

## Communicative Language Teaching for Enhancing Speaking Skills: A Systematic Literature Review

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### Abstract

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach that prioritizes meaningful interaction and student engagement to enhance language proficiency particularly in speaking. In today's globalized world, where communication is key, CLT proves valuable for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners who often struggle with limited vocabulary, low confidence, and insufficient speaking practice. This literature review, analyzing 30 studies from 2017 to 2025, affirms CLT's effectiveness in boosting fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, and confidence through interactive activities such as role-plays and discussions. It also fosters creativity, autonomy, and enjoyment in learning. Despite these benefits, challenges like overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, insufficient teacher training, and student anxiety can hinder CLT's success. To address these, the study recommends enhanced teacher training, resource-rich and supportive environments, confidence-building activities, and integrating CLT into broader educational policies, including MTB-MLE in the Philippines. In conclusion, CLT is not just a technique, it's a transformative approach that empowers learners to use language with confidence and real-world purpose.

**Keywords:** Speaking Skills, Communicative Language Teaching, Second Language Learners,

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### Introduction

Speaking is a daily human communication activity that takes place anywhere and anytime, serving as a bridge that connects the speaker and the listener. Speaking skills involve the use of elements such as grammatical structure, vocabulary, intonation, and pronunciation. Students frequently encounter challenges in social communication, such as being unable to articulate their opinions or ideas, or they comprehend what others communicate but struggle to convey it (Wahyuni et al., 2021). Sulastri et al. (2024) Speaking is an important one in mastering the language, but it is not an easy thing to master it, there are many difficulties faced by students in mastering speaking, such as lack of vocabularies, lack of material to be delivered, lack of confidence in conveying the ideas and lack of practice also lack of times. In this situation, a strategy or approach is required to enhance students' speaking abilities; numerous prior studies have explored ways to improve students' speaking skills, including the work conducted by Silva-Valencia et al. (2021).

Speaking skill is considered the most crucial amongst other language skills as it is one of the most productive activities in daily life and is important in carrying out conversations, that everyone should learn the communicative models of English-speaking skills such as vocabulary, grammar, fluency, comprehension, and communication (Purba & Zaki, 2019). One of the most effective communicative teaching models that helps students to improve their speaking skills is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which establishes teaching language as used in communication. It is a language teaching approach that helps language learners to adopt language through various ways using communication, it recognizes interaction, communicative competence, and speaking fluency. As said by University of Louisiana Monroe (2021), it is an approach that aims to achieve communicative rather than linguistic competence through learner interaction. Communicative Language Teaching is a student-center that highlights dynamic and active learning, and a large language learning environment (Ho, 2020). Communicative Language Teaching is a move from teacher-centered method to student-centred method and highlights the students' understanding of the language used in communication, teaching, and learning. It is a response to the emerging traditional grammar-focused method, emphasizing real-world interaction. Qasserass (2023) Communicative Language Teaching has accumulated significant attention in language education due to its emphasis on promoting effective communication and meaningful language use. It emphasizes the use of language in meaningful communication to learn the language used in the context, rather than using the language as part of communication.

The effectiveness of implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) also presents challenges. Students often experience anxiety, linguistic difficulties, and confidence issues, which can hinder their speaking progress, and can struggle with nervousness in a communicative setting, afraid to speak in front of the class and reportedly feeling shy in front of the class (Ellis, 2003; Zakaria & Royani, 2017; Wathawatthana et al., 2025). Despite the challenges that the method faces when implemented, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has proven to be highly effective in improving students' speaking skills, students also develop lively and interactive learning environment, positive attitudes and continuously showed improvements as a result of getting good in speaking (Purba & Zaki, 2019; Wathawatthana et al., 2025).

In this literature review, the researchers aim to contribute a critical and comprehensive analysis of studies that explores the use of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the effectiveness of improving students' speaking skills. This review will analyze and examine previous studies that use CLT in several key areas: (1) Effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching; (2) Challenges of Communicative Language Teaching; (3) Benefits of Communicative Language Teaching.

This review aims to explore the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in improving students' speaking skills over the academic year, analyzing, and examining current studies, identifying gaps, and offering insights for effective practice.

## Research Method

The researchers carried out 30 related research articles and studies conducted by previous researchers. A set of criteria was used in selecting research articles, including the date of publication studies published within the year of 2017 - 2025 were considered, these research articles were collected from various educational, peer-reviewed journals, and academic websites, like Google Scholar, ResearchGate, JSTOR, ERIK, etc., studies were selected based on their availability in the English language. The studies selected were based on their clear focus on using Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Also, the researchers used keywords to search for the following research articles and studies: "Speaking skills," "Communicative Language Teaching," "CLT," "Effectiveness," "Improving". By selecting these research articles, the researcher examines the variables that were carried out by the existing study. Each research study was analyzed and examined according to its effectiveness, challenges, and benefits, and organized in chronological order.

## Result and Discussion

### *Effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching*

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has already proven to be an effective approach to teaching language specifically in improving students' speaking skills. This area of literature review, the researchers examined and analyzed the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching in improving students' speaking skills throughout the academic year:

Zakaria and Royani (2017) found that the CLT method contributed a positive effect towards students' speaking skills, the comparison of pre-test and post-test results of the experimental class found higher pre-test and post-test, highlights that there was an improvement after the treatment and confirming the positive effect of CLT on speaking abilities. Similarly, Anggraini (2018) reported progressive increases in speaking scores through group activities, indicating CLT's role in fostering idea generation and effective speaking practice. Ervina and Kurniati (2019) showed that using video with CLT greatly improved pronunciation, intonation, speaking speed, and correctness. Groups using this method did better than others. Abdelmageed and Omer (2020) pointed out that teachers felt CLT successfully improved speaking speed and conversation skills, even with difficulties putting it into practice. Haliwanda (2021) saw better speaking speed, correctness, and clarity. This study found CLT was better than older grammar-translation ways. Trang (2022) emphasized that interactive classroom tasks and resources are important for creating communication-rich settings that help CLT work well. Muñoz and Gabriela (2023) agreed that CLT helps with pronunciation and communication, suggesting it be included in language courses. Nisha (2024) discovered that CLT greatly improved speaking skills, motivation, and independence in college-level EFL students in Bangladesh. Most recently, Wathawatthana et al. (2025) noted big improvements in speaking confidence and how smoothly students spoke using CLT, even with problems like anxiety and distractions. These studies

consistently show that CLT enhances speaking proficiency by promoting interactive, learner-centered activities that develop real-world communicative competence and learner motivation.

The improvements in fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and learner confidence in various situations indicate that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) not only develops linguistic skills but also boosts learner motivation. The approach emphasis on authentic communication activities, including role-plays, group discussions, and multimedia uses, fosters an engaging learning atmosphere that promotes active involvement and lessens speaking anxiety. However, the successful application of CLT relies on factors such as teacher readiness, access to suitable resources, and tackling learner emotional challenges like shyness and anxiety. These results are in line with theories of communicative competence, underscoring the importance of continuous teacher training and curriculum support to fully leverage the advantages of CLT. The evidence supports CLT as an effective, learner-focused method that significantly improves students' speaking skills and equips them for real-world language use outside the classroom.

### *Challenges of Communicative Language Teaching*

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was already proven as an effective approach to teaching language, specifically speaking. In this area of literature review, the researchers analyzed the challenges that the previous studies had encountered of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in improving students' speaking skills. There are several factors that challenged the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching. These are some obstacles that serve as a challenge of Communicative Language Teaching in improving students' speaking skills.

Yasin et al., (2017) stated that teachers' role in implementation of CLT is vital, it is important for teachers to plan their lessons carefully before applying them into class. In the study of Yasin et al., (2017) teachers did not fully implement its lesson plan during the implementation in the classroom, thus, a failure to improve the students' speaking skills' using CLT. The same challenge encountered by Islam (2016) with ineffective implementation of CLT because of the teacher-centered classroom, and not engaging learners resulted in a failure to contribute to students' speaking skills. There are also factors that hinders teachers' use of CLT. As stated, Mangaleswaran & Aziz (2019) teachers do not have much knowledge and confidence in practicing CLT. Wongwan et al., (2019) stated that teachers' language proficiency, lack of language culture knowledge that might cause inappropriate language use hindered them to implement CLT in their communicative classes. As stated by Ozsevik (2010); Jafari, et al., (2015) cited by Wongwan et al., (2019) Language teachers could not teach speaking skills effectively using CLT because they also had a hard time and chances of speaking the language as they were learning it. The lack of effective implementation of learning strategies, ineffective ways of teachers and lack enough practice, lack of authentic materials and activities inside the classroom hinders the use of CLT and the improvement of the speaking skills of the students (Paakki, 2013; AL-Garni & Almuhammadi, 2019; Abdelmageed & Omer, 2020). Also, Hui & Yunus

(2023) CLT teachers habitually retreat to traditional teaching methods, focusing on grammar and vocabulary learning. Teachers are not given enough training on CLT related courses; thus, teachers have limited knowledge on CLT and low speaking deficiency. The students' and teachers' environment is also a challenge of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), as stated by Mangaleswaran & Aziz (2019); Wongwan et al., (2019); Abdelmageed & Omer (2020); Darwaman et al., (2020); Hui & Yunus (2023) disruption due to lack of facilities, large learning environment and large classes with a large number of students, poor infrastructures and harmful learning environment hinders the improvement of students' speaking skills using CLT. (Zakaria & Royani, 2017; Anggraini 2018; Mulyanah et al., 2018; Ervina & Kurniati 2019; Abdelmageed & Omer 2020; Faridha, 2024; Wathawatthana et al., 2025) stated that students' often struggle with low self-confidence (afraid, shy, mistakes to speak in front of the classroom, not confident enough to participate), feeling of anxiety when speaking, hesitation and unwillingness to speak, lack of motivation and lack of opportunities, and nervousness in communicative activities are factors that hinders students' ability to improve their speaking skills using CLT.

Furthermore, Haliwanda (2021); Arrasul & Pole (2021) stated that students faced two problems in speaking using CLT. First, the problem from students' side, such as insecurity, self-doubt, and shyness. Fauzi & Ridwan (2024) Second, the aspects of speaking: fluency, accuracy, grammar, articulation, pronunciation, and clarity. Some students struggle with vocabulary, difficulties in pronouncing words, limited vocabulary and difficulties understanding unfamiliar words (Anggraini 2018; Mulyanah et al., 2018). Pubra & Zaki (2019) fluency, pronunciation, and duration of the activity are some of the problems that the students faced during the implementation of CLT. Mangaleswaran & Aziz (2019) also stated that students lack appropriate words, grammar, lexical comprehension, and fluency during the speaking practice. Major obstacles that challenged the use of CLT to improve speaking skills of the students were lack of language speaking skill and limited language exposure, grammar-based practices, low understanding of the target language skills (Shumin, 2002; Khan, 2013; AL-Garni & Almuhamadi, 2019; Wongwan et al., 2019). Also, Fauzi & Ridwan (2024) stated that traditional approaches to teaching speaking, such as grammar-translation and rote memorization, often fail to address the communicative aspects of language. These are some common challenges that the students and teachers faced during the implementation of the Communicative Language Teaching method. Hui & Yunus (2023) concluded that teacher-related, student-related, system-related, and context-related, are challenges that Communicative Language Teaching had encountered, this includes teachers' lack of training and knowledge of CLT, students' low language skills, specifically speaking (Mangaleswaran & Aziz, 2019), curriculum changes in education system (Molla, 2019), and disruptive environments (Wongwan et al., 2019).

The challenges of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) highlight the importance of teachers' role and teacher knowledge, effective teacher training and adequate preparation in improving the language skills of students, specifically speaking. This indicates that with effective implementation

and training of teachers' in CLT, can significantly improve the students' speaking skills. Meanwhile, the students' difficulties with language skills and low self-confidence can affect the effective implementation of CLT to address their speaking skills. Therefore, consistent language exposure is vital in the improvement of language skills, and teachers should foster their students' self-esteem, to encourage a supportive environment that enables them to implement communicative activities that promote students to be participative and encouraging.

### *Benefits of Communicative Language Teaching*

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) although proven effective in improving speaking skills, the approach encountered various obstacles in its implementation, like inadequate teacher preparation, students' lack language speaking exposure, etc., that hinders students to improve their speaking skills. This area of literature review, the researchers analyzed the benefits that Communicative Language Teachers (CLT) had offered to improve the quality of the students' speaking skills.

Studies by Yasin et al. (2017); Lumy (2018); Purba & Zaki (2019) collectively highlight the effectiveness of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method in improving students' speaking skills. They show that while CLT can significantly boost speaking proficiency, engagement, and confidence especially through interactive techniques like role plays, sentence starters, and storytelling its success depends heavily on proper implementation and consistent use of English in class. The research emphasizes the importance of teacher training, practical feedback, and creating a supportive environment, offering valuable guidance for curriculum design and classroom practice, particularly in non-native English settings. Efrizal (2012); Abdelmageed & Omer (2020); Trang (2022) proves CLT was found to foster positive teacher perceptions, promote collaborative and interactive learning, and significantly improve students' speaking proficiency, motivation, and confidence. The approach encouraged student-centered instruction, increased engagement, and created a supportive classroom environment.

Additionally, it addressed challenges such as low vocabulary and fear of speaking, supported holistic language development, and aligned with modern educational practices. These studies also emphasized the need for institutional support, teacher training, and curriculum adjustments to maximize CLT's benefits. The studies by Gutierrez-Heras & Camino (2022); Fauzi & Ridwan (2024); Wathawatthana et al., (2025) show that CLT improves fluency, accuracy, confidence, and communicative competence through real-life tasks like interviews and role-plays. The research also emphasizes the development of positive student attitudes, increased engagement, and the importance of integrating CLT into curricula to foster active, practical, and interactive language learning.

The collective findings from studies conducted between 2017 and 2025 consistently demonstrate that the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method is highly effective in

enhancing students' speaking skills across various educational contexts. CLT does not only improve fluency, accuracy, and communicative competence through interactive activities such as role plays, storytelling, and real-life tasks, but also boosts students' motivation, confidence, and engagement. The research highlights that the success of CLT is closely tied to proper implementation, teacher training, and consistent use of English in the classroom. Furthermore, the studies underscore the importance of a supportive learning environment and institutional backing to overcome challenges like limited vocabulary and fear of speaking. The student-centered nature of CLT, along with its alignment with modern pedagogical practices, makes it a valuable approach for curriculum development, especially in non-native English settings. They also affirm CLT's effectiveness in transforming language instruction from traditional, grammar-based methods to more holistic and communicative approaches.

## Conclusion

The reviewed studies confirm that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a very effective approach to improve the students' speaking skills. Evidence from various studies conducted between 2017 and 2025 indicates that CLT greatly improves learners' fluency, accuracy, vocabulary growth, pronunciation, and overall communication skills. Its student-centered approach promotes language enhancement through active involvement, creativity, and confidence. However, the successful implementation of CLT depends on factors such as teacher training, access to appropriate materials, and addressing student-related challenges like anxiety and low self-confidence. Although CLT provides many benefits, its implementation comes with difficulties. Several studies indicated that inadequate teacher training, restricted understanding of CLT methodology, and low language proficiency in teachers impede its effective implementation. Despite these challenges, the overall results strongly support the integration of CLT into English language teaching programs. Ensuring proper teaching preparation, ongoing professional development, and a supportive learning environment, the challenges of CLT can be reduced. By promoting real-world communication and emphasizing practical language application, CLT prepares students to function effectively in various social and academic environments. With appropriate implementation, CLT emerges as a strong and flexible approach for improving speaking abilities and preparing students for real-world communication outside the classroom.

For further use of this literature review, the researchers recommend teacher training and adequate preparation to implement proper procedures and address challenges in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) implementation. Also, it is important for teachers to foster their students' language skills, specifically speaking, with the use of CLT, as it is proven effective and beneficial. Lastly, the researchers recommend the use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in teaching or implementing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), as MTB-MLE faces a lot of criticism during its implementation, it is also the use of mother tongue as the language of instruction

in primary level of education in the Philippines, with the help of CLT, it may reduce the challenges and problems that MTB-MLE had encountered.

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