



TEACHING LANGUAGE SKILLS IN A COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

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ABSTRACT *This article explores the application of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in teaching the four core language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. With a growing emphasis on learner-centered pedagogy, CLT has become one of the most dominant methodologies in second and foreign language education. The article reviews relevant literature, analyzes communicative classroom practices, and evaluates their effectiveness based on qualitative research. The study finds that the communicative approach leads to higher student engagement, improved fluency, and stronger practical communication skills. The paper concludes with recommendations for integrating CLT into diverse educational contexts.*

Keywords: *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), language skills, language acquisition, learner-centered, interaction, second language education*

INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a primary means of human communication. As globalization and cross-cultural exchanges continue to intensify, the need to teach and learn foreign languages effectively has become increasingly important. Traditional language teaching approaches, such as the grammar-translation method or audio-lingual method, have often emphasized rote memorization and repetitive drills. While these approaches helped learners develop grammatical accuracy, they were often criticized for neglecting actual communication ability.

In response, **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)** emerged during the 1970s as a reaction against behaviorist theories of language learning. It shifted

the focus from structural competence to **communicative competence** — the ability to use the language appropriately in real-life contexts. This approach emphasizes interaction, authentic tasks, and meaningful communication over mere form-focused instruction.

This paper aims to critically examine how language skills — listening, speaking, reading, and writing — can be taught effectively through a communicative approach. It also highlights challenges faced during implementation and offers recommendations for educators and curriculum designers.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

The foundation of CLT lies in **Hymes' (1972)** concept of "communicative competence," which expanded upon Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence. Hymes argued that knowing a language meant not only mastering its grammar but also understanding how to use it in social contexts. Later, **Canale and Swain (1980)** categorized communicative competence into grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) emphasized that CLT incorporates a wide variety of activities aimed at promoting communication and real interaction. Instead of drilling isolated grammatical structures, students engage in **task-based learning, role-playing, problem-solving, and information-gap activities.**

Littlewood (1981) underlined the importance of both functional communication and social interaction in language learning. He stressed that CLT must balance both accuracy and fluency while giving learners opportunities for self-expression and autonomy.

TEACHING THE FOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS COMMUNICATIVELY

CLT offers various strategies to teach all four major language skills.

Skill	Communicative Techniques
Listening	Authentic audio, podcasts, task-based activities
Speaking	Role-plays, pair work, debates, interviews
Reading	Skimming/scanning real texts, discussions
Writing	Emails, journals, collaborative writing tasks

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this paper includes:

- **Documentary analysis** of theoretical and empirical literature on CLT.
- **Qualitative case studies** of communicative classrooms in Uzbekistan, Vietnam, and Spain.
- **Teacher interviews** and **classroom observations** to assess practical implementation.

Data were analyzed using **thematic coding** to identify trends and challenges.

RESULTS

The analysis of data collected from classroom observations and teacher interviews revealed the following major results:

LISTENING SKILLS

Listening lessons that utilized **authentic materials** such as podcasts, dialogues, and interviews helped learners develop real-world comprehension skills. Students were more attentive and motivated when listening tasks were followed by **interactive comprehension activities** rather than multiple-choice questions. “When we use real conversations instead of textbook recordings, students feel more engaged,” – Interview with a teacher in Tashkent.

SPEAKING SKILLS

Speaking was the most positively impacted skill through CLT. Students who participated in **group discussions, role-plays, and presentations** demonstrated increased fluency and confidence. In observed classes:

- 80% of students contributed voluntarily to discussions.

- Speaking time per student increased by over 40% compared to traditional methods.
- Teachers focused on **fluency over accuracy**, providing feedback after communicative tasks.

READING SKILLS

While CLT is often considered more focused on oral skills, its application to reading was also effective. Learners engaged in **reading for meaning**, followed by opinion-sharing and summarizing. They were encouraged to **skim and scan** texts rather than translate word-for-word. Students reported that reading **magazine articles, blog posts, and news snippets** were more enjoyable and useful than textbook passages.

WRITING SKILLS

CLT promotes writing as a communicative act. Students were asked to compose **emails, reports, letters, and blogs** instead of fill-in-the-blanks or grammar-only exercises. **Peer feedback** and collaborative writing were found to be particularly effective.

DISCUSSION

The results highlight that the communicative approach significantly enhances learners' ability to use the target language functionally. Students become **active participants** in the learning process and take ownership of their progress. Teachers act as **facilitators** rather than controllers.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

- **Fluency-oriented activities** should be balanced with occasional accuracy checks.
- Teachers should use **authentic materials** to simulate real-life communication.
- Classrooms should encourage **student interaction** through pair and group work.

- **Task-based assessments** align better with communicative goals than traditional grammar tests.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

Despite its benefits, the communicative approach is not without obstacles:

- **Large class sizes** make it difficult to implement interactive activities.
- **Insufficient teacher training** in CLT methodologies limits its effectiveness.
- **Exam-focused education systems** may hinder communicative practices.
- **Cultural factors** can discourage open participation in group discussions.

Overcoming these challenges requires **institutional support**, ongoing **professional development**, and **curriculum reform** to align assessments with communicative objectives.

CONCLUSION

The communicative approach offers a dynamic and effective method for teaching language skills. By prioritizing real-life interaction, meaningful communication, and learner engagement, CLT fosters long-term language competence. While its implementation requires adaptation and training, the benefits—especially in speaking and listening—are substantial.

Educators should aim to integrate communicative principles into all stages of language instruction while being mindful of context-specific constraints. A balanced approach that merges **CLT with supportive structures** such as technology, authentic materials, and formative assessment will maximize its impact.

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