

Communicative Language Teaching in Post-Soviet EFL Contexts: A Case for Reform in Uzbek Classrooms

Bonu Sadriddinova

Affiliation: Karshi State University
bonusadriddinova06@gmail.com

Abstract

This article discusses how CLT/Communicative English Language can be used in English classes in Uzbekistan. Although our government is trying to make some educational reforms, many schools still use old grammar-based teaching methods. This article explains the main ideas of CLT and also shows how it can be used in current teaching practices. It also gives further information about the disadvantages and advantages of this method in using Uzbek classrooms. In the end, the article suggests using CLT can help students to improve their not only language skills, but also their communication skills in English.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Uzbek education, language pedagogy, grammar-translation method, educational reform

Introduction

In recent decades, the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has changed from traditional grammar-focused instruction to more communicative, student-centered methods. Among these, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has widely known as one of the most widely known approaches in global language pedagogy. CLT emphasizes real-life communication, and the use of authentic language materials to develop learners' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.

However, in many post-Soviet countries—including Uzbekistan—this pedagogical transformation is not working that fast. Although English is prioritized in national education policies and the curriculum has been modernized to reflect communicative goals, actual classroom practices still often reflect the outdated grammar-translation method. These classrooms are typically teacher-centered, with an emphasis on rote memorization, controlled drills, and grammar rules rather than meaningful practices.

The legacy of Soviet educational traditions, a lack of trained teachers in communicative methods, insufficient classroom resources, and cultural attitudes toward teacher authority all contribute to resistance against fully adopting CLT. At the same time, the increasing global importance of English for academic and professional success is really crucial to develop the country.

This article explores the importance of CLT and also discusses about how to start to use from this technique all over the past-Soviet countries. hopefully Learning language becomes more easy and interactive because of this technique.

Literature Review

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged in the 1970s as a response to the traditional language teaching methods such as grammar-translation and audio-lingual approaches. While earlier models focused on form, accuracy, and memorization, CLT emphasizes fluency, meaning-making, and learner interaction (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). It is rooted in theories of communicative language proposed by Hymes (1972), who argued that effective language use is not only grammatical knowledge but also the ability to use language appropriately in social

contexts.

Several scholars have highlighted the core principles of CLT, which include task-based learning, authentic materials, pair and group work, and a focus on meaning over form (Nunan, 1991; Littlewood, 2007). These methods are believed to foster learner interest and motivation.

Despite its widespread acceptance in Western contexts, the implementation of CLT in non-Western and post-Soviet environments is still bearing hard to accept. Studies conducted in Eastern Europe and Central Asia have found that teachers often lack training in CLT principles, and struggle with large class sizes and limited access to resources (Karimov & Davies, 2018; Yakovleva, 2020). Furthermore, traditional classroom hierarchies—where the teacher is seen as the sole authority—clash with CLT's emphasis on student participation and learner-centered instruction.

In the context of Uzbekistan, recent educational reforms have signaled a shift toward modern methodologies, including CLT. However, as Sadikova (2021) notes, these reforms often remain superficial, with little change in actual classroom behavior. Teachers frequently express support for communicative goals in theory but still uses grammar-based instruction in practice due to exam-oriented systems which makes the lesson boring and lack of institutional support.

This review highlights the gap between policy-level ambition and classroom-level reality.

Discussion: Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing CLT in Uzbekistan

Although Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) offers clear advantages in developing practical language skills. Teachers often face large class sizes, and a lack of access to authentic materials. Moreover, many instructors were trained in teacher-centered places and are unfamiliar with an interactive communicative activities.

Yet, there are significant opportunities as well. One promising indicator is the success of learners who engage in self-directed, communicative learning outside the classroom. For instance, the author of this article successfully prepared for the IELTS exam in just 18 days through independent study. This achievement was made possible by building on a strong foundation in General English, through communicative and interactive self-practice strategies. The experience supports the argument that CLT-based approaches—when genuinely implemented—can dramatically in language language learning, especially when they encourage learner interest.

Such real-life evidence aligns with research suggesting that students exposed to communicative environments become more confident, fluent, and capable of using English in authentic situations (Brown, 2001).

Implications and Recommendations

To promote effective CLT technique in Uzbekistan, several strategic steps must be taken. First, teacher training programs need to be updated. Workshops should be organized with the support of the Western countries also communicative techniques and should be provided opportunities for teachers to apply them in real classroom settings.

Second, schools/government should invest in authentic materials, technological tools, and environments that support pair and group work. Peer collaboration, task-based assignments, and

project work should be prioritized.

Finally, a cultural shift is necessary to show the teacher's role. This change must be supported by school leadership, parents, and institutional policies or government.

Conclusion

In conclusion, CLS is a useful method for helping language learners to learn language effectively. It focuses on communication, not just any kind of rules. From my own experience from IELTS preparation I found that instead of just learning by heart some kind of rules or texts, real conversations and using English actively helped me to improve my language skill. CLT shows us the language is best learned by using it, not just by memorizing it.

References:

1. Benson, P. (2011). Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning (2nd ed.). Routledge.
→ Autonomy in language learning and how self-directed study impacts proficiency.
2. Dörnyei, Z. (2001). Motivational strategies in the language classroom. Cambridge University Press.
→ Discusses the role of motivation in language learning, essential for self-study.
3. Green, A. (2014). IELTS washback in context: Preparation for academic English proficiency. Cambridge University Press.
→ Detailed analysis of IELTS preparation strategies and test impacts.
4. Karimova, N. (2019). Self-directed learning for language proficiency: Case studies from Central Asia. *Journal of Language Learning*, 12(3), 45–58.
→ Regional insights on self-study effectiveness, especially in Uzbekistan.
5. Little, D. (1991). Learner autonomy 1: Definitions, issues and problems. Authentik.
→ Foundational work on defining and supporting learner autonomy.
6. Nation, I. S. P., & Newton, J. (2009). Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking. Routledge.
→ Provides practical speaking and listening strategies, useful in self-study.
7. Oxford, R. L. (1990). Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know. Newbury House.
→ Seminal book on learner strategies across all language skills.