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The Effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching in Developing Speaking Skills among B2-Level Students

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Abstract

Speaking is one of the most important skills in learning a foreign language because it enables learners to express their thoughts, share information, exchange opinions, and communicate effectively in different situations. However, many English language learners experience difficulties in developing speaking skills due to limited vocabulary, lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and insufficient opportunities for meaningful communication. Therefore, selecting appropriate teaching methods and classroom activities is essential for supporting students' speaking development. This article examines the role of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in developing speaking skills among B2-level English learners. The main purpose of the article is to explain how communicative teaching principles can be applied to speaking lessons and how structured classroom activities can encourage active student participation. The article discusses the theoretical foundations of CLT, the importance of meaningful interaction, and the roles of teachers and learners in the communicative classroom. It also presents a practical framework consisting of pre-communicative, communicative, and post-communicative activities, using the topic “The Importance of Technology in Education through using modal verbs” as an example of classroom practice. The proposed activities are designed to help students expand their vocabulary, express and support their opinions, participate in discussions, and reflect on their speaking performance. Furthermore, the article considers the potential advantages and limitations of these activities and suggests ways to address common classroom challenges. It concludes that CLT provides a useful framework for creating interactive and student-centered speaking lessons, although empirical research is needed to determine the actual effectiveness of the proposed activities.

Keywords

Communicative Language Teaching, speaking skills, B2-level students, communicative competence, speaking activities, classroom interaction, English language teaching.

Introduction: In today's globalized world, English has become an important tool for international communication, education, and professional development. Among the four main language skills, speaking is particularly significant because it enables learners to express their ideas, exchange information, and communicate effectively in different situations. Therefore, developing speaking skills is an essential goal of English language teaching. However, learning to speak English fluently and confidently can be challenging for many students. Common difficulties include limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, pronunciation problems, and a lack of confidence when communicating in a foreign language. Some learners understand English grammar and vocabulary but find it difficult to use their knowledge in real conversations. This situation highlights the need for teaching approaches that provide students with meaningful opportunities to practice spoken English.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is one of the approaches that aims to develop learners' communicative competence. It focuses on using language for meaningful communication rather than concentrating exclusively on memorizing grammatical rules or learning vocabulary separately. Through interaction, pair and group work, discussions, role-playing, information-gap tasks, and problem-solving activities, learners can practice expressing their thoughts, responding to others, and using English in different communicative situations. In this approach, the teacher guides and supports the learning process, while students actively participate in classroom communication.

The aim of this article is to examine the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching in developing speaking skills among B2-level English learners. It explores the theoretical principles of CLT, its application in speaking lessons, and the potential benefits and limitations of communicative teaching practices. It also considers how teachers can create supportive, student-centered learning environments that encourage active participation and help learners improve their oral communication skills.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review:

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach that aims to develop learners' communicative competence by encouraging them to use language for meaningful purposes. Richards (2006) explains that CLT focuses on communication rather than teaching grammatical structures in isolation. From this perspective, learners need not only to know grammatical rules but also to use English appropriately in real-life situations. For example, they may express opinions, exchange information, and respond to different viewpoints, developing their fluency and interaction skills.

The theoretical foundations of CLT are also connected to the concept of communicative competence. Canale and Swain (1980) identify grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence as important components of communication. This means that effective speakers need to use correct language, adapt it to different situations, and maintain communication when difficulties occur. These abilities are particularly important for B2-level learners, who are expected to express opinions, develop arguments, and participate in discussions with reasonable fluency. Research has also examined the effectiveness of CLT in developing speaking skills. Al-Garni and Almuhammadi (2019) investigated 42 female EFL students at the University of Jeddah. Their study compared students taught through communicative activities, such as interviews, problem-solving, and role-playing, with students receiving traditional instruction. The results showed that the experimental group achieved higher speaking scores. Similarly, Khowatim, Farid, and Saifuddin (2022) reported positive results from using CLT techniques, including role-playing and pair work. These findings suggest that meaningful interaction can support speaking development, although the results may vary depending on learners and classroom conditions.

Overall, the literature provides a theoretical and research-based foundation for using CLT to develop speaking skills. However, further investigation is needed to understand how this approach can best support the specific needs of B2-level learners.

Classroom Implementation of Speaking Activities :

The proposed lesson is designed for B2-level students and focuses on developing speaking skills through Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The lesson topic is "The Importance of Technology in Education". Before starting the activities, the teacher

briefly explains the functions and usage of modal verbs, providing examples related to technology in education. Students then practice using these structures through three communicative speaking activities.

1. Think and Speak Activity: The lesson begins with questions about the importance of technology in education, such as "How should students use technology to improve their learning?" and "What must teachers do to make lessons more interesting?" Students express their opinions using modal verbs and provide examples. This activity encourages individual speaking and helps learners connect grammar with meaningful communication.

2. Problem-Solving in Pairs: In this activity, students work in pairs and discuss different technology-related problems. For example, one student may describe a situation involving excessive time spent playing online games, while the other gives advice using modal verbs. Students use expressions such as "You should…", "You could…" and "You shouldn't…". Then, they change roles and discuss other situations. This activity develops interaction skills and helps students use modal verbs naturally.

3. Mini Debate: Agree or Disagree? In the final activity, students discuss the statement "Technology makes education better." They work in small groups, express their opinions, agree or disagree with others, and support their arguments with examples. They also answer questions such as "Should all schools use digital technology?" and "Could online learning replace traditional classrooms?" Students are encouraged to use different modal verbs during the discussion. The teacher monitors their participation and provides feedback on speaking fluency, grammar accuracy and clarity of ideas.

The three activities form a connected sequence. Students first express their personal opinions, then solve problems through pair communication, and finally exchange and defend their viewpoints in a group discussion. This progression is intended to develop speaking fluency, confidence and the ability to use modal verbs in meaningful communication.

Challenges and Possible Solutions

Although the suggested activities can create more opportunities for speaking practice, teachers may encounter some difficulties during the lesson. During the Think

and Speak activity, some students may find it difficult to organize their ideas and express their opinions using modal verbs correctly. To overcome this challenge, the teacher can provide guiding questions, useful expressions and a few examples before students start speaking. In the Problem-Solving in Pairs activity, learners may struggle to understand the given situations or provide suitable advice using modal verbs. The teacher can give clear instructions and present a sample dialogue to help them participate more confidently. During the Mini Debate activity, some students may hesitate to share their opinions, while more confident learners may dominate the discussion. To address this issue, the teacher can encourage equal participation, give everyone an opportunity to speak and create a supportive classroom atmosphere. These solutions can help students become more active, confident and effective communicators.

Overall Analysis

The proposed communicative activities demonstrate how Think and Speak, Problem-Solving in Pairs, and Mini Debate can contribute to developing speaking skills among B2-level learners. Think and Speak encourages students to express their personal opinions using modal verbs, while Problem-Solving in Pairs helps them give advice and interact with others. Mini Debate allows learners to share different viewpoints, support their arguments and communicate more independently. Together, these activities provide meaningful opportunities to practice modal verbs, improve speaking fluency and build confidence. Their successful implementation requires clear instructions, active participation and effective teacher guidance. Overall, CLT offers a useful approach to connecting grammar learning with real communication, although the actual effectiveness of these activities needs to be examined through classroom practice.

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