces anxiety and helps students become more fluent speakers over time. Another important aspect of CLT is the use of authentic materials and real-life communication situations. Teachers may use newspapers, videos, podcasts, online resources, and everyday communication tasks to expose students to natural English language use. Authentic materials help learners understand cultural contexts and communication patterns used by native speakers. Technology has further strengthened the effectiveness of CLT in higher education. Digital platforms, online discussions, language learning applications, and virtual communication tools provide additional opportunities for speaking practice. University students can communicate with international peers through video conferences, online projects, and social media platforms, thereby improving both speaking skills and intercultural competence.[6]

Research findings generally demonstrate positive effects of CLT on university students' speaking skills. Students participating in communicative classrooms often show improvements in fluency, vocabulary use, interaction skills, confidence, and motivation. Communicative approaches help learners become more active, independent, and engaged in the language learning process. Educational institutions increasingly recognize the importance

of communicative competence in higher education. Universities aim to prepare students for participation in international academic programs, professional communication, and global cooperation. Therefore, integrating CLT into university English language curricula supports both linguistic development and future career readiness. Thus, Communicative Language Teaching serves as an effective educational approach for improving English speaking skills among university students by promoting interaction, confidence, fluency, and meaningful communication.

Conclusion

The analysis presented in this article demonstrates that Communicative Language Teaching is highly effective in improving English speaking skills among university students. In modern higher education, where English functions as an international language of communication, developing speaking competence has become one of the primary objectives of language instruction. Traditional teaching methods focused mainly on grammar and memorization often fail to provide students with sufficient opportunities for meaningful communication. In contrast, CLT creates learner-centered environments that encourage active participation, interaction, and practical language use. The study highlights several important advantages of CLT in university language education. Communicative activities such as pair work, group discussions, role-playing, collaborative projects, and problem-solving tasks significantly improve students' fluency, confidence, pronunciation, and communication strategies. Through authentic interaction, learners develop the ability to express ideas spontaneously and participate effectively in real-life communication situations.

In conclusion, Communicative Language Teaching represents an effective and modern approach to improving English speaking skills among university students. By emphasizing meaningful interaction and learner participation, CLT prepares students for successful communication in academic, professional, and social environments. Universities should continue integrating communicative approaches into English language programs in order to meet the growing demands of international education and global communication. The development of communicative competence through CLT ultimately contributes to students' academic achievement, professional success, and active participation in multicultural society.

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