

Estrategias de enseñanza basadas en el enfoque comunicativo para mejorar la fluidez oral en estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera: una revisión bibliográfica cualitativa

Communicative Approach-Based Teaching Strategies for Enhancing Oral Fluency in EFL Learners: A Qualitative Bibliographic Review

Strategie didattiche basate sull'approccio comunicativo per migliorare la fluidità orale negli studenti di inglese come lingua straniera: una revisione bibliografica qualitativa

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Resumen

La fluidez oral constituye un componente central de la competencia comunicativa y continúa siendo un desafío para los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL), especialmente cuando la enseñanza ofrece oportunidades limitadas para una interacción oral sostenida. Esta revisión bibliográfica cualitativa analiza estrategias de enseñanza fundamentadas en la Enseñanza Comunicativa de Lenguas (CLT) que han sido asociadas con el desarrollo de la fluidez oral en contextos EFL. La revisión consideró literatura académica pertinente publicada entre 2006 y 2026, localizada mediante Google Scholar, Dialnet, Redalyc y EBSCOhost a partir de combinaciones de términos relacionados con EFL, fluidez oral, enseñanza comunicativa y estrategias didácticas. La literatura seleccionada fue examinada mediante extracción descriptiva y síntesis temática. Se identificaron cuatro categorías analíticas recurrentes: (1) interacción significativa y comunicación auténtica, (2) producción oral colaborativa, (3) práctica oral basada en tareas y repetición, y (4) confianza, participación y comunicación centrada en el estudiante. En conjunto, la literatura sugiere que el desarrollo de la fluidez no depende de una técnica aislada, sino de oportunidades reiteradas para producir lenguaje con un propósito comunicativo, negociar significados, colaborar con pares y recibir apoyo pedagógico adecuado. Asimismo, las características de las tareas, las condiciones de planificación y la organización del aula pueden incidir en el desempeño oral. Se concluye que las estrategias comunicativas alcanzan mayor valor pedagógico cuando integran uso significativo del idioma, interacción sostenida, agencia del estudiante y apoyo estructurado.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza Comunicativa de Lenguas; EFL; fluidez oral; estrategias comunicativas; interacción; revisión bibliográfica

Abstract

Oral fluency is a central component of communicative competence and remains a persistent challenge for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), particularly when classroom instruction provides limited opportunities for sustained spoken interaction. This qualitative bibliographic review analyzes teaching strategies grounded in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) that have been associated with the development of oral fluency in EFL contexts. The review drew on peer-reviewed and academically relevant literature published between 2006 and 2026 and located through Google Scholar, Dialnet, Redalyc, and EBSCOhost using combinations of terms related to EFL, oral fluency, communicative teaching, and instructional strategies. The selected

literature was examined through descriptive extraction and thematic synthesis. Four recurring analytical categories were identified: (1) meaningful interaction and authentic communication, (2) collaborative oral production, (3) task-based and repeated speaking practice, and (4) confidence, participation, and learner-centered communication. Across these categories, the literature consistently suggests that fluency development is supported not by a single classroom technique, but by repeated opportunities to produce language for a communicative purpose, negotiate meaning, collaborate with peers, and receive appropriate instructional support. The review also shows that task characteristics, planning conditions, and classroom organization can influence oral performance. These findings support a view of CLT in which teachers design purposeful communicative conditions rather than merely increase the quantity of speaking. The study concludes that communicative strategies are most pedagogically valuable when they integrate meaningful language use, sustained interaction, learner agency, and structured support.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching; EFL; oral fluency; communicative strategies; interaction; bibliographic review

Riassunto

La fluidità orale costituisce una componente centrale della competenza comunicativa e continua a rappresentare una sfida per gli studenti di inglese come lingua straniera (EFL), soprattutto quando l'insegnamento offre opportunità limitate di interazione orale prolungata. Questa revisione bibliografica qualitativa analizza le strategie didattiche basate sull'Approccio Comunicativo all'Insegnamento delle Lingue (Communicative Language Teaching, CLT) che sono state associate allo sviluppo della fluidità orale nei contesti EFL. La revisione ha preso in considerazione la letteratura accademica pertinente pubblicata tra il 2006 e il 2026, reperita attraverso Google Scholar, Dialnet, Redalyc ed EBSCOhost mediante combinazioni di termini relativi all'EFL, alla fluidità orale, all'insegnamento comunicativo e alle strategie didattiche. La letteratura selezionata è stata esaminata mediante estrazione descrittiva e sintesi tematica. Sono state identificate quattro categorie analitiche ricorrenti: (1) interazione significativa e comunicazione autentica, (2) produzione orale collaborativa, (3) pratica orale basata su compiti e ripetizione e (4) fiducia, partecipazione e comunicazione centrata sullo studente. Nel complesso, la letteratura suggerisce che lo sviluppo della fluidità non dipende da una singola tecnica, bensì da opportunità reiterate di

produrre lingua con uno scopo comunicativo, negoziare significati, collaborare con i pari e ricevere un adeguato supporto pedagogico. Inoltre, le caratteristiche dei compiti, le condizioni di pianificazione e l'organizzazione della classe possono incidere sulla performance orale. Si conclude che le strategie comunicative acquisiscono maggiore valore pedagogico quando integrano un uso significativo della lingua, un'interazione sostenuta, l'autonomia dello studente e un supporto strutturato.

Parole chiave: Approccio Comunicativo all'Insegnamento delle Lingue; EFL; fluidità orale; strategie comunicative; interazione; revisione bibliografica.

Introduction

English has become a major language for education, international communication, and professional development. In EFL settings, however, learners often have fewer opportunities to use English outside the classroom, which makes classroom speaking practice especially important. Oral communication enables learners to express ideas, negotiate meaning, respond to others, and participate in academic and social exchanges. Yet speaking is frequently experienced as demanding because it requires real-time language processing while learners manage vocabulary, pronunciation, grammatical resources, confidence, and interaction with others.

Research on EFL oral communication has identified multiple barriers to fluent speaking. These include limited opportunities for language use, large classes, anxiety and low self-confidence, restricted vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, and insufficiently communicative teaching practices (Ibna Seraj & Habil, 2021). In contexts where instruction emphasizes grammatical knowledge more strongly than purposeful language use, learners may know language forms without developing comparable ease in spontaneous communication (Bernal & Bernal, 2020).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) offers a relevant pedagogical framework for addressing this tension. Rather than treating grammatical accuracy as the sole or final objective, CLT emphasizes learners' ability to use language appropriately for meaningful purposes (Richards, 2006). Pair work, group work, role-play, information-gap activities, discussions, debates, communicative games, and task-based activities can create conditions in which learners must

exchange information, formulate ideas, respond to interlocutors, and adapt language to communicative demands.

Previous studies have examined individual strategies and their relationship with oral performance. Task-based instruction has been associated with gains in speaking fluency (Albino, 2017; Córdoba Zúñiga et al., 2023), information-gap activities have been used to promote purposeful oral exchange (Ortiz-Neira, 2019), cooperative learning has shown positive effects on speaking fluency (Namaziandost et al., 2020), and role-play has been linked to improvements in fluency and participation (Rababah, 2025). Other work highlights repeated speaking, collaborative tasks, task planning, group discussion, and the communicative function of tasks (Yang, 2014; Awwad & Alhamad, 2021; Morrison & Tavakoli, 2023; Wiboolyasarin et al., 2023).

Although these studies provide useful evidence, examining strategies separately can obscure the pedagogical mechanisms they share. A bibliographic synthesis is therefore valuable because it allows the literature to be read across studies, identifying recurring patterns rather than treating each technique as an isolated solution. The present study addresses this need by organizing the reviewed evidence around broader communicative principles and by interpreting how those principles relate to oral fluency.

Accordingly, the objective of this article is to analyze Communicative Language Teaching-based strategies associated with the enhancement of oral fluency in EFL learners. The guiding question is: What recurring pedagogical patterns can be identified in the literature on communicative strategies for developing EFL learners' oral fluency?

Theoretical Framework

English as a Foreign Language and oral communication

EFL generally refers to learning English in contexts where it is not the dominant language of everyday social communication (Harmer, 2001). In such settings, formal education may constitute the principal space in which learners encounter and use English. This makes the quality and frequency of classroom interaction especially consequential.

English proficiency can expand academic, professional, and intercultural opportunities. Oral communication is particularly relevant because learners must not only know linguistic forms but also use them intelligibly and appropriately in real time (Idrus, 2016; Vega Iza et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, EFL learners may experience environmental, psychological, linguistic, and instructional barriers that restrict oral participation (Ibna Seraj & Habil, 2021).

Oral fluency

Oral fluency concerns the capacity to produce speech with an appropriate degree of continuity, speed, coherence, and comprehensibility. Fluency is not synonymous with error-free language. Rather, it concerns the speaker's ability to maintain communication without excessive disruption while organizing meaning in real time (Sato, 2014). Pronunciation, pausing, speech rate, coherence, and the listener's ability to follow the message can all contribute to perceptions and measures of fluency.

From a pedagogical perspective, fluency develops through opportunities to formulate and reformulate messages, interact with others, and use linguistic resources under communicative pressure. This makes fluency particularly compatible with instructional approaches that privilege purposeful language use rather than isolated manipulation of forms.

Communicative Language Teaching

CLT is a broad approach to language teaching organized around communicative competence and meaningful language use. Richards (2006) describes it as a shift from teaching language primarily as a system of structures toward creating conditions in which learners use language for different purposes and in different contexts. The approach does not eliminate attention to form; rather, it situates linguistic knowledge within communicative activity.

Three principles are particularly relevant to oral fluency. First, interaction provides learners with opportunities to negotiate meaning and adjust language in response to others. Second, collaborative and learner-centered activity increases the amount of language learners themselves produce. Third, the teacher's role shifts toward designing communicative experiences, facilitating participation, monitoring performance, and providing feedback. These principles are also reflected in more recent discussions of CLT implementation in EFL contexts (Alofi & Almalki, 2022; Berezenko et al., 2022; Williyan et al., 2023).

Communicative strategies for oral fluency

Communicative strategies can take different classroom forms while sharing similar underlying purposes. Role-play and drama situate language in simulated social contexts; debates and

discussions require learners to formulate and defend ideas; information-gap activities create a genuine need to exchange information; pair and group work increase opportunities for participation; task-based instruction organizes language use around meaningful outcomes; and repeated speaking activities allow learners to produce similar content more efficiently over successive attempts. The pedagogical significance of these strategies lies less in their labels than in the communicative conditions they create: purpose, interaction, sustained production, responsiveness to an interlocutor, and opportunities to reorganize language.

Methodology

Research design

This study adopted a qualitative bibliographic review with a descriptive-interpretive scope. Its purpose was not to estimate a pooled effect size or to conduct a meta-analysis, but to identify and interpret recurring pedagogical patterns across literature addressing CLT-related strategies and EFL oral fluency. The unit of analysis was the published study or academic source rather than individual learners.

Search strategy and delimitations

The search reported by the authors covered literature published from 2006 through 2026 and used Google Scholar, Dialnet, Redalyc, and EBSCOhost. Search terms included combinations of EFL, oral fluency, strategies, communicative language teaching, and their Spanish equivalents, including fluidez oral and estrategias didácticas. English- and Spanish-language sources were considered. The review prioritized research directly addressing oral fluency, communicative speaking, or classroom strategies compatible with CLT.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Sources were retained when they were academically relevant to the review objective and provided conceptual or empirical information about EFL oral fluency, communicative interaction, or teaching strategies designed to increase meaningful spoken language use. Empirical studies were prioritized in the analytical synthesis. Sources were excluded from the core synthesis when their focus did not substantially address oral communication or when they did not contribute evidence or conceptual grounding relevant to the review question. Foundational books were used to establish theoretical concepts but were not treated as empirical evidence.

Analytical procedure

The reviewed material was examined in two stages. First, descriptive information was extracted concerning the strategy or instructional condition examined and the principal finding relevant to oral communication. Second, findings with similar pedagogical functions were compared and grouped through thematic synthesis. Rather than reproducing each study sequentially, the analysis sought recurring mechanisms across the literature. Four categories were consolidated: meaningful interaction and authentic communication; collaborative oral production; task-based and repeated speaking practice; and confidence, participation, and learner-centered communication. These categories were then interpreted in relation to CLT principles and oral-fluency development.

Because the manuscript is a bibliographic review, no human participants were recruited and no new personal data were collected. The interpretive voice presented in the Results and Discussion sections corresponds to the authors' synthesis of the reviewed literature.

Results

The thematic analysis produced four interrelated categories. Table 1 summarizes representative evidence from the literature used to construct the synthesis.

Source	Strategy / condition	Evidence relevant to oral fluency	Analytical category
Albino (2017)	Task-based language teaching	Meaningful tasks provided opportunities for sustained spoken production and were associated with development in speaking fluency.	Task-based and repeated practice
Ortiz-Neira (2019)	Information-gap activities	Learners had a communicative need to exchange missing information; the intervention reported improvement in oral fluency.	Meaningful interaction
Namazandost et al. (2020)	Cooperative learning	Cooperative learning increased peer interaction and showed a positive effect on speaking fluency.	Collaborative oral production
Awwad & Alhamad (2021)	Task planning / time pressure	Planning conditions influenced L2 oral performance, showing that fluency depends partly on	Task-based and repeated practice

Source	Strategy / condition	Evidence relevant to oral fluency	Analytical category
		how tasks are prepared and implemented.	
Córdoba Zúñiga et al. (2023)	Task-based language teaching	Fluency-oriented tasks were linked to dimensions such as pauses and speech production.	Task-based and repeated practice
Morrison & Tavakoli (2023)	Task communicative function	Different task functions produced differences in fluency measures, indicating that task design matters.	Meaningful interaction
Wiboolyasarini et al. (2023)	Collaborative tasks	Collaborative tasks supported negotiation and joint spoken production among peers.	Collaborative oral production
Yang (2014)	4/3/2 repeated speaking	Repeated delivery of similar content under progressively shorter time limits supported increasingly fluent production.	Task-based and repeated practice
Rababah (2025)	Role-play	The role-play group showed greater fluency improvement than learners receiving conventional speaking instruction.	Confidence and participation
Robayo Acuña (2025)	Teacher-reported communicative practices	Conversations, debates, role-plays, and information-gap activities were reported as practices for supporting oral fluency.	Confidence and participation
Hosseini et al. (2013)	Pair and team work	Classroom organization affected opportunities for learners to interact and practice spoken English.	Collaborative oral production
Gamba Buitrago (2017)	Collaborative/self-directed speaking	Collaborative speaking tasks supported peer interaction, confidence, and progressively more fluent production.	Collaborative oral production

Note. The table synthesizes representative studies explicitly discussed in the reviewed manuscript; it does not imply statistical comparability among studies.

Meaningful interaction and authentic communication

A first recurring pattern is that fluency-oriented strategies create a reason to communicate. Information-gap activities are a clear example: because one learner possesses information another learner needs, speech becomes instrumental to completing the task (Ortiz-Neira, 2019).

Communication games, dialogues, discussions, and other interactive tasks similarly move speaking away from decontextualized sentence production toward the exchange of meanings.

The reviewed evidence suggests that authenticity should be understood functionally rather than only as the use of real-world materials. A classroom task can be communicatively authentic when learners have a genuine informational, interpersonal, or problem-solving purpose. From this perspective, the common feature across information gaps, discussions, debates, and many task-based activities is not their format but the requirement to formulate a message for another person. Morrison and Tavakoli (2023) further complicate a simple 'more speaking equals more fluency' assumption by showing that the communicative function of a task can affect fluency measures. The authors' synthesis therefore indicates that communicative purpose and task design are central variables: meaningful interaction is productive when the task gives learners a clear reason to speak and an interactional structure that sustains language production.

Collaborative oral production

A second category concerns the social organization of speaking. Cooperative and collaborative formats increase opportunities for learners to speak with peers rather than directing all communication through the teacher. Namaziandost et al. (2020) reported a positive effect of cooperative learning on speaking fluency, while Wiboolyasarín et al. (2023) emphasized collaborative tasks as spaces for negotiation and joint language production. Pair and team arrangements likewise influence the amount and type of oral practice available to learners (Hosseini et al., 2013).

Across these studies, collaboration appears to support fluency through several connected mechanisms: increased speaking time, repeated turn-taking, exposure to peers' language, shared responsibility for task completion, and a potentially less threatening environment for oral experimentation. Collaborative learning should therefore not be reduced to placing learners in groups. Its value depends on whether the task distributes participation and requires meaningful contribution from group members.

This interpretation also helps explain why group discussion and collaborative presentations can be pedagogically useful. Their contribution lies in combining preparation, interaction, turn-taking, peer support, and extended production. The literature thus positions collaboration as a condition

that can expand opportunities for fluency practice when classroom organization avoids passive participation.

Task-based and repeated speaking practice

A third pattern is the importance of purposeful repetition and task structure. Albino (2017) and Córdoba Zúñiga et al. (2023) connect task-based instruction with oral-fluency development by requiring learners to use spoken language to accomplish meaningful outcomes. Such tasks differ from mechanical drills because repetition, when present, occurs in the service of communication. Yang's (2014) 4/3/2 activity illustrates how repetition can support fluency without abandoning communicative meaning. Learners communicate essentially the same content several times while the available speaking time becomes progressively shorter. Repeated production can reduce the processing burden associated with idea generation and allow greater attention to speed, continuity, and formulation.

The literature also indicates that task effectiveness depends on implementation conditions. Awwad and Alhamad (2021) show that planning and time pressure can influence oral performance, while Morrison and Tavakoli (2023) demonstrate that task function matters. Taken together, these findings suggest that teachers should not treat 'task-based learning' as a uniform technique. Planning time, communicative goal, cognitive demands, repetition, and interactional organization may all shape the fluency opportunities a task provides.

Confidence, participation, and learner-centered communication

The fourth category concerns learners' willingness and confidence to participate. Role-play, drama, dialogue, debate, and similar activities can provide structured spaces in which learners speak from an assigned role or within a defined communicative situation. Rababah (2025) reported greater fluency improvement for learners using role-play than for those receiving conventional speaking instruction, while Pinela et al. (2025) describe role-play as a strategy that can encourage participation and reduce fear of speaking.

Confidence should not be interpreted as an isolated psychological outcome. Within the reviewed literature, it is closely connected to task design and classroom support. Learners may participate more readily when expectations are clear, preparation is possible, errors are treated constructively, and communication is shared with peers rather than performed only for teacher evaluation.

The authors' synthesis therefore positions learner-centeredness as a practical feature of fluency instruction. The teacher remains essential, but primarily as a designer and facilitator of communicative conditions: organizing interaction, scaffolding tasks, monitoring participation, and providing feedback that supports continued language use.

Discussion

The four categories indicate that communicative strategies contribute to oral-fluency development through overlapping mechanisms rather than through isolated techniques. Information-gap activities, role-play, task-based learning, collaborative work, debates, repeated speaking, and group discussion differ in surface form, yet they converge in providing learners with reasons to speak, interlocutors to respond to, and opportunities to sustain or repeat oral production. This convergence is consistent with Richards' (2006) view of CLT as meaningful language use organized around communicative competence.

A central implication of the synthesis is that oral fluency should not be approached simply by increasing the number of speaking activities. The reviewed evidence suggests that the quality of communicative conditions matters. Tasks need a meaningful purpose; learners need sufficient opportunities to produce language; interaction should distribute participation; and task demands should be calibrated so that learners can focus on message formulation without becoming overwhelmed. Findings concerning planning, task function, and repeated speaking reinforce this interpretation (Awwad & Alhamad, 2021; Morrison & Tavakoli, 2023; Yang, 2014).

The synthesis also supports a social view of fluency development. Pair work, cooperative learning, collaborative tasks, and group discussion position fluency as something practiced through interaction rather than developed solely through individual rehearsal. This does not mean that collaboration automatically produces better speaking. Poorly structured group work can permit unequal participation. The pedagogical value of collaboration depends on task interdependence, accountability, turn-taking, and opportunities for each learner to contribute.

Another important pattern concerns the relationship between fluency and confidence. Anxiety, fear of errors, and low self-confidence have been identified as barriers to EFL oral communication (Ibna Seraj & Habil, 2021). Communicative strategies such as role-play and supportive peer interaction may reduce the perceived risk of speaking by giving learners contextual support and

shared responsibility. However, confidence should be viewed as both a condition for and a possible consequence of participation: learners need sufficiently safe opportunities to speak, while successful participation can in turn strengthen willingness to communicate.

The findings also clarify the teacher's role in CLT. A learner-centered classroom is not a teacher-absent classroom. Effective communicative instruction requires careful decisions about grouping, preparation time, task goals, feedback, and progression. The teacher facilitates fluency development by creating repeated opportunities for meaningful oral production while ensuring that communicative activity remains purposeful and inclusive.

From the authors' interpretive perspective, the most important contribution of the reviewed literature is therefore not a ranking of strategies. The evidence does not justify claiming that one technique is universally superior. Instead, it points to a set of design principles shared by productive communicative practices: meaningful purpose, sustained language production, interaction, manageable task demands, opportunities for repetition or planning, learner participation, and supportive feedback. These principles offer a more transferable basis for pedagogical decision-making than the adoption of any single activity.

Pedagogical Implications

Based on the thematic synthesis, the following principles can guide the design of fluency-oriented EFL instruction.

Design principle	Classroom implication	Illustrative strategies
Create a communicative need	Learners should need to exchange, obtain, defend, or jointly construct meaning rather than merely display a language form.	Information gaps; jigsaw tasks; problem-solving; debates
Increase meaningful speaking time	Organize participation so that learners produce substantial oral language rather than wait for teacher turns.	Pair work; small-group discussion; collaborative tasks
Use purposeful repetition	Allow learners to revisit similar content so that formulation becomes more efficient without turning practice into mechanical drilling.	4/3/2 speaking; repeated role-play; task rehearsal
Support planning	Provide preparation when task complexity or anxiety would otherwise restrict production.	Pre-task planning; idea mapping; collaborative preparation
Structure collaboration	Assign roles, outcomes, or information so that participation is distributed and interdependent.	Team tasks; collaborative presentations; group problem-solving

Design principle	Classroom implication	Illustrative strategies
Treat feedback as support for communication	Use feedback to improve subsequent performance without interrupting every attempt at meaning-making.	Delayed feedback; post-task reflection; focused corrective feedback

Limitations

This review has limitations that should be considered when interpreting its conclusions. First, it is a qualitative bibliographic synthesis rather than a systematic review or meta-analysis; consequently, it does not estimate the magnitude of effects across studies. Second, the reviewed literature includes different learner populations, instructional contexts, research designs, and operationalizations of fluency, which limits direct comparison. Third, the search relied on the databases and terms reported in the study and may not capture all relevant publications. Finally, foundational and empirical sources serve different purposes in the manuscript and should not be interpreted as equivalent forms of evidence. These limitations do not invalidate the thematic patterns identified, but they support cautious interpretation and point to the need for future reviews with more formal systematic-search and quality-appraisal procedures.

Conclusion

This qualitative bibliographic review analyzed CLT-based teaching strategies associated with oral fluency development in EFL learners. The synthesis identified four recurring categories: meaningful interaction and authentic communication, collaborative oral production, task-based and repeated speaking practice, and confidence, participation, and learner-centered communication.

Across the reviewed literature, oral fluency emerges as a product of sustained and purposeful language use rather than the simple accumulation of grammatical knowledge or the application of one preferred technique. Information-gap tasks, role-play, discussions, collaborative work, task-based instruction, and repeated speaking can all contribute to fluency when they create a genuine communicative purpose and sufficient opportunities for learners to formulate, exchange, and refine spoken messages.

The analysis also indicates that instructional design matters. Planning time, task function, grouping, repetition, learner responsibility, and teacher feedback can shape the quality of oral

practice. Consequently, the pedagogical question is not merely which activity to use, but how to design that activity so that learners participate meaningfully and repeatedly in communication. For EFL teachers, the findings support a balanced role as facilitator and instructional designer. Teachers can foster oral fluency by creating supportive communicative environments, structuring equitable interaction, connecting tasks to meaningful purposes, and providing feedback that helps learners improve without suppressing willingness to speak. Future research should compare how these design principles operate across proficiency levels and educational contexts and should employ clearly defined fluency measures to strengthen the evidence base.

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