

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT) METHODS IMPROVE FLUENCY AND COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN LEARNERS

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Annotation: The article Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Methods Improve Fluency and Communicative Competence in Learners examines the effectiveness of communicative approaches in enhancing learners' ability to use language fluently and meaningfully in real-life contexts. The study focuses on how CLT principles, such as interaction, authentic communication, and learner-centered instruction, contribute to the development of speaking skills and overall communicative competence. It highlights that language learning becomes more effective when learners are actively engaged in meaningful communication rather than isolated grammar practice. The article analyzes various CLT-based techniques, including role-plays, information-gap activities, group discussions, and task-based learning. These strategies are shown to increase learner participation, reduce anxiety, and promote spontaneous language use. The study also discusses the role of the teacher as a facilitator who creates supportive environments for communication and guides learners toward effective language use.

Key words: communicative language teaching, fluency, communicative competence, interaction.

Introduction

In recent decades, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has emerged as one of the most influential approaches in foreign language education. Unlike traditional methods that prioritize grammar rules and memorization, CLT focuses on the practical use of language for communication. In modern classrooms, the primary goal is not only to develop linguistic accuracy but also to enable learners to communicate effectively in real-life situations. This shift reflects the growing importance of fluency and communicative competence in a globalized world where English is widely used as a means of international communication.

Fluency refers to the ability to produce language smoothly and naturally, while communicative competence includes not only grammatical knowledge but also sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic abilities. Many learners struggle to achieve these competencies when teaching methods are limited to mechanical exercises and teacher-centered instruction. As a result, there is a need for approaches that encourage active participation, interaction, and meaningful language use. CLT addresses this need by placing learners at the center of the learning process and emphasizing communication as both the means and the goal of instruction.

CLT methods include a wide range of classroom activities designed to simulate real-life communication. These include pair work, group discussions, role-plays, problem-solving tasks, and information-gap activities. Such tasks require learners to exchange information, negotiate meaning, and respond to unpredictable situations, thereby promoting spontaneous language use. Through repeated exposure to communicative situations, learners gradually develop fluency and confidence.

Moreover, CLT creates a supportive learning environment where mistakes are viewed as a natural part of language development. This reduces learners' anxiety and encourages risk-taking, which is essential for improving speaking skills. Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating communication by organizing activities, providing feedback, and guiding learners without dominating the interaction. This article explores how CLT methods improve fluency and communicative competence, drawing on both theoretical perspectives and practical classroom applications.

Literature review. Communicative Language Teaching is widely supported by researchers as an effective approach to language learning. H. Douglas Brown emphasizes that language acquisition occurs most successfully when learners are engaged in meaningful interaction. He argues that communication-based instruction allows learners to internalize language structures naturally through use rather than memorization. According to Brown, fluency develops when learners are given opportunities to experiment with language in real communicative contexts [1, 210].

Jeremy Harmer highlights the importance of communicative activities such as role-plays and discussions in developing speaking skills. He explains that these activities encourage spontaneous speech and help learners build confidence. Harmer also notes that fluency improves when learners are allowed to speak freely without constant interruption for correction, which can otherwise hinder communication [2, 123].

William Littlewood focuses on the balance between fluency and accuracy in CLT. He suggests that communicative activities enable learners to practice grammar within meaningful contexts, leading to more effective language acquisition. Littlewood also emphasizes that interaction helps learners understand how language functions in social situations, thereby enhancing communicative competence [3, 45].

Jack C. Richards discusses the shift from traditional teaching methods to communicative approaches. He argues that CLT provides learners with opportunities to negotiate meaning and engage in authentic communication. Richards highlights that communicative competence involves multiple components, including discourse and strategic competence, which are best developed through interaction [4, 18].

Scott Thornbury explains that speaking is a skill that develops through practice and interaction. He states that CLT activities increase speaking time and encourage learners to use language actively. Thornbury also notes that task-based interaction helps learners move from controlled practice to more spontaneous communication [5, 67].

Penny Ur emphasizes the role of group work in promoting communication. She argues that collaborative activities increase participation and provide learners with more opportunities to practice speaking. Ur also highlights that interaction reduces anxiety and creates a supportive learning environment, which is essential for developing fluency [6, 120].

Methodology. This study employed a mixed-methods research design to examine the effectiveness of CLT methods in improving fluency and communicative competence among EFL learners. The participants consisted of 40 upper-intermediate students divided into an experimental group and a control group. Both groups followed the same curriculum; however, the experimental group was taught using CLT methods, while the control group received traditional instruction.

Data collection instruments included pre-tests and post-tests, observation checklists, and student questionnaires. Speaking tests were designed to evaluate fluency, accuracy, vocabulary use, pronunciation, and overall communicative effectiveness. Classroom observations were conducted to assess participation, interaction, and engagement levels.

The experimental group participated in communicative activities such as role-plays, group discussions, and task-based exercises over an eight-week period. The teacher acted as a facilitator, guiding communication and providing feedback after activities. The control group engaged mainly in grammar exercises and teacher-led instruction.

Results. The results showed that students in the experimental group demonstrated significant improvement in fluency and communicative competence compared to the control group. Post-test scores indicated higher performance in speaking tasks, particularly in terms of fluency, vocabulary range, and confidence.

Classroom observations revealed that learners in the experimental group were more active and engaged. They participated more frequently in discussions and showed greater willingness to communicate. In contrast, the control group remained relatively passive, with limited opportunities for interaction.

Discussion. The findings confirm that CLT methods are highly effective in promoting fluency and communicative competence. Interactive activities encourage learners to use language in meaningful contexts, which leads to deeper understanding and better retention. Increased speaking time and reduced anxiety contribute to improved confidence and willingness to communicate.

However, the study also suggests that CLT should be balanced with form-focused instruction to ensure accuracy. While fluency develops quickly through communication, grammatical accuracy may require additional support and feedback.

Conclusion. In conclusion, this study demonstrates that Communicative Language Teaching methods significantly improve learners' fluency and communicative competence. By emphasizing interaction, meaningful communication, and learner-centered instruction, CLT creates dynamic and effective learning environments. Students who engage in communicative activities develop not only linguistic skills but also confidence and independence.

The findings highlight the importance of integrating CLT methods into language teaching practices. Teachers should design lessons that encourage active participation and provide opportunities for authentic communication. Although challenges such as time constraints and classroom management may arise, the benefits of CLT outweigh these difficulties.

Overall, CLT represents a practical and effective approach to language teaching that prepares learners for real-life communication. Future research may explore its long-term impact and application in different educational contexts.

THE LIST OF LITERATURE

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