

Communicative Language Teaching in CEFR-Based English Learning

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to evaluate and enhance the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching in the context of CEFR-based English language learning. The population consisted of students from State Junior High School (SMPN) 8 in Jambi. The samples were collected using convenience sampling. A total of 32 students participated in this study. This investigation utilized a quantitative research approach with a pre-experimental design. The CEFR Test was utilized as an assessment tool for data collection. Three primary methodologies were employed in this investigation. The study consisted of pre-test, treatment procedures, and post-test assessments. The pretest was administered to assess the students' proficiency in spoken English according to the CEFR standard. Subsequently, the researchers administered eight rounds of treatments utilizing Communicative Language Teaching. The concluding round involved administering a post-test to determine if there was any improvement in students' speaking performance. The researchers analyzed the results of the pre-test and post-test following the implementation of the Communicative Language Teaching treatment in CEFR-based English learning. The two-tailed significance value obtained from the calculation of the paired samples t-test was 0.017, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. The value of this computation can be interpreted as the progressive improvement in student performance resulting from the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching in CEFR-based English education.

Keywords: CEFR; Communicative Language Teaching; Speaking Skills

Introduction,

The era of globalization is without a doubt the greatest challenge to social existence in the twenty-first century. Readiness to face the globalization period, in which

people must live in non-negotiable competition is imperative. In this global era, the world of education should also compete to generate outstanding students who can survive and compete continually in the labor market. Students must equip themselves with two basic things: knowledge and abilities. In fact, in order to compete in today's globalized job market, numerous talents are required.

"Soft skill" is the most important skill to have. According to Rider and Klaeyens (2014), in a summary report on findings on job recipients' perspectives on "soft skills," 90% of companies target the fact that the main skills that their workers must possess are "soft skills," in addition to "hard skills," which are skills directly related to one specific type of work. "Soft skills" are intimately tied to personal characteristics. Communication skills are among the "soft skills" that include honesty, communication, courtesy, accountability, social skills, a positive attitude, professionalism, adaptability, teamwork, and work ethics (Robies, 2012). Young (2016) stated that, according to a Microsoft survey, educators ranked communication abilities second only to problem solving skills. Thus, English, being the most commonly spoken language on the planet, is a necessary communication tool that must be acquired in order to face the world of work in the global society period.

Being able to speak and communicate fluently is the dream of foreign language learners, including English learners. In fact, effective communication relies heavily on the act of speaking (Wulandari et al, 2022). Proficiency in the English language holds significant value in today's context of digitalization and globalization. English is widely acknowledged as a global language and finds application in diverse spheres of life, including Indonesia (Ananda, 2022; Kurniawan & Radia, 2017; Shintasiwi, 2021). Acquiring this skill is regarded as essential for individuals desiring to succeed in the global marketplace and professional field (Afriana et al, 2022; Prasetyaningrum et al, 2023). English proficiency is essential for both students and teachers to effectively teach and practice during the learning process and to seek for jobs after graduation. The Internet and technological progress have further emphasized the importance of the English language, as a substantial portion of the content available in cyberspace is written in English.

Likewise, for educators, making students skilled in speaking is the goal of most English teachers. This is also in line with the objectives of learning English based on the curriculum. The four skills included in language skills; Listening, Speaking,

Reading, Writing, along with the linguistic aspects in it; Vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation are expected to be integrated as well as possible so that in the end the teaching objectives are achieved, namely, to create students who are skilled in English both orally and in writing.

However, it cannot be denied that teaching English at school is hampered because students' knowledge of the language is uneven. At school, students cannot refuse to be placed in classes where their English proficiency varies. With this tendency, teachers often find it difficult to teach English to students.

The most common problems of teaching English in Indonesia include difficulty understanding English topics, lack of training in English teaching and learning, limited resources and materials, low student motivation, and inadequate English exposure outside of school (Fidinillah, 2022; Wahyuningsih et al, 2023; Fadilah et al, 2023). Additionally, the formal instruction in secondary schools is often ineffective in improving English proficiency. Students also perceive English as difficult, not substantive for their future, and only a formality subject, leading to low confidence, motivation, and lack of practice in speaking English (Nasihin & Oktariani, 2022). These challenges highlight the need for improved teaching methods, training for English teachers, better resources and materials, increased student motivation, and opportunities for English exposure outside of the classroom.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is considered as the most influential approach to arrive at the second/foreign language teaching scene since the so-called scientific method (i.e. audio-language method) in the 1960s (Spada, 2007). CLT is an effective approach to teaching English to secondary school students. It focuses on developing students' practical and communicative skills in English, particularly in speaking and writing. CLT encourages students to engage in real-life interactions and meaningful communication, which helps improve their communicative competence. Studies have shown that implementing CLT strategies, such as collaborative learning and meaningful interaction, can enhance students' grammar knowledge and fluency in writing (Long, 2023). CLT also helps students become confident communicators in various real-life situations, as it emphasizes the importance of conveying actual meaning (Losi & Nasution, 2022). Teachers who implement CLT in teaching spoken language have been found to facilitate learners' development of communicative competence skills through their choice of materials,

facilitation of the teaching-learning process, and application of teaching-learning strategies (Rokaiya et al, 2022). Overall, applying CLT in teaching English to secondary school students can lead to improved language skills and better socialization among students from diverse backgrounds (Azizah et al, 2022).

Experimental studies on the use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method have shown positive results. A study conducted in Indonesia discovered that the application of CLT in translation classes led to enhanced cognitive engagement and writing motivation (Siregar et al, 2023). A separate study conducted in China revealed that both high school students and teachers exhibited a preference for the grammar-translation method over the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach. However, it was suggested that CLT should be given greater opportunities for practical application within the context of the recently implemented curriculum reform (Su & Yan, 2023). According to a study conducted in Indonesia, students had positive attitudes towards the communicative method, as evidenced by their favorable view of a friendly classroom environment and strong teacher-student connections (Nurhayati & Ganna, 2023). Similarly, a study conducted in Indonesia discovered that the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) had a positive impact on students' reading comprehension and served as a source of motivation for them to engage in reading (Rahmati, 2022). A research conducted in Mexico examined the understanding and perspectives of instructors on the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The study discovered that certain elements related to each language can impact the application of CLT principles (Morales & Alvarado , 2023).

Most of the study focused only on the implementation of CLT. This study however would like to suggest the learning environment on the basis on Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a globally recognized benchmark for assessing and classifying language competency. This research aims to provide students with valuable language learning experiences by aligning them with standardized criteria. Students are also encouraged to acquire proficiency in international standardized assessments. The study aims to promote novel practices, with SMPN 8 Jambi City serving as the site for putting the researchers' ideas into action. The impulse for this

research stems from the commitment of policymakers at SMPN 8 Jambi City, who recognize the importance of improving their students' foreign language competencies. Furthermore, a considerable portion of 7th-grade students lack foundational English skills, whereas 8th-grade students display a competency stall similar to their previous grade. The existing difference in linguistic proficiency complicates teaching and learning process. As a result, the researchers were motivated to conduct the study to find out: 1) What the students' CEFR Level were, 2) Whether or not there was significant improvement on students' speaking performance after being taught by implementing Communicative language Teaching in CEFR Based English learning.

Research Methodology,

For the purpose of this investigation, a quantitative approach was utilized, and a pre-experimental design was utilized as the research method. Specifically, experimental research is defined as study that actively regulates and manipulates the settings that affect occurrences in which the researchers is interested, introduces interventions, and creates a difference (Cohen et al, 2018). For the sake of this study, only one class functions as the class that will receive a special treatment. Both a pre-test and a post-test were administered in order to collect data on students' speaking achievement before and after implementing Communicative Language Teaching. The existence of special treatment in this study ensures that the treatment is more accurate since it can be compared to the circumstance before the treatment was applied (Sugiyono, 2013). This is because the treatment can be compared to the previous scenario.

All of the students that participated in this study were currently enrolled at SMPN 8 Jambi City. Class VII, class VIII, and class IX were the three groups that made up the participants in this study's population. There are eight classes available at each grade level at the SMPN 8 Jambi City. Nevertheless, this study utilized a method known as convenient sampling because the samples were taken from individuals who were available for the investigation. This study included the participation of thirty-two different students.

The conducting of the study was carried out with the speaking test as the instrument of the study. The CEFR standard served as the foundation for the development of the speaking test. The CEFR assessment, on the other hand, was restricted in this study by the researchers so that it could only focus on the CEFR for young learners known as YLE. YLE is designed for pre A1 (Starters), A1 (Movers), and A2 (Flyers) (Cambridge Assessment English, 2021). Therefore, in order to find out the students' real speaking level, the three different form of YLE Speaking assessment were designed and distributed to the students. During the test, the candidate is evaluated by a single examiner using certain criteria. The assessment for all levels is based on three criteria including Vocabulary, pronunciation, and interaction, each with a six-point scale (0 to 5), specified by candidate behavior. Scale descriptors are provided for Pre A1 Starters, A1 Movers, and A2 Flyers. The scale descriptions for vocabulary includes range, control, extent, and cohesion. For pronunciation the scale includes individual sounds, stress and intonation. In addition, for interaction the scale descriptions include reception/ responding, support required, and fluency/ promptness.

During the research study, the researchers provided eight rounds of interventions. The interventions sessions include various Communicative Language Teaching Based activities such as role-plays, group discussion, pair work, story-telling and picture narration, and information sharing. Emphasis is placed on fostering vocabulary expansion, fluency, accuracy and pragmatic competence in real life context. Throughout the intervention periods, participants' progress is closely monitored and recorded. Feedback sessions are conducted to provide constructive guidance and address individual learning needs.

The researches then conduct two analyses after gathering the data from pre-test and post-test. The first analyses utilized was descriptive analyses. This analysis was used to classify the students' speaking level, the mean scores, and the distribution of the scores for each of the level the students obtained. Then, in order to find out Whether or not there was significant improvement on students' speaking performance after being taught by implementing Communicative language Teaching in CEFR Based English learning the researchers computed pair sample t-test analyses by utilizing SPSS 26. Considering that it is paired, the information that is

obtained from the two samples must either be of the same quantity or originate from the same source.

Findings and Discussion,

Findings

Table 1. The result of pretest-and posttest

Students	Nilai / Hasil			
	Tes Awal (Pre Test)		Tes Akhir (Post Test)	
	Nilai CEFR	Level CEFR	Nilai CEFR	Level CEFR
1	5,5	A0 (Starter)	5,5	A0 (Starter)
2	0,5	A0 (Starter)	8,5	A0 (Starter)
3	0,8	A0 (Starter)	0,8	A0 (Starter)
4	8,5	A0 (Starter)	8,5	A0 (Starter)
5	11,6	A1 (Mover)	11,6	A1 (Mover)
6	1,0	A0 (Starter)	3,4	A0 (Starter)
7	9,7	A0 (Starter)	12,2	A1 (Mover)
8	8,8	A0 (Starter)	8,8	A0 (Starter)
9	8,8	A0 (Starter)	8,4	A0 (Starter)
10	1,0	A0 (Starter)	3,6	A0 (Starter)
11	8,5	A0 (Starter)	8,5	A0 (Starter)
12	8,3	A0 (Starter)	8,3	A0 (Starter)
13	0,9	A0 (Starter)	0,9	A0 (Starter)
14	8,8	A0 (Starter)	8,8	A0 (Starter)
15	2,5	A0 (Starter)	2,5	A0 (Starter)
16	6,6	A0 (Starter)	14,4	A1 (Mover)
17	1,2	A0 (Starter)	1,2	A0 (Starter)
18	0,5	A0 (Starter)	0,5	A0 (Starter)
19	1,0	A0 (Starter)	1,0	A0 (Starter)
20	1,4	A0 (Starter)	2,2	A0 (Starter)
21	0,0	A0 (Starter)	0,9	A0 (Starter)
22	0,5	A0 (Starter)	0,5	A0 (Starter)
23	0,0	A0 (Starter)	9,3	A0 (Starter)
24	9,1	A0 (Starter)	9,1	A0 (Starter)
25	0,0	A0 (Starter)	0,5	A0 (Starter)
26	12,6	A1 (Mover)	12,6	A1 (Mover)
27	0,0	A0 (Starter)	0,5	A0 (Starter)
28	11,5	A1 (Mover)	11,5	A1 (Mover)
29	6,9	A0 (Starter)	6,9	A0 (Starter)
30	9,1	A0 (Starter)	9,2	A0 (Starter)
31	0,0	A0 (Starter)	0,5	A0 (Starter)
32	9,1	A0 (Starter)	9,1	A0 (Starter)

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Pretest	32	,00	12,60	4,8344
Posttest	32	,50	14,40	5,9438
Valid N (listwise)	32			

Figure 1. The results of Descriptive Analyses -Before and after the treatment

The findings of the pretest showed that 29 out of 32 students were in the level of A0 or pre- A1. It means 90.625% of students (M=4.8344) were categorized starter. figure 1, the minimum score obtained during the pre-test is 0.0, which means that students are only at level A0 (Starter). The value of 0.0 is a description of the student's lack of ability to speak English, as evidenced by this CEFR test. Meanwhile, the highest score obtained from the pre-test results was 12.6, with an average of 4.8. This value is classified as A1 (movers).

The results of the posttest indicate the improvement on the students' achievement. Firstly, there was improvement on the number of the students who were categorized mover. Previously, there were only 3 students who could reach the mover level scores. In the post test there were 4 students who could reach the mover lever score. Although there were only four students who could be categorized as mover, 11 out of 32 students indicated significant improvement in the scores obtained (M= 5.9438). Besides, there was an increased in the students' lowest and highest score. Even though the level of the lowest score was categorized as starter, but the score (0.5) was higher than that in the pretest. Then, the highest score obtained by students was14.4, which is classified as an A1 CEFR Level Score while the average of the acquisition of the CEFR test carried out for these 32 students was 5.9 Indeed, when the lowest scores, highest scores, and averages produced by students when carrying out the pre-test and post-test are compared, it can be concluded that there is a clear increase in grades, even though they are still at the same level.

		Paired Samples Test							
				Paired Differences					
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-1,10938	2,49572	,44119	-2,00918	-,20957	-2,515	31	,017

Figure 2. The results of Paired Sample t-test

The results of descriptive analyses also aligned with the results of statistical analyses on paired sample t-test. Figure 2 is the result of calculations obtained from SPSS 26. The growth value obtained from the results of student acquisition during the initial and final tests is 0.017. Based on the comparison value determined by Sugiyono (2017), if the significance result is less than 0.05 (0.05), then it is certain that there is an increase between the initial and post-test scores. In fact, the value of the SPSS 26 calculation is 0.017, which is a smaller value when compared to 0.05. It was concluded that there was a significant improvement on the students' speaking achievement after being taught by using Communicative Language Teaching in CEFR based learning.

Discussion

The study focused on the students' speaking performance. Despite the fact that the pupils are in secondary school, their English language skills exceed expectations. Implementing a Communicative Language Teaching strategy linked with the CEFR-based learning evaluation was shown to have a favorable effect. The study's findings revealed that the score improved on the final test after receiving specific treatment through Communicative Language Teaching.

The results of the pretest and posttest analyses shed light on the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in improving students' speaking skills within a CEFR-based learning setting. The pretest results revealed that the majority of pupils were rated as A0 or pre-A1, indicating that they had a solid foundation in English. This initial assessment emphasizes the necessity of particular instructional interventions in addressing children' language weaknesses and facilitating meaningful language acquisition.

Students' speaking abilities improved significantly after the treatment. Notably, there was an increase in the number of children classified as A1 (Mover) following intervention, indicating tangible progress in language proficiency. While only a few students achieved this milestone on the pretest, the posttest results showed a significant increase in the proportion of students obtaining A1 proficiency, demonstrating CLT's effectiveness in promoting language development.

According to Spada (2007), the application of communicative language learning has a significant impact. CLT is the most influential approach to learning a

second or foreign language. The results of the studies also in line with the study from Aliazas & Velasco (2023) and Ghafar, et al (2023). The studies prove that CLT has positive impact on students' communicative competence, particularly in terms of fluency, vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, and comprehension. Students who were exposed to communicative language teaching demonstrated improvements in their speaking skills, including sub-skills like vocabulary, grammar, and fluency (Maming et al, 2022). Additionally, the communicative approach creates a friendly class atmosphere and fosters good relationships between students and teachers, which further enhances the learning experience (Solissa & Wariunsora, 2022).

Besides, applying various Communicative Language Teaching based activities brings a lot of advantages. Communicative language-based activities in the classroom focus on the belief that language is naturally functional for communication. These activities aim to develop communicative competence by focusing on the conveyance and reception of meanings in real-life social interactions. They stimulate students to be active and participative, allowing them to acquire communicative competence regardless of grammatical rules knowledge.

The implementation of role play activity for example, brings significant influence. The activities itself provides fun learning atmosphere where the students involve in real practice of language as means of communication. Miqawati & Wijayanti (2018) supported the idea. Their study proved that the training using role play method effectively improved students' speaking skill. The assessment showed a significant average increase in speaking ability. As a part of communicative language teaching activities, group discussion and small group discussion also help improve students' achievement. Group discussions provide students with opportunities to actively engage in the learning process and practice speaking (Sukmawati, et al, 2023). Through discussions, students are exposed to different perspectives and ideas, which helps expand their vocabulary knowledge (Jameel & Ui Haq, 2023). Additionally, group discussions allow students to receive constructive feedback from their peers and teachers, which further enhances their speaking proficiency (Purnamasari et al, 2023). Moreover, the interactive nature of group discussions promotes motivation and enthusiasm among students, leading to increased participation and learning outcomes (Anwar, et al, 2023). In fact, In the

context of English instruction in Indonesia, communicative activities such as information-gap activities, task completion activities, and information gathering activities are proposed to enhance students' speaking skills and their overall communicative competence (Affandi, 2017).

The implementation of Communicative language achievement is appropriate in the context of CEFR based learning in which CEFR becomes the standard for assessment. This study in fact, focus on The YLE tests which are aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), providing a standardized framework for assessing language proficiency levels. The YLE tests aim to evaluate the key language skills of young learners, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. By assessing these skills, the tests provide a comprehensive overview of a child's language proficiency and areas for improvement. These tests introduce children to everyday written and spoken English and are an excellent way for them to gain confidence and improve their English (Cambridge University Press & Assessment, 2024).

The goal of testing speaking through the Young Learners English (YLE) standardized test is to assess young learners' ability to communicate effectively in English. Specifically, the speaking component of the YLE test aims to evaluate a child's proficiency in spoken English within a variety of familiar and age-appropriate contexts. The speaking test assesses a child's ability to communicate verbally in English. It evaluates their pronunciation, intonation, and clarity of speech, as well as their ability to express themselves coherently and fluently. The speaking test often includes interactive tasks where the child listens to prompts or questions from the examiner and responds accordingly. The speaking tasks in the YLE test are designed to simulate real-life communication situations that children might encounter in everyday life. This encourages authentic communication and helps children develop practical language skills that they can use outside the classroom (Cambridge Assessment English, 2021).

Since Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes real-life communication and the use of authentic content, it aligns, overall, with the nature of the purpose of standardized tests in the context of YLE. It fits together in a way that makes sense for the improvement of students' speaking achievement when using the Communicative Language Teaching technique. It might be argued that in

addition to improving students' speaking abilities, Communicative Language Teaching equips them with the skills necessary to utilize English effectively in standardized and everyday contexts.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Overall, the pre-test and post-test outcomes, together with the use of customized instruction in the context of Communicative Language Teaching Approach rooted in CEFR based learning assessment have clearly exhibited a significant improvement in students' oral proficiency. The preliminary examination indicated a variety of skill levels, primarily at A0 (Starter) and A1 (Mover). After undergoing eight sessions of communicative language learning based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), a noticeable enhancement was noted in the performance of most students.

The statistical study, utilizing the paired sample t-test in SPSS 26, confirms the significance of the observed increase. The findings suggest a significant improvement in student scores from the pre-test to the post-test, as evidenced by a computed value of 0.017, which is below the minimum value of 0.05. This confirms the effectiveness of the CEFR-based strategy.

Although A0 levels were initially dominant in the initial test, the final test results show significant improvement across the board, with certain students advancing from A0 to A1. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that not all students experienced a change in their level. This implies that although there was a general rise in scores, several students maintained their initial level of skill.

In order to meet the individual needs of students who did not show any change in their level, it is advisable to consider exploring more strategies or adjustments to the CEFR-based approach. Consistently monitoring and adjusting the language learning program could enhance outcomes to a greater extent. Furthermore, broadening the range of evaluations beyond the CEFR test could yield a more thorough comprehension of pupils' language proficiencies.

This study highlights the achievement and efficiency of the CEFR-based communicative language learning technique in improving English speaking abilities. The favorable results justify the need for continual improvement in language

competency among students through ongoing enhancing and application of such teaching approaches.

With the achievement gained from the study, there is still limitation of the study. The study indeed implemented communicative language teaching approach by designing the activities rooted in YLE as a part of CEFR standardized assessment. The researchers implemented various Communicative Language Teaching based activities. However, the analyses of the study did not focus on finding out each of the effect of activities in detail. Therefore, it is suggested for the future researcher to seek into how each of the CLT based activities influence the students' performance.

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