

**BARRIERS TO INTERACTION: APPLYING COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE  
TEACHING IN LECTURE-BASED UNIVERSITIES**

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**Abstract:** This article explores the barriers to interaction when applying Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in lecture-based universities, particularly in EFL contexts. Although CLT promotes student-centered learning and active communication, traditional lecture methods often limit student participation. The study uses a survey to identify the main factors that reduce classroom interaction. The findings show that large class sizes, lecture-centered traditions, low speaking confidence, limited time, exam-oriented assessment, and inflexible classroom environments restrict communicative activities. The article also suggests gradual strategies to increase interaction. The results highlight the importance of moving from passive learning to interactive communication to improve students' speaking skills.

**Keywords:** Communicative Language Teaching, interaction, speaking skills, lecture-based universities, EFL, barriers, student participation

**Annotatsiya:** Ushbu maqolada ma'ruza asosidagi universitetlarda kommunikativ til o'qitish (CLT) yondashuvini qo'llash jarayonida yuzaga keladigan interaktsiya to'siqlari tahlil qilinadi. CLT faol muloqotga asoslangan bo'lsa-da, an'anaviy ma'ruza usuli talaba ishtirokini cheklaydi. Tadqiqotda so'rovnomaga orqali muloqotni kamaytiruvchi asosiy omillar aniqlangan. Natijalar katta guruhlar, ma'ruza markazli ta'lim, talabalarning nutqiy ishonchi pastligi, vaqt cheklovi, imtihonga yo'naltirilgan baholash hamda auditoriya sharoitlari interaktsiyani cheklashini ko'rsatdi. Maqolada interaktivlikni bosqichma-bosqich joriy etish bo'yicha tavsiyalar beriladi. Tadqiqot natijalari nutq ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish uchun interaktiv ta'lim muhimligini ko'rsatadi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** kommunikativ til o'qitish, interaktsiya, nutq ko'nikmalari, ma'ruza asosidagi universitetlar, EFL, to'siqlar, talaba faolligi

**Аннотация:** В статье рассматриваются барьеры взаимодействия при применении коммуникативного обучения языку (CLT) в университетах с лекционной системой, особенно в условиях EFL. Несмотря на ориентированность CLT на активное общение, традиционные лекционные методы ограничивают участие студентов. В исследовании с использованием анкетирования выявлены основные факторы, снижающие взаимодействие. Результаты показывают, что большие группы, лекционная традиция обучения, низкая



уверенность студентов в говорении, ограниченное время, экзаменационная система оценивания и условия аудитории препятствуют коммуникации. Предлагаются способы постепенного внедрения интерактивных методов. Полученные данные подчеркивают важность развития говорения через коммуникативное обучение.

**Ключевые слова:** коммуникативное обучение, взаимодействие, навыки говорения, лекционные университеты, EFL, барьеры, участие студентов

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach that focuses on developing learners' ability to use language for real communication. It encourages students to express ideas, ask questions, negotiate meaning, and participate in interactive tasks such as pair work, group discussions, role-plays, and problem-solving activities. The main goal of CLT is not only grammatical accuracy but also communicative competence. However, in many lecture-based universities, teaching still follows a traditional model where the teacher speaks most of the time and students listen passively. This creates a gap between the principles of CLT and the realities of university classrooms. As a result, teachers who attempt to apply communicative language teaching often face difficulties in promoting interaction.

Lecture-based teaching usually emphasizes explanation, note-taking, and memorization. The teacher explains grammar rules, vocabulary, and text content, while students focus on listening and writing. Interaction between students is limited, and speaking opportunities are rare. In contrast, CLT requires student-centered learning, where learners actively participate in discussions and communicative tasks. When CLT is introduced into a lecture-based environment, students may not immediately adapt to the new method. They may feel uncertain about their role in the classroom, especially if they are used to receiving information rather than producing language. This difference between traditional teaching and communicative teaching creates several barriers that reduce interaction.

One of the most significant barriers to interaction is **large class size**. In many universities, English classes may include thirty, forty, or even more students. Managing communicative activities in such classes becomes challenging. When students are divided into pairs or groups, the classroom can become noisy, and it is difficult for the teacher to monitor each group. Some students may actively participate, while others remain silent or depend on stronger classmates. The teacher may also find it difficult to provide feedback to all students. As a result, communicative activities may not function effectively, and interaction becomes uneven. Large classes also limit the teacher's ability to create a supportive environment where every student has the chance to speak.

Another important barrier is the **lecture-centered learning tradition** that many students bring to the classroom. Students who are accustomed to traditional teaching often expect the teacher to explain everything clearly and directly. They may believe that learning occurs only when the teacher speaks and students listen. When the teacher introduces communicative activities, some students may feel confused or think that the teacher is not "teaching" enough. They may hesitate to participate in discussions or group work because they are not used to sharing ideas in class. This mindset reduces student engagement and makes it difficult to create interactive learning conditions. Changing this habit requires time and consistent practice.



**Students' low speaking confidence** is another barrier that limits interaction in communicative classrooms. Many EFL students worry about making grammatical mistakes, mispronouncing words, or using incorrect vocabulary. They may also fear negative evaluation from classmates or the teacher. Because of this anxiety, students prefer to remain silent even when they understand the topic. In lecture-based settings, students rarely practice speaking, which further reduces their confidence. When CLT activities are introduced, only a few confident students may participate actively, while others avoid communication. This creates an imbalance in participation and reduces the overall effectiveness of communicative language teaching.

Limited classroom time also creates challenges for implementing CLT. Lecture-based courses often follow a tight schedule with many topics to cover during the semester. Teachers may feel pressure to complete the syllabus and prepare students for exams. Communicative activities, however, require time for instructions, discussion, interaction, and feedback. If teachers attempt to include these activities, they may worry about not finishing the required material. As a result, they may return to lecture-style teaching, which allows faster content delivery. This time pressure reduces opportunities for meaningful communication and limits the use of interactive tasks.

**Assessment methods** can also act as barriers to interaction. In many university contexts, examinations focus mainly on grammar, reading comprehension, and writing tasks. Speaking skills may not be included in formal assessment or may carry very little weight. When students know that speaking is not evaluated, they may not see the importance of participating in communicative activities. They focus instead on memorizing rules and practicing written exercises. Teachers may also prioritize exam preparation rather than interactive learning. This mismatch between communicative teaching and traditional assessment reduces motivation for both teachers and students to engage in speaking activities.

Teacher-related factors also influence the success of communicative language teaching. Some teachers may have limited training or experience in using CLT methods. Managing group work, encouraging shy students, and organizing communicative tasks require specific classroom management skills. Teachers may worry about losing control of the class, especially in large groups. They may also feel uncertain about how to assess speaking activities or provide effective feedback. Without sufficient support and professional development, teachers may prefer traditional lectures because they are more predictable and easier to manage. This situation reduces the use of communicative techniques.

Physical classroom conditions may also limit interaction. Many university classrooms are designed for lectures rather than group work. Fixed desks, limited space, and traditional seating arrangements make it difficult for students to move and form pairs or groups. When students cannot easily turn to their partners or rearrange seating, communicative activities become less practical. The physical environment therefore supports teacher-centered instruction and discourages interactive learning. Even when teachers want to apply CLT, classroom layout may prevent effective communication.

The main barriers to interaction in lecture-based universities can be identified as follows: large class size, lecture-centered learning traditions, students' low speaking confidence, limited time for communicative activities, exam-oriented assessment systems, lack of teacher training in



CLT, and inflexible classroom environments. These barriers often work together and create a learning atmosphere where students remain passive and interaction is limited. Understanding these challenges helps teachers recognize why communicative language teaching may not succeed immediately.

Despite these challenges, communicative language teaching can still be gradually introduced. Teachers can begin with short pair discussions, simple question-and-answer activities, and small group tasks that do not require major changes. They can also encourage participation by creating a supportive classroom atmosphere where mistakes are viewed as part of learning. Providing clear instructions and modeling speaking tasks can help students feel more comfortable. Over time, students become more familiar with interactive learning and gain confidence in speaking.

In conclusion, applying communicative language teaching in lecture-based universities involves several barriers that limit classroom interaction. These include large classes, traditional teaching habits, low student confidence, time pressure, assessment systems, teacher-related challenges, and classroom conditions. Recognizing these barriers allows teachers to understand the reasons behind limited participation. By gradually introducing interactive activities and encouraging student involvement, teachers can move from lecture-based instruction toward more communicative classrooms. This shift supports the development of speaking skills and helps students use English more effectively in real communication.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, implementing communicative language teaching in lecture-based universities presents several barriers that limit classroom interaction and student participation. These barriers include large class sizes, traditional lecture-centered instruction, low student confidence in speaking, time constraints, exam-oriented assessment, and inflexible classroom environments. Each of these factors reduces opportunities for meaningful communication and affects the development of speaking skills. The findings of this study show that interaction cannot be achieved simply by introducing communicative activities; instead, teachers must understand the learning context and gradually adapt their methods. Small changes such as pair work, guided discussions, and supportive feedback can help increase participation. When students become more comfortable with speaking, interaction naturally improves. Therefore, overcoming these barriers requires both pedagogical awareness and gradual classroom transformation. Encouraging interactive learning in lecture-based universities can significantly improve students' communicative competence and make language learning more effective

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