

Communicative English Teaching: Enhancing Fluency and Communication Skills

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Abstract: *The increasing demand for effective communication skills in the contemporary globalized context poses a dilemma for the teaching of both teachers and students. It is crucial to provide students with a solid groundwork in communication skills that are applicable in diverse real-world interactions beyond the confines of the classroom. The goal is to equip students for authentic situations as well as facilitating their success in superficial exams such as TOEIC, IELTS, or modern language assessments.*

Keywords: *Communicative English Teaching; Speaking Skill; Communicate.*

1. Introduction

In today's interconnected and globalized world, proficiency in English is more than just a linguistic skill; it is a vital tool for effective communication across borders and cultures. Recognizing this, educators have embraced Communicative English Teaching (CET) as a dynamic approach to language instruction, specifically tailored to enhance fluency and communication skills.

CET is grounded in the belief that language learning is most successful when learners are engaged in real communication. Traditional methods that focused predominantly on rote memorization of grammar rules and vocabulary often fell short in providing students with practical language skills for real-world situations. In contrast, CET emphasizes interactive and student-centered activities that mirror authentic language use.

Pair and group activities are another cornerstone of CET. Collaborative projects, debates, and problem-solving tasks encourage students to communicate with one another, promoting not only language development but also the essential skills of negotiation, cooperation, and critical thinking. This approach recognizes the importance of context and encourages learners to use English as a tool for meaningful communication.

Furthermore, integrating multimedia resources, such as videos, podcasts, and interactive online platforms, aligns with CET principles. These resources expose students to diverse accents, idiomatic expressions, and real-life scenarios, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the language in use. As technology continues to play an integral role in our lives, leveraging these tools in

the language-learning process becomes increasingly relevant.

Assessment under CET is not confined to traditional exams but embraces a holistic evaluation of a student's communicative competence. Assessments may include presentations, role-playing, and real-life simulations, allowing educators to gauge not only linguistic proficiency but also a student's ability to apply language skills in practical contexts.

2. Content

2.1 Review literature on Communicative English Teaching (CEL)

Richard (2006) said that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is seen as a meaning expression system whose main function is language to enable interaction and communication. The CLT approach allows language learners to express themselves and their views through collaborative activities carried out during class. CLT represents the use of Counseling-Learning theory to teach languages. One person gives advice, assistance, and support to another who has a problem or is in some way in need. CET draws a method of teaching English that emphasizes learning to communicate through interaction in the target language Richard et al (2001).

CET is an approach to teaching and learning languages that focuses on developing students' communicative competence, i.e., their ability to use the language effectively and appropriately in various social contexts.

The main goal of CET is to enable students to communicate in real-life situations, rather than just acquiring grammatical knowledge. This approach emphasizes the importance of interaction, problem-

solving, and context in language learning. For instance, a CET lesson may involve students practicing a conversation in a restaurant, rather than simply memorizing vocabulary related to food and drink.

2.2 The study

2.2.1 Key characteristics of CET

Communicative language teaching integrates listening, reading, writing, and speaking, which can have students practice multiple skills at once. It also uses groups or pairs for activities and tools and technology to create a more individualized learning experience for students, which aids their language learning abilities, such as their fluency in the language.

For example, teachers give students a topic about a popular sport. Students read the text or listen to a record. Then they discuss their favorite sport in pairs or in groups. When every student has general ideas about the topic, they practice writing or speaking the new language regarding something that they are passionate about.

In order to better comprehend the foundation of CET, it is crucial to break down its guiding principles and approach:

Focus on communication: Students learn language through real-life communication, using authentic texts and engaging in communicative activities.

Functional language use: CET prioritizes the ability to perform various functions, such as requesting, apologizing, or expressing opinions, rather than simply being correct grammatically.

Task-based activities: Lessons are centered around tasks that students complete, simulating real-world situations and encouraging interaction.

Collaborative learning: Group work and pair activities play an essential role in the CET classroom, as they foster interaction and negotiation of meaning between students.

Student-centered learning: CET promotes students taking an active role in their learning process, emphasizing their responsibility and autonomy in language development.

Note that while the focus of CET is on communication, it does not completely disregard the importance of explicit grammar instruction. However, grammar is typically taught in context, as a means to support communication.

2.2.2 Some common types of CET activities:

CET incorporates a wide range of activities

designed to enhance students' communication skills in various contexts. These activities typically focus on real-life situations, interaction, and problem-solving. Below is a table that highlights some common types of CET activities:

Role-plays: Students take on specific roles to engage in conversations related to a given scenario, simulating real-life situations and developing their speaking and listening skills.

Information gap tasks: These activities require students to work in pairs or groups, where each person possesses certain information that others do not have. Students must communicate effectively to share the information and complete the task.

Debates and discussions: Students engage in dialogues and debates, expressing and defending their opinions on various topics and situations. These activities help develop argumentation, persuasion, and critical thinking skills.

Problem-solving tasks: These activities involve students working collaboratively on puzzles, riddles or decision-making tasks. This process requires exchanging information, negotiating meaning, and using language functionally to reach a solution.

Project-based tasks: Working in groups or individually, students research, plan, and create products, such as presentations, posters, or videos. These activities demand effective use of language skills to convey information and meaning.

2.2.3 Enhancing fluency and communication skills:

Communication is defined as the ability to convey or share ideas and feelings effectively. Several experts agree that communication skills include conveying messages without misinterpretation or misleading others. There are many different ways that people exchange information including verbal, written, and/or non-verbal (body) language. Some people are naturally good at communication skills while others may find them more difficult. In either case, everyone can benefit from learning to communicate more clearly and productively.

Fluency in communication skills is seen as an important factor in the language learning development because it indicates the ability of the speaker's communication (Gorsuch,2011). The primary purpose in communication is how to make the listeners understood what the speaker is trying to express. However, it is not an easy job for teachers to enhance students's fluency in communication.

One way to gauge the success of a class for English language learners is to observe how much or

how little the students are depending on the teacher. The more learners are working independently, in pairs, or in small groups, the more successful the class.

Communicative activities provide opportunities for learners to use the language with one another and with other students in the class. Teachers choose the right topic, let students listen to the record or read the text. After listening or reading, students discuss both views and give opinion. When they have general ideas about the topic, students share their ideas on writing and speaking, these are the perfect way to enhance fluency and communication skills.

2.2.4 Some suggestions to develop effective CET activities for students:

Communicative activities include any activities that encourage and require a learner to speak with and listen to other learners, as well as with people in the program and community. Communicative activities have real purposes: to find information, break down barriers, talk, and learn. Even when a lesson is focused on developing reading or writing skills, communicative activities should be integrated into the lesson. Furthermore, research on second language acquisition (SLA) suggests that more learning takes place when students are engaged in relevant tasks within a dynamic learning environment rather than in traditional teacher-led classes (Moss & Ross-Feldman, 2003).

Creating impactful CET activities involves considering factors such as student proficiency levels, interests, learning objectives, and available resources. By keeping these elements in mind, teachers can design activities that meet the diverse needs of learners and promote meaningful communication. Here are some essential steps:

Identify learning objectives: Determine the language skills, functions, or topics that you want your students to practice and develop. Consider any specific grammar points, vocabulary, or cultural aspects that may be relevant to your objectives.

Select activities: Choose one or more communicative activities that align with your identified objectives and appropriately challenge your students. Consider varying the activity types to maintain engagement and cater to diverse learning styles.

Design materials: Develop or adapt authentic materials (such as texts, audios, or visuals) and create any additional resources or supports (such as

worksheets, question prompts, or guides) that your students may require during the activity.

Plan the lesson flow: Determine the sequence of activities, including any necessary lead-in tasks, pre- and post-activity discussions, and error correction or feedback stages. Ensure that the lesson progresses smoothly, with clear transitions between tasks.

Provide clear instructions: Ensure that students understand the purpose of the activity, their roles and responsibilities, and any specific procedures or expectations. Use clear, concise language and model tasks when necessary.

Monitor and support: Observe your students during the activity, offering guidance, encouragement, and support as needed. Identify any patterns of error, confusion, or difficulty to address in later stages of the lesson.

3. Conclusion

Overall, the CET approach encourages student engagement, collaboration, and active learning, ultimately preparing students to navigate real-world communication effectively and confidently.

CET is more than just learning a language; it's about equipping students with the skills they need to navigate an increasingly interconnected world. By placing an emphasis on real communication, functional language skills, and student-centered learning, CET empowers learners to become competent and confident English speakers. As we continue to embrace the opportunities of globalization, CET remains a vital approach in modern education, ensuring that students are not only fluent in English but also skilled communicators.

In conclusion, CET stands as a dynamic and effective approach to language instruction. By placing communication at the forefront, educators empower students to not only master the English language but also to use it confidently and proficiently in a variety of real-world situations. As we continue to navigate an increasingly interconnected global landscape, the ability to communicate fluently in English becomes a valuable asset for learners worldwide.

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