

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

The speaking English is one of the basic skills that students need to master in learning a foreign language, especially at the Junior High School level. Speaking skills are regarded as the most important language ability compared to other language skills, because speaking is an active language activity and is used most often in daily life. This skill plays an important role in the conversation process, because through speaking a person can express ideas, thoughts, and information directly to others. Therefore, mastery of speaking skills becomes a very crucial thing in communication. To achieve effective and meaningful communication, every individual needs to learn and master various aspects of communication in English speaking skills, such as mastery of vocabulary, grammar, fluency, comprehension, and the ability to interact in various context. However, in reality many students still experience difficulties in speaking English even though they have understood vocabulary and grammar in theory.

Speaking skills are one of the most essential language abilities for students to master compared. Several aspects included in speaking skills include pronunciation, speaking fluency, the accuracy of vocabulary and grammar use according to context, as well as interaction ability. Speaking skills are

valuable abilities that can continually be developed through sustained practice and the directed use of language. All of these aspects are important parts that can be continuously practiced and assessed in the learning process, so speaking skills become a highly valuable ability and can continue to be improved through consistent practice, communicative activities in the classroom, and focused use of English in various real-life situations (Brown, 2004)

At the Junior High School (SMP) level, speaking skills remain one of the biggest challenges for many students in English learning, even though they have studied vocabulary and grammar in theory. One of the causes is students'

low self confidence, where they often feel anxious about the possibility of making mistakes in pronunciation, grammar usage, or word choice, so they are reluctant to actively participate in speaking. In addition, teaching methods that remain conventional, such as the grammar-translation approach or repetitive practice (drill-based), dominate the learning process in the classroom. These methods tend to emphasized mastery of vocabulary and sentence construction, but provide little opportunity for students to engage in interactive and meaningful communication.

Another factor is the limited use of English outside the classroom, which causes students to rarely be exposed to real communication situations and affects their motivation to speak.

As a result of the combination of these factors, many students are not well trained in engaging in active communication, even though speaking ability is an important indicator of students' success in using English as a means of daily interaction, not merely mastery of language structure. This condition describes a common phenomenon in middle schools, where students still face difficulties in developing effective speaking skills despite having undergone formal learning processes. (Julfah, J et al., 2023)

My preliminary findings observation as a researcher at SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu on many students still face challenges in developing their English speaking skills. First, students often feel embarrassed or lack confidence when they make mistakes while speaking. This is caused by their concerns about negative evaluations from teachers or classmates, as well as the fear that mistakes made could disrupt the course of learning.

Second, most students tend to place more emphasis on answers considered grammatically correct, because they are accustomed to being taught to always focus on structural accuracy and formal correctness in the learning process, so they rarely try to use new vocabulary or expressions that could support language interaction.

Third, students are rarely involved in authentic language interaction activities, such as group discussions, conversations between friends, or speaking exercises that emphasize genuine meaning and communication. This happens due to a combination of shyness, excessive focus on correct answers, and limitations of the learning methods applied in the classroom. The limited opportunities to practice speaking interactively make students less accustomed to using English in real life situations.

This phenomenon shows that although students understand the theory of vocabulary and grammar, they still have difficulty applying speaking skills in everyday life, so the development of their speaking skills remains limited. Therefore, a more interactive, communicative, and student-centered learning strategy is needed, so that they get more opportunities to practice speaking actively, increase their self-confidence, and master oral communication skills comprehensively.

According to Ya-Yu Cloudia Ho (2020), the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a language teaching method that emphasizes the use of language as a means of communication in real situations, not merely studying language rules or structures separately. From this perspective, the main goal of language learning is to develop students' communication abilities, including the ability to convey meaning, speak fluently, and use language appropriately

according to the social context and various communication situations. Ho (2020) emphasizes that the implementation of CLT not only helps students improve structural accuracy in speaking, but also increases their confidence in using English in daily life.

In practice, classroom activities are designed to mimic language interactions that occur in the real world, involving students in activities that allow them to communicate authentically, such as role-plays, situation simulations, real conversations, pair or group discussions, as well as tasks that require negotiation of meaning between students. These activities are intended so that students can practice the ability to convey messages, understand their interlocutors, respond appropriately, and adjust the language used to the purpose of communication. This method also positions the teacher as a facilitator who supports the interaction process among students, so that learning is more centered on real communication practice. According to Qasserras (2023), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) should be understood not merely as a collection of teaching methods, but as a set of pedagogical principles that emphasize authentic language interaction, negotiation of meaning, task-based learning, and a learner-centered approach. In this framework, language learning is not only limited to mastery of grammar or sentence structure, but is more directed toward students' ability to communicate

effectively in various social contexts, which is known as communicative competence. Qasserras also explained that the core of CLT is to provide students with opportunities to engage in real and meaningful language practice, and experience structured social interactions, in which they actively participate in negotiating meaning, strive to understand their interlocutor's message, and convey their intentions in authentic conversations. This process not only involves speaking skills, but also listening, responding appropriately, and using language in interconnected communicative context.

Several previous studies show that the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has a positive effect on students' speaking ability. One of them, a study conducted by Dedi Efrizal (2012) found that most students felt more interested and motivated to speak in English through this approach. The CLT method encourages students to participate actively and make meaningful contributions in classroom speaking activities. With the implementation of CLT, students are not only able to increase their self-confidence, but also feel freer to express their ideas when speaking in front of their classmates. In addition, the majority of students can reduce feelings of fear and shame, so their speaking abilities improve significantly in each learning cycle. Additionally, a study by Candadila and Puspitasari (2025) shows that CLT not only significantly improves Junior High School students' speaking

skills over the traditional Audio Lingual method but also increases their motivation to learn. The results indicate that CLT sparks students' involvement and confidence in oral communication, leading to better development of their speaking skills.

As a researcher, I assume that the implementation of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method can have an effect in providing a positive influence on the improvement of students' speaking abilities. This improvement can be realized through various authentic language activities, such as conversations, role plays, dialogues between students, simulations of everyday life situations, as well as group work that encourages learners to actively use the language being learned. The CLT method emphasizes active student involvement by prioritizing the use of language that is meaningful, relevant, and context-appropriate in real situations. Within the CLT framework, the teacher acts as a facilitator who motivates and guides students to engage actively in learning, rather than merely as a presenter of material or a corrector of grammatical errors.

B. Identification of The Problem

Based on the research background described above, the problems identified in this study are as follows :

1. Many students display low levels of confidence and often feel anxious, embarrassed, and afraid of making mistakes

when speaking in English, so they are less motivated to actively participate in speaking activities.

2. The English language learning process in the classroom still relies heavily on conventional approaches that emphasize mastery of grammar, memorization, and written exercises, which results in limited opportunities for students to practice speaking skills in meaningful and interactive.
3. Students are rarely involved in authentic language interaction activities, such as group discussions, conversations, role plays, or simulations of real-life situations, which limits their ability to apply English in actual communicative contexts.

C. Limitation of The Research

Based on the explanantion above, this study focuses on implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method toward students' speaking skills of seventh grade at SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu on academic year 2025/2026. The research concentrates exclusively on the speaking skills of students' specifically elements like fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and etc.

D. Research Question

Based on the identification of the problems and background of the research above, then the researcher formulated the research question as follow : Is there a significant effect of Communicative Language Teaching method toward the speaking skills of seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu on academic year 2025/2026?

E. Research Objective

Based on the research questions above, the objective of this research is to determine whether or not the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method has a significant effect on the speaking skills of seventh grade students' at SMP Negeri 4 Kota Bengkulu on academic year 2025/2026.

F. Benefits of The Research

The results of this study are expected to be useful for the following parties:

1. Theoretical benefits

This study aims to enhance existing theories in the field of English language instruction, especially concerning how well the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The outcomes could also provide insights for upcoming research focused on communicative in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings.

2. Practical Benefits

This research is expected to provide practical benefits for the following parties :

- a. For teachers, this research offers educators valuable information about how effective the Communicative Language Teaching method can be as an alternative to enhance students' speaking skills.
- b. For students, this research aims to assist learners in boosting their speaking skills, building self assurance, and promoting their active involvement in English learning through engaging communication activities.
- c. For schools, the outcomes of this research can educational institutions in creating more impactful and interactive English teaching strategies and motivate the adoption of creative teaching techniques to improve students' speaking skills.
- d. For future researchers, this study can serve as a resource for future scholars interested in exploring similar topics related to the Communicative Language Teaching method and speaking skills.

G. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstandings between readers and researchers. The following key terms are defined as follows:

1. **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)** is a language teaching method that emphasizes interaction, meaningful communication, and using the target language in realistic contexts rather than solely focusing on grammar or drills. Teachers act as facilitators and students' engage in communicative tasks such as dialogues, role-play, pair work, group discussions, or other interactive activities that simulate real life language use (Priasih, 2024).
2. **Method** can be interpreted as the techniques or steps used to carry out research activities based on the approaches and planning that have been established. This method serves as a link between theoretical concepts and their application in research practice, so that the results obtained can be in accordance with the objectives that have been formulated. Thus, the selection of the appropriate method is very decisive for the quality as well as the validity of the research results produced. (Firdaus Wan Khairuldin & Ibrahim, 2017)
3. **Speaking** is understood not only as producing sentences but as co-constructing interaction with others. Interactional competence includes turn-taking, topic management, repair strategies, back-channeling, and the ability to sustain and

negotiate meaning collaboratively. Relevance to EFL learners' speaking proficiency depends on how effectively they manage interactional resources during real conversational exchanges, especially in paired or group speaking tasks. (Sato, K., & Crane, P. 2023)

4. **Skills** are a main component in professional expertise that show a person's ability to act appropriately and effectively in certain situations. These skills develop through a continuous educational process as well as practical experience, and serve as a bridge connecting theoretical understanding with the application of performance in the workplace. (Elvira et al., 2017)

