

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT) IN ENGLISH SPEAKING INTENSIVE PROGRAM

Rizky Vita Losi¹, Muhammad Muslim Nasution²

University of Pembangunan Panca Budi, Medan, Indonesia

University of Medan Area, Medan, Indonesia

rizkyvitalosi@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id

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Abstract

University students had difficulty with communicative skills, and they must engage in discussion situations in EFL class without adequate skills to speak or write in English. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) can play an essential role in EFL classes. This study surveyed the students' attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in an English-speaking intensive program. Fifteen university students responded to a 20-statement questionnaire as the data. The data was analyzed by using SPSS 20.0 program. The research findings revealed that the students showed positive attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The students' felt excited about learning through communicative activities, such as pair and group work, role play, games, etc. This learning satisfaction impacted their willingness to communicate in English. They were also motivated to communicate in English in their class even though they found it was not easy to use CLT, but they kept practising independently. Furthermore, it can be concluded that learning through CLT enabled students to communicate meaningfully, and their attitudes about these communication activities were positively impacted.

Keywords— Communicative Language Teaching (CLT); English Speaking Intensive Program; Language Attitude.

Introduction

English is regarded as the current method of communication in Indonesia since it is the most emphasized foreign language. In contrast, given the traditional or historical status of the Indonesian language, it plays a critical role in connecting the country and vernacular languages (Lie, 2017). Even though English is not used in regular communication, it is used in a few areas in Indonesia, such as foreign corporations, educational institutions, and foreign offices. Thus, it is heartening that today's culture is beginning to appreciate studying English, not just for its role in knowledge, science, and technology, but also for economic and professional growth (Gunantar, 2016).

Despite having studied English for years, many students still struggle to communicate in English, mainly when speaking, which frequently needs them to express their thoughts orally, and other skills (Abrar et al., 2018). Due to the obstacles, insufficient learning tools, and limited time and opportunity for practice, many students are rarely motivated to study English. The same problems even happen to university students. Furthermore, the student's motivation is an essential factor that English lecturers must cultivate to engage them in English teaching and learning (Jon et al., 2021).

In university life, English is considered the primary language that university students should master since they are learning in higher education. University students must be involved in any scientific activities, such as writing scientific articles, joining the debate, getting

scholarships or student exchange programs, etc. Speaking English is the most complex and complicated of four skills because it involves knowledge and exposure to the target language. A variety of issues have been identified as being responsible for poor speaking skills among EFL learners in general. Their English skills are still low (Soomro & Farooq, 2018). They can not communicate in English even in their daily life. Interacting in EFL class is even getting worse. They can not convey their opinion or idea in total and complete sentences. If they can do it, it will show many more grammatical errors. Lastly, they are not eager to speak English. The lecturers also keep teaching English monotonous and not practical teaching and learning.

Language teaching strategies are highly crucial for learning and teaching any language. English lecturers can employ various teaching strategies to make their lessons more entertaining and meaningful. Grammar Translation Method (GLT), Direct Method (DM), Audio Lingual Method (ALM), Situational Language Teaching (SLT), and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) are the five types of teaching methodologies. Among them, CLT is one of the most successful approaches for developing communicative competence and one of the most popular and extensively utilized. CLT has been used in EFL settings to increase students' capacity to utilize English in real-world scenarios in order to compensate for the limitations of traditional language teaching approaches. CLT promotes instructional approaches that foster communicative skills in natural settings. However, CLT ideas and practices have encountered a number of obstacles in EFL situations (Ansarey, 2012).

Communicative language teaching (CLT) was utilized to assist students enrolled in the "English in Media" course with their language learning. This course is aimed to teach students about the use of the English language (both text and conversation) in media such as movies, music, periodicals, and dramas. To strengthen the students' listening and speaking abilities, a communicative teaching method was used, and a range of interactive language activities was developed and performed in class. Students learn English through various engaging activities, and there are additional chores for them to complete in class. They, for example, not only learn a range of conversational themes, but they also role-play based on what they have already learned (Komol & Suwanphathama, 2020).

The impacts of applying the CLT approach on improving students' performance, oral interaction, verbal communication methods, and minimizing their challenges in speaking skills were investigated in the current study. As a result, this study investigates students' attitudes on CLT, proposing that their perspectives be taken into account in decisions about CLT integration into the EFL education system. As a result, the fundamental goal of CLT is to help students create meaning rather than develop grammatical structures or acquire native-like sounds. This indicates that studying a foreign language is determined by how well students have developed their communication skills and their ability to use their English language knowledge in real-life settings (Ansarey, 2012).

Literature Review

Language Attitude

The word 'attitudes' is used in this study to refer to participants' dispositions to accept or reject ideas by stating whether or not they feel favorably toward specific ideas or views (Ngoc, 2012). Attitudes appear to impact students' success or failure in communicative competence, revealing that they play a critical role in language learning. A positive attitude is also thought to facilitate foreign language acquisition, whereas a negative attitude acts as a psychological obstacle.

Attitude toward a language refers to a person's mental attitude or feelings regarding the position of their own or other people's languages. If learners have positive attitudes about language development, they will be satisfied with the learning process. Positive attitudes contribute to increasing language skills. On the other hand, negative attitudes have an unfavorable impact on students' impressions. Furthermore, the lecturer and the approach impact students' attitudes in the classroom (Amin, 2020).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)



As the name implies, the Communicative Approach views language learning as a whole, utilizing a variety of situations to help students communicate effectively (Sabrina, 2020). Because its ideas reflect a communicative perspective of language learning, CLT is considered an approach rather than a strategy. Many countries have implemented Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) into their English language curricula. Lecturers put up a context and initiate an activity, but it is the students' responsibility to see the engagement through to completion. They are in charge of their learning. Learners have a significant monitoring function, which they may apply subjectively to their language. The student can offer feedback to others on his engagement with the curriculum's unique objective. Learners in a CLT class have the chance to show their personalities and share their thoughts and opinions (Tekliuk, 2020).

Brainstorming, information gap, role plays, think-pair-share, interviews, problem-solving tasks, group discussion, jigsaws, games, challenges, and other well-known communicative activities are often used in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) classrooms. Interactions, functions, meanings, dynamics, issues, task orientation, and authenticity are connected with communication activities (Ho, 2020).

This theory encompasses a wide range of abilities: knowledge of grammar and vocabulary (linguistic competence); the ability to say the right thing in a given social situation (sociolinguistic competence); the ability to introduce, enter, contribute to, and end a conversation, and to do so consistently and coherently (discourse competence); the ability to communicate effectively and repair problems caused by communication breakdowns (communication competence) (Brandl, 2021).

CLT is more of a student-centered approach than a lecturer/teacher-centered one. The role of a lecturer in the classroom is to facilitate student communication through a practical learning assignment. Students are usually permitted to engage and contribute with one another. The role of a lecturer in the classroom is to facilitate student communication through a practical learning assignment. Students can usually engage with one another, discuss and trade peer assessments, and contribute to one another's projects.

Many CLT advocates, for example, utilize role-play activities (Tweedie & Johnson, 2018), presentations between groups and classmates (Dimond-Bayir, Russell, Blackwell, & Flores, 2017), problem-based learning (Cintra & Bittencourt, 2015), technologically assisted strategies, and visual-only video teaching strategies.

The CLT approach continually encourages educators and learners to look for teaching and learning resources and tools in their communities, surroundings, and civilizations. For example, the recent research (Santos, 2019) revealed that lecturers could develop visual-based teaching and learning resources utilizing students' communities as a source. Some of the exciting and up-to-date teaching and learning materials that allow students to interact and speak about their everyday lives with their classmates include material from communities such as city halls, school buildings, mayors, shopping malls, and school residential dorms (Miguel & Santos, 2020).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) aims to improve learners' communicative competence in listening, speaking, reading, writing, nonverbal interactions, and all other aspects of communicative competence. Students all demand grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, cultural awareness, social position, interpersonal skills, coherence, cohesiveness, background knowledge, and meanings beyond the sentences (Ho, 2020).

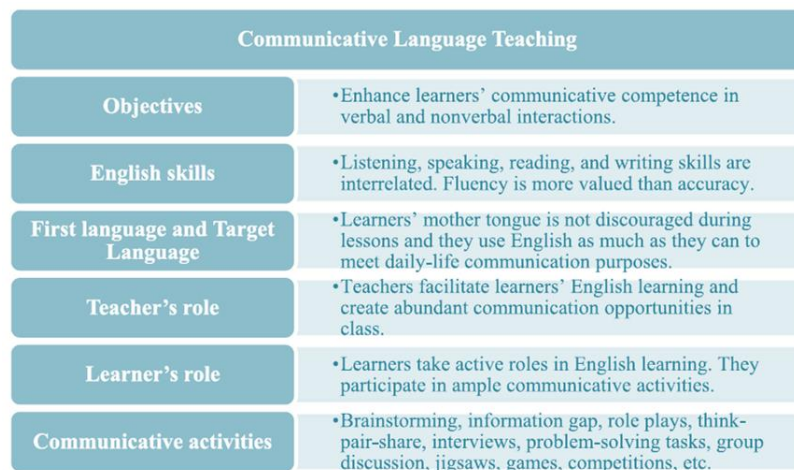


Figure 1. Framework of the CLT

Note. Adopted from Ho (2020)

When compared to other approaches, adopting CLT in teaching-learning speaking is seen to have several beneficial impacts. They say that by using this approach, a lecturer may encourage her students to practice the language through trial and error. They are required to engage with one another, either individually, in pairs, or groups (Yasin et al., 2017).

English Speaking Intensive Program

The English speaking intensive program is an EFL class held by the Language Center of University of Medan Area to enhance students' English skills, especially communicative skills. The students are involved in improving their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The students come from various study programs, and they are also from different backgrounds and levels in English teaching and learning. This class limits the participants and learning meetings, and this program will run in several batches to achieve the goal of improving students' English skills.

Research Method

Research Design

This research was a descriptive quantitative study. This study aimed to examine students' attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in an English speaking intensive program held by the Language Center of University of Medan Area. Descriptive designs are non-experimental because they doesn't require an intervention or treatment. They generally aim to provide information about key parameters without testing hypotheses (Sheean et al., 2011).

Participants

The participants were students from University of Medan Area, Indonesia. The participants, aged 18 to 22, studied in various study programs from different faculties. Fifteen students were taught intensively for almost two weeks in in-person meetings, and they were taught listening, speaking, reading, and writing materials in CLT.

Data Collection and Analysis

The written survey questionnaire used in this study was given to the students after experiencing EFL class using CLT in two weeks. A 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire was developed by adapting questions from different surveys on attitudes toward CLT in various studies. The questionnaire consisted of 20 statements, and the scale was interpreted as 1 for "strongly disagree", 2 for "disagree", 3 for "neutral", 4 for "agree", and 5 for "strongly agree". The data were interpreted on its Mean as follows: strongly disagree (1.00-2.19), disagree (2.20-3.39), neutral (3.40-4.59), agree (4.60-5.79), and strongly agree (5.80-7.00) (Gamble, 2013).

The first part of the survey explored the students’ attitudes regarding CLT. The second part of the survey questionnaire included questions related to the implementation of CLT in an English speaking intensive program in their class.

Some activities were done to obtain required information from the students, such as brainstorming, information gap, role plays, think-pair-share, interviews, problem-solving tasks, group discussion, jigsaws, and games.

The survey questionnaire was analyzed by SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) 20.0 program. Frequency calculations (i.e., how many students selected each answer) were used to produce descriptive central tendency statistics to comprehensively explain students’ attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in an English-speaking intensive program.

Results and Discussion

Result

To reveal more profound aspects of students' attitudes, the researchers administered the questionnaire after participating in an intense English speaking program to improve their English abilities for several weeks. The results of the questionnaire are seen in Table 1. Fifteen students completed it. The table provided their responses to the questionnaire statements in this calculation.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Students’ Attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in English Speaking Intensive Program

No.	Items	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
1	The topics and the content of CTL activities suit your needs.	15	1	5	1.6	0.51	0.26
2	The CTL activities are varied, enjoyable, and fun.	15	1	5	4.47	0.64	0.41
3	The content of CTL activities and the activities themselves are suitable for your proficiency level.	15	1	5	3.67	0.49	0.24
4	The procedure of using CTL activities is clear	15	1	5	3.67	0.49	0.24
5	The CTL activities are interesting.	15	1	5	4.73	0.46	0.21
6	The pictures provided in the CTL activities help you understand the activities.	15	1	5	4.2	0.41	0.17
7	The CTL activities are challenging.	15	1	5	3.6	0.51	0.26
8	The CTL activities motivate you to speak English.	15	1	5	4.4	0.51	0.26
9	You understand the purpose of CTL activities clearly.	15	1	5	3.93	0.59	0.35
10	The CTL activities are appropriate for using in EFL class.	15	1	5	4.13	0.64	0.41
11	I think using role-play as a way to promote English speaking is useful method of learning English.	15	1	5	4.47	0.52	0.27
12	I think using group discussion is very useful to help me to be more creative.	15	1	5	4.53	0.52	0.27
13	I hope that the lecturer will implement this teaching method in other English classes.	15	1	5	3.13	0.92	0.84

14	I will use this communicative language learning to practice English in my own time.	15	1	5	4.33	0.49	0.24
15	Even though, this method takes me much time to practice by my own, I will continue using it.	15	1	5	4.13	0.74	0.55
16	Even though role-play activities take me a lot of time to recite lines of the dialogue, it helps me to improve my speaking skill.	15	1	5	4.13	0.83	0.7
17	Even though, role-play activities take me a lot of time to recite lines of the dialogue, it helps me to improve my listening skill.	15	1	5	4.2	0.56	0.31
18	I hope that the lecturer will assign the students in other English classes to make a video since it is very useful for them to write their own English script as a way to improve English ability.	15	1	5	1.6	0.52	0.27
19	It takes me a long time to make a video but I really enjoyed doing it.	15	1	5	4.47	0.51	0.26
20	I can apply all activities for my other English subjects since those activities are very useful for me to improve my English listening and speaking skills.	15	1	5	1.47	0.52	0.27

Adapted from (Rezalou, 2021) and (Komol & Suwanphathama, 2020)

'Agree' and 'strongly agree' responses were interpreted as students' positive attitudes toward CLT in English speaking intensive program from the questionnaire item. The 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' responses were interpreted as students' negative attitudes on CLT in an English-speaking intensive program from the questionnaire item.

Some items in Table 1 showed high mean scores of students' attitudes toward CLT in an English speaking intensive program. The mean score of questionnaire items revealed that item 2 was about students' agreement about CLT activities that were varied, enjoyable, and fun (4.47). Item 5 was about students' agreement about interesting CLT activities (4.73). Item 6 was about students' agreement about CLT activities that were supported by pictures which help students to understand it (4.2). Item 8 was about students' agreement about CLT activities that motivated students to speak English (4.4). Item 10 was about students' agreement about CLT activities appropriate for EFL class (4.13). Item 11 was about role-playing in CLT activities, promoting English speaking in EFL class (4.47). Item 12 was about group discussion that was very useful to help students become more creative (4.53). Item 14 was about students' agreement to practice independently by using CLT activities (4.33). Item 15 was about students' agreement to continue CLT activities independently (4.13). Item 16 and 17 were about students' agreement that reading English dialogues in CLT activities could improve their speaking and listening skills (4.13 and 4.2). Lastly, item 19 was about students' interest in making a video in CTL activities (4.47).

Discussion

The interpretation of the research results showed that twelve statements were found to be positive attitudes since many students' responses were rated as 'agree' (4.60-5.79) and 'strongly agree' (5.80-7.00). From those statements, two key points could be discussed related to

students' attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching (CTL) in an English-speaking intensive program.

Firstly, students showed a positive attitude toward CLT activities in the English speaking intensive program since they had varied, enjoyable, and fun learning. Through pair and group work, presenting ideas, role-play, and storytelling, all of those activities can improve students' skills, particularly in listening and speaking skills. They thought that CTL activities could motivate them to speak English, and they did not hesitate to practice it on their own continuously.

A positive attitude and increased motivation are potent elements in improving students' language skills. These exercises were beneficial in earning the students' pleasure in all areas. The majority of students said these activities were enjoyable, fascinating, and inspiring. All concepts and activity designs were acceptable for the students' competence levels. Furthermore, most of the students said that these activities boosted their willingness to speak English. The findings of this study also supported Rezalou's studies (2021). They revealed that learning through communicative activities encouraged students to communicate meaningfully, and their attitudes toward engaging these activities in the classroom were positively impacted.

Secondly, students also showed a positive attitude towards CLT activities in group discussion, role-play, and making videos. All of those activities were considered successful in boosting students' motivation and creativity to improve their skills. It was difficult for the students, but they kept trying and doing their best to practice it. The result of this research pointed out that the majority of the students had positive attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in an English speaking intensive program, which was in line with the findings of Yang (2010), Soleimani & Hanafi (2013), and (Rukh, 2014).

Conclusion

This descriptive research represented students' attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The findings of this study confirmed that students value CLT classroom activities to complement the EFL class. The students found that learning English was acceptable for them, and they agreed that the vast number and diversity of classroom activities supplied by lecturers might be used to enhance their class content and self-study. The students also believed that this CLT increased their confidence and helped them develop their listening and speaking skills.

Students should practice spoken language to improve their speaking skills. Engaging students in classroom activities is essential for having suitable speaking classes. Lecturers should not overlook the importance of listening to students' voices in the classroom. Appropriate strategies for giving successful speaking lessons should be chosen.

Every time, practice is beneficial for optimal learning. As a result, EFL lecturers should encourage students to practice speaking as often as possible, and students should spend a significant amount of time developing their conversation skills. To do this, they can work in pairs and small groups to practice speaking as an efficient approach of stimulating engagement among students in the CLT classroom.

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