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Research Paper

Integrated Impact of Communicative and Pragmatic Language Teaching on Language Proficiency, Pragmatic Awareness, and Cultural Competence of Advanced University EFL Learners

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Abstract

This research sought to assess the integrated impact of CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) and PLT (Pragmatic Language Teaching) on language competency, pragmatic awareness, and cultural competence. The study used a mixed-methods methodology, integrating both pre-and post-tests, questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations, in addition to technological tools to enhance learning experiences in 150 advanced EFL students from five Iranian universities. The results obtained from repeated measures of ANOVA and t-tests demonstrated that the integrated use of CLT and PLT approaches leads to a considerable enhancement in language proficiency, pragmatic awareness, and cultural competence when compared to the utilization of either method individually. Qualitative findings demonstrated a notable rise in student self-assurance, enhanced comprehension of different cultures, and heightened levels of involvement. The results highlight the efficacy of combining Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Pragmatic Language Teaching (PLT) through the use of technology to improve global language training. The study's findings emphasize the necessity of providing instructor training in both strategies, developing a curriculum that effectively combines communicative and pragmatic features, and doing additional research to understand the long-term effects of integrated language teaching approaches. The research enhances our understanding of how the integration of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Pragmatic Language Teaching (PLT) might optimize language learning consequences and better equip students for real-life communication.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT); Pragmatic awareness; Pragmatic Language Teaching (PLT); Technology integration

تأثیر یکپارچه آموزش زبان ارتباطی و کاربردی بر مهارت زبان، آگاهی عملی و توانایی فرهنگی فراگیران زبان انگلیسی پیشرفته در سطح دانشگاه این تحقیق به دنبال ارزیابی تأثیر یکپارچه CLT (آموزش زبان ارتباطی) و PLT (آموزش زبان کاربردی) بر مهارت زبانی، آگاهی عملی و توانایی فرهنگی است. در این تحقیق از روش ترکیبی استفاده کرد که شامل دو پیش آزمون و پس آزمون، پرسشنامه، مصاحبه و مشاهدات کلاسی، علاوه بر ابزارهای فناورانه برای افزایش تجارب یادگیری با ۱۵۰ دانشجوی زبان انگلیسی پیشرفته پنج دانشگاه ایران بود. نتایج بدست آمده از اندازه‌گیری مکرر ANOVA و آزمون‌های t نشان داد که استفاده یکپارچه از رویکرد CLT و PLT منجر به افزایش قابل توجه مهارت زبانی، آگاهی عملی و توانایی فرهنگی در مقایسه با استفاده از هر یک از روش‌ها به صورت جداگانه می‌شود. یافته‌های کیفی افزایش قابل توجهی را در اعتماد به نفس فراگیران، افزایش درک فرهنگ‌های مختلف و افزایش سطح مشارکت نشان داد. نتایج این تحقیق کارآمدی تلفیق آموزش زبان ارتباطی (CLT) و آموزش زبان کاربردی (PLT) را از طریق استفاده از فناوری برای بهبود آموزش زبان جهانی نشان می‌دهد. همچنین، یافته‌های این تحقیق بر ضرورت ارائه آموزش مربیان در هر دو استراتژی، توسعه برنامه درسی که به طور موثر ویژگی‌های ارتباطی و کاربردی را با هم ترکیب می‌کند، و انجام تحقیقات اضافی برای درک تأثیرات بلند مدت رویکردهای آموزش یکپارچه زبان تأکید می‌کند. این تحقیق درک ما را از این که چگونه ادغام آموزش زبان ارتباطی (CLT) و آموزش زبان کاربردی (PLT) ممکن است پیامدهای یادگیری زبان را بهبود دهد و دانش‌آموزان را برای ارتباطات واقعی تجهیز کند، افزایش می‌دهد.

کلمات کلیدی: آموزش زبان ارتباطی (CLT)، آموزش زبان کاربردی (PLT)، یکپارچگی فناوری، آگاهی کاربردی

Introduction

CLT, or Communicative Language Teaching, arose in the 1970s as a direct challenge to the conventional grammar-translation approach. The fundamental idea of this approach is based on the belief that language acquisition thrives when there is meaningful interaction (Richards, 2006). CLT activities place a high importance on practical situations, cooperative assignments, and genuine exchanges, allowing learners to apply the language in a meaningful way.

The pedagogical ideas expressed in the given phrases embody a learner-centered and communicative approach to language instruction. This method emphasizes the utilization of real-life communication, task-oriented activities, genuine resources, and a tolerance for errors in order to facilitate effective language acquisition. These concepts align with the task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach, which aims to foster a student-centered classroom where the needs of learners are valued, and teachers prioritize the creation of conducive learning environments. Research has demonstrated that using real resources in language schools can significantly enhance learners' motivation to acquire the language. In addition, task-based language teaching (TBLT) focuses on the practical use of second language (L2) abilities to fulfill a specific communication need. The teacher plays a role in guiding the learning process to achieve the task at hand. The learner-centered approach emphasizes active learner participation and responsibility for their own development, which is in line with the TBLT philosophy of learning through practical experience. This method also aligns with the current trend in instruction to provide optimal learning circumstances. Task-based activities are essential elements of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) as they involve using language for various reasons and incorporate authentic materials like newspapers, movies, and songs. These activities simulate real-life situations and give learners the opportunity to experience genuine language use. Moreover, the approach places great importance on error tolerance, considering errors as inherent and utilizing them for the purpose of receiving feedback and enhancing performance. This aligns with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which prioritizes communication and interaction in language acquisition. CLT emphasizes the provision of constructive feedback on learners' communication skills rather than solely concentrating on accuracy.

To recapitulate, the given phrases encompass fundamental principles of successful language instruction, highlighting the significance of learner-focused, communicative, and task-oriented methods, along with the utilization of genuine materials and acceptance of errors to foster effective language acquisition and communication. These concepts align with current language teaching approaches and are backed by research in the field of second language acquisition.

Advantages of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

According to Littlewood (2001), pupils are more motivated to continue learning when they actively participate in the learning process. Engagement can be fostered through several strategies, such as utilizing games, engaging in role-playing activities, and working on collaborative projects. When students are completely involved, they are more likely to remember the material and effectively apply it in many circumstances.

According to Canale and Swain (1980), the use of a second language for communication has the potential to improve the communication abilities of learners in their native language. Moreover, acquiring a second language can enhance one's understanding of the diverse methods by which languages can be employed for effective communication. Moreover, proficient communication in a second language can also result in proficient communication in the native language. Ellis (1994) defines fluency as the capacity to communicate rapidly and readily in a language, whereas accuracy pertains to the ability to utilize the language with precision. Acquiring proficiency in a second language necessitates a significant investment of time and

consistent practice. In order to enhance their proficiency and precision, learners should actively participate in activities such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking in the second language to the greatest extent feasible.

According to Kumaravadivelu (2006), studying a second language helps enhance critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. This is because acquiring a new language requires comprehending and examining diverse thought patterns and modes of communication. Additionally, he proposes that when learners possess the ability to engage in critical thinking and problem-solving activities in a second language, they are also more inclined to exhibit the same skills in their native language. In addition, Byram (1997) highlights that acquiring a second language might result in a more profound comprehension of diverse cultures. The reason behind this is that acquiring a new language introduces individuals to a wide range of perspectives and lifestyles. Consequently, learners are more inclined to exhibit tolerance and acceptance towards others from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Recent Research in CLT

Language acquisition is an engaging and compelling process that involves exploring several routes. There are, in fact, three crucial components that enhance and expand this experience:

-Adopting the Digital Era: The incorporation of technology easily merges with the framework of language acquisition. Envision the use of digital tools for collaborative tasks, where each click and keystroke promotes conversation and connection. Individualized learning pathways adjust to your distinct requirements, molding your progress based on your speed and objectives. By using gamification, the process of acquiring a language becomes a captivating and immersive experience. According to Kukulska-Hulme & Shield (2019) and Warschauer & Meskill (2000), these components enable learners and open up new avenues for exploring language.

-"Unleashing the Power Within Motivation serves as the impetus that pulls us onward." Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011) and Ushioda (2014) provide insights into the aspects that stimulate motivation in learners. Self-directed learning enables individuals to assume authority, determine their own path, and establish objectives that are in line with their ambitions. This feeling of control promotes possession and enhances internal drive, resulting in a language-learning experience that is truly personalized.

-Developing Proficient Tasks: The tasks we participate in have a significant impact on our language acquisition. Ellis (2003) and Van den Branden (2006) highlight the significance of meticulously crafted projects that facilitate conversation, collaboration, and language development within the framework of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Envision activities that not only stimulate learners verbally but also engage them in meaningful exchanges, fostering teamwork and promoting language development.

Key Characteristics of PLT

An important aspect to consider in comprehending language is its employment in many circumstances and for distinct purposes. Developing a grasp of the norms and expectations connected with language use in different societies requires cultural awareness. Nonverbal communication, encompassing gestures, postures, and facial expressions, plays a crucial role in facilitating efficient communication. It is crucial to possess an understanding of etiquette and decorum in order to effectively utilize language in various social contexts. Moreover, the ability to understand and employ indirect language and sarcasm is crucial for effective communication.

New Frontiers in PLT

Some notable features of the dynamic realm of PLT include:

-Bridging Cultures: Engage in a profound expedition where language transcends limitations. Kim (2007) and Byram (2012) focus on the intricacies of intercultural communication. PLT functions as a cultural intermediary, fostering comprehension and admiration for varied modes of communication, principles, and standards. Imagine effortlessly understanding complex cultural nuances, smoothly moving between languages and customs, and establishing profound connections across different cultures.

-Exploring the Digital Seas: The virtual realm possesses a distinct language environment. Social media and digital communication need individuals to possess a new set of abilities, ranging from interpreting the humorous wink of an emoji to deciphering the mysterious shorthand of an abbreviation. Crystal (2011) and Barron (2008) examine this subject, investigating how PLT might provide you with the essential skills to effectively traverse these digital environments. Envision the process of decoding internet ciphers, acquiring expertise in the principles of digital decorum, and skillfully articulating oneself in this always-changing realm.

-Exploring the Language Toolbox: Communication extends beyond mere words. PLT explores the complexities of language usage, including the implied meaning, the lighthearted exchange of jokes, and the skill of managing social etiquette. Kasper and Rose (2002) as well as Kecskes (2014) examine efficient approaches to provide learners with these subtle techniques. Imagine comprehending the universal comedy that surpasses national boundaries, acquiring expertise in making indirect appeals, and effectively communicating with cultural awareness, guaranteeing that your message deeply resonates and establishes connections.

Striking the Balance: An Integrative Approach

While CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) and PLT (Productive Language Teaching) have distinct advantages, they are not mutually exclusive and can be successfully integrated to provide language learners with a comprehensive skill set. By integrating components from both methodologies, instructors can establish a vibrant instructional setting that fosters both fluency and appropriateness in communication. Here is a method to attain a harmonious amalgamation:

Incorporate practical elements into communicative language teaching (CLT) tasks: Integrate cultural factors, tactics for politeness, and nonverbal signals into communication exercises (Littlewood, 2001). Employ genuine resources that highlight sociolinguistic elements. Introduce students to authentic texts and movies that showcase language usage in various social situations (Kumaravadivelu, 2006), and deliver clear and direct instruction on pragmatic elements: Thoroughly elucidate and offer chances for application in employing indirectness, irony, and other communication styles that are peculiar to a particular culture (Kasper & Rose, 2002), and promote contemplation on the use of language: Facilitate learners' active participation in debates and critical examination of the linguistic decisions made in various contexts (Yule, 1996). By implementing these tactics, teachers can establish a harmonious combination of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Project-Based Language Teaching (PLT), enabling students to enhance their proficiency in both language communication and comprehension of cultural and societal conventions.

Recent Studies on the Collaborative Approach

As language learning progresses, instructors are actively searching for new methods to enhance communication abilities. One promising approach is the combination of two widely used methodologies: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Project-Based Language Teaching (PLT). By harnessing technology and allocating resources to teacher training, we can establish a potent collaboration that improves both the ability to communicate effectively and the understanding of language in learners.

This exploration comprises two primary components. The initial section explores the use of technology-driven collaboration, specifically analyzing how platforms like video conferencing and collaborative tools might enable genuine and culturally varied interactions. Furthermore, the potential for adapting CLT tasks to specifically target pragmatic aspects such as turn-taking and requesting is examined, highlighting the opportunity to utilize CLT activities as a method for enhancing pragmatic skills.

The second section of the text centers on the pivotal significance of teacher development. The studies underscore the need of providing instructors with extensive training in both CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) and PLT (Project-Based Learning) techniques. This training is crucial for preparing instructors with the essential knowledge and skills to successfully integrate both approaches.

The current study sought to offer helpful insights for instructors who are navigating the constantly evolving field of language learning by connecting theory and practice. By using technology and investing in teacher training, we can establish interactive and stimulating learning settings that enable learners to successfully communicate and adeptly negotiate the intricacies of language with cultural acumen and pragmatic consciousness.

Journey to Effective Communication

Both Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Pragmatic Language Teaching (PLT) provide useful tools for effectively navigating the intricate process of acquiring a language. This journey comprises multiple elements and can be enhanced in terms of comprehensiveness and productivity if instructors and learners possess a profound comprehension of their own capabilities, integrate recent research discoveries, and embrace a synergistic approach that integrates both methodologies. The primary objective is to provide pupils with the assurance and proficiency to proficiently utilize language and establish significant associations in an ever more interconnected global environment.

Finally, it is crucial to examine the following aspects for further investigation: the influence of individual variations in learning styles and learner preferences on the efficacy of CLT and PLT; the ethical concerns that must be considered when teaching pragmatic aspects that may differ among cultures and reinforce detrimental stereotypes; and the continuous development of both CLT and PLT approaches in response to evolving technological norms and societal demands.

Novelty of the Study

The objective of this study was to address a notable deficiency in current research by carefully combining the methodologies of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Pragmatic Language Teaching (PLT) and evaluating their combined efficacy in a diversified, technology-enhanced teaching environment. This research differs from earlier studies in that it examines the collaborative potential of CLT and PLT together rather than individually. It presents empirical data on this topic. Moreover, it assesses their lasting influence on language proficiency and pragmatic competence, providing new perspectives on how these strategies can collectively improve the language learning experiences of advanced EFL students.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following research questions and hypotheses were addressed

***RQ1.** How does the integration of CLT and PLT affect language proficiency among advanced EFL learners?*

***RQ2.** What impact does this combined approach have on learners' pragmatic awareness and cultural competence?*

RQ3. *How do technological tools enhance the effectiveness of the combined CLT and PLT methodology?*

Research Hypotheses

Ho1. The integration of CLT and PLT will significantly improve language proficiency compared to using either method alone.

Ho2. Students exposed to the combined approach will demonstrate greater pragmatic awareness and cultural competence.

Ho3. The use of technology will enhance student engagement and facilitate the integration of communicative and pragmatic elements in language learning.

Methodology

Design of the Study

This study utilized a mixed-methods design to evaluate the effects of combining Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Pragmatic Language Teaching (PLT) on the language competency, pragmatic awareness, and cultural competence of advanced Iranian EFL students. The mixed-methods approach combines both quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analysis to provide a thorough and detailed knowledge of how this integrated teaching methodology impacts student results. The study's rigorous methodology, characterized by a wide-ranging and varied group of participants, precise data collection procedures, and the utilization of technical tools, guarantees a thorough and dependable assessment of the efficacy of integrating CLT and PLT in the language learning curriculum.

Participants

This study included a sample of 150 proficient male and female EFL students, chosen using convenient sampling. The study was carried out at five prestigious universities in Iran, selected for their varied student demographics and well-established EFL programs. The universities encompass establishments situated in Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Mashhad, and Tabriz, so covering a diverse range of geographical and cultural backgrounds. The deliberate inclusion of individuals from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, genders, and learning styles in this selection has resulted in a wide range of participants, hence increasing the applicability of the findings.

The selected participants were randomly divided into the following groups:

- Group 1: CLT-only
- Group 2: PLT-only
- Group 3: Integrated CLT and PLT

Demographic Distribution

Gender: The participant group consisted of both male and female students, achieving a balanced gender representation. This balance was crucial in examining whether the combined CLT and PLT methodologies had differential impacts based on gender.

Academic Background: The five universities involved in the study were selected based on their reputations for having robust EFL programs. These institutions were located in different regions of Iran, ensuring geographical diversity. Each university contributed 30 students to the study, thereby equalizing institutional representation.

Proficiency Level: All participants were at an advanced level of English proficiency. This was confirmed through the standardized English proficiency test (TOFLE) administered at the

beginning of the study. Students had to score within a specific range to qualify for participation, ensuring a uniform level of linguistic competence across the sample.

Instrumentation

This study used a range of instruments over a sixteen-week academic semester to assess language competency, pragmatic awareness, and cultural competence among advanced EFL learners. This extensive collection of instruments ensured a thorough and multifaceted assessment of the study's findings.

Pre- and Post-tests

Purpose: To measure improvements in language proficiency, including both fluency and accuracy.

Instruments: Standardized language proficiency tests (TOFLE) were administered before and after the intervention. These tests included sections on reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Procedure: The pre-test was conducted at the beginning of the semester to establish baseline proficiency levels. The post-test was administered at the end of the semester to assess progress and the impact of the integrated CLT and PLT approach.

Data Analysis: The obtained scores were compared using repeated measures ANOVA to identify statistically significant improvements in language proficiency.

Survey Questionnaire

Purpose: To evaluate changes in students' pragmatic awareness and cultural competence.

Instruments: Likert-scale surveys are designed to measure students' understanding of pragmatic features (e.g., politeness strategies, indirect language use) and cultural awareness.

Procedure: Surveys were distributed twice—at the beginning and end of the study period.

Data Analysis: Survey results were analyzed using paired t-tests to detect significant changes in students' pragmatic and cultural awareness.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Purpose: To gain in-depth insights into students' and instructors' experiences and perceptions of the integrated teaching approach.

Participants: A stratified random sample of students and all participating instructors.

Procedure: Interviews were conducted midway through the semester and at the end of the study. Each interview lasted approximately 30-45 minutes and was audio-recorded for transcription and analysis.

Data Analysis: Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring themes and insights regarding the combined CLT and PLT approach.

Classroom Observations

Purpose: To document interaction patterns, engagement levels, and the practical application of CLT and PLT elements in the classroom.

Procedure: Observations were conducted by trained researchers who attended classes periodically throughout the semester. An observation checklist was used to systematically record data on student interactions, engagement, and the use of communicative and pragmatic strategies.

Data Analysis: Observational data were coded and analyzed to identify trends and patterns in classroom dynamics and teaching practices.

Technology Integration (Video Conferencing Tools)

Purpose: To facilitate intercultural exchanges and enhance real-world communicative experiences.

Tools: The platform 'Skype' was used to connect students with peers and speakers from different cultural backgrounds.

Procedure: Scheduled intercultural exchange sessions were integrated into the curriculum, allowing students to practice language skills in authentic contexts.

Digital Collaborative Platforms

Purpose: To support task-based activities and collaborative learning.

Tools: The Google Classroom platform was used for group projects and collaborative tasks.

Procedure: Students engaged in various digital collaborative tasks, such as joint presentations, peer reviews, and group discussions.

Gamified Language Learning Applications

Purpose: To enhance motivation and engagement through gamified elements.

Tools: The Quizlet application was incorporated to provide interactive and engaging language practice.

Procedure: Gamified activities were scheduled regularly, and students' progress and engagement were tracked through the apps' analytics features.

Data Collection Procedure

The collection of quantitative data involved administering pre-tests and post-tests to evaluate language competency, pragmatic awareness, and cultural competence. The tests were conducted at the beginning and end of the study period for all 150 participants in the three groups (CLT-only, PLT-only, and integrated CLT and PLT). Also, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of participants, together with classroom observations, to obtain qualitative data during the intervention period. In addition, students regularly submitted reflective notebooks, offering valuable insights into their learning experiences. Technology was incorporated into the data collection process, utilizing digital platforms to facilitate collaborative projects and video conferencing technologies to facilitate intercultural contacts. The use of many methods for collecting data ensured a diverse and complete dataset detailed study of how the combined CLT and PLT approach improved the language abilities and cultural competency of advanced EFL learners.

Data Analysis Procedure

In order to analyze the obtained data, repeated measures ANOVA was employed to evaluate changes in language proficiency, pragmatic awareness, and cultural competence among the three groups by using quantitative data from pre-tests and post-tests. Also, to identify specific group differences, post-hoc tests were implemented, with a significance threshold of $p < 0.001$. The interventions' impact was quantified by calculating their effect sizes. Furthermore, interview transcripts and classroom observation notes were subjected to thematic analysis for the qualitative data. Coding the data, identifying recurring themes, and interpreting patterns related to student engagement, confidence, and cultural understanding were all part of this process. The nuanced interpretation of the effectiveness of the combined CLT and PLT approach was facilitated by the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings. This approach provided both statistical evidence and rich, contextual insights into the learners' experiences and progress throughout the 16-week intervention period.



Results

Quantitative Analysis

The results in Table 1 below indicate significant improvements in language proficiency scores for all three groups. However, the integrated CLT and PLT groups demonstrated the highest mean improvement, confirming the effectiveness of the combined approach.

Table 1

Language Proficiency Scores Pre-test and Post-test

| Group | Pre-test Mean | Post-test Mean | Mean Difference | p-value |
|------------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|----------|
| CLT-only | 70.2 | 78.5 | 8.3 | 0.002* |
| PLT-only | 69.8 | 77.4 | 7.6 | 0.004* |
| Integrated CLT and PLT | 70.1 | 85.2 | 15.1 | < 0.001* |

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

Pragmatic Awareness and Cultural Competence Survey Results

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the pragmatic awareness and cultural competence between the pre-test and post-test for the integrated CLT and PLT group.

Table 2

Pragmatic Awareness and Cultural Competence Scores Pre-test and Post-test

| Measure | Pre-test Mean | Post-test Mean | Mean Difference | p-value |
|---------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|----------|
| Pragmatic Awareness | 65.4 | 83.7 | 18.3 | < 0.001* |
| Cultural Competence | 62.8 | 81.5 | 18.7 | < 0.001* |

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

The integrated approach group showed significant improvements in pragmatic awareness and cultural competence, with mean differences of 18.3 and 18.7, respectively. These results were statistically significant, with p-values less than 0.001, indicating the effectiveness of integrating CLT and PLT in enhancing these skills.

To analyze the differences in language proficiency test scores among the three groups (CLT-only, PLT-only, and Integrated CLT and PLT), a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted. The analysis assessed the pre-test and post-test scores to determine the effectiveness of each teaching approach.

Table 3

ANOVA Results

| Source of Variation | SS (Sum of Squares) | df (Degrees of Freedom) | MS (Mean Square) | F-value | p-value |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------|----------|
| Between Groups | 1024.5 | 2 | 512.25 | 19.82 | < 0.001* |
| Within Groups | 3891.4 | 147 | 26.47 | | |
| Error | 2154.6 | 147 | 14.66 | | |
| Total | 7070.5 | 149 | | | |

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

The ANOVA results indicate a significant difference in language proficiency improvements among the three groups ($F(2, 147) = 19.82, p < 0.001$). This suggests that the teaching method significantly affects language proficiency outcomes. Post-hoc test was also conducted to determine which groups differed significantly from each other.



Table 4*Post-Hoc Analysis (Tukey's HSD)*

| Comparison | Mean Difference | p-value |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|
| CLT-only vs. PLT-only | 0.7 | 0.753 |
| CLT-only vs. Integrated CLT and PLT | 6.8 | < 0.001* |
| PLT-only vs. Integrated CLT and PLT | 7.5 | < 0.001* |

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

The post-hoc analysis reveals that the Integrated CLT and PLT groups showed a significantly higher improvement in language proficiency compared to both the CLT-only and PLT-only groups ($p < 0.001$). However, there was no significant difference between the CLT-only and PLT-only groups ($p = 0.753$).

Qualitative Analysis

Interviews and Classroom Observations

A thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews and classroom observation notes revealed the following three key themes:

- **Increased Confidence:** Students reported feeling more confident using English in real-world scenarios, attributing this to the practical communication tasks and cultural understanding gained through the integrated approach.
- **Enhanced Cultural Understanding:** Exposure to pragmatic elements of language through the PLT components led to a deeper understanding of cultural nuances and appropriate language use in various contexts.
- **Engagement and Interaction:** Teachers observed higher student engagement and interaction levels in classrooms that employed the integrated approach. Students were more active participants in discussions and collaborative tasks, positively impacting their learning experience.

Table 5*Thematic Analysis*

| Theme | Description | Example Quotes |
|--|--|--|
| Increased Confidence | Students felt more assured in their ability to communicate effectively in English. | "I feel more confident speaking in class and outside." |
| Enhanced Cultural Understanding | Students developed a better grasp of cultural and pragmatic aspects of language use. | "I now understand why certain expressions are used." |
| Engagement and Interaction | Higher student engagement and participation were noted. | "Students are more engaged and collaborative." |

The qualitative data verified the quantitative findings, underscoring the benefits of the integrated CLT and PLT approach in enhancing language proficiency, pragmatic awareness, and cultural competence. In fact, the integration of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Pragmatic Language Teaching (PLT) in this study proved to be significantly more effective in improving advanced EFL students' language proficiency, pragmatic awareness, and cultural competence compared to using each approach independently. The quantitative analysis demonstrated substantial improvements across all measures, particularly for the integrated approach group. The qualitative data provided further insights into the positive impact on student confidence, cultural understanding, and classroom engagement.

Discussion

The results of this study provide compelling evidence for the effectiveness of integrating Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Pragmatic Language Teaching (PLT) in enhancing advanced EFL students' language proficiency, pragmatic awareness, and cultural competence. The significant improvements observed in the integrated CLT and PLT group compared to the CLT-only and PLT-only groups underscore the value of a comprehensive approach to language teaching.

The quantitative analysis revealed that students in the integrated CLT and PLT groups demonstrated significantly higher improvements in language proficiency compared to their peers in the other two groups. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that a holistic approach to language teaching combining various instructional strategies can lead to better language acquisition outcomes (Richards, 2006; Ellis, 2003). The significant p-values ($p < 0.001$) from the repeated measures ANOVA and post-hoc tests confirm the robustness of these results. The improvement in language proficiency is likely due to the balanced emphasis on both fluency and accuracy, facilitated by the integration of communicative and pragmatic tasks.

The study also found significant gains in pragmatic awareness and cultural competence among students in the integrated group. The mean differences of 18.3 and 18.7 for pragmatic awareness and cultural competence, respectively, highlight the impact of incorporating pragmatic elements into language instruction. These findings are consistent with the work of Kasper and Rose (2002), who emphasized the importance of pragmatics in second language acquisition. The significant improvement in these areas suggests that students are better equipped to navigate real-world communication scenarios, understanding not only the linguistic but also the cultural context of language use.

Qualitative data from interviews and classroom observations further support the quantitative findings. Students reported increased confidence in using English, attributing their progress to the practical and interactive nature of the integrated approach. This enhanced confidence is crucial for language learners, as it can reduce anxiety and promote more active participation in language use (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Teachers also noted higher levels of engagement and interaction, which are critical factors for effective language learning (Littlewood, 2001). The thematic analysis indicated that the integrated approach fostered a more dynamic and interactive classroom environment, leading to better student outcomes.

The use of technology, such as video conferencing tools, digital collaborative platforms, and gamified language learning applications, played a significant role in the success of the integrated approach. These tools not only facilitated intercultural exchanges and collaborative tasks but also made learning more engaging and motivating for students. This aligns with findings from Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (2019), who highlighted the positive impact of technology on language learning. Technology integration allowed for more authentic and varied language practice, contributing to the observed improvements in proficiency, pragmatic awareness, and cultural competence.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates the significant benefits of integrating Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Pragmatic Language Teaching (PLT) for advanced EFL students. The combined approach led to greater improvements in language proficiency, pragmatic awareness, and cultural competence compared to using each method independently. The findings underscore the importance of a comprehensive language teaching strategy that addresses both linguistic and cultural dimensions of language use.

Instructors are encouraged to adopt an integrated approach to language teaching, incorporating both communicative and pragmatic elements into their instruction. The use of technology should

be leveraged to enhance engagement and provide opportunities for authentic language practice. By fostering an environment that emphasizes fluency, accuracy, and cultural competence, teachers can better prepare students for real-world communication.

Future research should explore the long-term effects of the integrated CLT and PLT approach and its applicability in different instructional contexts. Studies could investigate how this approach impacts learners at various proficiency levels and in diverse cultural settings. Additionally, research on integrating other language teaching methodologies with CLT and PLT could provide further insights into optimizing language instruction.

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Appendices

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your overall experience with the integrated CLT and PLT approach?
2. Can you give an example of a classroom activity that you found particularly effective in improving your language skills? Why was it helpful?
3. How has your confidence in using English changed since the beginning of this course?
4. In what ways, if any, do you think your understanding of cultural differences in communication has improved?
5. Can you describe a situation where you applied pragmatic skills learned in this course to a real-life communication scenario?
6. How did the use of technology (e.g., video conferencing, digital collaborative platforms) enhance your learning experience?
7. What challenges, if any, did you face while adapting to this integrated approach?
8. How do you think this approach compares to previous language learning experiences you've had?
9. Can you give an example of how your ability to navigate cultural nuances in communication has changed?
10. In what ways has this course affected your motivation to continue learning English?
11. How has your awareness of pragmatic aspects of language (e.g., politeness strategies, indirect communication) developed throughout this course?
12. What aspects of the integrated approach do you think were most beneficial for improving your language proficiency?
13. How has this course influenced your ability to engage in intercultural communication?
14. Can you describe any changes in your approach to language learning as a result of this course?
15. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience with the integrated CLT and PLT approach?

Gamified Quizlet

Cultural Pragmatics in English

Set 1: Indirect Requests

Term: "It's a bit chilly in here."

Definition: An indirect way of asking someone to close the window or turn up the heating.

Term: "Do you happen to have the time?"

Definition: A polite way of asking for the current time.

Term: "I was wondering if you could help me with this."

Definition: A polite way to ask for assistance.

Set 2: Idiomatic Expressions

Term: "Break the ice."

Definition: To initiate social interaction in a tense or unfamiliar situation.

Term: "Pull someone's leg"

Definition: To joke with someone or trick them playfully.

Term: "Hit the nail on the head"

Definition: To describe exactly what is causing a situation or problem.

Set 3: Cultural Norms

Term: "Taarof"

Definition: An Iranian form of civility emphasizing both deference and social rank.

Term: "Personal space"

Definition: The physical distance people keep in social interactions, which varies by culture.

Term: "Gift-giving etiquette"

Definition: Cultural rules about when and how to give gifts appropriately.

Observation Checklist

Observer: _____ Date: _____ Class: _

| Criteria | Not Observed | Somewhat Observed | Fully Observed |
|--|--------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Students engage in meaningful communication tasks. | | | |
| Teacher facilitates rather than dominates | | | |
| Cultural context is integrated into activities. | | | |
| Students demonstrate awareness of pragmatic norms. | | | |
| Technology is effectively used to enhance learning. | | | |
| Students use appropriate register and politeness strategies. | | | |
| Authentic materials are incorporated into the lesson. | | | |
| Students engage in collaborative problem-solving | | | |
| Feedback focuses on both accuracy and appropriateness. | | | |
| Students demonstrate intercultural awareness. | | | |

Comments: _____

Likert-scale Survey

Please rate your agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree):



1. I feel confident using English in various social situations.
1 2 3 4 5
2. I can recognize and use indirect language appropriately.
1 2 3 4 5
3. I understand how cultural differences affect communication.
1 2 3 4 5
4. I can adapt my language use to different social contexts.
1 2 3 4 5
5. The integrated CLT and PLT approach has improved my language skills.
1 2 3 4 5
6. I can effectively use technology tools for language learning.
1 2 3 4 5
7. I feel more aware of the pragmatic aspects of English communication.
1 2 3 4 5
8. I can engage in meaningful conversations on various topics in English.
1 2 3 4 5
9. I understand the importance of non-verbal communication in English.
1 2 3 4 5
10. I feel prepared to communicate in real-life situations with native English speakers.
1 2 3 4 5

Pre-test/Post-test

Section A: Reading Comprehension (20 points)

Read the following passage and answer the questions:

In many Western cultures, it's common to maintain eye contact during conversations as a sign of attentiveness and respect. However, in some Asian cultures, prolonged eye contact can be perceived as confrontational or disrespectful, especially when speaking with someone of higher social status. Understanding these cultural differences is crucial for effective cross-cultural communication.

1. What does maintaining eye contact signify in Western cultures? (2 points)
2. How might prolonged eye contact be interpreted in some Asian cultures? (2 points)
3. Why is understanding cultural differences in non-verbal communication important? (2 points)
4. Identify an example of indirect language in the text. (2 points)
5. How does the author's tone reflect cultural awareness? (2 points)

Section B: Pragmatic Awareness (30 points)

Choose the most appropriate response in each situation:

1. Your professor asks, "Do you have a moment?" You're actually busy. What's the most appropriate response? (3 points)
 - a) "No, I don't."
 - b) "I'm quite busy right now, but I could spare a few minutes if it's urgent."
 - c) "Yes, I do."
 - d) [Ignore the question]
2. You're at a formal dinner and want someone to pass the salt. What's the politest way to ask? (3 points)
 - a) "Give me the salt."
 - b) "Salt, please."
 - c) "Would you mind passing the salt, please?"
 - d) [Reach across the table and take it]
3. A colleague makes a mistake at work. How would you politely point it out? (3 points)
 - a) "You've made a mistake here."
 - b) "I think there might be a small error in this part. Shall we look at it together?"
 - c) "This is wrong. Fix it."
 - d) [Don't mention it to avoid conflict]

Section C: Cultural Competence (30 points)

Explain how you would handle the following situations:

1. You're invited to a formal dinner in an English-speaking country. Describe the etiquette you would follow. (10 points)
2. A foreign colleague makes a statement that you find culturally insensitive. How would you address this situation? (10 points)
3. You're giving a presentation to an international audience. How would you adapt your communication style to ensure effective cross-cultural understanding? (10 points)

Section D: Language Production (20 points)

Write a short essay (150-200 words) on the following topic:

The importance of understanding the cultural context in global communication

Survey Questionnaire

How often do you use English outside of class?

Daily Weekly Monthly Rarely Never

1. Which aspects of the integrated CLT and PLT approach did you find most helpful? (Check all that apply)
 - Role-playing activities
 - Cultural discussions
 - Technology-enhanced tasks

- Pragmatic awareness exercises
- Collaborative projects
2. How has your understanding of cultural differences in communication changed since the beginning of this course?
[Open-ended response]
3. What challenges did you face in adapting to the integrated CLT and PLT approach?
[Open-ended response]
4. How confident do you feel about using English in real-life situations now compared to before the course?
- Much more confident
- Somewhat more confident
- No change
- Less confident
5. Which technological tools did you find most useful for language learning? (Check all that apply)
- Language learning apps
- Video conferencing for international exchanges
- Online collaborative platforms
- Digital language corpora
- Social media for authentic language exposure
6. How has your ability to recognize and use indirect language improved?
- Significantly improved
- Somewhat improved
- No change
- Declined
7. What aspects of pragmatic language use do you still find challenging?
[Open-ended response]
8. How has this course affected your motivation to continue improving your English skills?
- Greatly increased motivation
- Somewhat increased motivation
- No change in motivation
- Decreased motivation
9. What suggestions do you have for improving the integrated CLT and PLT approach?
[Open-ended response]

Pragmatic Awareness Exercises Samples

1. Indirect Speech Acts Analysis:
Present students with a dialogue containing indirect speech acts. Ask them to identify the indirect requests, refusals, or compliments and explain the cultural context that influences these indirect expressions.

Example:

A: "It's a bit chilly in here, isn't it?"

B: "Oh, I'll close the window."

Task: Explain why A didn't directly ask B to close the window and how B understood the implied request.

2. Cultural Misunderstanding Scenarios:

Provide students with scenarios where cultural misunderstandings occur due to pragmatic differences. Ask them to identify the source of the misunderstanding and suggest appropriate responses.

Example:

An American student says "Thanks!" when an Iranian host offers more food, intending to accept politely. The host doesn't serve more food, thinking the student is refusing.

Task: Explain the misunderstanding and suggest how the American student could more clearly accept the offer in an Iranian context.

3. Register Shifting Role-play:

Have students role-play conversations in different social contexts, requiring them to shift their language register appropriately.

Example:

Role-play a conversation about borrowing a book:

a) With a close friend

b) With a professor

c) With a librarian

Task: Discuss how language use changes based on social distance and power dynamics.

4. Politeness Strategies Comparison:

Example: Present students with the following requests in both Iranian and English-speaking contexts:

Iranian context: "Bebakhshid, mishe lotfan ketab ro be man bedid?" (Excuse me, could you please give me the book?)

English-speaking context: "Would you mind passing me that book?" Ask students to analyze and compare the politeness strategies used in each culture, noting differences in directness, use of honorifics, and level of formality.

5. Pragmatic Failure Analysis:

Example: An Iranian student studying in the US says to their professor, "I want you to explain this again," which sounds demanding in English. Students identify that the direct translation from Farsi might be perceived as impolite in English. They suggest alternatives like, "I'm sorry, but I'm having trouble understanding this concept. Would you mind explaining it again?"

6. Implicature Recognition:

Example: Provide the following dialogue:

A: "Are you going to Tom's party tonight?"

B: "I have an exam tomorrow." Students identify that B's response implies a refusal to attend the party without explicitly saying "no," and explain how this differs from the literal meaning of having an exam.

7. Socio-pragmatic Judgment Task:

Example: Present the following scenario: "You need to ask your professor for an extension on an important assignment. The professor is known to be strict about deadlines." Students rate the

appropriateness of different requests on a scale from 1 (very inappropriate) to 5 (very appropriate):

- a) "I need an extension."
- b) "Would it be possible to have an extension, please?"
- c) "I was wondering if you might consider granting me an extension on the assignment?"

8. Pragmatic Transfer Identification:

Example: Show the following L2 (English) production by an Iranian learner:

"Teacher, give me one pen, please." Students identify that this is a direct translation of a common Farsi request structure. They suggest more appropriate L2 expressions like: "Excuse me, could I borrow a pen, please?"

"Would you mind lending me a pen?"

Collaborative Projects Samples

1. Cross-Cultural Communication Guide:

In small groups, students create a guide for effective communication between Iranian and English-speaking cultures, focusing on pragmatic aspects like politeness strategies, taboo topics, and non-verbal communication.

2. Digital Storytelling:

Students collaborate to create a short video story that highlights pragmatic differences between Iranian and English-speaking cultures. They write the script, act out scenes, and edit the video together.

3. Intercultural Webinar:

Organize a webinar with EFL students from an English-speaking country. Iranian students prepare presentations on aspects of Iranian communication style and engage in discussions about cultural differences in language use.

4. Pragmatic Corpus Analysis:

Students work in teams to analyze a corpus of natural language data (e.g., movie scripts and recorded conversations) to identify patterns of pragmatic language use in different situations. They present their findings to the class.

5. Pragmatic Awareness Campaign:

Students work in teams to create a social media campaign raising awareness about pragmatic aspects of language use in cross-cultural communication.

6. Intercultural Communication Podcast:

Groups of students produce a series of podcast episodes discussing pragmatic differences between Iranian and English-speaking cultures, featuring interviews with native speakers.

7. Virtual Cultural Exchange Program:

Organize a semester-long virtual exchange with students from an English-speaking country. Iranian students collaborate with their international peers on projects exploring cultural and pragmatic differences.

8. Pragmatic Feature Documentary:

Teams create short documentaries focusing on specific pragmatic features (e.g., compliment responses and apology strategies) in Iranian and English-speaking cultures.

Biodata

I was born on Dec. 5.1973 in Kerman, Iran, and went to school in Kerman. I attended Shahid Bahonar University, Kerman, Iran, and received my B.A. degree in English Language and Literature in 1996. I received my M.A. degree in English Literature from Tehran University, Tehran, Iran, in 2000 and my Ph.D. in the same specialty from Shahid Beheshti University of Tehran, Iran, in 2016. I have been teaching, carrying out research, and consulting students since 2001 in different universities, including Azaad University and Shahid Bahonar University. I have been an assistant professor of the Department of Literature and Foreign Languages at Payam-e-Noor Univerity, Tehran, Iran, since 2017.



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