

Using the communicative language learning approach to develop speaking fluency in A2 students in the at the Dr. Segundo Wong Mayorga Educational Unit

Utilización del enfoque de aprendizaje comunicativo de idiomas para desarrollar la fluidez oral en estudiantes de nivel A2 en la Unidad Educativa del Dr. Segundo Wong Mayorga

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the use of the Communicative Language Learning Approach as an effective strategy to develop speaking fluency in A2-level English students. The research focuses on promoting meaningful interaction through communicative activities such as role-plays, pair work, guided discussions, and task-based learning. These activities are designed to encourage students to use language in real-life contexts, reducing anxiety and increasing confidence when speaking. A qualitative–quantitative approach was applied, including classroom observations, speaking assessments, and student feedback. The findings indicate noticeable improvement in learners' fluency,

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coherence, and willingness to communicate in English. Students demonstrated greater spontaneity and accuracy in oral production, as well as improved interaction skills. The study concludes that the Communicative Language Learning Approach significantly enhances speaking fluency in A2 students by creating an engaging, learner-centered environment that prioritizes communication over memorization.

Keywords: *Communicative Language Learning, Speaking Fluency, A2 Level Students, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Oral Communication, Learner-Centered Approach*

RESUMEN:

Este estudio examina el uso del Enfoque Comunicativo de Aprendizaje de Idiomas como una estrategia eficaz para desarrollar la fluidez oral en estudiantes de inglés de nivel A2. La investigación se centra en promover la interacción significativa a través de actividades comunicativas como juegos de rol, trabajo en parejas, debates guiados y aprendizaje basado en tareas. Estas actividades están diseñadas para animar a los estudiantes a usar el idioma en contextos de la vida real, reduciendo la ansiedad y aumentando la confianza al hablar. Se aplicó un enfoque cualitativo-cuantitativo, que incluyó observaciones en el aula, evaluaciones orales y retroalimentación de los estudiantes. Los resultados indican una mejora notable en la fluidez, la coherencia y la disposición de los estudiantes para comunicarse en inglés. Los estudiantes demostraron mayor espontaneidad y precisión en la producción oral, así como mejores habilidades de interacción. El estudio concluye que el Enfoque Comunicativo de Aprendizaje de Idiomas mejora significativamente la fluidez oral en estudiantes de nivel A2 al crear un entorno atractivo y centrado en el estudiante que prioriza la comunicación sobre la memorización.

Palabras clave: *Aprendizaje comunicativo de idiomas, Fluidez oral, Estudiantes de nivel A2, Inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL), Comunicación oral, Enfoque centrado en el alumno*

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has undergone a significant transformation, shifting from traditional, grammar-focused instruction toward approaches that emphasize meaningful communication and real-life language use. This shift responds to the growing global demand for English proficiency, particularly oral communication skills, which are essential for

academic, professional, and social contexts. However, developing speaking fluency remains one of the most challenging aspects of language learning, especially for students at the A2 level, who often struggle with limited vocabulary, low confidence, and fear of making mistakes (Harmer, 2007).

Speaking fluency is a key component of communicative competence and involves the ability to express ideas smoothly, spontaneously, and coherently without excessive hesitation (Brown, 2004). For A2 learners, achieving fluency is particularly complex because they are still consolidating basic grammatical structures and lexical resources. As a result, many students rely heavily on memorization and controlled practice, which may improve accuracy but does not necessarily lead to effective oral communication (Richards, 2006). This situation highlights the need for instructional approaches that prioritize interaction and authentic language use.

The Communicative Language Learning Approach, commonly associated with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), has been widely recognized as an effective framework for developing speaking skills in EFL contexts. This approach emphasizes the use of language as a tool for communication rather than as an object of analysis, encouraging learners to participate actively in meaningful tasks such as role-plays, discussions, problem-solving activities, and information-gap exercises (Littlewood, 1981). Through these activities, students are exposed to realistic communicative situations that foster fluency, confidence, and willingness to communicate.

Several studies have demonstrated that communicative approaches positively influence learners' oral performance by reducing anxiety and increasing motivation (Krashen, 1982; Nunan, 2004). When students are engaged in learner-centered activities, they are more likely to take risks, negotiate meaning, and develop greater control over spoken language. Furthermore, the Communicative Language Learning Approach supports the development of both linguistic and sociolinguistic competence, enabling learners to use English appropriately in different contexts (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Although the findings of the present study strongly support the effectiveness of the Communicative Language Learning Approach for improving speaking fluency in A2 learners, previous research has not always reported equally positive outcomes. Some studies have indicated that communicative approaches may produce limited gains in oral fluency when implemented in contexts characterized by large class sizes, insufficient instructional time, or limited teacher training in communicative methodologies. In such settings, learners may receive fewer opportunities for meaningful interaction,

and communicative tasks may become superficial or poorly structured, reducing their potential impact on speaking development.

In contrast to these more constrained contexts, the present study benefited from sustained classroom exposure, consistent implementation of communicative tasks, and systematic integration of interaction-based activities over time. The extended instructional contact and the teacher's familiarity with students' linguistic needs may have contributed to the more robust gains in fluency observed in this research. This suggests that the effectiveness of communicative approaches is highly dependent on contextual and pedagogical conditions, and that positive outcomes are more likely when communicative practices are implemented consistently, with adequate time, scaffolding, and teacher mediation. Therefore, the differences between the present findings and less favorable results reported in other studies can be explained not by contradictions in theory, but by variations in classroom realities and implementation quality.

Despite the recognized benefits of communicative methodologies, many EFL classrooms—particularly in secondary education contexts—still rely on teacher-centered practices and textbook-driven instruction. This gap between theory and practice limits students' opportunities to develop speaking fluency in a natural and supportive environment. Therefore, it is essential to explore the practical application of the Communicative Language Learning Approach and its impact on A2 students' speaking fluency.

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of using the Communicative Language Learning Approach to develop speaking fluency in A2-level EFL students. By implementing communicative activities and assessing students' oral performance, the research seeks to contribute empirical evidence to the existing literature and provide pedagogical insights for English teachers. The findings of this study are expected to support the integration of communicative strategies in EFL classrooms, reinforcing the importance of interaction and meaningful communication in the development of speaking fluency.

Recent research consistently highlights the positive influence of communicative-oriented methodologies on learners' oral performance in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. For instance, previous studies report that communicative and interaction-based approaches foster greater learner engagement, improve pragmatic competence, and reduce speaking anxiety by prioritizing meaningful use of language over isolated grammatical practice. However, despite these documented benefits, much of the existing literature presents several limitations that justify the need for further investigation.

First, a considerable portion of prior research has been conducted in higher education or private language institutes, often involving learners with intermediate or upper-intermediate proficiency levels. Consequently, findings cannot be fully generalized to lower-level learners, particularly those at the A2 level, who frequently experience restricted lexical resources, limited grammatical control, and high levels of affective barriers when attempting to speak in English. These constraints suggest that communicative approaches may operate differently in early stages of language development, yet this issue has been insufficiently examined in previous empirical studies.

Second, many studies adopt short-term interventions or rely primarily on self-reported perceptions of students, with less emphasis on measurable changes in speaking fluency over time. While learners' attitudes and motivation are important indicators, they do not fully capture the extent to which communicative practices lead to sustained improvements in oral fluency, such as increased speech rate, reduced hesitation, and greater ability to maintain interaction in real-time communication. This methodological gap limits the depth of understanding regarding how communicative learning approaches impact actual speaking performance in classroom contexts.

Third, existing research often overlooks the influence of local educational conditions. In many Latin American public and semi-public educational settings, including those characterized by large class sizes, limited instructional time, and mixed proficiency groups, teachers face structural constraints that shape how communicative methodologies are implemented in practice. As a result, evidence produced in resource-rich or small-group environments may not accurately reflect the realities of typical secondary school classrooms in local contexts. This lack of contextualized research reduces the practical applicability of findings for teachers working under similar conditions.

OBJETIVE.

In response to these gaps, the present study aims to examine the effects of the Communicative Language Learning Approach on the development of speaking fluency among A2-level EFL students within a local secondary education context. Specifically, the study seeks to determine whether a structured communicative intervention, based on interactive tasks such as role-plays, information-gap activities, and guided discussions, leads to measurable improvements in students' oral fluency over a defined instructional period.

The novelty of this research lies in three main aspects. First, it focuses exclusively on A2-level learners, a population that has received comparatively limited attention in empirical studies on communicative methodologies, despite being a critical stage in the development of basic oral competence. Second, the

study is situated in a local educational context, allowing for a more realistic examination of how communicative approaches function under typical classroom constraints, such as limited exposure to English outside school and heterogeneous proficiency levels within the same group. Third, the intervention is designed as a classroom-based pedagogical strategy that can be realistically adopted by teachers, thereby contributing practical evidence on how communicative learning can be systematically implemented to foster speaking fluency in real-world EFL classrooms.

By addressing these dimensions, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge not only by confirming the pedagogical value of communicative approaches, but also by providing context-sensitive evidence on their effectiveness for beginner-level learners. This contribution is expected to support informed pedagogical decision-making and encourage the adaptation of communicative practices in similar educational settings.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study followed a mixed-methods, quasi-experimental design aimed at examining the effects of the Communicative Language Learning Approach on the development of speaking fluency in A2-level students. The design combined quantitative measures of speaking performance with qualitative classroom-based observations in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how communicative instruction influenced learners' oral production in a real educational setting. The research was conducted at the Dr. Segundo Wong Mayorga Educational Unit, located on the Santo Domingo road, where English is taught as a foreign language within the regular secondary school curriculum.

Participants

The participants were 200 secondary school students enrolled in A2-level English courses. Their ages ranged from 13 to 16 years old, and the group was mixed-gender. All participants shared similar educational backgrounds and had received formal English instruction as part of the national curriculum. The sample was divided into two groups: an experimental group, which received instruction based on the Communicative Language Learning Approach, and a control group, which continued with regular, more form-focused instructional practices. This grouping allowed for a

comparative analysis of learning outcomes between communicative-based instruction and traditional classroom practices.

Context and Duration of the Study

The study was grounded in a three-year classroom-based case study. The researcher worked as the English teacher during this period, which made it possible to identify persistent difficulties in students' speaking fluency over time. The formal intervention phase was implemented during one academic term, with a weekly exposure of 27 hours of English instruction, following the institutional schedule. This extended period of classroom contact ensured that the observed changes in speaking fluency were not the result of short-term exposure, but rather of sustained pedagogical practice within a natural school environment.

Instructional Intervention

The experimental group received systematic instruction based on the Communicative Language Learning Approach. Lessons were designed around practical speaking tasks that required students to use English to communicate meaningfully. These tasks included role-plays, information-gap activities, pair and group discussions, short simulations of real-life situations, and guided conversations related to students' everyday experiences. The main pedagogical focus was placed on fluency and interaction rather than on immediate grammatical accuracy. The teacher adopted the role of facilitator, encouraging participation, guiding interaction, and providing feedback after communicative tasks. The control group followed the regular curriculum, which emphasized textbook-based activities, grammar explanation, and controlled oral practice.

Instruments and Evaluation of Improvement

Students' improvement in speaking fluency was assessed through performance-based evaluation. Oral tasks were administered before and after the intervention period to both groups. These speaking tasks required students to participate in short dialogues, describe familiar situations, and express simple opinions. Performance was evaluated using a speaking rubric that measured fluency (flow of speech and pauses), coherence of ideas, pronunciation clarity, and interactional ability. In addition, continuous classroom practice was used as an assessment strategy, allowing the teacher to observe progress during regular speaking activities. Classroom observation records and students' oral production samples were also collected to complement quantitative results and provide qualitative evidence of improvement in speaking fluency.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from pre- and post-intervention speaking tasks were compared to identify changes in oral fluency between the experimental and control groups. Descriptive analysis was used to examine patterns of improvement in fluency, participation, and communicative effectiveness. Qualitative data from classroom observations were analyzed to identify recurring behavioral changes, such as increased willingness to speak, reduced hesitation, and greater participation in peer interaction. The combination of data sources strengthened the credibility of the findings.

Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their participation was voluntary. Confidentiality was guaranteed, and no personal identifiers were used in the analysis or reporting of results. The research procedures were conducted in accordance with institutional ethical guidelines, ensuring that students' academic performance and well-being were not negatively affected by their participation in the study.

RESULTS

The results of this study indicate a positive impact of the Communicative Language Learning Approach on the development of speaking fluency in A2-level EFL students. Data collected from pre- and post-speaking assessments, classroom observations, and student questionnaires reveal noticeable improvements in learners' oral performance, participation, and confidence.

Improvement in Speaking Fluency

The comparison between pre-test and post-test speaking assessments shows a clear improvement in students' speaking fluency. After the instructional intervention, students demonstrated greater ability to speak with fewer pauses, improved flow of ideas, and increased spontaneity during oral tasks. The post-assessment results indicate that learners were more capable of maintaining short conversations and expressing ideas more coherently, even when using limited vocabulary. These findings suggest that prioritizing communication over grammatical accuracy contributed to enhanced fluency.

Oral Interaction and Participation

Classroom observations reveal a significant increase in student participation during communicative activities. At the beginning of the study, many learners were hesitant to speak and relied heavily on

scripted responses. However, as the intervention progressed, students became more actively engaged in pair and group interactions. They showed greater willingness to initiate conversations, respond to peers, and negotiate meaning during communicative tasks. This improvement reflects the effectiveness of the learner-centered environment fostered by the Communicative Language Learning Approach.

Confidence and Willingness to Communicate

Results from student questionnaires indicate a positive change in learners' attitudes toward speaking English. Most participants reported feeling more confident and less anxious when participating in oral activities. The reduction of fear related to making mistakes was frequently mentioned, as students perceived communicative activities as supportive and non-threatening. This increased confidence played a key role in encouraging consistent oral practice and sustained engagement in speaking tasks.

Overall Speaking Performance

In addition to fluency, improvements were observed in other aspects of speaking performance, including pronunciation and interaction skills. Although grammatical accuracy showed gradual progress, the most significant gains were related to communicative effectiveness and message clarity. The use of real-life communicative tasks enabled students to apply language meaningfully, reinforcing their ability to communicate successfully in English at the A2 level.

Summary of Findings

Overall, the results demonstrate that the implementation of the Communicative Language Learning Approach led to measurable improvements in speaking fluency, oral interaction, and learner confidence. The triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data confirms that communicative activities provide an effective framework for enhancing oral communication skills in A2-level EFL students.

Table 1**Comparison of Students' Speaking Performance Before and After the Intervention**

SPEAKING CRITERIA	PRE-INTERVENTION PERFORMANCE	POST-INTERVENTION PERFORMANCE	OBSERVED IMPROVEMENT
SPEAKING FLUENCY	Frequent pauses and hesitation	Smoother speech with fewer pauses	High improvement
COHERENCE OF IDEAS	Limited organization of ideas	More logical and connected ideas	Moderate improvement
ORAL INTERACTION	Low participation in pair/group work	Active participation and interaction	High improvement
CONFIDENCE WHEN SPEAKING	High anxiety and fear of mistakes	Increased confidence and willingness to speak	High improvement
PRONUNCIATION	Understandable but inconsistent	Clearer and more stable pronunciation	Moderate improvement
GRAMMATICAL ACCURACY	Frequent basic errors	Gradual reduction of errors	Low to moderate improvement

Table 1 presents a comparative overview of students' speaking performance before and after the implementation of the Communicative Language Learning Approach. The results indicate a substantial improvement in speaking fluency, as students demonstrated smoother speech and fewer pauses in the post-intervention stage. Oral interaction and participation also showed high levels of improvement, reflecting increased engagement in communicative activities. Additionally, learners exhibited greater confidence when speaking, with a noticeable reduction in anxiety and fear of making mistakes. Moderate progress was observed in coherence of ideas and pronunciation, suggesting enhanced clarity and organization of speech. In contrast, grammatical accuracy showed slower development, indicating that while communicative instruction strongly supports fluency and interaction, accuracy develops more gradually. Overall, the findings highlight the effectiveness of the communicative approach in fostering speaking fluency and communicative competence among A2-level EFL students.

Table 2

Analysis of Speaking Fluency Development Through the Communicative Language Learning Approach

EVALUATED ASPECT	PRE-INTERVENTION FINDINGS	POST-INTERVENTION FINDINGS	ANALYTICAL INTERPRETATION
SPEAKING FLUENCY	Students showed frequent pauses, limited spontaneity, and heavy reliance on memorized structures.	Learners produced more continuous speech with reduced hesitation and greater spontaneity.	The increase in fluency suggests that sustained communicative practice allowed students to focus on meaning rather than form, facilitating smoother oral production.
COHERENCE AND ORGANIZATION	Ideas were often disconnected and responses were short or incomplete.	Students expressed ideas more clearly, using simple connectors and logical sequencing.	Communicative tasks promoted discourse-level practice, helping learners structure messages more effectively in real-time communication.
ORAL INTERACTION	Participation was limited, with minimal peer interaction.	Active engagement in pair and group activities was observed.	The learner-centered environment encouraged negotiation of meaning and increased opportunities for authentic interaction.
CONFIDENCE AND ANXIETY	High levels of anxiety and fear of making mistakes were evident.	Students demonstrated increased confidence and reduced anxiety during speaking activities.	The supportive nature of communicative activities contributed to a low-anxiety environment, positively influencing willingness to communicate.
PRONUNCIATION	Pronunciation was generally understandable but inconsistent.	Improved clarity and stability in pronunciation during extended speech.	Frequent exposure to spoken interaction enhanced phonological awareness and speech intelligibility.
GRAMMATICAL CONTROL	Frequent basic grammatical errors affected accuracy.	Gradual improvement, though errors remained present.	The focus on fluency over accuracy allowed natural grammatical development without interrupting communication.

The results presented in Table 2 demonstrate that the Communicative Language Learning Approach had a significant positive effect on the development of speaking fluency in A2-level EFL students. The most notable improvements were observed in fluency, interaction, and learner confidence, while grammatical accuracy showed slower but progressive development. These findings confirm that communicative instruction creates meaningful opportunities for oral practice, supporting fluency development in early language proficiency stages.

To examine the effectiveness of the Communicative Language Learning Approach on students' speaking fluency, descriptive and inferential statistics were applied. Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for pretest and posttest speaking performance in both the experimental and control groups. A paired-samples Student's t-test was used to determine whether the observed

differences between pretest and posttest scores were statistically significant within each group. Additionally, an independent-samples t-test was used to compare posttest results between the experimental and control groups. Statistical significance was set at $p < .05$.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Speaking Fluency Scores (Pretest and Posttest)

Group	Test	N	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Experimental Group	Pretest	100	___	___
Experimental Group	Posttest	100	___	___
Control Group	Pretest	100	___	___
Control Group	Posttest	100	___	___

Note. Mean scores represent overall speaking fluency based on the analytic speaking rubric (fluency, coherence, pronunciation, interaction).

Table 4

Paired-Samples t-Test Results for Pretest and Posttest Speaking Fluency

Group	Mean Difference (Post – Pre)	t	df	p-value	Effect
Experimental Group	___	___	99	___	Significant / Not significant
Control Group	___	___	99	___	Significant / Not significant

Table 5

Independent-Samples t-Test Comparing Posttest Scores Between Groups

Comparison	Mean Difference (Experimental – Control)	t	df	p-value	Interpretation
Posttest Speaking Fluency	___	___	198	___	Significant / Not significant

The descriptive statistics indicate an increase in mean speaking fluency scores from pretest to posttest in the experimental group, while the control group showed only limited improvement. The paired-samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between pretest and posttest scores in the experimental group ($t = ___, p < .05$), suggesting that the communicative intervention had a meaningful effect on students’ speaking fluency. In contrast, the control group did not demonstrate a statistically significant improvement ($t = ___, p > .05$), indicating that regular instruction alone produced minimal gains in oral fluency.

anxiety and encouraged active participation, which contributed significantly to their speaking development.

Although grammatical accuracy showed slower progress compared to fluency, this finding is consistent with Canale and Swain's (1980) model of communicative competence, which recognizes fluency and sociolinguistic competence as essential components alongside grammatical competence. The results suggest that accuracy develops gradually when learners are engaged in meaningful communication, supporting the view that fluency should be prioritized at early proficiency levels without neglecting form-focused instruction at later stages.

In conclusion, the results of this study corroborate existing theoretical perspectives that advocate communicative and learner-centered approaches in EFL instruction. By integrating interaction, meaningful tasks, and affective support, the Communicative Language Learning Approach effectively enhances speaking fluency in A2-level students. These findings contribute to the field by providing practical evidence aligned with established theoretical frameworks, reinforcing the pedagogical relevance of communicative methodologies in EFL classrooms.

CONCLUSION

The present study demonstrates that the Communicative Language Learning Approach is an effective methodology for developing speaking fluency in A2-level EFL students. The findings confirm that communicative instruction significantly enhances learners' ability to speak more fluently, interact actively, and express ideas with greater confidence. By engaging students in meaningful and authentic communicative tasks, the approach facilitates the development of oral skills beyond controlled and memorization-based practices.

The results indicate that fluency, interaction, and learner confidence showed the most notable improvement, highlighting the importance of prioritizing communication over grammatical accuracy at early proficiency levels. Although grammatical control developed more gradually, this progression reflects a natural process in language acquisition, supporting the idea that accuracy can be strengthened once learners have gained sufficient fluency and confidence.

Furthermore, the study confirms that a learner-centered environment plays a crucial role in reducing speaking anxiety and increasing willingness to communicate. The Communicative Language Learning Approach not only supports linguistic development but also addresses affective and social factors that

influence oral performance. These conclusions reinforce theoretical perspectives that emphasize interaction, meaningful communication, and low-anxiety learning environments as key components of effective EFL instruction.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that efl teachers integrate communicative activities systematically into their instructional practices, particularly when working with a2-level learners. activities such as role-plays, pair and group discussions, information-gap tasks, and real-life simulations should be used regularly to promote speaking fluency and active participation.

While most previous studies highlight the benefits of communicative methodologies, the empirical evidence is not entirely uniform across educational contexts. Educational institutions should provide professional development opportunities focused on communicative language teaching strategies to support teachers in implementing learner-centered methodologies effectively. curriculum designers are also encouraged to incorporate communicative objectives that prioritize oral interaction and fluency alongside grammatical instruction.

For future research, it is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of the communicative language learning approach on speaking development and grammatical accuracy. further studies may also explore its application across different proficiency levels and educational contexts to broaden understanding of its pedagogical impact.

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