**IDEAS**
**Journal of Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature**

ISSN 2338-4778 (Print)
ISSN 2548-4192 (Online)

Volume 14, Number 2, December 2026
pp. 9493 - 9503

Copyright © 2026 The Author
IDEAS is licensed under CC-BY-SA 4.0 License



Issued by English study program of UIN Palopo

# The Impact of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on Students' Language Learning: A Classroom-Based Study in an Indonesian EFL Context

**Nurdiana[1], Iskandar[2], Munir[3]**
[1,2,3] Universitas Negeri Makassar

**Article Info**

**Received:** 2026-04-07
**Revised:** 2026-05-19
**Accepted:** 2026-11-08

***Keywords:***
*Communicative Language Teaching; English Language Teaching; Students' Communication Skills; Classroom Interaction*

***DOI:***
10.24256/ideas. v14i2. 10627

**Corresponding Author:**
Nurdiana
diananurdiana519@gmail.com
Universitas Negeri Makassar

**Abstract**

*This study aims to explore the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), its impact on students' language learning, and the challenges faced by teachers in English language teaching. The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 9 Makassar using a descriptive qualitative research design. The participants consisted of one English teacher and eleventh-grade students. Data were collected through classroom observations, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) interactive model, including data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that teachers implemented CLT through communicative activities such as group discussions, role plays, presentations, and information-gap activities. These activities encouraged students to actively use English and interact with their classmates. The study also found that CLT had a positive impact on students' communicative competence and classroom engagement. Students became more confident, motivated, and active in speaking and listening activities. In addition, the classroom atmosphere became more interactive and enjoyable, helping reduce students' fear of making mistakes. However, several challenges were identified, including limited vocabulary, lack of confidence, differences in students' English proficiency, and limited learning media.*

## 1. Introduction

In many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, language teaching still focuses heavily on grammar mastery, memorization, and written exercises rather than meaningful communication. As a result, students often experience difficulties in expressing ideas, participating in classroom interaction, and using English in real-life situations. Many students become passive learners, lack confidence in speaking, and feel afraid of making mistakes when communicating in English. This condition shows that traditional teaching methods often fail to develop students' communicative ability effectively.

To address these problems, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been widely introduced as an approach that emphasizes meaningful communication and student interaction. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), CLT views communication as both the goal and the process of language learning. Through communicative activities such as discussions, role-play, pair work, and problem-solving tasks, students are encouraged to use English actively in authentic situations. CLT also supports student-centered learning, where teachers act as facilitators rather than the main source of knowledge.

The concept of communicative competence is closely related to CLT. Hymes (1972) explained that communicative competence refers not only to grammatical knowledge but also to the ability to use language appropriately in different social contexts. Furthermore, Canale and Swain (1980) proposed that communicative competence includes grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. These components help learners communicate effectively and meaningfully. In addition, Task-Based Language Teaching, which is closely connected to CLT principles, emphasizes the use of meaningful tasks and interaction to support language acquisition (Long, 2020).

Several previous studies have shown that CLT positively influences students' language learning. Sato and Loewen (2021) found that communicative tasks improve students' speaking fluency and classroom interaction. Dörnyei and Ryan (2023) also emphasized that communicative activities can increase students' motivation and willingness to communicate. In Indonesian EFL contexts, Rahmawati (2022) revealed that CLT helped students become more confident in speaking English, while Putri (2023) found improvements in students' participation and communicative competence after the implementation of communicative activities.

However, despite its advantages, CLT also faces several challenges in EFL classrooms, particularly in Indonesia. Large classroom size, limited learning resources, students' low vocabulary mastery, and students' anxiety when speaking English often hinder effective CLT implementation. In addition, some teachers still experience difficulties in designing communicative activities and balancing fluency with grammatical accuracy. Existing evidence demonstrates that the success of CLT depends greatly on teachers' classroom management, learning environment, and students' participation.

ISSN 2338-4778 (Print)
ISSN 2548-4192 (Online)

Although many studies have discussed CLT, most previous research tends to focus only on specific aspects such as speaking skills or motivation. Few studies explore the broader impact of CLT on multiple dimensions of language learning, including communicative competence, fluency, confidence, motivation, and classroom interaction within a real Indonesian EFL classroom context. This suggests that more comprehensive classroom-based studies are still needed.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), its impact on students' language learning, and the challenges faced by teachers in an Indonesian EFL classroom. This study also highlights the novelty of providing a holistic analysis of CLT implementation in a real classroom setting by examining various aspects of students' language learning simultaneously.

A qualitative descriptive design was considered appropriate for this study because it allows the researcher to explore classroom interaction, students' experiences, and teachers' perspectives in depth. Through observations and interviews, the researcher could understand how CLT was implemented naturally in the classroom and how it influenced students' communicative learning experiences.

## 2. Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to investigate the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), its impact on students' language learning, and the challenges faced by teachers in an EFL classroom. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to explore classroom interaction, students' experiences, and teachers' perspectives naturally and in depth within the real classroom context.

The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 9 Makassar. The participants consisted of one English teacher and eleventh-grade students who were actively involved in English learning activities using the CLT approach. Several students were also selected as interview participants based on their classroom participation and involvement during communicative activities.

Data collection was conducted over several classroom meetings through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Classroom observations were carried out to examine how CLT activities were implemented and how students responded during the learning process. The researcher observed communicative activities such as group discussions, role-play, pair work, and classroom interaction. Field notes were used to record students' participation, communication patterns, and classroom atmosphere.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the English teacher and selected students to gather deeper insights into their experiences and perceptions of the implementation of CLT. The interviews focused on students' confidence, motivation, classroom participation, and communicative competence.

Documentation, such as lesson plans and teaching materials, was also used to support the observational and interview data.

The data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data condensation stage, the researcher selected, simplified, and categorized important information from observation notes and interview transcripts. The data were then coded into several themes related to the implementation of CLT, its impact on students, and classroom challenges. After coding, the data were organized and displayed descriptively to identify patterns and relationships among the findings. Finally, conclusions were drawn from the interpretation of both observation and interview data.

To strengthen the credibility of the findings, this study applied data triangulation by comparing information obtained from classroom observations, interviews, and documentation. Observation findings and interview results were analyzed together to identify consistent patterns regarding students' participation, confidence, interaction, and communicative development during CLT activities. In addition, member checking was conducted by confirming several interview responses with the participants to ensure the accuracy of the data interpretation.

Ethical considerations were also applied in this study. The researcher obtained permission from the school and informed consent from the participants before conducting the research. Participants' identities and personal information were kept confidential, and all collected data were used only for research purposes.

## 3. Result

This section presents the results of the data analysis on the impact of communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on students' language learning. The findings are derived from classroom observations and semi-structured interviews and are organized into several key.

### *Improvement of Communicative Competence*

The findings show that CLT improved students' communicative competence through meaningful classroom interaction. During classroom observations, students actively participated in discussions, role-play, and question-answer activities. Students were able to express opinions, ask questions, and respond to their classmates using simple English expressions. Observation data demonstrate that students focused more on conveying meaning than on grammatical accuracy during communication activities.

One student stated:

*" ...saya jadi berani bicara bahasa Inggris walaupun belum sempurna..."*

Another student explained:

*"...kalau kerja kelompok, saya bisa Latihan bicara dengan teman jadi lebih mudah..."*

These findings suggest that communicative activities provided students with more

ISSN 2338-4778 (Print)
ISSN 2548-4192 (Online)

opportunities to practice English naturally. The teacher also explained that students became more willing to communicate when they were not pressured to speak perfectly.

*"...saya melihat siswa lebih aktif kalau kegiatan belajar dibuat santai dan komunikatif..."*

However, not all students showed the same level of participation. Active students tended to speak more confidently during discussions and role-play activities, while passive students often relied on their friends or used Indonesian when they lacked vocabulary. Although some students still experienced difficulties in expressing ideas fluently, they gradually became more involved during repeated communicative activities.

***Development of Speaking Fluency***

The findings reveal that CLT helped students develop speaking fluency through repeated communicative practice. During pair work and group discussions, students were encouraged to speak continuously without frequent interruption from the teacher. Observation data demonstrate that students became more fluent because they were given opportunities to practice speaking regularly in meaningful situations.

One student stated:

*"...kalau diskusi atau role-play, saya bisa bicara lebih lancar dibanding sebelumnya..."*

Another student added:

*"...dulu saya takut bicara, sekarang lebih sering mencoba walaupun masih salah..."*

These findings suggest that fluency improved because students practiced speaking in authentic interaction rather than focusing only on grammar exercises. The teacher also explained that delaying direct correction helped students speak more naturally.

*"...kalau langsung dikoreksi terus, siswa biasanya jadi berhenti bicara..."*

However, the observation also showed that some students still paused frequently or mixed English with Indonesian because of limited vocabulary mastery. Less active students tended to speak up only when asked directly by the teacher, while more confident students dominated classroom interaction. This finding indicates that fluency development varied depending on students' confidence and participation levels.

***Increase in Students' confidence***

The study found that CLT created a more supportive learning environment that helped reduce students' anxiety and increase their confidence in speaking English. Observation data demonstrate that students became more willing to participate when the teacher allowed them to communicate freely without emphasizing immediate grammatical correction.

One student explained:

*"...Tidak takut salah karena guru tidak langsung koreksi..."*

Another student stated:

*"…Kalau kerja kelompok lebih percaya diri karena dibantu teman..."*

These findings suggest that collaborative activities reduced students' fear of making mistakes because they felt supported by peers and teachers. Pair work and group discussions helped passive students become more comfortable participating in classroom interaction.

The teacher also confirmed this condition:

*"…Siswa yang biasanya diam mulai mau bicara kalau belajar dalam kelompok kecil…"*

However, some students still showed anxiety during presentations or when speaking in front of the whole class. A few students remained silent because they were afraid of being laughed at by their classmates. This demonstrates that although CLT reduced anxiety for many students, confidence problems still existed among several learners.

***Improvement of Learning Motivation***

The findings indicate that CLT increased students' motivation because learning activities were more interactive and related to real communication. Observation data demonstrate that students showed enthusiasm during role-play, group discussion, and communicative games compared to traditional lecture-based activities.

One student stated:

*"…Belajar jadi lebih seru karena banyak aktivitas seperti diskusi dan kerja kelompok..."*

Another student explained:

*"…Saya lebih suka belajar seperti ini karena tidak hanya dengar penjelasan guru…"*

These findings reveal that students became more motivated because they were actively involved in the learning process. The teacher also stated that communicative activities helped students become more interested in English lessons.

*"…Kalau aktivitasnya menarik, siswa lebih semangat ikut pelajaran..."*

Nevertheless, several challenges were still identified. Some students lost focus during group discussions and talked about unrelated topics. In addition, a few students depended too much on active classmates during collaborative activities. This suggests that maintaining students' engagement during communicative learning remained a challenge for the teacher.

***Enhancement of Interaction and Classroom Participation***

Another important finding is that CLT enhanced classroom interaction and participation. Through pair work and group discussions, students had more opportunities to exchange ideas, negotiate meaning, and collaborate with classmates. Observation data demonstrate that classroom interaction became more student-centered compared to traditional teacher-dominated instruction.

One student stated:

*"…Kami lebih sering kerja kelompok, jadi bisa saling bantu…"*

ISSN 2338-4778 (Print)
ISSN 2548-4192 (Online)

Another student explained:

*"...Kalau belajar bersama teman lebih mudah memahami materi..."*

These findings suggest that interaction played an important role in supporting language learning because students learned not only from the teacher but also from peers. The teacher also explained that communicative activities encouraged quieter students to participate gradually.

*"...Siswa yang pasif biasanya mulai ikut berbicara setelah melihat temannya aktif..."*

However, the findings also revealed several implementation challenges. Large classroom conditions sometimes made it difficult for the teacher to monitor all groups effectively. Some students also preferred using Indonesian during discussions because they lacked confidence and vocabulary in English. These classroom constraints demonstrate that the implementation of CLT requires effective classroom management and continuous teacher support to maintain meaningful interaction.

## 4. Discussion

This section interprets the findings by linking them to relevant theories and previous studies. The discussion highlights how Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) shapes students' language learning across multiple dimensions.

### *Communicative Competence as the Core Outcome of CLT*

The analysis that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) helped students develop communicative competence through meaningful classroom interaction. Students were encouraged to use English actively during discussions, role-play, and group activities rather than focusing only on grammatical accuracy. This supports Hymes' (1972) theory that communicative competence involves not only grammatical knowledge but also the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts. Similarly, Canale and Swain (1980) explained that communicative competence includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. In this study, students demonstrated these competencies by expressing ideas, responding to peers, and maintaining classroom interaction despite making grammatical mistakes.

The evidence also suggests that interaction-based learning allowed students to negotiate meaning and practice language naturally. This supports Long's (2020) interaction Hypothesis, which emphasizes that language development occurs through interaction and communication. Through collaborative activities, students learned from peers and became more engaged in classroom communication.

However, communicative competence did not develop equally among all students. More active students participated confidently during communicative tasks, while passive students still relied on Indonesian or avoided speaking

because of limited vocabulary and anxiety. This demonstrates that students' individual differences strongly influence the effectiveness of CLT implementation.

***Fluency Development through Meaningful Practice***

The results demonstrate that repeated communicative activities helped students improve their speaking fluency. Pair work, discussions, and role-play activities gave students opportunities to practice speaking continuously without frequent interruption. This finding aligns with Richards (2006), who argued that fluency develops when learners use language for meaningful communication instead of memorizing language structures.

The classroom interaction observed in this study also reflects principles of Task-Based Language Teaching, where students learn language through meaningful tasks and communication (Long, 2020). Activities such as problem-solving, discussions, and role-play encouraged students to focus on communication goals rather than perfect grammar. As students practiced more frequently, they became more willing to express ideas spontaneously.

Nevertheless, fluency development remained uneven. Some students still paused frequently, mixed English with Indonesian, or depended on classmates during discussions. Students with lower proficiency levels often struggled to maintain conversations because of limited vocabulary and a lack of confidence. These findings reveal that while CLT supports fluency development, teachers still need to provide sufficient scaffolding and vocabulary support for less proficient learners.

***Anxiety and Students' Confidence***

The analysis highlights that CLT created a supportive classroom atmosphere that reduced students' anxiety and increased confidence in using English. Students became more willing to participate because the teacher did not focus heavily on immediate error correction. This finding supports Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which explains that lower anxiety can facilitate language acquisition.

In addition, the findings can also be connected to the Willingness to Communicate theory, which emphasizes that students are more likely to communicate when they feel confident and supported in the learning environment. Group work and collaborative interaction helped students feel safer because they could share ideas with peers before speaking in front of the whole class. As a result, many passive students gradually became more involved during communicative activities.

However, the evidence also suggests that not all students experienced the same level of confidence. Some students still felt anxious during presentations or avoided speaking because they were afraid of making mistakes. A few learners appeared more comfortable with participating actively in communication tasks. These mixed experiences indicate that CLT may not automatically reduced anxiety for all learners without continuous teacher support and classroom encouragement.

***Motivation and Social Interaction in Language Learning***

The findings reveal that communicative activities increased students'

ISSN 2338-4778 (Print)
ISSN 2548-4192 (Online)

motivation and classroom engagement. Students became more enthusiastic because the activities were interactive, meaningful, and related to real-life communication. This supports Dörnyei and Ryan (2023), who emphasize that meaningful interaction and active participation are important factors in language learning motivation.

The results can also be interpreted through Sociocultural Theory, which explains that learning occurs through social interaction and collaboration. Through pair work and group discussions, students exchanged ideas, supported one another, and learned collaboratively. Social interaction allowed students to practice communication naturally while building confidence and participation.

However, several classroom constraints affected the effectiveness of interaction during CLT implementation. Large classroom conditions sometimes made it difficult for the teacher to monitor all groups equally. Some students became passive during discussions and relied too much on active classmates. In addition, students occasionally used Indonesian more frequently than English during group interaction. These challenges demonstrate that communicative activities require effective classroom management and active teacher monitoring to ensure balanced participation.

### *Challenges in Implementing CLT*

Although CLT showed positive impacts on students' language learning, the study also identified several implementation challenges. One major challenge was students' varying English proficiency levels. Higher-achieving students tended to dominate communication activities, while lower-level students participated less actively because they lacked vocabulary and confidence.

Another challenge involved classroom management. Managing communicative activities in large classrooms requires teachers to organize time, participation, and interaction carefully. The teacher needed to ensure that all students remained engaged and used English meaningfully during activities. Without proper management, some students became distracted or discussed unrelated topics.

Limited learning resources and media also affected CLT implementation. The teacher sometimes experienced difficulties designing communicative materials that matched students' needs and proficiency levels. These findings suggest that successful CLT implementation depends not only on communicative activities themselves but also on teacher preparation, classroom conditions, and institutional support.

### *Pedagogical Implications*

The analysis highlights several important implications for EFL classroom practice. First, teachers should create supportive and student-centered learning environments where students feel comfortable communicating without fear of

making mistakes. Teachers can encourage participation through pair work, group discussion, role-play, and task-based activities that reflect real-life communication.

Second, teachers should provide scaffolding for less active or lower-proficiency students by giving vocabulary support, clear instructions, and gradual speaking opportunities. Teachers also need effective classroom management strategies to maintain students' engagement during communicative activities.

Third, schools and educational institutions should support CLT implementation by providing teacher training programs, communicative teaching materials, and classroom resources. Assessment should also focus not only on grammatical accuracy but also on students' communicative competence, interaction, fluency, and participation during learning activities.

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that CLT can positively influence students' communicative learning experiences, but its effectiveness depends greatly on classroom management, teacher support, students' readiness, and the learning environment.

## 5. Conclusion

This study concludes that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has a positive and This study concludes that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has a positive impact on students' language learning in the observed EFL classroom, particularly in improving communicative competence, speaking fluency, confidence, motivation, and classroom interaction. Through communicative activities such as discussions, role-play, and group work, students become more active and engaged in using English. However, these findings should be interpreted cautiously, as the study was conducted in a single classroom with a limited number of participants and used a qualitative approach. Despite these limitations, the study highlights that the effectiveness of CLT depends not only on communicative activities but also on the teacher's ability to create a supportive and interactive learning environment.

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, it is recommended that English teachers implement CLT more consistently by designing meaningful communicative activities and creating a supportive classroom environment that reduces students' anxiety and encourages participation. Schools and educational institutions should also support CLT implementation by providing appropriate resources and teacher training. Additionally, future researchers are encouraged to investigate the impact of CLT using different research designs, such as mixed-methods or experimental approaches, and to focus on specific aspects of language learning, including speaking skills, motivation, and classroom interaction across various educational contexts.

## 6. References

Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. Pearson.
Brown, H. D., & Lee, H. (2020). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to*

ISSN 2338-4778 (Print)
ISSN 2548-4192 (Online)

*language pedagogy*. Pearson.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Pearson.

Dörnyei, Z., & Ryan, S. (2023). *The psychology of the language learner revisited*. Routledge.

Furwana, D., Muin, F. R., Zainuddin, A. A., & Mulyani, A. G. (2024). Unlocking the Potential: Exploring the Impact of Online Assessment in English Language Teaching. IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature, 12(1), 653-662.

Harmer, J. (2007). *How to teach English*. Longman.

Husnaini, H. (2022). Development of Self Esteem-Oriented Micro Teaching Materials for IAIN Palopo English Education Students. IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature, 10(1), 538-560.

Hymes, D. (1972). On communicative competence. In J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics*. Penguin.

Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon.

Littlewood, W. (1981). *Communicative language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Long, M. (2020). *Second language acquisition and task-based language teaching*. Wiley.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis*. Sage.

Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today*. Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C. (2021). *Teaching English through interaction*. Cambridge.

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Sato, M., & Loewen, S. (2021). *Evidence-based second language pedagogy*. Routledge.