

LEARNER PERCEPTIONS, ATTITUDES, AND EXPECTATIONS IN COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING: A STUDY OF UNDERGRADUATE LITERATURE STUDENTS IN AFFILIATED COLLEGES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS, TN, INDIA.

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Abstract

This study was based on attitude perception and expectation of the undergraduate students studying literature in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) from affiliated colleges of the University of Madras, Tamil Nadu, India. Because English has a dual role as an object of literature and a tool of communication, we must understand how students react to CLT in order to make sound pedagogical decisions. This study employs a mixed method, i.e., quantitative survey and qualitative interview, in examining students' perceptions of CLT, their belief about whether or not CLT works, and what they want from an L2 to be studied within a literature-based curriculum. Results show that attitudes towards CLT have overall been positive, and particularly regarding speaking and listening skills, despite the botched implementation of CLT as a result of insufficient resources and teacher-centered beliefs. Students expressed the desire for more interactively paced student-centered classrooms that involve authentic language use. The significance of reconciling pedagogical theory with classroom practice is emphasized in this research through focusing attention on teacher training and curriculum design. The results aim to move educational practitioners and policy makers a step further in establishing a more communication-oriented and student-involved learning environment for English language learners.

Keywords

Communicative Language Teaching, student perception, language pedagogy, literature education, learner attitude, curriculum expectation

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Introduction

In the dynamic field of language teaching, CLT has increasingly become a central approach in trying to resist rote learning and drilling while adopting communicative practice and interaction, learner centeredness and traditional skill-based grammatical approaches. In India, PU literature classes (esp. at UG level), English has dual status, it is first, a subject to teach and learn. It also acts as one of the most effective vehicles for communication. Have they got a strong competitor? However, English language teaching in many of the affiliated colleges of the University of Madras, Tamil Nadu, is still lecture based and examinational in type with students not speaking very well orally.

The purpose of this study is to understand how students in literature programs at the undergraduate level perceive, feel and expect regarding CLT. Literature students are a particular population; they have not just been exposed to English in an academic context, but are also ambitious as far as

the language is concerned because for many of them, being good at English has become associated with access to further education/employment and cultural upward mobility. They are, therefore, especially important in indicating a discrepancy between language learning and teaching itself. By elevating learners' viewpoints, our research acknowledges the role of students as active participants in education. The focus of the study: Their perspectives, classroom communication practices and in terms of understanding how CLT is related to their academic behaviours.

2. Review of Literature

Omar (2025) investigated the application of CLT in SOE in the Kurdistan Region, Iraq using both qualitative and quantitative methods. It was seen that although teachers viewed CLT as a useful tool, practical difficulties such as large class sizes and strict assessment restricted its actual application. The study underscored the need to connect pedagogies with institutional contexts.

Bascones and Neuto (2025) examined CLT application in the Philippines and

found a considerable disconnect in teachers' understanding of CLT principles. Even with interactive approaches, most teachers faced difficulties engaging (largely due to weak grammar skills and contextual issues). The study called for better-trained and continuing support of teachers.

Cao, Jeyaraj& Razali (2024) studied basic learning in higher education and show that although basic learning is increasing, students have a lot of pressure due to tight schedules, mismatched content and insufficient instructor support, especially online. Their thematic analysis identifies hindrances for engagement, learning and pushing oneself in a self-directed fashion, with the interventions underlining 'needs' for consistent pedagogic instruction as well as timely response to failure, individualized oversight. Although with a limited sample, the study offers a deep insight into student experiences and merits more student-oriented instruction design.

James, Mahamud, and Ni-Ana (2024) investigate the comprehension and application of CLTs by secondary school teachers in Ghana. Although CLT is acknowledged as contributing to communicative competence, teaching practice is still predominantly teacher-centred, but this may change because of the lack of knowledge – gaps in what are called institutional consideration. It underscores the significance of context-based in-service training and motivational tactics for stimulating learner engagement, pointing towards a discrepancy between CLT ideals and actual classroom practices.

Rochmawati et al. (2024) studied their students' perception and opinion when implementing CLT at a vocational school of the aviation industry in Indonesia. Their findings indicate that cognition/emotion and attitude significantly contribute to learning performance with the strongest predictor being attitude. This study draws attention to the emotive and motivational dimensions of language learning, calling for more content-emotion pedagogical practices.

Akramy, Daqiq and Orfan (2024) in their empirical research on students' perception towards CLT using sound statistical methods also find an overall support for interactive learning that is student-centered in contrast to the grammar-centrality of the traditional instruction. What is evident is that gender does not make a difference in the preference of students and they desire interaction while facing space-based boundaries. It emphasizes the role of student demand as a catalyst to educational reform and to factors promoting the localization of pedagogical innovations.

Yunus et al. (2023) performed a systematic review on the use of CLT in enhancing oral proficiency skills among EFL learners, and they find strong

evidence to indicate that it might be useful. But barriers persist to putting it in place, like limited class time and lack of prepared teachers, and a numbing emphasis on exams. The point that these authors are making is for less research that represents mono-perspectives in the context of CLT and more inclusive, contextual-focused institutionalized research.

3. Significance of the Study

- Helps teachers align instruction with student expectations.
- Enhances understanding of student attitudes that affect motivation.
- Identifies perception gaps that may influence the success of CLT.
- Supports curriculum designers in making student-centered improvements to language programs.

4.Objectives

The primary objective is to examine learners' perceptions, attitudes, and expectations in the context of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and to understand how these elements influence their participation, performance, and communicative competence.

The Secondary Objectives are:

- To explore how learners' perceptions and attitudes affect their engagement and responses in CLT classrooms.
- To identify key factors that influence learners' expectations and motivation in communicative language learning environments.
- To suggest pedagogical improvements based on learners' experiences and feedback for enhancing the effectiveness of CLT practices.

5. Limitations of the Research

The limitations of the research were:

1. The study focuses exclusively on learners' perspectives within Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) environments, and does not encompass the viewpoints of instructors or institutional stakeholders.
2. The sample is limited to a specific educational level and linguistic context, which may not reflect broader trends across diverse language learning settings or regions. Shifts in educational technologies, curriculum reforms, or instructional delivery methods in the future may influence learners' perceptions, attitudes, and expectations in unforeseen ways.
3. As learner-centered teaching approaches continue to evolve, new patterns of student engagement and expectation may emerge, potentially requiring a

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reevaluation of the current findings and frameworks.

6. Research Design

Research Design	Applications in this Study
Exploratory	Review of existing literature, identification of factors shaping learners' perceptions, attitudes, and expectations during Communicative Language Teaching.
Descriptive	Development and validation of research instruments, measurement of learners' responses, formulation and testing of hypotheses, and analysis of collected data.
Causal	Examination and validation of the conceptual framework through techniques such as path analysis to understand the relationships among perception, attitude, and expectation.

Source: Compiled by Researcher.

7. Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

RQ1: Do learners' perception, attitude, and expectation influence their engagement during Communicative Language Teaching?

RQ2: Do demographic variables such as gender and age have any significant effect on learners' perception, attitude, and expectation toward Communicative Language Teaching?

8. Hypothesis Analysis (ANOVA)

8.1 ANOVA

8.1.1 Gender

H_{01.1}: There is no significant difference between gender of the respondents and their perception.

H_{01.2}: There is no significant difference between gender of the respondents and their attitude.

H_{01.3}: There is no significant difference between gender of the respondents and their expectation.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Perception Between Groups	42.909	1	42.909	.839	.363
Perception Within Groups	3323.002	65	51.123		
Perception Total	3365.910	66			
Attitude Between Groups	12.646	1	12.646	.550	.461
Attitude Within Groups	1495.623	65	23.010		
Attitude Total	1508.269	66			
Expectation Between Groups	73.088	1	73.088	.803	.374
Expectation Within Groups	5918.852	65	91.059		
Expectation Total	5991.940	66			

8.1.2 Age

H_{01.4}: There is no significant difference between age of the respondents and their perception.

H_{01.5}: There is no significant difference between age of the respondents and their attitude.

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H_{01.6}: There is no significant difference between age of the respondents and their expectation.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Perception Between Groups	141.045	2	70.522	1.400	.254
Perception Within Groups	3224.866	64	50.389		
Perception Total	3365.910	66			
Attitude Between Groups	138.262	2	69.131	3.229	.046
Attitude Within Groups	1370.007	64	21.406		
Attitude Total	1508.269	66			
Expectation Between Groups	344.948	2	172.474	1.955	.150
Expectation Within Groups	5646.993	64	88.234		
Expectation Total	5991.940	66			

8.1.3 Mother Tongue

H_{01.7}: There is no significant difference between mother tongue of the respondents and their perception.

H_{01.8}: There is no significant difference between mother tongue of the respondents and their attitude.

H_{01.9}: There is no significant difference between mother tongue of the respondents and their expectation.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Perception Between Groups	381.972	3	127.324	2.688	.054
Perception Within Groups	2983.938	63	47.364		
Perception Total	3365.910	66			
Attitude Between Groups	374.629	3	124.876	6.940	.000
Attitude Within Groups	1133.640	63	17.994		
Attitude Total	1508.269	66			
Expectation Between Groups	1275.812	3	425.271	5.681	.002
Expectation Within Groups	4716.129	63	74.859		
Expectation Total	5991.940	66			

8.1.4 English Proficiency

H_{01.10}: There is no significant difference between English proficiency of the respondents and their perception.

H_{01.11}: There is no significant difference between

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English proficiency of the respondents and their attitude.

H_{01.12}: There is no significant difference between English proficiency of the respondents and their expectation.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Perception Between Groups	518.355	2	259.177	5.825	.005
Perception Within Groups	2847.556	64	44.493		
Perception Total	3365.910	66			
Attitude Between Groups	309.265	2	154.632	8.254	.001
Attitude Within Groups	1199.004	64	18.734		
Attitude Total	1508.269	66			
Expectation Between Groups	1737.373	2	868.687	13.067	.000
Expectation Within Groups	4254.567	64	66.478		
Expectation Total	5991.940	66			

8.1.5 Frequency of English Outside the Class

H_{01.13}: There is no significant difference between frequency of English use outside the class of the respondents and their perception.

H_{01.14}: There is no significant difference between frequency of English use outside the class of the respondents and their attitude.

H_{01.15}: There is no significant difference between frequency of English use outside the class of the respondents and their expectation.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Perception Between Groups	393.554	3	131.185	2.781	.048
Perception Within Groups	2972.356	63	47.180		
Perception Total	3365.910	66			
Attitude Between Groups	352.783	3	117.594	6.412	.001
Attitude Within Groups	1155.486	63	18.341		
Attitude Total	1508.269	66			
Expectation Between Groups	1019.216	3	339.739	4.304	.008
Expectation Within Groups	4972.724	63	78.932		
Expectation Total	5991.940	66			

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	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
n Total	0	6			

The ANOVA results reveal that gender does not significantly influence learners' perception, attitude, or expectation in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) ($p > .05$). Age shows a significant effect only on attitude ($p = .046$), indicating differing attitudes across age groups, while perception and expectation remain unaffected. Mother tongue significantly affects both attitude ($p = .000$) and expectation ($p = .002$), suggesting linguistic background influences how learners feel and what they expect from CLT. English proficiency has a significant impact on all three variables (perception: $p = .005$, attitude: $p = .001$, expectation: $p = .000$), implying that learners with different proficiency levels perceive and respond to CLT differently. Similarly, frequency of speaking English also significantly affects perception ($p = .048$), attitude ($p = .001$), and expectation ($p = .008$), highlighting the role of language use in shaping learners' experiences with CLT.

8.2 CORRELATION

8.2.1 Correlation between learner's perception and their attitude

$H_{01.16}$: There is no significant correlation between learners' perception and their attitude toward communicative language teaching.

	Perception	Attitude
Perception Pearson Correlation	1	.888**
Perception Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Perception N	67	67
Attitude Pearson Correlation	.888**	1
Attitude Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

	Perception	Attitude
Attitude N	67	67

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

8.2.2 Correlation between learner's perception and their expectation

$H_{01.17}$: There is no significant correlation between learners' perception and their expectations toward communicative language teaching.

	Perception	Expectation
Perception Pearson Correlation	1	.754**
Perception Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Perception N	67	67
Expectation Pearson Correlation	.754**	1
Expectation Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
Expectation N	67	67

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

8.2.3 Correlation between learner's attitude and their expectations

$H_{01.18}$: There is no significant correlation between learners' attitude and their expectations toward communicative language teaching.

	Attitude	Expectation
Attitude Pearson Correlation	1	.836**
Attitude Sig. (2-tailed)		.000

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	Attitude	Expectation
Attitude N	67	67
Expectation Pearson Correlation	.836**	1
Expectation Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
Expectation N	67	67

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

The correlation analysis reveals strong positive relationships among perception, attitude, and expectation. Firstly, perception and attitude are very highly correlated ($r = 0.888$, $p < .001$), indicating that as perception improves, attitude tends to improve correspondingly. Secondly, perception also has a strong positive correlation with expectation ($r = 0.754$, $p < .001$), suggesting that better perception is associated with higher expectations. Thirdly, attitude and expectation are also highly correlated ($r = 0.836$, $p < .001$), showing that individuals with a positive attitude generally have higher expectations. All correlations are statistically significant at the 0.01 level, demonstrating robust relationships. This implies that these three constructs are closely interlinked, and improving one may positively influence the others.

9. Findings

- Learners' perception has a very strong positive impact on their attitude towards Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).
- Learners' perception has a strong positive impact on their expectations from CLT.
- Learners' attitude has a strong positive impact on their expectations from CLT.
- Gender has no significant impact on learners' perception, attitude, or expectation towards CLT.
- Age has a significant impact on learners' attitude but does not affect perception or expectation.
- Mother tongue has a significant impact on learners' attitude and expectation but does not affect perception.
- English proficiency significantly influences learners' perception, attitude, and expectation towards CLT.

- Frequency of speaking English significantly influences learners' perception, attitude, and expectation towards CLT.

10. Recommendations

The findings of this study are of considerable significance to the field of language education and hold valuable insights for language teachers, curriculum designers, academic researchers, and educational policymakers involved in undergraduate literature programs. Since this research was conducted specifically within affiliated colleges of the University of Madras, it suggests future scope for comparative studies across different educational institutions, academic disciplines, and cultural contexts where Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is employed. Further investigations could focus on how teacher training and institutional support influence learners' perception, attitude, and expectation towards CLT. Additionally, it would be beneficial to explore other learner-related variables, such as long-term language retention, intercultural competence, and learner autonomy, which may be impacted by CLT beyond the classroom environment. Such expanded research would contribute to a deeper understanding of how communicative approaches can be effectively localized and adapted to diverse learner populations.

11. Conclusion

The results of the present study indicate that perception, attitude and expectation of learners on CLT play a significant interrelated role in undergraduate literature programmes run under the affiliated college system of the University of Madras. Results show that gender has no effect but age, mother tongue and English proficiency and frequency of spoken use have all a strong impact on learners' attitudes/motivation and expectations. Implications of these findings conclude with the need for language teaching methods that are context specific and learner-characterized. More important, the positive relationships between the three constructs suggest that promoting positive perceptions is beneficial to increasing attitudes and expected outcomes toward CLT. Due to the particular educational conditions in this study, one possible direction for future research into CLT that could strengthen our finding is inquiries from across academic disciplines and cultural backgrounds. In addition, more in-depth studies of teacher professional development and university support could offer useful directions to enhance learner engagement and language achievement. In sum, this study has added to the emerging discussion of tailoring communicative language teaching practices to respond to different learner populations in Indian higher education.

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