THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE CONTEXT OF ONLINE LEARNING: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract:
With the occurrence of the COVID-19 crisis, there has been dramatically growth and adoption of online education. As a consequence of the epidemic, institutes have been compulsory to close, and teaching and learning have changed fully to home studying. As a result, numerous educational institutions have adopted online teaching and learning on a massive scale. To combine the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach with a framework of computer-assisted language learning seems to be the best strategy during a coronavirus outbreak. This study offers a survey of the literature on Communicative Language Teaching in the situation of online teaching and studying. This paper begins with an overview, definition, and characteristics of CLT. It then examines how CLT can be beneficial in a virtual classroom: advantages and disadvantages. Besides, it discusses the approaches to using CLT in online teaching and learning. This paper's goal is to provide an effective overview that can be used for online language instruction. The study will add to our understanding of Communicative Language Teaching and its use in an online setting.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background of study and statement of problems

Since the 1990s, technological advancements have increased the use of technology in pedagogy and transformed the approaches to teaching and learning. Current advancements have accelerated the expansion of online learning, making it a popular option for students who are unable to attend face-to-face sessions on a regular basis (Means, Bakia, & Murphy, 2014). Because practically all countries have instituted a mobility ban to avoid the feast of the Covid-19 catastrophe, online learning has become increasingly popular.

During the pandemic of Covid-19, educational institutions in Vietnam are using online instruction in teaching and learning in response to high demand. Many institutions have begun to use internet resources for online instruction and to provide students with online self-study tools. Even though online education has been around for a long time, it still poses significant obstacles to educational institutions, professors, and students. Schools must establish an online teaching and learning system; as a result, they must cope with quick changes from the Ministry of Education and educate instructors on various technical tools. Furthermore, a number of problems involve instructors and the use of technological skills in the classroom. The most common is the limited teacher-student interaction. Technology restricts the use of language in the actual world in the virtual classroom. The growth of technology has resulted in a loss of engagement between teachers and students. They must adjust their teaching approaches and adapt to the use of technology in the virtual classroom. Despite the lack of face-to-face connection in online classrooms, they both learn to utilize online technologies to educate students smoothly and guarantee that their learners understand the teachings. There are additional difficulties for students to overcome. It is difficult to study from home since they can only attend online classes without the essential social connection with professors, classmates, and learning materials. Students not having stable internet access and smart technology equipment find it difficult to engage in online classes as well as effectively interact with teachers and other students.

Over the years, to suit the needs of diverse learners, target languages, and geographic locations, numerous teaching and learning theories and methodologies have been improved. To combine the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach with computer-assisted language learning seems to be a suitable strategy during the Covid pandemic, according to Noh (2020). In teaching and learning language, the CLT approach is considered a momentous and applicable theory and it has been extensively applied in online learning (Savignon, 2002). Besides, the teaching method of teachers supports the building of the language fluency of learners and it involves student-centered learning platforms, course design, and tasks. It is stated by Noh (2020) that teachers are

not motivated when teaching online since a part of them are not familiar with new technology. Besides, students still do not improve their learning performance, especially they are not confident to express their opinions in online classes. In fact, the CLT method has the potential to integrate a variety of classroom activities and tools, including discussion, team sharing, problem-based learning, and even role-play practice.

1.2 Aims and objectives of the study

This article summarises a transitory discussion about the Communicative Language Teaching approach, the advantages and disadvantages of the method, and its implementation in an online classroom environment. The current paper aims to discover the following areas by doing an extensive literature review:

- The advantages and disadvantages of Communicative Language Teaching in the virtual classroom,
- The implementation of Communicative Language Teaching in online language learning.

1.3 Research questions

In developing research questions for the current study, the researcher is concerned about two research areas. The current study efforts to discourse the subsequent research questions:

- How Communicative Language Teaching can be beneficial in a virtual classroom: advantages and disadvantages?
- What is the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching in online language learning?

1.4 Scope of the study

The current research focused on investigating the CLT approach, the benefits and drawbacks of the approach, and its implementation in an online classroom environment. The researchers discuss how the current study relates to the prior investigation in the field of Communicative Language Teaching in the online learning environment. This research focuses on analyzing the previous research in the related research areas. The scope of the study was narrowed down to Communicative Language Teaching in a virtual class. Some definitions along with the major characteristic features of Communicative Language Teaching are mentioned in this study.

1.5 Definition of keywords

In the current study, the followings are key terms to provide specific perspectives on the research areas:

- Communicative Language Teaching: a method of teaching a foreign or second language that stresses communicative skills as the primary aim of language acquisition (Richards, Platt, and Platt, 1992).

- Online Language Learning: a variety of learning situations, such as a web-based class, a fully virtual classroom, or online courses (Courtney & Willhoite, 2015).
- Online Language Teaching: Although it mimics face-to-face training, it is also known as multi-modal since students can talk, interact, and look through video cameras to negotiate meaning.

1.6 Organization of the study

The existing study consists of two main parts as below:

- Part 1 is an introduction to the study, including a background of the study, statement of the problems, aims and objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the research, and definitions of key terms.
- Part 2 is the literature review, presenting a definition of Communicative language learning (including definition, advantages and disadvantages); online education and Supplement of online language learning, Approaches to using CLT in online teaching and learning (Computer-mediated learning and Synchronous online teaching), and review of several previous studies in the research area.

2. Literature review

2.1. Communicative language learning

2.1.1 Definition of Communicative Language Teaching

Many writers have characterized Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as a method of teaching language (Cannale, 1983; Cook, 1991; Littlewood, 1981; Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Rivers, 1987). CLT is a technique of teaching a foreign or second language that emphasizes communicative competence as the primary aim of language acquisition Richards, et al. in the Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1992: 65). Moreover, CLT has been described and characterized in a number of ways by other experts on the subject (Littlewood, 1981; Savignon, 1991). The functional and structural components of language are given special focus in communicative language training, which combines them into a more fully communicative perspective, as demonstrated by Littlewood (1981).

Generally, CLT proponents typically go beyond teaching the target language's grammatical rules, suggesting that learners would gain communicative competence through using the target language in meaningful ways. The communicative method is concerned with each learner's individual needs. By building the language related to the actual world rather than the schoolroom, students may quickly and easily acquire the necessary skills.

2.1.2 Advantages and disadvantages of CLT in teaching and learning English

In terms of the bright sides, the application of CLT has shown various rewards in the teaching of English as a foreign/second language. In contrast to audio-lingual and grammar-translation methodologies, Communicative instruction emphasizes "task-

oriented, student-centered" linguistic training and delivers pupils a complete command of the English language for communication opportunities (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Many of the key advantages of CLT, according to other researchers, are as follows:

a) It encourages pupils to advance their aptitude to utilize English independently because it stresses fluency in the target language. It gives learners projects which help them think more clearly about what they'll say and how they'll present themselves. This provides kids greater confidence when dealing with others, and they enjoy talking more as a result (Brown, 1994).

b) Communication is something that CLT values and works towards. Consequently, enabling learners to utilize the language in a communicative environment to suit their requirements in realistic communication is a top focus in CLT (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). In other words, it blends the real-life situation of the native English speaker with activities in classrooms like role-playing and imitation (Harmer, 2007).

c) The bulk of the learning procedure takes place outside of the classroom, suggesting that CLT programs have transitioned from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered approach. To put it another way, the learner spends considerably more time claiming that the teacher's part is limited to assisting the learning progression. Accordingly, in order to accomplish communicative competence, the learners need to practice and interact more in the CLT class (Brown, 1994).

Regarding dark sides, various critiques have been leveled at the principles of CLT to language teaching and learning:

a) Rather than language and structure, the approach prioritizes meanings and rules of usage. To put it another way, some people believe that not enough attention is placed on correcting speech and language problems. It is because several emphases are placed on denotation at the expense of the system. It is believed that with CLT, there is a jeopardy of overstating verbal talents and understating reading and writing abilities (Harmer, 2007).

b) Fluency takes precedence over grammar and phonetic correctness in the CLT technique. Hughes (1989) asserts that communicative language training results in pupils who are "fluent but inaccurate." What is intended to occur in CLT lessons is that fluency will take precedence over accuracy.

c) Intermediate and advanced students will benefit from the CLT technique, while novices will benefit from some supervised practice. Learners with low stages of proficiency in the target language could struggle to engage in verbal communicative activities, and communicative fluency might not be acceptable if any institution's assessments are grammar-based.

d) The ability of the instructor to monitor must be exceptional. Classroom activities are not realistic, despite instructors' best efforts, and recreating really authentic language usage and enabling true involvement can be challenging. Furthermore, one of the guiding principles of this strategy is to place a strong emphasis on the

learners' needs and interests. As a result, every teacher ought to build a larger attempt to tailor the curriculum to the students' necessities.

e) CLT may be difficult to conduct in an EFL classroom due to an absence of resources and materials, such as genuine supplies and native speaker educators, as well as the huge size of the classes. Furthermore, adequate classrooms with teamwork activities, as well as educational tools and resources, have not been accessible (Johnson and Morrow, 1981).

2.2. Online education

Online education is a type of alternative education that takes place over the Internet for students who are unable to attend face-to-face educational programs due to distance or time constraints (Courtney & Willhoite, 2015; Means et al., 2014). Online learning is referred to as e-learning, computer-based training, web-based training, internet-based training, online training, electronic learning, mobile learning, and computer-aided distant education. By the 1960s, online education had matured, but there was no meaningful contact between teachers and students within classes (Courtney & Willhoite, 2015). Despite concerns about the speed with which teachers and students communicate and the effectiveness with which knowledge is delivered, online education continues to exist and grow fast around the world.

2.2.1 Advantages of online education

The simplicity and flexibility of online courses motivate learners to study online, which is an advantage of online education. Students preferring to study in their selected places can benefit from online learning (You & Kang, 2014). Learners who have access to the Internet can enroll in a variety of courses that fit their daily work routine. Furthermore, with the assistance of professors or peers, students can enhance skills such as time management and self-study. Online courses, as a result of the advancement of information technology, allow students in tiny, rural locations to participate in courses that would otherwise be unavailable due to distance (Chaney, 2001).

2.2.2 Disadvantages of online education

While taking an online course, students may encounter a number of possible problems. The absence of a sense of community, peer interaction, and the ability to maintain learners' motivation are all regularly cited as drawbacks of online learning (Rovai et al., 2005). The lack of engagement in the online learning environment, according to the researcher, is to blame for the students' poorer perseverance rates. Furthermore, online students experience less interaction than students in face-to-face classes. Peer interaction can have an adverse influence on various components of the learning procedure (Donlevy, 2003). According to Thomson (2010), many students prefer to work individually, minimizing the need to communicate with peers. Maintaining motivation in an online course has been identified as a concern for online students. Students who lack individuality and self-motivation have poorer achievement rates in online learning

environments because they do not devote enough time to participate in classes (Savenye, 2005).

2.2.3 Supplement of online language learning

The term "online language learning" can apply to a variety of learning situations, such as a web-based class, a fully virtual classroom, or online courses (Courtney & Willhoite, 2015). Students fully learning in online language courses never directly communicate with teachers or other students in a face-to-face scenery. Since the early 1990s, online learning via networked computers has been offered. Online learning is always evolving due to a mix of cost and location convenience, as well as technological advancements. Schools and universities all over the world provide formal online language classes. Formal classes will likely take place in an online learning environment, which may include educational institution-produced learning materials. The four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) are frequently addressed in online language classes, as well as grammar and vocabulary. Learning websites allow teachers to broadcast live language classes to a worldwide audience, allowing students from all over the world to participate. Students can communicate and ask for support from teachers anytime in online language classes. In this line, Courtney & Willhoite (2015) conducted a study about language learning via social smart devices such as computers or smartphones.

2.3. Approaches of using CLT in online teaching and learning

CLT is often regarded as an inclusive language teaching method, but how does it fare in the face of technology and online learning? Computer-mediated learning and synchronous online education will be covered in the following segment.

2.3.1 Computer-mediated learning

Nguyen (2010) offers a unique perspective on the subject, incorporating computer-mediated collaborative learning. CLT online, in this study, establishes a setting in which a student interacts with cooperating peers to solve an issue using a computer and its communication capabilities. Asynchronous and synchronous communication volume with high and various ways of interactivity is the most popular facility. To put it another way, the instructor would still serve as a facilitator, but students would take the lead by collaborating in groups. It was discovered that through online collaborative learning, students could develop a sense of actual responsibility for engaging in meaningful dialogue in the academic community. From the standpoint of sociocultural theory, computer-mediated collaborative learning in the real world is incredibly conceivable when we introduce technology into the classroom or vice versa. A factor of successful computer-mediated collaborative learning class has also been analysed by Nguyen (2020). The researcher suggested that further investigations are needed to back up the notion.

2.3.2 Synchronous online teaching

In Nguyen's article, the investigator used synchronous instruction to enable computer-mediated communication (2020). The reason is that synchronous learning mimics face-to-face education, but it is also known as multi-modal since learners may talk, converse, and look at video cameras to negotiate meaning. Because it is real-time, interesting, and interactive, the researcher chose to employ role-playing and UN-assembly activities using Zoom as a teaching tool to reflect real-world communication. CLT can be conducted among pre-service teachers, though not without challenges, according to the findings. For one thing, it's difficult to get everyone to say what they were thinking while also ensuring that no one dominates the conversation, making the interaction one-sided. Then, there was the matter of sound quality. Due to distractions, the network may be unstable at times, and the conversation may veer away from the major aims.

Discord, a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), immediate messaging, and digital supply platform, is another popular online teaching tool. Ramadhan (2021) did research on older students who were learning to talk by applying Discord to be an online education medium. The researcher discovered that the software makes learning more convenient for students by including an inclusive, interactive voice channel function that helps with speaking. When the teacher creates a conducive and comfortable setting for the students, they are more inspired to use the tool. Another advantage is that kids' goal setting and attitude foundation can be influenced by their peers.

2.4. Previous studies

With respect to the research on CLT, numerous studies have been conducted on the introduction and submission of this approach in the virtual classroom. The research focused on a variety of components of CLT, including pedagogical features and instructors' perceptions and attitudes about CLT.

Mohamed and Normala (2006) explored the modified production of students in CLT classrooms in Malaysia. The researchers in this study focus on the ways teachers asked questions and the way students responded in the classroom. The research was conducted on two classes of students at beginners and intermediate levels in a university in Malaysia. The teachers' interactions with students were recorded and analyzed to identify the result of the research. According to their findings, educators did not deliver many chances for students to provide changed output. These results suggest the requirement to adjust the teachers' teaching method to enhance the interaction, encourage communication, and enhance language learning.

In terms of investigation of the online learning environment, in a qualitative study done by Alex (2015) at Walden University in America, the relevance of investigation on learners' views of interaction and their experience in cultivating English was underlined. The study's participants were chosen using purposive sampling from three university departments. Face-to-face interviews were done, and questionnaires were completed via electronic mail. The research questions focused on how participants described interaction and how they viewed learning experiences in an online course. Participants ranked

engagement with course material as the most significant, followed by a collaboration with teachers, according to the findings. The character of the learners was the next most important factor, followed by student-student interaction. According to the researcher, learners' attitudes and satisfaction with online learning were influenced by their perceptions of interaction.

Though there have been a variety of research conducted on the application of CLT in English classroom as well as online teaching and learning, research about using CLT in the context of online learning are still scarce. That was one of the main reasons why the researchers wanted to undertake this study in order to close the gap. The current suggested research is intended to explore the application of communicative language education in the setting of online learning, based on literature studies that provide vital insights.

3. Conclusion

This article focuses on Communicative Language Teaching in the online learning environment, particularly in the Covid-19 pandemic. CLT highlights the necessity for teachers to apply real-life statements in the online learning environment.

There are several pros and cons of CLT for teaching English as a foreign/second language. CLT supports the student to progress in their capability to use English independently. It besides incorporates real-life communication into classroom activities. Due to CLT, the learning process has changed from teacher-centered to learner-centered approach. The disadvantages of CLT are mainly the emphasis on oral abilities and not enough on reading and writing skills. In addition, CLT may cause difficulty for learners with a low level of competency in the goal language when they join in oral communicative activities in an online class. The successful conduct of CLT in English language education in an online context is based on the lectures' comprehension and belief in CLT. Online CLT approaches such as computer-mediated learning are suitable for collaboration in an online teaching context. Besides, synchronous online learning with the engagement of technology tools helps in real-life communication in teaching and learning.

The study's results would result in a number of contributions. The current study's findings will provide insight into instructors' classroom practices when using the CLT technique in an online learning environment. Second, instructors who take part in this study will get significant experience in self-reflection about their classroom pedagogical method. Since CLT is a methodology that is developed in many countries, it is hoped that the findings of this research will be helpful and applicable in similar research areas. More empirical studies would further supplement the area of communicative teaching in a virtual atmosphere.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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