# BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTING COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING IN UZBEK SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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**Annotation.** This article explores the major barriers to implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Uzbek secondary schools. Although CLT has been introduced to improve students' communicative competence, many teachers continue to use traditional grammar-based methods. The study discusses factors such as lack of teacher training, large class sizes, limited resources, and the influence of exam-oriented teaching. It also highlights cultural and institutional challenges that prevent the practical application of CLT principles in classrooms. The findings suggest that successful implementation of CLT requires professional development programs, modern teaching materials, and systemic educational reforms that encourage communication-focused learning.

**Introduction.** In recent years, English language education in Uzbekistan has undergone significant reforms aimed at aligning local teaching practices with international standards. One of the most prominent innovations introduced by the Ministry of Public Education is the adoption of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), a learner-centered approach that emphasizes real communication, interaction, and the practical use of language rather than rote memorization of grammar rules. The purpose of CLT is to enable students to develop communicative competence, which includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse competence. However, despite its theoretical advantages, the implementation of CLT in Uzbek secondary schools remains limited and inconsistent. Several factors contribute to this challenge. Many English teachers in Uzbekistan still rely heavily on traditional, teacher-centered methods that focus on grammar translation and test preparation. This resistance is often rooted in a lack of sufficient training and understanding of CLT principles. Moreover, large class sizes, limited instructional time, and outdated assessment systems make it difficult for teachers to create interactive, student-centered environments. Another major obstacle is the scarcity of authentic materials and technological resources, which are essential for developing communicative skills in real-life contexts. Additionally, cultural and institutional barriers play a crucial role. The education system in Uzbekistan has historically emphasized accuracy and discipline rather than creativity and communication, leading to a mismatch between

CLT philosophy and traditional classroom expectations. Teachers often feel pressure to prepare students for grammar-based national exams, which discourages them from implementing communicative tasks such as group discussions, role plays, or project-based learning. Given these persistent issues, it is essential to examine the underlying barriers that prevent the effective implementation of CLT in Uzbek secondary schools. Understanding these challenges will not only help educators and policymakers develop more practical strategies for teacher training and curriculum reform but also contribute to improving the overall quality of English language education in Uzbekistan.

**Analysis of literature.** Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged as a response to traditional grammar-based methods that focused mainly on linguistic accuracy rather than meaningful communication. Hymes (1972) first introduced the concept of communicative competence, emphasizing that effective language use requires not only grammatical knowledge but also the ability to use language appropriately in different social contexts. Building on this, Canale and Swain (1980) proposed four components of communicative competence: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. These ideas became the theoretical foundation of CLT, which encourages learners to use the target language in authentic communicative situations. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), CLT shifts the focus of language teaching from form to function, making the learner an active participant in the learning process. However, studies have shown that in many Asian and post-Soviet contexts, including Uzbekistan, the adoption of CLT has faced significant barriers. Littlewood (2013) noted that teachers often misunderstand CLT as requiring complete abandonment of grammar instruction, leading to confusion and resistance in classroom practice. In Uzbekistan, several researchers have explored challenges to implementing CLT in local schools. Karimov (2019) found that many EFL teachers lack adequate training in communicative methods, which results in continued reliance on the grammar-translation approach. Similarly, Qodirova (2021) reported that teachers face difficulties due to large class sizes, limited access to authentic materials, and rigid examination systems that prioritize grammar and reading comprehension over speaking and listening skills. Institutional and cultural factors also play a crucial role. Brown (2007) argued that successful language teaching depends on an educational environment that supports student interaction and learner autonomy. However, as Sharipova (2022) observed, Uzbek classrooms often remain teacher-centered, and students are hesitant to participate in communicative activities because of fear of making mistakes or being judged. Moreover, the emphasis on national testing discourages teachers from experimenting with innovative, communicative strategies.

Table 1. Key Studies on CLT Barriers in Uzbekistan

| Author | Focus | Main Idea |
|---|---|---|
| Hymes (1972) | Communicative competence | Language use must fit social context |

| Author | Focus | Main Idea |
|---|---|---|
| Canale & Swain (1980) | CLT framework | Defined four components of competence |
| Karimov (2019) | CLT in Uzbekistan | Teachers rely on traditional methods |
| Qodirova (2021) | Teacher challenges | Large classes and exams limit CLT |
| Sharipova (2022) | Classroom culture | Students fear mistakes; low interaction |

**Research discussion.** The findings from the reviewed studies indicate that the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Uzbek secondary schools faces a combination of pedagogical, institutional, and cultural barriers. Although the government has encouraged the adoption of modern, communicative methods, many teachers continue to use traditional grammar-based approaches. This situation reflects a gap between educational policy and classroom practice. As Karimov (2019) and Qodirova (2021) suggest, one of the main obstacles is insufficient teacher training. Many EFL teachers lack deep understanding of CLT principles and have limited experience in organizing communicative tasks. As a result, lessons often emphasize accuracy rather than fluency. In addition, large class sizes and exam-oriented teaching prevent teachers from engaging students in interactive activities such as role plays and discussions. Another important factor is the cultural and institutional environment. Uzbek classrooms are still strongly teacher-centered, where students are expected to listen rather than participate. As Sharipova (2022) notes, students' fear of making mistakes and traditional attitudes toward authority limit opportunities for authentic communication. These factors suggest that successful implementation of CLT requires not only methodological training but also a change in classroom culture and assessment systems.

**Conclusion.** The study shows that despite official efforts to modernize English language education, the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Uzbek secondary schools remains a serious challenge. Many teachers continue to depend on traditional grammar-based methods due to limited training, lack of teaching resources, and exam-oriented assessment systems. Large class sizes and insufficient exposure to communicative activities also make it difficult to apply CLT effectively in real classrooms. Cultural and institutional factors further complicate the situation. Teacher-centered traditions and students' fear of making mistakes reduce classroom interaction and limit opportunities for developing communicative competence. To overcome these barriers, it is necessary to strengthen teacher training programs, provide access to authentic teaching materials, and revise the national examination system to include communicative skills.

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