



GIVING WRITING A VOICE: THE ROLE OF CLT (COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING) IN ENHANCING EFL WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, teaching a foreign language to students has come a long way since its early days necessitating a lot of skills together with innovative approaches. So, modern teachers are investigating through different methodologies to facilitate learning process emphasizing organic exposure to authentic materials over rote memorization. As a result, educators are giving precedence to CLT(Communicative language teaching) to advance its effectiveness mainly due to a wide range of benefits it offers to learners. Especially, among four fundamental language skills writing is often argued as rather underrepresented in terms of CLT integration rather than the introduction of CLT into teaching skills like listening and speaking. So, it is gaining worldwide attention though it is a comparatively new phenomenon. This article highlights the implementation of CLT in fostering writing skills and promoting learner engagement effectively and making this process more interactive and less stressful in EFL classroom through different strategies and techniques

Introduction:

Communicative language teaching(CLT) which mainly facilitates learning through communication is regarded as one of the new approaches to language teaching. No matter how popular the integration of CLT in instructing listening and speaking to the learners, incorporating it to writing necessitates hard work and consistent effort thereby making it rather underrepresented. But what makes it special among other methods is that it makes learning enjoyable and interactive by creating positive learning atmosphere in the classroom.

The main reason why writing is considered to be a core communicative skill is that it is the productive written mode of communication which allows to express feelings, emotions and ideas no matter time and distance. Through writing individuals will be able to track their thoughts permanently and participate

in the global dialogue. Moreover, writing develops key elements of effective communication such as precision, reflection and self-expression. If we take notes and try to organize beforehand, we may present flawless speech in front of the audience. Additionally, effective writing bridges writer's messages and reader's understanding providing meaningful interaction. Also, writing synthesizes input and output, turning passive knowledge into active communication.

Methods

The study employed a qualitative classroom based approach to examine how Communicative language teaching can be integrated in writing section for EFL learners. The participants were 15 intermediate level students who were at the age of 15 and 17. The main reason why they were selected was that the relevance of their age to the effectiveness of this method was also being examined.

To investigate the implication of CLT principles on writing process, 3 consecutive class series were conducted with the help of different techniques. Each lesson was designed according to a specific method incorporating authentic tasks such as writing e-mails, reflective entry or discussion based pre-writing activities target of which was to integrate communication into writing section. During each session, they were distributed a wide range of short articles about an array of topics. Firstly, they were asked to be organized in pairs so as to read the passages, discuss it and exchange ideas. The highlighting moment was when they gave peer feedback to each other before producing final result. After that, while presenting what they learned others were required to take notes which is key element of effective writing.

During the next lesson, students were divided into different groups in order to improve collaborative working. One specific topic was chosen and groups were assigned to write a paragraph together rather than making a person responsible for the whole work. Prior to moving to the main procedure, they were given some time to discuss what to present and to brainstorm their ideas.

Data were collected through student's written work, classroom observations and reflective tasks. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively in order to identify overall improvement rate in fluency, cohesion and content organization. Additionally, thanks to reflective writing, students were able to express themselves and analyze how useful they found this technique in an EFL context.

Results

The purpose of this study was to examine how Communicative language teaching (CLT) could be applied to enhance students' writing performance in ESL context. It involved 15 intermediate-level proficiency students. After using CLT based tasks such as collaborative writing and peer feedback, most of the students reported that they felt more motivated to write. Because, before submitting their final drafts they exchanged ideas with each other and rectified inaccuracies in structure and vocabulary.

Secondly, it improved overall fluency in ideas covered within the context. Before applying CLT, they produced written texts with a lot of gaps in ideas: incomplete ideas, lack of support and one-sided approach. They only represented a single idea without further developing it or adding extra ideas. However, within the groups they shared insights and expanded upon initial ideas after discussion. It was also noticeable that they approached this matter from another

angle after reading a short article targeted to the topic of discussion. It made them think creatively and generate new ideas quickly, enabled them to reconsider this matter prior to reaching conclusions.

Thirdly, chain writing not only improved their collaborative working skills, but also created a completely new and educational learning environment for them . They learned how to organize paragraphs and link ideas even if they were written by different groups. The skills needed from them were not only about being a perfect writer or fluent flow producer but being concentrated and attentive was a priority. Notably, brainstorming time gave them a unique chance to exchange new ideas and expand their knowledge. After this activity students built confidence to keep the smooth flow of ideas within the context which is crucial to produce good writing.

The tables below outlines the data about how was students` performance in different writing components before the study and after the study and provides improvement percentages at the end.

Writing component	Before CLT(%)	After CLT(%)	Improvement
Idea generation	45%	78%	+33%
Writing fluency	50%	82%	+32%
Coherence & Cohision	42%	70%	+28%
Motivation & Engagement	55%	85%	+30%
Grammatical accuracy	48%	56%	+8%

Discussions

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of CLT(Communicative language teaching) into improving student`s overall writing proficiency. The results revealed that with CLT application in writing, overall student motivation was boosted, data generation process was accelerated and collaborative working skills were enhanced. Even if grammatical accuracy remained a challenge, students started to feel more motivated and confident when it comes to suggesting ideas in the very topic they were assigned. Noteworthy to mention that those who got maximum benefit from this technique were found to be intermediate and advanced level students as they already gained a lot of foundational knowledge in English and CLT was an effective method to further develop it.

Unlike traditional grammar-based writing instructions whose main objective is mainly about grammar accuracy and usage of complex writing instructions, CLT(Communicative language teaching) focuses on enhancing meaning and improving the flow of ideas. It is still true that with the former technique students do well in terms of using grammar and a variety

of writing structures which are considered to be key to produce fluent writing. However, the improvement in writing fluency can be attributed to interactive nature of CLT tasks which helped to be meaning oriented clear cut with points they make. This finding supports Stephen Krashen's input hypothesis which suggests that writing improves when students are exposed to meaningful input.

Moreover, teacher's intervention was limited due to collaborative writing tasks which enabled students to give feedbacks on their performance and exchange ideas. This supports Vygotsky's zone of proximal development theory which suggests that peer feedback and teacher scaffolding help learners stretch their writing ability. Minimal instruction can also offer maximum result when it was provided correctly and guided by professionals.

Additionally, during different writing tasks such as chain writing participants wrote in order to convey meaning to the reader without emphasizing grammar. It matches with what Halliday states in his functional linguistics theory which states that language serves different purposes depending on context- which supports writing for audience and purpose. It means with different CLT tasks participants prioritized meaning over grammar range and accuracy thereby creating meaningful piece of writing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, CLT(Communicative language teaching) is a way to combine true nature of writing with fixed stages involved in this procedure. We can not completely rely on it as if it could develop our basic writing skills. As results show it is quite effective for those who have fundamental knowledge and skills on writing. It is true to accept it as a boosting technique not a solution to get rewarding benefits at the end. The results highlight the potential of CLT

(Communicative language teaching) to transform traditional writing lessons into an interactive procedure. CLT should be accepted as a communicative bridge between speaking and writing which facilitate idea sharing by providing the negotiation of meaning. Based on these findings teachers are encouraged to incorporate different CLT tasks with writing in order to get maximum result. However underrepresented it is among educators, it should be applied anyway as it offers a lot of unique advantages. Even though research produced positive outcomes, it was limited to the small number of participants and short period of time. So, the results may not represent all learning context. Further investigations are needed to further improve CLT-based writing instructions. It necessitates meticulous investigation on boosting grammar accuracy..

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