☼   33

The CLT Approach and Its Influence on Speaking Proficiency

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	The objective of this study is to investigate the influence of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach on the speaking ability of first-grade students. A quantitative method was employed, specifically a quasi-experimental design. There were two classes selected: one as the experimental group (X) and the other as the control group (Y). The participants were the first-grade students of SMAN 2 Kupang in the 2024/2025 academic year. Class A and Class B were chosen as the samples using purposive sampling. A questionnaire was administered to assess the perceptions of the experimental group regarding the implementation of the CLT approach. In addition, tests were conducted to measure students' progress in speaking ability, and classroom observations were carried out to monitor student engagement during the application of the CLT approach. Based on the comparison between pre-test and post-test results, students' post-test scores were higher than their pre-test scores. The results of the hypothesis testing showed that the calculated t-value is 12.503, which exceeded the critical t-value of 1.701 ($t_a \geq t_t$). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. These findings indicated that the implementation of the CLT approach was effective in improving the speaking ability of first-grade students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language plays a fundamental role in enabling humans to communicate and interact with one another. Richards and Schmidt (2010: 311) describe language as a communication system that consists of structured arrangements of sounds, forming larger units such as morphemes, words, sentences, and utterances. Among the many languages spoken globally, English holds a prominent place as an international language. As Patel and Jain (2008: 6) suggest, English serves as a global lingua franca, facilitating cross-cultural communication and playing a vital role in education and various aspects of national life.

Despite its significance, learning English as a foreign language poses greater challenges than acquiring a first or national language. Lohithakshan (2002: 235) notes that learning involves behavioral change resulting from sustained experience, such as speaking, singing, or writing. In this context, learning a foreign language entail internalizing vocabulary, grammar, and communicative norms. English language teaching, therefore, is framed within the broader discipline of second or foreign language instruction, which, according to Johnston (2003: 1), primarily focuses on the mental process of language acquisition. Gutteridge (2000: 2) emphasizes that English teaching involves both what is taught and how it is taught, underlining the importance of interaction and communication between teachers and students.

In Indonesia, particularly in schools such as Public Senior High School 2 Kupang, students still face significant challenges in speaking English confidently and fluently. Classroom observations revealed a predominance of teacher-centered methods, with limited opportunities for meaningful communication or authentic language use. Students often memorize vocabulary and grammatical structures without engaging in real-life language practice as it is aligned with a study conducted by Arochman, et al. (2023); Masitoh et al. (2025). As a result, many of them experience anxiety and low motivation when speaking in English, especially during class discussions or oral examinations. This condition is exacerbated by limited exposure to English outside the classroom, making it difficult for students to develop communicative competence. These ongoing challenges underscore the need to adopt more effective, interactive approaches to English teaching.

One such approach is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which shifts the focus from form-based instruction to meaningful communication. Harmer (2001: 84) characterizes CLT as a set of beliefs that prioritize how language is taught rather than just what is taught. Pollard (2008: 20) points out that CLT emphasizes real communication, rooted in the belief that language is best acquired through use rather than rule memorization. In line with this, Banciu and Jireghie (2012: 94) describe CLT as comprising several core principles, which Nunan (1991) elaborates as: promoting interaction in the target language, integrating authentic materials, encouraging learner autonomy, drawing from learners' personal experiences, and connecting classroom learning to real-world language use.

Further reinforcing this, Nunan (in Patel & Jain, 2008: 94) identifies CLT as a learner-centered approach that not only enhances grammatical competence but also develops social skills essential for real-world communication. According to Patel and Jain (2008: 98–100), CLT is beneficial because it focuses on communicative competence, fosters a communicative classroom environment, and is adapted to students' mental and emotional needs. As Richards (2006: 5) explains, CLT redefines classroom roles, where teachers become facilitators rather than sole knowledge providers, and students engage more actively and collaboratively in their learning.

Terkait implemetasi CLT terhadap peningkatan kemampuan speaking siswa, sebuah penelitian terdahulu yang dilakukan oleh Mangaleswaran & Aziz (2019) menyebutkan bahwa terdapat a slight increase in the students overall speaking skills after CLT implementation. The CLT implementation was disrupted due to the lack of facilities and focus on exams. Moreover, it was found that the students still lack of appropriate words and grammar during the speaking practices, and the teacher's roles as the facilitator, the guide and the corrector of their weaknesses in speaking were highly recommended. Penelitian terkait lainnya dilakukan oleh Fauzi & Ridwan (2025) menjelaskan bahwa the CLT significantly improved students' speaking proficiency by fostering an interactive learning environment where learners actively engage in real-life communicative tasks. Key improvements were observed in students' ability to articulate thoughts, use appropriate vocabulary, and interact effectively in various conversational context. Moreover, a related study conducted by Nggawu & Thao (2023) revealed that the incorporation of CLT in the speaking class positively impacts the speaking abilities of both introverted and extroverted students. However, a slight distinction can be observed in terms of the extent of improvement between the two groups, with the extrovert class showing a more notable progress. Recognizing and accommodating the diverse learning styles and preferences of students can help create a comprehensive and inclusive learning environment that fosters growth and development for all learners, regardless of their personality traits

Several previous studies have shown varying results regarding the implementation of CLT in enhancing students' speaking skills. A study conducted by Mangaleswaran and Aziz (2019) reported a slight increase in students' overall speaking performance after applying CLT. However, the implementation was hindered by limited facilities and an academic focus on exams. Moreover, students continued to struggle with selecting appropriate vocabulary and using correct grammar during speaking activities. As a result, the teacher's role as a facilitator, guide, and error corrector was seen as crucial in supporting students' speaking development.

In contrast, a study by Fauzi and Ridwan (2025) found that CLT significantly improved students' speaking proficiency by fostering an interactive learning environment where learners actively engaged in real-life communicative tasks. Notable improvements were observed in students' ability to articulate ideas, use appropriate vocabulary, and engage effectively in various conversational contexts. Additionally, a study by Nggawu and Thao (2023) revealed that the incorporation of CLT positively influenced the speaking abilities of both introverted and extroverted students. However, a slight difference in improvement levels was noted, with extroverted students showing more substantial progress. These findings highlight the importance of recognizing and accommodating diverse learner characteristics to build an inclusive classroom environment that supports the development of all students, regardless of personality type.

Considering these findings, it is essential to conduct this research in the context of Public Senior High School 2 Kupang to determine the extent to which CLT can enhance students' speaking ability within the specific socio-educational setting of the region. This study seeks to offer insights into the local implementation of CLT and inform teaching strategies that are better suited to the students' needs and challenges. To achieve this objective, the study formulated the following hypotheses:

- **H₀ (Null Hypothesis):** The implementation of the CLT approach does not have a significant effect on the speaking abilities.
- **Hₐ (Alternative Hypothesis):** The implementation of the CLT approach has a significant effect on the speaking abilities.

2.   METHODS

The study was conducted for 3 weeks that 3 meetings in each week, it was starting at 26th January to 08th February 2025. The place of conducting this research was at Public Senior High School 2 Kupang in front of the Mayor of Kupang City, at Sk. Lerik Street. The Public Senior High School 2 Kupang is located in Kelapa Lima sub-district.

This study focused on applying quantitative method which was specified on the experimental research, particularly quasi-experiment. In this design, the researcher took two classes as an experimental group (X) and control group (Y). The researcher gave a test for both classes to gain the data. The implementation of CLT approach in the experimental group as (X) while the researcher did not apply the Communicative Language Teaching in the control group (Y).

The population of this research were all the students in first grade. The first-grade students in the Public Senior High School 2 Kupang divided into 15 classes, they were 15 students in each class, and the population taken by the researcher in conducting this research was 545 students. Therefore, the sample in conducting this research was 30 students from two classes, namely class A and B with each class had 15 students. In this research, the researcher took the sample based on the purposive sampling. Ary, et al., (2010: 156) argued that purposive sampling also referred to as judgment sampling sample elements judged to be typical, or representative, are chosen from the population. The data collecting technique of this research was;

a)   Questionnaire

In conducting this research, the questionnaire used in order to gain the students' perception or opinion about the CLT approach implementation in teaching Speaking. while, the questionnaire only given to the experimental class.

b)   Observation

In conducting this research, the researcher used the observation to know the student's activity in the classroom process in both classes based on the indicators in the observation sheet (see appendix 3).

c)   Test

A test, in simple terms, is a method of measuring a Pearson's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain" (Brown, 2003: 3). There were two tests given in conducting this research. Those tests were pre-test and post-test.

1)   Pre-test

Pre-test given to know the basic understanding of student's speaking before giving treatment to both groups.

The researcher gave the students speaking test about complementing expression.

2)   Post-test

post-test was given after treatment for the experimental class and regular teaching for control group, it aimed to compare whether the method used was effective or not and to compare the score between two groups used as object of research.

How to make an instrument was the measurement of the cognitive by using the testing technique. Some steps had done to arrange the cognitive instrument. In this research, the researcher had some steps in arranging the cognitive test.

a)   The material selection based on the basic competences in curriculum. It was about the complementing expression

b)   Indicator arrangement and learning purpose of cognitive so the instrument could be more specified and purposed.

The assessment arrangement might be appropriate to the indicator, which expected. The questions in the test given were covering six levels of cognitive skill. Those skills were; C1 (remembering), C2 (understanding), C3 (implementing), C4 (analyzing), C5 (scoring), and C6 (creating).

Data analysis is to indicate how you will analyze the data to test the hypothesis and/or answer the research question (Ary *et al,* 2010: 95). The formulas used in analyzing this research were mean, variance testing, prerequisite testing (normality and the homogeneity testing), and the hypothesis testing.

a)   Mean

$$M = \frac{\Sigma X}{N}$$

Where:

M   : Mean

X   : Total Score

N   : Total Sample

(Sarwono, 2006: 140).

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b) Variance

   1) Variance X_2 ($Sx1$):

$$Sx = \frac{\sum(x-\bar{x})^2}{n-1}$$

   2) Variance Y_2 (Sy):

$$Sy = \frac{\sum(y-\bar{y})^2}{n-1}$$

Where:

x and y = total score

$\bar{x}$ and $\bar{y}$ = score of mean

N = total sample

<div align="right">(Sarwono, 2006: 150)</div>

c) Prerequisite testing
Generally, the prerequisite testing that used to test the merged of two samples was the normality test and the homogeneity test. The prerequisite testing can be found by using the statistic of IBM SPSS software.

   1) Normality Testing

$$X^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{k} \frac{(o_{i-}e_i)}{e_i} \sim X^2 (k-3)$$

<div align="right">(Budiyono, 2009: 168)</div>

If *sig.* score of the normality test was higher than α (*sig. > 0.050*) then H_0 was accepted, so it can be said that the data distributed normally.

   2) Homogeneity Testing

$$S_p{}^2 = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{k}(n_k-1)s_i^2}{N-k}$$

<div align="right">(Budiyono, 2009: 174)</div>

The decision for this test was if the score of *sig.* of homogeneity testing was higher than α (*sig. > α*) then H_a is accepted, so it could be said that the data was homogeneity.

d) Hypothesis testing
In this part, the writer uses variable x and y in *t-test*. The *t-test* used in this research was 2 independent variable t-test. The formula of *t-test* is as follow:

$$T_{test} = \frac{(\bar{X}1 - \bar{X}2)}{S_p\sqrt{\frac{1}{n_1} - \frac{1}{n_2}}}$$

Where:

t   =t-test

$\bar{x}1$ and $\bar{x}2$ = mean

n 1 and n 2 = Total Samples

<div align="right">(Budiyono, 2009: 157)</div>

    T-test was compared with *t-table* based on the determined Constanta (α= 0.5%). Then, the decision about hypothesis testing made according to the following criterion: If *t-test > t-table*. Ha was accepted If *t-test < t-table*. Ha was refused.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

    The questionnaire gave to the students in experimental class that showed how they gave their opinion or perspective about the implementation of CLT approach can increase their motivation in learning English. There were 5 (33.3%) out of 15 students had the perception that the implementation of CLT was very good approach,

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while there were 10 (66.7%) out of 15 students had the perception that the implementation of CLT was a good approach for learning English. The students' speaking scores had been gotten by giving the students dialogue test in pair. The following table presented the result of prerequisite test of the variable before conduct the test of hypothesis.

Table 1. The Test of Normality and Homogeneity in the Pretest between Experimental and Control Class

| | Normality Test | | | | | | Homogeneity Test | | | |
| | Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a] | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | | | | | |
	Sta	df	Sig.	Sta	df	Sig.	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Exprmnt	.141	15	.200*	.974	15	.908	.030	1	28	.864
Control	.161	15	.200*	.902	15	.103				

Table 2. The Test of Normality and Homogeneity in the Posttest between Experimental and Control Class

| | Normality Test | | | | | | Homogeneity Test | | | |
| Group | Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a] | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | | | | | |
	Sta	df	Sig.	Sta	df	Sig.	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Experiment	.104	15	.200*	.955	15	.612	2.635	1	28	.116
control	.152	15	.200*	.923	15	.211				

Table 3. The Test of Normality and Homogeneity in the Experimental Class between the Pretest and Posttest

| | | Normality Test | | | | | | Homogeneity Test | | | |
| | Test | Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a] | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | | | | | |
		Sta	df	Sig.	Sta	df	Sig.	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Score	Pre	.141	15	.200*	.974	15	.908	2.635	1	28	.116
	Post	.104	15	.200*	.955	15	.612				

Pre-Test

In this part, pre-test was used to know the basic ability of the students especially speaking ability before any treatment was given to the experimental class. Meanwhile, this test was provided to both classes, as it seen in table 4.

Experimental Class

The pre-test in experimental class showed that there were 5 (33.3%) out of 15 students categorized in fair, while 8 (53.3%) out of the 15 students categorized in poor level, and the last was 2 (13.3%) out of 15 students categorized in very poor level.

Control Class

The pre-test in control class showed that there were 9 (60.0%) out of 15 students categorized in poor level, while 6 (40.0%) out of the students categorized in very poor level.

Table 4. Tabulation of Speaking Pretest Result

| | | Experimental Class | | | Control Class | | | |
		F	%	Cumulative Percent		F	%	Cumulative Percent
Valid	fair	5	33.3	33.3	fair	-	-	-
	Poor	8	53.3	86.7	Poor	9	60.0	60.0
	Very Poor	2	13.3	100.0	very poor	6	40.0	100.0
	Total	15	100.0		Total	15	100.0	

Post-test

The post-test given in order to know the influence of students' ability of speaking after giving the treatment by applying the CLT approach to experimental class and no treatment given to the control class or the researcher did not apply the CLT approach in the control class.

Experimental class

There were 13 (86.7%) out of 15 students' category in very good level of speaking ability, and there were 2 (13.3%) out of 15 students' category in good level of speaking ability.

Control Class

There were 13 out of 15 students (86.7%) were categorized in fair, and there were 2 students (13.3%) were poor ability level of speaking. Considering the aims of the study, then the scores of the students of the experimental class in the pre-test and post-test in the teaching and learning process is presented in the following table.

Table 5. The Tabulation of Students' Speaking Score of Posttest

		Experimental Class				Control Class		
		F	%	Cumulative Percent		F	%	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very good	13	86.7	86.7	fair	13	86.7	86.7
	good	2	13.3	100.0	poor	2	13.3	100.0
	Total	15	100.0		Total	15	100.0	

Computing Variance

1. Variance x_1 (Sx_1)

$$Sx = \frac{\sum(x-\bar{x})^2}{n-1}$$
$$Sx = \frac{763.73}{14} = 54.46$$

2. Variance x_2 (Sx_2)

$$Sx = \frac{\sum(x-\bar{x})^2}{n-1}$$
$$Sx = \frac{101.73}{14} = 7.267$$

Mean

1. $\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{N} = \frac{832}{15} = 55.46$

2. $\bar{y} = \frac{\sum y}{N} = \frac{1228}{15} = 81.86$

Normality Testing

The significance scores of experimental classes in the pre-test and the post-test, the point of experimental class either in the pre-test or the post-test was 0.200. Hence, it could be concluded that both group of tests were distributed normally, because the score 0.200 was higher than 0.05 (see table in 1, 2, dan 3).

Normality Testing

The significance was 0.116. Because of the significance gotten was higher than 0.05. Thus, it could be concluded that the two data in the experimental class between the pre-test and the post-test above had the same variance. The score of Statistic Levene showed that the df1= the total group data – 1 or 2-1. While df2 = the total data – the data of group total or 30 – 2 = 28 (see table 1, 2, dan 3).

Hypothesis Testing

$$T_{test} = \frac{(\bar{X}1 - \bar{X}2)}{S_p\sqrt{\frac{1}{n_1} - \frac{1}{n_2}}}$$

$$S_p = \frac{(14)\,54.55 + (14)7.267}{\sqrt{28 \cdot 2}}$$

$$= \frac{763.7 + 101.73}{\sqrt{26}}$$

$$= \frac{865.43}{\sqrt{26}} = \sqrt{33.28} = 5.768$$

$$t = \frac{55.466 - 81.46}{5.768\sqrt{0.06 + 0.06}}$$

$$= \frac{25.994}{2.079} = 12.503$$

The t-test compared with t-table based on the determined Constanta 0.05 (α= 0.5%) and the determined Constanta= n - 2= 28 (n= 30 - 2= 28), so t-table was 1.701. Based on the result of hypothesis testing above that the score of t-test was 12.503 and the score of t-table was 1.701. Hence, the t-test was higher than t-table.

The students' perceptions about the implementation of CLT approach above had been shown that the students in experimental class had motivation to learn English as the foreign language because in the student's perception that CLT was either good and a very good approach after the researcher applied it. Then, the researcher taught the complementing expression in order to measure up the students' speaking ability that had developed because some of the students got very good level. While, the result of pre-test scores gained of the students in both experimental class and control class were not being able to get a good level because no treatment when giving the students a test of speaking. The interpretation scores of Post-tests in the experimental class had proven that the implementation of CLT approach was developing students' speaking ability especially in making the conversation of the complementing expression. While, the students' speaking ability level of post-test in the control class was only in fair and poor level. It was because of the treatment in teaching process before testing had not been given to the them.

Based on the formula that had been used, the score of variables mean in experimental class of pre-test was 55.46 and control class of pre-test was 49.46. Then, the variables' mean of post-test increased because of implementing the CLT approach. The scores were 81,86 and 64.48. In this section, the scores of variances of pre-test in experimental class were 54.55 and control class was 47.98. The score of variances of post-test in experimental class was 7.267 and score of control class in pre-test was 13.71. After that, the score of hypothesis testing compared with the score of t-table. Meanwhile, t-test was 12.503. Based on the Determinant coefficient determined is 5 % (0.05). The t-table was (dk = n1 + n2 – 2 = 15 + 15 – 2 = 28) t-table is 1,701. The t-table ≤ t-test > t-table which shown by the data 1,701 < 12.503 > 1,701. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis was accepted that the CLT approach can influence the students' speaking ability.

The implementation of CLT approach in teaching process, the researcher started to observe the samples since the class was beginning and the students were divided in pairs in order to let them communicated freely in pair under the topic "Complementing Expression" then the researcher observed the sample one by one. The students' activity in the experimental class was as follows;

a) All the students paid full attention on the learning process and built a conversation in pair.
b) Participating to give the motivation to the other groups who are presenting the dialogue in the front of the class.
c) Active in giving the correction for every group which were presenting the dialogue.
d) Most of students did not discuss anything out of the topic given by the researcher, while there was no gap for the students who did not follow the rules because the atmosphere of English was create.
e) The students ware freely to communicate in pair but the students should have the enthusiasm to be discipline in the teaching and learning process.
f) The best motivation shown by the students that each of them always bring the dictionary in every single meeting.

Then, the students' activity in the control class was as follows;

a) The motivation of learning was not appeared, then there was not full attention that paid by the students in learning process and atmosphere of English was not created.
b) There was no self-confidence on the students, then the speaking problems had not overcome well because they lose the willingness of learning English especially in speaking.
c) The students did not bring the dictionary in some meetings.

Some advantages could be gained by the students in learning speaking by using CLT, such as;

a) The students who had not self-confidence could be helped in overcoming it.
b) The students who had a good basic ability in English could achieve their skills.
c) The responsibility was created in group working or corporation in overcoming the studying difficulties.
d) The students learned how to work in groups.

4.   CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research is that the implementation of the CLT approach significantly influenced the speaking skills of first-grade students at Public Senior High School 2 Kupang in the 2024/2025 academic year. The results showed that students in the experimental group achieved higher post-test scores compared to their pre-test scores, indicating a notable improvement in speaking ability. Based on the results of hypothesis testing, the alternative hypothesis was accepted, as the calculated t-value exceeded the critical value in the t-table. This suggests that the CLT approach was effective in enhancing students' speaking performance. The approach was also motivational for students in learning English as a foreign language, given its learner-centered nature in which the teacher acts as a facilitator rather than the central focus of instruction. Although this study has no specific section for implications, the CLT approach can serve as a viable strategy to improve students' speaking skills. Additionally, the study found that students' writing skills also improved, and vocabulary mastery became a focal point, supporting the idea that vocabulary acquisition plays a key role in developing speaking proficiency.

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