

EXPLORING TEACHERS' STRATEGIES IN IMPLEMENTING COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING IN TEACHING SPEAKING

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ABSTRACT

Speaking is one of the most important skills in English language learning because it is the main means of communication. However, many students still struggle to use English actively because of limited opportunities to practice communication in the classroom. Therefore, this study aims to explore the teachers' strategies in implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in teaching speaking. This research was conducted because research on teachers' strategies in implementing CLT in teaching speaking at the junior high school level in Indonesia is still limited. This research used a qualitative descriptive approach and involved an English teacher at a junior high school in Karawang. Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews, then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and the drawing and conclusions. The results of the research indicate that teachers employed six main strategies: facilitating classroom interaction, encouraging student participation, creating a communicative learning environment, organizing communicative learning activities, providing feedback, and managing speaking activities. The most frequently used activities were pair work and paired dialogues. This research also identified several challenges, such as low student self-confidence, limited class time, and large class sizes. The findings suggest that the implementation of CLT can increase student engagement and provide more opportunities to develop English speaking ability.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), teacher strategies, teaching speaking, communicative activities, qualitative study.

ABSTRAK

Kemampuan berbicara merupakan salah satu keterampilan penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris karena menjadi sarana utama komunikasi. Namun, banyak siswa masih mengalami kesulitan dalam menggunakan bahasa Inggris secara aktif akibat terbatasnya kesempatan untuk berlatih berkomunikasi di kelas. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi strategi yang digunakan guru dalam mengimplementasikan pendekatan Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) pada pembelajaran berbicara. Penelitian ini dilakukan karena penelitian mengenai strategi guru dalam penerapan CLT pada pembelajaran speaking di tingkat sekolah menengah pertama di Indonesia masih terbatas. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan melibatkan seorang guru bahasa Inggris di salah satu SMP di Karawang. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas dan wawancara semi-terstruktur, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model analisis interaktif Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi

data, penyajian data, serta penarikan dan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru menerapkan enam strategi utama, yaitu memfasilitasi interaksi kelas, mendorong partisipasi siswa, menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang komunikatif, mengorganisasi aktivitas pembelajaran komunikatif, memberikan umpan balik, dan mengelola kegiatan berbicara. Aktivitas yang paling sering digunakan adalah pair work dan dialog berpasangan. Penelitian ini juga menemukan beberapa kendala, seperti rendahnya kepercayaan diri siswa, keterbatasan waktu pembelajaran, dan jumlah siswa yang besar di dalam kelas. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan CLT dapat meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa dan memberikan lebih banyak kesempatan untuk mengembangkan kemampuan berbicara bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), strategi guru, pembelajaran berbicara, aktivitas komunikatif, penelitian kualitatif.

A. Introduction

English is one of the most important international languages, playing a crucial role in global communication, education, technology, and various other aspects of life. Therefore, English has been designated as a required subject at every level of education to support the development of students' communication skills in the face of global developments (Lena et al., 2023). In English language learning, students are expected to master the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these four skills, speaking is particularly important because it allows students to convey ideas, opinions, and information to others directly. Speaking ability also serves

as an indicator of an individual's success in using language as a tool for communication.

However, in practice, many students still struggle to use their English speaking skills appropriately (Toro et al., 2020). Students in Indonesia tend to understand English language theory but still face difficulties in applying it in real-life communication because the learning process focuses more on theory and exams than on communicative language use (Ilyas et al., 2023). This situation is influenced by various factors, such as the dominant use of mother tongue, limited linguistic background, limited time, fear of making mistakes, feeling shy, and lack of student participation (Taddese, 2019). Furthermore, Asfaw et al.

(2021) state that a lack of focus on speaking activities, limited speaking practice, and ineffective classroom management also affect the implementation of speaking instruction in the classroom.

Based on these conditions, teachers need to implement learning strategies that encourage students to communicate actively. Lestari (2024) states that to support successful learning, teachers need to consider certain principles when designing speaking techniques, as these influence the success of the learning process by encouraging students to communicate more actively in the classroom. In line with this, Richards and Rodgers (2001) explain that speaking activities in language learning must involve authentic communication that allows students to actively use English through interaction and collaboration.

One approach considered to support the students' speaking abilities is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). According to Richards (2006), CLT is a set of principles in language teaching that includes language learning objectives, the process of language acquisition by students, types of classroom activities

that are effective in supporting learning, and the roles of teachers and students in learning activities. Furthermore, Richards and Rodgers (2014) state that CLT is based on the view that language is, in essence, a tool for communication. Therefore, the application of CLT can help students use language in real communicative contexts and improve their communicative competence in the target language (Nurdayani et al., 2024).

In line with these principles, based on the results of preliminary observations and interviews with English teachers at SMPN 2 Telukjambe Timur, it was found that teachers had tried to implement communicative learning through the use of dialogues, pair work, and encouraging the use of English in daily classroom activities. These various activities demonstrate the teachers' efforts to create a learning environment that supports interaction and the active use of English. However, several challenges still exist in practice, such as students' low confidence in using English, limited class time, and a large class size, which means that not all students can actively participate in speaking

activities. These conditions indicate that the implementation of CLT in the classroom requires specific strategies to ensure that communicative learning objectives are optimally achieved.

Previous research has investigated the application of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in speaking instruction. Adem and Berkessa (2022) examined teachers' practices in teaching speaking skills based on CLT principles. Nurdayani et al. (2024) discussed students' responses, challenges faced by teachers, and solutions in the application of CLT to speaking instruction. Rochmawati et al. (2024) investigated the effect of students' perceptions and attitudes on English language learning achievement in the implementation of CLT using a quantitative approach. Meanwhile, Laia (2024) focused on improving students' speaking skills through the CLT method using a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design. Additionally, Dewi et al. (2024) discuss the general application of the CLT method and student responses in speaking instruction. However, previous studies mostly focused on the effectiveness of CLT, students' responses, and speaking

achievement, while limited studies specifically explore how teachers implement communicative strategies during speaking instruction in Indonesian junior high school classroom.

Therefore, this research aims to explore teachers' strategies in implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in teaching speaking. This research focuses on identifying the communicative strategies and activities used by teachers in the classroom, as well as how these strategies are applied in the speaking learning process. Additionally, this research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how teachers facilitate student interaction and encourage students to actively communicate in English through communicative learning activities.

B. Research Method

This research employs a qualitative research method with a descriptive design. According to Nassaji (2015), descriptive qualitative focuses on describing a phenomenon and its main characteristics through the collection of rich and detailed data that reflect participants' opinions,

perspectives, and attitudes from various sources. In this study, the phenomenon examined is the use of the Communicative Language Teaching in teaching speaking. This design is appropriate because the research aims to explore and describe teachers' strategies in depth within real classroom contexts.

The research was conducted at SMPN 2 Telukjambe Timur, Karawang. The participant in this study was an English teacher who teaches seventh-grade students. The participant was selected through purposive sampling because the teacher had been applying the Communicative Language Teaching approach in teaching speaking skills.

Research data were collected using two methods: observation and semi-structured interviews. Observations were conducted to collect data on the implementation of CLT strategies used by teachers during the learning process. Observations were conducted in two classes: Class VII E and Class VII F. Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain more in-depth information regarding the strategies used by teachers, the reasons for using those strategies,

and the challenges faced in their implementation. The research instruments consisted of observation and interview guidelines adapted from the categories of teacher strategies in CLT implementation proposed by Nabilla et al. (2025) and aligned with the principles of CLT according to Richards (2006) and Richards and Rodgers (2014).

Data analysis in this research used Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive analysis model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing and conclusions. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selected, focused, and reduced the data collected from observations and interviews. Next, the reduced data were presented in narrative form based on categories of teacher strategies in implementing CLT. The final stage involved drawing and verifying conclusions to identify patterns and address the research focus on teachers' strategies in implementing Communicative Language Teaching in teaching speaking.

C. Results and Discussion

Facilitating Classroom Interaction

The research findings indicate that teachers facilitate classroom interaction by encouraging the use of English from the beginning of the lesson. Teachers begin the lesson with greeting and introduction activities and encourage students to use simple English expressions when asking for permission or interacting in class. In addition, teachers provide opportunities for students to engage in dialogues in pairs as a form of communicative interaction. However, observations indicate that some students still use Indonesian when communicating with their classmates.

The findings indicate that teachers have applied one of the key principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), namely creating interaction as a means of language use. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), interaction is a crucial element in CLT because it provides students with opportunities to use language as a tool for communication, rather than merely learning language structures.

Encouraging Student Participation

The results show that teachers tried to increase student participation through dialogue practice carried out in pairs. Teachers motivated students to have the courage to speak in English and asked them to memorize the dialogues before engaging in communication practice. This strategy aimed to help students become more confident when speaking.

However, observations revealed that not all students actively participated in speaking activities. Some students still appeared passive and lacked confidence in using English. This finding agrees with Richards and Rodgers (2014), who state that CLT positions students as active participants in the communication process, making student engagement a critical factor in successful learning.

Creating Communicative Learning Environment

Teachers create a communicative learning environment by encouraging students to use English in various daily classroom activities, such as greeting others, praying, introducing themselves, and asking for permission. This practice is

carried out consistently so that students become familiar with using English in situations related to their daily activities.

This finding agrees with Richards (2006), who states that language learning should provide students with opportunities to use the language in meaningful contexts. Through a communicative learning environment, students not only learn language rules but also develop communicative competence in their daily activities.

Organizing Communicative Learning Activities

The results of the research show that the communicative activities most frequently used by teachers are pair work and paired dialogues. Teachers divide students into small groups so that each student has the opportunity to practice speaking and interacting in English. These activities allow students to exchange information and communicate directly with each other.

The use of pair work is in line with the theory proposed by Richards and Rodgers (2014), which states that communicative activities such as pair work, group work, and role-play are key techniques in CLT because they

increase students' opportunities to use the target language during the learning process.

Providing Feedback

Teachers provide immediate feedback on students' pronunciation errors during speaking activities. Teachers correct inaccurate pronunciation and provide examples of correct pronunciation so that students can correct their mistakes. In addition, teachers often repeat the correct pronunciation of words or sentences during the learning process.

Providing feedback is one of the teacher's key roles in the CLT approach. Richards (2006) explains that teachers do not merely act as instructors, but also as facilitators who help students develop communicative skills through supportive guidance and correction.

Managing Speaking Activities

The research findings indicate that teachers manage speaking activities by providing clear instructions before the activity begins and arranging the time according to classroom conditions. However, teachers face challenges in the form of

limited class time and a large number of students, so that not all students have the opportunity to practice speaking in front of the class. In addition, students' low self-confidence also poses a challenge in the implementation of CLT.

These findings indicate that the success of CLT implementation is influenced not only by teachers' strategies but also by classroom conditions. These results support the research by Nabilla et al. (2025), which states that CLT implementation is influenced by factors such as student characteristics, class size, and the management of instructional time.

D. Conclusion

This research shows that teachers have implemented Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in teaching speaking through six main strategies: facilitating classroom interaction, encouraging student participation, creating a communicative learning environment, organizing communicative learning activities, providing feedback, and managing speaking activities. These strategies were applied through the use of greetings, pair work, encouraging the use of English in

classroom activities, providing feedback on pronunciation errors, and managing speaking activities according to the learning conditions. The research findings indicate that these strategies have supported the creation of a more communicative learning environment and provided students with opportunities to actively use English in the learning process.

However, the implementation of CLT still faces several challenges, such as low student self-confidence, limited class time, and relatively large class sizes, which mean that not all students have the same opportunity to participate in speaking activities. Therefore, teachers are advised to continue developing a variety of communicative activities that can increase the engagement of all students and to manage class time more effectively. Furthermore, future research is recommended to involve more participants and different school contexts, as well as to examine the implementation of CLT from the students' perspective, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' strategies in implementing Communicative Language Teaching in teaching speaking.

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