

## Analyzing the Influence of Communicative Language Teaching on Functional Writing Skills: Moderating Role of Information and Communication Technology

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### ABSTRACT

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is essential for developing students' communicative and functional writing skills. In this age of information and communication technologies, students must be proficient in functional writing to communicate effectively through emails, articles, manuscripts, and academic tasks. Thus, this study analyzed the influence of communicative language teaching on functional writing skills and the moderating role of information and communication teaching. The study was a mixed-method research. There were two objectives such as (a) to explore English teachers' perspectives on the influence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on functional writing skills and (d) to analyze teachers' perceptions toward the moderating role of information and communication technology in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) for functional writing skills. All the public secondary school English teachers in the Jhelum, Punjab, Pakistan district were the population. A sample of 200 teachers was selected for quantitative data through random sampling techniques. The researcher developed research instruments to collect quantitative through survey techniques. The developed instrument was validated, and its reliability was checked and found to be appropriate. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (version 26). This study concluded that there was a positive but moderate correlation between Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and students' functional writing skills. The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into CLT demonstrated a strong and significant correlation with students' functional writing skills, and the regression analysis indicated that ICT integration is a strong predictor of functional writing skills, with the model explaining 92.9% of the variance ( $R=.964$ , and an  $R^2=.929$ ). These results highlight the essential role of ICT in enhancing functional writing skills when integrated effectively into CLT approaches. This research recommends that secondary educational institutions be motivated to integrate ICT tools into the CLT approach to improve students' functional writing of the secondary students.

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### INTRODUCTION

Millions of students globally want to enhance their English language proficiency, supporting the rapid growth of the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) sector. It is essential to have diverse skills to meet the needs of practical English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. These competencies include expertise in optimal language education methodologies and an awareness of the distinct needs of individual learners (Achieng, 2023).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes interaction as foreign language acquisition's principal means and objective. The principal aim of the communicative language education method is to provide students with the skills and confidence necessary for successful communication in diverse real-life contexts, facilitated by regular oral exercises and collaborative interactions among peers. In the context of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), communication functions as both a primary objective and a method of teaching (Zhao, 2022). Richard and Rodgers (2014) define Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as a language education strategy that emphasizes conversation as both the objective and the method of language acquisition. It started in the 1970s and gained popularity as a reaction to conventional language teaching methods that mainly emphasized grammatical rules and rote memorization.

Communicative language teaching has originated in the rising discontent with the behaviorist and structural approaches to language. The most popular British approach to teaching English as a foreign language up to that time was situational language teaching (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Chomsky demonstrated at that time that traditional structural theories of language could not explain the essential features of language and pointed out the shortcomings

of the grammar-translation technique as well as other structural and behavioral methods (3). He believed that the conventional approaches ignore language's capacity for function and communication in favor of only emphasizing memorization of grammatical structures, mechanical vocabulary exercises, or grammar rules. As a result, students could understand the conventions of language use but could not apply them (Zhang, 2020).

Developing students' communicative competence is the aim of communicative language teaching. The interactions among learners and their instructors in communicative language instruction programs might provide certain traits needed to do this. Almost all activities in communicative language teaching (CLT) have a communicative goal, the most noticeable feature. Through interactive exercises, students utilize and acquire the target language. Classroom activities, such as roleplay, games, and problem-solving exercises, necessitate student interaction and information sharing. Some elements of these activities are as follows. "Activities that are truly communicative, according to Morrow, have three features in common: information gap, choice, and feedback" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Students have more incredible opportunities and flexibility to connect in class because communicative language education is student-oriented, and the students are communicators. Instructors provide opportunities for students to voice their thoughts and opinions. In addition, Communicative Language Teaching advocates employing accurate materials in the learning process that are reasonably engaging and motivating for students to address the common issue of students being unable to use the target language effectively outside of the classroom. The last advantage is that learning a second language will inspire kids since students acquire the target language via conversation in a genuinely communicative classroom. The situations provided directly affect their day-to-day lives (Liu, 2020).

Functional writing skills are the capacity to communicate effectively and coherently in various practical and professional settings. These abilities are necessary in both academic and professional contexts since they require delivering information, ideas, or directions understandably to the target audience. Functional writing covers a variety of formats, including emails, reports, memoranda, manuals, and other business materials. Functional writing abilities involve writing that communicates a message to the audience in a straightforward, clear, and explicit manner (Williams, 2001; Williams & Beam, 2019).

The fundamental objective of functional writing is to document real-life actions or submit applications. Writing has evolved into a potent mode of communication, wherein functional writing skills serve academic purposes and facilitate interpersonal interactions to meet specific needs and objectives, functioning as a primary tool for self-expression, idea formulation, and persuasion. Moreover, functional writing pertains to the pragmatic use of English to accomplish tangible goals. Functional writing abilities pertain to practical actions, such as using writing for specific tasks and contexts and prioritizing quality over quantity, since writing is defined as a productive and dynamic cognitive process through which individuals create meaning (Samiullah et al., 2018).

Thus, a functional approach to language in general and writing in particular ensures meaningful usage and facilitates communication in writing (Hartnett, 1997). As a result, writing is no longer just a way to demonstrate academic understanding but also a powerful tool for interpersonal connection. Furthermore, when teaching is specifically created to meet the requirements and goals of each student, writing is greatly improved; it becomes a primary tool for self-expression, idea shaping, and persuasion (Brown and Lee, 2015; Nunan, 1999; Salem, 2013). According to Shu (2019), students' functional writing skills can be developed by engaging students in real-world writing tasks through the CLT approach.

Dina & Ciornei (2014) state that the key component in using ICT features, such as the internet, videos, and audio, in language instruction is to enhance communication skills for both oral and written communications. Computers and their associated language learning applications can provide second language learners increased autonomy by freeing them from the constraints of traditional classrooms. This gives learners the flexibility to study their learning materials anytime they want. Abbas et al. (2019) highlighted using digital tools for academic performance. Hussein (2015) states that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enhances language teaching and learning by promoting creativity and innovation.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Studies recommend that educators should form a balance between Communicative Language Teaching and traditional techniques in order to address this issue. Teachers should also modify their teaching methods to fit the needs of the learners. The approaches that are most effective for pupils are the greatest ones. The goal of the traditional approaches, including grammar translation and the audio-lingual technique, is to help students become proficient in language in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and other areas. Enhancing students' communicative ability is the overarching goal of communicative language teaching. It emphasizes language usage and meaning more than language structure (Shu, 2019).

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are essential in many aspects of life, including second language instruction. Within the context of communicative language education, a language instructor plays a crucial role in

enhancing students' functional writing abilities by offering chances for real and meaningful language usage and application (Yunus et al., 2013). Research indicates that integrating information and communication technologies in writing classrooms fosters a supportive environment that enhances students' functional writing skills in quality and quantity (Fidaoui et al., 2010; Yunus et al., 2013).

According to Jayanthi and Kumar (2016), in the current era, English teachers worldwide tend to choose communicative teaching and learning over traditional English Language Teaching (ELT) approaches. These old techniques often focus on a teacher-centered approach and overlook the development of students' communication abilities. The teacher-centered method primarily relies on the learner's memory and disregards the genuine use of language. While a successful EFL instructor is not necessarily limited to a particular approach, the use of ICTs has significantly influenced the speed of teaching tactics to align with the objectives of instructional materials and the requirements of students.

Ellis (1997) highlights the importance of empirical research on the implications of CLT for practical writing abilities. Despite the theoretical roots of CLT in encouraging interactive language usage, there is a significant gap in knowing how these principles transfer into improved functional writing abilities. Zare and Derakhshan (2022) emphasize the significance of recognizing the changing role of technology in language education and the need for research to keep up with these changes. At the same time, the incorporation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in language education has grown in popularity, potentially transforming the dynamics of language learning (Warschauer et al., 2004).

However, according to Sadeghi (2024), the literature lacks a comprehensive investigation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) moderating role in CLT and its influence on specific language abilities and exceptionally functional writing skills. Considering the fast technological advances, the investigation is crucial to represent the current environment of integrating technology in language instruction. Furthermore, today's students are called "digital natives" (Prensky, 2005), emphasizing the need to study how these language learners utilize technology while learning.

Akramy et al. (2024) investigated students' attitudes toward the CLT approach. The results showed that EFL students in Afghanistan have favorable opinions of the CLT method. Additionally, the study demonstrated that students' attitudes towards CLT are good regardless of gender. Furthermore, no statistically significant variation exists among the participants' group characteristics (age, first language, and English learning experience).

Muhammad et al. (2023) evaluated research articles published between 2015 and 2022 to conduct a critical study of CLT application in teaching and learning. They claimed that teachers in Pakistan should consider sociological and cultural factors when developing curricula. Teachers of English in Pakistani public and private institutions are urged to adapt CLT methodology to local realities in light of a paradigm for teaching English using traditional methods. Students may find it simpler to engage in the teaching process and accept responsibility for their studies if they are taught using CLT, which can potentially change how English is taught in public and private schools. They said that teaching communicative language is the most extensively used pedagogical strategy for teaching foreign languages.

Poudel (2022) reported that ICTs benefited participants in their teaching and learning activities, particularly in accessing learning materials, preparing and presenting their lessons, and undertaking collaborative learning activities. However, respondents expressed dissatisfaction with using ICTs in English teaching and learning. The primary issues they faced in integrating ICTs in ELT were access to ICT tools and the expertise required to use them.

Baig et al. (2021) investigated the influence of ICT on the writing abilities of ESL learners at the secondary level using an experimental research methodology in Pakistan. The findings show that ICT plays a vital role in improving the writing abilities of ESL students. The research by Ojwang and Kitainge (2023) on the impact of language usage on students' performance in functional writing skills using a qualitative and quantitative research approach showed that improper language use in students' functional writing skills negatively impacted student performance.

Ho (2020) researched and found that students made considerable progress toward higher communication ability in paper-based and oral-based assessments. Their assessments of communication skills supported the findings. The investigation results indicated that communication Language Teaching (CLT) promotes students' English learning, boosts their confidence, and improves their communication competence in Tourism English.

The research by Kumbi et al. (2024) discovered that the communicative language strategy significantly enhances students' essay writing performance. Although gender alone does not substantially impact performance, its combination with the instructional style is statistically significant. Suggestions encompass implementing communicative language approaches across different courses, offering professional development for educators on contemporary language teaching methodologies, and mentoring student instructors in the practical use of the communicative language technique.

In light of the above importance of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) to improve learners' functional writing skills, this study aims to analyze the influence of CLT on functional writing skills with a particular focus on analyzing the moderating role that information and communication technology plays in this process within the context of Secondary education level in Pakistan with following objectives:

**Objectives of the Study**

- To explore English teachers' perspectives on the influence of communicative language teaching (CLT) on the functional writing skills of Secondary students
- To analyze teachers' perceptions toward the moderating role of information and communication technology in communicative language teaching (CLT) for functional writing skills.

**Hypothesis of the Study**

- H1: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has a positive and significant influence on Students' Functional Writing Skills.
- H2: Information Communication Technology (ICT) moderates the influence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on Students' Functional Writing Skills.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The current study was descriptive and employed a quantitative research approach, in which a survey was conducted to gather the required data from English teachers teaching at public secondary schools in the district of Jhelum. A sample of 200 English secondary school teachers was selected randomly for data collection through a research instrument in the form of a Likert-based questionnaire developed by the researchers. The research instrument was validated by obtaining experts' opinions, and Cronbach's Alpha was used to confirm its reliability, which was calculated as ( $\alpha = .80$ ). The researcher collected data from the respondents through personal visits to the sample secondary schools and also utilized an online data collection method using the Google Forms technique. A necessary permission letter was obtained from the supervisor to commence the data collection phase. A consent letter was also obtained from the district education officer of the concerned district and the school heads for data collection. All necessary ethical considerations were followed during and after data collection. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 26), and the following results were obtained.

The conceptual framework below illustrates the influence of the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach on students' functional writing skills (FWS) and how the integration of ICTs (adoption and utilization of ICTs) moderates the influence of CLT on functional writing skills. Figure 1 shows that teachers use the CLT approach by adopting and utilizing ICTs in orto. The figure below shows the CLT as the independent variable, ICT as the moderating variable, FWS as the dependent variable).

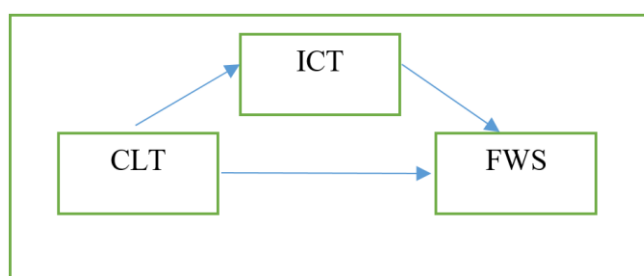


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

This table shows the gender of the secondary teachers participating in this study. Results shown in Table 1 revealed that 100 (50%) male teachers and 100 (50%) female teachers participated in this research.

Table 1: Gender of the English Secondary Teacher

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	100	50.0	50.0
Female	100	50.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

Table 2: Academic Education of the Secondary Teacher

Education	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
BS/MA English	139	69.5	69.5
MPhil English	54	27.0	96.5
PhD English	7	3.5	100.0

Total	200	100.0
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This table shows the academic education of the secondary teachers. Results reported in Table 2 show that the number of teachers who had BS/MA English education was 139 (69.5%), MPhil education 54 (27%), and PhD education 7 (3.5%).

Table 3 shows the professional education of the secondary teachers. Results found that teachers who had B.Ed. Education was 140 (70%), and teachers with M.Ed. Education were 60 (30%).

Table 3: Professional Education of the Secondary Teacher

Prof.Education	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
B.Ed	140	70.0	70.0
M.Ed	60	30.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

The teaching experience of the secondary teachers is reported in Table 4. Results show that teachers who had 1-10 years of experience were 120 (60%), 11-20 years of experience 73 (36.5%), and 21-30 years of experience 7 (3.5%).

Table 4: Teaching Experience of the Secondary Teacher

Experience	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-10 year	120	60.0	60.0
11-20 year	73	36.5	96.5
21-30 year	7	3.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

Results in Table 5 show the English certification achieved by the secondary teachers. According to the results, teachers who had English certification were 71 (35.5%), those who had no English certification were 119 (59.5%), and those who didn't know about English certification were 10 (5%).

Table 5: English Certification of the Secondary Teacher

Answer Scale	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	71	35.5	35.5
No	119	59.5	95.0
Don't know	10	5.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

Results reported in Table 6 show a positive but moderate correlation between CLT and students' functional writing skills ( $r=.336$ ,  $p=.000 < .05$  &  $.01$  levels). Thus, the hypothesis "There is a positive and significant influence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on Students' Functional Writing Skills" is accepted.

Table 6: H1: There is a positive and significant influence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on Students' Functional Writing Skills

Variables	Communicative Language Teaching	Functional Writing Skills
Communicative Language Teaching	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.336**
	N	200
Functional Writing Skills	Pearson Correlation	.336**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	200

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7: H2: Information Communication Technology (ICT) moderates the influence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on Students' Functional Writing Skills.

	ICT integration	Functional Writing Skills
ICT integration	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.964**
	N	200
Functional Writing Skills	Pearson Correlation	.964**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	200

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results described in Table 7 show a positive high correlation between the integration of ICT into CLT and students' functional writing skills ( $r=.964$ ,  $p=.000 < .05$  &  $.01$  levels). Thus, the hypothesis "Information Communication Technology (ICT) moderates the influence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on Students' Functional Writing Skills" is accepted.

Therefore, based on the above correlations, it has been found that ICT and functional writing skills ( $r=.964$ ) are significantly different from the correlation between CLT and functional writing skills ( $r=.336$ ). These results found a significant difference in the relationship strength, indicating that ICT integration in CLT may play a vital role in moderating or influencing students' functional writing skills.

**Regression Analysis**

Table 8(a,b,c) shows the results of regression analysis that was performed to investigate the moderating role of integration of ICT into CLT for developing Students' English functional writing skills. Results found a significant relationship between ICT in CLT and students' functional writing skills. The regression model demonstrated a strong predictive capability with an ( $R=.964$  and an  $R^2=.929$ ) reporting that 92.9% of the change in functional writing skills is explained by ICT interaction. Moreover, the ANOVA table results also confirmed the model's overall significance ( $F = 2599.164$ ,  $p=.000 < .001$  level). The coefficient results ( $B = .146$ ,  $p < .001$ ) show that a one-unit increase in ICT interaction leads to a .146 increase in writing skills. In contrast, the standardized coefficient ( $\beta = .964$ ) highlights the strong influence of ICT interaction.

Table 8(a): Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.964 <sup>a</sup>	.929	.929	.17120

a. Predictors: (Constant), ICT\_Interaction

Table 8(b): ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	76.184	1	76.184	2599.164	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	5.804	198	.029		
Total	81.988	199			

a. Dependent Variable: ICT\_CLT\_FWS

b. Predictors: (Constant), ICT\_Interaction

Table 8(c): Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	1.642	.042			39.042	.000
ICT_Interaction	.146	.003	.964		50.982	.000

a. Dependent Variable: ICT\_CLT\_FWS

**CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study revealed that male and female English secondary school teachers were equal; most English teachers had BS/MA English academic qualifications, and most teachers had B.Ed. professional education, most English teachers had 1-10 years of teaching experience, and most English teachers did not know about International English Language certification. Results discovered a positive but moderate correlation between CLT and students' functional writing skills ( $r=.336$ ,  $p=.000<.05$  &  $.01$  levels). Thus, the hypothesis "There is a positive and significant influence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on Students' Functional Writing Skills" is accepted. Results revealed a positive high correlation between the integration of ICT into CLT and students' functional writing skills ( $r=.964$ ,  $p=.000<.05$  &  $.01$  levels). Thus, the hypothesis "Information Communication Technology (ICT) moderates the influence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on Students' Functional Writing Skills" is accepted. These results found a significant difference in the strength of the relationship that indicates that ICT integration in CLT may play a vital role in moderating or influencing students' functional writing skills. In addition, the regression model demonstrated a strong predictive capability with an ( $R=.964$  and an  $R^2=.929$ ) reporting that 92.9% of the change in functional writing skills is explained by ICT interaction. Moreover, the ANOVA table results also confirmed the model's overall significance ( $F = 2599.164$ ,  $p=.000 < .001$  level). The coefficient results ( $B = .146$ ,  $p < .001$ ) show that a one-unit increase in ICT interaction leads to a .146 increase in writing skills. In contrast, the standardized coefficient ( $\beta = .964$ ) highlights the strong influence of ICT interaction. These results highlight the essential role of ICT in enhancing functional writing skills when integrated effectively into CLT approaches. This research recommends that secondary educational institutions should be motivated to integrate ICT tools into the CLT approach in order to enhance students' functional writing of the secondary students.

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