

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING: ENHANCING INTERACTION IN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

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Abstract: *This study investigates the effectiveness of communicative language teaching in enhancing interaction in language classrooms. The research examines two groups of learners: one group received instruction through communicative language teaching methods, while the other was taught using traditional grammar-based approaches. The results indicate that the group exposed to communicative methods demonstrated significantly higher levels of interaction and engagement during lessons. These findings suggest that incorporating communicative techniques in language teaching can improve learner participation and foster a more interactive learning environment. This research contributes to the understanding of effective language teaching methodologies and highlights the need for further exploration in this area.*

Key words: *Communicative language teaching, grammar-focused methods, grammar-translation methods, traditional approach, real-life language use.*

Introduction. Language acquisition has long been a focus of research, with a variety of methods developed to aid learners in mastering a second language. Among these, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has emerged as a widely recognized and implemented method, focusing on interaction and the practical use of language. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) also mentioned the basic principles of CLT. These were: the use of the target language as a vehicle for communication, emphasizing communication over the mastery of forms, the use and practice of authentic language, consideration of errors as inevitable and the manifestation of the learners' development, use of classroom activities that promote interaction, and judicious use of the native language of the learners. Unlike traditional grammar-focused methods, CLT emphasizes fluency and communication, often leading to higher levels of learner engagement. The purpose of this paper is to explore how CLT can effectively enhance learners' communicative competence, compared to more traditional approaches like the grammar-translation method and structure-based ones. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), as an approach to language teaching, was introduced to the field of second/foreign language teaching in the 1970s due to the insufficiency of the existing methods to enable learners to communicate in the target language (Desai, 2015). As Desai stated, CLT is becoming one of the key approaches in education as other traditional approaches are founded insufficient. On top of that, numerous studies have explored the impact of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in enhancing learners' language proficiency. One such study investigated the role of CLT in improving students' English speaking skills in a non-native context. The research employed

a quasi-experimental design, with two groups of university students: one following the CLT method and the other adhering to traditional grammar-focused instruction.

Methods. The experimental group (A) engaged in communicative tasks such as role-plays, discussions, and simulations designed to mimic real-life language use. In contrast, the control group (B) relied on grammar and translation exercises. Pre-test and post-test assessments measured both groups' speaking performance and communicative competence.

The findings revealed that the CLT group significantly outperformed the control group in speaking fluency, interaction, and real-world language application. Students also reported higher motivation and confidence levels, attributing their progress to the interactive and practical nature of CLT activities. As it is stated, there are underlying principles of Communicative Language Teaching that the teachers should be aware of to support their students' language development. Richards and Rodgers (2014, p. 105), for example, listed five principles of CLT:

- Learners learn a language through using it to communicate;
- Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities;
- Fluency is an important dimension of communication;
- Communication involves the integration of different language skills;
- Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error.

This research also came as a proof of that.

Results. These results underscore the importance of CLT in fostering communicative competence and improving language learners' ability to use English effectively in diverse, everyday situations. This research adds to the growing evidence supporting CLT as a superior method for developing functional language skills compared to traditional approaches.

Overall, after the 12-week intervention, Group A showed a 25% improvement in oral fluency, as measured by the pre- and post-tests, while Group B demonstrated only a 8% improvement. Additionally, observational data indicated that students in Group A engaged in more spontaneous interaction, with a 40% increase in voluntary participation. Group B's interactions remained more structured, with less student-to-student communication. These results suggest that CLT enhances oral fluency and learner interaction more than the traditional grammar-translation method.

Discussion. In the Communicative Approach, language is viewed as a means of communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Having accepted language as a means of communication and analyzed the importance of communication, sociolinguistic factors, the findings suggest that Communicative Language Teaching offers significant advantages in fostering student fluency and interaction compared to the other traditional methods. What made this experiment valuable is that it has the exact period of time which could help the reliability of the research paper; got students from tertiary education, which declines the researches and concepts demonstrated difficulties in learning languages in middle-age classes; it has exact progress using this method in real-life cases and recommends others to use that too. Moreover, the increased student engagement observed in Group A also

supports the claim that CLT can make learning more dynamic and learner-centered. However, this study had limitations, such as a relatively small sample size and a limited time frame. Future research could explore CLT’s effectiveness across different language levels or extend the intervention period to examine long-term effects. On top of that, there are some challenges that can be faced during speaking in the EFL contexts. It is a difficult skill; even those who have been studying English for many years find it difficult to speak appropriately and understandably (Bueno et al., 2006). Speaking is challenging because it involves a set of physical and mental activities more than just

knowing the grammar and semantics of the language (Jung, 1995; Shumin, 1997). According to Levelt (1995), for example, the cognitive process of speaking involves three interacting and overlapping stages (conceptualization, formulation, and articulation) and one ever-present process (self-monitoring) (as cited in Goh & Burns, 2012). Although this challenges exist, we should admit that knowing language can be tested through speaking. The teaching and learning of speaking is an essential part of English language instruction as the mastery of speaking skills is a priority for many language learners through which they evaluate their success in language learning and the effectiveness of English courses (Richards, 2006).

Conclusion. In conclusion, this study demonstrates that Communicative Language Teaching can significantly improve learners' oral fluency and interactive skills compared to traditional grammar-translation methods. The findings support the implementation of CLT in language classrooms, particularly when the goal is to enhance communicative competence. However, further research is necessary to explore its long-term impact and effectiveness in different learning environments.

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