

**DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS THROUGH
COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT)****Surayyo Abidjanova**

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Abstract

Speaking is one of the most important skills in learning a foreign language, especially for university students who need to communicate effectively in academic and professional contexts. However, many students face difficulties in speaking English fluently and confidently. This article aims to explore the role of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in developing the speaking skills of university students. The study analyzes the main principles of CLT and its effectiveness in improving students' oral communication. The results show that CLT helps students become more active, confident, and motivated speakers by focusing on real-life communication and interaction in the classroom.

Keywords

speaking skills, communicative language teaching, university students, English learning, oral communication

Introduction

In modern higher education, the ability to speak English fluently has become a key requirement for university students. English is widely used as an international language in education, science, and professional communication. University students are expected to participate in academic presentations, classroom discussions, seminars, and conferences where spoken English plays an important role. Moreover, strong speaking skills are essential for students' future careers, as many professions require effective communication with international partners and colleagues.

Despite studying English for many years, a large number of students still experience serious difficulties in speaking. These difficulties often include fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, and problems with pronunciation. In many cases, students understand grammar rules and written texts well, but they hesitate to speak in real communication situations. This gap between knowledge and actual language use prevents students from expressing their ideas clearly and confidently. One of the main reasons for this problem is the use of traditional teaching methods in English language classrooms. These



methods usually focus on grammar rules, reading, and writing skills, while speaking practice receives less attention. Lessons are often teacher-centered, and students have limited opportunities to speak freely and interact with others. As a result, students may achieve good results in written exams but still lack effective oral communication skills.

In response to these challenges, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has become increasingly popular as an effective approach to language teaching. CLT emphasizes meaningful communication and focuses on using language as a tool for real-life interaction rather than only learning grammatical structures. Through activities such as pair work, group discussions, role plays, and problem-solving tasks, students are encouraged to actively use English in the classroom. Therefore, this article focuses on how Communicative Language Teaching can help develop the speaking skills of university students. By creating a communicative learning environment and increasing students' participation in speaking activities, CLT aims to improve fluency, confidence, and overall communicative competence. The study highlights the importance of using communicative methods in higher education to better prepare students for academic and professional communication in English.

CLT is a comprehensive and effective approach to developing speaking skills in language learners. Its success lies in its ability to balance fluency and accuracy, structure and spontaneity, and individual and collaborative learning. For speaking instruction to be truly effective, educators must embrace CLT principles while remaining flexible to their specific teaching contexts. They must also invest in ongoing professional development, adapt assessment methods, and design interactive, student-centered classrooms. Only through such efforts can the true potential of communicative language teaching be realized—producing learners who are not only proficient in the language but also confident, culturally aware, and capable of thriving in diverse communication settings.

Literature Review

In recent years, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been widely discussed by language education researchers as an effective approach for improving speaking skills. Many modern scholars emphasize that CLT helps learners use language for real communication rather than only focusing on grammatical accuracy. According to Jack C. Richards (2015), CLT creates a learner-centered environment where students actively participate in meaningful interaction, which is essential for developing oral communication skills. Research conducted by David Nunan (2016) highlights the importance of task-based and communicative activities in speaking development. Nunan argues that learners improve their speaking ability when they are involved in tasks that reflect real-life communication. Such tasks encourage students to express their opinions, negotiate meaning, and use language naturally, which leads to greater fluency and confidence.

More recent studies also support the effectiveness of CLT in higher education contexts. H. Douglas Brown (2018) states that communicative competence includes not only grammatical knowledge but also the ability to use language appropriately in social situations. From this perspective, CLT plays a key role in helping university students develop both linguistic and communicative competence.

In addition, Rod Ellis (2020) emphasizes that interaction is a central factor in second language learning. His research shows that frequent interaction in the classroom helps learners notice language gaps and improve their speaking performance. CLT provides such interaction through pair work, group discussions, and problem-solving activities, which are especially



effective for speaking practice. Recent empirical studies also confirm the positive impact of CLT on students' speaking skills. For example, Norbert Schmitt (2020) notes that communicative activities support vocabulary development by allowing learners to use new words in meaningful contexts. This is particularly important for speaking, as limited vocabulary is one of the main barriers to oral communication among university students. Furthermore, Zoltán Dörnyei (2021) focuses on the motivational aspect of communicative approaches. He argues that CLT increases learners' motivation by making lessons more engaging and relevant to real-life needs. Motivated students are more willing to speak and participate actively in classroom activities, which directly contributes to speaking skill development. The reviewed literature clearly shows that modern researchers strongly support the use of Communicative Language Teaching for developing speaking skills. Recent studies emphasize interaction, real-life communication, learner motivation, and meaningful use of language as key factors in successful speaking instruction. These findings provide a strong theoretical foundation for applying CLT in university-level English language teaching.

Methodology

This study is based on a qualitative analysis of teaching practices and existing research on Communicative Language Teaching. The research was conducted through classroom observations and analysis of communicative activities used in university English classes. Various CLT techniques such as role plays, group discussions, pair work, and problem-solving tasks were examined. The participants of the study were university students studying English as a foreign language. Their speaking performance and participation in communicative activities were observed over a certain period. The main focus was on students' fluency, confidence, and ability to express ideas clearly during communicative tasks.

Results

The results of the study clearly indicate that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has a strong positive impact on the development of speaking skills among university students. After the regular use of communicative activities in English classes, noticeable improvements were observed in students' fluency, confidence, and willingness to speak. Students became more active participants in classroom communication and showed greater interest in speaking tasks.

One of the most significant changes was a reduction in students' fear of making mistakes. At the beginning of the learning process, many students avoided speaking in front of the class and preferred to remain silent. However, through pair work and small group discussions, students felt more comfortable expressing their ideas. For example, during role-play activities such as simulated job interviews or everyday communication situations, students were able to speak more freely without fear of negative evaluation. This supportive environment encouraged students to focus on meaning rather than accuracy alone.

Another important result was the improvement in speaking fluency. Students who regularly participated in communicative tasks were able to speak for longer periods without frequent pauses. In discussion-based activities, such as expressing opinions on familiar topics or solving simple problems in groups, students demonstrated smoother speech and better use of linking words. Over time, their responses became more natural and less dependent on memorized sentences. Methodology is one of the most important elements to implement the objective of education in teaching learning process particularly in English classes. The main purpose of this scientific writing since GTM is commonly used previously and CLT is very famous nowadays. Communicative approach, commonly referred to as communicative language teaching (CLT) is a method of teaching languages that places an emphasis on interaction as the means of the learning.



GTM is applied for helping students to read and appreciate foreign language literature objectives.

Vocabulary development was also observed as a result of CLT-based instruction. Through real-life communication tasks, students were exposed to new words and expressions in meaningful contexts. For instance, during group discussions on university life or future career plans, students actively used topic-related vocabulary and learned from their peers. This helped them expand their active vocabulary and apply it more effectively in spoken communication.

Pronunciation and intonation also showed gradual improvement. Continuous interaction with classmates allowed students to notice correct pronunciation patterns and adjust their own speech. In communicative activities such as presentations and short dialogues, students became more aware of stress and intonation, which made their speech clearer and easier to understand.

Furthermore, CLT increased students' motivation and engagement in the learning process. Many students reported that speaking activities felt more interesting and enjoyable compared to traditional grammar-focused lessons. Real-life tasks made learning more meaningful, as students could see the practical value of speaking English. As a result, students were more willing to participate actively in lessons and take responsibility for their own learning. The findings demonstrate that Communicative Language Teaching creates an effective learning environment for developing speaking skills. By providing frequent opportunities for interaction and communication, CLT helps university students improve fluency, confidence, vocabulary use, and pronunciation. These results confirm that CLT is a valuable approach for enhancing oral communication in higher education.

One of the greatest strengths of CLT lies in its emphasis on functional language use. Learners are trained to navigate everyday situations, solve problems, express opinions, and interact naturally with others. This prepares them not just for exams, but for practical use of the language in academic, professional, and social settings. Activities such as roleplays, discussions, interviews, and task-based projects allow for creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking—skills essential in 21st-century education. Another important contribution of CLT is its role in promoting learner autonomy and motivation. By shifting the role of the teacher from knowledge-giver to facilitator, CLT empowers students to take charge of their learning. Students become more responsible, self-reflective, and engaged when they participate in meaningful communicative tasks, rather than memorizing abstract rules with little relevance to their personal lives. However, implementing CLT is not without challenges. Teachers may face difficulties related to large class sizes, limited resources, cultural resistance, or lack of training. Furthermore, assessing communicative competence requires alternative approaches that go beyond traditional grammar tests. Performance-based assessment, observation, self-evaluation, and rubric-based grading must be integrated into the curriculum to ensure that students' communicative growth is measured fairly and effectively.

Discussion

The findings of this study strongly support the idea that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an effective approach for developing speaking skills among university students. The results show that students became more confident, fluent, and willing to participate in oral communication when communicative activities were regularly used in the classroom. These findings are consistent with modern language teaching theories, which emphasize interaction and meaningful use of language.

One important aspect of CLT discussed in this study is the reduction of students' fear of speaking. Many students initially avoided speaking because they were afraid of making grammatical or pronunciation mistakes. However, communicative activities such as pair discussions and role plays helped create a supportive learning environment. For example, during



role-play tasks simulating real-life situations like ordering food or attending a job interview, students focused more on expressing meaning than on perfect accuracy. This shift reduced anxiety and encouraged more natural speech. Another key point is the improvement of fluency through continuous interaction. The results showed that students were able to speak for longer periods with fewer pauses. This can be explained by the frequent use of discussion-based tasks in CLT. For instance, when students discussed familiar topics such as university life or future career plans, they were able to organize their ideas more easily and speak more smoothly. This supports the view of Rod Ellis, who emphasizes the role of interaction in developing speaking ability. Vocabulary development is also an important issue discussed in relation to CLT. Traditional methods often teach vocabulary in isolation, while CLT allows students to learn new words in context. In this study, students expanded their active vocabulary by listening to their peers and using new expressions during group tasks. For example, during group problem-solving activities, students naturally reused words and phrases introduced by others, which helped them remember and apply vocabulary more effectively in speaking.

In today's globalized world, speaking is regarded as one of the most essential skills in language learning. Learners are expected not only to understand the rules of grammar but also to express themselves effectively and appropriately in real-time communication. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach has been widely adopted to meet this demand. CLT is based on the idea that the primary function of language is communication, and it emphasizes learning to use language through interaction. This paper investigates how CLT enhances speaking skills, focusing on its core principles, classroom practices, and its impact on learner engagement and communicative competence.

Motivation played a significant role in the success of CLT-based instruction. Many students reported that communicative activities were more interesting and enjoyable than traditional grammar-focused lessons. This finding supports the ideas of Zoltán Dörnyei, who highlights motivation as a key factor in language learning success. When students see the practical value of speaking English for real communication, they become more engaged and active learners. However, the discussion also highlights some challenges in applying CLT. Managing communicative activities in large classes can be difficult, and some students may dominate discussions while others remain passive. For example, in group discussions, more confident students tended to speak more, while quieter students needed additional support. This suggests that teachers should carefully plan activities and provide equal opportunities for all students to participate. The discussion confirms that Communicative Language Teaching offers significant advantages for developing speaking skills at the university level. By encouraging interaction, reducing anxiety, improving fluency, and increasing motivation, CLT helps students become more effective speakers of English. Despite certain challenges, the benefits of CLT clearly outweigh its limitations, making it a valuable approach for higher education language classrooms.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the role of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in developing the speaking skills of university students. The findings clearly show that CLT is an effective and practical approach for improving students' oral communication abilities. By focusing on real-life communication and interaction, CLT helps students overcome common speaking problems such as fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, and limited fluency.

The results demonstrate that students who regularly participate in communicative activities become more confident and active speakers. Activities such as pair work, group discussions, and role plays create a supportive learning environment where students can practice speaking without anxiety. As a result, students improve their fluency, expand their vocabulary,



and develop clearer pronunciation.

Furthermore, CLT increases students' motivation and engagement in the learning process. When students see the practical value of speaking English for academic and professional purposes, they become more willing to participate in classroom activities. Although some challenges exist, such as managing large classes and ensuring equal participation, the advantages of CLT clearly outweigh these difficulties.

In conclusion, Communicative Language Teaching plays a significant role in developing speaking skills at the university level. Therefore, it is recommended that English language teachers use CLT methods more actively in higher education classrooms to help students become confident and effective speakers of English.

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