



Published on June, 21st 2026

Vol. 6 Number 1

PROMOTING STUDENTS' ENGLISH-SPEAKING SKILL THROUGH COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT) AND INVESTIGATING STUDENTS' VOICES OF CLT

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Abstract

Speaking is an essential English skill, yet it can be troublesome for many learners. Every English teacher must implement teaching strategies to support the achievement of learning objectives in speaking classes. Speaking problems also appeared in MA Ma'arif NU Sains Al-Qur'an Sumbang. Therefore, the researchers conducted action research using Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) techniques to boost the speaking skill of eleventh-grade students. Additionally, this investigation aims to explore students' perceptions. The action research was conducted through planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The enhancement of speaking skill was measured through pre-test and post-test by calculating the average scores. Moreover, the students' opinions were explored through a questionnaire, and the data were analysed by calculating the percentage of each item. The test results demonstrated a notable increase in students' speaking ability. In cycle 1, the average scores increased from 47.67 to 85.11. Then, in Cycle 2, students' English-speaking skill increased from 62.73 to 85.5. Additionally, based on the survey, the majority of students admitted that CLT exercises were enjoyable and useful in improving their speaking ability and confidence. The study shows that CLT exercises are successful in enhancing students' speaking skill, and it receives positive opinions from the students.

Keywords: *English-Speaking Skill, Students' Voices, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Action Research*



A. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a fundamental aspect of human communication, and it serves as a primary means of expressing thoughts, emotions, and ideas. In English, speaking is regarded as a crucial skill for language learners (Akhter, 2021; Kadnawi, 2021; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Setiadi & Simanjuntak, 2025; Sudarmo, 2021). Speaking is one of the four language skills which are interpreted as an expression of idea, opinion, or message with spoken language (Cahyono & Indah, 2012; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Moreover, Gilakjani (2016) points out that speaking is the first mode in which children acquire language, it is part of the daily involvement of most people with language activities, and it is the prime motor of language changing. Ali (2022) argues that communication and comprehension would be absent without effective and proficient speaking, and the alternative would most likely be misunderstanding and bewilderment. Therefore, in order to communicate effectively, eloquently, and clearly, English language learners need make sure to grasp speaking. In short, English-speaking skill is essential for daily life, and communication can be hampered without appropriate speaking ability.

Even though the importance of English-speaking skill is undoubtable, this skill is commonly considered as difficult to be mastered. Pollard in Kurniati et al. (2015) identifies speaking as one of the most formidable aspects for students to conquer. The complexity of mastering speaking skill is attributed to several factors. Among these challenges, students face a limited exposure to English, influenced by environmental factors. Kadnawi (2021) points out that due to their lack of experience, embarrassment, and fear of mispronouncing words, many students struggle with speaking. Thus, assisting the students to master English-speaking skill is mostly demanding.

Speaking problems also occurred in MA Ma'arif NU Sains Al-Qur'an Sumbang, Central Java, Indonesia. The English teacher highlighted that students exhibit hesitancy and fear in participating in English conversations, facing limitations in vocabulary and struggling with pronunciation. Notably, the 11th-grade classes were particularly inactive in terms of speaking engagement. Therefore, the researchers chose the 11th-grade classes as the focus of the study, aiming to enhance speaking skill through Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). This necessity was underscored by the pre-test results of



Cycle 1, which revealed a low baseline average score of 47.67, indicating significant struggles in pronunciation, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension as speaking elements.

One of the suggested solution to overcome speaking skill problems is the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011) assert that communicative language teaching (CLT) is recognized as the prevailing and extensively employed instructional method capable of achieving the desired goal of efficient communication. This approach places a strong emphasis on engaging students in authentic language use, where they learn not only the formal aspects of a language but also the practical skills needed to communicate in real-life situations. According to Harmer (2007), a significant aspect of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) revolves around the core idea that when students engage in communication tasks that prioritize conveying meaning, the language itself, and its proficiency, will naturally develop. In summary, CLT has various benefits that can support the improvement of English-speaking ability.

After reviewing several studies on the application of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), it is evident that this approach holds significant promise in enhancing students' speaking skill. There were studies conducted by Efrizal (2012) and Lumy (2018). These studies suggested that the implementation of CLT can effectively improve students' speaking achievements. Furthermore, there was completed by Rahman (2021). This research was conducted at the State Vocational High School Praya Tengah highlighting the application of CLT not only enhanced speaking skill but also transformed the classroom environment into an attractive, varied, and joyful space. Collectively, these findings underscore the positive impact of utilizing Communicative Language Teaching methods to foster a more engaging and effective leaning experience, particularly in the development of students' speaking proficiency.

The aforementioned studies mainly focused on analysing and improving speaking skill, the current research not only aims to foster speaking skill but also explicitly addresses students' perceptions of CLT implementation. By conducting a more localized study, researchers aim to uncover nuanced challenges, such as hesitancy, fear, limited



vocabularies, and pronunciation issues, and subsequently implement tailored CLT strategies to address these specific obstacles. This research seeks to contribute a contextualized perspective to the existing body of knowledge, offering insights that can be beneficial for English language educators facing similar challenges in different EFL settings.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed action research. According to Wongwanich in Meesuk et al. (2020), teachers are tasked with conducting classroom action research concurrently with managing learning, as it serves as a crucial responsibility aimed at systematic self-development and the enhancement of students. Kemmis et al. (2014) explain that classroom action research provides a structured framework for implementing interventions, observing outcomes, and refining strategies based on continuous reflection.

In this study, the participants involved were 20 students from 11th-grade at MA Ma'arif NU Sains Al-Qur'an Sumbang. Furthermore, the data were gathered through spoken tests and questionnaire. According to Brown (2000), a test is a significant process or method created to prompt learners' performance, aiming to assess their achievement based on specific criteria. These assessments, meticulously crafted by the researcher, will align closely with the material covered in the school's syllabus. By anchoring the assessment questions in the syllabus, the researcher ensured relevance and coherence between the classroom content and the evaluation process.

Then, to explore students' voices, the researches gave a closed-questionnaire to the students. In-depth feedback from students is pivotal for unravelling the experiential dimensions of CLT implementation. Hopkins (2004) asserts that utilizing questionnaires with targeted inquiries about various aspects of the classroom, curriculum, or teaching approach is a rapid and straightforward method to gather comprehensive and insightful information from students. The questionnaire covered inquiries about their engagement levels, the effectiveness of various CLT methods used, challenges faced, and perceived improvements in speaking skill.



The data from the tests were examined using a rubric aligned with the linguistic elements evaluated, encompassing pronunciation, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension usage. This rubric was customized to align with the specific objectives outlined in the school's syllabus. The computation of students' individual scores on the test employed a formula adapted from Brown (2004).

Formula:

$$SA = \frac{C+F+G+P+V}{\text{Max Score (25)}} \times 100$$

Note:

SA = Speaking ability score

C = Comprehension score

F = Fluency score

G = Grammar score

P = Pronunciation score

V = Vocabulary score

Then, the data from the questionnaire were analysed by calculating the percentage for each item. The questionnaire employed a Likert scale to measure students' responses, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Through this approach, the researcher aimed to comprehend the students' perspectives on the impact of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) interventions on their speaking skill. Arikunto (2014) mentions the following formula to calculate the percentage in order to determine the most prevalent perception among students.

$$P = FN \times 100\%$$

P = Percentage

F = Number of the students choosing the item

N = Total number of the students

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. RESULTS

a. Students' English-Speaking Skill

This research was completed in two different cycles. To measure students' English-speaking ability, the team used pre-test and post-test in each cycle. In cycle

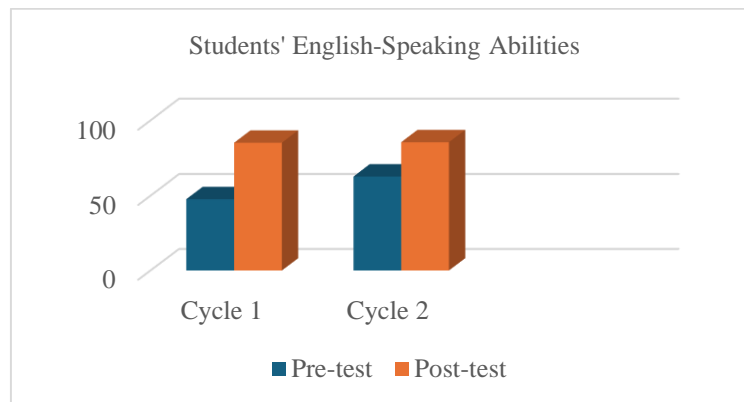


1, the English teacher took on the role of facilitating the teaching and learning process, incorporating CLT activity into the classroom dynamics. The chosen CLT technique for this cycle was role-play. Through this interactive approach, students actively engaged in communicative language exercises, fostering a dynamic and participatory learning environment.

At the beginning of cycle 1, the team did a spoken test, and the result revealed that the students' speaking skill was below the expected level, with an average score of 47.67. The benchmark for success was set at a minimum average score of 70, indicating that significant improvement was required. After the students received the CLT intervention, they were given a post-test to assess their progress. Similar to the pre-test, the students were assessed by the researchers. The oral assessments were scored using a rubric that evaluated pronunciation, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension. The post-test results showed significant improvement, with an overall average score of 85.11. This indicates that the students' speaking ability had improved substantially. However, to ensure that the improvements were consistent and sustainable, the researcher proceeded to Cycle 2.

In Cycle 2, the researchers employed a different technique and material compared to Cycle 1, necessitating a new pre-test to measure the students' speaking ability. The technique utilised in this cycle was simulation, and before its implementation, the team did a spoken pre-test. The average score of students' pre-tests achieved 62.73. Then, the simulation technique was applied for two meetings. At the end of the cycle, the team did a post-test. The final average score was 85.5.

The success in Cycle 2 highlights the effectiveness of using diverse CLT techniques tailored to the material and the students' needs. The improved scores suggest that simulations, which allow for a more interactive and immersive learning experience, can significantly enhance language proficiency. This finding underscores the importance of employing varied instructional strategies to address different learning contexts and goals. The development of students' English-speaking ability can be seen in the following chart:



Picture 1. The Development of Students' English-Speaking Abilities

b. Students' Perceptions

After completing two cycles of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) intervention, the researcher distributed a questionnaire to 20 students to gather their insights and experiences with communicative activities in the classroom. The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions adopted from Rezalou & Yagiz (2021). The options were ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

Tabel 1. The Questionnaire Results

No.	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Engaging in communicative activities creates a comfortable environment and fosters a sense of joy in learning English.	30%	50%	20%	0%	0%
2	Participating in communicative activities aids in the enhancement of my speaking skill.	30%	60%	5%	5%	0%
3	Involvement in communicative activities boosts my self-assurance in speaking English.	20%	40%	30%	10%	0%
4	I gain a clear understanding of the process involved in conducting communicative activities.	20%	65%	5%	0%	0%



No.	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD
5	Communicative activities actively promote learners' involvement in the classroom.	50%	45%	5%	0%	0%
6	Engaging in communicative activities fosters positive relationships among learners and between learners and the teacher.	45%	50%	5%	0%	0%
7	Participating in communicative activities sparks learners' needs and interests.	25%	25%	45%	5%	0%
8	Through communicative activities, I come to realize the significance of English.	40%	30%	30%	0%	0%
9	Involvement in communicative activities stimulates thinking and contributes to increased self-confidence.	25%	25%	45%	5%	0%
10	Learning English naturally is facilitated through participation in communicative activities.	25%	50%	25%	0%	0%
11	A preference for learning English through communicative activities is evident.	40%	55%	5%	0%	0%
12	The knowledge acquired through communicative activities can be applied both in the classroom and in daily life.	35%	45%	20%	0%	0%

From Tabel 1, we can see that the majority of students (80%) found that communicative activities created a comfortable and enjoyable learning



environment. This indicates that the majority of students felt positive and engaged during these activities. 90% of students believed that communicative activities helped them to improve their speaking skill, suggesting these activities are highly effective for language enhancement. A majority of 60% of students felt that their self-confidence in speaking English increased, although 40% were either neutral or disagreed, indicating room for improvement in boosting confidence. A substantial 85% of students understood the process of communicative activities, showing the effectiveness of instruction and clarity in teaching methods. 95% of students felt that these activities encouraged active participation, highlighting the engaging nature of CLT. A vast majority of 95% believed that communicative activities helped them to build positive relationships, both peer-to-peer and between students and the teacher.

While half of the students (50%) felt that these activities were suitable for their needs and interests, the other half were neutral or disagreed, suggesting mixed feelings about the relevance or engagement of the activities. A majority of students (70%) recognized the importance of English through these activities, though a significant portion (30%) remained neutral. Half of the students (50%) felt that the activities stimulated thinking and build self-confidence, but the other half were neutral or disagreed, indicating varied impacts on different students. A majority of students (75%) believed that learning English occurs naturally through these activities, affirming the effectiveness of CLT in language acquisition. 95% of the students preferred learning English through communicative activities, showing strong support for this method. 80% of the students believed that the knowledge gained was applicable beyond the classroom, indicating practical benefits of these activities.

The data from the questionnaire indicate a generally positive reception towards the use of communicative activities in the classroom. The majority of students found these activities beneficial for improving speaking skill, understanding English, building confidence, and fostering a comfortable learning environment. The results suggest that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)



techniques are effective and well-received by students, highlighting their potential for enhancing English language learning in the classroom.

2. DISCUSSION

This study aims to foster the speaking skill of 11th-grade students through the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) activities. The research was conducted over two cycles, with each cycle involving a series of pre-tests, interventions, and post-tests. The interventions in Cycle 1 used role-play with the material focusing on "Explanation Text", while Cycle 2 incorporated simulations with the material focusing on "Meaning Through Music." The successfulness of these interventions was evaluated using the spoken tests and the closed-questionnaire.

The results of the spoken tests revealed that CLT can be used to foster students' English-speaking skill. The usage of role-play and simulation encourages the students to speak more in their classes. Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999) point out that the focus on language fluency over mere grammatical accuracy is a key strength of CLT, and this approach encourages learners to use the language spontaneously and naturally in various contexts. Moreover, Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011) argue that CLT prioritizes the development of real-life communication skills. This approach encourages learners to engage in meaningful conversations, fostering language acquisition through authentic interactions. In essence, it incorporates real-life scenarios of native English speakers into classroom exercises like role-plays and simulations (Harmer, 2007).

The implementation of role-play and simulation widens the opportunity of the students to gain their confidence to speak English in front of many people. Providing the opportunity to practice can also support the enhancement of students' speaking skill. Mulyana & Anugrahgusti (2020) admit that the use of role play positively influences the enhancement of students' speaking skill. This method allows students to boost their confidence and experiment with various situations encountered in their daily lives. Ayuningtias et al. (2019) further support the idea that incorporating performance-based activities, such as role-playing, can be effective



technical strategies in teaching and improving English speaking skill. Additionally, Joni (2020) suggests that using simulation techniques can actively engage students in the speaking learning process. Thus, role-play and simulation are admitted to influence students' speaking skills positively.

Furthermore, the data of the questionnaire revealed strong positive responses from the students. For instance, 80% of the students agreed and strongly agreed that communicative activities created a comfortable and enjoyable learning environment. Richards and Rodgers (2001) argue that CLT encourages the integration of cultural elements into language learning, fostering cultural awareness and sensitivity. Additionally, 90% of students believed these activities helped enhance their speaking skills, and 60% reported increased self-assurance in speaking English. Furthermore, 85% of the students gained a clear understanding of the processes involved in communicative activities, and 95% felt that these activities promoted learner involvement and fostered positive relationships among students and between students and teachers. Thamarana (2015) mentions that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) serves as a motivation for students to enhance their independent English language proficiency, emphasizing fluency in the target language.

However, responses were mixed regarding whether communicative activities sparked learners' needs and interests, with 50% agreeing and 45% remaining neutral. Additionally, 70% of students realized the significance of English through these activities, and 50% felt that these activities stimulated thinking and increased self-confidence. Moreover, 75% of students agreed that learning English naturally was facilitated through communicative activities, and 95% showed a preference for learning English through these methods. Consequently, learners gain confidence in their interactions with others and derive greater enjoyment from speaking, as indicated by Brown (2001). Lastly, 80% believed that the knowledge acquired through communicative activities could be applied both in the classroom and in daily life. According to Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011), CLT prioritizes the development of real-life communication skills



D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

1. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to enhance the speaking ability of 11th-grade students through the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) activities. The research, conducted over two cycles, utilized role-play and simulation techniques with materials focusing on "Explanation Text" and "Meaning Through Music," respectively. The result data from pre-tests and post-tests demonstrated significant improvements in students' speaking skill. In cycle 1, the average scores increased from 47.67 to 85. Moreover, in cycle 2, the students' speaking score could be enhanced from 62.73 to 85.5. Additionally, the data of the questionnaire revealed positive perceptions of CLT activities. The majority of students agreed that these activities created a comfortable and enjoyable learning environment and enhanced their speaking skills and their confidence. Overall, the results indicate the successes of CLT activities in developing students' English-speaking abilities, and CLT obtained students' positive feedbacks.

2. SUGGESTIONS

The researchers suggest the next researchers to conduct more action research in speaking classes using different techniques in CLT. Further studies can also explore the impact of different types of communicative activities on various language skills, such as listening, reading, and writing. Moreover, the next studies can examine the effectiveness of CLT activities in diverse educational settings and with students of different age groups and proficiency levels, and even develop new and innovative CLT activities that incorporate technology and digital media to enhance engagement and learning outcomes.



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