

## Communicative Language Teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Systematic Literature Review of Trends, Challenges, and Pedagogical Innovations

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### ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review (SLR) examines Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) practices in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) contexts, focusing on research from 2015 to 2025. The review investigates how CLT contributes to learners' speaking competence, motivation, and intercultural communicative competence (ICC), as well as to the professional development of educators. It also addresses structural constraints in implementation and innovations in digital pedagogy. The methodology followed PRISMA 2020 guidelines, using Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar to identify 68 eligible peer-reviewed articles. The studies were analyzed thematically and appraised using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklists to ensure rigor and relevance. The findings reveal that CLT enhances learner fluency, confidence, and engagement when implemented through interaction-rich activities such as role-plays, group discussions, and peer feedback. Integrating psychological frameworks such as self-efficacy theory and Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) demonstrates that CLT fosters higher motivation and more positive learner attitudes. Additionally, incorporating ICC frameworks has enriched CLT in multicultural classrooms by promoting empathy, reflection, and adaptability. However, the review also identifies persistent barriers to CLT adoption, including exam-driven education systems, cultural misalignments, and limited teacher training. Emerging evidence supports the efficacy of online and blended CLT models that utilize microlearning, mobile technologies, and peer-assessment strategies. Teacher beliefs, teacher identity, and collaborative professional development are shown to be critical factors in shaping CLT practices. In conclusion, this review underscores CLT's adaptability and potential in diverse linguistic and technological environments, advocating for greater institutional support.

**Keywords:** Communicative Language Teaching; speaking competence; intercultural communicative competence; language pedagogy.

### INTRODUCTION

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has emerged as a globally recognized paradigm in English Language Teaching (ELT), evolving significantly since its initial formulation in the 1970s (Harindra & Rohman, 2025; Nayak, 2026; Orujlu, 2025; Pemberton, 2024). Unlike traditional methodologies that prioritize grammatical accuracy and rote memorization, CLT emphasizes real-world communication, learner interaction, and pragmatic competence. Over the last decade (2015–2025), a notable transformation has taken place as CLT has integrated digital advancements and adapted to contemporary pedagogical priorities that stress learner autonomy, technological fluency, and intercultural understanding.

The dominance of CLT in both EFL and ESP instruction is reflected in its widespread adoption across regions such as Asia, Europe, and Latin America (Basturkmen, 2022; Chap, 2025; Yu et al., 2024). This review contends that, while CLT remains foundational in ELT curricula, its theoretical and practical alignment with 21st-century learning goals warrants critical reassessment. The global communication demands of this century—shaped by technological innovation, multicultural encounters, and workforce-specific language needs—necessitate a renewed examination of CLT’s capacity to deliver relevant and effective instruction. Studies from across the globe demonstrate that integrating CLT with educational technologies—such as online discussion tools, mobile applications, and AI-based tutoring platforms—has revitalized language learning environments. In Indonesia and China, for example, WhatsApp-supported tasks and online video modules have made communicative practice more accessible and engaging (Andiansyah et al., 2025; Basturkmen, 2022; Krentzman, 2022). These innovations reflect a pedagogical shift toward interactive learning that supports all four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) within authentic contexts. Alongside technological enhancements, CLT has also evolved to accommodate specific learner needs through ESP-oriented approaches. In such contexts, English instruction is customized for disciplines such as nursing, engineering, or tourism, emphasizing context-specific vocabulary and communicative tasks. This pragmatic orientation aligns with CLT’s core principles and strengthens learners’ functional proficiency. The growing emphasis on relevance and authenticity in language use has also prompted exploration of pedagogical translation, wherein educators employ culturally contextualized adaptations to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps (Han, 2022).

Nonetheless, implementing CLT is not without obstacles. Persistent tensions arise between policy-level endorsement of CLT and classroom-level execution. For example, despite curricular reforms advocating CLT, many instructors in Bangladesh, South Korea, and other countries continue to rely on Grammar-Translation methods due to entrenched beliefs or systemic constraints. Teachers’ cognition often blends traditional and contemporary pedagogies, leading to inconsistent application of communicative principles (Ngandeu, 2021). Moreover, assessment practices that prioritize accuracy over fluency tend to hinder the adoption of learner-centered, interaction-based instruction. High-stakes exams in some contexts deter teachers from fully embracing CLT because success is measured by grammatical precision rather than communicative ability (Aisyah, 2017). The digitalization of education—accelerated by global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic—has further complicated CLT implementation. While digital tools provide opportunities for remote interaction and peer collaboration, their integration requires pedagogical training and technological infrastructure that many institutions lack. Particularly in low-resource settings, limited internet access and digital illiteracy impede equitable access to communicative language education. An emerging concern is the integration of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) into CLT. In multilingual classrooms, CLT must go beyond linguistic proficiency to cultivate learners’ ability to navigate cultural nuances, negotiate meaning, and engage in respectful global discourse. Intercultural tasks embedded in communicative lessons—such as virtual exchanges with international peers or critical discussions of cultural artifacts—can foster empathy and global awareness (Ortaçtepe, 2022; Al-Amri, 2020).

These efforts represent a fusion of CLT with intercultural pedagogy, helping learners become not only proficient speakers but also competent global citizens. To explore these shifts comprehensively, the present SLR synthesizes research published between 2015 and 2025 across multiple regions. It focuses on six interrelated subtopics: (1) speaking competence development, (2) learner motivation and attitudes, (3) intercultural communicative competence, (4) implementation challenges, (5) digital and blended CLT innovations, and (6) teacher beliefs and identity. Together, these dimensions reflect the evolving scope and complexity of CLT in contemporary ELT practice. The objectives of this review are threefold. First, it aims to identify emerging pedagogical trends that illustrate how CLT has been innovated or expanded to meet local and global learning demands. Second, it explores recurring barriers and challenges—both systemic and situational—that inhibit effective CLT implementation. Third, the review evaluates contributions from cutting-edge practices that incorporate technology, intercultural strategies, and specialized instruction to strengthen communicative outcomes. Through this synthesis, the study contributes to the scholarly understanding of CLT and provides guidance for educators, policymakers, and curriculum designers seeking to modernize language instruction.

In constructing this review, several core terms are clarified. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) refers to instructional approaches that emphasize real-world language use through learner-centered tasks and interaction. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) denotes the tailoring of English instruction to discipline-specific contexts such as medicine, aviation, or law. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) applies to contexts where English is taught as a non-native language, typically outside Anglophone countries. Pedagogical translation involves culturally and linguistically adaptive instructional design that facilitates learner comprehension across diverse backgrounds. Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) reflects a learner's capacity to communicate appropriately across cultural boundaries, encompassing empathy, openness, and critical awareness. Microlearning refers to the delivery of compact, modular learning experiences, often technology-mediated, and suited to learners' schedules and digital preferences.

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. Section 2 outlines the methodological procedures used in sourcing, selecting, and evaluating the literature. Section 3 provides the theoretical grounding for CLT and examines its evolution into hybrid and culturally responsive forms. Section 4 presents a comprehensive review of findings, structured into six thematic areas corresponding to the review's scope. Section 5 offers concluding insights, discusses current gaps, and suggests directions for future CLT research and practice. Through this review, we seek to answer a central question: How has Communicative Language Teaching adapted to address the technological, cultural, and pragmatic demands of 21st-century English language education? By examining this question across time, geographical contexts, and pedagogical innovations, the study offers a timely, evidence-based perspective on the trajectory of communicative pedagogy worldwide.

## **METHOD**

### **Search Strategy To conduct this SLR, three major academic databases**

To conduct this SLR, three major academic databases were selected: Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. These platforms were chosen for their extensive coverage of

peer-reviewed publications across the fields of education, linguistics, and applied language studies. A comprehensive keyword search strategy was implemented to identify relevant sources. The core search terms included “Communicative Language Teaching,” “CLT innovations,” “ESP CLT,” “EFL communication,” “pedagogical translation,” and “microlearning in ELT.” Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) and exact-phrase search techniques (using quotation marks for fixed phrases) were applied to refine results and ensure relevancy. To increase search efficiency, field-specific delimiters such as TITLE, ABSTRACT, and KEYWORDS were used in databases like Scopus and Web of Science. Wildcards (e.g., to capture education, educational, etc.) and filtering by publication year (2015–2025) and subject area further ensured that a broad range of relevant studies was captured while excluding off-topic results.

### **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Based on guidelines from prior systematic reviews in education (Qasserras, 2023), explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to ensure methodological rigor: Inclusion Criteria; Research published between 2015 and 2025, Publications in peer-reviewed journals or reputable conference proceedings; Studies focused explicitly on Communicative Language Teaching within EFL or ESP contexts; Studies reporting empirical findings (quantitative or qualitative) or theoretical contributions related to communicative competence. Exclusion Criteria: Non-English publications (unless an official English translation was available); Non peer-reviewed sources such as blogs, editorials, or opinion pieces; Studies not situated in language learning contexts or not directly related to CLT; and Articles lacking methodological clarity or relevance to the conceptual framework of CLT. These criteria were designed to balance comprehensiveness with specificity, ensuring the inclusion of high-quality and contextually relevant studies. Applying these filters helped focus the review on sources that are most pertinent to modern CLT practice.

### **Screening Process**

The screening process involved multiple stages to ensure consistency and transparency in study selection. Initially, the titles and abstracts of retrieved records were scanned for relevance, and duplicates were removed. Next, two independent reviewers performed full-text evaluations of the remaining articles using a predefined coding sheet to extract key information (e.g., publication year, geographic region, methodological approach, focus area, key findings). Any discrepancies in study inclusion were resolved through discussion or, when necessary, arbitration by a third reviewer. A PRISMA 2020-compliant flow diagram (Page et al., 2021) was used to document the identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion of studies. This systematic process ensured transparency and replicability in how studies were filtered and chosen for analysis.

### **Quality Assessment Tools**

To assess the reliability and validity of the included studies, two well-established frameworks were employed. First, the PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines were used to ensure that all procedural steps—from literature search through results presentation—adhered to internationally

recognized standards. Second, the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklists were applied to evaluate the quality of each study. This appraisal covered research design clarity, appropriateness of participants, rigor of data collection and analysis, consideration of ethical issues, and the relevance of findings to CLT contexts. Together, PRISMA and CASP provided a robust framework for systematic synthesis and critical appraisal. The integration of these tools supports the methodological credibility of this review and aligns with best practices in educational research synthesis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### CLT and Speaking Competence Development

The evidence in this section confirms that CLT remains a robust pedagogical approach for enhancing speaking competence. Through classroom interaction strategies, thoughtful integration of technology, and attention to affective support mechanisms, CLT empowers learners to engage in meaningful oral communication. The synthesis of studies provides a clear evidence base that connects practice with theory, paving the way for targeted innovations in EFL and ESP speaking instruction.

**Table 1. Summary of CLT Strategies and Speaking Competence Outcomes Across Reviewed Studies**

Hui & Yunus (2023)	Malaysia	Role play, peer discussion	Fluency, interaction	CLT improved turn-taking and oral expression
Indah (2018)	Indonesia	Simulated dialogues	Vocabulary, fluency	Increased use of lexical chunks
Çimen & Çeşme (2022)	Turkey	TBLT (task-based learning)	Interactional competence	Collaboration improved confidence and fluency
Alshareef (2024)	Saudi Arabia	Thematic vocabulary tasks	Fluency, vocabulary use	Topic-based tasks fostered contextual language use
Majeed (2022)	Pakistan	Task-based instruction	Fluency	Enhanced spontaneous speech
Zubair (2024)	Pakistan	“Safe” CLT classroom environment	Reduced anxiety	Learners reported greater comfort and engagement
Mukhrib (2020)	Indonesia	Peer feedback	Accuracy, fluency	Scaffolded support improved confidence
Kamati & Mavuru (2020)	Namibia	L1 scaffolding	Anxiety reduction	Confidence increased with transitional L1 support
Aji & Irawan (2023)	Indonesia	Peer-assessed role play	Pragmatic output	Role play + feedback improved pragmatic accuracy
Day et al. (2021)	USA	Online video-based feedback	Pronunciation, clarity	Peer video reviews improved pronunciation self-awareness
Faridah et al. (2020)	Indonesia	Reflective learning	Self-monitoring logs	Metacognitive reflection enhanced learner outcomes

Homayouni (2022)	Iran	Communicative grammar tasks	Accuracy, fluency	Grammar-focused speaking tasks improved fluency
Liu & Aryadoust (2022)	Singapore	Video feedback, peer scoring	Pronunciation	Improved articulation and reduced speaking anxiety
Nabil et al. (2024)	Tunisia	Augmented reality activities	Fluency, turn-taking	AR exercises boosted vocabulary use and interaction
van Ginkel & Sichterman (2023)	Netherlands	VR & online peer review apps	Oral presentation, clarity	Learners improved speech clarity and presentation organization

### CLT, Motivation, and Learner Attitudes

Learner Persistence, Curiosity, and Classroom Behavior. CLT's long-term impact on learner persistence and classroom behavior has also been explored. Li et al. (2018) observed that students in CLT settings persisted longer with challenging tasks and showed greater motivation to overcome difficulties. The inherently learner-centered nature of CLT fosters a sense of responsibility and ownership, which can translate into resilience when facing language challenges. Moreover, the exploratory design of many CLT activities tends to spark curiosity a key predictor of deep learning. Fadillah et al. (2024) found that the use of authentic materials (like YouTube videos and interactive simulations) in CLT piqued students' interest and led to more autonomous learning behaviors. In terms of classroom behavior, increased collaboration and peer support are commonly reported outcomes of CLT. Feng and Sumettikoon (2024) noted that in technology-enhanced CLT environments, students engaged more frequently and respectfully with peers, indicating a participatory culture fostered by the communicative approach. This collaborative spirit reflects the social constructivist underpinnings of CLT (as championed by Hymes and others), where knowledge is co-constructed through interaction.

**Table 2. CLT, Motivation, and Learner Attitudes: Summary of Representative Studies**

1	Rochmawati et al. (2024)	Student motivation and perceptions	Mixed-method	Affective Filter Hypothesis	Positive perceptions of CLT; reduced speaking anxiety
2	Mabkhot & Djurabaev (2024)	Attitudes and emotional engagement	Qualitative	ABT; Self-Efficacy Theory	Emotional bonding in CLT enhances learning persistence
3	Franz & Teo (2018)	Engagement in dialogic CLT	Case study	Learner-centered learning theory	Dialogic instruction boosts student motivation
4	Winch (2019)	Learner autonomy	Ethnographic	Motivation Theory	Autonomy in CLT drives emotional connection to learning
5	Chua & Soon (2021)	Self-efficacy and participation	Survey	Bandura's Social Cog. Theory (SCT)	Higher belief in abilities leads to increased participation

6	Asrul & Dahlan (2022)	Vocabulary retention in CLT	Experimental	CLT pedagogical principles	Collaboration in CLT enhances vocabulary retention
7	Hadie et al. (2021)	Mastery goals in CLT	Quantitative	Achievement Goal Theory (AGT)	Mastery focus in CLT (vs. competition) enhances motivation
8	Barjesteh & Isae (2023)	Tech-mediated CLT and motivation	Experimental	Affective Engagement Theory	Digital CLT environment raises student motivation
9	Luthfiyyah et al. (2021)	Mobile- supported CLT	Mixed-method	Formative Assessment Theory	Mobile/online CLT reduces anxiety, supports speaking practice
10	Fadillah et al. (2024);   Feng & Sumettikoon (2024)	Curiosity and classroom behavior	Qualitative +   Observational	Social Constructivism	CLT encourages exploratory learning and cooperative behavior

## CLT and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

**Table 3. CLT and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)**

Dimension	Key Findings	Pedagogical Implications
<b>CLT-ICC Integration</b>	CLT provides a strong foundation for developing ICC through meaningful communication and interaction	Language teaching should integrate cultural dimensions alongside linguistic competence
<b>Cross-Cultural Awareness</b>	Communicative pedagogies enhance learners' awareness of cultural diversity and differences	Teachers should incorporate culturally rich materials and intercultural tasks
<b>Negotiation of Meaning</b>	Learners engage in meaning negotiation during communication, improving intercultural understanding	Interactive activities (e.g., discussions, role plays) should be emphasized
<b>Identity Formation</b>	Learners construct and negotiate their identities as intercultural speakers in EFL settings	Classrooms should support learner identity expression and reflection
<b>Assessment Frameworks</b>	ICC requires multidimensional assessment covering linguistic, cultural, and communicative aspects	Assessment tools should integrate intercultural criteria, not just language accuracy
<b>Learner Experiences</b>	Positive learner engagement and increased confidence in intercultural communication are observed	Learning environments should be supportive, authentic, and student-centered
<b>Cultural Adaptation Strategies</b>	Learners apply adaptive strategies to navigate different cultural contexts	Teachers should scaffold intercultural strategies explicitly
<b>Ideological Dynamics</b>	Cultural and ideological factors influence how ICC is interpreted and practiced	Pedagogy should be context-sensitive, balancing global and local perspectives

## Frameworks for Assessing ICC in CLT Classrooms

The findings indicate that effective ICC assessment in CLT contexts requires a holistic approach, combining performance-based rubrics and self-assessment tools to enhance both intercultural competence and learner autonomy.

**Table 4. Frameworks for Assessing ICC in CLT Classrooms**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>	<b>Pedagogical Implications</b>
<b>Assessment Frameworks</b>	Reliable and context-sensitive frameworks are essential for evaluating ICC in CLT environments	Teachers should design assessments that reflect real communicative and cultural contexts
<b>Rubric Design</b>	Assessment rubrics must capture cross-cultural understanding, such as interpreting cultural references and appropriate communication	Rubrics should include intercultural indicators, not only linguistic accuracy
<b>Alignment with CLT</b>	Assessment tasks (presentations, role-plays, discussions) align with communicative objectives of CLT	Performance-based assessment should be prioritized in classroom practice
<b>Teacher-Led Assessment</b>	Teachers play a key role in evaluating students' intercultural communicative performance	Educators need training in developing and applying ICC-based assessment tools
<b>Self-Assessment</b>	Self-assessment tools help learners reflect on their intercultural communication abilities	Learning should include reflective activities to enhance learner autonomy
<b>Metacognitive Awareness</b>	Self-assessment promotes awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses in intercultural communication	Instruction should foster critical reflection and self-evaluation skills
<b>Learner Agency</b>	Students become more active and responsible for their learning through self-assessment	CLT environments should empower students as independent learners
<b>Cultural Competence Development</b>	Assessment supports learners in understanding and navigating cultural values and norms	Teaching should integrate intercultural reflection into communication tasks

## Task-based assessments have also been effective for ICC

This synthesis highlights that scenario-based learning combined with formative and observational assessment plays a critical role in fostering intercultural communicative competence (ICC), especially when supported by technology-enhanced tools in CLT environment.



**Table 5. Task-based assessments have also been effective for ICC**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>	<b>Pedagogical Implications</b>
<b>Scenario-Based Tasks</b>	Simulations (e.g., business meetings, tourist role-plays) enable learners to engage in real-world intercultural interactions	Teachers should incorporate authentic, scenario-based activities in language learning
<b>Development of ICC Skills</b>	Learners develop negotiation skills, empathy, and communicative adaptation through experiential tasks	Learning activities should emphasize interaction, not memorization
<b>Spontaneous Language Use</b>	Scenario-based learning encourages natural and spontaneous communication	Classrooms should create opportunities for unscripted communication
<b>Experiential Learning</b>	Intercultural competence develops through experience and reflection rather than rote learning	Reflective practices should be integrated into learning activities
<b>Observational Assessment</b>	Teachers can evaluate students' intercultural performance through observation during interactions	Use of observation tools is essential in dynamic communicative settings
<b>Intercultural Indicators</b>	Checklists (e.g., eye contact, turn-taking, politeness strategies) help assess intercultural readiness	Assessment should include behavioral and cultural communication indicators
<b>Formative Assessment</b>	Continuous and varied assessments support ICC development effectively	Teachers should apply ongoing, process-based evaluation methods
<b>Technology Integration</b>	AI tools (e.g., chatbots) can track learner responses in culturally contextualized interactions	Digital tools can enhance monitoring and feedback in intercultural learning
<b>Overall Conclusion</b>	Varied, experiential, and formative assessment methods are crucial for developing ICC through CLT	Instruction should combine interaction, reflection, and adaptive assessment strategies

## Learner Perception and Cultural Negotiation in Communicative Tasks

**Table 6. Learner Perception and Cultural Negotiation in Communicative Tasks**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>	<b>Impact on ICC</b>	<b>Pedagogical Implications</b>
<b>Cultural Exposure</b>	Communicative tasks provide opportunities for learners to encounter diverse cultural norms	Enhances cultural awareness and sensitivity	Teachers should design tasks based on intercultural contexts
<b>Flexible Communication Strategies</b>	Learners adjust language use, politeness, and meaning interpretation across cultures	Develops pragmatic competence and communicative flexibility	Instruction should promote adaptive language use
<b>Intercultural Interaction</b>	Role-plays and discussions expose learners to unfamiliar cultural situations	Strengthens meaning negotiation skills	Interactive activities should be prioritized
<b>Productive Conflict</b>	Cultural differences lead to clarification, negotiation, and resolution of misunderstandings	Builds linguistic dexterity and cultural humility	Teachers should facilitate constructive, challenging interactions
<b>Negotiation of Meaning</b>	Learners refine expressions and interpret intentions during interaction	Improves intercultural communication competence	Focus on communication

			processes, not only outcomes
<b>Task-Based Cultural Engagement</b>	Cultural topics increase motivation and deepen cognitive engagement	Enhances conceptual and cultural understanding	Integrate cultural themes (e.g., traditions, social norms) into tasks
<b>Communicative Relativism</b>	Learners consider multiple cultural perspectives in communication	Promotes pluralistic thinking	Encourage reflective discussions on cultural differences
<b>Reflection (Peer &amp; Self)</b>	Reflection activities help learners evaluate their intercultural behavior	Strengthens intercultural awareness and metacognition	Use reflective journals and debrief discussions
<b>Metacognitive Awareness</b>	Learners become aware of how they communicate across cultures	Supports deeper intercultural competence development	Incorporate reflective and analytical learning processes
<b>Internalization (Vygotsky)</b>	Social interaction within the ZPD fosters internalization of cultural norms and strategies	Develops higher-order intercultural skills	Teachers should provide scaffolding in intercultural tasks
<b>Learner Role Transformation</b>	Learners evolve into mediators of language and culture	Integrates linguistic and cultural competence	CLT should aim to develop intercultural mediators

## Cultural Context and Local Adaptation of CLT

**Table 7. Cultural Context and Local Adaptation of CLT**

Aspect	Key Findings	Impact on ICC Implementation	Pedagogical Implications
<b>Cultural Context Factors</b>	Religion, societal values, and power distance influence intercultural learning (Lwanga-Lumu, 2020)	May support or hinder students' openness to intercultural engagement	Teachers must adapt CLT to align with local cultural norms
<b>Classroom Power Dynamics</b>	Hierarchical cultures may limit student participation and willingness to challenge ideas	Reduces depth of intercultural interaction and negotiation	Encourage gradual participation and create safe discussion environments
<b>Ideological Content in Materials</b>	Instructional materials may carry cultural biases (Albari & Yamin, 2020)	Culturally irrelevant content can hinder authentic engagement	Use culturally relevant and locally meaningful materials
<b>Local Curriculum Adaptation</b>	Learning is more effective when connected to students' sociocultural identity	Enhances engagement and relatability in intercultural tasks	Design curriculum reflecting learners' local context and experiences
<b>CLT vs Traditional Practices</b>	Tension exists between CLT and teacher-centered classroom traditions (Ariatna, 2016)	Students may struggle with interactive and egalitarian approaches	Apply hybrid pedagogy combining CLT with local teaching norms
<b>Pedagogical Code-Switching</b>	Gradual adaptation of CLT strategies helps bridge global and local practices	Facilitates smoother transition to communicative and intercultural learning	Introduce CLT incrementally and adapt methods culturally

<b>Technology Integration</b>	AI tools (e.g., chatbots) adapted to local language and norms improve learning	Increases learner confidence and participation	Use culturally responsive digital tools in CLT environments
<b>Learner Engagement</b>	Learners respond better to culturally familiar content and communication styles	Enhances motivation and communicative competence	Ensure learning tools and activities reflect learners' linguistic and cultural realities
<b>Overall Conclusion</b>	ICC in CLT is most effective when aligned with local cultural contexts	Promotes meaningful intercultural competence development	Balance global pedagogical approaches with local cultural sensitivity

## Identity, Ideology, and Classroom Interaction

**Table 8. Identity, Ideology, and Classroom Interaction**

Aspect	Key Findings	Impact on ICC	Pedagogical Implications
<b>Learner Identity Traits</b>	Openness and social flexibility (Peifer & Yangchen, 2017) enhance success in intercultural communication	Learners become more adaptive and effective in navigating cultural differences	Teachers should foster an open and flexible classroom environment
<b>Personality and Adaptability</b>	Learners with higher openness handle ambiguity and novel cultural situations better	Strengthens intercultural interaction and communication strategies	CLT should expose students to diverse perspectives to build adaptability
<b>Diversity Ideologies</b>	Institutional and personal beliefs about multiculturalism influence engagement (Dang et al., 2023)	Inclusive ideologies promote respect and engagement; monocultural views hinder participation	Promote inclusive and multicultural values in classroom discourse
<b>Classroom Ideological Climate</b>	Assimilationist environments limit intercultural exploration	Reduces willingness to engage in intercultural dialogue	Encourage pluralism and openness in classroom interaction
<b>Translanguaging Practices</b>	Use of multiple languages creates hybrid communicative identities (Zhi-jie & Shen, 2023)	Enhances linguistic flexibility and intercultural identity formation	Allow and support translanguaging in multilingual classrooms
<b>Identity Negotiation</b>	Learners integrate multiple cultural and linguistic identities	Strengthens sense of belonging and intercultural competence	Design tasks that allow expression of personal and cultural identity
<b>Ideological Reflexivity</b>	Lack of critical reflection may suppress minority voices (Sawatsky et al., 2023)	Limits authenticity and depth of ICC development	Encourage critical reflection on cultural and ideological assumptions
<b>Inclusive Classroom Environment</b>	Pluralistic classrooms foster empathy and richer intercultural dialogue	Enhances intercultural awareness and communication quality	Create safe, inclusive spaces for diverse perspectives
<b>CLT and ICC Integration</b>	CLT supports intercultural engagement through real-	Promotes holistic development of ICC	Integrate communicative tasks

	world tasks and identity negotiation		with cultural and reflective components
<b>Technology-Enhanced CLT</b>	AI tools (e.g., chatbots) adapted to cultural context improve engagement	Increases communicative confidence and intercultural interaction	Use culturally responsive digital tools in CLT environments
<b>Overall Conclusion</b>	ICC development is maximized when CLT integrates identity, ideology, reflection, and cultural responsiveness	Leads to inclusive, adaptive, and effective intercultural communicators	Balance communicative practice with cultural awareness and critical pedagogy

## Structural Challenges and Constraints in CLT Implementation

**Table 9. Structural Challenges and Constraints in CLT Implementation**

Domain	Constraint	Key Issue	Impact	Pedagogical Response
<b>Curriculum</b>	Rigid design	Limited flexibility for communicative tasks	Reduced authentic interaction	Integrate task-based and ICC-oriented content
<b>Assessment</b>	Exam-oriented	Focus on grammar and memorization	Misaligned with CLT goals	Use performance-based assessment
<b>Teachers</b>	Limited training	Lack of CLT competence	Teacher-centered practices persist	Provide CLT-focused professional development
<b>Classroom Culture</b>	Low participation	Students passive and reluctant to speak	Weak interaction and meaning negotiation	Apply scaffolding and interactive strategies
<b>Cultural Norms</b>	High power distance	Hesitation to challenge or express ideas	Limited critical and intercultural dialogue	Foster safe and inclusive environments
<b>Institution</b>	Large classes	Difficult to manage interaction	Ineffective communicative activities	Use group-based learning strategies
<b>Resources</b>	Limited materials	Overreliance on textbooks	Reduced exposure to authentic language	Use digital and real-world resources
<b>Learners</b>	Low readiness	Lack of confidence in communication	Limited engagement	Introduce tasks gradually
<b>Policy</b>	Standardized exams	Focus on cognitive outcomes	CLT sidelined	Align policy with communicative competence
<b>Integration</b>	Theory–practice gap	Inconsistent CLT application	Limited learning outcomes	Apply context-sensitive hybrid pedagogy

## Structural and Curricular Barriers

**Table 10. Structural and Curricular Barriers**

Domain	Specific Issue	Key Evidence	Impact on CLT	Pedagogical Implications
<b>Curriculum Focus</b>	Limited emphasis on oral communication	Kabir (2023) – Bangladesh curriculum sidelines speaking skills	Weak development of communicative competence	Integrate speaking and listening as core outcomes
<b>Policy–Practice Gap</b>	CLT supported in policy but not in practice	Al Amin & Greenwood (2022)	Inconsistent classroom implementation	Align policy with classroom support and resources
<b>Teacher Readiness</b>	Lack of training and CLT-aligned materials	Wang & Bale (2024)	Teachers struggle to apply communicative methods	Provide structured materials and professional training
<b>Instructional Materials</b>	Form-focused textbooks dominate	Multiple studies	Limits communicative and interactive activities	Develop CLT-oriented teaching resources
<b>Institutional Support</b>	Uneven support across schools	Chun & Abdullah (2022) – Malaysia	Fragmented CLT implementation	Ensure consistent institutional commitment
<b>Teacher Attitudes</b>	Varied beliefs about CLT effectiveness	Chun & Abdullah (2022)	Inconsistent teaching practices	Promote positive attitudes through training
<b>Curriculum Overload</b>	Excessive content coverage demands	Rouffet et al. (2023) – Netherlands	Reduced time for communicative tasks	Simplify curriculum and prioritize depth over breadth
<b>Time Constraints</b>	Pressure to complete syllabus	Multiple contexts	Teachers revert to lecture-based teaching	Allocate time for interaction-based learning
<b>Program Alignment</b>	Lack of coherence across curriculum, materials, and assessment	Canale & Swain; Qasserras (2023)	Weak CLT outcomes	Ensure alignment of all program components with CLT
<b>Structural Barrier</b>	Grammar-focused tradition dominates	Cross-context evidence	Limits communicative teaching practices	Shift toward communicative competence framework

## Traditional Teaching Styles and Assessment Washback

**Table 11. Traditional Teaching Styles and Assessment Washback**

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Specific Issue</b>	<b>Key Evidence</b>	<b>Impact on CLT</b>	<b>Pedagogical Implications</b>
<b>Pedagogical Tradition</b>	Dominance of teacher-centered and rote learning	Moodie (2016); Moodie & Nam (2016) – South Korea	Resistance to interactive and communicative methods	Gradual shift toward student-centered learning
<b>Cultural Expectations</b>	Learners and parents favor traditional methods	Moodie & Nam (2016)	Skepticism toward CLT practices	Build awareness of CLT benefits among stakeholders
<b>Assessment Washback</b>	High-stakes exams shape teaching practices	Aisyah (2017) – Indonesia	Focus on grammar and reading over communication	Reform assessment to include communicative skills
<b>Exam Orientation</b>	Teaching to the test dominates instruction	Multiple studies	Reduction of speaking and listening activities	Balance test preparation with communicative tasks
<b>Methodological Persistence</b>	Continued use of Grammar-Translation & Audiolingual methods	Rahman et al. (2019); Rezi & Bedra (2024)	Limits development of communicative competence	Promote CLT-based instructional practices
<b>Teacher Evaluation System</b>	Teachers judged by students' test scores	Rahman et al. (2019)	Encourages short-term, test-focused teaching	Redefine teacher performance indicators
<b>Skill Imbalance</b>	Listening and speaking neglected in assessments	Alwazir & Shukri (2016)	Weak oral communication development	Integrate all language skills in assessment
<b>Theory–Practice Conflict</b>	CLT principles conflict with exam-focused systems	Hymes; Savignon	Inconsistent implementation of CLT	Align pedagogy with communicative competence theory
<b>Systemic Constraint</b>	Misalignment between teaching goals and evaluation systems	Cross-context evidence	Limits full adoption of CLT	Conduct systemic reform in curriculum and assessment
<b>Overall Conclusion</b>	Assessment-driven systems reinforce traditional pedagogy	Strong washback effect on teaching practices	Hinders communicative language development	Integrate assessment reform with pedagogical change

## Cultural and Ideological Tensions

**Table 12. Cultural and Ideological Tensions**

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Key Issue</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Impact on CLT</b>	<b>Strategic Response</b>
<b>Cultural Norms</b>	Confucian values (authority, passivity)	Chan (2021); Zhong (2023)	Limits student interaction and participation	Adapt CLT to culturally acceptable interaction patterns
<b>Sociocultural Context</b>	Influence of religion, politics, and social harmony	Lwanga-Lumu (2020)	Reduces openness to debate and opinion-sharing	Design culturally sensitive communicative tasks
<b>Curriculum Misalignment</b>	Lack of ICC and oral communication focus	Rokaiya & Saharuddin (2022); Kabir (2023)	Superficial CLT implementation	Apply constructive alignment (objectives–materials–assessment)
<b>Assessment System</b>	Grammar-focused and non-communicative testing	Chan (2021); Aisyah (2017)	Negative washback on teaching practices	Implement performance-based assessment
<b>Teacher Development</b>	Limited, non-contextual training	Chun & Abdullah (2022); Sourani (2023)	Weak CLT execution in classrooms	Provide continuous, context-sensitive professional development
<b>Stakeholder Influence</b>	Lack of support from institutions, parents, leaders	Multiple studies	Resistance to CLT adoption	Engage stakeholders through training and awareness programs
<b>Pedagogical Tension</b>	Conflict between global CLT and local practices	Chan (2021); Tokmakova (2020)	CLT perceived as ineffective or inappropriate	Use pedagogical translation (adapt CLT locally)
<b>Instructional Integration</b>	Limited integration with other approaches	Han (2022); Burazer & Skela (2024)	Reduced relevance to local learning goals	Combine CLT with CLIL or local methods
<b>Cultural Relevance</b>	Lack of local content in teaching materials	Tokmakova (2020)	Low learner engagement	Integrate local culture, norms, and topics
<b>Theoretical Alignment</b>	Weak adaptation of global theories (e.g., Byram)	Theoretical perspectives	Ineffective ICC development	Align CLT with intercultural competence frameworks
<b>Systemic Barrier</b>	Fragmented policy, curriculum, and practice	Cross-context evidence	Inconsistent CLT implementation	Apply holistic, system-wide reform
<b>Overall Conclusion</b>	CLT success depends on cultural and structural alignment	Synthesized findings	Limits effectiveness if ignored	Use flexible, context-responsive CLT models

## Teacher Training, Professional Identity, and Preparedness

**Table 13. Teacher Training, Professional Identity, and Preparedness**

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Key Issue</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Impact on CLT</b>	<b>Strategic Response</b>
<b>Teacher Competence</b>	Limited training in CLT methodologies	Franz & Teo (2018) – Singapore	Difficulty designing and managing communicative tasks	Provide targeted CLT training and practical guidelines
<b>Pedagogical Flexibility</b>	Overreliance on single teaching method	Mohd. Asraf et al. (2019) – Malaysia	Rigid or ineffective application of CLT	Develop multi-method teaching repertoire
<b>Teacher Beliefs</b>	Persistence of traditional teaching orientations	Multiple studies	Resistance to student-centered approaches	Promote reflective teaching practices
<b>Professional Development (PD)</b>	Lack of sustained and continuous PD	Cross-context evidence	Weak and inconsistent CLT implementation	Implement ongoing CPD programs
<b>Reflective Practice</b>	Limited opportunities for collaborative reflection	Yiwen (2023)	Slow improvement in teaching practices	Establish teacher learning communities
<b>Mentorship</b>	Lack of guidance for novice teachers	Shahid et al. (2023)	Difficulty adapting CLT to context	Apply mentoring and coaching systems
<b>Action Research</b>	Minimal teacher-led inquiry	Ghafar et al. (2023)	Gap between theory and practice	Encourage classroom-based action research
<b>Teacher Agency</b>	Low sense of autonomy and innovation	Theoretical perspective (teacher cognition)	Passive implementation of CLT	Empower teachers as reflective practitioners
<b>Professional Identity</b>	Teachers see themselves as knowledge transmitters	Theoretical support	Limits facilitative role in CLT	Shift identity toward facilitator of learning
<b>Institutional Support</b>	Limited time, resources, and administrative backing	Cross-context evidence	PD initiatives not sustained	Provide structural and administrative support
<b>Community of Practice</b>	Lack of collaborative professional networks	Yiwen (2023)	Isolation in implementing CLT	Build peer support and professional communities
<b>Overall Conclusion</b>	Teacher readiness is central to CLT success	Synthesized findings	Determines effectiveness of CLT implementation	Combine PD, mentorship, and institutional support



## Innovative CLT Practices in Online and Blended Settings

**Table 14. Innovative CLT Practices in Online and Blended Settings**

Domain	Key Findings	Impact on CLT	Challenges	Strategic Implications
<b>Digital Integration</b>	Use of mobile apps, interactive platforms, and LMS	Expands CLT beyond traditional classrooms	Unequal access to technology	Ensure equitable access and infrastructure
<b>Learner Autonomy</b>	Digital tools support self-directed learning	Increases independence and responsibility	Low self-regulation in some learners	Guide learners with structured support
<b>Engagement</b>	Interactive features enhance student participation	Improves motivation and involvement	Difficulty sustaining long-term engagement	Use varied and adaptive learning activities
<b>Skill Development</b>	Supports integrated language skills (speaking, listening, etc.)	Strengthens communicative competence	Quality of tasks may vary	Design high-quality communicative tasks
<b>Blended Learning</b>	Combines online and face-to-face CLT practices	Enhances flexibility and learning effectiveness	Coordination between modes	Apply coherent blended learning design
<b>Formative Feedback</b>	Digital environments enable timely feedback	Improves learning outcomes and reflection	Inconsistent feedback quality	Prioritize continuous formative assessment
<b>Instructional Design</b>	Need for structured and research-based design	Ensures effectiveness of digital CLT	Poorly designed content reduces impact	Apply mobile and microlearning principles
<b>Cultural Responsiveness</b>	Content must reflect learners' cultural context	Enhances relevance and engagement	Risk of culturally irrelevant materials	Adapt content to local cultural contexts
<b>Sustainability</b>	Long-term implementation requires consistency	Maintains effectiveness over time	Declining motivation and usage	Monitor and continuously improve practices
<b>Overall Conclusion</b>	Digital CLT enhances communicative competence when well-designed	Strengthens 21st-century learning outcomes	Requires addressing technical and pedagogical constraints	Integrate technology with pedagogy and cultural context

### Teacher Beliefs, Training, and Professional Identity in CLT

Teacher beliefs, professional identity, and training experiences are critical determinants in the successful implementation of CLT. While CLT has gained prominence as a student-centered approach emphasizing authentic communication, its practical adoption depends heavily on teachers' attitudes, understandings, and the institutional contexts in which they work. This section analyzes literature on educators' conceptions of CLT, their training needs, and the interplay between beliefs, identities, and school norms. We integrate findings from representative studies (e.g., Huang & Yang, 2018; Whyte et al., 2022; Phothongsunan, 2020),

summarized in Table 4.6, and connect them to broader theoretical frameworks presented in Section 4.

**Table 15. Summary of Studies on Teacher Beliefs, Training, and Identity in CLT Implementation**

Huang & Yang (2018)	Taiwan	Teacher beliefs about communicative competence	Positive teacher beliefs were linked to greater CLT adoption in classrooms.
Phothongsunan (2020)	Thailand	Pre-service training and teacher beliefs	Teachers' perceptions of student ability influenced their use of CLT (doubt in students led to less CLT).
Whyte et al. (2022)	France	Impact of institutional culture on beliefs	Teacher authority beliefs often overrode training; institutional expectations shaped practice.
Sato et al. (2019)	Japan	Professional identity shaping practice	Teachers with progressive, facilitator identities were more able to implement CLT successfully.
Anto & Coenders (2019)	Indonesia	Collaborative teacher professional development (PD)	Reflection and shared learning in PD improved integration of CLT strategies.
Jennings et al. (2017)	USA	Mentoring models in teacher education	Mentorship helped new teachers manage uncertainty and adopt CLT approaches with confidence.
Tootkaboni (2019)	Iran	Belief-practice alignment	Teachers whose beliefs aligned with communicative practices had higher CLT efficacy and better outcomes.
Alkhirbash (2023)	Yemen	Student preparedness and teacher adaptations	Low teacher confidence in student abilities led to preference for traditional instruction over CLT.
Igarashi (2024)	Japan	Peer communities and identity development	Supportive collegial networks increased teachers' use of CLT and experimentation.
Zych & Llorent (2020)	Spain	Cultural barriers to CLT	Traditional cultural expectations (e.g., deference, order) hindered acceptance of CLT among teachers.
König et al. (2020)	Germany	Curriculum and institutional priorities	Rigid, standardized curricula restricted teachers' ability to integrate CLT activities.
Tondeur et al. (2019)	Belgium	Teacher identity and ICT/CLT pedagogies	Teachers' professional identities moderated their response to CLT-aligned innovations; those seeing themselves as "modern educators" embraced new methods, others resisted.
Baran et al. (2017)	Turkey	Peer influence and community learning	Negative peer pressure (collegial resistance) discouraged individual teachers from innovating with CLT.

The literature underscores that effective CLT implementation requires more than just methodological knowledge—it necessitates shifts in teacher beliefs, re-negotiation of teacher identity, and systemic support at multiple levels. Aligning teacher training programs with institutional policies, and fostering collaborative and reflective school cultures, are essential steps for sustaining communicative pedagogies in diverse EFL contexts.

## CONCLUSION

This review concludes that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) remains a highly relevant and effective pedagogical approach in language education, particularly in enhancing speaking competence, learner motivation, and interactional skills when integrated with digital innovation, intercultural frameworks, and learner-centered practices. However, its implementation is often hindered by systemic challenges such as rigid curricula, exam-oriented systems, and limited teacher training, while educators' beliefs and professional identities significantly influence its success. The study theoretically extends communicative competence frameworks into digital and intercultural contexts and practically highlights the need for adaptive, blended, and collaborative teaching models. To maximize CLT's potential, it is essential to strengthen professional development, align assessment systems with communicative goals, and adopt supportive educational policies. Future research is encouraged to explore longitudinal impacts, the role of artificial intelligence, and culturally responsive approaches within CLT. Overall, CLT continues to provide a strong foundation for developing effective, empathetic communication skills in a globalized and multilingual world.

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