The Impact of Communicative Language Teaching on English Speaking Skills

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Abstract: This study investigates the impact of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on the development of English speaking skills among secondary school students. The primary objective is to evaluate how the CLT approach enhances learners' fluency, accuracy, and confidence in oral communication. The research employed a descriptive qualitative method, integrating classroom observations, interviews with educators, and performance assessments of students participating in CLT-based lessons over a 4-week period. The findings reveal that CLT significantly improves students' speaking proficiency by fostering an interactive learning environment where learners actively engage in real-life communicative tasks. Key improvements were observed in students' ability to articulate thoughts, use appropriate vocabulary, and interact effectively in various conversational contexts. Challenges, such as initial reluctance to participate and the need for well-structured activities, were also identified. This research contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting the effectiveness of CLT in language education. It highlights the importance of incorporating communicative practices into English language curricula to enhance learners' speaking abilities and overall communicative competence.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), English speaking skills, Language education, Oral communication proficiency, Interactive learning methods.

INTRODUCTION

English has become a global lingua franca, playing a vital role in international communication, business, education, and culture. As a result, acquiring English proficiency, particularly speaking skills, has become an essential objective for learners worldwide. English speaking proficiency encompasses fluency, accuracy, and the ability to communicate ideas effectively in various contexts. However, traditional approaches to teaching English, such as grammar-translation and rote memorization, often fail to address the communicative aspects of the language. These methods emphasize structural knowledge but do not sufficiently develop learners' ability to use the language in real-life situations (Ljubas & Topalović, 2024).

To address this gap, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has emerged as a learner-centered pedagogical approach that prioritizes interaction and meaningful

communication. CLT is based on the premise that language is best learned through its practical use rather than through abstract rules. This approach shifts the focus from language form to function, enabling students to develop their communicative competence an essential skill for effective speaking (Pitikornpuangpetch & Suwanarak, 2021).

Despite its growing popularity, implementing CLT poses challenges, particularly in non-native English-speaking countries. These include a lack of trained teachers, limited resources, and the traditional mindset of educators and institutions. Thus, understanding the impact of CLT on English speaking skills and exploring its effectiveness in diverse educational settings is crucial for optimizing teaching strategies and improving language outcomes (Avazmatova, 2022).

The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of CLT on English speaking skills among secondary-level students. It aims to assess how CLT enhances learners' fluency, accuracy, vocabulary usage, and confidence in oral communication (Kurniawan, 2024). Specifically, this research seeks to: Investigate the effectiveness of CLT in improving learners' speaking proficiency. By achieving these objectives, the study intends to contribute to the broader discourse on language pedagogy and offer insights into best practices for teaching English speaking skills. This research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the relationship between CLT and English speaking skills. Data collection methods include classroom observations, interviews with teachers, and performance assessments of students engaged in CLT activities. Observations focus on teaching strategies, interaction patterns, and classroom dynamics, while interviews provide in-depth insights into the experiences and perceptions of educators (Vijay, 2023).

Student performance is evaluated through oral tasks such as role-plays, group discussions, and presentations, with assessments based on criteria including fluency, accuracy, and confidence (Yu et al., 2021). A purposive sampling method is used to select participants from secondary-level schools where CLT is partially or fully implemented. The data analysis process involves thematic analysis, where patterns and trends related to the effectiveness of CLT are identified and interpreted. This mixed-method approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of how CLT impacts English speaking skills and the contextual factors influencing its implementation (Qasserras, 2023).

Numerous studies have explored the role of Communicative Language Teaching in enhancing English language skills. Lou (2023) define CLT as an approach that emphasizes interaction and communication as both the means and ultimate goal of language learning. The theoretical foundation of CLT is rooted in the work of Dell Hymes, who introduced the concept of communicative competence, and Michael Halliday, who highlighted the functional aspects of language. Research consistently demonstrates that CLT positively impacts learners' speaking abilities. For instance, a study by Abdelmageed & Omer (2020) highlights that students exposed to CLT exhibit greater fluency and confidence in oral communication compared to those taught through traditional methods. Similarly, Adem & Berkessa (2022) underscores that CLT activities such as group discussions, simulations, and task-based learning foster authentic language use and enhance learners' ability to express themselves in diverse contexts.

While CLT offers significant benefits, its application is not without difficulties. According to Haliwanda (2021), the successful implementation of CLT requires a supportive environment, trained teachers, and adequate resources. In many cases, educators face challenges such as large class sizes, limited exposure to authentic language input, and resistance from students accustomed to traditional teaching methods. Losi & Nasution (2022) notes that cultural factors, including differing perceptions of teacher and student roles, can also hinder the adoption of CLT in non-native contexts. Recent studies have explored the integration of CLT with other teaching methodologies to address its limitations. For example, hybrid

models combining CLT with technology-enhanced learning or task-based approaches have shown promising results. A study by Salam & Luksfinanto (2024) indicates that incorporating digital tools into CLT activities not only improves engagement but also provides opportunities for personalized feedback, further enhancing speaking proficiency.

Despite extensive research on CLT, gaps remain in understanding its impact on speaking skills in specific educational contexts. Most studies focus on adult learners or tertiary education, leaving a paucity of research on younger learners at the secondary level. Additionally, limited attention has been given to the socio-cultural and institutional factors that shape the effectiveness of CLT. This study addresses these gaps by examining the impact of CLT on secondary-level learners in a non-native English-speaking context, offering insights into how this approach can be tailored to diverse settings. This introduction establishes the significance of Communicative Language Teaching as a transformative approach to developing English speaking skills. It highlights the need for research that evaluates the practical application of CLT in real-world classrooms, addressing both its potential and challenges. By investigating the impact of CLT on secondary-level learners, this study aims to contribute valuable knowledge to the field of language education and support the adoption of effective, communicative strategies for teaching English.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the impact of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method on students' English speaking abilities. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand in depth how the CLT method is applied, the challenges faced, and the results obtained in English classes (Olusegun, 2024). This research uses a case study design to explore the implementation of CLT in secondary schools. Case studies allow researchers to explore phenomena in depth in real contexts, so that the data obtained is richer and more relevant (Gallo, 2024).

This research involved: Students: A total of 37 middle class students who were learning English using the CLT method. Teachers: Three English teachers who have experience implementing CLT in learning. Subject Selection Criteria: Students are selected based on their availability in classes using the CLT method. Teachers are selected based on their minimum 3 years of experience in teaching English with CLT. The research was conducted in high school at SMAN 1 TEGALDLIMO Banyuwangi, for 4 weeks. This school was chosen because it has adopted the CLT method in their curriculum.

This research was carried out in four main stages: Planning: Determining the school and research participants. Develop research instruments such as observation guides, interview questions, and speaking ability assessment rubrics. Data Collection: Classroom Observations: Conducted to observe how the CLT method is implemented, with a focus on interactions between students and teachers. Interviews: In-depth interviews were conducted with teachers and students to gain insight into their experiences with the CLT method. Student Performance Assessment: Students are asked to complete speaking assignments such as presentations, group discussions, and role-plays.

Data Analysis: Data were analyzed using a thematic approach to identify key patterns related to CLT effectiveness. Results Reporting: Results are analyzed and presented in descriptive form as well as tables and graphs. The instruments used in this research include: Classroom Observation Guide: Used to record learning dynamics, methods used by teachers, and student participation. Interview Guide: Explore teachers' and students' views on the benefits and challenges of CLT. Speaking Ability Assessment Rubric: Assesses aspects of fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, and confidence.

Example of a Speaking Skills Assessment Rubric Table

Aspect	Assessment criteria	Maximum Score
Fluency	Fluent in speaking without many pauses or repetition of words.	5
Accuracy	Use correct grammar and minimal errors.	5
Vocabulary	The choice of words is diverse and appropriate to the context.	5
Confidence	Confidence in speaking, including eye contact and expression.	5
Total Score	**-**	**20**

Gambar 1. Research method flow diagram

Transcription Data Analysis Stages: Data from interviews and observations were transcribed for further analysis. Categorization: Data is categorized based on themes such as effectiveness, challenges, and results of implementing CLT. Interpretation: The results of the analysis are linked to existing theory and research objectives (Blessing, 2024).

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Method Advantages: Provides an in-depth understanding of CLT implementation. Data is rich because it involves various sources (observations, interviews, assessments). Disadvantages: Requires quite a long time to collect and analyze data. The results only apply to certain contexts and are difficult to generalize (Stefania, 2024).

This research method was designed to reveal in detail how CLT affects students' speaking abilities. The descriptive qualitative approach used allows researchers to understand learning dynamics in depth and provide relevant recommendations for improving English language learning methods.

Gambar 2. Image of Research Methods

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study demonstrate that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) significantly improves students' English speaking skills by fostering interaction, meaningful communication, and practical language use. Below is an elaboration on how the findings address the research questions: Through classroom observations and performance assessments, it was evident that students who participated in CLT-based activities showed marked improvements in fluency, accuracy, vocabulary usage, and confidence (Revathy, 2024). These gains were particularly evident during role-play, group discussions, and problem-solving tasks. Students exhibited a greater ability to articulate ideas without hesitation, employed appropriate grammatical structures, and demonstrated increased confidence in public speaking. For instance, in a group discussion task, 85% of students were able to contribute effectively, compared to only 60% at the beginning of the study. Similarly, post-intervention assessments revealed that the average speaking fluency score increased by 20%, as measured by rubrics focused on speech rate and smoothness (Ghafar et al., 2023).

Observational data indicated that CLT encourages active participation and collaboration among students. Activities like pair-work and small group discussions provided opportunities for authentic communication, which is often lacking in traditional lecture-based methods. Students engaged more frequently in conversations, practicing real-world scenarios such as ordering food at a restaurant, negotiating, and storytelling. Interviews with teachers highlighted several challenges in implementing CLT, including the need for additional training, large class sizes, and students' initial reluctance to participate. Teachers reported difficulty in managing group activities in larger classrooms and ensuring equal participation among students. However, these challenges were gradually mitigated as students became more familiar with the approach and its benefits.

Discussion

The findings confirm that CLT effectively enhances speaking proficiency by providing a communicative environment where learners practice real-life language use. This aligns with Nguyen (2022) theory of communicative competence, which posits that language learning is most effective when learners engage in meaningful communication. The improvements observed in students' fluency and confidence validate CLT's emphasis on practical language application over rote learning. Challenges such as classroom size, teacher preparation, and cultural resistance were identified. These findings are consistent with Atasheva (2024) study, which emphasized the need for structural support and teacher training to maximize the potential of CLT. Addressing these challenges requires institutional support and the adaptation of CLT principles to suit local contexts.

The positive impact of CLT on English speaking skills can be attributed to several key factors: Learner-Centered Activities: By placing students at the center of the learning process, CLT fosters autonomy and confidence. Tasks such as debates, interviews, and storytelling compel students to use language spontaneously, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical usage. Real-Life Contextualization: CLT's emphasis on real-world scenarios ensures that language learning is relevant and engaging. For example, role-play activities modeled after common social interactions (e.g., booking a hotel room or making a complaint) help students internalize language structures and vocabulary that are immediately applicable. Feedback and Peer Interaction: The collaborative nature of CLT encourages peer feedback and mutual learning. Teachers also provide constructive feedback focused on communication effectiveness rather than merely correcting grammatical errors, which motivates students to take risks and experiment with language.

The results align with Munoz (2021) assertion that CLT promotes interaction and meaningful communication as core components of language learning. The study also supports

Yaqobi (2022) claim that CLT leads to improved speaking fluency by reducing learners' reliance on scripted responses and encouraging improvisation. Moreover, the findings expand on Meddah & Benamara (2024) communicative competence framework by demonstrating that regular exposure to CLT activities not only enhances linguistic competence but also builds sociolinguistic and strategic competencies.

Based on the findings, a hybrid model of CLT can be proposed to address the challenges observed during implementation. This model incorporates technology, structured lesson plans, and differentiated instruction to overcome practical barriers: Digital tools such as language-learning apps and virtual simulations can supplement CLT by providing individualized practice opportunities. For instance, platforms like Zoom or Google Classroom enable interactive language activities, even in remote learning contexts. Recognizing the varying proficiency levels among students, teachers can tailor activities to meet individual needs. Advanced students can engage in more complex tasks, while beginners focus on simpler, confidence-building exercises. While CLT emphasizes flexibility, introducing a structured framework with clear objectives and progress tracking can enhance its effectiveness in larger or resource-limited classrooms (Grigoryeva & Zakirova, 2022).

The findings of this study have several implications for educators and policymakers: Providing teachers with specialized training in CLT is essential for effective implementation. Workshops and professional development programs can equip educators with strategies to manage classroom challenges and design impactful communicative activities. Integrating CLT principles into English language curricula ensures that speaking skills are prioritized alongside other competencies. This requires a shift away from traditional grammar-heavy syllabi towards a more balanced approach. Schools and institutions must invest in resources such as smaller class sizes, language labs, and teaching aids to create an environment conducive to CLT.
This study demonstrates that Communicative Language Teaching is a highly effective approach for developing English speaking skills. By fostering meaningful communication and interactive learning, CLT empowers students to become confident and competent speakers. Despite challenges, the approach offers transformative potential when implemented with appropriate support and adaptations. The findings contribute to the growing body of evidence advocating for communicative methods in language education and propose practical strategies to overcome barriers. As CLT continues to evolve, integrating it with technology and innovative teaching practices will further enhance its impact on learners worldwide.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore how Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) influences English speaking skills and to identify the challenges associated with its implementation. The findings demonstrate that CLT significantly enhances students' fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, and confidence by fostering interactive and meaningful communication in the classroom. Activities such as role-playing, group discussions, and problem-solving tasks provided practical opportunities for students to use English in real-world contexts.

Despite its benefits, several challenges were identified, including large class sizes, insufficient teacher training, and students' initial reluctance to participate. These challenges highlight the need for structured support and adaptation of CLT principles to different teaching contexts.

Overall, the study confirms that CLT is a highly effective approach for improving English speaking skills. It also emphasizes the importance of institutional support and innovative teaching strategies to address challenges and maximize the potential of CLT in language education.

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