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## Effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching in Developing English Fluency

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### Abstract

English fluency is a crucial skill for academic achievement, employability, and global communication. In multilingual contexts such as India, English is commonly taught as a second language, yet many undergraduate students struggle to communicate fluently despite years of formal instruction. Traditional teaching methods often emphasize grammar accuracy and written examinations, limiting opportunities for meaningful communication. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), a learner-centered approach, focuses on interaction, real-life communication, and functional language use.

This study examines the effectiveness of CLT in developing English fluency among undergraduate students. A quasi-experimental research design was employed with 240 students divided into control (traditional method) and experimental (CLT method) groups. Data were collected using speaking fluency tests, rating scales, questionnaires, and classroom observations. Statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, and t-test analysis were applied.

The results indicate that students exposed to CLT demonstrated significant improvement in fluency, pronunciation, confidence, and interactive competence compared to those taught through traditional methods. The study concludes that CLT is highly effective in enhancing English fluency in higher education and recommends its systematic integration into undergraduate curricula.

**Keywords:** Communicative Language Teaching, English fluency, ESL, speaking skills, higher education, communicative competence



## **Introduction**

Fluency in English is increasingly essential in higher education and professional environments. Undergraduate students are expected to present seminars, participate in group discussions, attend interviews, and collaborate on projects in English. However, many learners hesitate while speaking, struggle with vocabulary retrieval, and lack confidence. Traditional teaching methods such as the Grammar-Translation Method and lecture-based instruction emphasize grammatical rules and written exercises. While these methods help develop structural knowledge, they often fail to develop spontaneous speaking ability. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) shifts the focus from grammatical perfection to meaningful communication. This research explores whether CLT significantly improves English fluency among undergraduate students.

## **2. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 Concept of English Fluency**

Fluency refers to the ability to speak smoothly, naturally, and confidently with minimal hesitation. It includes:

- Speed and rhythm of speech
- Pronunciation clarity
- Reduced pauses and fillers
- Ability to maintain conversation
- Coherent expression of ideas

Fluency differs from accuracy. A learner may make minor grammatical errors but still communicate effectively.

### **2.2 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

CLT is a learner-centered teaching approach that emphasizes interaction and practical communication. Its features include:

- Role plays and simulations
- Pair and group work
- Problem-solving tasks
- Information-gap activities
- Real-life communication scenarios

The goal of CLT is to develop communicative competence rather than mere grammatical knowledge.



### 2.3 Theoretical Support

Stephen Krashen proposed the Input Hypothesis, stating that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input slightly above their current level (i+1). CLT facilitates this through interactive tasks.

Communicative competence theory also supports CLT by emphasizing functional language use in social contexts.

### 3. Review of Literature

Several studies have highlighted the advantages of CLT:

- Increased classroom participation
- Reduced language anxiety
- Improved pronunciation through peer interaction
- Enhanced vocabulary retention
- Greater learner motivation

Research suggests that interactive learning environments foster spontaneous speech and reduce fear of making mistakes. However, some studies report challenges in implementing CLT due to large class sizes and exam-oriented systems.

Despite these findings, there remains a need for empirical research specifically measuring fluency development at the undergraduate level.

### 4. Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the effectiveness of CLT in developing English fluency.
2. To compare fluency levels between traditional and CLT methods.
3. To measure improvement in speaking confidence.
4. To analyze student perceptions toward communicative activities.

### 5. Hypotheses

- **H<sub>0</sub> (Null Hypothesis):** There is no significant difference in fluency levels between students taught through traditional methods and those taught through CLT.
- **H<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):** Students taught through CLT show significantly higher fluency levels compared to those taught through traditional methods.

### 6. Research Methodology

#### 6.1 Research Design

A quasi-experimental design with control and experimental groups.

#### 6.2 Sample

240 undergraduate students divided into:

- Control Group (Traditional Method) – 120 students



- Experimental Group (CLT Method) – 120 students

### **6.3 Tools for Data Collection**

- Pre-test and post-test speaking assessments
- Fluency rating scale (based on speech rate, coherence, pronunciation, confidence)
- Structured questionnaire
- Classroom observation checklist

### **6.4 Data Analysis Techniques**

- Mean and standard deviation
- Independent sample t-test
- Percentage analysis

## **7. Implementation Procedure**

### **7.1 Control Group (Traditional Method)**

- Lecture-based teaching
- Grammar drills
- Textbook reading
- Written exercises
- Limited speaking activities

### **7.2 Experimental Group (CLT)**

- Group discussions
- Role plays and simulations
- Debates
- Pair work activities
- Task-based learning
- Real-life communication tasks

The intervention lasted for 12 weeks.

## **8. Results and Analysis**

### **8.1 Pre-Test Analysis**

Both groups showed similar baseline fluency levels, indicating no significant initial difference.

### **8.2 Post-Test Analysis**

The experimental group demonstrated:

- Increased speech speed
- Reduced hesitation
- Improved pronunciation clarity
- Greater confidence during presentations



### **8.3 Statistical Findings**

- Mean fluency improvement (CLT group): 24%
- Mean fluency improvement (Traditional group): 11%
- The calculated t-value was greater than the critical value at the 5% level of significance.

Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

### **9. Discussion**

The findings clearly indicate that CLT significantly enhances English fluency. Students actively engaged in communicative tasks developed spontaneous speech patterns and interactive competence.

Interactive learning reduced anxiety and encouraged peer collaboration. The supportive classroom environment promoted confidence-building.

Traditional methods improved grammatical accuracy but were less effective in promoting natural communication.

### **10. Educational Implications**

1. English curricula should incorporate communicative activities.
2. Assessment systems should evaluate speaking and interaction skills.
3. Teacher training programs must emphasize CLT strategies.
4. Institutions should encourage language clubs and speaking forums.
5. Smaller interactive groups should be promoted for effective communication practice.
- 6.

### **11. Challenges in Implementing CLT**

- Large classroom sizes
- Time constraints
- Exam-oriented educational systems
- Mixed proficiency levels
- Limited teacher training

### **12. Limitations of the Study**

- Limited to selected institutions
- Short intervention period
- Motivation levels not fully controlled
- Self-reported feedback may contain bias

### **13. Recommendations for Future Research**

- Longitudinal studies on sustained fluency development
- Comparative studies of CLT and Task-Based Learning



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- Integration of digital tools with CLT
- Research on reducing language anxiety

## **Conclusion**

The study confirms that Communicative Language Teaching is highly effective in developing English fluency among undergraduate students. By emphasizing meaningful interaction and real-life communication, CLT enhances speaking confidence, pronunciation, and spontaneity.

While traditional teaching methods contribute to grammatical accuracy, they are insufficient for developing communicative competence. Therefore, integrating CLT into undergraduate English curricula is essential for preparing students for academic and professional communication in a globalized context.

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