



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT) IN EFL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract: This article examines the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in EFL classrooms, focusing on its impact on learners communicative competence, motivation, and language proficiency. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from pre- and post-tests with qualitative insights from classroom observations and interviews. The findings indicate that CLT significantly enhances students speaking skills, interaction, and confidence through meaningful communication and learner-centered activities. However, certain challenges such as limited resources, large class sizes, and traditional assessment systems may affect its implementation. The study suggests adopting a context-sensitive approach to maximize CLT effectiveness.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching, EFL, communicative competence, learner-centered approach, language skills.

Introduction

In recent decades, the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) has undergone significant transformations, shifting from traditional teacher-centered approaches toward more learner-centered and communication-oriented methodologies. Among these, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has emerged as one of the most influential paradigms in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Rooted in the concept of communicative competence, CLT emphasizes the ability of learners to use language effectively and appropriately in real-life situations rather than merely mastering grammatical structures. The growing importance of English as a global lingua franca has further highlighted the need for teaching approaches that prioritize meaningful interaction and practical language use. In this context, CLT aims to develop learners' fluency, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence through interactive activities such as role-plays, discussions, and problem-solving tasks. Unlike traditional methods, which often focus on rote memorization and explicit grammar instruction, CLT promotes active student participation and authentic communication in the classroom.

Despite its widespread adoption, the implementation of CLT in EFL



classrooms presents both opportunities and challenges. Factors such as large class sizes, limited resources, insufficient teacher training, and cultural differences in educational contexts may influence its effectiveness. Furthermore, there remains ongoing debate among scholars regarding the extent to which CLT can be successfully adapted to diverse learning environments, particularly in non-native English-speaking countries

Literature Review

In modern English Language Teaching, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is widely regarded as an effective approach aimed at developing learners communicative competence through meaningful interaction. Contemporary scholars emphasize that CLT represents a shift from traditional grammar-focused instruction to a more functional and learner-centered model. According to Jack C. Richards, effective language teaching today prioritizes fluency, interaction, and the ability to use language in authentic contexts rather than the mere acquisition of grammatical rules. In line with this view, David Nunan highlights the importance of task-based activities within CLT, arguing that learners develop communicative skills more successfully when engaged in real-life tasks such as discussions, problem-solving, and role-playing. These interactive practices not only improve speaking abilities but also enhance learners confidence and motivation.

Furthermore, the concept of communicative competence has been expanded in recent literature. Michael Byram emphasizes that communicative competence includes intercultural awareness, which enables learners to use language appropriately in different cultural contexts. Similarly, Claire Kramsch argues that language learning is inseparable from cultural understanding, and CLT provides an effective framework for integrating cultural elements into language instruction. Despite its advantages, several researchers have identified challenges in the implementation of CLT, particularly in EFL settings. Jeremy Harmer notes that practical issues such as large class sizes, limited teaching resources, and insufficient teacher training can reduce the effectiveness of communicative activities. In addition, H. Douglas Brown points out that traditional examination systems and teacher-centered educational cultures may conflict with the principles of CLT, making its full implementation difficult⁵⁹.

Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods research design to investigate the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in EFL classrooms.

⁵⁹ Brown, H. Douglas Principles of Language Learning and Teaching. - 6th ed. - White Plains: Pearson Education, 2014. - 412 p.



Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-tests to measure learners improvement in communicative competence, while qualitative data were obtained via classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with both teachers and students. The sample consisted of intermediate-level EFL learners selected from a higher educational institution, and the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of CLT implementation and its outcomes.

Results And Discussion

The effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in EFL classrooms can be analyzed through its influence on communicative competence, learner engagement, and overall language development. One of the fundamental principles of CLT is the prioritization of meaningful communication over the memorization of grammatical rules. In practice, this is achieved through interactive classroom activities such as role-plays, pair work, group discussions, and problem-solving tasks. These activities simulate real-life communication and encourage learners to use language purposefully, which leads to the development of fluency and spontaneous speech production. As learners are exposed to authentic communicative situations, they gradually acquire the ability to negotiate meaning, express opinions, and respond appropriately in different contexts.

Another significant advantage of CLT lies in its learner-centered orientation. In contrast to traditional teacher-centered methods, where students often play a passive role, CLT promotes active participation and collaborative learning. Students are encouraged to interact with one another, share ideas, and take responsibility for their own learning process. This shift not only increases motivation but also creates a more dynamic and supportive classroom environment. Research observations indicate that learners engaged in communicative activities tend to demonstrate higher levels of confidence and a greater willingness to communicate, which are essential factors for successful language acquisition, especially in EFL settings where exposure to English outside the classroom is limited. In addition, CLT contributes significantly to the integration of language and culture. Communication is not limited to linguistic knowledge; it also involves understanding social norms, cultural values, and contextual appropriateness. Through the use of authentic materials such as videos, dialogues, and real-life scenarios, CLT enables learners to develop intercultural communicative competence. This allows students to interpret and produce language that is not only grammatically correct but also culturally appropriate. Such an approach is particularly relevant in the context of globalization, where English functions as an international means of communication across diverse cultural backgrounds.



However, despite its pedagogical advantages, the implementation of CLT in EFL classrooms presents several challenges. One of the most common issues is related to classroom conditions, including large class sizes and limited teaching resources. These factors can make it difficult for teachers to organize effective communicative activities and monitor student participation. Furthermore, in many educational systems, assessment practices are still largely based on traditional grammar-focused examinations. This creates a mismatch between communicative teaching objectives and evaluation methods, often forcing teachers to combine CLT with more conventional approaches in order to meet institutional requirements.

Another important factor influencing the effectiveness of CLT is teacher competence. Successful implementation of CLT requires teachers to possess not only strong language proficiency but also advanced pedagogical skills. They must be able to design meaningful communicative tasks, facilitate interaction, manage classroom dynamics, and provide constructive feedback. Without adequate training and professional development, teachers may encounter difficulties in applying CLT principles effectively. Therefore, continuous teacher education and institutional support play a crucial role in ensuring the successful adoption of this approach. Moreover, it is important to consider the role of learner-related factors in CLT implementation. Students who are accustomed to traditional, teacher-centered instruction may initially feel uncertain or reluctant to participate in communicative activities. They may lack confidence or fear making mistakes in front of others. In such cases, teachers need to create a supportive and non-threatening learning environment that encourages risk-taking and gradual participation. Over time, as learners become more familiar with communicative practices, their confidence and competence tend to improve significantly.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis demonstrates that CLT is a highly effective approach for enhancing communicative competence, fostering learner engagement, and promoting practical language use in EFL classrooms. Nevertheless, its success depends on a variety of contextual factors, including classroom conditions, assessment systems, teacher preparedness, and learner attitudes. A flexible and context-sensitive application of CLT, combined with appropriate institutional support, can significantly improve the quality and outcomes of English language teaching.

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