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Original Research

The Impact of Communicative Grammar Teaching (CGT) on Grade 11 Students' Speaking Proficiency and Their Attitude in Hachalu Hundessa Secondary School: A Quasi-Experimental Study

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of communicative grammar teaching (CGT) on the speaking performance of Grade 11 students at Hachalu Hundessa Secondary School in Mettu Town, Ethiopia. Employing a quasi-experimental design within an explanatory sequential mixed-methods framework, students were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Data were collected through written tests, oral tests, and a structured questionnaire. The oral tests were audio-recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy in assessing overall speaking performance. The discrimination index and difficulty level of the written tests were analyzed, while the reliability of the questionnaire was verified using Cronbach's Alpha. Linear regression was used to examine the influence of lesson content, task design during presentation and practice stages, and instructional factors on speaking performance. ANOVA (F-test) assessed mean differences between groups, and Pearson correlation measured relationships among key variables in measuring attitudes. The content, themes, and narratives of the oral test transcripts provided additional depth to the findings in the qualitative analysis. Results indicated that CGT produced significant improvements in students' grammatical knowledge and speaking performance. The study recommends that teachers should embed grammar instruction within meaningful communicative activities, incorporating interactive, practice-oriented speaking tasks, and providing timely, specific feedback to enhance learners' communicative competence.

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INTRODUCTION

The importance of effective communication in language learning has become more evident, particularly when evaluating students' speaking abilities. When grammar teaching relies mainly on memorizing rules and structures, learners often find it difficult to transfer this knowledge to real-life conversation. As a result, many students may understand grammatical forms on paper yet still struggle to speak with confidence and ease in authentic situations (Skehan, 2023). Communicative grammar teaching integrates grammar into meaningful communication, enabling learners to practice structures in real contexts, which enhances both fluency and accuracy while building confidence in speaking (Rahayu, 2023).

Evidence suggests that when grammar is taught through communicative activities, learners are more likely to notice and internalize grammatical features and use them effectively in speech, and task-based activities and peer interactions provide

immediate feedback that helps students adjust and refine their spoken language, thereby strengthening grammatical competence, boosting overall speaking performance, and building learners' confidence (Tsulaia, 2023).

Despite these recognized benefits, there are still few empirical studies that look specifically at how communicative grammar teaching affects speaking performance across grade 11 learner groups in the current study area. Thus, this study aims to address that gap by examining its impact on students' speaking abilities, using a framework that assesses both fluency and accuracy in spoken interactions.

Statement of the Problem

In the Ethiopian context, English proficiency remains central to the preparation of students for technical, vocational, and tertiary academic demands. Recent evidence indicates that many trainees continue to struggle with essential communicative skills required for tasks such as report writing, oral presentations, and interpreting technical instructions, indicating a mismatch between workplace expectations and learners' actual competencies (Shewangizaw & Hailu, 2024). As Ethiopia seeks to advance its science and technology sectors and strengthen its industrial capacity, the development of effective English language instruction becomes increasingly significant.

Despite this national need, learners' proficiency levels often fall short of required standards, as psychological and linguistic factors such as low motivation, limited confidence, fear of making mistakes, anxiety, and persistent weaknesses in fluency, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary use, and pronunciation restrict students' participation in speaking activities and hinder their ability to express ideas coherently in English (Tasisa & Teshome, 2025). These challenges extend beyond secondary schools and are also evident among English-major students in higher education, where inadequate communicative competence affects academic performance in courses delivered in English (Gari & Abebe, 2023).

The persistence of these problems has been linked to the widespread use of traditional, form-focused methods of grammar instruction that emphasize rule memorization rather than communicative application. Such approaches provide limited opportunities for meaningful language use and do not adequately support the transfer of declarative knowledge into fluent performance (Haile et al., 2024). Scholars in applied linguistics note that mastery of grammatical rules alone does not guarantee communicative effectiveness, as learners frequently struggle to apply these forms appropriately in real-life contexts (Zhang, 2023).

Additional studies point to the role of affective and contextual factors, including speaking anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and insufficient opportunities for oral practice, although some of this work has methodological limitations or focuses on contexts outside secondary education (Amsalu, 2023). Teachers further report that natural science students, in particular, face significant barriers in spoken English, suggesting that the grammar instruction they receive does not sufficiently promote communicative competence.

Taken together, these gaps underscore the need to investigate pedagogical approaches that more effectively integrate grammar instruction with communicative practice. This study, therefore, examines the impact of communicative grammar teaching on learners' English-speaking proficiency in the Ilu Aba Bor Zone of the Oromia Region and addresses the following research questions.

Research Questions

1. How does communicative grammar teaching, compared to traditional grammar instruction, affect students' speaking proficiency and grammatical knowledge?
2. What are students' attitudes toward communicative grammar teaching, specifically regarding the connection between their grammatical knowledge and speaking skills?

Conceptual Framework

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Communicative Grammar Teaching (CGT) view grammar as a functional component of meaningful communication that enhances learners' speaking performance, grammatical knowledge, and attitudes toward English, and embedding grammar in contextualized communicative tasks helps learners notice and apply structures more effectively in real communication; likewise, task-based language teaching (TBLT) emphasizes goal-oriented tasks and real interaction that promote fluency, accuracy, and strategic competence through authentic use and feedback (Tsulaia, 2023). Additionally, affective factors such as motivation, confidence, enjoyment, and perceived relevance shape learners' engagement, with supportive communicative environments strengthening these factors (Kiruthiga & Christopher, 2022). Figure 1 demonstrates the visual representation of the conceptual framework.

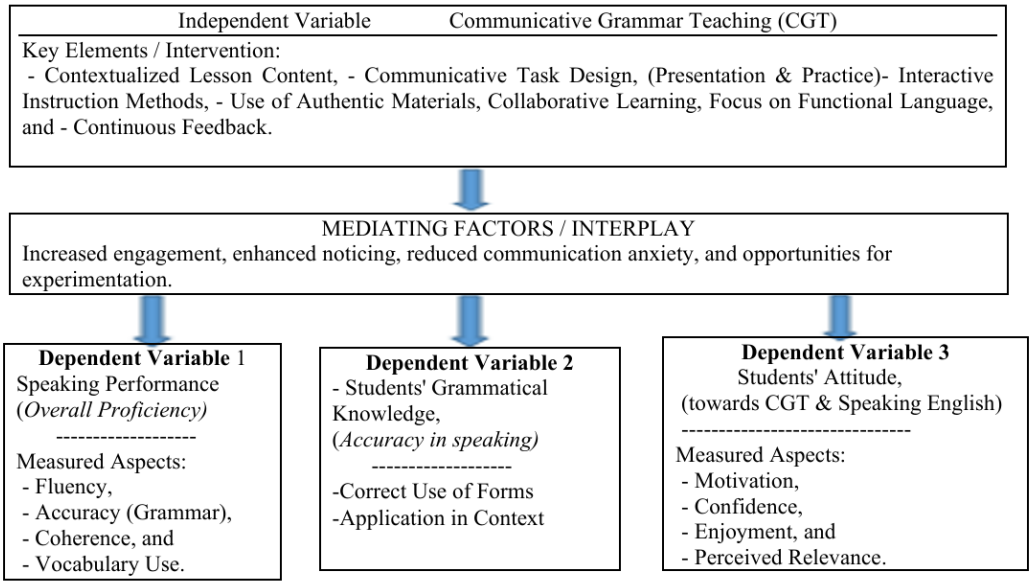

Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework*

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of communicative grammar instruction on the speaking performance of Grade 11 students. Hence, guided by the pragmatist worldview, the study employed a quasi-experimental design that incorporated contextualized communicative tasks developed by the researcher to align with the learners' academic environment and communicative needs.

Research Approach

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design (QUAN → QUAL), in which quantitative data were collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data to explain and enrich the quantitative findings, allowing for a more comprehensive interpretation of the research problem. In an explanatory sequential design, researchers begin with the collection and analysis of quantitative data and then follow up with qualitative data collection to provide more profound insights and explanations of the quantitative findings, enhancing the interpretation and richness of the results (Kerari et al., 2023). According to this approach, the integration of quantitative and qualitative strands improves the validity and credibility of findings by enabling methodological triangulation and a fuller understanding of complex research questions, as quantitative data can offer breadth and qualitative data can provide depth and context (Sharma et al., 2023).

Target Population

The target population for this study included four sections of Grade 11 students at Hachalu Hundessa Secondary School (two natural science sections and two social science sections) with a total of 248 learners (103 males and 145 females). The study also involved the three English teachers assigned to these classes (two males and one female). These groups were chosen because they are directly engaged in the day-to-day teaching and learning of grammar at the school, making them appropriate participants for the investigation.

Sample Size

The study involved all students from the two natural science sections in Hachalu Hundessa Secondary School. Because the research followed a quasi-experimental design, the existing classes were used as intact groups. One section was assigned as the experimental group, while the other served as the control group. School records showed that each section of Grade 11 typically enrolled about *40* students (14 male + 26 female students of the experimental group and 15 male + 25 female students of the control group). Using both sections brought the total sample size to 80 students. Working with intact classes allowed the researcher to maintain the natural composition of each group, minimize potential selection bias, and ensure that the sample was sufficiently large to support the statistical analyses planned for the study.

Sampling Technique

For this study, convenience sampling was first employed to select the school for its accessibility and the belief that it could yield valuable insights due to its diverse student population and experienced English teachers. Then, it employed purposive sampling**,** specifically using intact class groups. This approach was chosen because the intervention was intended for natural science students, making the two existing sections the most appropriate groups for comparison.

After identifying the two classes, one section was designated as the experimental group, which received the instructional intervention. The other section continued with the regular method of teaching and served as the control group**.** As the classes were found to be similar in size and general characteristics, a simple random method was used to decide which class would receive the intervention. This procedure helped preserve fairness and strengthened the internal validity of the study while still operating within the constraints of a quasi-experimental design.

This approach aligns with the nature of quasi-experimental research, which employs intact groups rather than randomized individual assignments (Sedgwick, 2021). The two teachers of the groups had comparable academic backgrounds and professional experience (19 and 20 years). This minimized the potential instructor bias. All students in the experimental group were included in the questionnaire phase of the study. This ensured an optimal sample size large enough to provide meaningful data yet manageable for classroom-based intervention. The inclusion of all English teachers further enriched the data by capturing multiple perspectives on grammar instruction practices.

Experimental methods

Language Items and Speaking Tasks

During the intervention phase of the study, instruction focused on selected grammatical items from the Grade 11 English students' textbook, including the simple present, present continuous, present perfect, past perfect, simple past, past continuous, simple future, and future perfect tenses. In addition, adjectives, adverbs, participles, active and passive voice, and adverbial and relative clauses were taught. These grammar items were chosen for two main reasons: first, they appear in the Grade 11 English textbook, and second, they reflect the kinds of grammatical structures students often use when speaking in class. The communicative grammar items and the related speaking activities used during the intervention are summarized below.

Table 1

Communicative Grammar Items and Corresponding Speaking Tasks

Week	Content (Communicative Grammar Items)	Topics for Speaking Tasks
1.	Simple Present Tense	Introducing oneself and peers; practicing tenses in various contexts through pair/group activities.
2.	Present Perfect Tense	Pair interviews using the present perfect, sharing findings with the class, and discussing personal achievements.
3.	Simple Past Tense	Talking about the past weekend, creating dialogues from teacher-provided scenarios, and sentence transformations.
4.	Past Perfect Tense	Conducting pair/group interviews using the past perfect tense.
5.	Past Continuous Tense	Story creation based on "Unexpected Event at a Football Game"; sharing with peers.
6.	Simple Future Tense	Role-playing and dialogue on plans in groups.
7.	Future Perfect Tense	Group discussions on long-term plans using the future perfect tense.
8	Active and Passive Voice	Transforming active to passive voice; comparing meaning and use.
9	Adverbial Clauses of Comparison	Group comparison tasks using descriptive data (e.g., height or habits).
10	Relative Clauses	Completing prompts and conducting Q&A using relative clauses.

Classroom Teaching Methodology

The experimental process unfolded in three stages:

Pre-test Phase

Both control and experimental groups completed pre-tests to assess their initial grammatical knowledge and speaking abilities.

Intervention Phase

The experimental group underwent ten weeks of communicative grammar instruction emphasizing form, meaning, and use.

Post-test Phase

Both groups completed post-tests to measure progress and identify the effect of communicative grammar teaching on speaking performance.

As illustrated in Table 1, the communicative approach integrated contextualized activities, task-based learning, and collaborative interaction, enabling students to apply grammatical knowledge in authentic communication.

Data Gathering Tools

A mixed-methods data collection design was used, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain comprehensive insights into the effects of communicative grammar instruction on students' speaking performance, as recommended in recent mixed-methods research (Kerari et al., 2023).

Quantitative Data Collection

A questionnaire served as the main quantitative tool to measure participants' attitudes toward the communicative grammar teaching approach following the intervention. This instrument included both Likert-scale items and open-ended responses, designed to assess students' perceptions of effectiveness, engagement, and motivation. The questionnaire's reliability was confirmed through internal consistency testing using Cronbach's alpha.

Qualitative Data Collection

To examine how communicative grammar teaching influenced speaking performance, oral tests were administered both before and after the intervention.

Baseline Measurement

The pre-test established participants' initial speaking proficiency, providing a reference point for evaluating improvement.

Comparative Analysis

Comparing pre-test and post-test outcomes allowed the researcher to determine whether communicative grammar instruction produced significant improvement in the experimental group relative to the control group. The oral assessments were audio-recorded and transcribed, ensuring accuracy and allowing detailed qualitative analysis of linguistic features such as fluency, accuracy, and complexity (Ogawa, 2022).

Procedures of Data Collection

The data collection for this quasi-experimental study followed a clear, sequential process. Work was organized into three major stages: preparation before the intervention, the implementation of the intervention itself, and the post-intervention assessments. Each step was carried out according to the predetermined schedule.

Phase 1: Pre-Intervention Preparation (Before February 2024)

Curriculum Review and Material Development

The researcher began by reviewing the Grade 11 English curriculum used in Ethiopia and identifying the key grammatical structures to be taught. Guided by recent research on form-focused communicative grammar instruction, which integrates attention to grammatical form within meaningful, communicative activities, communicative lesson plans and instructional materials were created for the experimental group. These materials included task-based, contextualized activities aimed at helping students understand grammar in terms of form, meaning, and use, consistent with evidence that such integrated instruction can enhance learners' language performance and attitudes towards language learning (Woymo et al, 2024).

Design of Assessment Tools

The assessment tools for the study were carefully designed in advance and included written and oral pre-tests and post-tests for both the control and experimental groups, as well as a questionnaire for the experimental group to collect students' views on communicative grammar instruction. The questionnaire was adapted from established instruments used in previous research and modified to suit the local context, following current best practices in questionnaire design and validation for educational research (Boateng et al., 2022). To ensure reliability in the oral assessments, detailed procedures for test administration were established, including audio-recording guidelines and transcription standards for consistent scoring.

Baseline data collection took place in the second half of February 2024, when both groups completed written and oral pre-tests to confirm group comparability and provide reference data for later analysis. In early March 2024, the researcher conducted a teacher orientation session that included a model lesson and practical training on implementing communicative grammar teaching. The training emphasized integrating form, meaning, and use so that the teacher could confidently deliver the intervention as intended.

The communicative grammar teaching intervention was implemented from mid-March to May 30, 2024, lasting ten weeks with two instructional sessions per week for the experimental group, while the control group continued with traditional grammar instruction. Post-intervention data collection occurred in June 2024, beginning with the administration of the attitude questionnaire to the experimental group, followed by written and oral post-tests for both groups. All oral post-tests were audio-recorded and transcribed to ensure accurate analysis of learning outcomes and to measure the effects of the intervention.

Structure of the Experimental Lessons

The experiment followed three instructional stages: presentation, practice, and production, each aligned

with the grammatical dimensions of form, meaning, and use.

Presentation Stage

Grammar items were introduced inductively through authentic contexts such as question-and-answer activities and dialogues featuring the target structures. Follow-up tasks (e.g., dialogue completion questions, matching, or comprehension checks) encouraged learners to notice target features. Students worked individually and in pairs to infer grammatical patterns, which the teacher later summarized and clarified using concept-checking questions.

Practice Stage

Students practiced the target forms through mechanical and meaningful activities. Mechanical practice focused on accuracy through drills, substitutions, and written gap-fills. Meaningful practice promoted fluency via communicative tasks such as information-gap activities, role-plays, and guided discussions. The teacher's role was primarily that of a facilitator and coach, offering guidance and immediate feedback (Wiboolyasarin et al., 2023).

Production Stage

In this final stage, learners used target structures in authentic communicative contexts, for instance, through debates, collaborative writings, surveys, or role-plays. The emphasis was on fluency and meaning negotiation rather than grammatical perfection. The teacher served as an organizer, facilitator, and co-communicator, allowing students to self-correct naturally while maintaining communicative flow.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before the study began, ensuring that participation was voluntary and based on a clear understanding of the research purpose and procedures. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout data collection, analysis, and reporting. Participants were assured that all information provided would be used solely for academic purposes. The study also sought to generate beneficial outcomes, particularly by improving classroom practice through communicative grammar instruction. All participants were treated fairly and equitably, with no discrimination or coercion, in accordance with established ethical standards for research involving human subjects (Cornock & Rees, 2023).

Methods of Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze the data, enabling comprehensive triangulation of the findings.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data derived from tests and questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS Version 22. The descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and standard error of the mean) summarized group performance. Inferential statistics, particularly the paired-sample t-test, were applied to examine pre- and post-test differences between groups. Linear regression analysis was employed to explore relationships between dependent (speaking performance) and independent (instructional approach and attitude) variables (Nandiyanto & Hofifah, 2024).

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative data collected mainly from a sample of transcribed oral tests and open-ended questionnaire responses were analyzed using thematic, content, and narrative analysis techniques. These methods allowed the researcher to capture insights that numerical data could not convey, such as learners' perceptions, affective engagement, and communicative development (Lochmiller, 2021). The qualitative findings complemented the quantitative results, offering a richer interpretation of how communicative grammar instruction influenced students' fluency, grammatical accuracy, and attitudes toward communicative grammar teaching.

Reliability of the Assessment Instruments

Ensuring the reliability of the written and oral tests was essential for the accuracy and credibility of the study's findings. Accordingly, careful attention was given to the design, administration, and analysis of

all instruments. For the oral pre- and post-tests, questions focused on the familiar theme of self-introduction. Students' responses were audio-recorded and transcribed, allowing detailed examination of both linguistic and paralinguistic features.

The reliability of the written tests was established through item analysis, including discrimination indices and difficulty levels, which ensured that items effectively distinguished between high and low achievers and contributed to overall test quality (Nawir et al., 2023). These procedures ensured consistent and dependable data, thereby strengthening the validity of the study's quantitative findings.

Validity of the Assessment Instruments

Safeguarding the validity of the written and oral tests was essential for the credibility and meaningful interpretation of the study's findings. To support content validity, both types of assessments were carefully aligned with the learning objectives and instructional focus of the intervention. For the oral pre- and post-tests, tasks were centered on the familiar theme of self-introduction, a construct relevant to the communicative abilities targeted in the curriculum. Students' responses were audio-recorded and transcribed, enabling systematic evaluation of both linguistic performance and related communicative behaviors. This approach ensured that the test tasks genuinely reflected the domain of oral communication skills intended for measurement.

For the written tests, validity was further supported through item analysis procedures. Items were reviewed for their relevance, clarity, and alignment with targeted competencies. Additionally, discrimination indices and difficulty levels were examined to confirm that each item meaningfully differentiated between higher- and lower-performing students and contributed to the overall assessment of the construct under investigation (Nawir et al., 2023). These analyses helped verify that the instrument measured what it was intended to measure and reinforced the interpretive validity of the quantitative results. Together, these careful design, administration, and evaluation practices contributed to strong internal and construct validity, ensuring that the data collected provided a trustworthy basis for interpreting the effects of the instructional intervention.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Analysis of the Test Results

Three types of tests were administered. These include traditional grammar tests, communicative (contextualized) grammar tests, and oral performance tests, which were evaluated across five key rubrics: grammar, vocabulary, discourse management, pronunciation, and interactive communication (Tekin & Sallabaş, 2023).

Table 2

Comparison of the Experimental Group's Pre-test and Post-test Results

Pair	Mean	Std. D	Std. Error	95% CI (Lower–Upper)	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Tr Gra	-0.42683	1.18089	0.18442	-0.79957 – -0.05409	-2.314	40	0.026
CGr	-0.42683	1.20707	0.18851	-0.80783 – -0.04583	-2.264	40	0.029
Oral Test	-0.52195	0.58417	0.09123	-0.70634 – -0.33756	-5.721	40	0.000

Note*: The "Mean Difference" is calculated as post-test score minus pre-test score. A negative mean difference indicates improvement.*

The goal was to determine how students' speaking performance related to their grammatical competence and how communicative grammar instruction influenced overall improvement. As

shown in Table 2, there were statistically significant differences between pre- and post-test scores for the experimental group across all three assessment types. The traditional grammar test results showed significant improvement (t = -2.314, p = 0.026). Similarly, the communicative grammar test results revealed a significant positive change (t = -2.264, p = 0.029). Most notably, the oral performance test demonstrated substantial improvement (t = -5.721, p < 0.001), indicating a strong effect of communicative grammar instruction on students' speaking skills. These findings confirm that communicative grammar teaching significantly enhances students' grammatical accuracy and oral performance.

Table 3

Comparison of the Control Group's Pre-test and Post-test Results

Pair	Mean	Std. D	Std. Error	95% CI (Lower–Upper)	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
TrG	-0.15854	1.44239	0.22526	-0.61381 – 0.29674	-0.704	40	0.486
ComG	-0.14634	1.55822	0.24335	-0.63818 – 0.34549	-0.601	40	0.551
Oral Test	0.11220	0.57061	0.08911	-0.06791 – 0.29230	1.259	40	0.215

Note*: The "Mean Difference" is calculated as post-test score minus pre-test score, and a negative mean difference indicates improvement.*

Table 3 reveals that the control group showed no statistically significant improvement between pre- and post-tests across all test types. For the traditional grammar test, the result revealed p = 0.486 (>0.05). For the communicative grammar test, the result indicated p = 0.551 (>0.05). For the oral test, the result was found to be p = 0.215 (>0.05). This lack of significant improvement suggests that traditional grammar instruction alone did not substantially improve students' grammatical or oral proficiency. Consequently, the results support the claim that contextualized, communicative instruction provides more effective learning outcomes in EFL classrooms (Tsulaia, 2023).

Qualitative Analysis of Oral Test Results

To gain qualitative insights, the self-introduction tasks of selected students from both groups were transcribed and analyzed. The following excerpt illustrates representative responses before and after the intervention.

Interpretation

The data in Table 4 demonstrate that students in the experimental group showed noticeable improvement in fluency, grammatical accuracy, and confidence during oral communication tasks. Their post-test responses were more syntactically accurate, contextually appropriate, and delivered with fewer hesitations. Conversely, students in the control group exhibited minimal progress, often retaining similar grammatical errors and hesitancy patterns observed in their pre-test responses. This evidence underscores that communicative grammar instruction fosters greater spoken fluency and grammatical competence, aligning with previous findings by Zhang (2023).

Table 4

Sample Results of Students' Oral Interview Responses

Student	Question	Before the Experiment	After the Experiment
EGS1	Would you tell me about yourself?	ah?... (hesitating)	My name is Natinael. I am from Mettu. I am a grade 11 student.
CGS1	Would you tell me about yourself?	My name is Habib. I came to from Mettu.	My name is Habib. I came to from Mettu.
EGS1	Which school did you attend first?	I go to Kiddus Gebriel Elementary school when I am seven.	I went to Kiddus Gebriel Elementary School.
CGS1	Which school did you attend first?	I go to Bishari Elementary school when I am seven.	I go to Bishari Elementary school.
EGS2	What are your hobbies?	Watch TV.	I like watching films.
CGS2	What are your hobbies?	Hobby… (does not know meaning).	I watching TV.
EGS2	Please tell me your future plan.	My future plan? To go to university	I will go to university to learn and be a doctor. I like to help sick people.
CGS3	Please tell me your future plan.	My future plan is doctor… I to help sick people.	My future plan is to be doctor. e. I like to help sick people.
EGS6	Where do you want to live in the future?	Mettu. I live in Mettu.	I want to live in Mettu.
CGS6	Where do you want to live in the future?	Hawassa. I live in Hawassa.	I live in Hawassa.

Key: EGS = Experimental Group Student; CGS = Control Group Student

Analysis of Questionnaire Results

A questionnaire was used as a data collection tool to explore students' attitudes toward lesson content, task design, and instructional influence in communicative grammar instruction. The results were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Interpretation of Descriptive Statistics

The results in Table 5 reveal that students generally held positive attitudes toward all aspects of communicative grammar teaching, as indicated by mean scores above the neutral midpoint (3.0) on a 5-point Likert scale.

The mean score of 3.99 indicates that students expressed a strongly positive perception of the lesson content. The relatively low standard deviation (0.58) suggests a high level of agreement among respondents, implying that the instructional content was perceived as relevant and engaging by most students.

The mean score of 3.68 under task design in the presentation stage reflects a moderately positive attitude, though the higher standard deviation (1.01) implies more varied opinions. This suggests that while many students appreciated the presentation-stage tasks, some found them less engaging or challenging. Such variability may stem from individual learning preferences or proficiency differences (Akramy et al., 2024).

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of Students' Attitudes

Items	Students' Attitudes toward Lesson Content	Students' Attitudes toward Task Design in Presentation Stage	Students'Attitudes toward Task Design in the Practice Stage	Students' Attitudes toward Influence of Instruction
N (Valid)	41	41	41	41
Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.9943	3.6780	3.4472	3.6641
Std.Deviation	0.58051	1.01280	0.99085	0.96903
No. of Items	8	5	6	7

Source: Researcher's Survey (2024)

With a mean of 3.45 and SD = 0.99, students' responses under task design in the practice stage indicate a generally favorable but less consistent attitude toward practice-stage activities. This result aligns with prior findings that students' motivation and engagement fluctuate during repetitive or accuracy-based stages of communicative lessons (Hu & Wang, 2023)

The mean score of 3.66 signifies a positive attitude toward the impact of instruction on learning outcomes. The standard deviation (0.97) indicates moderate variability, suggesting that while most students felt the instruction was effective, perceptions differed slightly based on individual experiences and learning styles. Generally, students demonstrated favorable attitudes toward the communicative grammar approach overall, particularly in relation to lesson content and instructional influence. However, variability in responses regarding task design indicates areas where instructional design might be refined for greater engagement and consistency.

Analysis of the Relationship between Independent and Dependent Variables

This section presents the regression analysis conducted to examine the impact of independent variables: lesson content, task design at the presentation stage, task design at the practice stage, and the influence of instruction on students' speaking performance. Prior to performing regression analysis, several diagnostic tests were conducted to ensure the data met the necessary assumptions.

Correlation Test between Study Variables

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the strength and direction of relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable (speaking performance). Correlation thresholds (e.g., values approaching or above 0.80) are commonly used as part of regression diagnostics to identify potential multicollinearity among predictors and ensure stable estimates (Youssef, 2022). Additionally, recent research in language assessment emphasizes the importance of examining correlation matrices and associated metrics (e.g., Variance Inflation Factor) to detect collinearity before conducting regression analysis (Zhang & Wang, 2023). These diagnostic steps helped ensure that the regression results accurately reflected the relationships among instructional approach, attitudes, and speaking performance.

Table 6

Correlation Table

Variables	SATLC	SATDA PreS	SATDA PracS	SAT II	SSP
Students' Attitudes towards the Lesson Content.	1	.999	.687	.988	.344
Students' Attitudes towards the Task Design in the Presentation Stage.	.999	1	.677	.988	.328
Students' Attitudes towards the Task Design in Practice Stage.	.687	.677	1	.705	.581
Students' Attitudes towards Influence of Instruction.	.988	.988	.705	1	.387
The Impact of Communicative Grammar Teaching for Students' Speaking Performance.	.344	.328	.581	.387	1

*Note: *p < 0.01, p < 0.05; N = 41, Source: Researcher's Survey, 2024*

Table 6 demonstrates the correlation between variables. In the lesson content and speaking performance, the correlation coefficient is 0.344 (p = 0.028), indicating a significant positive relationship. This implies that improvements in lesson content are associated with increased speaking performance. In the task design in the presentation stage and speaking performance, a positive correlation of 0.328 (p = 0.036) suggests that better-designed tasks during the presentation stage enhance students' speaking performance. In the task design in the practice stage and speaking performance, **t**he correlation coefficient of 0.581 (p = 0.000) indicates a strong, significant positive relationship. This shows that effective task design in practice activities has a substantial impact on speaking performance. Under the influence of instruction and speaking performance**,** there is a moderate positive relationship, suggesting that higher-quality instruction positively affects students' speaking performance with a correlation coefficient of 0.387 (p = 0.012).

The analysis shows that all independent variables, lesson content, task design in both presentation and practice stages, and the influence of instruction are positively correlated with students' speaking performance. The strength of the relationship is strongest for task design during the practice stage, followed by instruction, lesson content, and task design in the presentation stage. These findings indicate that enhancing lesson quality, task design, and instructional methods can significantly improve students' speaking performance.

Table 7

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) tested the overall significance of the regression model.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2.501	4	0.625	6.914	0.000
Residual	3.255	36	0.090	-	-
Total	5.756	40	-	-	-

As indicated in Table 7, the ANOVA results show that the regression model is statistically significant. The F-value of 6.914 with a p-value of .000 indicates that the set of predictor variables, taken together, reliably explains variation in the outcome variable. In other words, the model performs better than would be expected by chance.

The regression sum of squares (2.501) represents the portion of the total variation that the model can account for, while the residual sum of squares (3.255) reflects the unexplained variation. Because the regression component explains a substantial amount of the total variance (5.756), it suggests that the predictors meaningfully contribute to predicting the dependent variable. Overall, the ANOVA confirms that the regression model is a good fit for the data and that the predictors collectively have a significant influence on the outcome.

Regression Equation

As shown in Table 8, the regression analysis produced the following model describing students' speaking performance: Speaking performance = 1.923 + 0.140(LC) + 0.146(TDaPreS) + 0.124(TDaPraS) + 0.186(IoI). This equation shows that all four predictors—Lesson Content (LC), Task Design at Presentation Stage (TDaPreS), Task Design at Practice Stage (TDaPraS), and Influence of Instruction (IoI) make positive contributions to speaking performance. Each coefficient indicates the expected increase in speaking performance for every one-unit increase in the corresponding predictor, holding the others constant. All independent variables were statistically significant at the 5% level, demonstrating that they meaningfully and reliably predict students' speaking performance.

Table 8

Regression Coefficients

Independent Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	95% CI for B
Constant	1.923	0.493		3.903	0.000	0.924 – 2.923
Lesson Content	0.140	0.067	0.296	2.084	0.044	0.004 – 0.276
Task Design (Presentation),	0.146	0.066	0.285	2.232	0.032	0.013 – 0.280
Task Design (Practice),	0.124	0.051	0.325	2.434	0.020	0.021 – 0.228
Influence of Instruction,	0.186	0.089	0.306	2.077	0.045	0.004 – 0.367

Table 9 reveals that reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha: All variables exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.7, indicating good internal consistency.

Table 9

Reliability of Questionnaire Data

Variable	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Lesson Content,	8	0.980
Task Design (Presentation),	5	0.967
Task Design (Practice),	6	0.976
Influence of Instruction,	7	0.984
Speaking performance,	8	0.714

The findings of this quasi-experimental study offer strong evidence about the impact of communicative grammar teaching (CGT) on Grade 11 students' speaking performance, grammatical knowledge, and attitudes toward grammar instruction delivered through communicative methods.

Speaking Performance and Grammatical Knowledge

Results from the oral tests assessed for grammatical accuracy, fluency, and overall speaking quality showed clear and significant improvement in the group taught through CGT. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) revealed a statistically significant difference in mean speaking performance scores between the experimental group ($M = 0.52195$, $SD = 0.58417$) and the control group ($M = 0.11220$, $SD = 0.57061$), with the F-test indicating significance at $p < .05$. In practical terms, students exposed to CGT performed noticeably better than those who received traditional grammar instruction.

A closer look at the oral test data confirmed this pattern. Students in the experimental group used grammar more accurately and with greater complexity. They also demonstrated improved fluency and coherence, reflected in fewer hesitations, more varied vocabulary, and a more effective use of grammatical structures to express meaning.

Linear regression analysis added further support to these findings. Well-planned lesson content, thoughtful task design at both the presentation and practice stages, and the influence of instruction emerged as strong positive predictors of speaking performance ($p < .01$). These results underscore the importance of integrating grammar into communicative tasks in a deliberate and structured way, as this design appears to meaningfully improve students' spoken output.

Attitudes toward Speaking

The attitudinal data, gathered through a structured questionnaire with strong internal reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.714), showed a clear and positive shift among students in the experimental group. Compared to their peers in the control group, these students expressed higher levels of confidence, motivation, and enjoyment during speaking activities. Many also reported feeling more comfortable taking part in conversational tasks, less anxious about making mistakes, and more aware of the value of learning grammar for real communication. This shift suggests that CGT not only builds linguistic skill but also nurtures the affective conditions that support continued language learning.

Qualitative Insights

Content, thematic, and narrative analyses of the audio-recorded oral test transcripts reinforced the quantitative results. Students in the experimental group were more willing to experiment with new grammar and vocabulary, monitored and corrected their own errors, and engaged in more natural, sustained, and confident conversations. They demonstrated improved fluency and interactive competence and viewed grammar as a tool for meaningful communication rather than isolated rules. These qualitative findings highlighted how CGT supported practical grammar use and enhanced learners' communicative confidence.

Discussion

This study examined the effects of communicative grammar teaching (CGT) on Grade 11 students' speaking performance, grammatical knowledge, and attitudes at Hachalu Hundessa Secondary School. The findings clearly indicate that CGT led to meaningful improvement in all three areas for students who received the intervention compared to those taught through traditional methods. Improvements in grammatical knowledge and speaking performance align with the principles of communicative language teaching, which emphasize learning grammar through meaningful use. As supported by Tsulaia (2023), grammar learned in communicative contexts is more deeply understood and more easily applied in real communication. The structured design of communicative tasks played a crucial role in these gains, a result further supported by the linear regression analysis, highlighting the importance of

task relevance and clarity in promoting effective grammar use in speaking.

The significant improvement in fluency, accuracy, and overall communicative ability supports recent research showing that authentic communicative practice fosters meaningful language development in EFL learners (Tsulaia, 2023). Students in the experimental group engaged in task-based activities and peer interaction that allowed them to experiment with grammar, receive immediate feedback, and refine their speech. These findings align with studies emphasizing the role of noticing and internalizing language features through meaningful interaction rather than rote memorization (Nawir et al., 2023). Instead of focusing on isolated rules, students gradually learned to use grammar as a functional resource for expressing meaning in conversation, which is consistent with evidence that task-based language teaching promotes confident and effective spoken communication (Zhang, 2023).

Another important outcome of the study was the positive shift in students' attitudes toward speaking English. Increased confidence, motivation, and reduced anxiety contributed significantly to meaningful language learning, creating a reinforcing cycle in which improved performance encouraged greater participation. Qualitative data further enriched these findings, revealing a supportive learning environment that promoted experimentation, self-correction, and spontaneous interaction. Despite these positive results, the study has limitations, including the quasi-experimental design, the focus on a single secondary school, and the short duration of the intervention, which limit the generalizability and long-term conclusions. Future research should involve longer interventions, diverse contexts, and broader participant groups to strengthen evidence for the effectiveness of CGT.

CONCLUSION

This study provides compelling evidence that communicative grammar teaching (CGT) is an effective approach for improving Grade 11 students' speaking performance at Hachalu Hundessa Secondary School. The intervention strengthened students' grammatical knowledge, enhanced their fluency and accuracy, and contributed to more positive and confident attitudes toward speaking English. When grammar instruction is embedded in meaningful communication and supported by interactive, practice-oriented activities, students learn to use grammatical structures more effectively and more naturally. These findings indicate that CGT offers clear advantages over traditional methods for developing the practical speaking skills students need for real-life communication.

Recommendations

Drawing on the study's main findings, several recommendations are proposed for teachers, curriculum developers, and educational institutions seeking to improve English language teaching. Teachers are encouraged to move beyond presenting grammar as isolated rules and instead integrate it into meaningful communicative activities such as role-plays, discussions, debates, and storytelling. Designing interactive speaking tasks that promote spontaneous language use can help learners experiment with grammatical forms while focusing on real communication. Feedback should also play a central role, with teachers providing timely and specific responses that address both grammatical accuracy and fluency within communicative contexts. Peer feedback and self-reflection are also recommended to support learner autonomy.

Creating a supportive classroom environment is equally important for effective communicative grammar teaching. Students should feel comfortable taking risks, making mistakes, and participating actively without fear of negative judgment. A positive and low-anxiety atmosphere helps build learners' confidence and encourages more active engagement in speaking. When students perceive grammar as a tool for communication rather than a source of error, they become more willing to participate and develop their speaking skills.

For curriculum developers and educational institutions, it is recommended that curriculum frameworks explicitly emphasize the principles of communicative grammar teaching. Grammar instruction should be embedded in communicative contexts and linked to clear speaking objectives, while teaching materials should include authentic language input and interactive tasks rather than rote exercises. Educational institutions and policymakers should also support teachers through ongoing professional development focused on the practical implementation of communicative grammar instruction. In addition, assessment practices should align with communicative goals by evaluating students' ability to use grammar accurately and fluently in real-time spoken communication rather than focusing solely on isolated grammatical knowledge.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Tesfaye Hambissa: Conceptualization, Data Collection, Model Development, Analysis & Writing Original Draft. **Tamene Kitila** : Supervision, Data Analysis & Model Validation, Review & Editing.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethical approval

Ethical approval for the study was obtained through an official letter of cooperation from Addis Ababa University, facilitating coordination with school administrators and participants. The researcher clearly explained the study's aims to all participants to ensure a full understanding of its purpose and implications. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

Data availability statement

The data used in this study are available upon request.

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