

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING IN DEVELOPING SPEAKING FLUENCY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is one of the most influential approaches in modern foreign language education, emphasizing meaningful interaction and real-life communication. This article investigates the effectiveness of CLT in developing speaking fluency among university students learning English as a foreign language. The study is based on a qualitative and descriptive analysis of theoretical literature and classroom practices. The findings reveal that CLT significantly improves learners' speaking fluency, confidence, and communicative competence by creating authentic interaction, encouraging student participation, and reducing anxiety. The article also discusses challenges in implementing CLT at the university level and offers practical recommendations for English language teachers.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching, speaking fluency, university students, EFL, communicative competence

Introduction

In recent decades, the goals of English language teaching have shifted from mastering grammatical structures to developing communicative competence. University students are expected not only to understand English but also to speak it fluently and confidently in academic and professional contexts. However, many learners face difficulties in oral communication due to limited speaking practice, fear of making mistakes, and teacher-centered instructional methods.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged as a response to these challenges by prioritizing communication as both the means and the goal of language learning. CLT emphasizes interaction, authentic language use, and learner-centered activities. This article aims to examine the effectiveness of CLT in developing speaking fluency among university students and to highlight its pedagogical value in higher education.

Literature Review

Communicative Language Teaching is grounded in the theory of communicative competence proposed by Hymes, which includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. According to Richards and Rodgers, CLT focuses on meaningful communication rather than the accurate use of isolated language forms.

Research studies have demonstrated that CLT positively influences speaking skills by increasing learners' exposure to communicative tasks such as role-plays, discussions,

interviews, and problem-solving activities. Harmer notes that fluency develops when learners are given opportunities to speak freely without constant correction. Similarly, Littlewood emphasizes that communicative activities help learners develop confidence and spontaneous speech. At the university level, CLT has been shown to enhance students' motivation and participation, particularly in EFL contexts where exposure to English outside the classroom is limited.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design based on the analysis of academic literature, methodological sources, and classroom observations in university English courses. The focus is on identifying how CLT principles and activities contribute to the development of speaking fluency among undergraduate students. Data were collected through: analysis of published research on CLT and speaking skills; observation of communicative activities used in university classrooms; reflection on students' oral performance and engagement during CLT-based lessons.

Communicative Language Teaching and Speaking Fluency

Speaking fluency refers to the ability to speak smoothly, confidently, and with minimal hesitation. In CLT-based classrooms, fluency is developed through continuous interaction and purposeful communication. The following features of Communicative Language Teaching contribute directly to the development of speaking fluency. First, meaning-focused interaction encourages students to prioritize the transmission of meaning rather than the production of grammatically perfect sentences, which allows for more spontaneous and confident speech. Second, the use of authentic tasks simulates real-life situations and promotes natural language use, helping learners apply English in meaningful contexts. In addition, pair and group work significantly increase students' opportunities to speak and negotiate meaning with peers, thereby enhancing fluency through interaction. Reduced teacher talk is another essential feature, as the teacher functions as a facilitator rather than a lecturer, creating more space for student participation. Finally, tolerance of errors plays a crucial role in fluency development, as mistakes are viewed as a natural part of the language learning process, reducing anxiety and encouraging learners to speak more freely. Through these principles, students gradually gain confidence and improve their oral fluency.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis indicates that Communicative Language Teaching is highly effective in developing speaking fluency among university students. Students exposed to CLT activities demonstrate increased willingness to speak, improved fluency, and greater confidence in expressing ideas.

Pair and group activities reduce speaking anxiety and create a supportive learning environment. Role-plays and discussions allow learners to practice functional language and spontaneous speech. Moreover, students become more autonomous and responsible for their learning. However, the study also identifies challenges such as large class sizes, limited instructional

time, and teachers' insufficient training in CLT methodology. Despite these limitations, the benefits of CLT outweigh the challenges when appropriate strategies and planning are applied.

Conclusion

Communicative Language Teaching plays a crucial role in developing speaking fluency among university students. By emphasizing meaningful interaction and learner-centered activities, CLT creates opportunities for authentic language use and fluency development. The findings of this study confirm that CLT enhances students' oral communication skills, motivation, and confidence. Therefore, it is recommended that university English instructors integrate CLT principles into their teaching practices and provide students with regular opportunities for communicative interaction. Future research may focus on empirical studies measuring fluency development through experimental designs.

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