



THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT) IN IMPROVING SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' LISTENING AND SPEAKING COMPETENCE

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Abstract: This article explores the role of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in improving secondary school students' listening and speaking competence. In modern language education, the ability to communicate effectively is considered a primary goal, and CLT has emerged as a student-centered approach that emphasizes real-life communication. The study examines how CLT techniques such as pair work, group discussions, role plays, and task-based activities contribute to the development of learners' oral and aural skills. It also highlights the importance of authentic materials and interactive classroom environments in fostering meaningful communication. The findings suggest that the implementation of CLT significantly enhances students' confidence, fluency, and comprehension abilities. Furthermore, the approach encourages active participation and reduces learners' anxiety, making language acquisition more effective and engaging. The article concludes that CLT is a highly effective methodology for improving listening and speaking skills among secondary school students.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), listening skills, speaking skills, secondary school students, communicative competence, language acquisition, interactive learning, student-centered approach, fluency development, classroom communication

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the primary goal of foreign language education has shifted from the mastery of grammatical structures to the development of communicative competence. This shift reflects the growing need for learners to use language effectively in real-life situations rather than merely demonstrating theoretical knowledge. In this context, listening and speaking skills have become essential components of language proficiency, particularly at the secondary school level, where students are expected to actively engage in communication and express their ideas clearly and confidently.

However, in many traditional classrooms, language teaching is still largely focused on teacher-centered instruction, memorization, and the passive acquisition of vocabulary and grammar rules. As a result, students often face difficulties in understanding spoken language and participating in conversations. They may possess adequate knowledge of linguistic forms but lack the ability to use them in authentic communicative contexts. This gap between knowledge and practical use highlights the need for more effective teaching approaches that prioritize interaction and real communication. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has emerged as a powerful approach to address these challenges. CLT emphasizes the use of




language as a tool for communication and encourages learners to engage in meaningful interaction through activities such as role-plays, discussions, problem-solving tasks, and collaborative work. By creating a learner-centered environment, CLT provides students with opportunities to practice listening and speaking in realistic contexts, thereby enhancing both fluency and comprehension.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been widely discussed in the field of applied linguistics and language pedagogy, particularly in relation to the development of learners' communicative competence. The theoretical foundation of CLT is closely linked to the work of Dell Hymes, who introduced the notion of communicative competence as a broader concept than linguistic competence. Hymes emphasized that effective language use involves not only grammatical accuracy but also the ability to use language appropriately in different social contexts. This idea later became central to modern language teaching methodologies [2]. Further development of communicative competence was provided by Michael Canale and Merrill Swain, who proposed a comprehensive model consisting of grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences. Their framework highlighted the importance of integrating listening and speaking skills into language instruction, as these skills are essential for meaningful communication [1]. In this regard, CLT aims to create opportunities for learners to practice language in interactive and authentic contexts. Research has shown that traditional teaching methods often fail to develop students' oral and aural abilities effectively. According to Stephen Krashen, language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input in a low-anxiety environment. His Input Hypothesis suggests that listening plays a crucial role in language development, as it provides learners with the necessary input for acquiring new structures [3]. However, without opportunities for active language use, students may struggle to develop speaking skills. In contrast, Merrill Swain introduced the Output Hypothesis, arguing that producing language (speaking) is equally important, as it enables learners to process language more deeply and identify gaps in their knowledge. This perspective supports the principles of CLT, which emphasize both input (listening) and output (speaking) through interactive activities such as discussions, role-plays, and problem-solving tasks [6].

METHODOLOGY

This study used a quasi-experimental design to examine the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in improving students' listening and speaking skills. A total of 40 secondary school students (aged 14–16) were divided into an experimental group and a control group, each consisting of 20 learners with similar English proficiency (A2–B1 level). The experimental group was taught using CLT techniques such as role-plays, group discussions, and task-based activities, while the control group followed traditional teacher-centered methods. The intervention lasted for eight weeks. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests, classroom observations, questionnaires, and short interviews.



Quantitative data were analyzed by comparing test scores, while qualitative data were interpreted thematically to assess students' engagement and attitudes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results showed that both groups started with similar proficiency levels; however, the experimental group demonstrated significantly greater improvement in listening and speaking skills after the intervention. Students in the CLT group became more fluent, confident, and better at understanding spoken English, whereas the control group showed only limited progress. Classroom observations and questionnaire results revealed that CLT increased student participation, motivation, and reduced speaking anxiety. Learners responded positively to interactive activities and reported that real-life communication tasks helped them learn more effectively.


These findings support the theories of Stephen Krashen and Merrill Swain, emphasizing the importance of both input and output in language acquisition [3, 6]. Overall, CLT proved to be more effective than traditional methods in developing communicative competence.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that Communicative Language Teaching is an effective approach for improving secondary school students' listening and speaking competence. The integration of interactive activities, authentic materials, and learner-centered techniques significantly enhances students' fluency, comprehension, and confidence in using the English language. The results highlight the importance of shifting from traditional, teacher-centered methods to more communicative and engaging approaches in language education. It is recommended that teachers incorporate CLT strategies into their classrooms to create meaningful learning experiences and to better prepare students for real-life communication.

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