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## **Integrating Communicative Language Teaching to Enhance Speaking Competence Among Pre-Service English Teachers: A Quasi-Experimental Study**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study investigates the effectiveness of integrating Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in enhancing speaking competence among pre-service English teachers at the tertiary level. Employing a quasi-experimental design with a pretest–posttest control group, the study involved 60 third-semester students enrolled in a Speaking for Academic Purposes course. The experimental group received instruction through CLT-based communicative tasks, while the control group was taught using conventional lecture-based instruction. Data were collected through a performance-based speaking test assessed using an analytic rubric covering fluency, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary range, pronunciation, and interactive communication. Statistical analyses using paired-sample and independent-sample t-tests revealed a statistically significant improvement in the experimental group compared to the control group ( $p < .05$ ). The findings indicate that CLT fosters meaningful interaction, increases learner autonomy, and significantly improves communicative competence. The study recommends systematic CLT integration in English teacher education programs to better prepare future educators for communicative classroom contexts.*

**Keywords:** *Communicative Language Teaching, speaking competence, EFL, pre-service teachers, quasi-experimental research.*

## INTRODUCTION

Speaking competence is a central component of communicative proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. For pre-service English teachers, speaking ability is not merely a linguistic skill but a professional necessity, as they are expected to model accurate and effective communication in classroom settings.

Despite its importance, speaking instruction in many higher education institutions remains structurally oriented and teacher-centered. Traditional approaches often emphasize grammatical accuracy over communicative effectiveness, limiting students' opportunities to engage in authentic language use.

The concept of communicative competence introduced by Dell Hymes shifted the focus of language teaching from form to function. Later, Michael Canale and Merrill Swain expanded this framework to include grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), as elaborated by Jack C. Richards, emphasizes authentic communication, learner interaction, and task-based learning. However, empirical evidence on its effectiveness in pre-service teacher education programs in EFL contexts remains limited.

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. Does the integration of CLT significantly improve students' speaking competence?
2. Which components of speaking competence are most influenced by CLT?
3. What pedagogical implications can be derived for English teacher education programs?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Communicative Language Teaching

CLT emerged as a reaction against structural and audiolingual methods. It prioritizes meaning over form and promotes language use in authentic communicative contexts. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), CLT is characterized by:

- Meaning-focused interaction
- Task-based activities
- Learner-centered instruction
- Functional language use

The theoretical foundation of CLT aligns with socio-constructivist perspectives, where knowledge is constructed through interaction and negotiation of meaning.

### Speaking Competence in EFL Contexts

Speaking competence involves complex cognitive and linguistic processes. Jeremy Harmer emphasizes that speaking requires real-time processing, negotiation of meaning, and interactive strategies.

Similarly, H. Douglas Brown proposes that speaking assessment should include:

- Fluency
- Accuracy
- Pronunciation
- Vocabulary
- Interactive communication

In teacher education contexts, speaking competence is linked to pedagogical identity and classroom

authority.

### **Theoretical Support: Input and Output Hypotheses**

The effectiveness of CLT is supported by second language acquisition theories. Stephen Krashen argues that comprehensible input facilitates acquisition, while Swain's Output Hypothesis highlights the importance of language production in noticing linguistic gaps. Thus, CLT provides both meaningful input and opportunities for authentic output.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a quasi-experimental design using a pretest–posttest control group model. Random assignment was not feasible due to institutional constraints; therefore, intact classes were used.

### **Participants**

The participants were 60 third-semester students enrolled in an English Education program. They were divided into:

- Experimental group (n = 30)
- Control group (n = 30)

Pretest results confirmed no significant difference between groups ( $p > .05$ ).

### **Treatment Procedure**

The experimental group received CLT-based instruction for eight sessions (two months). Activities included:

- Role-play simulations
- Information-gap tasks
- Academic discussions
- Problem-solving tasks
- Debate sessions
- Reflective speaking journals

The control group received conventional instruction, including structured dialogue practice and grammar-focused exercises.

### **Instrumentation**

Speaking performance was assessed using an analytic rubric adapted from Brown (2004). Each component was scored on a scale of 1–5, yielding a maximum score of 25. Inter-rater reliability was established through double scoring procedures.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using:

- Normality and homogeneity tests
- Paired-sample t-tests

- Independent-sample t-tests  
The significance level was set at  $\alpha = .05$ .

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Descriptive Statistics

Group	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Gain Score
Experimental	68.4	82.7	14.3
Control	67.9	73.2	5.3

### Inferential Statistics

Independent-sample t-test results indicated a significant difference between groups ( $p = .000$ ). The effect size (Cohen's  $d = 0.87$ ) suggests a large practical impact.

### Component-Level Analysis

The most significant improvements occurred in:

- Fluency
- Interactive communication

These findings confirm that communicative tasks enhance spontaneous speech production and negotiation of meaning.

### Discussion

The results support Hymes' communicative competence framework and align with Krashen's and Swain's theoretical perspectives. CLT promotes learner autonomy, reduces speaking anxiety, and fosters authentic language use.

Moreover, the findings highlight the importance of shifting from teacher-centered instruction toward interaction-driven pedagogy in teacher education programs.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study demonstrates that systematic integration of CLT significantly enhances speaking competence among pre-service English teachers. The approach particularly improves fluency and interactional skills, essential for future educators.

### Pedagogical Implications

- Teacher education programs should embed CLT principles in curriculum design.
- Performance-based assessment should be prioritized.
- Professional development for lecturers should include communicative pedagogy training.

### Limitations and Future Research

The study was limited to one institution and a short intervention period. Future research may:

- Conduct longitudinal studies
- Integrate digital CLT platforms
- Examine affective variables such as speaking anxiety

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