

EFL Female Students' Perceptions of Communicative Language Teaching in University Classes

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate EFL female students' perceptions of communicative language teaching in the classrooms at Umm Al Qura University. The research employed a descriptive quantitative approach, with forty-three female students responding to the researcher's questionnaire. The study employed a simple random sampling research design within the quantitative research paradigm. The questionnaire addressed three aspects of the communicative language teaching approach: tasks, activities, and evaluation in the English classroom; the role of students in the English classroom; and the role of teachers in the English classroom. The research findings indicated that EFL female students' perceptions of the communicative language teaching in English classrooms are high. The results indicated that students favor the implementation of the CLT in English language teaching. It suggests using various CLT strategies in the classroom to help students better comprehend English as a foreign language.

Keywords: EFL Female Students, Communicative Competence, Communicative Language Teaching, Teacher's role, Students' role.

المستخلص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء تصورات طالبات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية حول تدريس اللغة الانجليزية في ضوء النهج التواصلي في قاعات الدراسة بجامعة أم القرى. استخدمت الدراسة منهجاً وصفيًا كميًا، حيث أجابت ثلاثة وأربعون طالبة على استبانة الباحثة. اعتمدت الدراسة تصميمًا بحثيًا يعتمد على العينة العشوائية البسيطة ضمن إطار البحث الكمي. تناولت الاستبانة ثلاثة جوانب من تدريس اللغة الانجليزية في ضوء النهج التواصلي: المهام والأنشطة والتقويم في صفوف اللغة الإنجليزية؛ دور الطلاب في صفوف اللغة الإنجليزية؛ ودور المعلمين في صفوف اللغة الإنجليزية. وأشارت نتائج البحث إلى أن تصورات الطالبات اللاتي يدرسن اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية حول تدريس اللغة في ضوء النهج التواصلي في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية جاءت بدرجة عالية. أشارت النتائج إلى أن الطالبات يفضلن تطبيق تدريس اللغة في ضوء النهج التواصلي

في صفوف اللغة الانجليزية. وتوصي هذه الدراسة باستخدام استراتيجيات تدريس اللغة في ضوء النهج التواصلي لاستخدامها في الصف الدراسي، وذلك لمساعدة الطلبة على فهم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بشكل أفضل.

الكلمات المفتاحية: طالبات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، الكفاءة التواصلية، النهج التواصلي، دور المعلم، دور الطلاب

1. INTRODUCTION

English is recognized as a universal language, enabling people to communicate and express themselves in many ways across cultures and backgrounds. The significance of English proficiency, as well as its role as a foreign language, has been recognized across various domains. In sectors such as the humanities, manufacturing, and finance, English has become an essential tool that enhances both communication and professional practices. (Karim et al., 2023).

In the context of educational practices, learning English as a foreign language has become a crucial skill that requires dedication, attention, and focus (Nguyen, 2024).

In recent years, Saudi Arabia has launched several initiatives to improve English-language education. The Saudi Ministry of Education, in line with Vision 2030, has taken proactive measures to enhance English language teaching and learning (Gobert, 2019). These efforts have included adopting modern teaching methods and implementing various teacher training programs. Ongoing efforts and updates to teaching resources and curriculum emphasize a dedication to advancing students' proficiency in English (Al-Shehri, 2020).

Various studies on the potential efforts of the Saudi educational system to enhance language-teaching techniques have played a crucial role in addressing the issue (Al-Shehri, 2020; Johnson & Golombek, 2020). A significant gap in current practices is the need to integrate innovative teaching methods into experimentation to enhance language proficiency further. Traditional methods have their benefits, but they may not always align with students' evolving needs. To overcome this gap, there is a growing emphasis on practical, modern teaching methods tailored to students' needs (Karim et al., 2023). One of these methods is the Communicative Language Teaching Method (CLT), which focuses on the practical use of language and interaction in real-life contexts.

A diverse array of language-teaching methods is employed worldwide, yet CLT has attracted considerable scholarly attention for its efficiency. Researchers such as Althagafi (2023) support the use of CLT as a critical tool for EFL students, emphasising that it opens the door to a compelling understanding of English acquisition. Several vocational training centers and educational institutes have adopted CLT strategies, focusing on real-life communicative situations to improve language fluency and boost confidence in verbal communication. This technique helps improve learners' intellectual and cognitive abilities as they engage in meaningful conversations with peers and family members. According to Itmeizeh and Ibnian (2022) and Akhter (2021), teaching methods are crucial for developing communication skills among EFL learners.

2. Research Significance

CLT is one of the teaching approaches that has gained significant popularity and positive feedback, particularly when combined with communication and information technologies and neural networks. These evolutions have been seen to accelerate and improve the efficiency of language

EFL Female Students' Perceptions of Communicative Language

learning. CLT has been explored in Saudi Arabia and applied over the years, sustaining substantial acceptance among learners and researchers across several educational institutes. Various studies, such as those by Drake (2012) and Nyamayedenga and Jager (2020), have reported favorable outcomes from implementing CLT, including increased use of English as an instructional medium and improvements in communication skills among EFL students. Numerous studies have explored EFL teachers' and professional educationists and trainers' perceptions of CLT. Shaikh et al. (2024) and Khezrab et al. (2023) report positive feedback from teachers using CLT, noting significant improvements in students' classroom communication. Khalil and Semono-Eke (2020) state that CLT helps develop students' learning abilities and fosters active learning. The widespread acceptance of CLT has been recommended since the 1970s, when English was considered a second language but still held an equivalent status to the native languages (Palacios, 2022; Rahman et al., 2018). Thi Ngu et al. (2021) and Yu (2023) have described efficient language learning as the mastery of control ruling over language use. Richards and Rodgers (2014) have culminated in the significance of adopting CLT to improve communication skills and increase student engagement (Wei et al., 2018; Alharbi, 2020). The current educational landscape has provided educators with a range of applications and tools to deepen their understanding of contemporary teaching methods (Thorne et al., 2021). However, research has also identified several challenges that teachers and trainers may face when implementing CLT methods, particularly in the practical classroom setting (Itmeizeh & Ibnian, 2022; Shaikh et al., 2024). These challenges are often attributed to limited training and insufficient experience among teachers and trainers in effectively implementing the CLT approach (Drake, 2012; Nyamayedenga & Jager, 2020). Subsequently, it is essential for teachers to understand and implement CLT in their teaching strategies thoroughly. With proper understanding, incorporation, and strategic application, both learners and teachers can benefit significantly from the CLT approach. Most research on CLT's role in EFL focuses on the perceptions of professional educators and trainers. However, fundamentally, CLT is a learner-centered approach and hence vindicates examination from the perspective of the EFL learners. Investigating students' perceptions of CLT is necessary to inform future research in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the existing literature in Saudi Arabia has provided limited insights into the impact of CLT on EFL learners. Hence, this study aims to address a gap in the existing literature by investigating the influence of CLT approaches on EFL students at Umm Al-Qura University in Saudi Arabia.

The scope of this study is to explore EFL female students' perceptions of CLT in the English classroom. This study aims to examine how CLT facilitates both teaching and learning. Accurate implementation of CLT techniques enables teachers to develop strategies and plan the EFL course content efficiently. By investigating EFL female learners' perceptions, this study aims to provide insights into the prospective effectiveness and standing of CLT methods in language education.

3. Research Objective:

- 1) To explore the EFL female students' perceptions of tasks, activities, and evaluation in the English classroom through the communicative language teaching approach
- 2) To explore the EFL female students' perceptions of students' roles in the English classroom through the communicative language teaching approach.
- 3) To explore the EFL female students' perceptions of the teacher's role in the English classroom through the communicative language teaching approach.

4. Research Question:

The present study aimed to answer the following questions.

What are EFL female students' perceptions of using a communicative language teaching approach in the English classroom?

- 1- What are EFL female students' perceptions of tasks, activities, and evaluation in the English classroom through the communicative language teaching approach?
- 2- What are EFL female students' perceptions of students' roles in the English classroom through the communicative language teaching approach?
- 3- What are EFL female students' perceptions of the teacher's role in the English classroom through the communicative language teaching approach?

5. Research Justification:

Several studies have examined teachers' perceptions of CLT approaches in EFL classrooms. Unfortunately, the focus of the CLT approach has mainly been on teachers' perceptions. This study targets students' perceptions of the CLT approach to aid in rejuvenating their communicative skills.

6. Significance of the study:

1. This study is a response to many previous studies that recommended using a communicative language teaching approach.
2. This research signifies enriching the research library on studies related to EFL students and their focus on language learning approaches, such as communicative language teaching.
3. This research can help English language teachers in applying CLT to enhance students' communicative competence in English.

7. Limitations of the research:

The research study had the following limitations:

1. The sample size was limited to level 4 EFL female students at Umm Al-Qura University.
2. The time was also a limitation, as the students selected for the study were only from the third semester of the academic year 2024.

8. LITERATURE REVIEW

8.1 Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching emerged in Great Britain during the 1970s, replacing previous language-teaching methodologies (Lafta, 2021; Ahmad et al., 2023). The primary goals of CLT are to enhance learners' language acquisition and to apply that knowledge in their day-to-day communicative contexts. Grounded in Hymes' theory of communicative competence, CLT upholds an extensive understanding of language learning that extends beyond grammatical proficiency (Ahmed, 2023). The theory presented by Hyme offers an anthropological perspective on language, providing a model for analyzing communicative scenarios within their subcultural contexts .

EFL Female Students' Perceptions of Communicative Language

The emergence of CLT has profoundly influenced contemporary language-learning practices worldwide. Li (1998) has highlighted that several instructors, trainers, and educators have broadly embraced the methodologies and principles of CLT. Reflecting on the growth of language teaching over the last fifty years, Richards (2006) establishes three main points:

1. Traditional approaches (until the late 1960s)
2. Classic Communicative Language Teaching (1970s-1990s)
3. Contemporary communicative language teaching (current era)

This classification underscores the essential role of CLT in shaping contemporary practices of language education and its growing relevance in the current era .

Researchers have identified notable similarities between traditional language-teaching approaches and the CLT proposed by Krashen and Terrell (Palacios, 2022). Despite the prominent characteristics of each approach, there are standard features shared, focusing on the development of learners' communicative competence. Both approaches emphasize the importance of exposure in understanding language before actively using it. In particular, the natural approach, outlined by Vinuesa (2002), emphasizes the essential role of listening comprehension as a prerequisite for language production.

The theory proposed by Krashen integrates the language acquisition device (LAD) and the Chomsky concept of comprehensible input, both of which are crucial for effective second-language acquisition (Mitchell et al., 2019). Several studies have highlighted the four significant interconnected characteristics of CLT. The aims of CLT extend beyond linguistic knowledge and grammatical competence. The emphasis is on empowering learners to use language effectively in meaningful contexts (Triwibowo, 2023; Aswad et al., 2024). Moreover, while the forms of organizational language are not the key focus, the emphasis shifts to students' ability to apply the language practically. Furthermore, CLT prioritizes fluency over accuracy, differentiating it from older teaching techniques that prioritized accurate grammatical forms. The CLT approach values learners' fluency with language over adherence to grammar, thereby encouraging practical use and engagement with the language. Lastly, the CLT approach emphasizes students' reliance on language use, promoting authentic communication in productive interactions and unrehearsed contexts (Brown, 2014). Conjointly, these characteristics define the approach of CLT as an effective and modern framework that maintains focus on practical, meaningful communication rather than linguistic precision and theoretical knowledge .

8.2 The Role of Learners and the Teachers in the CLT Classroom

The CLT, as a learner-centered approach, emphasizes the centrality of students in the educational process. In the CLT approach, the targeted language is used for interaction rather than merely as an object of exploration and study. Learners engaged in group work, and pairs are seen to be actively participating in mutual engagement, fostering cooperative learning activities (Vinuesa, 2002; Agwu & Nmadu, 2023).

In this framework, the role of teachers is critical, as they serve as facilitators who direct the classroom's focus toward effective language communication (Rahman et al., 2018). According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), teachers use teaching methodologies that actively engage students through group tasks and collaborative activities. By dividing students into groups, teachers aim to

mitigate the disconnect between students' interests and instructional content (Eikeland & Ohna, 2022). This method fosters interactive relationships among students and encourages them to communicate effectively in the classroom.

The CLT approach prioritizes the development of communicative competence, as it promotes interaction between teachers and students whilst enabling teachers to guide students throughout their learning process better (Brown, 2014; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Nyamayedenga & Jager, 2020). Studies have indicated that the students prioritise teachers who develop an information-rich and supportive learning environment. Teachers are perceived as co-learners who play a crucial role in shaping the learning process through a practical CLT approach (Kustati, 2018). Subsequently, teachers, trainers, and educators are seen as essential resources for facilitating the learning environment and promoting effective communication .(Almutairi 2024)

8.3 Enhancing Communicative Competence Through Communicative Activities

CLT incorporates several activities designed to effectively foster communication skills. These activities include problem-solving tasks, games, and role-plays, which are essential for enhancing classroom interaction and are designed to provide students with opportunities to refine and practice their skills of effective communication in meaningful contexts (Sabrina, 2020) .

Moreover, activities like these not only help learners become more confident and expressive but also serve specific purposes in educational growth (Adem & Berkessa, 2022). To achieve the target aim of CLT's communication practice and knowledge, the trainers and educators are assigned a range of activities to deepen students' communication practice skills and knowledge. Efficient processes are required for effective communication, enabling negotiations to be better understood, meaningful interactions to be promoted, and information to be easily shared (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

In addition, dialogues as a pedagogical tool are often used by teachers to facilitate interactions based on real-life situations (Barak, 2024). Using genuine communication gives students plenty of opportunities to understand what they are being told and to engage with the language effectively. Guidance for students to help them develop their verbal and comprehension skills is provided through prescribed techniques (Vinuesa, 2002). Communication does not merely involve passive learner participation; it is a process that emphasizes cooperation rather than an individualistic learning methodology. This collaboration helps students cope with stress and overcome communication challenges in class. Instead, strategists contend that communication failures are a joint responsibility of learners and teachers rather than the sole responsibility of one party (Adem & Berkessa, 2022). Karim et al. (2023) concluded that communicative activities play a crucial role in fostering communicative competence, as they provide authentic experiences of the functional aspects of language in real communication contexts.

Similarly, Tiu et al. (2023) found that communicative activities are particularly effective in developing speaking skills, which are key to communicative competence. Febriantini et al. (2021) also argued that communicative activities are more effective than traditional methods in developing language skills. However, Cevallos and Pauta (2021) pointed out that non-authentic materials can also be valuable, especially for learners with low proficiency in receptive skills. Additionally, research by Liu (2023) and Lazariiev et al. (2021) suggests that learners exposed to either communicative or non-communicative tasks achieve similar levels of communicative competence. Studies have supported the notion that efficient communication is a shared effort

EFL Female Students' Perceptions of Communicative Language

between teachers and students, a perception widely accepted by curriculum developers and educators (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

9. Previous Studies

Almutairi (2024). This study investigates teachers' views on CLT for fluency and oral skills among Saudi female first-year English majors. Data were collected using a mixed-methods design: a five-point attitudinal questionnaire completed by 32 English instructors at Taif University and semi-structured interviews with two teachers. The findings indicated that teachers had positive attitudes towards CLT's impact on fluency and oral communication and endorsed communicative behaviors in the classroom.

Gaynor (2024). This research presents the findings of a study of EFL classes following the CLT, examining attitudes toward online and in-person communicative English learning and their consequences for pedagogical practice. A total of 327 non-English majors from a university of science and engineering completed a Likert-scale survey covering five groups: English study; online learning; learning environment; lesson activities; and teacher engagement. Results revealed that students clearly favored in-class learning (in their view), which was more effective at generating peer participation and interaction, with implications for enhancing communicative learning experiences.

Alluhaydan (2024). This study examines Saudi college and graduate students' perceptions and attitudes toward CLT for speaking and listening in the context of Saudi Arabia's segregated educational system and the gender-specific factors. In a questionnaire, participants' perceptions of CLT activities were higher than their attitudinal scores. Perceptions and attitudes toward CLT activities were higher among females than among males. Females preferred short videos, and males favored teacher directions for CLT tasks. Psychologically, CLT activities were considered essential for language development by males, while females were encouraged to engage in role-plays. Females showed a reduced preference for group activities compared to males.

Metruk (2023). This paper explores Slovak EFL learners' perspectives on the principles of the communicative approach at the core level. 111 Slovak University EFL learners/teachers rated the agreement with CLT statements on a 5-point Likert scale. Overall, participants mostly agreed with 16 of 18 CLT statements and were neutral towards teaching in the native language, but neutral towards using native-language lessons and learners learning grammar rules. Findings indicated positive reception of communicative principles and activities, with encouragement of interactive learner-centered lessons and recognition of communication's significance for language acquisition.

Moshkalova & Zhacheva (2022). This study investigates Kazakhstani English teachers' perceptions of CLT. Ten English teachers were interviewed to gather their perspectives on CLT and its use in enhancing learners' speaking. The most frequently used CLT methods were role-plays, interactive dialogues, and pair/group work. CLT use in Kazakhstan is not well established; it needs improvement, as it requires considerable effort from both teachers and learners.

Llena et al. (2022). This research uses communicative language education to support Grade 7 learners in public schools in Tondo, Manila, in developing their speaking skills. The researcher also taught CLT, with a pre-test and a post-test administered 2 months later. Statistical comparisons (t-tests, weighted means, ANOVA, etc.) showed significant improvement in speaking

EFL Female Students' Perceptions of Communicative Language

ability. Task-based learning was revealed to afford natural opportunities for conversation and exchange that support language acquisition.

Radosavlevikj (2020). The study examines perceptions and problems with CLT and students' communicative competence among 10 teachers and 27 first-year students representing students with different levels of English proficiency at the Southeast European University. Questionnaires included questions on students' and teachers' responsibilities, group activities, the use of the native language, and error correction. The results of the study indicated generally positive views toward CLT, with strong positive attitudes toward teacher-student interdependence and pair/group work as dominant modes of acquiring communicative competence.

Komol & Suwanphathama (2020). This study explores students' attitudes toward CLT in enhancing their listening and speaking among 82 4th-year students enrolled in the English in the Media course. The role-play, pair work, group discussion, and video production activities, for example, had very positive feedback. Students also concurred that creating an English short film gave them extensive exposure and improved their listening and speaking confidence.

9.1 Comments on the related studies:

The analyzed studies highlight the significant impact of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on enhancing EFL learners' speaking, listening, and overall communication skills across diverse educational environments. Several studies, including Almutairi (2024), Alluhaydan (2024), Komol and Suwanphathama (2020), and Gaynor (2024), reported favorable opinions from both students and instructors regarding CLT. These studies emphasized that activities such as role-playing, pair work, group discussions, and video creation significantly enhanced students' engagement, confidence, and fluency. The literature primarily featured quantitative approaches, with a Likert-scale questionnaire as the primary instrument for measuring perceptions and attitudes, as observed in Metruk (2023) and Radosavlevikj (2020).

Conversely, qualitative and experimental methods were not standard. For instance, Moshkalova and Zhacheva (2022) conducted interviews to examine teachers' perspectives in Kazakhstan. In contrast, Llena et al. (2022) employed an experimental pre/post design to assess real enhancements in speaking skills resulting from CLT.

The researchers differ in their sample selection. Certain studies focused on university students, such as Metruk (2023) and Gaynor (2024). Some focused on educators (Almutairi, 2024; Moshkalova & Zhacheva, 2022), others on school-age students (Llena et al., 2022).

9.2 Research gap:

Although some Saudi studies are available, they are restricted to specific courses or demographics (Alluhaydan, 2024; Almutairi, 2024). There remains a necessity to investigate perspectives among wider female student groups at the university level.

Many studies have focused on speaking and listening; nonetheless, CLT has the potential to improve other communicative skills that remain unexamined.

10. Research Methodology:

This study was conducted at Umm Al Qura University, a public university in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. This study used a descriptive, quantitative approach. Forty-three female third-semester

students for the 2024 academic year were selected using simple random and purposive sampling methods. Moreover, the quantitative approach enhances the efficiency of the collected results and enables a comprehensive evaluation, leading to a more effective conclusion.

A questionnaire was designed for this study to collect data on EFL female students' perceptions of the communicative language teaching approach in English classrooms. This research used descriptive statistics to correlate questionnaire results with the research questions.

10.1 Participants:

The research involved forty-three female EFL students studying English Language level 4 at Umm Al Qura University. It was conducted in the third semester of the 2024 academic year. Using simple random sampling, participants were recruited for this research, as this method helps select participants with the relevant educational skills needed for this study. The purpose of selecting female respondents was to assess their cognitive learning capabilities across various tasks and activities using the CLT approach.

10.2 Data Collection:

The researcher created a self-administered questionnaire with 29 items, divided into three categorical domains, to address the research questions.

10.3 Data Analysis:

The three-domain questionnaire, comprising 29 items, explored female students' perceptions of Communicative Language Teaching in English classrooms. The study adopted Likert's technique, in which all possible items were initially presented to the students. Thus, a total of twenty-nine items were distributed on the following three domains:

1. The tasks, activities, and evaluation in the English classroom.
2. The student's role is to be involved in the English classroom's tasks, activities, and evaluation.
3. The teacher's role in the English classroom's tasks, activities, and evaluation.

10.4 Scale of Students' Perceptions on Using the Communicative Language Teaching Approach

The researcher developed the scale to measure female students' perceptions of the use of a communicative language-teaching approach in the English classroom. Among the different techniques available for the construction of the Scale, Likert's technique of summated Ratings was adopted. The researcher first listed all the possible items and tried to make them comprehensible to the students. Thus, a total of twenty-nine items were distributed on three domains: first, the task, activities, and evaluation in the English classroom; second, students' role; and third, teachers' role. Each item, therefore, contained five alternative responses such as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Strongly Disagree (SD), and Disagree (D). The scoring is based on a five-point Likert-type scale, where items are scored 5 for SA, 4 for A, 3 for U, 2 for D, and 1 for SD.

Furthermore, the questionnaire was validated by the determination of a panel of university professors who were experts in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The professors revised the questionnaire and commented on the items they considered suitable for the research.

EFL Female Students' Perceptions of Communicative Language

The questionnaire feedback was thoroughly reviewed to add and remove items, which were then implemented with 20 EFL students. The analysis of those items was performed in the following order:

1. Finding the questionnaire's validity
2. Finding the questionnaire's reliability

To test the questionnaire's internal consistency and validity, the researcher analyzed the correlation between each item's degree and the domain's total degree using Pearson's Correlation coefficient. Table 1 below shows the correlation between the degree of each item and the domain's total degree.

Table (1): The correlation between the degree of each item and the total degree of the domain

Item No	Correlation Value	Sig	Item No	Correlation Value	Sig
Task, activities, and evaluation in the English classroom					
1	0.790**	0.009	9	0.785**	0.000
2	0.937**	0.000	10	0.916**	0.000
3	0.913**	0.000	11	0.825**	0.000
4	0.840**	0.000	12	0.878**	0.000
5	0.755**	0.000	13	0.890**	0.000
6	0.816**	0.000	14	0.943**	0.000
7	0.648**	0.002	15	0.819**	0.000
8	0.759**	0.000	16	—	—
Students' role					
1	0.649**	0.002	6	0.827**	0.000
2	0.804**	0.000	7	0.798**	0.000
3	0.619**	0.004	8	0.721**	0.001
4	0.734**	0.000	9	0.814**	0.000
5	0.668**	0.001	10	0.793**	0.000
Teachers' role					
1	0.743**	0.000	3	0.913**	0.000
2	0.901**	0.000	4	0.883**	0.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

The result in Table 1 shows that the values of correlation are significant at (0.01), which means the items of the scale are valid.

EFL Female Students' Perceptions of Communicative Language

In addition, the correlation between the degree of each domain and the scale's total degree was determined. Table 2 shows the correlation between the degree of each domain and the scale's total degree.

Table 2: The correlation between the degree of each domain and the total degree of the scale

S.N	Domain	Correlation Value	Sig
1	Task, activities, and evaluation in the classroom	0.949**	0.000
2	Students' role	0.980**	0.000
3	The teacher's role	0.945**	0.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

The result in Table (2) shows that the values of correlation are significant at (0.01), which means the domains of the scale are valid.

Reliability of the scale

For measuring the reliability of the scale, the Cronbach's Alpha method was used. Table (3) shows the reliability of the scale.

Table (3): The Reliability of the scale

S.N	Domain	Items no	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Task, activities, and evaluation in the classroom	15	0.96
2	Students' role	10	0.91
3	The teacher's role	4	0.86
whole scale		29	0.97

As shown in the table (3), the value of the reliability coefficient of the domains was found respectively 0.96, 91, and 86, and the reliability coefficient of the scale was found 0.97, which indicates that the scale was very reliable according to George and Mallery (2003, p. 231).

Finding of the main question

What are EFL female students' perceptions of using the communicative language teaching approach in the English classroom?

EFL Female Students' Perceptions of Communicative Language

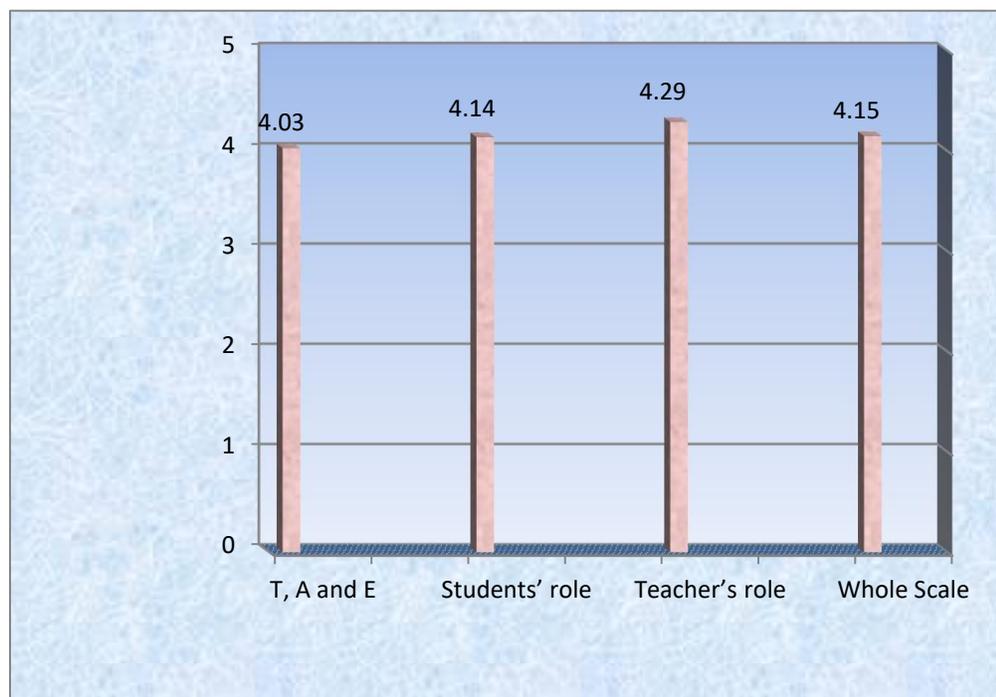
To answer this question, means and standard deviations are used to identify students' perceptions of using a communicative language-teaching approach in the English classroom. The details are given in the following table:

Table 4: Mean scores to identify the students' perceptions of the communicative language teaching approach

No	Domain	Mean	S.D	Rank	perception Degree
1	Task, activities, and evaluation in the classroom.	4.03	0.57	3	High
2	Students' role	4.14	0.65	2	High
3	Teacher's role	4.29	0.56	1	Very High
Mean of the whole questionnaire		4.15	0.49	—	High

Table 4 shows that the mean score for the whole scale is 4.15, indicating that EFL students' perception of the communicative language teaching approach in English classrooms is high. The questionnaire's mean scores ranged from 4.03 to 4.29. The domain of the teacher's role has a mean score of 4.29, ranking first and highest. The mean score for the students' role domain is 4.14, indicating it is the second-highest. Now, left with the last domain of tasks and activities in the classroom, the mean score for this domain is 4.03, ranking last among the three domains.

These results are further described in the graph below;



Graph 1: Mean Scores of EFL female students' perceptions of communicative language teaching approach.

EFL Female Students' Perceptions of Communicative Language

The results of Table 4 and the graph indicate that students' perception of using CLT approaches is highly preferred, especially with the help of their teachers. The table results also indicate that students are interested in improving their communication by interacting with one another (the role of students in the classroom). Moreover, the results indicate that students prefer greater teacher involvement. Hence, the teachers should use more CLT techniques that involve their active facilitation, which would further encourage students to communicate and engage in the classroom.

The study has three secondary questions, and the first concerns EFL students' perceptions of tasks, activities, and evaluations in English classrooms using the CLT approach.

1- What are EFL **female** students' perceptions of tasks, activities, and evaluation in the English classroom through the communicative language teaching approach?

To determine the answer to the first secondary question, the twenty-nine-item questionnaire was divided into its first domain, which was then administered to the students.

To answer this question, mean scores and standard deviations were used to examine students' perceptions of tasks, activities, and evaluation in English classrooms using the CLT approach. The results are shown in the table below.

Table 5: Mean scores to identify the students' perceptions of tasks, activities, and evaluation in the English classroom through the communicative language teaching approach

No	Item	Mean	S.D	Rank	perception Degree
1	Classroom tasks are focused on all of the components of communicative competence	4.23	0.75	2	Very high
2	The CTL activities are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes	4.09	0.86	5	High
3	Fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use.	4.33	0.64	1	Very high
4	The topics and the content of CTL activities suit students' needs	4.05	0.72	8	High
5	The CTL activities are interesting, enjoyable, and fun	3.77	1.25	14	High
6	The CTL activities are challenging.	3.67	1.14	15	High
7	The CTL activities are appropriate for using in EFL class.	3.98	0.91	12	High
8	The CTL activities are Varied.	4.07	0.79	6	High
9	The target language is a vehicle for classroom communication, not just the object of the study.	4.12	0.85	4	High
10	Errors are seen as a natural outcome of the development of communication skills and are therefore tolerated.	4.00	1.04	10	High

EFL Female Students' Perceptions of Communicative Language

No	Item	Mean	S.D	Rank	perception Degree
11	Communicative interaction encourages cooperative relationships among students.	4.19	0.93	3	High
12	The communicative tasks are appropriate for the students to develop their language skills.	4.07	0.79	7	High
13	The communicative tasks help the students to use the target language outside the classroom.	4.02	0.93	9	High
14	The CTL activities provide opportunities for rehearsal of real-life situations and provide opportunity for real communication.	3.98	0.85	11	High
15	The CTL activities emphasize on creative role plays, simulations, dramas, games, projects, etc.	3.86	0.94	13	High
Mean of the whole domain		4.03	0.57	3	High

The table above indicates that the mean score of the whole scale is 4.03, This implies that EFL students' perceptions of tasks, activities, and evaluations in English classrooms using the CLT approach are high. The mean scores for the first domain ranged from 3.67 to 4.33, with two items having very high degrees. Thirteen items are in the second-highest degree range, ranging from 3.40 to 4.20. The third item ranked first, and the first ranked second; both thus had high degrees. At the same time, the fifth and sixth items have ranked penultimate and last, respectively, and both have high degrees.

This result indicates that CLT emphasizes authentic communication, collaborative activities, and real-time interaction, which increases student engagement, confidence, and participation. The CTL activities emphasize creative role-plays, simulations, dramas, games, and projects that learners value more.

This result aligns with previous studies, which also found that EFL learners generally have positive attitudes toward CLT tasks, activities, and practices.

For instance, Almutairi (2024) asserted that EFL learners highly liked CLT-based activities due to their interactive and communicative competence.

In addition, Gaynor (2024) found that students clearly prefer in-class language learning. Students considered classroom-based pedagogy more effective, particularly in fostering peer involvement and interaction.

Similarly, Metruk (2023) and Radosavlevikj (2020) emphasized that communicative tasks, authentic activities, and assessments significantly enhance students' motivation and willingness to communicate.

These findings reinforce the idea that CLT-related tasks, activities, and evaluations contribute positively to students' learning experience and communicative development.

EFL Female Students' Perceptions of Communicative Language

2-What are EFL female students' perceptions of students' roles in the English classroom through the communicative language teaching approach?

The second secondary question of the study concerns EFL female students' perceptions of their role in a classroom using the CLT approach. The initial twenty-nine-item questionnaire was divided into a second-domain questionnaire and administered to the students to determine answers to this question.

The mean and standard deviation scores indicate students' perceptions of their role in the English classroom through the CLT approach, as shown in the table below.

Table 6: Means scores to identify the students' perceptions of students' role in the English classroom through the communicative language teaching approach

No	Item	Mean	S.D	Rank	perception Degree
1	Students are asked to state the reporter's predictions in different words.	4.09	0.84	6	High
2	Students can figure out the speaker's or writer's intention in the given texts.	4.07	0.98	9	High
3	Students work in small groups which maximizes the amount of communication practice.	4.19	1.07	3	High
4	Students are given an opportunity to express their ideas and opinions.	4.33	0.83	2	Very high
5	In CLT, students are involved in questioning and answering activities.	4.35	0.65	1	Very high
6	In CLT, students are involved in problem- solving activities.	4.16	0.87	4	High
7	In CLT classes, students are willing to participate in group and pair work.	4.09	0.94	7	High
8	In CLT classes, students interact primarily with each other rather than with the teacher in EFL classroom.	4.07	0.96	8	High
9	In CLT classes, students are devoted to focus on meaningful communication rather than grammatical skills.	3.91	1.10	10	High
10	CLT help students to take responsibility of their learning process more than teacher-centered approaches.	4.12	0.82	5	High
Mean of the whole domain		4.14	0.65	2	High

The mean score across the entire scale is 4.14, as shown in Table 6, indicating that EFL students' perceptions of the role of students in the classroom through the CLT approach are high; the mean scores for the second domain range from 3.91 to 4.35. Two items are at very high degrees, with the mean scores ranging from 4.21 to 5. Eight items had high degrees, with mean scores ranging from 3.40 to 4.20. The fourth and fifth items ranked first and second, respectively, with the highest degrees for both. The second and ninth items ranked penultimate, and the last ranked highest.

EFL Female Students' Perceptions of Communicative Language

The research findings revealed that female EFL students at Umm Al Qura University held a favorable perception of students' roles in CLT, indicating strong consensus on its benefits for their language learning experiences.

This resonated with Alluhaydan (2024), who reported that female students had a higher perception of Students' roles at the CLT, where they are allowed to express their ideas and opinions and engage in multiple activities (e.g., making short videos, role-plays).

In addition to that, these results are aligned with the previous literature, like (Radosavlevikj, 2020); (Komol Suwanphathama, 2020), and (Llena, Maravilla, and Maming, 2022), which focus on the efficacy of CLT in promoting learner engagement and the development of language skills. A study by Gaynor (2024) found that CLT methods significantly enhance EFL learners' motivation and communicative competence, consistent with the positive results observed in the current study. Likewise, another study by Metruk (2023) found that when EFL learners engage in communicative activities, they tend to show enhanced language acquisition and higher levels of confidence.

3-What are EFL female students' perceptions of the teacher's role in the English classroom through the communicative language teaching approach?

The third and final secondary question concerns EFL students' perceptions of teachers' roles in English classrooms using the CLT approach. The twenty-nine-item questionnaire was divided into a third-domain questionnaire and administered to the students to determine answers to this question.

The mean and standard deviation scores identified students' perceptions of the teacher's role in English classrooms through the CLT approach. The results are given in the table below.

Table 7: Mean scores to identify the students' perceptions of the teacher's role in the English classroom through the communicative language teaching approach

No	Item	Mean	S.D	Rank	perception Degree
1	The teacher's feedback is focused on the appropriateness and not on the linguistic form of the students.	4.02	0.88	4	High
2	The role of the teacher is a facilitator in the language classroom.	4.16	0.72	3	High
3	Teachers explain new words and phrases and let the learners do the exercises in the textbook.	4.51	0.70	1	Very high
4	Teachers act as monitors, then models for correct speech and writing.	4.47	0.73	2	Very high
Mean of the whole domain		4.29	0.56	1	Very High

Table 7 shows that the mean score for the whole scale is 4.29, indicating that EFL students' perceptions of the role of teachers in the English classroom through the communicative language teaching approach are very high. The mean scores of the third domain range from (4.02-4.51). 2

EFL Female Students' Perceptions of Communicative Language

items have very high degrees with mean scores ranging from (4.21-5), and two items have high degrees with mean scores ranging from (3.40-4.20).

This research result is consistent with the findings of Moss & Ross-Feldman (2003). (Jeyasala, 2014) Teachers should provide students with sufficient space to interact and encourage others to participate in activities that involve verbal communication practices. The findings of this research align with those of Li (1998), indicating the importance of a teacher's role as a facilitator (Komol & Suwanphathama, 2020).

Evidently, the students are most interested and have a favored perception of the teacher's role in CLT in their classrooms. The results have shown that the students are keen to learn and want the teacher to serve as a guide and facilitator rather than a transmitter of knowledge. They are interested in learning new things through the CLT approach, which also gives them the leverage to assess their analysis and learning pace.

Moreover, it can be determined that students prioritized the teacher's role as the most important in communicative classrooms. The teacher encourages participation, scaffolds language use, and provides feedback based on real-life communication. The results indicate that students prefer CLT classrooms, where their engagement and involvement are highly valued.

This result aligns with previous studies' findings. For example, Almutairi (2024) reported that EFL students highly appreciated teachers who employed communicative strategies, emphasizing support, guidance, and interaction. Likewise, Moshkalova and Zhacheva (2022) and Radosavlevikj (2020) found that teachers who assume CLT roles, such as facilitators and motivators, significantly influence students' positive attitudes toward learning English. The analysis of the results indicates that the students are more inclined towards how the teacher creates a communicative learning environment in the classroom than towards the activities and tasks. It cannot be overlooked that the perception of activities and tasks is also high; however, compared to the teacher's role, it is relatively low, and the perception of the students' role is similarly low. The students are keen to learn and improve their communication skills, and they want their teachers and themselves to play an active role in the classroom.

Conclusion:

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is an excellent tool for teachers to implement approaches that promote active, healthy learning among students and develop their ability to communicate effectively and express themselves within communities and societies. The research findings indicate that EFL female students' perceptions of tasks, activities, and evaluations in English classrooms using the CLT approach are high, also, indicate that EFL female students' perceptions of the role of students in the classroom through the CLT approach are high; and EFL female students' perceptions of the role of teachers in the English classroom through the communicative language teaching approach are very high. That means students perceived the communicative language teaching approach positively and favored its implementation in language teaching in Saudi Arabia. The general results show that EFL female students' perceptions of the communicative language teaching approach in English classrooms are high.

Recommendations

Since the teacher's role domain shows a very high mean score, this indicates that female students placed greater emphasis on the teacher's role than on other aspects. So, the teachers need to invest in more creative and engaging activities under CLT to enrich the cognitive development of EFL

EFL Female Students' Perceptions of Communicative Language

learners. Moreover, teachers need to employ CLT activities that stimulate students' minds and intellect by encouraging creative role-plays, dramas, and fictional scenarios. These activities will not only encourage students but also motivate teachers to practice language teaching through interactive in-class sessions. Furthermore, in doing so, the teachers should also create active, challenging activities that focus on EFL students' communication skills rather than merely on grammatical skills.

Additionally, the teachers need to implement more appropriate methods that develop the communication skills of the EFL students. For that, the education ministries also need to create teacher-training programs, awareness sessions, and seminars so that teachers can develop more efficient ways to implement CLT in their classrooms, particularly with EFL learners.

Suggestions:

This research suggests future research on the following contextual aspects:

- 1- Saudi EFL teachers' professional training in CLT in developing EFL learners' communicative competence.
- 2- The effectiveness of CLT between male and female secondary school students.
- 3- The impact of CLT- based tasks on the oral fluency of EFL learners.
- 4- The influences of CLT on students' motivation and self-confidence in the English classroom.

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