

Breaking the Silence: The Impact of the CLT Method on Grade 12 Students' Speaking Skills

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ABSTRACT

Teaching speaking skills to EFL learners remains a significant challenge, often hindered by traditional methods that prioritize rote learning over meaningful communication. This study investigates the impact of communicative language teaching (CLT) on the speaking skills of Grade 12 students, while also exploring their attitudes toward this approach. Moreover, the study considers how CLT might contribute to enhancing language literacy, particularly in terms of speaking proficiency. Thirty Grade 12 students, selected through purposive sampling, participated in the study. The research employed a pre- and post-test, a questionnaire, and a semi-structured interview as the primary instruments. Data analysis involved calculating mean scores and standard deviations, along with thematic analysis of the interview data. Findings revealed that the implementation of CLT significantly improved students' speaking skills, with mean scores rising from 61.2 to 69.2. Additionally, students demonstrated positive attitudes toward the method, highlighting its effectiveness in enhancing their speaking ability and creating a favorable language learning experience.

Key words: Communicative Language Teaching, Speaking skills, Attitudes, Literacy

INTRODUCTION

English has become a vital global language for communication in various fields, including education, business, technology, politics, and commerce (Ashraf & Tsegay, 2015). Many language learners study English to improve their speaking skills, which are essential for effective interaction, academic success, and career advancement (Richards & Renandya, 2002; Zainal & Yunus, 2021). According to Richards and Renandya (2002), speaking is one of the key skills that students must master to engage with the world and succeed. In Thailand, English holds significant importance both academically and professionally, with proficiency considered crucial for educational endeavors, employment, and professional growth (Meksophawannagul, 2015; Phetsangkhad & Kriangkrai, 2023). The Ministry of Education in Thailand has mandated English as a compulsory subject from primary school onwards, emphasizing a proficiency-based curriculum aimed at enhancing communication skills, knowledge acquisition, and career advancement (Apridayani & Teo, 2021). English proficiency, particularly in speaking, is therefore essential for individuals in today's globalized society to succeed in both academic and professional settings.

Despite English's global significance, Thai students face challenges in communication, with many lacking confidence and struggling with vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (Chaya, 2022; Tahe, 2021). Speaking, which is a productive skill like writing, involves conveying meaning through

speech and can be enhanced by focusing on fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and body language (Spratt et al., 2005). The lack of fluency is often due to insufficient practice, inaccurate pronunciation, and ineffective learning methods (Widiyati & Pangesti, 2022). As reported in the news, Thai students' English proficiency has been declining over the years, with the country ranked 64th in 2018, dropping to 74th in 2019, 89th in 2020, 100th in 2021, and 97th in 2022 on the Education First English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) (Namfah, 2024). Moreover, in 2023, Thailand ranked 101st, placing it in the "very low proficiency" category. Additionally, the O-NET examination revealed that Grade 12 students in the Northeastern region had the lowest average scores in Thailand (The National Institute of Educational Testing Service (Public Organization), 2022). Beyond linguistic issues, Thai students often remain quiet in English classes due to factors like limited vocabulary, personality traits, and the classroom environment (Chaiyasat & Intakaew, 2023). This silence in class is further influenced by low confidence, lack of language skills, and cultural, teacher, and student-related factors (Tomlinson & Dat, 2004; Wang, 2019). Additionally, silence is associated with willingness to communicate (WTC), which shares similarities with shyness and reluctance to participate (McCroskey & Richmond, 1982; MacIntyre, 2007). These challenges highlight the need for improved teaching methods and greater emphasis on developing English communication skills.

According to Reeder (2017), literacy is a shared activity, and oral literacy development thrives in social contexts.

Learning language skills is enhanced through social interaction, which provides opportunities for students to practice their oral skills in real-life situations. Collaborative activities, such as group reading, are particularly effective in fostering oral literacy by encouraging participation and engagement. The importance of active involvement in learning oral language is emphasized by Abella (2016) and Andas (2014), who stress that learners are social beings who benefit from interactive and engaging language activities. Through active learning, such as choral reading and other collaborative practices, students enhance their oral literacy skills.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has emerged as a leading approach in language education, emphasizing communication and encouraging learners to engage in authentic language use (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). CLT views language as a tool for social interaction, where speakers convey meaning for specific purposes, either orally or in writing (Berns, 1990). The method aims to help students master all components of communicative competence, with the teacher acting as a motivator, facilitator, assessor, and corrector during speaking activities (Harmer, 1998). Harmer (1998) furthered that CLT activities emphasize real-world communication and diverse language use, as opposed to non-communicative activities, which focus primarily on grammatical form. Savignon (2010) highlighted that CLT involves engaging learners in communication, enabling them to develop their communicative competence. This approach focuses not only on grammatical rules but also on using those rules effectively and appropriately in communication (Brown, 2007). Given that students often lack practice and confidence in producing sentences for oral communication, integrating CLT can potentially improve speaking skills by fostering active participation and critical thinking, which is essential for success in language learning.

Although CLT is effective, it presents challenges, including anxiety and confidence issues that hinder speaking progress, as learners often struggle with nervousness in communicative settings (Ellis, 2003). Students also face difficulties with vocabulary and grammar, which impede fluent expression (Nunan, 1991). The classroom environment is crucial for CLT's success, as distractions, such as noise or uncommitted peers, can disrupt communication, echoing Johnson and Johnson's (2001) emphasis on a focused environment. This study's students also highlighted how distractions affected their speaking practice. To maximize CLT's potential, addressing issues like anxiety, language barriers, and distractions is essential. Creating a supportive, distraction-free environment, as Cook (2008) suggests, can help students overcome these obstacles and improve their speaking skills.

In contrast to traditional methods like Grammar-Translation and the Direct Method, which focused primarily on grammar and vocabulary, CLT prioritizes communication and interaction (Baugh, 1993; Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). These older methods did not encourage real communication, whereas CLT fosters active engagement between learners (Dos Santos, 2020). Over time, CLT has replaced older methods as the dominant approach in language teaching, adapting

to modern educational needs (Savignon, 2002; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Second language learning has shifted focus from grammar training to communication, especially in the 21st century. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach has revolutionized ESL education by emphasizing communicative competence and meaningful interaction over traditional grammar-based methods (Aziz et al., 2020). CLT is highly relevant today, as it aligns with 21st-century classroom practices such as creativity, critical thinking, and communication (Rahman et al., 2021). According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), CLT promotes actual communication and problem-solving through active learning. Activities like role play and games foster a positive environment, encouraging students to speak confidently, with teachers serving as facilitators (Santos & Miguel, 2020).

There is a growing body of research supporting the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in enhancing language learning outcomes, particularly in improving speaking proficiency and fostering active participation among students. For instance, in Malaysia, CLT activities were found to significantly enhance English-speaking interactions, making the learning process more dynamic (Eddie, 2020). Similarly, research in Taiwan emphasized that CLT not only supports English acquisition but also boosts students' confidence and enhances their communicative skills (Ho, 2020). In Vietnam, CLT was identified as an effective and suitable teaching strategy, addressing students' needs for practical communication skills (Tran, 2022). A study in Turkey revealed that speaking classes were particularly effective, as students reported significant improvements in their speaking abilities and greater satisfaction after CLT interventions (Rezalou & Yağız, 2021). In addition, Chen (2015) studied the impact of CLT in a mixed English discussion class, focusing on whether using L1 improves learners' attitudes. The findings indicated that L1 use reduced anxiety, while incorporating visual aids and role-playing made students more active and positive learners. Similarly, Zakiyah (2022) explored the use of CLT in teaching speaking skills to elementary students at ECC Darussalam Course. The study found that CLT promotes active participation, encouraging collaboration, idea-sharing, and feedback. Furthermore, Anggraini (2018) conducted action research demonstrating that CLT significantly improved students' speaking skills through group discussions and picture reconstruction activities over three cycles. Sulastri et al. (2024) conducted a quantitative study using a quasi-experimental design to evaluate the impact of HOTS-based Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on the speaking skills of 27 tenth-grade students, finding significant improvement. The results demonstrated that HOTS-based CLT effectively enhances student creativity and activity in language use. Likewise, Hayat (2017) carried out an experimental study at SMAN 3 Polewali, focusing on enhancing students' speaking accuracy and fluency. The results revealed a significant improvement after the treatment, with T-test analysis confirming CLT's effectiveness. Collectively, these studies highlight the positive impact of CLT in fostering speaking proficiency and engagement among learners.

In Thailand, research has consistently shown the positive effects of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on students' English-speaking abilities. Suphan and Phusawisot (2020) conducted an action research study with 25 vocational students in the hotel and service sectors, which revealed that traditional memorization-based teaching was ineffective. In contrast, CLT activities significantly enhanced students' pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and fluency. Similarly, Komol and Suwanphathama (2020) found that CLT activities such as role-playing, group discussions, and video production boosted students' confidence and improved their speaking skills. These interactive activities helped students engage with English in meaningful ways, enabling them to apply language skills to real-life situations. However, challenges such as varying proficiency levels and large class sizes emerged in the study by Bruner et al. (2014), which explored CLT's impact on Thai students from two universities. Despite these challenges, the study emphasized that collaborative activities and non-scripted dialogues were more effective, with authentic language contexts facilitating skill application. Furthermore, Panpistharwee and Suwannarak (2024) explored the implementation of CLT in online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic among Thai EFL lecturers. Their findings indicated that while CLT enhanced classroom interaction, student engagement, and self-directed learning, barriers such as student distraction, large class sizes, and technological difficulties were significant challenges. Inprasit (2016) also explored Thai native teachers' experiences with CLT in extended education schools, where both teachers and students faced difficulties related to learner characteristics, low proficiency, and lack of teacher confidence. The study stressed the importance of a clear understanding of CLT and the need for ongoing professional development for teachers. Similarly, Sarikha (2022) studied Thai EFL secondary school teachers' perceptions and challenges with CLT. Involving 30 experienced teachers, the study found that while teachers had a solid understanding of CLT, they faced challenges related to students' abilities, administrative support, and their own roles. The study emphasizes the need for greater support to address these issues for effective CLT implementation. Overall, these studies highlight both the benefits and challenges of implementing CLT in diverse educational contexts in Thailand.

Several studies in Thailand have explored the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), with much of the research focusing on university-level students (Sarikha, 2022; Suphan & Phusawisot, 2020; Panpistharwee & Suwannarak, 2024). These studies have highlighted the positive effects of CLT on students' speaking abilities, classroom interaction, and overall engagement. However, most of the research has concentrated on higher education, leaving a gap in understanding how CLT is applied at the high school level, particularly for Mathayomsuksa 6 (Grade 12) students. Furthermore, recent studies have shifted toward exploring the challenges teachers face when implementing CLT, such as large class sizes, diverse student proficiency levels, and a lack of administrative support. This research aims to fill this gap by examining the impact of CLT on Grade 12 students'

speaking skills. The study will explore whether there is a difference in speaking skills before and after exposure to CLT and will assess students' attitudes toward the method. The research questions are as follows:

1. Is there a difference in the speaking skills proficiency of Mathayomsuksa 6 students before and after exposure to the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method?
2. What attitudes do the students have towards the application of the CLT method?

METHOD

This pre-experimental study utilized a one-group pre-test-posttest design (Bonate, 2000) to evaluate the effectiveness of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method in enhancing students' speaking skills and assessing their attitudes toward the approach. The design aimed to measure changes in speaking proficiency before and after students were exposed to CLT activities, providing insight into both skill development and learner perceptions.

Participants

The study involved 30 Grade 12 students from the targeted school located in Roi-Et, Thailand, over a 16-week period. These students were selected through purposive sampling from those enrolled in additional English courses. The participants were chosen based on their similar characteristics, including age, academic background, and English proficiency level, ensuring a homogenous group. This selection process aimed to minimize variability and focus on the effectiveness of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method for this specific group. The students were all actively engaged in enhancing their English skills, and their participation was voluntary.

Instruments

The study utilized several instruments, including lesson plans, a pre-test, a post-test, a questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews.

Lesson plans integrating CLT

When designing lesson plans using the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method, activities should prioritize real communication, meaningful tasks, and the application of language in students' experiences. CLT emphasizes communication through activities such as role plays, information-sharing tasks, and task-based interactions (Richards & Rogers, 2014). Role plays, for example, support students in constructing meaningful messages applicable to real-life situations, enhancing their ability to communicate authentically (Dang, 2018; Rahmatillah, 2019). One such example is a customer-service scenario, which allows students to practice negotiation and problem-solving in realistic contexts. Information-sharing tasks, such as "Describe and Draw" or "Find the Difference," foster collaboration, communication skills, question formation, vocabulary expansion, and

the use of functional language (Blog, 2024). Task-based learning, on the other hand, encourages students to engage in tasks of personal interest, using only the target language and its taught elements, thereby focusing on communication through task completion (Richards & Rogers, 2014). These activities promote communicative competence by immersing students in interactive, real-world situations that improve their language skills.

For this study, lesson plans were designed to incorporate collaborative tasks, drills, discussions, and games that allow students to practice English in real-life contexts. The emphasis was placed on fluency and practical communication, while materials such as videos and role-plays were incorporated to enhance learning. As Colker (2007) and Abe (2013) suggest, hands-on activities that stimulate multiple senses, group work, and constant use of English promote better language acquisition, even if they initially cause stress.

The lesson plans were reviewed by experts to ensure their alignment with CLT principles, achieving an average Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) score of 0.96. The activities were designed to support students' language development through interactive and meaningful tasks, enhancing both their confidence and competence in English communication.

A pre-test and a post-test

A 4 items pre- and post-test speaking assessment was used to evaluate changes in speaking skills. The speaking test included four questions covering topics such as making choices, styles of songs, achievements, and indispensable things. The item objective congruence (IOC) was found to be 1.00. After conducting a pilot test with 31 students with similar characteristics to the study participants, the discrimination (r) and difficulty (p) indices were found to be 0.3 and 0.7, respectively. The test reliability, assessed through the alpha-Cronbach correlation, was found to be 0.9.

A speaking assessment rubric was developed to evaluate both the pre-test and post-test speaking performances. The rubric assessed several speaking aspects, including grammar, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, and content, using a numeric scale from 1 to 5. These criteria were adapted from Hongsa et al. (2023), as shown in Table 1.

Questionnaire

The opinion questionnaire, developed by the researchers, consisted of 9 closed-ended items with a five-point Likert scale, designed to evaluate participants' attitudes toward the integration of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method to improve speaking skills. Content validity was assessed using the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) method, reviewed by three experts, with an average score of 0.91. The reliability of the questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's alpha, resulting in a score of 0.86.

Semi-structure interview

The semi-structured interview is a qualitative research method that aims to gather data through oral exchanges, focusing on facts and perspectives related to a specific research objective in a flexible manner (Bryman, 2012). In this research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 students to gather in-depth insights into students' attitudes toward the use of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method. Two questions were prepared and asked in Thai before being transcribed into English. The interviews provided an opportunity for students to express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences regarding CLT in a more open-ended format. The questions focused on students' perceptions of the effectiveness of CLT in improving their speaking skills, their level of comfort during CLT activities, and their overall learning experience.

Table 1. Speaking Assessment Rubric adapted from Hongsa et al. (2023)

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	Limited use of correct grammar. Frequent errors.	Some use of correct grammar, but with noticeable errors.	Mostly correct grammar with occasional errors.	Consistent use of correct grammar. Rare errors.	Flawless use of grammar throughout.
Vocabulary	Limited and repetitive vocabulary. Frequent word choice issues.	Basic vocabulary with some repetition. Limited range of words.	Adequate vocabulary with occasional repetition.	Varied vocabulary, demonstrating a good range of words.	Rich and varied vocabulary, showing sophistication.
Fluency	Difficulty expressing thoughts. Frequent pauses and hesitations.	Limited fluency with noticeable pauses. Some effort to maintain a flow.	Reasonable fluency with occasional pauses. Generally maintains a flow.	Smooth and consistent flow of speech with minimal pauses.	Fluent and natural speech with no disruptions.
Pronunciation	Pronunciation issues hinder understanding. Frequent mispronunciations.	Some difficulty in pronunciation. Occasional mispronunciations.	Generally clear pronunciation with occasional errors.	Clear and understandable pronunciation. Rare errors.	Excellent pronunciation with no issues.
Content	Incoherent or irrelevant content. Lack of clear ideas.	Limited coherence and relevance. Some relevant points.	Generally coherent and relevant content. Clear expression of ideas.	Well-organized and relevant content. Thoughtful expression of ideas.	Highly organized and compelling content. Strong expression of ideas.

Data Collection

The study was conducted over a 16-week period. A pre-test was given to students before the start of the first week of classes to assess their verbal communication proficiency in various situations. The research applied the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, incorporating the PPP model, which aims to promote effective communication in the target language. This approach helps enhance students' four language skills and various aspects of language learning (Bouchebat et al., 2023; Vargas et al., 2023). The PPP model includes three key stages: presentation, where new language is introduced; practice, where students actively engage with the material; and production, where students apply their knowledge in real communicative scenarios (Ur, 1996). The lesson topics are based on the textbook adopted by the school.

At the end of the semester, a post-test was administered, using the same items as the pre-test, and required oral responses. The goal was to assess the effectiveness of the CLT approach in improving students' English speaking skills. By comparing the results of the pre-test and post-test, the study aimed to measure the improvement in students' speaking proficiency after using the CLT method.

Lastly, after the post-test, a questionnaire was distributed to explore students' attitudes toward using CLT to enhance their speaking abilities. The questionnaire included nine closed-ended questions on a 5-point Likert scale (Likert, 1979) and one open-ended question, offering both quantitative and qualitative insights into students' perceptions of the CLT method's effectiveness.

Data Analysis

This study employed percentage analysis to evaluate the data, with both pre-test and post-test results analyzed using a paired t-test, alongside calculations of mean and standard deviation. The closed-ended responses from the questionnaire,

utilizing a 5-point Likert scale, were also analyzed using mean and standard deviation, while the semi-structured interview data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify key themes related to students' attitudes and experiences with the CLT method.

RESULTS

This study aimed to investigate the effects of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method on the speaking skills of Grade 12 students and to explore their attitudes toward this instructional approach. The analysis of the results is presented below.

The results from Table 2 suggest that there was a statistically significant improvement in the students' speaking skills after the implementation of the CLT method, with the mean score increasing from 61.2 in the pretest to 69.2 in the post-test. The t-test confirms that this difference is significant ($p < 0.001$), providing evidence that the CLT method positively impacted the students' speaking abilities.

According to the data in Table 3, students exhibited a positive perception of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. With mean scores ranging from 4.07 to 4.34 and relatively low standard deviations, the results indicate a strong level of agreement among students regarding the benefits of CLT for improving their speaking skills.

Notably, statement 1 received the highest mean score (Mean = 4.34, SD = 0.81), demonstrating that most students agreed that CLT helps enhance their speaking abilities. Likewise, statement 4 (Mean = 4.31, SD = 0.76) ranked second, indicating students' belief that CLT is an effective method for language learning. Additionally, statement 2 (Mean = 4.24, SD = 0.69) ranked third, suggesting that students find CLT activities engaging and enjoyable.

Moreover, three statements—statement 6, statement 7, and statement 8—received comparable mean scores. Specifically, statement 6 (Mean = 4.21, SD = 0.77) revealed that students found role-playing activities beneficial for their speaking skills. Likewise, statement 7 (Mean = 4.21, SD = 0.73) showed that students gained confidence in speaking English after participating in CLT lessons, while statement 8 (Mean = 4.21, SD = 0.82) reflected overall satisfaction with CLT.

Table 2. Comparison of pre-and post-listening tests

Test	N	Total Score	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig
Pretest	30	100	61.2	2.32	4.45	29	0.000
Posttest	30	100	69.2	2.60			

Table 3. Students' perceptions and attitudes toward the implementation of the CLT method

Statement	\bar{x}	SD	Interpretation
1. I believe CLT helps me improve my speaking skills.	4.34	0.81	Agree
2. I find CLT activities engaging and enjoyable.	4.24	0.69	Agree
3. I feel that CLT encourages active participation in class.	4.17	1.00	Agree
4. I believe CLT is an effective method for learning a new language.	4.31	0.76	Agree
5. I enjoy participating in group discussions and conversations in English.	4.17	0.89	Agree
6. I find role-playing activities in CLT helpful for improving my speaking skills.	4.21	0.77	Agree
7. I feel more confident speaking English after participating in CLT lessons.	4.21	0.73	Agree
8. I am satisfied with the CLT method used in my English classes.	4.21	0.82	Agree
9. I would recommend CLT-based learning to my peers.	4.07	0.88	Agree
Total	4.23	0.84	Agree

On the other hand, statement 9 obtained the lowest mean score (Mean = 4.07, SD = 0.88), suggesting that while students generally appreciate CLT, they are slightly less inclined to recommend it to their peers. Nevertheless, with an overall mean score of 4.23 (SD = 0.84), the findings confirm that students hold a favorable attitude toward CLT in enhancing their speaking skills. To further support these results, semi-structured interview responses were analyzed thematically to provide deeper insights into students' experiences with CLT.

The following section presents the findings from the semi-structured interviews, organized according to key themes that emerged from the participants' responses.

Table 4 illustrates students' positive attitudes toward the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method in improving their speaking skills. Many students highlighted the benefits of practicing in real-life situations, which helped boost their confidence (Students 1, 4, 8, and 10). Others emphasized the interactive and engaging aspects of CLT, such as working in pairs or groups, role plays, and games, which made learning enjoyable and effective (Students 2, 3, and 9). Additionally, some students appreciated how CLT encouraged them to use English in meaningful conversations rather than relying solely on memorization (Students 5 and 6). Overall, the responses indicate that students find CLT an effective and motivating approach for enhancing their speaking abilities.

Table 5 highlights students' challenges related to confidence and anxiety when speaking in English using the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method. Some students struggle with shyness and nervousness, especially when speaking in front of the class, as they feel self-conscious under the gaze of their peers (Student 2). Others experience frustration when making mistakes, finding it difficult to correct themselves while speaking (Student 7). Additionally, pronunciation issues contribute to feelings of embarrassment, making some students hesitant to speak (Student 8). These responses suggest that while CLT is beneficial, confidence and anxiety remain significant barriers to students' oral communication development.

Table 6 presents students' attitudes toward linguistic challenges, specifically difficulties with vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension, when using the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method. Several students struggle with recalling appropriate words quickly, especially under pressure (Student 1), and find it challenging to remember grammar rules while speaking (Student 3). Additionally, some students face comprehension difficulties, such as keeping up with fast-paced conversations (Student 4) or understanding their teacher and peers (Student 10). Limited vocabulary also poses a challenge, particularly when discussing complex topics (Student 5). These responses indicate that while CLT encourages active communication, linguistic barriers can hinder students' fluency and confidence in speaking.

Table 4. Students' attitudes toward the helpfulness of CLT in improving speaking skills

Respondents	Example of students' response
Student 1	"It helps because I get to practice speaking in real situations. I feel more confident now."
Student 2	"I like working in pairs and groups. It's fun and I learn more when I speak with my friends."
Student 3	"Definitely! The role plays and games make it easy to practice."
Student 4	"Yes, I feel like I can say more things now, and I don't worry so much about mistakes."
Student 5	"Yes, because I get to use English in real conversations, not just memorize."
Student 6	"Yes, it's easier to learn when we practice speaking instead of just reading or writing."
Student 8	"Yes, because I feel more comfortable speaking English now."
Student 9	"Yes, I like how we practice in pairs or groups. It's fun and useful."
Student 10	"Yes, because I can try speaking without being afraid of making mistakes."

Table 5. Students' Attitudes toward Challenges Related to Confidence and Anxiety

Respondents	Example of students' response
Student 2	"Yes, I feel shy when I have to speak in front of the class. It's scary when everyone looks at me."
Student 7	"I get frustrated when I make mistakes, and it's hard to correct myself while talking."
Student 8	"Sometimes I feel embarrassed when I don't pronounce words correctly."

Table 6. Students' attitudes toward linguistic challenges (vocabulary, grammar, and understanding)

Respondents	Example of students' response
Student 1	"Sometimes it's hard to think of the right words quickly, especially when I'm nervous."
Student 3	"I think it's hard to remember the grammar rules while I'm speaking."
Student 4	"Sometimes my classmates speak too fast, and I can't follow the conversation."
Student 5	"I think it's hard when the topics are too difficult or when I don't know enough vocabulary." (Student 5)
Student 10	"Yes, I think it's hard when I don't understand what the teacher or my classmates are saying."

Table 7. Students' attitudes toward classroom environment challenges

Respondents	Example of students' response
Student 6	"Sometimes it's noisy in the class, and I can't hear what my partner is saying."
Student 9	"Sometimes my partner doesn't take it seriously, so it's hard to practice properly."

Table 7 reflects students' attitudes toward challenges in the classroom environment that affect their ability to practice speaking. One student points out that the noise in the classroom makes it difficult to hear their partner, which disrupts communication and hampers the learning process (Student 6). Another student shares that working with a partner who does not take the activity seriously makes it harder to engage in effective practice (Student 9). These responses indicate that factors such as noise and a lack of commitment from classmates can create obstacles to successful speaking practice in a CLT-based classroom.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study address the first research question, demonstrating that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) significantly enhances students' speaking abilities. This result is consistent with numerous studies that have highlighted the effectiveness of CLT in improving speaking proficiency. For example, research in Malaysia has shown that CLT activities improve English-speaking interactions (Eddie, 2020), which aligns with the results of this study. Similarly, studies in Taiwan and Vietnam emphasize that CLT not only enhances communicative skills but also boosts students' confidence and facilitates practical language use (Ho, 2020; Tran, 2022), supporting our findings. Furthermore, studies in Turkey, Indonesia, and Thailand confirm that CLT—through interactive activities such as group discussions and role-playing—improves speaking proficiency and fosters student engagement (Rezalou & Yağız, 2021; Zakiyah, 2022; Suphan & Phusawisot, 2020; Komol & Suwanphathama, 2020). Collectively, these studies reinforce the findings of this research, underscoring the effectiveness of CLT in improving speaking skills.

In addressing the second research question, the results of this study indicate that students generally have a positive attitude toward CLT, although they face challenges such as anxiety, linguistic difficulties, and distractions. However, the interactive nature of CLT activities plays a key role in boosting students' confidence and fluency. This is consistent with findings from previous studies (Chen, 2015; Sarikha, 2022; Inprasit, 2016). Moreover, CLT fosters a dynamic and engaging learning environment, which helps reduce anxiety and encourages active participation, as demonstrated in earlier research (Zakiyah, 2022; Anggraini, 2018; Suphan & Phusawisot, 2020). Therefore, despite the challenges students face, CLT continues to provide an effective framework for improving speaking skills and increasing student engagement.

CLT method is effective in improving students' speaking skills by focusing on interactive, real-life communication. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), CLT emphasizes

communication rather than memorization, helping students develop fluency and confidence. This study's findings support the idea that CLT activities, like role-playing and group discussions, boost students' speaking confidence, making them feel more comfortable using English in various contexts.

Despite its effectiveness, CLT also presents challenges. Students often experience anxiety and confidence issues, which can hinder their speaking progress. Studies like Ellis (2003) highlight that learners can struggle with nervousness in communicative settings, and in this study, students reported feeling shy when speaking in front of the class. Additionally, vocabulary and grammar difficulties make it harder for students to express themselves fluently, as noted by Nunan (1991).

The classroom environment also plays a key role in CLT's success. Distractions, such as noise or uncommitted peers, can disrupt communication. Johnson and Johnson (2001) pointed out the importance of a focused environment, and this study's students echoed that sentiment, mentioning how distractions hindered their speaking practice. A supportive, distraction-free setting is essential for maximizing CLT's potential. Furthermore, this result supports Reeder's (2017) study, which highlights that collaborative activities are crucial for fostering oral literacy. Working together provides students with more opportunities to interact and communicate, which aligns with the findings of Abella (2016) and Andas (2014), who emphasize that active, interactive learning environments help improve oral language skills and literacy, as learners thrive in socially engaging contexts.

Thus, CLT is effective in enhancing speaking skills, though it requires attention to challenges like anxiety, language barriers, and classroom distractions. By addressing these issues, teachers can create a more supportive learning environment, as Cook (2008) suggests, helping students overcome obstacles and improve their speaking abilities.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method has proven to be highly effective in improving students' English speaking skills, as shown by the notable progress observed in their speaking abilities before and after participating in CLT activities. This improvement reflects the positive influence of CLT on students' ability to engage in authentic English communication. The study also emphasizes that CLT not only enhances speaking proficiency but also fosters a lively and interactive learning environment. Activities such as role-playing, group discussions, and task-based communication encourage active student participation, enriching the overall learning experience. The results of this research show that while students generally have a

positive attitude toward CLT, they also experience challenges such as anxiety, linguistic difficulties, and classroom environment distractions. Nonetheless, the interactive nature of CLT activities contributes significantly to boosting students' speaking confidence and fluency.

The results of this research offer valuable insights for educators and researchers examining the effectiveness of CLT in enhancing students' speaking abilities. Additionally, the study provides practical recommendations for both teachers and students in EFL contexts, encouraging the integration of CLT activities to improve speaking skills. By prioritizing communication and interaction, CLT allows students to practice using English in real-world situations, boosting their confidence and fluency.

A limitation of this study is that there was only one instructor responsible for scoring the students' pre- and post-tests. This could introduce potential bias in the evaluation process, as the scores may reflect the instructor's subjective interpretation of students' performance. Future research could address this limitation by involving multiple evaluators to ensure a more objective and reliable assessment of students' progress.

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