Designing a CLT-Based ESP Course for Translation Studies Students

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Abstract

In today's world of language learning, the desire to learn a language with practical applications in real-world settings is considered very important. Therefore, this study aims to develop a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)-based ESP course for Translation Studies students. It considers what kind of material will be appropriate for them, what outcomes are expected, and what challenges they believe exist in implementing CLT in designing an ESP course. The sample for this study was selected through a needs analysis based on John Munby's model (1948) of the Communicative Need Processor (CNP). A total of 56 students completed the questionnaire. The results showed that nearly 70% of the students supported implementing a CLT-based ESP course, which would help improve their oral skills, critical thinking, and ability to handle real-world translation tasks. However, challenges remain, such as a lack of modern technologies and teachers unfamiliar with them who are not using these tools in classrooms to implement the CLT method.
Keywords: ESP, CLT, Need Analysis, Course Designing, Translation Studies

1. Introduction

In today's rapidly changing world of education and language learning, ESP (English for Specific Purpose) is gaining considerable importance. ESP aims to equip learners with the specific linguistic and communicative skills required in their respective fields, recognizing that language needs differ across various disciplines (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). When examining Translation Studies students in Pakistan, it becomes clear that mastering just the linguistic needs for their academic success is insufficient. They also have to master the communicative skills required in their professional field. They need to develop a deep understanding of discourse, the culture in which they will be working professionally, and the communicative strategies required to perform effectively in their workplace (Hyland, 2002).

In our education system, the traditional method of teaching focuses on memorization of the grammatical rules and vocabulary (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). It does not pay attention to the practical needs of the students, which will enhance their practical skills, such as making them able to perform confidently in real-world translation tasks.

To address these limitations, a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach within an ESP framework is crucial. CLT promotes a learner-centered model that focuses on real-life language use, interactive learning, and the development of context-sensitive communicative skills (Littlewood, 1981; Savignon, 2002). Thus, the CLT-based approach is essential for Translation Studies students. This research aims to present a practical recommendation by designing an ESP course for Translation Studies Students. The course is designed based on CLT principles, offering a practical approach to teaching them. It will enhance their language and practical skills, making it more interactive, relevant, and skill-oriented. The main focus of this study is on answering the following research questions:

1. How can CLT principles be used in designing an ESP course for Translation Studies students?
2. In what ways can a CLT-based ELT course help students enhance their language and professional skills?
3. What kind of challenges are there in designing and implementing a CLT-based ESP course tailored for Translation Studies Students?

2. Literature Review

Investigating the impact of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in teaching English for Specific purposes has been a topic over the past few years. Different researchers have studied it in various ways. Tashmetova (2024) investigated the influence of Communicative Language Teaching in foreign language learning. In her research, she explored various factors and practices that teachers use in teaching English as a foreign language. At the end, she presented different factors that could contribute to teachers' misinterpretation of the practice of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). These three factors were both external and internal factors. She reported that the internal factors were directly related to the teachers themselves. This included a lack of communicative competence, unwillingness to change their teaching style, or reluctance to improve it according to the learner's needs. On the other hand, external factors included a lack of training opportunities for the teachers, low salaries, and a lack of resources for the teachers to effectively implement the CLT in the classrooms.

Sukmawati et al. (2023) investigated how the incorporation of technology could help learners better learn in an ESP course. They found that applying the method of teaching ESP, particularly through social media, was very effective because it was a quicker way for students to understand the subject. They applied a qualitative method in their study. They concluded that social

media had a positive effect on ESP learning as students used social media daily, which increased their perception and engagement with the content. It also helped students to practice their language skills in real-life communication. They concluded that it should be used as a teaching tool for improving communicative competence, and teachers should design interactive and engaging activities through these social media platforms to enhance the learning process.

Aguaguiña Pilla et al. (2025) studied the role of ESP in specialized fields such as business, medicine, and technology and concluded that tailoring English instruction to the specific linguistic and communicative needs of each discipline significantly increased learners' professional competence and language proficiency.

Un-udom et al (2024) investigated how English proficiency of Thai music professionals could be achieved by applying Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the process of making their instructional package. The purpose of the study was to identify the needs of Thai music professionals in improving their English language skills. The second purpose was to make such an instructional package that could meet their needs. 150 Thai music professionals were surveyed, and a structured questionnaire was made to determine the English language needs of these professionals. They designed the instructional package on the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which was reviewed by five experts. To evaluate its effectiveness, pre-and post-tests were conducted before and after the package was introduced to measure learners. The results showed that the application of the CLT principle improved the learning of the language.

Febrijanto and Kurniajati (2017) studied the importance of developing an ESP course that was based on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). They noted that the CLT approach focused on both written and verbal language skills required by the nurses in their professional field. They categorized the four essential skills needed in the nursing profession, including assessment (which is concerned with gathering information and documenting the patient), nursing diagnosis (which is concerned with effectively communicating and telling the patient's problem), planning (which is the concerned with writing and the discussion about the care plan), and evaluation (which is concerned with the reporting of the patient's current state and any progress in their health to the doctor). Thus, the syllabus was designed according to the needs of the nursing students.

3. Methodology

The present study is based on quantitative research. First, the questionnaire was given to the students for the needs analysis. This needs analysis was based on John Munby's model (1948), Communicative Need Processor (CNP), which focuses on the needs of the learners that are linked to the real-world tasks and language use. This model emphasizes the learners' needs.

In this model, the main focus is on the communicative needs of the learners or of a group of learners. After the needs analysis, the ESP course was designed with a focus on the communicative needs of the Translation Studies students, grounded in the communicative language teaching method (CLT). It focuses on the real-life communicative needs of the learners rather than just their academic needs.

The data for the needs analysis was collected through the questionnaires. First, a pilot test was conducted involving 15 students from the targeted population, and the test was reviewed by an expert to evaluate its applicability. After doing the pilot test, the questionnaire was given to 60 students of Translation Studies, out of which 56 completed responses were received. The data was analyzed on Microsoft Excel to calculate the percentage of each response.

4. Data Analysis

For the needs analysis, a questionnaire consisting of 12 questions was designed. After getting the responses, each question was separately analyzed to find the percentage of responses in each question, which were as follows:

The first question was generally designed to collect the initial information about whether the students had previously studied the Translation Studies course. Out of 56 students, 39.3% reported that they had not taken any Translation Studies course previously, and the remaining 60.7% indicated that they had taken it previously. See the following Figure 1:

Figure 1: Previous Exposure to the Translation Studies Course
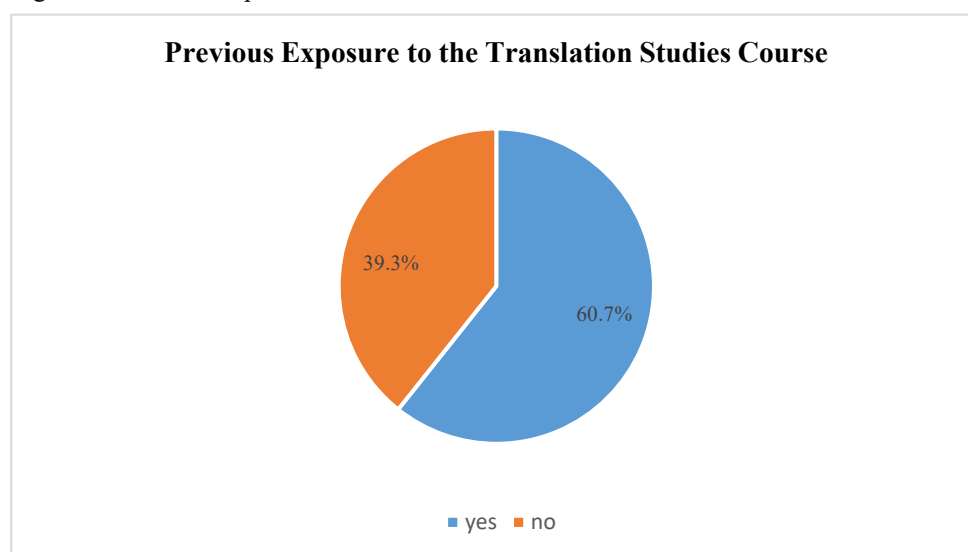
The second question focused on their primary goals for enrolling in the translation studies course, and the majority of the students (69.6%) responded that they aimed to improve their communication skills. Additionally, 12.5% indicated that they enrolled in the course to achieve freelancing opportunities, 16.1% mentioned professional purposes, and

41.1% reported academic purposes as their motivation for taking the course. See the following Figure 2:

Figure 2: Purpose for which Students are taking the Translation Studies Course

Purpose for which Students are taking the Translation Studies Course

Improving their communication skills	69.6%
Frelancing	12.5%
Professional Purpose	16.1%
Acedamic Purpose	41.1%

■ Precentage of responses
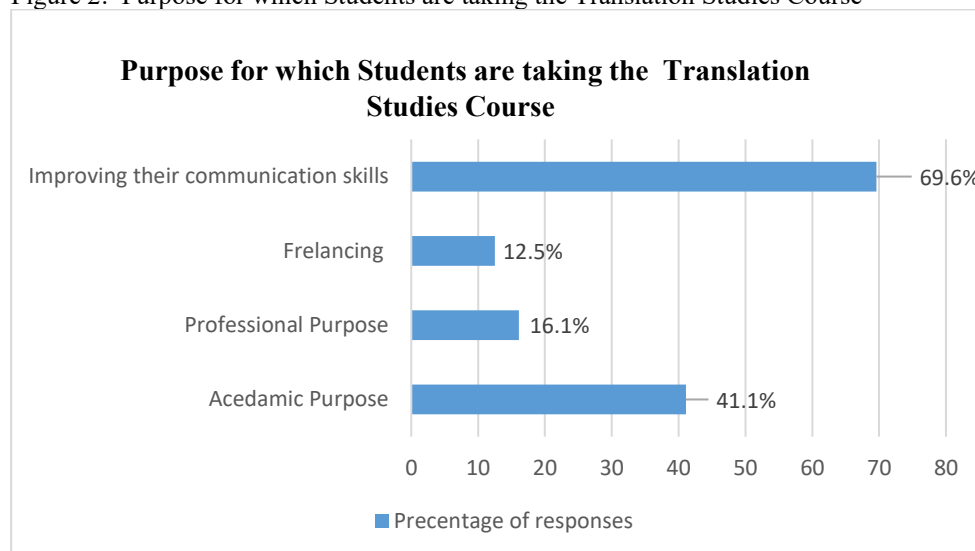
The third question was how many students are engaged in the translation work in real life, and out of 56 students, 34 (60.70%) responded that they were often involved in translation-related tasks. See the following Figure 3:
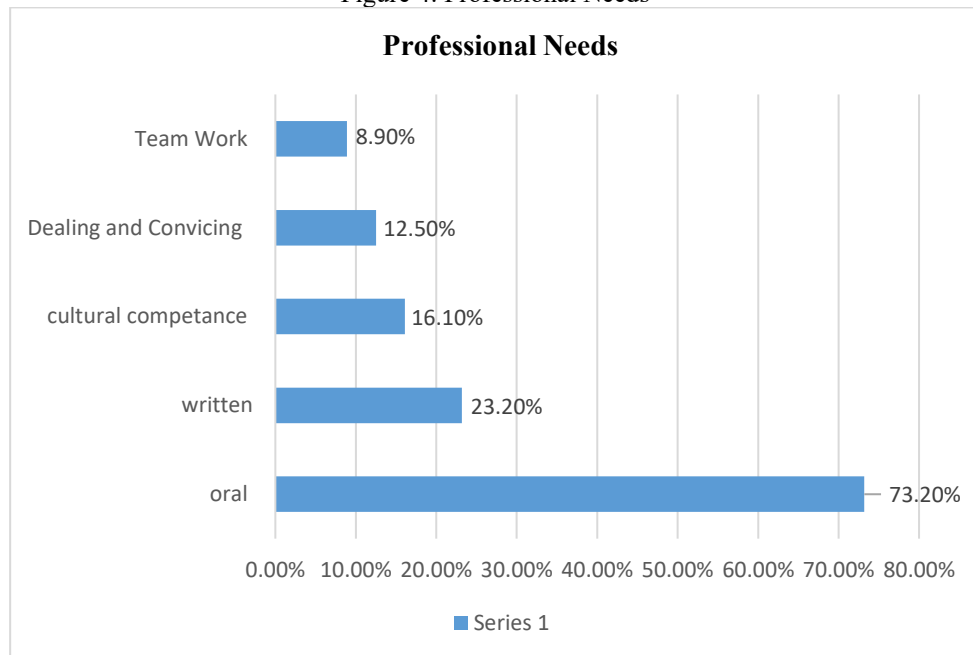
Figure 3: Practical Necessity of Translation Competence in Students' Lives

Practical Necessity of Translation Competence in Students' Lives

5.40%
16.10%
17.90%
60.70%

■ Always ■ Often ■ Sometimes ■ Rarely
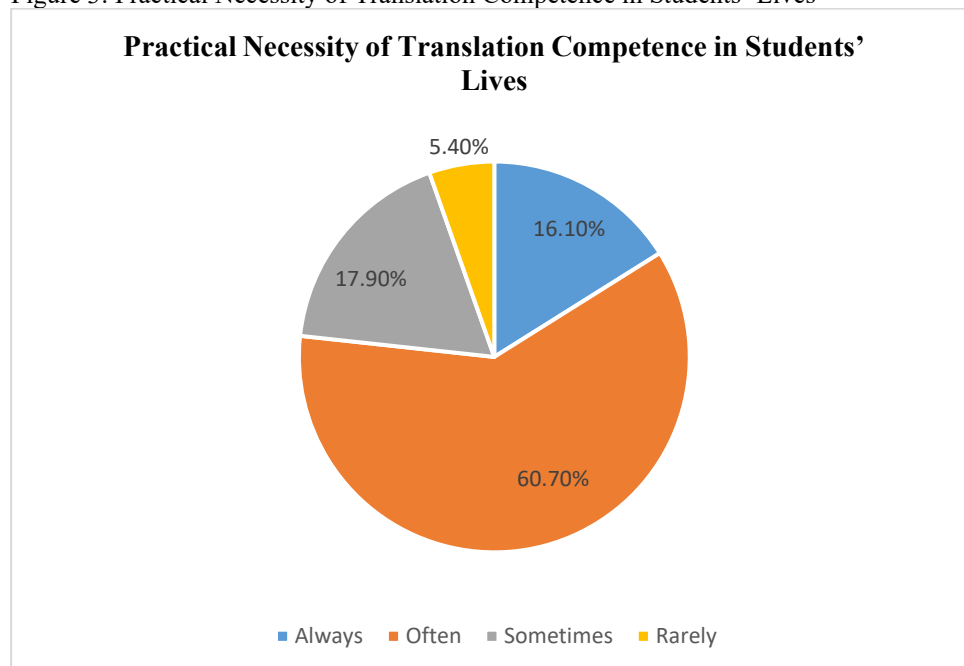
The fourth question was what skills they considered most important for them in the professional field of Translation Studies. 41 students (73.2%) answered that oral communication skills were most important for them, 23,20% emphasized the importance of writing, 16.10% chose cultural
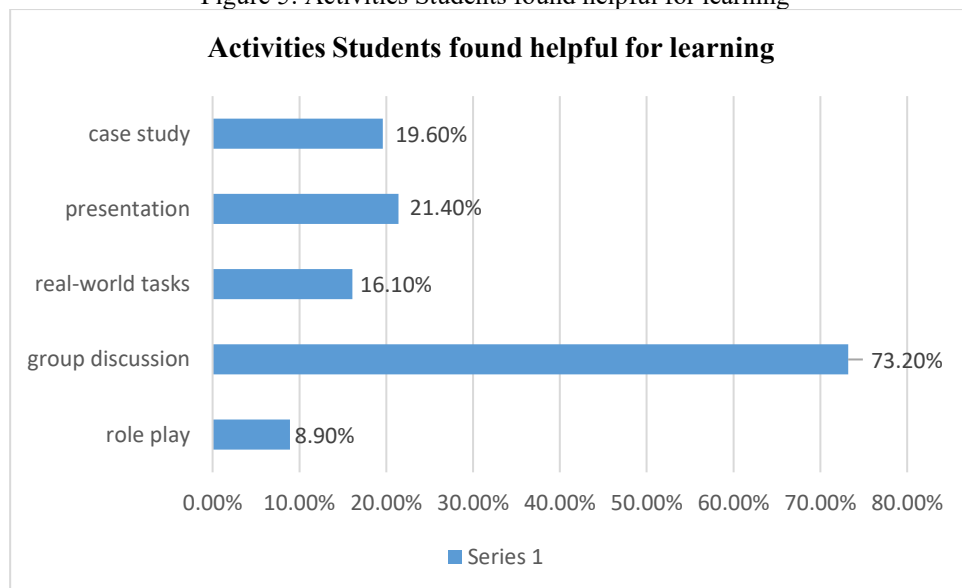
competence, 12.50% selected dealing and convincing abilities, and 8.90% chose teamwork as essential skills. See the following Figure 4:

Figure 4: Professional Needs

Professional Needs

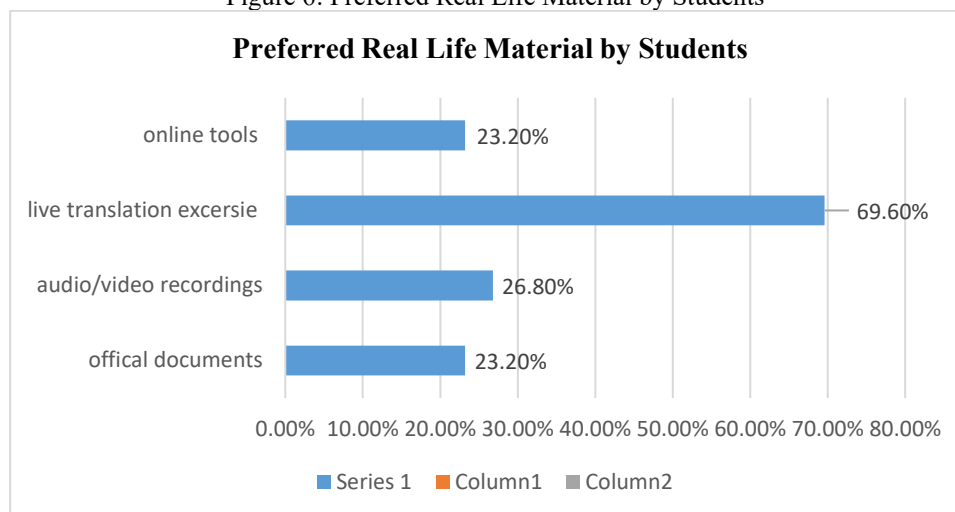| Category	Value
Team Work	8.90%
Dealing and Convicing	12.50%
cultural competance	16.10%
written	23.20%
oral	73.20%

■ Series 1

The fifth question was what type of activities they found useful for Translation Studies. 41 students (73.2%) reported that group discussion was really helpful in learning and performing effectively in the classroom, 19.60% found case studies helpful, 21.40% emphasized the value of presentation, 16.10% emphasized the real-world task, and 8.90% believed role play was effective. See the following Figure 5:

Figure 5: Activities Students found helpful for learning

Activities Students found helpful for learning

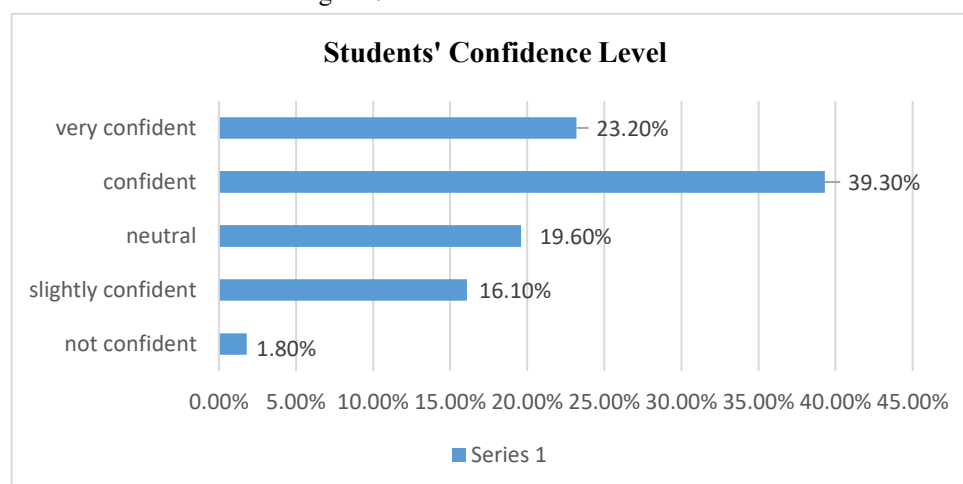| Category	Value
case study	19.60%
presentation	21.40%
real-world tasks	16.10%
group discussion	73.20%
role play	8.90%

■ Series 1

The sixth question focused on identifying real-life material they prefer for the study. Among 56 students, 39 students (69.60%) reported that they preferred doing the live interpretation exercises, 23.20% selected online tools, 26.80% preferred audio/video recording, and 23.20% chose it as a useful resource. See Figure 6:

Figure 6: Preferred Real Life Material by Students

Preferred Real Life Material by Students

Category	Percentage
online tools	23.20%
live translation excersie	69.60%
audio/video recordings	26.80%
offical documents	23.20%

■ Series 1 ■ Column1 ■ Column2

The seventh question was how confident the students felt when speaking English in a professional environment. Among the 56 participants, 39.3% reported feeling confident, while 23.2% stated they felt very confident. In contrast, 1.8% admitted that they lacked confidence, and 16.1% described themselves as slightly confident. Additionally, 19.6% of the students selected the neutral option. See Figure 7:
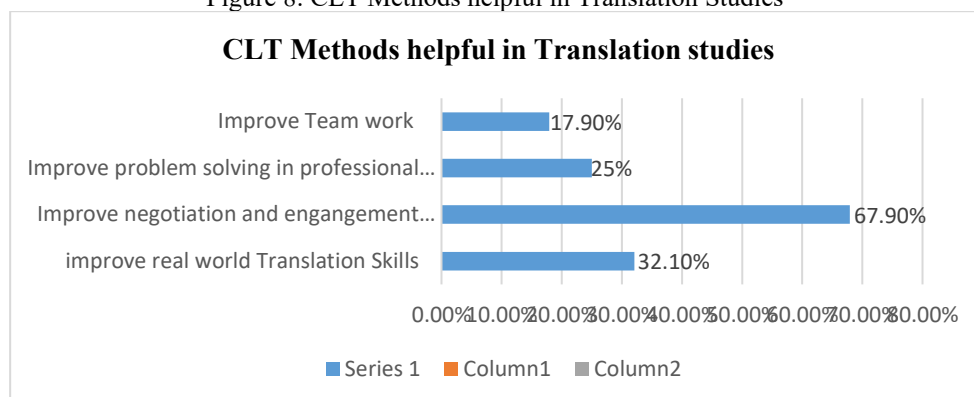
Figure 7: Students' Confidence Level

Students' Confidence Level

Category	Percentage
very confident	23.20%
confident	39.30%
neutral	19.60%
slightly confident	16.10%
not confident	1.80%

■ Series 1

The eighth question was how the students believed that the teaching communication method was useful in translation research. 38 students (67.90%) answered that due to communicative language teaching
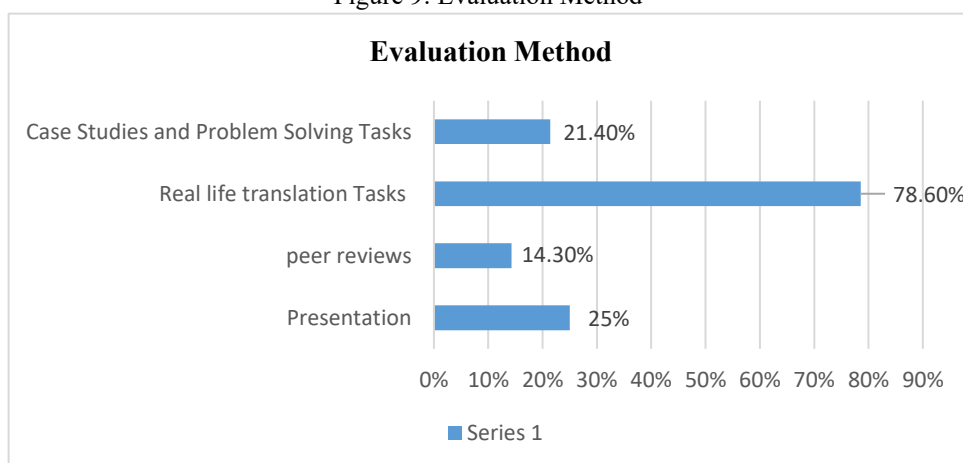
methods, their abilities to negotiate and interact with others were enhanced. See Figure 8:

Figure 8: CLT Methods helpful in Translation Studies

CLT Methods helpful in Translation studies

Category	Value
Improve Team work	17.90%
Improve problem solving in professional…	25%
Improve negotiation and engangement…	67.90%
improve real world Translation Skills	32.10%

0.00% 10.00% 20.00% 30.00% 40.00% 50.00% 60.00% 70.00% 80.00%

■ Series 1   ■ Column1   ■ Column2

The ninth question was what kind of evaluation method the students believed was effective in evaluating their performances in the course. 44 students (78.60%) answered that a real-life task for translation was best for the evaluation of this course, 21.40% favoured case studies and problem-solving tasks, 14.30% emphasized the importance of peer reviews, and 25% of students believed presentation is the most effective evaluation method. See the following Figure 9:

Figure 9: Evaluation Method

Evaluation Method

Category	Value
Case Studies and Problem Solving Tasks	21.40%
Real life translation Tasks	78.60%
peer reviews	14.30%
Presentation	25%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90%

■ Series 1

The tenth question was whether they had taken any course that included the communicative method of teaching. 37 students (66.10%) reported that they had prior exposure to it and found it effective for their learning process, whereas 33.90% reported that they had no prior exposure to CLT. See Figure 10:

Figure 10: Students with Prior Experience in CLT-Based Courses

**Students with Prior Experience in CLT-Based Courses**
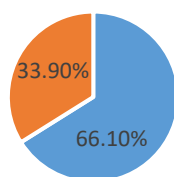
The eleventh question aimed to analyze the challenges the students anticipated in implementing a CLT-based ESP course. 30 students (53.60%) answered that the lack of suitable teaching material was a problem. Additionally, 21.4% pointed to the unavailability of qualified teachers, while 23.2% believed their lack of confidence in speaking English could pose a challenge. Furthermore, 30.4% highlighted the lack of practical experience as a potential barrier. See the following Figure 11:

Figure 11: Student-Perceived Challenges in Implementing a CLT-Based ESP Course
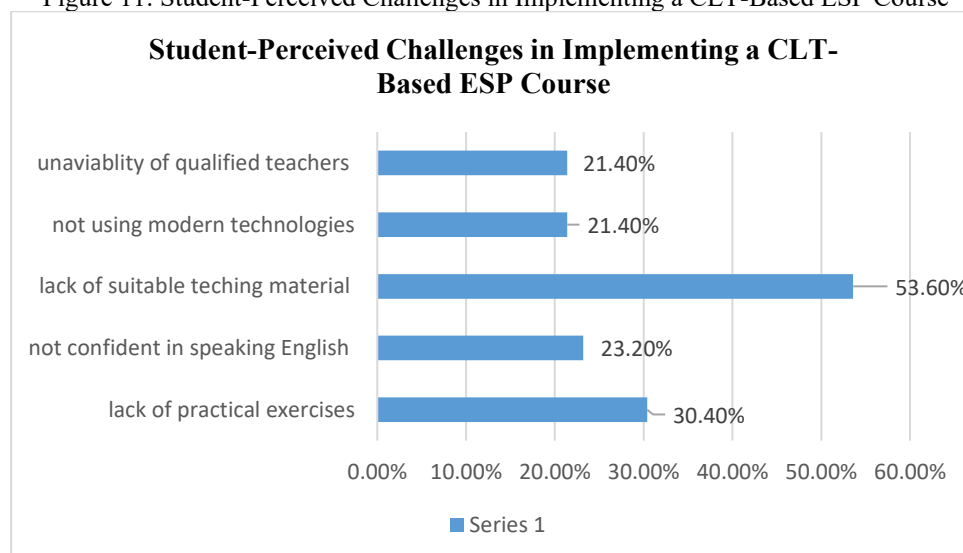
The final question explored students' perspectives on what steps could help overcome the challenges linked with the implementing CLT-based ESP course. Among 56 students, 37 students (66.10%) stated that greater exposure to real-life translation events would help address these challenges, 25% were in favour of a training workshop for teachers, 32.10% reported the use of modern technologies for addressing these challenges, and 33.90% emphasized the importance of more practical work. See the following Figure 12:

Figure 12: Student-Suggested Strategies for Overcoming Challenges
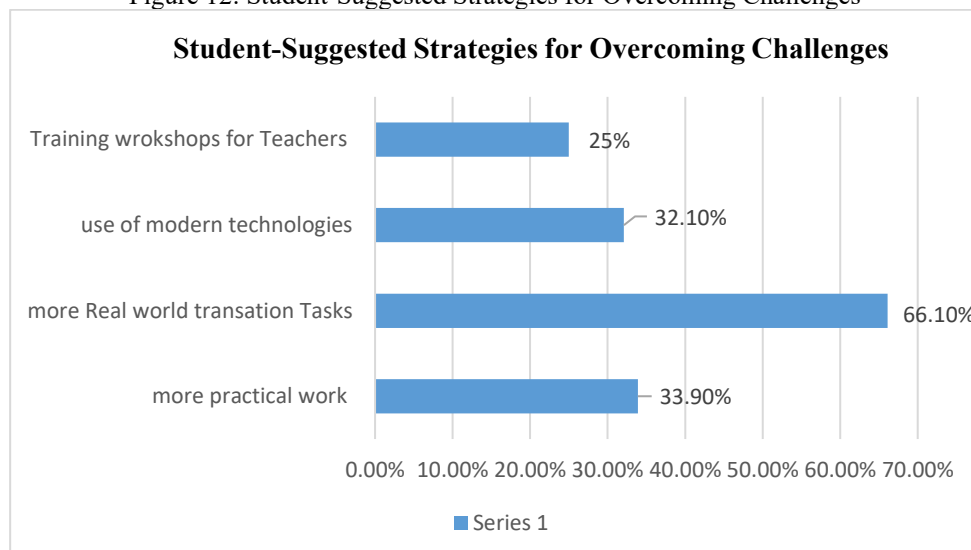
5. Results and Discussion

After analyzing the data obtained from the questionnaire, we can interpret that the students are in great favor of a CLT-based ESP course. They have shown a positive response towards implementing a CLT-based ESP course for Translation Studies. Most of the students said that communicative competence and knowledge of real-world tasks were important for their skill development.

For instance, in response to question 8, 38 students (67.90%) stated that a CLT-based course can help them improve their skills, such as negotiation and interactions outside the classroom in the real world. This highlights that a CLT-based ESP course offers a wide view of practical learning in which learners learn how to use the language or the skills they are learning in the professional domains. (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

In addition to this, we can say that a CLT-based ESP course for Translation Studies students can be very effective for them as it supports the development of oral skills, encourages active engagement with others in group work or teamwork, and most importantly, promotes contextual learning through authentic materials and situations (Celce-Murcia, 2001).

Based on the questionnaire responses, one of the materials considered suitable for a CLT-based ESP course in Translation Studies was the use of real-life materials, as 39 students supported this approach. There should be a focus on improving the oral communication skills of the students, as 41 students were in favor of this. Additionally, students should be based on their performance in the classroom in different activities, as 44 students were in favor. These preferences reflect the core principles of CLT, which value task-based, learner-centered instruction and performance-based evaluation (Brown, 2001; Savignon, 2002).

Thus, this CLT-based ESP course can significantly help the students of Translation Studies in improving their confidence in the real-world translation task, developing their problem-solving skills, and increasing their critical thinking.

6. Conclusion

This study aims to investigate how a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)-based ESP course would be helpful for Translation Studies students and what kind of material will be helpful for them. Also, it investigates what challenges they think are there that prevent the implementation of a CLT-based ESP course for Translation Studies students. The main finding of this study was that many students were in favor of the implementation of CLT-based ESP course design. This will help them improve their communication skills and enhance their problem-solving. The challenges that were found to hinder the implementation of CLT-based ESP courses were a lack of appropriate material used and unprofessional teachers who were not familiar with the CLT method of teaching. The significance of this study is that it works as a bridge between academic learning and the learning of real-world tasks, which can be helpful for students in their professional settings.

The limitation of this study is that it focuses mostly on the development of a CLT-based ESP course for Translation Studies students. Future research can build on this study by implementing this CLT-based course and comparing the results of the learning outcome before and after its implementation. This CLT-based ESP course for Translation Studies students not only helps them in learning the language but also focuses on developing skills that will help them in their professional and real-world translation tasks.

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Appendix:

Proposed CLT based ESP course for Translation Studies Students

Course Code:	Course Title: ESP course for Translation Studies
Year: 2025	Semester: Fall 2025
Instructor Name:	Office (Room Number):
Email:	Office Hours:

Course Goals
- To improve oral communication skills needed for translation tasks.   - To improve confidence in professional and classroom discussion.   - Applying communicative language teaching methods to make the learners able to solve real life translation tasks.   - Focus on learner's accuracy and fluency in live interpretation tasks.   - Improve English speaking skills.   - Demonstrating the practical translation abilities by the mean of communicative tasks.
Course Content

	• Introduction to the Communicative language teaching method in translation studies. • Sentence accuracy in oral communication. • Live translation tasks. • Group discussion on the topics of translation. • Role plays which reflect the real world translation activities. • Translation through audio video methods. • Grammar and vocabulary development based on contextual knowledge. • Leaning communicative strategies which are helpful in negotiation and interaction with others. • Building vocabulary based solely for translation profession.
Reference Books	• Baker, M., & Saldanha, G. (2019). *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies*. Routledge. • Bassnett, S. (2013). *Translation studies*. routledge. • Gambier, Y., & Van Doorslaer, L. (Eds.). (2021). *Handbook of Translation Studies: Volume 5*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. • Brandl, K. (2008). Communicative language teaching in action. *Upper Saddle River, NJ*. • Kelly, D. (2014). *A handbook for translator trainers*. Routledge.

Duration of Course: 32 sessions each of 90 minutes.
Attendance: minimum 70% attendance is required for appearing in final examination.
Grading:

- Mid-Term: 25%
- Sessional: 35%
  - Oral Tasks (presentation, role play etc) 10%
  - Translating audio and video notes 10%
  - Live translation tasks from real world 15%
- Final term: 40%

Session	Topic
1&2	Introduction to CLT in Translation Studies
3&4	Grammar and correct sentence structure in context for Translation professionals
5&6	Live listing exercise for translation.
7&8	Group Discussion: Related to real-world translation tasks.
9&10	Role play: like a translator in public service (courts, airports, hospitals)
11&12	Vocabulary development (based on different fields of translators)
13&14	Sentence construction: imperative or interrogative forms, etc.

15&16	Mid-Term
17&18	Oral translation practice in teams.
19&20	Oral presentation of translations, individual.
21&22	How to deal with stage fright and voice management.
23&24	Negotiation and problem-solving real-world exercise.
25&26	Real world translation task by using authentic materials like news reports, interviews, etc.
27&28	Peer feedback and discussion session
29&30	Using advanced strategies like different technologies in translation tasks
31&32	Revision
Session Schedule	