

# Communicative Language Teaching in English Language Classroom: Significance, Principles, and Implementation

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The introduction of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method in English language teaching has transformed the emphasis of teaching methods from conventional grammar-based teaching to a more interactive and contextually relevant learner-centered approach. The language teaching in today's classroom concentrates more on communicative competence than language proficiency. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has become a revolutionary technique in English language education with its emphasis on meaningful communication rather than rote learning of grammatical structures. CLT emphasizes interaction-driven learning, learner engagement, contextual appropriateness, and fluency. This article aims to study the significance of CLT in developing communicative competence in English language classrooms. It also tries to explore the driving principles of this teaching method and to study how CLT can be implemented in English language teaching classrooms. Communicative Language Teaching is adapted in classrooms as roleplays, group discussions, presentations, and simulations. There are also certain limitations like the willingness and skill-set of teachers. There are limited resources available to bring this method into practice. Yet, Communicative Language Teaching is one of the practical ways to enhance language acquisition among learners who strive for communicative proficiency.

**Keywords:** Communicative Language Teaching, communicative competence,

learner engagement, significance and principles.

## 1. Introduction

After the emergence of the Communicative Language Teaching Method, there is a shift from the acquisition of language proficiency to aiming for communicative proficiency. The traditional grammar teaching method has become a secondary objective, while gaining proficiency in communication becomes the primary objective of the language learners. CLT emphasizes real-life communication, encourages students to be involved in day-to-day conversations, and task-based learning activities. As learners' involvement in the language acquisition process is encouraged through the CLT method, they naturally gain confidence in using the language for communication and thereby inherit fluency and accuracy of the language. CLT is a generalized umbrella term to describe learning sequences which aim to improve the students' ability to communicate in contrast to teaching which is aimed more at learning bits of language just because they exist, without focusing on their use in communication. (Harmer, 2007)

### SIGNIFICANCE AND PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING METHOD:

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is one of the key strategies in contemporary language teaching methods, which emphasizes interaction as the main method of language acquisition. This instructional change emphasizes the value of realistic language use in real-life situations by placing a higher priority on the development of communicative competence than on conventional grammar-based approaches. Various research studies explore that CLT has significantly improved the student motivation and self-efficacy in language acquisition and thereby promoting a more interactive and adaptive classroom setting. (Humphreys., et al., 2023). Moreover, CLT emphasizes collaboration and peer interaction, enhancing students' language performance in varied contexts. This is one of the essential features in today's worldwide environment. Some studies indicate that conventional approaches have benefits in some areas, such as gaining knowledge on grammar and vocabulary, whereas the importance of CLT lies in boosting language proficiency and retention of the acquired language. CLT is a highly relevant and appropriate teaching method for today's learners as it enhances the oral competence among the learners and also prepares them for using the language beyond the classroom.

Communicative Language Teaching emphasizes learner-centeredness, fostering an environment where learners actively engage in their education process. The method prioritizes real-life communication, focusing on practical use in authentic contexts. In the CLT approach, meaning and context are given much importance. One of the most characteristic features of CLT is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language, combining these into a more fully communicative view. Some of the basic principles that act as the driving factors of CLT are:

1. Appropriate use of language is emphasized rather than accuracy.
2. Language should be taught by integrating all language skills and not by only one skill.

3. Language cannot be learnt through rote memorization or in isolation but should be learnt through social interaction.

Jack Richards summarises four core principles in his work *Communicative Language Teaching Today*. These principles are:

1. People learn a language by using it to communicate.
2. Meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.
3. Learning to communicate is a process that involves trial and error.
4. Learner errors are often not corrected immediately but can be corrected later.

The five features of CLT according to David Nunan (1991) are:

1. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
2. The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
3. The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the learning management process.
4. An enhancement of the learner's own personal experience as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom.

Thus, the key principles of Communicative Language Teaching are integrating real-life interactions and communications in classrooms, inheriting oral proficiency through task-based activities, and involving learners in collaborative learning. The adaptation of CLT principles to language education leads to students' involvement in the process of learning and fosters their communication ability.

## COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

To implement the Communicative Teaching Method in the English classroom, suitable teaching content and methods combined with real life, intensive teaching and practice, the communicative teaching process, student-centeredness, and encouragement of students to use language consciously, stimulating students' enthusiasm for communication in English are the vital requirements. There needs to be a shift from traditional teaching approaches to innovative and interactive teaching strategies to be implemented in the classrooms. One of the key strategies to implement CLT in the classroom is to foster interactive and collaborative activities. They may either be a structured dialogue or a role play. The activities must include active and creative conversation, based upon the level of the learners. The activities should be competency-based, focused on life skills. These are performance oriented instructions. Engaging in classroom activities requires students to use the language in practical, and meaningful ways. Some of the activities that can be practiced in the classroom with real-time scenarios are Role Play, Group Discussion, Information Gap Activities, Opinion Sharing, Pair Work, Interviews, Group Work, and Simulations. Role Plays are a popular choice, as they allow students to practice real-life scenarios. Group Discussions and Debates are another way

to promote communication and these activities encourage students to express their opinion, listen to others, and engage in meaningful conversations. Most students are more comfortable speaking in pairs than in front of the entire class. Opinion sharing is the best way to make students open up with their strong opinion about a certain topic. These activities should be open-ended, and encourage the students to think creatively and to use the language in the most flexible and adaptive ways. CLT also makes use of authentic materials like videos, news articles, and social media posts for practice.

In the Communicative Language Teaching method, the teacher should act as a facilitator, and as a monitor. The teacher has to design and implement activities, and monitor and assess students' progress. The primary role of the teacher is to keep the communication going on between all members of the class as they perform various activities. The teacher prepares the activities and explains how to carry out the activities. During the activity time, the teacher should monitor the performance of the students. Then they have to provide constructive feedback. The teacher can identify the errors and correct it once the activities are over. The role of the teacher in Communicative Language Teaching is that of a facilitator, who creates a classroom climate conducive to language learning and provides opportunities for learners to use and practice the language.

## STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

Communicative Language Teaching is all about learning a language by using it in real-life situations. It's about thinking conversations, discussions, and role-playing rather than memorizing grammar rules. CLT effectively improves students' fluency and develops communicative ability in speaking the target language. It advocates student-centered learning. The learners are allowed to express or share their thoughts and opinions, it fosters the learners' communication and collaboration skills. They become confident to express themselves naturally and effectively by practicing real-life situation conversations. Indeed, in CLT there is a paradigm shift in learner autonomy giving learners greater choice over their learning.

The challenges faced for successfully implementing the CLT in language classrooms are broadly categorised as: i. conceptual constraints, ii. Classroom-level constraints, and iii. Societal-institutional level constraints. (Butler, 2011). It needs more time to practice in the classroom. The regular class hours are not sufficient for practice. It is time-consuming. The teachers should be well-prepared in advance. The students' participation is not approachable at all times. Moreover, there are not enough resource materials. Without prior planning, the CLT method is not effective for learners. Assessment of learners' oral fluency is also a challenging task.

## 2. Conclusion

Communicative Language Teaching emerged as a direct and practical approach to language learning. Developing communicative competence is the major goal of CLT. CLT can be practiced in classrooms using various communication activities like role play, group discussions, debates, and simulations. The activities are given based on real-life communication scenarios. It's a student-centered approach, where the teacher acts as a facilitator and a monitor, who provides interactive and creative activities. CLT needs more

time to practice in the classroom with limited resources available. Despite its challenges, Communicative Language Teaching develops the learners' ability to handle unexpected situations, which is essential for effective communication. It is an effective tool for language instruction.

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