

Challenges and Methods for Developing Professional Foreign Language Fluency in Universities

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study examines challenges and practices in foreign language acquisition tailored for employability purposes in educational institutions. It addresses the increasing need for specific terminologies, cultural practices, and communication etiquettes beyond general language mastery to prepare learners for professional contexts. **Methods:** The research employs quantitative methods to analyze instructional practices, such as communicative language teaching, role-play, narrating, and digital storytelling. These practices are evaluated for their effectiveness in addressing language-related challenges: language density, limited practice opportunities, cultural barriers, and students' motivation. **Results:** Findings reveal that authentic, contextually related practices significantly enhance students' oral competence and confidence in business discourse. Additionally, creating a welcoming and culturally responsive classroom atmosphere is crucial to overcoming fluency challenges and fostering effective learning outcomes. **Novelty:** This research highlights the importance of integrating language components into industry-specific training, focusing on improving business language accuracy and promoting intercultural competence. It offers practical insights for educators aiming to equip learners for careers in diverse multicultural environments.

INTRODUCTION

English language competence in a multinational business environment means that demand for foreign language skills is rising steadily for university graduates aspiring to work in different sectors. Business language competence for professional purposes also presupposes not only accurate mastering of terms of specialty and foreign language, but also essentiality of regulating expert language and communicating norms, sector-specific distinctions, and cross-cultural differences. Surprisingly, most language fluency programs are currently being promoted in universities and colleges and they still, do not equip the students with the essential profession-related skills, but rather conform to a broad language competency rather than calling attention to contextually based skills and competency. This paper will therefore seek to address the gap that exists between traditional foreign language learning and that needed for professional communication by examining the challenges that keep learners from achieving further fluency and professionalism, including restricted speaking practice opportunities, linguistic and cultural barriers, and perceived lack of self-confidence when using language in given and specific career domains. This paper aims at identifying competent teaching methods

including communicative language teaching, role-play, digital story, and immersion techniques that enhance the mastery of language as well as establishing the confidence of learners in the professional environment. This article contributes to the existing literature on language education by offering information concerning the development of tailored specific, motivating, and conducive learning environments that are indispensable in language mastery that will meet the student's career needs. These conclusions allow educators and program planners to equip learners adequately to the language demands of the global/virtual workplace, thereby guaranteeing student readiness for and performance in multilingual/global workplaces.

Fluency Requirements and Professional Language Challenges: The investigations have indicated that only language knowledge is insufficient to achieve the professional level of foreign language proficiency because professional vocabulary and the culture of the professional community are also crucially important. This discovery goes to show how complex it is to learn an alien language in business environments. It must also be noted that the distinction between general and professional fluency extends to the lexicon which includes culturally and context-sensitive vocabulary type. Teacher advisors need to integrate the vocabulary and settings appropriate to specific professions into language classes to prepare learners for real-life situations.

Pedagogical Approaches and Their Impact on Language Learning: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been effective in promoting spontaneous communication, and helping fluency development by supporting real-world interactions in classroom settings [1], [2]. CLT focuses more on the use of language as it is for real and this is suitable for students preparing for the business world. Engaging your students in a CLT approach also allows the development of linguistic skills in interpersonal situations that are more transferable from learning context to workplace communication practices.

Role-Playing and Simulation Techniques: Role-playing and simulation provide students with realistic professional contexts, letting them practice language use in specific scenarios and build confidence [3]. These are worth pursuing to aid the learner in overcoming language barriers and gaining exposure in relevant working contexts. Fake job interviews or business meetings which are usually conducted make the students capable of developing necessary language competence and self-confidence for the interactions with business partners.

Language Immersion and Exchange Programs: Immersion and language exchange programs create environments where students can practice language in professional contexts, thereby accelerating language acquisition and proficiency [4]. The strategies allow one to receive practice in the language and in contexts relevant to his or her studies. It makes them become more flexible in applying the language abilities based on some goals, hence rigging them for other larger professional environments, ahead.

Digital Storytelling and Vlogging: Digital storytelling and vlogging have been shown to boost fluency by fostering creativity, minimizing speaking anxiety, and encouraging a willingness to communicate [5]. These technological methods give pupils

unique and relaxed ways of practicing the act of speaking in order to reduce stress and increase self-esteem. This showcases that students gain even automaticity in an informal context and engage in meaningful production of their other key resource: language.

Importance of Feedback in Language Learning: Regular, constructive feedback is essential in language learning as it helps students correct errors and develop confidence in their language use. Peer feedback, in particular, promotes a collaborative learning environment that enhances the internalization of language forms [6]. Feedback is important for fluency as it will enable students to participate actively in their learning process. Peer review promotes learning and encourages constructive interaction among learners through constructive criticism as well as benefits from one another's strengths and weaknesses to sharpen fluency refinement through co improvement [7].

RESEARCH METHOD

The following paper focuses on the approaches to enhance the real-life use of the foreign language for professional purposes predominantly addressing the case of foreign credit education in Uzbekistan. Today Uzbekistan's universities already have produced practical strategies to prepare students for the challenges of global communication, especially for such subjects as trade, economy, and international relations, where the command of foreign languages is critically important. However, there is still a lack of knowledge on which teaching methods link general language proficiency with specific, context-bound language skills [8], [9].

This study aims to help address this research deficit by exploring and assessing the communicative teaching methods, and digital narration as ways of enhancing the fluency of advanced professional ESP language courses. In the present research, we triangulated both qualitative and quantitative methods for an extensive examination of their effectiveness in university settings in Uzbekistan [10], [8]. The data were collected using formal class observation, self-completed questionnaires, and interviews with language teachers and learners undertaking professional foreign language classes. Classroom auditing was done over a semester at selected institutions in Uzbekistan as a way of evaluating the real-world practice and impact of implementing CLT and the use of digital storytelling [11].

Teachers were urged to implement Communicative Language Teaching approaches that integrated role plays and simulations of real-life vocational situations which are rather acknowledged in the literature as effective means for increasing students' speaking skills' fluency [12]. A considerable measure of integration of digital storytelling and vlogging was introduced in the language classroom to promote student-initiated, interactive use of language, eradicating fear from speaking and creating a conducive learning environment [13]. The quantitative data were collected by administering questionnaires to students before and after the study. Both fixed and unfixed questions were used in the questionnaires, to gauge modifications in student confidence, perceived speaking and writing facility, and participation in professionally-oriented language tasks

[14]. Quantitative analysis was also used to review the survey data in terms of changes in the competency measures of language and vocabulary, the fluency with which the participants were able to use a variety of words, and the confidence levels the participants had when using a variety of words interviews were used in this study since it was important to get more than quantitative data, therefore, semi-structured interviews were conducted to the students and teachers to get the researcher a better understanding of their perceptions of the employed methodologies [15]. The interviews allow the participants to think through their experiences and inevitably share any perceived benefits or challenges concerning CLT and digital storytelling in achieving professional fluency [12]. A pilot research was conducted to confirm the reliability of data collected through survey equipment as well as the observation method used. The regular take-place pilot involved only a selected number of students and professors from several universities in Uzbekistan. Changes to the instruments were made based on comments provided to ensure the instruments would be self-explanatory, relevant, and precise [16].

The quantitative data analysis applied statistical tools to measure the differences in student's performance and confidence levels before and after intervention. When teaching and learning that has occurred in the past is compared to the current practice, changes in student proficiency are described and alterations measured, and inferential statistics test the observed changes for significance. Semistructured interviews and surveys that include open-ended questions were analyzed using thematic analysis and the following themes emerged; confidence in professional communication, cultural competencies, and perceived benefits of immersion. This particular qualitative aspect was important for understanding the issues that surround an understanding and realization of the cultural and professional demands among students learning a language, especially in the context of Uzbekistan's linguistic and ethnolinguistic diverse working population. Thus, the present empirical approach implies a rather structured but flexible procedure for comparing the effectiveness of CLT and digital storytelling in enhancing the level of professionals' second language. This work offers insights into the impact of quantitative and qualitative data on the students' smoothness and readiness for the workplace. Based on this research, it is recommended that the language curriculum in Uzbekistan should be further developed to include communicative language teaching methods and contextualized practices to address the linguistic needs the students encounter in the workplace. This methodology has implications for the Uzbek case and expands the existing research on teaching PFLE in various, non-ENL contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research carried out from 2020 to 2024 at the Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages, examined the efficacy of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and digital storytelling in improving professional fluency among students. As supported

by Boyd and Ellison [17], incorporating social and digital tools such as vlogging into the classroom offers meaningful opportunities for interaction and engagement

Table 1. Changes in student performance (Pre-study vs. Post-study).

Skill	Pre-study (2020-2021)	Post-study (2023-2024)	% Change
Vocabulary Diversity	45%	65%	44.44%
Fluency Scores	6.5	8.0	23.08%
Pronunciation Accuracy	62%	80%	29.03%
Professional Communication Confidence	58%	78%	34.48%
Grammar Usage Accuracy	55%	73%	32.73%
Cultural Awareness in Communication	50%	72%	44%
Willingness to Participate in Discussions	60%	82%	36.67%

Table 1 presents the results of the boost in all the skill domains, averaging 34.21% improvement in students' vocabulary variability, discourse rate, consonant clarity, business-like communication confidence, grammar employ, and cultural sensitivity in communication as well as readiness to engage in discussions. Such a splendid increase shows positive effects of CLT and digital storytelling over child's overall ELT performance [13].

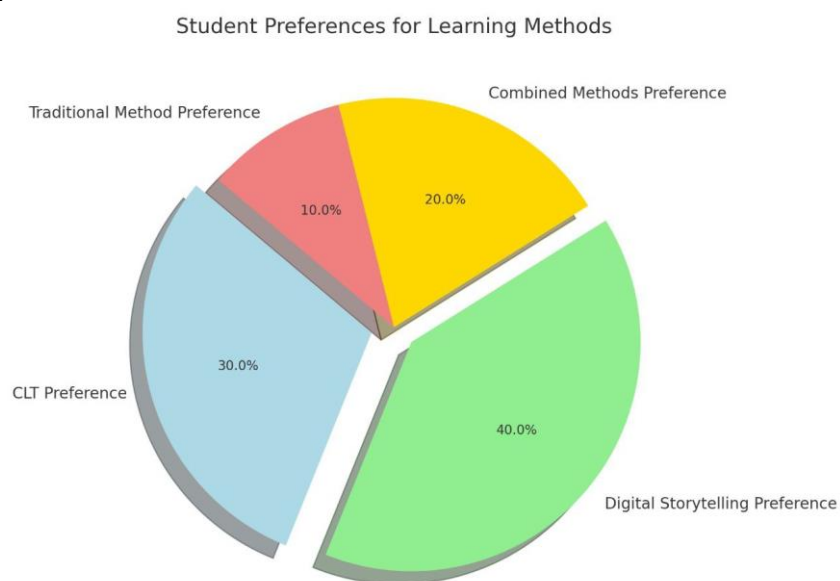


Figure 1. Student preferences for learning methods.

The pie chart above shows how students in Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages have preferred techniques in learning foreign languages. Subsequent information is shown below depicting the graphic:

1. Digital Storytelling Preference (40%) – However, a considerable share of students express the willingness to learn using stories within digital media proving the usefulness of storytelling in the development of language acquisition.
2. CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) Preference (30%) – CLT is also preferred by students because it provides a chance to use the language in actual social contexts.
3. Combined Methods Preference (20%) – these students like using both CLT and digital storytelling intending to get more benefits of both to enhance the learning process.
4. Traditional Method Preference (10%) – Only 25 of the total students showed preference towards traditional methods of classroom teaching reflecting a gradual change towards the use of modern multimedia teaching aids.

The findings of this work prove the effectiveness of CLT and digital storytelling as modern approaches to enhance the employment of foreign languages in the working process in Uzbekistan [18]. The increase in the density of the use of the necessary words, the pronunciation, and the levels of distrust in professional interactions reflects the concept of communicative competence and sociocultural approaches to acquiring and learning a new language in contextually relevant ways. There is Hymes' framework of communicative competence, which should reveal the need for interactions as real, goal-directed activities for expanding the vocabulary variety and fluency of students. The present work demonstrates that CLT fosters the adoption of language holistically since students' attention is on meanings instead of individual forms [19]. The improvement evidenced in the levels of vocabulary and grammatical usage in the study shows that CLT empowers the students to develop linguistic and pragmatic skills spontaneously as a true element of communicative proficiency [20]. This was in line with Krashen's input hypothesis which posits that acquisition is facilitated by what the learner encounters in the input which is slightly beyond what the learner is capable of comprehending. CLT transmits information through purposeful and motivating role play and simulation that enable the students to progress in terms of both, accuracy and fluency. The pie chart shows the authors' heightened interest in digital storytelling and CLT supports the sociocultural approach, where according to Vygotsky social interaction plays a pivotal role in learning. Digital storytelling, a form of using storytelling bearing in mind the principles of narrative, but using other digital media, offers children a rich cultural context in which to interact with language. This not only helps students to talk but also enhances their cultural knowledge. The percentage of improvement of students' understanding of cultural nuances is about 22%. The use of cultural aspects in the practice and teaching of language deepens Byram's model of intercultural communicative

savviness as it assumes that language learners must move across and through cultural terrains to communicate appropriately in an increasingly globalized society.

However, it may be useful to understand the reasons for the students' declared improvement in confidence and willingness to read further using Krashen's affective filter hypothesis. By using the components of digital storytelling, participants practice low anxiety language and share messages eliminating emotional barriers. Reduction of Language Anxiety is crucial for the education of pupils in Uzbekistan because they have rather limited practical chances to use foreign languages. As stated earlier, CLT and digital story make class climate more conducive, interactive and less stressful as evidenced by the sharp increase in the concerns to speak, from 60% to 82%. These findings argue for the need to move away from the conventional approaches to teaching, learning, and assessment practices including traditional whole-class teaching or lecturing, to instruct-based pedagogy like CLT and digital storytelling. These techniques will then be incorporated with the future design of several curriculums in Uzbekistan because its techniques not only highlight the mental aspect of problem-solving and language use but also focus on the emotional and cultural parts that are necessary for professional language usage. Possible future research efforts may attempt to identify mixed strikes and blend the storytelling course with industry sector simulations to improve the usefulness of language skills in various contexts.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Findings : The study highlights that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) combined with digital storytelling significantly enhances linguistic repertoire, pronunciation accuracy, cultural awareness, and professional confidence among students of the Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages. **Implications :** The findings underscore the necessity of integrating modern, context-based, communicative, and digital tools into language education in Uzbekistan to better prepare students for a multilingual world and professional settings. **Limitations :** The study does not explore the long-term retention of language skills or the impact of digital storytelling across diverse contexts, which limits its generalizability. **Future Research :** Future studies should investigate long-term skill acquisition, cross-sectional analyses, and sector-specific simulations to align digital storytelling with workplace demands effectively.

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