



Students' Perceptions and Attitudes toward the Use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Improving English Speaking Skill

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Abstract

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an instructional approach that prioritizes the development of communication skills, utilizing language in contexts relevant to daily activities. However, its application, particularly in English speaking lessons, presents various challenges and difficulties for students. The primary objective of this study was to explore students' perceptions and attitudes toward the use of CLT in improving English speaking skill. This research adopted a descriptive quantitative design, with participants consisted of 55 third-semester students from the English Education Study Program at Universitas Khairun. Data were gathered through a Google Form survey containing a Likert scale-based questionnaire with 20 items. The data were subsequently analyzed by using mean scores and percentage distributions. The result of the research showed that (1) students generally held a positive perception of CLT in English speaking instruction, as evidenced by an overall mean score of 3.79, corresponding to a "high" level of agreement, with 75.85% of respondents in the "agree" category. CLT was found to boost students' confidence in speaking English. Furthermore, (2) students exhibited a positive attitude toward CLT, with an average attitude score of 3.7, indicating a "high" level of agreement, and 74% agreeing with the approach. This positive response is attributed to the variety, enjoyment, and engaging of the activities included in CLT. However, an area for improvement identified in the study is the alignment of English-speaking lesson materials with the students' proficiency levels to ensure more effective learning outcomes.

Keywords: CLT, Speaking, Students' Perception, Attitude

1. Introduction

English, as a foreign language taught in Indonesia, inherently lacks integration into everyday communication. This limited practical usage poses significant challenges to the teaching and learning process, impacting both instructors and learners alike (Winnie et al, 2023). Consequently, acquiring proficiency in English proves to be a considerable hurdle for language learners in the Indonesian context. Rafii (2021) highlights that a significant number of school graduates in Indonesia struggle to communicate effectively in English, which has emerged as a national concern. One contributing factor is that during the process of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), students often spend the majority of their time developing speaking skills within the classroom environment. However, they frequently fail to make optimal use of this time to improve their speaking proficiency. Additionally, the insufficient incorporation of communicative activities in the classroom hinders students' ability to articulate and organize their ideas verbally.

Addressing English language learning in Indonesia requires several critical adjustments, including bridging the transition from the first language to the target foreign language, accommodating cultural differences, reshaping cognitive patterns, and adapting to distinct emotional and behavioral frameworks. Though nowadays, the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has broadened in educational level, both teachers and students utilize it on learning process in many ways (Uswatunnisa, 2024). Yet, the effort in improving students' speaking proficiency is still not optimal. The endeavors are inherently complex. Brown (2007) states that mastering English as a foreign language is not a solitary endeavor; thus, achieving fluency is exceptionally uncommon when learning is confined solely to classroom instruction. The core objective of English language education is the acquisition of key linguistic competencies, particularly speaking. Aligning with this perspective, Hui and Yunus (2023) emphasize that second language acquisition transcends routine training in linguistic structures such as grammar. Instead, its ultimate aim should be fostering communicative competence as a functional and overarching goal.

Various approaches and methods have been developed to address challenges in English speaking instruction, one of which is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). CLT is an approach that prioritizes the development of communicative competence, focusing on the use of language in contexts relevant to everyday situations. This is consistent with Ansarey's (2012) assertion that CLT emphasizes an instructional approach that promotes communicative skills within a natural learning environment. Activities such as role-playing, group discussions, video creation, and simulations are integral to CLT, actively engaging students in the learning process. By participating in these interactive tasks, students' awareness and understanding of the English language are developed in a structured and formal manner. Classroom activities are typically designed to focus on completing language-mediated tasks or involve negotiating and sharing information.

Several studies on the use of CLT in improving students' English-speaking skills have been conducted, including research by Faridha (2024), Basir (2024), Sitorus (2019), and Nggawu & Thao (2023). Generally, research results demonstrate a significant improvement in students' English-speaking skills. However, the implementation of the CLT method in English speaking instruction presents challenges, as it requires considerable effort and practice from both students and instructors. According to Nggawu and Thao (2023), the interactive and collaborative aspects of CLT in speaking classes should be more closely aligned with students' preferred learning styles to facilitate more substantial improvements in their speaking abilities. Given this context, it is also essential to take into account students' perceptions and attitudes toward CLT, as these factors can help evaluate the limitations associated with its implementation. Understanding whether instructors and students align in their perceptions and attitudes regarding the CLT activities employed in the classroom is particularly valuable for enhancing the effectiveness of the learning process.

Students' perceptions and attitudes regarding the use of CLT in learning can provide insights into the implementation of CLT in the classroom and it has a direct influence on the effectiveness of instruction, particularly in speaking English instruction. Furthermore, gaining insights into these perceptions and attitudes can contribute to fostering greater motivation to learn, identifying learners' needs and preferences in teaching methodologies, promoting students' engagement, addressing potential barriers to learning, improving educational outcomes, and facilitating the integration of innovative teaching approaches. The primary objective of this study is to explore students' perceptions and attitudes regarding the use of CLT in improving their speaking skill on

classroom practices that they experience. Thus, the problem statements in this study are:
(1) What are the students' perception toward the use of CLT in improving speaking skill?
(2) What are students' attitude toward the use of CLT in improving speaking skill?

1.1. Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) can be considered an effective instructional approach for enhancing students' vocabulary acquisition in English. Through the application of CLT, students are able to develop a greater understanding of their speaking proficiency in English, ensuring that their use of language is both contextually and semantically accurate.

The implementation of CLT offers innovative approaches to the learning environment, particularly in facilitating student interactions. Additionally, this method contributes to enhancing students' motivation, interest in learning, curiosity, and speaking proficiency in English. As highlighted by Hien (2021), a key factor influencing the success of CLT is the attitudes of both teachers and students. Teachers' beliefs are particularly significant, as they shape both the content and the methods of instruction.

Thus, CLT can be understood as an approach that concurrently emphasizes both the mastery of language structures and communicative competence. These two components are interdependent and crucial for achieving proficiency in a language, especially in English. According to Firiady, (2018), in the context of CLT, it is essential for the activities to actively engage students, encouraging them to interact and apply the language forms they have acquired for authentic and meaningful communication. Moreover, Hien (2021) asserts that CLT is among the most effective approaches in second language education, as it allows learners to practice and improve their communicative competence in both pedagogical contexts and real-world situations. Consequently, instructors must take real-life contexts into account when implementing CLT in the classroom to ensure its effectiveness.

CLT emphasizes the use of 'authentic communication' from the outset of instruction, with conversation playing a significant role within the approach (Horwitz, 2008, as cited in Yuliawati & Aprillia, 2019). The effectiveness of CLT in enhancing students' vocabulary acquisition is consistent with the positive perceptions expressed by students who are taught through this method. This is supported by various studies, including those by Farooq (2015) and Savignon & Wang (2003), which highlight the beneficial impact of CLT on language learning.

In sum, the use of the CLT represents a foundational approach in target language instruction, incorporating several essential aspects of language proficiency. These include the ability to adapt language use, apply it across diverse contexts, comprehend various types of texts, and communicate effectively despite potential limitations the speaker may face.

1.2. Speaking Skill

Speaking is a fundamental language skill that plays a vital role in facilitating interaction by conveying ideas, information, and emotions in a clear, effective, and contextually appropriate manner. In other words, speaking is one of the main purposes of language learning to transfer idea to others person (Sudirman, Junaid, & Tamallo, 2020). As noted by Hui & Yunus (2023), speaking is a crucial life skill for communicating the ideas to others through verbal exchanges. This skill necessitates both physical and

cognitive effort to ensure a seamless exchange of ideas between interlocutors. In today's globally connected world, proficiency in spoken English is of paramount importance, as it enables individuals to establish the meaningful connections that bridge diverse backgrounds and experiences.

In the domain of speaking instruction, mastering speaking skill is essential for facilitating clear and effective communication. This mastery plays a crucial role not only in enhancing students' direct communicative abilities but also in assessing their interaction competence. Public perception often evaluates an individual's proficiency in English based on their speaking ability (Lestari, 2018). English speaking skill is essential competency that can be developed and directly assessed. Key components of speaking proficiency include articulation, vocabulary, grammar, intonation, fluency, and non-verbal communication. Challenges such as anxiety, limited vocabulary, or low self-confidence can be mitigated through consistent practice, vocabulary expansion, constructive feedback, listening to proficient speakers, and active participation in discussions. With sustained effort and practice, speaking abilities can be significantly enhanced. This is particularly important, as speaking skill is often considered a key indicator of student success in language learning, as noted by Oduke (2014), who emphasized that speaking is the most critical language skill for achieving success in educational contexts.

1.3. CLT in Teaching Speaking

Teaching speaking skills in English as a foreign language (EFL) necessitates the implementation of a variety of engaging techniques and strategies aimed at enhancing students' communicative competence. One prominent method associated with effective speaking instruction is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). This approach continues to be widely employed to improve students' speaking abilities in English language education.

Richard (2006) asserts that CLT framework offer meaningful tasks and authentic situations that facilitate the development of various language aspects, including the ability to sustain conversations for learners who face language limitations. Among the effective activities utilized within the CLT framework are role-playing, which simulates authentic conversational scenarios, and games that foster a dynamic and motivating learning environment. Additionally, storytelling and problem-solving tasks conducted through group discussions encourage students to articulate their thoughts while simultaneously developing critical thinking skills. Collectively, these diverse CLT activities not only contribute to the improvement of students' speaking proficiency but also significantly boost their motivation and engagement in the learning process, ultimately resulting in increased confidence and competence in oral communication.

1.4. Perception and Attitude in Learning

According to Brignall (2001), the process of perception enables humans to interpret and assign meaning to the world around them. In other words, perception is how humans make sense of the world. In the context of learning, perception refers to the process through which individuals interpret and assign meaning to information acquired through their senses. This process is shaped by internal factors such as motivation, emotional states, prior experiences, and attention, as well as external influences like instructional strategies, the learning environment, and the use of educational media.

Perception plays a critical role in how students process, organize, and comprehend learning material, often correlating with distinct learning styles, including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic approaches. Its significance lies in its ability to facilitate effective understanding, enhance student engagement, and reinforce memory retention. Consequently, implementing strategies such as employing dynamic teaching methods, aligning material with learners' lived experiences, and fostering a supportive and positive learning atmosphere is essential to optimizing student perception in educational settings. It is in line with Rezalou & Yagiz's (2021) statement that a range of interactive and stimulating communicative activities, including the exploration of engaging topics, the creation of a supportive classroom environment, and fostering positive interactions, plays a significant role in shaping students' perceptions. Furthermore, positive students' perception contributes to the creation of a supportive and collaborative learning environment, strengthen teacher-student relationships, and promote a constructive attitude toward education. These factors collectively enhance both academic performance and personal growth.

Meanwhile, attitude can be understood as the mental or emotional disposition of an individual toward a person or object (Khan & Ali, 2012). Students' attitudes toward the application of teaching methods are shaped by various factors, such as prior experiences, individual preferences, and the classroom environment. These attitudes reflect students' perceptions of the method's effectiveness, engagement, and alignment with their learning styles. When students view the teaching method as relevant and engaging, they are more likely to adopt a positive attitude, which can enhance both motivation and active participation in the learning process. Conversely, if the method is perceived as monotonous, difficult to grasp, or misaligned with their needs, students may exhibit negative attitudes, potentially leading to disengagement or feelings of inadequacy. According to Amin (2020), a positive attitude toward the teaching method is also linked to students' increased confidence in their ability to succeed in the learning environment, while a negative attitude can impede participation and hinder academic performance. Therefore, it is essential for educators to carefully consider students' characteristics and preferences when selecting and implementing teaching strategies to foster an effective and engaging learning experience.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This research was a descriptive quantitative design. As defined by Sugiyono (2016), descriptive research aims to determine the values of independent variables, whether singular or multiple, without making comparisons or establishing relationships with other variables. The primary objective of this research is to find out the students' perceptions and attitudes toward the use of CLT in improving English speaking skills.

2.2. Subject of the Research

Using the convenience sampling technique, the participants in this study were third-semester students enrolled in the English Language Education program at Universitas Khairun. A total of 55 third-semester students participated in this study as they were

undergoing a 12-week speaking course, where they were exposed to the CLT approach through activities such as role-playing, group discussions, and video creation.

2.3. Technique of Data Collection and Data Analysis

In this research, data were gathered through the use of Google Forms. The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire consisted 20 items, adapted from various surveys assessing perceptions and attitudes toward CLT. The first ten questions focused on students' perceptions toward the use of CLT, while the remaining ten items aimed to examine their attitudes toward the use of CLT in improving speaking skill. The questionnaire was based on a 5-point Likert scale, with the following rating interpretation: 1 for "strongly disagree," 2 for "disagree," 3 for "neutral," 4 for "agree," and 5 for "strongly agree." The collected data were then analyzed by calculating the mean score and percentage, with specific interpretative criteria applied.

Table 1. Mean Scores Interpretation

Mean Score	Score Interpretation	Level of Agreement
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly disagree	Very low
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Low
2.61 – 3.40	Undecided	Neutral
3.41 – 4.20	Agree	High
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly agree	Very high

Adopted from Metruk (2023)

Table 2. Score Interpretation Criteria

Range	Classification
0% - 19.99%	Strongly disagree
20% - 39.99%	Disagree
40% - 59.99%	Neutral
60% - 79.99%	Agree
80% - 100%	Strongly agree

Adopted from Muliani, et all (2022)

3. Results

3.1. Findings

The findings of this research elaborates on students' perceptions and attitudes toward the use of CLT as a means to improve English speaking skills. Initially, students were engaged in a 12-week speaking program that incorporated CLT techniques, including role-play, group discussions, and video creation. Subsequently, students completed a questionnaire designed to gather insights into their perceptions and attitudes towards the use of CLT. The data collected from the questionnaire were then analyzed and summarized.

a. Students' Perceptions toward the Use of CLT in Improving Speaking Skill

An overview of the results concerning students' perceptions of CLT in improving their speaking skill is presented in Table 3 below:

Tabel 3. Students' Perceptions toward the Use of CLT in improving English Speaking Skill

No.	Items	Mean	Level	Percent (%)	Classification
1.	Role-play activities have helped me build confidence in my speaking skills	3.45	High	69.09	Agree
2.	Role-play activities have enhanced my creativity.	3.54	High	70.91	Agree
3.	Role-play activities have enabled me to improve my pronunciation skills..	3.75	High	74.90	Agree
4.	Lecturer guidance on how to conduct classroom activities is essential.	3.75	High	74.90	Agree
5.	I believe group discussion activities provide an opportunity for me to develop speaking skills.	3.60	High	72	Agree
6.	I believe group discussions help enhance my confidence in speaking.	4.25	Very High	85.10	Strongly Agree
7.	I believe creating short English videos provides me with extensive exposure to using the English language.	3.70	High	75	Agree
8.	The role of lecturer as facilitator in language learning is highly significant.	3.85	High	77.10	Agree
9.	Role-play activities, group discussions, and English video creation significantly contribute to enhancing my confidence in speaking skills.	4.24	Very High	84.70	Strongly Agree
10.	Role-play activities, group discussions, and English video creation serve as effective tools in facilitating my speaking skills development..	3.76	High	75.30	Agree
Total		3.79	High	75.85	Agree

Based on the data presented in Table 3, the overall mean score for students' perceptions was 3.79, indicating a "high" level of agreement, with a percentage of 75.85%, categorized as "agree". It suggests that students generally approve of the use of CLT in improving their English speaking skills. The highest mean score was found in item 6 (mean = 4.25), which is classified as "very high," with 85.10% of students strongly agreeing with the statement. This result indicates that, among the three CLT methods utilized, group discussion was perceived as the most effective in boosting students' confidence in speaking English. The second highest mean score was observed in item 9 (mean = 4.24), which also falls under the "very high" category with 84.70% of students strongly agreeing. This finding further supports the idea that all three CLT activities—role-play, group discussion, and video production—contributed significantly to enhancing students' self-confidence in speaking English. The high ratings for both items demonstrate a clear connection between the use of CLT and the improvement of students' speaking confidence, indicating that students believe CLT plays a vital role in boosting their confidence when communicating in English.

The two items with the lowest scores were item 1 (mean = 3.45) and item 2 (mean = 3.54), which pertain to the role-play activity within the speaking lessons. These scores were comparatively lower than those of the other activities in the CLT framework. However, both items still fell within the "high" range and were categorized as "agree," indicating that the students generally believe role-play contributes to improving their confidence and creativity in English speaking. In general, students exhibited a positive perception of the use of CLT for improving their speaking skills, particularly in terms of boosting their confidence in speaking English. Although certain items showed lower scores, they still remained in the positive category, suggesting that some aspects of the CLT activities require further refinement to better support the students in improving their English speaking proficiency.

b. Students' Attitudes toward the Use of CLT in Improving Speaking Skill

The following is a summary of the questionnaire results regarding the students' attitudes toward the use of CLT in improving English speaking skills, as presented in Table 4 below:

Tabel 4. Students' Attitudes toward the Use of CLT in Improving English Speaking Skill

No.	Items	Mean	Level	Percent (%)	Classification
1.	The topics and activities within CLT approach, such as role-play, group discussions, and video production, align with your needs.	3.60	High	72	Agree
2.	The activities within CLT approach are diverse and enjoyable.	4.23	Very High	84.73	Strongly Agree
3.	The content of CLT activities aligns with your level of proficiency.	3.55	High	70.9	Agree
4.	The steps of the CLT activities are clear.	3.69	High	73.8	Agree
5.	The CLT activities are engaging.	4.22	Very High	84.4	Strongly Agree
6.	The images provided in the CLT activities help you understand the tasks.	3.56	High	71.27	Agree
7.	The CLT activities are challenging.	3.44	High	68.7	Agree
8.	The CLT activities motivate you to speak English.	3.56	High	71.3	Agree
9.	You clearly understand the objectives of the CLT activities.	3.56	High	71.27	Agree
10.	The CLT activities are suitable for use in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class.	3.58	High	71.6	Agree
Total		3.7	High	74	Agree

Based on Table 4 above, the overall average attitude score of the students reached 3.7, which is classified as "high" with a percentage of 74% in the "agree" category. It

indicates that students have a positive attitude toward the use of CLT in improving their English speaking skills. The highest attitude score was found in item 2 (mean = 4.23), which falls under the "very high" level with a percentage of 84.73% in the "strongly agree" category. This suggests that the activities employed using the CLT approach in English speaking classes are varied and enjoyable. The second highest attitude score was in item 5 (mean = 4.22), which also falls in the "very high" level with a percentage of 84.40% in the "strongly agree" category, indicating that the three CLT methods (role-play, group discussion, and video making) are engaging. These two highest scores demonstrate that the use of CLT in English speaking lessons is varied, enjoyable, and interesting.

The two lowest items were item 3 (mean = 3.55), which pertains to the content of CLT activities not fully aligning with the students' proficiency level, and item 2 (mean = 3.44), which indicates that the activities in CLT do not provide significant challenges for the students. However, both items are still within the "high" level and fall under the "agree" category. Overall, the students demonstrated a positive attitude and support for the use of CLT in improving their English speaking skills. Although some specific aspects of the statements yielded lower scores, they still remained in the positive category. This suggests that certain components of the CLT activities, such as role-play, group discussions, and video production, may need to be reevaluated and adjusted to better match the students' proficiency levels, in order to effectively aid them in improving their English speaking skills.

3.2. Discussion

a. Students' Perceptions toward the Use of CLT in Improving Speaking Skill

The findings of this study indicate that students' perceptions toward the use of CLT in improving their English-speaking skill is largely positive. The overall average score of 3.79, categorized as "high," with 75.85% of students agreeing, reflects a favorable view of CLT in enhancing speaking proficiency. A key finding is that CLT, particularly the group discussion activity, plays a significant role in boosting students' confidence in speaking. This is consistent with Xu's (2023) argument that CLT offers extensive opportunities for learners to practice speaking, identify errors, and reinforce their learning while expanding their vocabulary. Furthermore, CLT is an effective method for strengthening content understanding and evaluating students' competencies. Its student-centered approach fosters active engagement, particularly through peer-to-peer discussions. Additionally, Faridha (2024) supports the effectiveness of CLT, especially in fostering communication skills, within the EFL context. The approach enhances students' motivation and engagement, contributing substantially to the development of students' speaking skills through interactive and structured speaking activities. Thus, it can be said that positive student perceptions of learning particularly in English-speaking class by using CLT, play a crucial role in fostering a collaborative and supportive educational environment, enhancing the teacher-student relationship, and cultivating a constructive attitude toward education. Collectively, these elements contribute significantly to students' academic success and personal development.

b. Students' Attitudes toward the Use of CLT in Improving Speaking Skill

The results of this study indicate that students exhibit a positive attitude towards the use of CLT in improving their English-speaking skills. This is evidenced by an overall average attitude score of 3.7, classified as "high," with 74% of students in agreement. This suggests that students support the activities within the CLT framework, such as role-

playing, group discussions, and video production, as effective tools for improving their speaking proficiency in English. The study also highlights that students perceive CLT activities as diverse, enjoyable, and engaging. This is in line with Dewi et al. (2024), who suggest that CLT can enhance students' motivation due to its interactive and enjoyable nature, which helps mitigate boredom during the learning process. The material is engaging and revisited frequently, making it easier for students to adapt to this approach.

Overall, the study findings reveal that most students have a positive attitude towards CLT. These results are consistent with previous research conducted by Akramy et al. (2024), Komol & Suwanphathama (2020), Rezalou & Yagiz (2021), Losi & Nasution (2022), Xu (2023), and Metruk (2023). The application of CLT as an effective teaching method, which emphasizes the development of communication skills and enhances student confidence, plays a significant role in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, particularly in speaking skills development.

4. Conclusion

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a method that prioritizes communicative competence, where language use is adapted to real-life situations. However, the application of CLT in English speaking instruction presents challenges, as students may face difficulties that require considerable effort and practice. This includes both the students' active participation and the teacher's role as a facilitator. Several CLT activities, such as role-play, group discussion, and video creation, have been implemented. The objective of the research is to explore students' perceptions and attitudes toward the use of CLT, as this is expected to significantly impact the effectiveness of English-speaking instruction. The findings reveal that students have a positive perception of CLT, particularly in relation to activities such as role-play, group discussion, and video production, with an overall average score of 3.79, indicating a "high" level of agreement (75.85%). Students identified group discussions as the most helpful activity, as they felt it significantly enhanced their confidence in speaking English. Additionally, students exhibited a positive attitude toward the use of CLT in improving their English-speaking skills, with an average attitude score of 3.7, categorized as "high" (74% agreement). These results suggest that CLT is perceived as an effective approach to fostering greater confidence and skill in English speaking.

To improve speaking proficiency, it is essential for students to engage in consistent oral language practice. Active participation in a variety of classroom activities is crucial for fostering an effective speaking environment. It is imperative for instructors to actively listen to students and select appropriate CLT-based activities that support the successful delivery of speaking lessons. Moreover, instructors should carefully consider the students' proficiency levels when choosing teaching materials to ensure the learning experience aligns with their abilities.

This study acknowledges limitations related to its research design. To gain a deeper understanding, future studies could incorporate supplementary methods such as interviews or observations. It is recommended that subsequent research address these limitations by concentrating on statements with lower levels of agreement in order to broaden the insights into EFL students' perceptions and attitudes towards the implementation of the CLT approach within the context of higher education.

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