

STUDENTS' SPEAKING DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A BILINGUAL PROGRAM USING COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT) AT SMA TAKHASSUS AL QUR'AN

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Abstract

This research investigates the impact of the bilingual program implemented through the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method in improving the speaking skills of students at SMA Takhassus Al-Qur'an. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the data were collected through classroom observations, dormitory observations, interviews with teachers and students, and supporting documentation. The research focuses on how the CLT method is applied within the bilingual dormitory environment to enhance students' communicative competence. The findings show that the bilingual environment, supported by CLT-based activities such as group discussions, speaking tasks, and daily communication in English, significantly contributes to students' improvement in fluency, pronunciation, interaction, and accuracy. The structured dormitory curriculum, combined with consistent language exposure and supportive peer interaction, builds students' confidence and encourages them to practice speaking more frequently. Despite the challenges such as vocabulary limitations and code-switching, especially among first-year students, the bilingual program has positively impacted students' speaking performance. In conclusion, the integration of the bilingual program and CLT principles has proven to be effective in improving students' English-speaking skills in both academic and social contexts.

Keywords: Bilingual Program, CLT Method, Speaking

Introduction

Language is a system of communication which consists a set of sounds and written symbols which are used by the people of a particular country or region for talking or writing. Language is a communication tools that people to absorb more tings such as information and other knowndlege. Speaking is a fundamental aspect of human communication, facilitating the acquisition and conveyance of information and knowledge. It represents a cognitive process whereby one's speech is conveyed and comprehended with precision and clarity by others. However, despite the growing prevalence of English in Indonesia, a significant proportion of the population remains unacquainted with the language. Consequently, the ability to speak English remains a formidable challenge, particularly given the limited exposure to the language in daily communication.

The act of speaking indirectly enables the creation of a text that can be readily understood. In the act of speaking, one encounters speakers, listeners, and the information or messages conveyed. Furthermore, proficiency in English pronunciation is a significant challenge for many learners, particularly in the context of public speaking. This is a crucial aspect of the English language that requires both confidence and skill. Many students are apprehensive about speaking English due to their lack of proficiency in pronunciation and grammar. This apprehension hinders their ability to practise and enhance their spoken English skills.

One of the primary responsibilities of educators is the guidance of students in the development of their communication abilities. One of the most challenging aspects of this endeavour is the necessity of teaching students to speak English, a language that is not their native tongue nor one that is utilize on a daily basis. The environment exerts a significant influence on the improvement of English proficiency, as English is a communication tool that necessitates frequent utilization and practice. However, in Indonesia, English is not a language that is commonly employed in everyday life. Despite the fact that many Indonesia in the capital city utilize English as a means of communication, there are still numerous individuals in other regions who are not proficient in the language.

This situation presents a major challenge for English teachers, particularly in encouraging students to speak confidently and fluently. Students often feel anxious, lack vocabulary, and are hesitant to express themselves due to limited exposure to English in their surroundings. Without an appropriate teaching approach and supportive environment, the development of students' speaking skills becomes stagnant. In response to this issue, the bilingual boarding school program represents an optimal solution. Bilingualism is defined as the ability to communicate in two language. It is often used to describe individuals or groups who speak two language. According to the Indonesian-language dictionary (KBBI), "bilingual" is defined as "able or accustomed to using two languages well; concerned with containing two languages."

The environment is a significant factor in enhancing English language proficiency. Bilingual boarding schools represent a potential solution to this challenge. In such institutions, students are expected to utilize both English and Arabic according to a prescribe schedule. This approach offers a promising avenue for fostering students' English communication abilities. In addition, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach has emerged as a relevant strategy, as it emphasizes meaningful communication and real-life language use. While previous studies have examined the use of CLT in classroom instruction, few have explored its integration within bilingual dormitories where students actively engage with English beyond the classroom context. This study addresses that gap by investigating the impact of a bilingual program through CLT on students' speaking skills in a dormitory environment. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of CLT with a structured bilingual living space. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to English language teaching by highlighting the importance of creating communicative environments that support active language use, and by providing practical insights for teachers to improve students' speaking proficiency through meaningful interaction.

The Bilingual Boarding Program at SMA Takhassus Al-Qur'an uses the communicative language teaching (CLT) method to improve students' ability to communicate in English. Using this method can increase students' confidence in speaking English. In the implementation of this method, students are able to relate English to the context around them, so that English becomes an active ability and communication tool

for students both in the classroom and in their daily lives. This study aims to find out the impact of bilingual program through communicative language teaching to Improve Student's Speaking Skill at SMA Takhassus Al-Qur'an based on the reason above

Literary Review

Teaching Speaking

Teaching speaking is the activity of teaching students to speak, both in the context of English and other languages. Speaking is a part of daily life the average person produces tens of thousands of words a day. Speaking skills are a crucial aspect of language learning that students must master in order to communicate effectively with others, especially in their future professional careers (Mulyanti, 2021). By acquiring these skills, students will gain the confidence to communicate or share their ideas with others and pursue further studies abroad. The goal of teaching is to make sure that the students are competent to speak, therefore the language course is very important.

In the process of learning to speak, it is important to gain an understanding of the various aspects and components that contribute to the act of speaking itself. There are five key speaking skills, including pronunciation, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension (Mulyanti, 2021). Comprehension is the understanding of a language as a means of communication in which two or more individuals speak to each other. Students should be able to control structure and use appropriate grammatical forms in communication. Vocabulary is a component of speaking ability. Pronunciation is also a crucial aspect of speaking ability, as it concerns how the speaker's sounds are perceived by listeners.

Bilingual Program

Bilingual boarding school refers to an educational program where students live in a boarding school or educational hostel while studying in two languages. The concept combines aspects of boarding with a bilingual curriculum, providing a well-rounded learning experience in two languages at once. Bilingualism is the activity of using languages alternately, from one language to another by a person, as Hidayah and Rofik (2017) . This ability requires a good mastery of both languages used. First, the mother tongue (B1), and second, another language as a

second language (B2). However, B2 is not mastered as fluently as B1. The use of B2 is limited only to the introduction of the language (Chaer, A., & Agustina, 2014)

The program often includes cultural activities and experiences designed to deepen students' understanding of the language and culture they are learning. Students usually receive additional support such as academic guidance, conseling, and language practice sessions to help them adapt and thrive in a bilingual environment. Living in a dormitory allows students to focus on their studies and language practice without distractions. In this way, bilingual dormitories aim to significantly improve students' language skills while providing a comprehensive education and life experience that supports personal and academic development.

In an environment where English is the dominant language, students become more familiar with English and accustomed to speaking in English, even if they have less proficiency in the language. Over time, they improve their English speaking skills. The impact of bilingual environmental factors on the enhancement of students' speaking skills has been a subject of considerable interest. In contexts where English is the language of communication, the presence of peers who can serve as speaking partners can facilitate the correction of errors in speech. (Barac & Bialystok, 2012, as cited in (Muchsonny et al., 2021)

Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a language teaching method that emphasizes communication as the main goal of learning. In this method, students are focused on learning the language by having actual social interactions, such as conversations, presentations, and discussions. CLT considers that communicative skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are competencies that must be developed in language learning. Therefore, teachers provide realistic and fun communicative situations for students, so that students can learn and apply the language learned in real situations.

According to Savignon (2002:01) Communicative language teaching (CLT) is defined as a teaching method that focuses on both processes and goals in classroom learning. The primary theoretical concept in CLT is "communicative competence," a term introduced into discussions of language use and second or foreign language learning in

the early 1970s. Competence is defined in the context of the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning, and it draws from both psycholinguistic and sociocultural perspectives in second language acquisition (SLA). (as cited in Laia, 2024).

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach aims to examine how students' speaking skills are developed through the bilingual program implemented in the dormitory of SMA Takhasus Al-Qur'an. This research does not apply or experiment with CLT directly, but rather observes whether its principles are already present in the teaching and learning practices within the school environment. The focus of CLT in this study is categorized into three aspects: (1) the General Communicative Approach, (2) Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and (3) the characteristics of Immersion Programs. These aspects are used as a reference to analysis and describe how the bilingual environment and speaking activities observed in the classroom and dormitory align with the CLT principles.

Methods

In order to obtain the data, the writer employed the data collection method uses three methods (Creswell, 2009). Given that this research is qualitative in methodology, the writer utilized the in-depth interview technique as the primary method and then proceeded with classroom observation for the purpose of ensuring the validity of the findings.

The observation sheet was used to collect data in the form of teacher activities during the teaching-learning process. Then to find out information about students' opinions, aspirations, hopes, desires, and beliefs about mathematics, the authors used interview techniques. Data collection in this study was carried out descriptively where the data collected was not data in the form of numbers. The data came from observation notes, interview results, documents, photos, audio and video recordings obtained through observation, and deep interviews and quantitative data as supporting data in the form of students' speaking scores from semester 1 to 3, and also the scores from the results of the assessment by the researcher.

Findings and Discussions

1. Classroom activity observation

Opening

Teaching and learning activities begin with a greeting. The teacher greeted the students by saying, "Assalamu'alaikum." "Good morning, students," and the students respond with "Wa'alaikumsalam." Let's pray together in the morning before we start this lesson. After opening, the teacher checks the attendance of students by calling students one by one.

According to the attendance, almost all the students are present in the classroom. Except for students who were sick or had other important activities, they gave permission letters to the teacher as proof of their absence. Then, the teacher asked, "Is there any homework or assignments?" "What's the material we discussed last meeting?" By asking those questions, students would remember and review the previous lesson that had been learned because the materials always have a relationship with each other.

Based on the above observation, the teacher begins the class by greeting the students first. Then, the teacher asks about the previous material to help students remember it. Researchers also observed that the teacher provided ice breakers during learning activities to make the class more fun and exciting. The teacher also facilitates brainstorming to introduce the topic and stimulate student activity.

Main activities

The teacher then divides the students into multiple groups. Subsequently, the teacher provides each group with a specific keyword and distributes it to the students, allocating one keyword to each group. The subject of discussion pertains to the pro and con of using social media for teenagers. Then, each group discusses the issue with their group members. Following a 15-minute discussion with group members, the teacher facilitates a session in which each group presents the results of their previous discussion in front of other students. Since there were two pro groups and two contra groups, the presentations were combined into two sessions, namely the presentations of the pro and contra groups.

Each group discussed their opinions on the topic they were assigned. As mentioned earlier, there were two pro groups and two contra groups. After discussing with their groups, each group presented and participated in a cross-discussion with the other groups. This

method allowed students to express their opinions well. However, there were still some mistakes in English, such as a lack of vocabulary and pronunciation. However, this does not change the fact that this learning strategy can improve students' communication skills. After each group finishes presenting the results of their discussion. The teacher then summarizes the discussion and reviews some new vocabulary and vocabulary that is difficult for students to understand.

Related to the result of the observation and interview above, it can be known that the teacher used the techniques of Communicative Language Teaching in order for the students to be able to achieve communicative competence.

Closing

The bell rang, and the teacher announced that the lesson would resume at the next meeting. In the closing lesson, the teacher gave comments about the students' performance and suggestions for what should be improved. The teacher also reviewed the material by giving questions that would conclude their teaching and learning that day. The class was closed by saying "Hamdallah" together.

Based on the observation, it can be known that the teacher did not ask a question to make the conclusion. In this case, the teacher practiced speaking skills for the students.

2. Dormitory Observation

During the second dormitory observation, the researcher observed students' interactions using English as the medium of communication. The medium of communication used by students in their daily interactions is English. However, some students especially those in the first grade still mixed their first language (Indonesian) with English during the learning process. This tendency was more common among first-grade students, as they were still in the process of adjusting to using English as their means of communication. In contrast, second- and third-grade students were already accustomed to using English as their primary communication tool.

S1 : Is the *kamar mandi kosong*? I seriously need to shower

S2 : I think Caca *baru aja masuk*. But she's usually quick

S1 : Ugh, I really wanna shower now. My hair's *bau banget*

S2 : Be patient. By the way, do you still have *sabun*?

S1 : Of course *iya dong*

The dialogue illustrates code-switching behavior among students, indicating limited vocabulary and a developing familiarity with English. This code-mixing behavior suggests that although students have been exposed to a bilingual environment, they still rely on their first language when encountering lexical gaps. According to CLT principles, this stage can be addressed through scaffolded speaking tasks that progressively build vocabulary and communicative confidence. This phenomenon is particularly common among first-grade students who are still transitioning into a fully bilingual environment. The two students are first-year students who are still adjusting to using English as their primary language of communication. However, they can easily interact and communicate with each other.

Based on the above observation data, it can be concluded that the bilingual environment and the Communicative Language Teaching method can improve students' English communication skills.

3. Interview

The environment of Bilingual program had an important factor in the English learning process, particularly for those who were not comfortable with it before. Additionally, some emphasize that, although they still make many mistakes when speaking, they now have the ability and courage to speak English. This confirms the importance of an environment that requires students to speak English, as it allows them to adapt more quickly. The following is a sample interview with a student. Based on an interview with student:

"I am more comfortable and confident in speaking English although I still make many mistakes. However, since I have been in the dormitory I am more confident and also I have friends to talk to so that over time my ability has increased" (Interview with Annisa on May 05, 2025)

Based on the above statements, this indicates an increase in confidence and progress in students' speaking skills. This statement is corroborated by several other students' opinions who stated that the

bilingual program also expanded their vocabulary. This opinion is based on respondents who said that they can now watch English movies without the need for subtitles, an indicator that their listening and speaking skills have improved.

In the activities of Bilingual Program used Communicative Language Teaching approach. This approach is regarded as effective in creating an active and communicative learning atmosphere and in encouraging direct student involvement in the use of English. One respondent explained that teachers consistently use interactive approaches, such as giving time for students to discuss during learning. In the classroom the teacher provides opportunities for students to interact with each other, the interaction can be in the form of discussion of predetermined material, dialog interaction or light interaction conducted by the teacher before learning begins. This shows that students are not only the recipients of the material, but also actively participate in building understanding collaboratively. Based on an interview with student:

“Teachers always use interactive approaches such as giving discussion time in their learning sessions Assignments such as role plays and group discussions help me practice speaking fluently” (Interview with Ziyah on May 05, 2025)

“Have many opportunities to practice speaking with classmates, both group discussions and direct conversations” (Interview with Afifah on May 05, 2025)

Based on the students' responses, interactive activities are an important part of classroom dynamics that support students' speaking skill development, facilitated not only by the teacher but also by the students themselves. The students' mention of activities in class learning such as role plays, storytelling, and group presentations reflects the core strategies of CLT, which prioritize interaction and authentic use of language over rote memorization (Savignon, 2002).

Interviews with English teachers at Bilingual Dormitory SMATAQ revealed that the bilingual program has a significant impact on students' speaking development. According to Miss Rohmah, students who initially had little to no English proficiency gradually improved due to their daily

exposure to English, both in formal classes and through interactions in the dormitory. These classes include speaking, writing, reading, grammar, and vocabulary, all of which are conducted in English and scheduled regularly.

“They started out not knowing any English, but the environment practically forced them to speak it. Honestly, the real secret to learning English is just habit. When you're in a situation where you're forced to communicate in English, you'll naturally get used to it, whether you enjoy it or not.” (Interview with Miss Rohmah, May 10, 2025)

This statement aligns with Grosjean’s (1982) theory that bilingual competence is achieved through habitual exposure and meaningful use of language in everyday situations. The dormitory environment plays a central role in this process by creating an atmosphere where English becomes a necessity, not just an academic subject. As a result, students acquire the language naturally and contextually. Furthermore, Mr. Kholis emphasized the use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as the core strategy in the bilingual dormitory. He noted that in real-world settings, English proficiency is often judged by one’s ability to speak fluently, rather than by grammatical accuracy.

“In our society, English proficiency is often equated with the ability to speak the language fluently.” (Interview with Mr. Kholis, May 10, 2025)

He explained that vocabulary plays a vital role in speaking development. Grammar, although important, is better learned through experience rather than direct instruction.

“If we're aiming to be able to speak, then we absolutely need to have a large vocabulary. Without a lot of words, we simply can't talk. It's just like a small child: once they have enough vocabulary, they can start speaking, even if their grammar isn't perfect.” (Interview with Mr. Kholis, May 10, 2025)

This perspective reflects CLT principles, where communication is prioritized over perfection. Teachers act as facilitators, encouraging students to interact, solve problems, and use language in context.

4. *Bilingual Program and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)*

The bilingual program had a significant impact on improved students' speaking skills. This is supported by the curriculum implemented by the SMATAQ bilingual dormitory in the learning process both in the classroom and outside the classroom. Based on the statements of some students, they experienced an increase in speaking skills while in the dormitory, this is because English is used as the main tool of communication in the dormitory. In addition, there is a sanction or punishment system so that students become orderly in using English in their interactions.

This idea is further supported by Brown's (2001) statement, which highlights the significance of interaction as the foundation of communicative language learning. He argues that communication involves understanding meaning through interaction between learners. In his book, Brown explains that language learning does not only concern what is taught or linguistic competence, but also how it is learned through meaningful interaction.

The research results also explain the implementation of the communicative language teaching method. This is demonstrated by the teacher's interaction with students in the classroom. For example, the teacher stimulates students by asking for their opinions on certain topics. The teacher also mentions the importance of using appropriate vocabulary, they do this in the classroom. The teacher provides students with a lot of vocabulary. They do this beyond the students' obligation to find vocabulary themselves. The teacher explains the correct and appropriate use of vocabulary so students can easily and clearly interact in English. Savignon (2002) emphasized that communicative competence the goal of CLT emerges from the use of language in real communication.

Based on the results of the interview, the use of communicative language teaching methods is illustrated by the use of an interactive approach in the classroom. The use of English greetings and instructions at the beginning of the lesson reflects the application of CLT principles, where exposure to the target language is emphasized even during

routine activities. Teachers use an interactive approach in the classroom such as discussions, student presentations, the use of simulated dialog methods carried out by students in front of the class and also other methods such as roleplay, storytelling and others.

The role of the teacher as a facilitator and the student-centered nature of learning, as observed during group discussions and dialogue creation, reflect the CLT principle of learner autonomy (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). CLT also encourages fluency over accuracy, especially in early stages, which is supported by findings that students are confident to speak even if errors occur. The use of real-life topics such as food preferences and social media in classroom discussions exemplifies authentic communication is a fundamental principle of CLT. This engagement provides a functional context for students to apply language, supporting the belief that language is best acquired when it is used meaningfully.

5. Students' Speaking Score

To support the analysis of students' speaking skill improvement through the bilingual program and the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the researcher also collected students' English academic scores from Semester 1 to Semester 3. The chart below presents the progression of students' English performance during the program.



Based on the bar chart, it can be observed that most students experienced consistent improvement across the semesters. For example, Naura Nuril Anbiya increased her score from 76 in Semester 1 to 88 in Semester 3, showing a total improvement of 12 points. Similarly, Firda Durrotul Hikmah maintained high performance, increasing from 89 to

96. These data support the qualitative findings from the interviews and observations, where the students mentioned increased confidence, fluency, and frequency of English use both in class and in the dormitory environment. This aligns with Richards (2006), who stated that CLT improves communicative competence when students are consistently exposed to meaningful language use.

Conclusion

Based on the research results presented in the chapter before, it can be concluded that the bilingual program implemented at SMA Takhassus Al-Qur'an, supported by the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, has a significant impact on improving students' speaking skills.

Students showed better understanding and usage of English vocabulary, as well as improved pronunciation. This is supported by classroom observations where students actively participated in speaking activities, learned new words, and practiced speaking through dialogue and discussion. Students became more confident in expressing their ideas in English. Although some students initially felt nervous and afraid of making mistakes, the supportive environment of the bilingual dormitory and CLT-based activities helped reduce their anxiety and encouraged them to speak more frequently. The teaching strategies used in both classroom and dormitory settings reflect the core principles of CLT. Activities such as role plays, group discussions, and task-based assignments encouraged students to communicate meaningfully using the target language in real-life contexts. The bilingual dormitory played an essential role in creating a consistent language-rich environment. Daily communication using English, combined with structured language activities and even interaction with native speakers, provided students with opportunities to practice English authentically.

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