Communication in Speaking Class: Perceptions and Attitudes of Students STKIP Al Maksum

Muhammad Hassan[1*)], Tiara Aulia[2)], Sinta Wulandari[2)]
[1,2,3]*Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, STKIP Al Maksu Langkat, Indonesia*

Correspondence Email : Muhammadhasan@stkipalmaksum.ac.id

Abstract

This study looked at the impact of communicative activities on students' speaking abilities and challenges in communitive language teaching (CLT) classrooms. Classroom action research (CAR) was taken into consideration as the research design in this study. A quantitative technique was applied in this study. The researcher wanted to improve the students' speaking abilities using communicative activities from the Communicative Language Teaching Method. Ten cycles, each lasting ten weeks, were used to divide up the teaching and learning process. Stages of the cycle are Planning, Action, Observation, and Refection. In general, kids preferred classroom activities that encouraged healthy competition and high   levels   of participation. Following the interventions, students reported significantly higher levels of satisfaction with their speaking ability, proving the value of speaking classes. Different student views on using communicative activities were statistically significant.

1. Introduction

Numerous language students around the globe study English to improve their speaking skills. Understanding the nature and ability of speaking in a second language (SL) or foreign language (FL) is a difficult endeavor. People speak for a variety of purposes, and each purpose requires specific speaking abilities. For example, basic conversations are used for making new acquaintances, establishing social contact with others, or simply chatting with close friends. On the other hand, when we engage in conversation with someone, we may wish to convey our opinions, persuade them, or clarify the words and sentences. In certain circumstances, speaking is used for describing, lamenting, making requests, entertaining with anecdotes, and giving instructions. Each of these purposes for speaking requires a solid understanding of spoken language that reflects the context or situation, the specific roles and relationships of the participants. The importance of speaking in the teaching and learning of foreign languages stems from the fact that by speaking, people communicate their ideas and thoughts. Students' reluctance to communicate is likely a common occurrence for English instructors.

This issue can be attributed to factors such as a lack of trust, a vocabulary deficit, or uninteresting conversation topics. Compared to other language teaching methods in the world that have attempted to improve teaching and learning quality and provide the intended effect on language learners, communicative language teaching has proven to be successful. According to a number of teachers, communicative language teaching (CLT) can be one of the most effective methods for helping students practice the language in classrooms for regular life and communication. In English language instruction, various methods promote the active use of language and can enhance speaking skills. However, Communicative Language imparting is widely used in other countries and is an effective method for imparting speaking skills. In the study, the researcher examined the effect of the CLT method on students' speaking abilities; students who received 10 weeks of speaking instruction from the teacher-researcher were taught using this method.

Throughout the sessions, the students' verbal interaction strategies, performances, and challenges have been observed and evaluated. In addition, the positive or negative consequences of employing communicative language teaching methods in language classes have been identified. By implementing CLT, "teachers may provide learners with opportunities to develop both accuracy and fluency in a CLT environment" (Farooq, 2015, p. The concentration of CLT classrooms, according to Brown (2007, p. 226), is on "speaking and listening skills, writing for specific communicative purposes, and authentic reading texts. "Changes and innovations in language teaching have impacted the teaching of English in Turkey. Therefore, policymakers in Turkey emphasized the importance of developing students' communicative skills as a primary objective of English language instruction (Students Education Board, 2006). In this circumstance, OF instructors can play a significant role in decision-making in the language classroom (Lamie, 2005).In the Students context and classrooms, communicative objectives of policymakers are not addressed; the English language is taught and presented structurally (Alagozlü, 2012; Işk, 2011; Uztosun, 2013a).

Many years are spent learning English in a structured environment, but students struggle to improve their verbal communication and oral skills (Alagozlü, 2012, p. 1759). Due to an overreliance on structure-based language instruction in elementary, middle, and high schools, students struggle with communicative skills and enrol in various university departments to complete their English education without adequate attention to speaking or writing in English. On the other hand, students in English Department have the opportunity to improve their English, but they must complete two years of intensive English classes that emphasize skills. Therefore, it is crucial to offer practical classes at this level. In order for English Departments at universities to provide skill-based English courses effectively, it is essential to consider and support students' anticipated requirements in great detail. These issues are the primary motivations for conducting this investigation. In general, the researcher sought to identify and present guidelines for developing and promoting oral interaction and speaking courses for language learners in English Departments. Following an approach centered on the requirements of students, the researcher desired to implement interventions for enhancing classroom oral interaction practices. To achieve this objective, the perspectives of students were carefully considered when deciding on classroom practices, and action research (AR) was then used to implement the desired lesson plans in speaking classrooms. As a conclusion, the findings of this study may be useful for understanding the impact of action research in the OF context by employing the CLT method, listening to students' voices, and considering their implications for enhancing the participation, performance, and oral proficiency of learners in the classroom. Globally, language students endeavor to acquire

English proficiency, which is a challenging endeavor. Speaking serves various purposes, and each objective necessitates a unique set of speaking abilities. Discussions involve expressing opinions and persuading others, whereas simple conversations foster social connections.

Speaking can be used for describing, making requests, entertaining, giving directions, and complaining in addition to describing and making requests. Speaking fluently is essential because it conveys the participants' context, roles, and relationships. Speaking is essential for learning and teaching foreign languages since it allows people to express their ideas and views. However, students who are unwilling to speak up are a common problem for English teachers. This reservation could be brought on by a lack of confidence, a restricted vocabulary, or a disinterest in the conversational subjects. In an effort to enhance language teaching and learning, various teaching techniques have been researched on a global level. One of them has been proven to be successful in promoting language proficiency, particularly in speaking abilities: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). This article's goal is to investigate how students view and feel about speaking class communicative activities. We investigate the effect of CLT on students' speaking abilities through a 10-week study done by a teacher-researcher. The study's main objective is to observe and assess students' verbal interaction techniques, accomplishments, and challenges. It also aims to identify the advantages and disadvantages of using communicative language teaching techniques in language schools. CLT offers chances to improve one's correctness and fluency in a communicative setting. It places a focus on communication skills like speaking and listening, writing with intention, and reading real texts. The development of students' conversational skills has been emphasized as a major goal by policymakers, and English language instruction in Turkey has undergone changes and innovations as a result. However, the predominant method of teaching English in Turkey at the moment is still structure-based, which hinders students' ability to communicate verbally and orally. The need for English Language Teaching (English Department) departments to enhance oral contact and speaking lessons for language learners is covered in this article. We intend to offer suggestions and recommendations for boosting oral proficiency in English Department classes by taking into account the anticipated needs of students, supporting their development, and taking into account their voices through action research. By exploring the influence of action research in the OF setting, utilizing CLT methodologies, and actively listening to students' voices, this study contributes to the understanding and improvement of of learners' classroom involvement, performance, and oral proficiency. By utilizing professional analysis and pertinent ideas, we look at how students view and feel about speaking class communicative activities. The results of this study will offer insight on CLT's efficacy and its impact on students' language learning experiences, paving the path for more effective and engaging speaking sessions in the future.

2. **Review of literature**

The academic community has provided numerous helpful definitions for the idea of attitude. Oskamp (1977, p. 19) defines attitude as one's reaction, whether positive or negative, to a given thing. Oskamp (1977) identifies three aspects of attitude in his definition. A person's thoughts and feelings towards the thing in question constitute the first cognitive component. The affective aspect considers how the thing makes the person feel emotionally. The final factor is how a person behaves in relation to the thing. An individual's "attitude towards a language" refers to their "mental attitude or feelings" (Amin, 2020, p. 29) towards the status of their own language or the languages

of others.Since a student's success or failure in learning a language is correlated with their attitude towards the task at hand, Gardner (1985) places a premium on this factor. If students enter the process with a positive outlook on learning the language, they are more likely to emerge from it feeling fulfilled. A more positive outlook helps one become more fluent in another language. On the flip side, negative attitudes have a damaging effect on how students think. Students' dispositions in class are affected not just by the instructor but also by the teaching strategy used. Teachers of the target language who have experience and who care about their students' needs can boost their students' positive attitudes by employing engaging teaching strategies. As we've seen, a student's mindset can make all the difference in whether they succeed in school. Positive attitudes towards learning the target language can be fostered through students' enjoyment of class activities, classroom climate, and teaching methods. Learners' attitudes and levels of contentment while engaging in communicative tasks were assessed in this research.

3. **Research Method**

Since it suited the research objectives and could be completed in a classroom setting, classroom action research (CAR) was chosen as the research design. According to a recent study's authors, "Classroom Action Research is highly needed in improving teaching and learning for both students and teachers" (Wulandari et al., 2019, p. 318). The goal of this study was to identify the problem that required a deeper investigation (Burns, 2010a).The goal of this study was to pinpoint real-world problems with OF students' communication skills and to make recommendations for fixes based on communicative activities from the Communicative Language Teaching Method. As a result, the researcher's initial research questions were established by gathering information on the difficulties and constraints of the teaching process as they relate to students' oral communication skills. He then carefully planned, performed various actions, and thought about the outcomes. A quantitative methodology was used to carry out this study. The study was carried out by a Lecturer at Stkip Al Maksum. The study involved students in English Department who intended to become of instructors. The ages of the participants were not taken into consideration when creating the questions that gathered general demographic data about the study's participants. To select the participants in the study, convenience sampling, a type of non-probability or non-random sampling, was used.

Lesson Plan

When creating lesson plans, the researcher took into account the following practises:

1. Investigating the study's objectives, course description, aims, and learner competency before constructing the lesson plans in accordance with the principles of communicative activities
2. Choosing from textbooks the features and information pertinent to the study's goals.
3. Creating lesson plans that take into account the research approach, the teaching of communicative languages, and offering students various communicative activities
4. Reviewing and talking about lesson ideas to get feedback
5. Practically evaluating the lesson ideas in a pilot study with 40 students.
6. After doing the pilot study, revising, altering, and making crucial modifications about the treatments' weak aspects to strengthen them. In this study, ten lesson plans with various communication tasks were used.

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English Speaking Assessment

In addition to interviews, information gap techniques, cloze tests, semi-direct exams, picture tests, role-plays, band descriptors, and technology are all methods for evaluating speaking skills. However, interviews are the most typical of all the speaking exam kinds described. In the interviewing process, communication is necessary. Throughout this procedure, the teacher anticipates the students will respond to open-ended questions in the target language. During interviews, students have the option to express their ideas and reply to questions. During interviews, teachers assess whether or not students are using language effectively (Goh & Aryadous, 2010). Interviews are more useful than other evaluation methods for assessing students' speaking skills in certain topic areas. The results of interviews can also be used to improve or change curricula and instruction. Teachers or assessors may videotape student speaking performances for a future review.Additionally, during the interview, they can immediately evaluate the performance of their students. The Pre-test and Post-test in this study were produced in the form of interviews and were given to the students in order to understand the state of the students' capacity in speaking skill before and after executing action research. Finding out whether the pupils' speaking skills have greatly improved is the main objective of the tests. The pre-test and post-test were created as follows by the researcher to gauge the students' speaking abilities:

1. The researcher opted to review several helpful books for creating a speaking examination after reading the course description.
2. The test was assessed by two seasoned English Department, who subsequently verified the test's validity in terms of its content. The test was then administered to students.
3. When redesigning the test, the researcher took into account the feedback from the experts to strengthen the weak aspects.

The Rubric of Speaking Ability

The speaking evaluation criteria are practical instruments that list the students' speaking performance scores. Speaking pre-test and post-test results were used to determine the study's required scores. The results of two tests were compared at the end of the semester. The outcomes showed whether or not the communicative exercises were effective at helping students' speaking abilities. For this study, the researcher employed Hui's (2011) analytic rubric of speaking ability.

Observation Checklist

An observation checklist was used to gain data through the observation in the process of teaching and learning speaking in the CLT classroom.

Questionnaire

The researcher used a Phisutthangkoon (2012) perception questionnaire to examine how second-year OF students perceived the utilization of communicative activities in the CLT classroom. The validity of the questionnaire was validated by professionals from the English department. The Cronbach Alpha () Coefficient was used in the pilot study to assess the questionnaire's internal consistency, and the result was a value of r = 0.75. The twelve Likert-scale items on this questionnaire were assessed by the students on a five-point scale ranging from extremely low (1) to very high (5). The researcher used an attitude questionnaire with ten Likert-scale items to look at the second-year students' attitudes toward communicative activities. In the current study, a questionnaire created by Phisutthangkoon (2012) was also

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used. The validity of the questionnaire was verified by the thesis advisor before to use, and a pilot study with 40 OF students was carried out. The internal consistency was calculated using the Cronbach Alpha () Coefficient, and a value of r = 0.76 was obtained. The students gave scores from very low to very high for each item on the scale, expressing their perceptions.
As a result of the students' open communication about the speaking classroom, the researcher was able to collect insightful information for crucial interventions and term evaluation. This made it possible to fully comprehend the students' viewpoints on the utilization of communicative activities.

Data Collection Process in the Pilot and Main Study
Before beginning the primary investigation, the researcher underwent identical steps to gauge the design's utility. A crucial component of research investigations is the execution of the pilot study. It is impossible to predict how data collection will turn out. As a result, the researcher can revise the data collection procedure' weaknesses using the outcomes of the pilot study. The two-week pilot research was conducted. The researcher did not notice any harm, disadvantage, or unjustified stress brought on by the research method during the pilot study. On the other hand, the students were eager to participate in the activities. The main study's eight-week data collection period took place during the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. The post-test was then used by the researcher with the pupils.

Research Procedure
The study was divided into ten cycles, each consisting of two sessions over the course of ten weeks. Four interconnected stages—Planning (P), Action (A), Observation (O), and Reflection (R)—were used throughout the procedure. Lewin described classroom action research as a sequential sequence of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection, according to Kunandar (2010, p. 42).

4. Findings
The Difference between Pre-test and Post-test Scores
The results of the speaking pre- and post-tests were evaluated by three raters. The researcher measured the speaking proficiency of second-year OF students using descriptive statistics, and then computed and compared the average mean score of three raters' mean scores of two tests to determine the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test. The average mean scores of the three raters for the post-test were greater than those for the pre-test, as shown in table 1. The individuals' post-test mean score (M = 84) was significantly higher than their pre-test mean score (M = 74.58). The following results are shown in Table 1::

Table 1: A Comparison of the Pre-Test and Post- Test Mean Scores for Speaking Skill

Raters	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Rater 1	75.87	84.75
Rater 2	73.50	83.25
Rater 3	74.37	84
Average	74.58	84

As seen in Table 1, the three ratters' average scores after the test were much higher than their pre-test average scores. In comparison to their average scores prior to the test (M =

74.58), the students' average results following the test (M = 84) were significantly higher. These results show that second-year OF students' speaking skills have significantly improved. To ascertain if the inclusion of communicative activities had an effect on students' speaking ability, the researcher used the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. For second-year of students, the results shown in Table show a significant difference in speaking proficiency between the pre-test and post-test (z = -5.57, sig = 0.00, p 0.05). The median score on the English speaking test was higher on the post-test (Md = 85) than it was on the pre-test (Md = 75). The median scores for the pre-test and post-test in all three Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were different, with the post-test median score being higher. According to the results of the three Wilcoxon signed-rank tests and the assessments of three ratters, there was a significant improvement in the speaking abilities of of students between the speaking pre-test and post-test. Additionally, students' attitudes on the usage of communicative activities were evaluated by having them rate various items on a scale of 1 to 5 at the conclusion of the study.to very high (5). Descriptive statistics were used to analyse participants' self-rating scores from the perception questionnaires. The researcher interpreted the results. The results indicated that students' perception toward using communicative activities was positive and they rated it at a very high level (M = 4.31). The results are shown:

Table 2: Pre-Test and Post- Test Mean Scores

	R	n	M.R.	S.R	z	p
	Negative ranks	0	.00	.00		
	Positive ranks	36	18.5	666		
Pre & Post-Test	Ties	4	0		-5.52	.000
	Total	40				

According to Table 2, the results reveal a significant difference in the speaking proficiency of second-year OF students between the pre- and post-test (z = -5.52, sig = 0.00, p0.05). The median score on the post-test for English speakers (Md = 85) was higher than the pre-test's median score (Md = 75). The results shown to demonstrate a significant change in the speaking proficiency of second-year OF students between the pre-test and post-test (z = -5.57, sig = 0.00,p 0.05). The post-test had a higher median score on the English speaking exam (Md = 85) than the pre-test (Md = 75). In three Wilcoxon signed-rank tests, the median scores for the pre-test and post-test are identical, and the median score for the post-test is greater than the median score for the pre-test. Three Wilcoxon signed-rank tests and three ratters' evaluations revealed substantial differences in the speaking proficiency of OF students between the speaking pre-test and post-test.

Students' Perceptions toward Using Communicative Activities

The researcher conducted a study to investigate how students perceive the utilization of communicative activities at the conclusion of their studies. In order to gather this information, students were provided with a set of questions to answer. They were asked to rate their responses using a five-point scale, ranging from "very low" (1) to "very high" (5). The data collected from the perception questionnaires was analysed using descriptive statistics. Upon analysing the results, the researcher concluded that students held a positive

perception regarding the implementation of communicative activities, as indicated by their high ratings (M = 4.31).

Students' Attitudes toward Using Communicative Activities

An attitude survey was presented to the students to ascertain their thoughts on the use of communicative activities in the classroom. Then, similarly to the perception questionnaire, they were required to score each item on a scale of five. To examine the results of the students' self-ratings, the researcher used descriptive statistics. The researcher analyzed the results and found that the pupils had an incredibly high level of favorable opinions toward these activities (M = 4.47).

5. Discussion

When we look at the study's findings, we can observe that communicative activities helped the second-year of students' speaking abilities. The opinions and attitudes of the students regarding these activities were favourable at the conclusion of the study. This study showed that the challenges surrounding teaching speaking are crucial and highly valuable in providing policymakers, teacher educators, and teachers with consequences. The findings of Nanthaboot's (2012) and Phuphanpet's (2004) studies are consistent with those of the current study because the students' participation in these activities improved their pronunciation, allowed them to have fun in class, developed their speaking abilities, gave them more opportunities to practice speaking in front of others, and allowed them to do so with greater confidence. The students stated their happiness with communicative activities as a result of these factors. All of the activities were designed to encourage the students to participate in those that would advance their English-speaking abilities. Students subconsciously picked up language by engaging in communicative activities. For instance, the students focussed on communicating in English using phrases and focusing on the meaning when they completed the information gap task, simulating communication in real life. Following completion of the exercises, their speaking ability gradually increased.

6. **Conclusions**

Classroom practice is not considered in the program's design. Although practice of language structures is emphasized in English classroom activities, students' conversational skills are still being developed. The first objective for policymakers should be closing the gap between theory and practice. They ought to be informed about problems in the classroom as well. To improve their speaking skills, students should practice speaking in public. It's crucial to involve students in class activities if you want to have effective speaking sessions. It's crucial for teachers to listen to their students in the classroom. Delivering effective speaking lessons requires employing the right methods.

The chance to practice speaking might be increased through activities that include groups of people. It is crucial that educators consider the benefits of working in small groups. Depending on how the activity is set up, speaking exercises might have different levels of value. Speaking classes have benefits that pre-service instructors will find useful. As a result, teacher-training programs should carefully consider the views of the students while developing a language-learning curriculum.

A speaking course of this nature might be implemented in Students, english department to teach aspiring English lecturer the value of classrooms centered on student bargaining. Action research is something that future educators should get more familiar with.

Teachers may have the opportunity to hear what their pupils have to say and develop original lesson plans thanks to a flexible curriculum. Less regulated speaking activities should not be included in course texts by instructors.

The actions that must be taken ought to be clear. Before letting the students engage in an activity, the teacher should explain the procedure. When giving instructions, teachers should first explain how the tasks should be carried out before evaluating the students' development during the feedback period. When giving directions, teachers must captivate students' attention and use simple language (Gower et al., 2005).

Perfect learning is always possible with practice. Speaking practice should be encouraged by OF instructors as much as feasible. Students should regularly practice speaking. Working in pairs and small groups, they can practice speaking as an effective tactic to promote interaction among the students in the CLT classroom.

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