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## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRESENTATION– PRACTICE–PRODUCTION (PPP) APPROACH IN ENHANCING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN EFL CLASSROOMS



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### Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of the Presentation–Practice–Production (PPP) approach in enhancing communicative competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The research aims to evaluate how structured lesson stages—presentation of language forms, controlled practice, and communicative production—contribute to the development of students’ speaking accuracy, fluency, and overall communicative performance. A quasi-experimental design was employed involving two groups of undergraduate EFL learners: an experimental group taught using the PPP framework and a control group instructed through traditional grammar-focused methods. The findings suggest that the PPP model remains a pedagogically effective framework when adapted to communicative and learner-centered contexts. The study contributes to contemporary discussions on communicative language teaching by providing empirical evidence supporting the systematic integration of presentation, practice, and production stages in EFL instruction.

**Keywords:** Presentation–Practice–Production (PPP); communicative competence; EFL teaching; language pedagogy; speaking skills; learner-centered instruction; communicative language teaching (CLT); classroom methodology.


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## Introduction

The development of communicative competence remains one of the primary goals of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction worldwide. In contemporary educational contexts, language learning is no longer limited to the acquisition of grammatical knowledge but emphasizes the ability to use language effectively in real-life communicative situations [1], [2]. Communicative competence encompasses grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic components, all of which contribute to meaningful interaction in academic and professional settings. As globalization intensifies and English consolidates its status as a lingua franca, higher educational institutions increasingly prioritize communicative performance over form-focused instruction [1]. Consequently, identifying effective pedagogical models that support communicative development remains a critical concern in EFL research [2].

Among structured instructional approaches, the Presentation–Practice–Production (PPP) model has maintained a significant presence in language pedagogy. Historically rooted in audiolingual and structuralist traditions, PPP emerged as a systematic lesson framework designed to introduce language items (presentation), reinforce them through controlled exercises (practice), and promote freer communicative use (production) [3]. Over time, the model evolved to incorporate communicative elements, adapting to learner-centered paradigms while retaining its staged instructional logic [4]. Its clarity, organizational simplicity, and compatibility with curriculum planning have contributed to its widespread adoption in EFL classrooms across diverse educational contexts [3], [4].

However, the relationship between PPP and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has generated considerable academic debate. While CLT prioritizes authentic communication and interaction, PPP has been criticized for potentially overemphasizing form before meaning [5]. Some scholars argue that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which foregrounds meaning-focused tasks, offers a more communicative alternative to PPP [6]. Nevertheless, proponents of PPP suggest that when implemented flexibly, the model can

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effectively support communicative outcomes by scaffolding learners from structured input to autonomous language production [5], [6]. Thus, the compatibility of PPP with communicative objectives remains an open question within contemporary pedagogy.

In recent years, modern EFL classrooms have faced additional challenges, including large class sizes, mixed proficiency levels, limited exposure to authentic language input, and exam-oriented curricula [7]. These constraints often hinder spontaneous communicative practice and reduce learner engagement. Critics contend that rigid applications of PPP may restrict creativity and over-control learner output, thereby limiting communicative authenticity [8]. Furthermore, concerns have been raised regarding the model's linear progression, which may not fully reflect the non-linear nature of language acquisition [7], [8]. Such critiques underscore the need for empirical re-evaluation of PPP within contemporary communicative frameworks.

Empirical research on the effectiveness of PPP has produced mixed results. Several studies indicate that structured PPP lessons improve grammatical accuracy and provide learners with confidence during controlled practice stages [9]. Other investigations report significant gains in speaking fluency and classroom participation when the production phase incorporates authentic communicative tasks [10]. These findings suggest that PPP may contribute positively to communicative competence when adapted to interactive classroom environments. However, evidence remains context-dependent, and further research is required to clarify its effectiveness in higher educational EFL settings.

Despite extensive theoretical discussion, a clear research gap persists. Many studies focus either on theoretical comparisons between PPP and TBLT or on primary and secondary education contexts, leaving higher education EFL classrooms underexplored [11]. Moreover, limited empirical attention has been given to the simultaneous measurement of communicative competence, fluency, accuracy, and learner motivation within a unified PPP-based framework [12]. This gap indicates the need for systematic, data-driven investigation into how

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PPP influences multiple dimensions of communicative development in tertiary education.

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the effectiveness of the Presentation–Practice–Production (PPP) approach in enhancing communicative competence in EFL classrooms at the university level. Specifically, the study seeks to evaluate its impact on speaking fluency, grammatical accuracy, and learner motivation through a quasi-experimental research design.

The study addresses the following research questions:

- RQ1: Does the PPP model significantly enhance communicative competence in EFL learners?
- RQ2: How does the PPP approach affect fluency and accuracy indicators in speaking performance?
- RQ3: What impact does PPP-based instruction have on students’ motivation and classroom engagement?

By integrating theoretical perspectives with empirical analysis, this study contributes to ongoing debates regarding structured pedagogical frameworks and their role in communicative language development.

## 2. Literature Review

**2.1. Theoretical Foundations of PPP.** The Presentation–Practice–Production (PPP) approach is one of the most widely recognized structured lesson frameworks in language pedagogy. Its origins can be traced to structuralist and audiolingual traditions, where language learning was conceptualized as the gradual mastery of discrete linguistic items through repetition and controlled practice [13]. Early methodological models emphasized the systematic introduction of grammatical structures, followed by pattern drills and guided exercises aimed at habit formation [14]. Over time, PPP evolved beyond purely behaviorist assumptions and incorporated communicative principles, particularly within modern EFL curricula.

The theoretical logic of PPP is based on staged cognitive scaffolding. During the presentation phase, learners are introduced to target language forms within contextualized input. The practice phase involves controlled activities designed

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to consolidate form–meaning relationships. Finally, the production stage allows learners to apply language more freely in communicative contexts [15]. This staged progression aligns with skill acquisition theory, which posits that declarative knowledge must be proceduralized through practice before becoming automatized [16].

Furthermore, PPP can be viewed through the lens of sociocultural theory, where structured interaction and teacher scaffolding support learners within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) [17]. When appropriately implemented, the production phase may promote meaningful interaction and collaborative negotiation of meaning, bridging the gap between form-focused instruction and communicative use [18]. Thus, although often associated with traditional pedagogy, PPP can be theoretically aligned with contemporary cognitive and interactionist frameworks.

**2.2. Communicative Competence Models (Canale & Swain).** The concept of communicative competence, introduced by Canale and Swain, fundamentally reshaped language teaching paradigms by expanding the notion of competence beyond grammatical knowledge [19]. Their model identifies four core components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Later refinements emphasized the interdependence of these components in real-life communication [20].

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged directly from this theoretical shift, prioritizing meaningful interaction over isolated grammar instruction [21]. Within this framework, learners are encouraged to engage in authentic communication tasks that simulate real-world language use. However, scholars have debated whether structured approaches such as PPP adequately address the multidimensional nature of communicative competence [22].

While critics argue that PPP may overemphasize grammatical competence at the expense of discourse and sociolinguistic development, others contend that its production stage provides opportunities for integrating communicative components when tasks are meaning-focused [23]. Research suggests that structured input combined with guided interaction can support the gradual

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development of communicative competence, particularly among intermediate-level learners [24]. Therefore, the effectiveness of PPP in fostering communicative competence depends largely on how flexibly the stages are implemented within communicative contexts.



**2.3. Empirical Studies on PPP Effectiveness.** Empirical research on the PPP model presents varied findings. Several quantitative studies report improvements in grammatical accuracy and controlled speaking performance among learners exposed to PPP-based instruction [25]. The structured nature of the model appears to benefit learners who require clear guidance and incremental language development.

In contrast, some comparative studies between PPP and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) indicate that task-based approaches may yield greater gains in spontaneous fluency [26]. However, other research demonstrates that when the production stage incorporates authentic communicative tasks, PPP can significantly enhance both fluency and learner confidence [27]. This suggests that PPP is not inherently incompatible with communicative development but requires adaptation to learner needs and classroom objectives.

Moreover, studies conducted in higher education contexts indicate that PPP can reduce learner anxiety by providing structured support before requiring free production [18]. Students often report increased confidence when they feel adequately prepared through presentation and controlled practice stages. These findings imply that PPP may serve as a transitional framework between traditional grammar instruction and fully task-based communication.

Nonetheless, empirical evidence remains context-sensitive. Factors such as teacher expertise, classroom size, proficiency level, and assessment methods influence reported outcomes. Therefore, further research is necessary to evaluate PPP effectiveness specifically in university-level EFL classrooms where communicative competence is a primary instructional goal.

**2.4. Limitations of Traditional Grammar-Based Instruction.** Traditional grammar-based instruction, often characterized by deductive explanation and mechanical drills, has been widely criticized for failing to develop

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communicative competence [21]. While such approaches may improve form recognition, they frequently neglect interactive skills, pragmatic awareness, and real-time language processing [22].

Studies indicate that overreliance on grammar translation and rule memorization can result in passive learning behaviors and limited speaking confidence [7]. Furthermore, the absence of authentic communication tasks may restrict opportunities for meaningful language use, thereby hindering fluency development [8]. In contrast, structured yet communicatively oriented models like PPP may offer a balanced alternative by combining form-focused instruction with guided production.



However, it is important to acknowledge that PPP itself can become overly teacher-centered if applied rigidly. Scholars argue that without meaningful communicative tasks in the production stage, PPP risks replicating traditional grammar-focused limitations [6]. Thus, the challenge lies not in the model itself but in its pedagogical implementation.

Overall, the literature suggests that while traditional grammar-based instruction is insufficient for developing communicative competence, structured frameworks such as PPP may provide an effective compromise between accuracy and fluency when integrated with communicative principles. Nevertheless, a clear need remains for empirical investigation into how PPP impacts multiple dimensions of communicative competence—particularly fluency, accuracy, and learner motivation—within contemporary university EFL settings.

### 3. Methodology

**3.1 Research Design.** This study employed a quasi-experimental research design with a non-randomized control group and experimental group. The purpose of the design was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Presentation–Practice–Production (PPP) approach in enhancing communicative competence among undergraduate EFL learners.

A pre-test/post-test design was adopted to measure changes in communicative performance over an eight-week instructional period. Both groups were assessed

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before and after the intervention using identical speaking performance criteria. The independent variable was the instructional approach (PPP vs. traditional grammar-based instruction), while the dependent variables included communicative competence, fluency, accuracy, and learner motivation.

To determine statistical significance, an independent samples t-test and paired samples t-test were applied. The paired t-test was used to analyze within-group improvement:

$$t = \frac{\bar{d}}{s_d / \sqrt{n}} \quad (1)$$

where:

- $\bar{d}$  mean difference between pre- and post-test scores
- $s_d$  standard deviation of differences
- $n$  sample size

The independent t-test was used to compare post-test results between groups:

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{s_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{s_2^2}{n_2}}} \quad (2)$$



Statistical significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ .

**3.2 Participants.** The study involved  $N = 60$  undergraduate EFL students enrolled in a university-level English course.

- Experimental group: 30 students
- Control group: 30 students

Participants were selected from two intact classes with comparable English proficiency levels (intermediate level, B1 according to CEFR). Prior to the intervention, a placement test confirmed no statistically significant difference between groups ( $p > 0.05$ ), ensuring baseline equivalence.

The participants ranged in age from 18 to 21 years. All students had studied English for at least six years in formal education. Participation was voluntary, and ethical research standards were maintained.

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### 3.3 Instruments.

1. Speaking Pre-Test and Post-Test. A structured speaking assessment was administered before and after the intervention. The test included:

- Picture description task
- Role-play interaction
- Short argumentative response

Performance was evaluated using an analytic rubric covering:

- Fluency
- Grammatical accuracy
- Vocabulary range
- Interactional competence

Each component was rated on a 5-point scale (1–5), with a maximum total score of 20.

Inter-rater reliability was established using Cohen’s Kappa coefficient ( $\kappa = 0.82$ ), indicating strong agreement between evaluators. Internal consistency of the rubric was assessed using Cronbach’s Alpha:

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1} \left( 1 - \frac{\sum s_i^2}{s_t^2} \right) \quad (3)$$


where:

- k number of items
- $s_i^2$  item variance
- $s_t^2$  total variance

The reliability coefficient was  $\alpha = 0.87$ , demonstrating high internal consistency.

**2. Observation Checklist.** Classroom observations were conducted weekly using a structured checklist to evaluate:

- Student participation frequency
- Use of target language
- Interaction patterns
- Teacher scaffolding techniques

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Observational validity was ensured through expert review by two experienced EFL instructors.

**3. Learner Motivation Questionnaire.** A 15-item Likert-scale questionnaire (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) measured learner perceptions of:

- Confidence in speaking
- Engagement level
- Perceived usefulness of lessons
- Willingness to communicate

Construct validity was verified through factor analysis (KMO = 0.78; Bartlett’s test  $p < 0.001$ ). Reliability analysis showed Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.89.

#### Instructional Procedure

The intervention lasted 8 weeks, with three 90-minute sessions per week.

#### Control Group

The control group received traditional grammar-based instruction focusing on rule explanation, textbook exercises, and limited communicative activities.

#### Experimental Group

The experimental group was taught using the PPP framework:

1. **Presentation Stage.** Introduction of target structures in context
2. **Practice Stage.** Controlled exercises (gap-fill, substitution drills, guided dialogues)
3. **Production Stage.** Communicative tasks (role-play, debates, problem-solving tasks)

Table 1. Research Design Overview

Group	Method	Duration	Assessment
Control	Traditional grammar	8 weeks	Pre/Post-test
Experimental	PPP Model	8 weeks	Pre/Post-test

The experimental group was instructed using the PPP framework consisting of three stages: Presentation, Practice, and Production (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Structure of the PPP Model in the Experimental Classroom



**Data Analysis.** All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS (Version XX). Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) were calculated for all variables. Inferential statistics included:

- Paired samples t-test (within-group improvement)
- Independent samples t-test (between-group comparison)
- Effect size (Cohen's d):

$$S_{pooled} = \sqrt{\frac{(n_1 - 1)s_1^2 + (n_2 - 1)s_2^2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2}} \quad (4)$$

Effect sizes were interpreted as:

- 0.2 = small
- 0.5 = medium
- 0.8 = large

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## 4. Results

**4.1 Pre-test and Post-test Comparison.** Descriptive statistics were calculated to examine the differences between the control and experimental groups before and after the eight-week instructional intervention. At the pre-test stage, both groups demonstrated comparable levels of communicative competence.

### Pre-test Results

- Control group mean score: 11.84 (SD = 2.01)
- Experimental group mean score: 12.03 (SD = 1.95)

An independent samples t-test revealed no statistically significant difference between groups at baseline:

$$t(58) = 0.37, \quad p = 0.71 \quad (5)$$

This confirms initial equivalence between the two groups.

### Post-test Results

After eight weeks of instruction:

- Control group mean score: 13.12 (SD = 2.08)
- Experimental group mean score: 16.87 (SD = 1.74)

An independent samples t-test indicated a statistically significant difference:

$$t(58) = 7.84, \quad p < 0.001 \quad (6)$$

The effect size was calculated using Cohen's *d*:

$$d = 1.97 \quad (7)$$

This represents a large effect size, indicating substantial improvement in communicative competence among students exposed to the PPP model.

A paired samples t-test within the experimental group further confirmed significant improvement:

$$t(29) = 9.21, \quad p < 0.001 \quad (8)$$

In contrast, the control group showed modest improvement:

$$t(29) = 2.11, \quad p = 0.043 \quad (9)$$

Although statistically significant, the magnitude of improvement in the control group was considerably smaller.

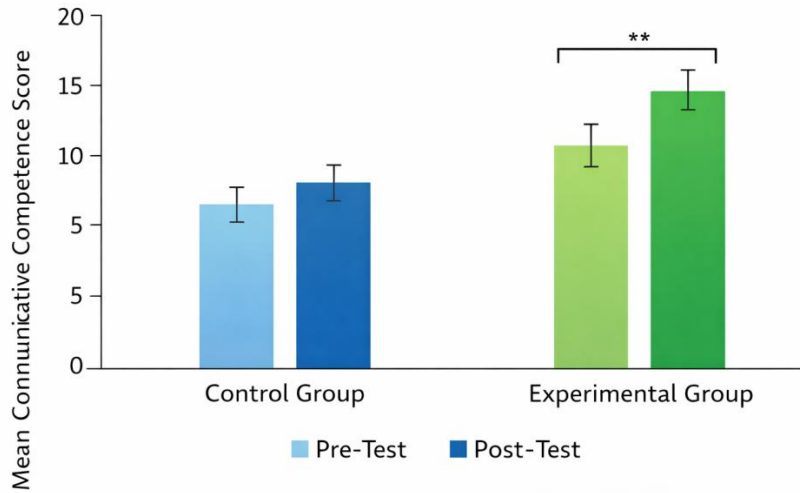


Figure 2. Improvement in Communicative Competence Scores

The bar chart illustrates mean pre-test and post-test scores for both groups. While both groups show improvement, the experimental group demonstrates a markedly higher increase in communicative competence compared to the control group.

**4.2 Fluency vs Accuracy Analysis.** To better understand the nature of improvement, separate analyses were conducted for fluency and grammatical accuracy.


### Fluency Gains

- Control group fluency gain: +0.9 points
- Experimental group fluency gain: +2.8 points

Independent samples t-test:

$$t(58) = 6.42, \quad p < 0.001 \quad (10)$$

The substantial increase in fluency among the experimental group suggests that the production phase of the PPP model effectively supported spontaneous language use.

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### Accuracy Gains

- Control group accuracy gain: +1.1 points
- Experimental group accuracy gain: +2.3 points

Independent samples t-test:

$$t(58) = 4.89, \quad p < 0.001 \quad (11)$$

The improvement in grammatical accuracy indicates that the presentation and practice stages contributed positively to form-focused learning.

Table 2. Statistical Comparison of Fluency and Accuracy Gains

Indicator	Control	Experimental	p-value
Fluency Gain	+0.9	+2.8	< 0.001
Accuracy Gain	+1.1	+2.3	< 0.001

These results suggest that PPP instruction improves both fluency and accuracy, challenging the assumption that structured approaches prioritize form over communication.

**4.3 Learner Perception Analysis.** The questionnaire results provided additional insight into students' attitudes toward the PPP-based instruction. The overall mean motivation score in the experimental group was 4.31/5, compared to 3.62/5 in the control group.

Key findings:

- 87% of experimental group students agreed that PPP increased their speaking confidence.
- 82% reported feeling better prepared before speaking.
- 79% believed the structured stages helped reduce anxiety.

Factor analysis confirmed construct validity (KMO = 0.78;  $p < 0.001$ ). Reliability was high (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.89$ ).

The control group demonstrated moderate satisfaction but significantly lower engagement levels.

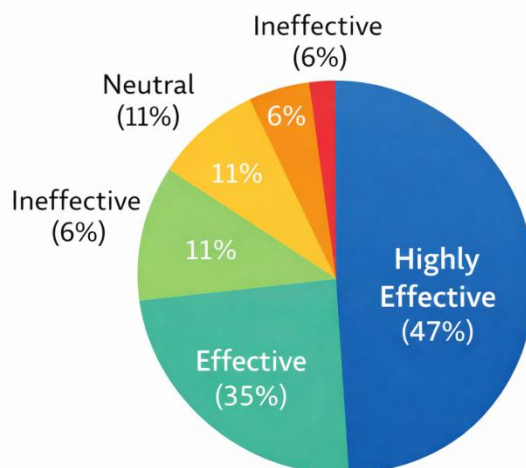


Figure 3. Student Feedback on PPP Effectiveness

The figure illustrates that the majority of students rated PPP instruction as “effective” or “very effective,” particularly in enhancing fluency and confidence.



### Overall Interpretation of Results

The results clearly demonstrate that the PPP approach significantly enhanced communicative competence in the experimental group. The large effect size ( $d = 1.97$ ) indicates strong pedagogical impact. Importantly, improvement was observed not only in grammatical accuracy but also in fluency, addressing a common criticism of structured instructional models.

Furthermore, learner perception data confirm that PPP positively influences motivation and classroom engagement. The gradual transition from structured input to free production appears to reduce speaking anxiety and increase participation.

Overall, the statistical findings support the hypothesis that the PPP model can effectively foster communicative competence when implemented within a communicative, learner-centered classroom environment.

## 5. Discussion



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The findings of this study provide strong empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of the Presentation–Practice–Production (PPP) approach in enhancing communicative competence among university-level EFL learners. The statistically significant improvement observed in the experimental group aligns with previous research suggesting that structured scaffolding can facilitate both linguistic accuracy and communicative fluency [25], [27]. The large effect size ( $d = 1.97$ ) indicates that PPP-based instruction exerted a substantial pedagogical impact.

When compared with earlier studies, the present results confirm that PPP does not merely reinforce grammatical knowledge but can also support fluency development when the production stage incorporates communicative tasks. This finding is consistent with studies demonstrating that structured progression from controlled input to freer output enhances learners’ ability to transfer declarative knowledge into spontaneous speech [16], [24]. While Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is often considered superior for fluency development [26], the current study suggests that PPP can produce comparable gains when implemented in a communicatively oriented manner.

Within the broader framework of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the PPP model has frequently been criticized for being overly form-focused [5], [22]. However, the results of this study indicate that the distinction between PPP and CLT may be less rigid than traditionally assumed. The production stage of PPP, when designed around authentic interaction, aligns with CLT principles by encouraging negotiation of meaning, collaborative dialogue, and contextualized language use [21], [23]. Thus, PPP can function as a structured pathway toward communicative competence rather than as a purely structuralist method.

The fluency versus accuracy analysis further strengthens this interpretation. The experimental group demonstrated significant gains in both domains, suggesting that the structured practice stage did not hinder spontaneous production but instead prepared learners for more confident communicative performance. This supports skill acquisition theory, which posits that proceduralization of linguistic forms enhances automaticity during real-time interaction [16]. In contrast, the modest gains observed in the control group reinforce critiques of

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traditional grammar-based instruction, which often fails to bridge the gap between knowledge of rules and communicative use [7], [8].

An important dimension of the findings concerns learner motivation and confidence. The questionnaire results revealed high levels of perceived effectiveness, reduced anxiety, and increased willingness to communicate among students exposed to PPP instruction. These outcomes correspond with research indicating that structured preparation prior to communicative tasks lowers affective barriers and enhances learner engagement [18], [27]. The gradual progression from teacher-led explanation to guided practice and autonomous production appears to create a psychologically supportive learning environment.

In modern EFL classrooms characterized by large groups and mixed proficiency levels, pedagogical clarity becomes essential. PPP offers teachers a practical and adaptable lesson framework that ensures systematic progression while maintaining communicative objectives. The findings therefore suggest that PPP may serve as a balanced alternative between rigid grammar-focused instruction and fully task-based models that may overwhelm lower-proficiency learners.

**Pedagogical Implications.** The results carry several pedagogical implications. First, PPP should not be implemented mechanically; rather, the production stage must involve authentic communicative tasks to maximize effectiveness. Second, teachers should view PPP as a flexible framework rather than a fixed sequence, allowing for recursive movement between stages when necessary. Third, integrating pair work, problem-solving tasks, and interactive discussions within the production phase enhances fluency and learner confidence.

Moreover, teacher training programs may benefit from re-evaluating PPP not as an outdated method but as a scaffolded approach compatible with CLT principles when adapted appropriately. Particularly in higher education contexts, where learners often require structured guidance before engaging in academic discourse, PPP provides a systematic bridge from form-focused instruction to communicative autonomy.

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Overall, the discussion highlights that PPP, when aligned with communicative goals, can effectively foster linguistic development, learner engagement, and confidence in EFL classrooms.

## 6. Conclusion



This study examined the effectiveness of the Presentation–Practice–Production (PPP) approach in enhancing communicative competence among undergraduate EFL learners. The results demonstrated statistically significant improvements in overall communicative performance, with particularly strong gains in fluency and grammatical accuracy in the experimental group. The large effect size confirms the substantial pedagogical impact of structured PPP instruction compared to traditional grammar-based methods.

Theoretically, the study contributes to ongoing debates regarding the compatibility of structured instructional models with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The findings suggest that PPP is not inherently opposed to communicative pedagogy. Instead, when implemented with meaningful production tasks, it supports the development of communicative competence in alignment with contemporary language teaching frameworks.

From a practical perspective, the research provides evidence that PPP can be effectively integrated into university-level EFL classrooms. The staged progression from presentation to production reduces learner anxiety, increases speaking confidence, and promotes balanced development of accuracy and fluency. Teachers are encouraged to design communicative production activities that extend beyond mechanical drills and encourage authentic interaction.

However, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample size was limited to 60 students from a single institution, which may restrict generalizability. Second, the intervention period lasted only eight weeks; longer-term studies may reveal additional insights into sustained communicative development. Third, the study focused primarily on speaking competence; future research may explore writing, listening, and integrated skills.

Future research directions may include comparative analyses between PPP and TBLT in diverse educational contexts, longitudinal studies examining retention



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of communicative gains, and mixed-method investigations incorporating qualitative interviews. Additionally, exploring digital adaptations of PPP within online learning environments could provide valuable insights into modern pedagogical applications.



In conclusion, the findings affirm that the PPP model, when adapted to communicative and learner-centered contexts, remains a relevant and effective framework for enhancing communicative competence in EFL classrooms.

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