

**THE EFFECT OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING METHOD
TOWARD THE SPEAKING SKILLS OF SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS AT SMP
NEGERI 4 KOTA BENGKULU**

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ABSTRACT

This study is motivated by students' low speaking skills, which is influenced by a lack of self-confidence, limited opportunities to practice communication, and the use of teaching methods that focus more on grammar than on communicative skills. This study aims to analyze the effect of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method on the speaking skills of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu. The research used a quasi-experimental approach with a non-equivalent control group design. The sample consisted of two classes: VII.1 as the experimental class and VII.2 as the control class. Data were collected through speaking tests in the form of pre-tests and post-tests with assessments on fluency, accuracy, and comprehension. The results showed a significant improvement in the speaking skills of students in the experimental class, with the mean score increasing from 53.39 to 63.97. Meanwhile, the control class also experienced an increase from 47.91 to 56.66, but not as much as the experimental class. Statistical tests showed a significance value < 0.05 , which means there is a significant effect from the implementation of the CLT method. Thus, the Communicative Language Teaching method proved effective in improving students' speaking skills.

Keywords: *Communicative Language Teaching, Speaking Skills, Teaching Method*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh rendahnya kemampuan berbicara siswa yang dipengaruhi oleh kurangnya rasa percaya diri, minimnya kesempatan berlatih komunikasi, serta penggunaan metode pembelajaran yang lebih berfokus pada tata bahasa daripada keterampilan komunikatif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh metode *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT) terhadap kemampuan berbicara siswa kelas VII di SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuasi-eksperimen dengan desain *non-equivalent control group*. Sampel terdiri dari dua kelas, yaitu VII.1 sebagai kelas eksperimen dan VII.2 sebagai kelas kontrol. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes berbicara dalam bentuk *pre-test* dan *post-test* dengan penilaian pada aspek kelancaran, ketepatan, dan pemahaman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan signifikan pada kemampuan berbicara siswa di kelas eksperimen, dengan rata-rata nilai meningkat dari 53,39 menjadi 63,97. Sementara itu, kelas kontrol juga mengalami peningkatan dari 47,91 menjadi 56,66, namun tidak sebesar kelas eksperimen. Uji statistik menunjukkan nilai signifikansi $< 0,05$, yang berarti terdapat

pengaruh signifikan dari penerapan metode CLT. Dengan demikian, metode *Communicative Language Teaching* terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara siswa.

Kata Kunci: *Communicative Language Teaching*, Kemampuan Berbicara, Metode Pembelajaran

A. Introduction

Speaking skills is one of the primary skills in English language learning that students must master, especially at the Junior High School level. This skill not only functions as a tool to convey ideas, thoughts, and information, but also serves as a key indicator of a person's success in communicating using a foreign language. According to Brown (2004), speaking skills encompass several important aspects such as fluency, accuracy, vocabulary knowledge, grammar, and the ability to interact in real communicative contexts. In addition, Sato and Crane (2023) emphasize that speaking is not merely producing sentences, but an interactive process of constructing shared meaning through communication.

However, the phenomenon observed in the field shows that students' speaking ability is still relatively low. Based on initial observations at SMP Negeri 4 Kota

Bengkulu, it was found that the majority of students have difficulty expressing ideas orally. Students tend to feel less confident, fear making mistakes, and are reluctant to participate actively in speaking activities. This condition is reinforced by findings from Julfah et al. (2023), which state that low self-confidence and limited opportunities for communication practice are the main factors hindering students' speaking ability. In addition, the learning process, still dominated by conventional methods such as grammar-translation and drills, causes students to focus more on language structure aspects than on communicative language use.

Limited exposure to English outside the classroom also worsens the situation. Students seldom engage in authentic interactions such as discussions, conversations, or communication simulations, so their speaking skills do not develop optimally. According to Zhang (2024),

however, the success of speaking instruction is strongly influenced by affective factors such as motivation, self-confidence, and a learning environment that supports interaction. Therefore, a teaching approach is needed that can create a communicative, interactive, and student-centered learning atmosphere.

Based on the description, there is a gap between the demand for communicative language learning and teaching practices that remain oriented toward structural aspects. Therefore, the focus of the problem in this study is the low speaking skills of students, which is suspected to be related to the use of less communicative teaching methods.

One approach considered effective is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). According to Qasserras (2023), CLT is a language learning approach that emphasizes interaction, negotiation of meaning, and the use of language in real contexts to develop students' communicative competence. This approach is supported by Ho (2020), who states that CLT can increase students' self confidence and encourage them to use the language

actively through activities such as role play, group discussions, and communication simulations. Various previous studies also show that the implementation of CLT can significantly improve students' speaking abilities, in terms of fluency, accuracy, and confidence (Efrizal, 2012; Candadila & Puspitasari, 2025).

The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is a significant effect of using the CLT method on improving students' speaking skills. In addition, this study also aims to provide an overview of the effectiveness of communication-based learning in increasing students' participation and self-confidence in speaking English.

The benefits of this research are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study can enrich the literature in the field of English language teaching, particularly regarding the application of CLT in improving speaking skills. Practically, this study is expected to serve as a reference for teachers in choosing more effective and communicative teaching methods, help students improve their speaking ability and self-confidence, and serve as a reference

for future researchers who wish to examine a similar topic.

B. Research Method

This research uses a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental method (quasi-experimental design). The design employed is a non-equivalent control group design, which involves two groups: an experimental class and a control class that were not chosen randomly. The experimental class was given treatment in the form of implementing the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method, while the control class was not given any treatment.

The population in this study comprised all seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 4, Kota Bengkulu. The study sample consisted of two classes: class VII.1 as the experimental group and class VII.2 as the control group. The sample was selected using purposive sampling based on certain considerations relevant to the research objectives.

Data were collected through speaking ability tests administered as a pre-test and a post-test. These tests aimed to measure students' speaking skills before and after the treatment. The assessment of speaking ability

included several aspects fluency, accuracy, and comprehension.

The research procedure began with administering a pre-test to both classes to determine students' initial abilities. Next, the experimental class received treatment using the CLT method through various communicative activities, such as discussions, role plays, and group work, while the control class followed instruction using conventional methods. After the treatment was completed, both classes were given a post-test to determine improvements in the students' speaking abilities.

The data obtained were then analyzed using inferential statistical analysis to test the research hypothesis. The tests used included tests for normality and homogeneity as prerequisites for analysis, as well as a t-test to determine significant differences between the experimental group and the control group. The hypothesis testing criteria were based on a significance value of < 0.05 .

C.Result and Discussion

The research results show that there was an improvement in students' speaking skills after the implementation of the Communicative

Language Teaching (CLT) method. In the experimental class, the students' average score increased from 53.39 on the pre-test to 63.97 on the post-test. Meanwhile, in the control class, the average score also increased from 47.91 to 56.66, but that increase was not as large as the one in the experimental class. This indicates that the use of the CLT method has a more effective impact compared to conventional teaching methods in improving students' speaking skills.

This improvement can be explained by the characteristics of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasize the use of language in real communicative contexts. Through activities such as discussions, role-plays, and group work, students have more opportunities to practice speaking actively, thereby improving their fluency, accuracy, and comprehension. These findings align with the theory put forward by Qasserras (2023), who explains that CLT focuses on interaction, negotiation of meaning, and the use of authentic communicative activities in learning. Furthermore, Qasserras (2023) emphasizes that repetitive communicative activities, supported

by adequate scaffolding and structured interaction, can help develop students' communicative competence optimally. Thus, the implementation of CLT in this study enabled students to engage directly in meaningful communication practice, which ultimately not only improved their speaking ability but also their confidence in expressing ideas orally.

Before conducting hypothesis testing, the data were first tested using prerequisite analysis tests. The results of the normality test show that the data are normally distributed.

1. Normality Test

Tests of Normality

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statis	df	Sig.	Statis	df	Sig.
hasil	pretest A (kontrol)	.110	32	.200 [*]	.962	32	.316
	posttest A (kontrol)	.090	32	.200 [*]	.979	32	.756
	pretest B (eksperimen)	.111	33	.200 [*]	.967	33	.402

posttest B (eksperimen)	.119	33	.200*	.940	33	.070
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*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The results of the normality tests show that the Shapiro Wilk significance values were 0.316 for the control group's pre-test, 0.756 for its post-test, 0.402 for the experimental group's pre-test, and 0.070 for its post-test. Since all these values exceed 0.05 (Sig. > 0.05), it can be concluded that both the pre-test and post-test data in the control and experimental groups are normally distributed. Therefore, the data meet the assumptions required for further statistical analysis.

2. Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test indicates that the variances of the two groups are homogeneous, which means the data come from populations with the same variance.

Test of Homogeneity of Variance					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
pre test	Based on Mean	1.765	1	63	.189

Based on Median	1.745	1	63	.191
Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.745	1	62.703	.191
Based on trimmed mean	1.754	1	63	.190

Based on the analysis, the results indicate $df_1 = 1$ and $df_2 = 63$, with significance values of 0.189 (based on the mean), 0.191 (based on the median), 0.191 (based on the median with adjusted degrees of freedom), and 0.190 (based on the trimmed mean). Since all these significance values are greater than 0.05 (Sig. > 0.05), it can be concluded that the variances of the pre-test scores in the control and experimental classes are homogeneous.

Test of Homogeneity of Variance					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
post test	Based on Mean	1.651	1	63	.204
	Based on Median	1.418	1	63	.238

Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.418	1	59.932	.238
Based on trimmed mean	1.628	1	63	.207

Based on the analysis, the results indicate $df_1 = 1$ and $df_2 = 63$, with significance values of 0.204 (based on the mean), 0.238 (based on the median), 0.238 (based on the median with adjusted degrees of freedom), and 0.207 (based on the trimmed mean). Since all these significance values are greater than 0.05 (Sig. > 0.05), it can be concluded

that the variances of the post-test scores in the control and experimental classes are homogeneous.

3. T-Test

Hypothesis testing was carried out using a t-test to determine the difference between the experimental class and the control class. The analysis results showed that the significance value was less than 0.05, so it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the two groups. Thus, the hypothesis stating that the CLT method affects students' speaking ability is accepted.

Independent Sample Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
POST-TEST	Equal variances assumed	1.651	.204	-3.602	63	.001	-7.313	2.031	11.371	-3.256
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.590	59.450	.001	-7.313	2.037	11.390	-3.237

Based on the table, Levene's test for equality of variances shows a significance value of 0.204 (> 0.05). This indicates that the variances of the two groups are homogeneous, so the t-test analysis refers to the "equal variances assumed" row. In that row, the t value is -3.602 with degrees of freedom (df) 63 and a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) < 0.001 . Because the significance value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. Thus, there is a significant difference in the mean posttest scores between the two classes. Therefore, it can be concluded that the implementation of

the Communicative Language Teaching method in the experimental class had a significant effect on improving speaking skills.

4. F-Test

The F-test was also used to reinforce the analysis results, which showed that there was a significant difference in variance between the two groups after the treatment. This further strengthens that the application of the CLT method has an effect on improving students' speaking skills.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: posttest

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	868.950 ^a	1	868.950	12.972	.001	.171
Intercept	236391.596	1	236391.596	3528.911	.000	.982
Group	868.950	1	868.950	12.972	.001	.171
Error	4220.188	63	66.987			
Total	241978.000	65				
Corrected Total	5089.138	64				

a. R Squared = .171 (Adjusted R Squared = .158)

Based on the table above, it is known that the F statistic for the group variable is 12.972 with a significance value < 0.001 . Because that

significance value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. This indicates that there is a

significant effect of differences in treatment groups on the posttest results. In other words, the variations in treatment given to each group have a real impact on the results obtained.

The results of this study indicate that the Communicative Language Teaching method is effective in improving students' speaking abilities. These findings support previous research which states that the communicative approach can increase student engagement, confidence, and active language skills. Therefore, the CLT method can be used as an alternative, more innovative and effective teaching strategy in English instruction, particularly in the development of speaking skills.

D. Conclusion

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method has a significant effect on improving the speaking skills of seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu. This is shown by an increase in the average student score in the experimental class from 53.39 to 63.97, which is higher compared to the

increase in the control class from 47.91 to 56.66. In addition, the statistical analysis results show a significance value of less than 0.05, which indicates that there is a significant difference between the two groups.

The improvement of students' speaking skills is closely related to the characteristics of CLT, which emphasize using language in real communicative contexts through various interactive activities. This approach gives students more opportunities to be active in communication, thereby improving fluency, accuracy, comprehension, and confidence in speaking. Thus, the CLT method has proven effective as an alternative teaching strategy for enhancing students' speaking skills.

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that English teachers apply the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method in the learning process, particularly to improve students' speaking skills, because this method has been proven to encourage active participation and enhance communication skills. Students are also expected to be more confident and active in participating in communicative learning activities, and

to take advantage of every opportunity to practice speaking in English. In addition, schools are expected to support the implementation of innovative teaching methods by providing facilities and a learning environment that are conducive to the development of students' communication skills. For future researchers, it is recommended to expand this study by examining the application of the CLT method to other language skills or at different educational levels, and to consider additional variables such as learning motivation, self-confidence, or other affective factors to obtain more comprehensive results.

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