

# IMPROVING STUDENTS' ORAL COMPETENCY THROUGH COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING APPROACH

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## ABSTRACT

*The main objective of this study is to know the improvement of English language teaching especially in the Oral Competency aspect using communicative approaches or Communicative Language Teaching Approach. The method used in this study was Classroom action research. The Data in this study uses percentage analysis. The respondent in the study was a semester 1 2017/2018 student of General English 4 parallel F in one of the colleges in North Sulawesi, consisting of 31 students. Based on the results of data analysis, there is an increase in the ability to speak (Oral Competency) students in each cycle. Data showed that on pre-assessment (pre-assessment) of student oral competence: on Pre-assesment: 0% (excellent), 45% (very good), 45% (good) 10% (needs improvement). On cycle I: 3% (excellent), 68% (very good), 26% (good), 3% (needs improvement). In cycle II: 10% (excellent), 48% (very good), 39% (good), 3% (need improvement). In cycle III: 10% (excellent), 48% (very good), 42% (good), 0% (need improvement). This research indicates that the use of communicative approaches through the Communicative Language Teaching Approach is able to improve the oral competency of General English 4 students in semester 1 2017/2018 in one of the colleges in North Sulawesi.*

**Keywords:** *Oral Competency, Communicative Competence.*

## INTRODUCTION

English oral competency is very important for people interaction where people almost speak everywhere and every day through English. In this global era, many people used English as a mean of communication and it makes people who come from different countries to be easier in interacting and communicating. As one of international language, English is also taught in Indonesia as a foreign language.

Speaking is one way to communicate ideas and thought orally. In enabling students to communicate, we need to apply the language in real communication. According to Gert and Hans (2008: 207), speaking is speech or utterances with the

purpose of having intention to be recognized by speaker and the receiver processes the statements in order to recognize their intentions. Brown and Yule (1999: 14) stated that speaking is depending on the complexity of the information to be communicated; however, the speaker sometimes finds it is difficult to clarify what they want to say. Rebecca (2006:144) stated that speaking is the first mode in which children acquire language, it is part of the daily involvement of most people with language activities, and it is the prime motor of language change.

As language learners who had learned English intensively, the students should be able to interact orally each other through English. But in fact, most of the students did not perform English in their language conversation. They would rather to use Manadonese or Indonesian language than English as a mean of communication. It because of the method in teaching English that is used by English teacher in classroom is boring method, there is no innovation in teaching English, which the teacher used traditional method that made English atmosphere in classroom seems monotone.

From the phenomenon above, the researcher is interested in analyzing some problems that make students reluctant to use English in their daily conversation and implementing Communicative Language Teaching method to improve students' oral competency.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

To answer the research question, the researcher used classroom action research (CAR). Classroom Action Research is a method of finding out what works best in your own classroom so that you can improve student learning. We know a great deal about good teaching in general (e.g. McKeachie, 1999; Chickering and Gamson, 1987; Weimer, 1996), but every teaching situation is unique in terms of content, level, student skills and learning styles, teacher skills and teaching styles, and many other factors. To maximize student learning, a teacher must find out what works best in a particular situation. There are many ways to improve knowledge about teaching. Many teachers practice personal reflection on teaching; that is, they look back at what has worked and has not worked in the classroom and think about how they can change their teaching

strategies to enhance learning. (Hole and McEntee (1999) provide useful steps for enhancing such reflection. A few teachers (most notably Education professors) conduct formal empirical studies on teaching and learning, adding to our knowledge base.

CAR fits in the center of a continuum ranging from personal reflection at one end to formal educational research at the other. CAR is more systematic and data-based than personal reflection, but it is more informal and personal than formal educational research. In CAR, a teacher focuses attention on a problem or question about his or her own classroom. For example, does role-playing help students understand course concepts more completely than lecture methods? Which concepts are most confusing to students? The data is analyzed by using percentages.

John Elliot (1991) defines action research as: ‘Action research is the process through which teachers collaborate in evaluating their practice jointly: raise awareness of their personal theory; articulate a shared conception of values; try out new strategies to render the values expressed in their practice more consistent with educational values their espouse; record their work in a form which is readily available to and understandable by other teachers; and thus develop a shared theory by research practice.’

Action research methods were proposed by Kurt Lewin in 1946, as a research technique in social psychology. More recently, Donald Schön (1983) described the reflective practitioner as one who thinks systematically about practice. Classroom Action Research is systematic, yet less formal, research conducted by practitioners to inform their action. The goal of CAR is to improve your own teaching in your own classroom (or your department or school). While there is no requirement that the CAR findings be generalized to other situations, as in traditional research, the results of classroom action research can add to the knowledge base. Classroom action research goes beyond personal reflection to use informal research practices such as a brief literature review, group comparisons, and data collection and analysis. Validity is achieved through the triangulation of data. The focus is on the practical significance of findings, rather than statistical or theoretical significance. Findings are usually disseminated through brief reports or

presentations to local colleagues or administrators. Most teachers, from pre-school through university level, can be taught the methods of action research in a single course, a series of workshops, or through extensive mentoring (Mettetal, 2000).

The boundaries between these categories are not distinct. Some CAR projects may become comprehensive enough to be considered traditional research, with generalizable findings. Other CAR projects may be so informal that they are closer to personal reflection. In this essay, I will describe the prototypical CAR project.

First and foremost, classroom action research is a very effective way of improving your teaching. Assessing student understanding at mid-term helps you plan the most effective strategies for the rest of the semester. Comparing the student learning outcomes of different teaching strategies helps you discover which teaching techniques work best in a particular situation. Because you are researching the impact of your own teaching, you automatically take into account your own teaching strengths and weaknesses, the typical skill level of your students, etc. Your findings have immediate practical significance in terms of teaching decisions.

Second, CAR provides a means of documenting your teaching effectiveness. The brief reports and presentations resulting from CAR can be included in teaching portfolios, tenure dossiers, and other reports at the teacher or school level. This information can also help meet the increasing requirements of the assessment movement that we document student learning.

Third, CAR can provide a renewed sense of excitement about teaching. After many years, teaching can become routine and even boring. Learning CAR methodology provides a new challenge, and the results of CAR projects often prompt teachers to change their current strategies. CAR projects done as teams have the added benefit of increasing peer discussion of teaching issues. Classroom action research follows the same steps as the general scientific model, although in a more informal manner. CAR methods also recognize that the researcher is, first and foremost, the classroom teacher and that the research cannot be allowed to take precedence over student learning. The CAR process can be conceptualized as a seven-step process. (For more detailed information about conducting CAR

research, see authors such as Bell, 1993; Sagor, 2000; and Hubbard and Power, 1993)

Step one: Identify a question or problem.

This question should be something related to student learning in your classroom. For example, would a different type of assignment enhance student understanding? Would a strict attendance policy result in better test scores? Would more time spent in cooperative learning groups help students understand concepts at a higher level? The general model might be "what is the effect of X on student learning?" Since the goal of CAR is to inform decision-making, the question or problem should look at something under teacher control, such as teaching strategies, student assignments, and classroom activities. The problem should also be an area in which you are willing to change. There is no point in conducting a CAR project if you have no intention of acting on your findings. Larger institutional questions might be tackled, if the institution is committed to change. Finally, the question or problem should be feasible in terms of time, effort and resources. In general, this means to think small--to look at one aspect of teaching in a single course. Angelo and Cross (1993) suggest that you NOT start with your "problem class" but rather start with a class that is progressing fairly well. As you become more comfortable with CAR methods, you may attempt more complicated projects.

Step two: Review Literature.

You need to gather two types of information, background literature and data. The literature review may be much less extensive than traditional research, and the use of secondary sources is sufficient. Sources such as Cross and Steadman (1996) or Woolfolk (2000) will often provide background information on learning, motivation, and classroom management topics.

Step three: Plan a research strategy.

The research design of a CAR study may take many forms, ranging from a pretest-post-test design to a comparison of similar classes to a descriptive case study of a single class or student. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are appropriate. The tightly controlled experimental designs of traditional research are rarely possible in a natural classroom setting, so CAR relies on the triangulation

of data to provide validity. To triangulate, collect at least three types of data (such as student test scores, teacher evaluations, and observations of student behavior). If all data point to the same conclusions, you have some assurance of validity.

Step four: Gather data.

CAR tends to rely heavily on existing data such as test scores, teacher evaluations, and final course grades. You might also want to collect other data. See Angelo and Cross (1993) for a wonderful array of classroom assessment techniques. (Be sure to check with your Institutional Review Board for policies regarding the use of human subjects. Most CAR with adult students will be exempt from review as long as you do not identify individual students.)

Step five: Make sense of the data.

Analyze your data, looking for findings with practical significance. Simple statistical analyses of quantitative data, such as simple t-tests and correlations, are usually sufficient. Tables or graphs are often very helpful. Qualitative data can be analyzed for recurring themes, citing supporting evidence. Practical significance, rather than statistical significance, is the goal.

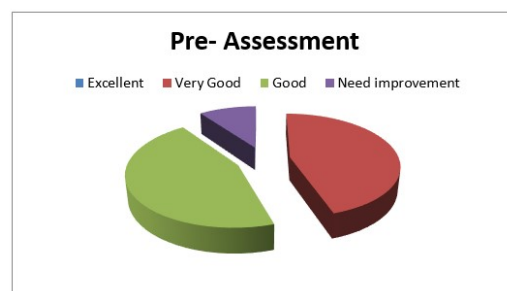
Step six: Take action.

Use your findings to make decisions about your teaching strategies. Sometimes you will find that one strategy is clearly more effective, leading to an obvious choice. Other times, strategies may prove to be equally effective. In that situation, you may choose the strategy that you prefer or the one that your students prefer.

Step seven: Share your findings.

## **RESULT**

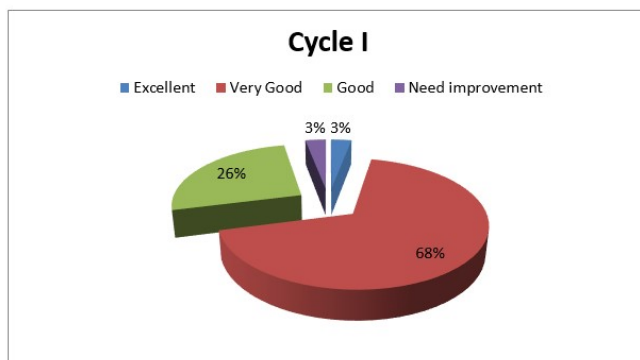
### **a. Pre-assessment**



Interval	Qualification	Pre-assessment	
		Number of Students	percentages
23 – 25	A or Excellent	0	0%
20 – 22	B or Very Good	14	45%
17 – 19	C or Good	14	45%
16 – or below	Needs improvement	3	10%

From the result above, it can be seen that the students really need some improvement in oral competency. The data shows that no one in excellent category or 0%, 45% are very good, 45% are good and there are 10% students who need some improvements. Based on the result above, the researcher concluded that students need more improvement in their oral competency and decided to do more action to improve their oral competency better.

**b. Cycle I**

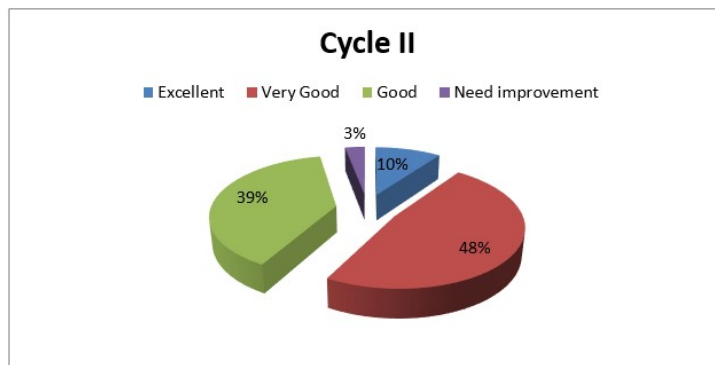


Interval	Qualification	Cycle I	
		Number of Students	percentages
23 – 25	A or Excellent	1	3%
20 – 22	B or Very Good	21	68%
17 – 19	C or Good	8	26%
16 – or below	Needs improvement	1	3%

Based on the table above, it can be seen that there is improvement in students' oral competency than in pre-assessment. The data shows that 3% of students are excellent categories, 68% are very good, 26% are good categories and 3% needs improvement. Based on the evaluation and reflection, the researcher concludes that there is improvement in students' speaking ability. However,

researcher feels that it is important to improve students' oral competency because the indicator of success has not been reached yet. Some students have several problem in speaking such as low motivation in speaking, they don't have enough vocabularies to express their ideas, feeling shy when they are speaking in front of the teacher, still rigid to express their ideas through oral communication, unfamiliar with good techniques to speak easily, unable to speak well that caused of difficulties in expressing their ideas. Besides that, the method that applied before was not interesting enough. Therefore, the researcher needs to do action again.

c. **Cycle II**

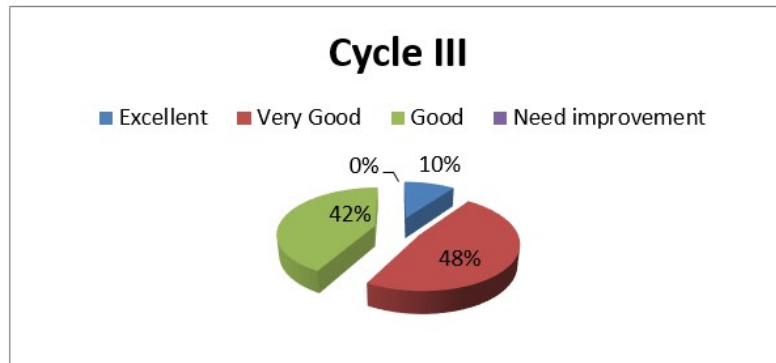


Interval	Qualification	Cycle II	
		Number of Students	percentages
23 – 25	A or Excellent	3	10%
20 – 22	B or Very Good	15	48%
17 – 19	C or Good	12	39%
16 – or below	Needs improvement	1	3%

It can be seen from the table above that students' oral competency is increasing. It shows that 10% of students are in excellent categories, 48% are very good, 39% are good and 3% of them need improvement. From the data above, the researcher considered that the indicator of success has not been reached yet, for there are 3 % students who still need improvement in their oral competency. That is why; the researcher needs to do the next cycle in order to overcome the problem in improving students' oral competency



d. Cycle III



Interval	Qualification	Cycle III	
		Number of Students	percentages
23 – 25	A or Excellent	3	10%
20 – 22	B or Very Good	15	48%
17 – 19	C or Good	13	42%
16 – or below	Needs improvement	0	0%

From the table above can be concluded that any significant progress on students’ oral competency. It shows that 10% numbers of students are excellent, 48% are very good, 42% are good and 0% needs no any improvement. From the result above, the researcher conclude that the indicator of success is completed. Therefore, the researcher decided to stop the action.

**DISCUSSION**

Based on the results which found by researcher in each cycles of this research, we could see that most of students were interested in learning English speaking through Communicative Language Teaching Approach. They selves-confidence to express their ideas in speaking activity inside classroom, most of them could minimize their fears and shy to speak, the frequency and percentage of students’ speaking ability were increased well in each cycles. In addition, Communicative Language Teaching method could motivate the students to be active and had a great participation in speaking activity during teaching and learning process in classroom. Another aspect that found by researcher in this study that Communicative motivate students and minimize students’ problems in their oral competency such as low motivation to speak, don’t have enough

vocabularies to express their ideas, feeling shy when they spoke in front of their friends, still rigid express their ideas through oral communication, unfamiliar with good techniques to speak easily, well that caused of difficulties in expressing their ideas, etc until there is no student who was not active in oral activities.

## **CONCLUSION**

Method is one of important things that must be applied during teaching and learning process in order the purpose of teaching can be reached. One of the method can be applied in teaching English speaking is language teaching because by applying the method, teaching speaking can be more effective, and it is able to improve students' oral competency. From the findings above, it is proved that CLT approach helps to improve the students' oral competency as this approach encourage communication in the target language. the significant improving results from pre-assessment, cycle I, II and III have stated that CLT approach is effective to be used in the language classroom. As CLT doesn't focus entirely on grammatical accuracy, it encourages participations from low proficiency students. Teachers and lecturers should adopt and implementing CLT approach in their teaching practice as it was proven to be an effective teaching method in improving students' oral competency at one university in North Sulawesi.

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