

## EFFECTIVENESS OF CLT BASED ON GAYONESE CULTURE IN ENHANCING JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS IN CENTRAL ACEH

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### ABSTRACT

Most junior high schools do not give enough attention to designing and implementing communication between students and teachers. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method aims to address the challenges faced in speaking activities and make students more interested in interacting with local culture-based texts. Every student should take the opportunity to communicate with their peers. This research is an experimental study conducted at SMPN 18 Aceh Tengah, focusing on eighth-grade students. The researcher employed quasi-experimental research, with the experimental group in class VIII A taught using CLT, while the control group in class VIII B was taught using conventional activities. Both classes took a pre-test at the beginning. Before the treatment, the two groups were balanced, starting from the same level. The post-test was administered at the end, after the treatment. The data collection instrument was a speaking test. The data were analyzed using t-test computation, and the collected data underwent descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The research findings indicated a significant difference in the students' speaking ability between the experimental group, who were taught using CLT, and those taught using conventional activities as demonstrated by the t-test. The t-observed value was higher than the t-table value ( $3.404 > 2.682$  with df 48 at 10%). The probability value of 0.01 was lower than the significance level ( $0.01 < 0.05$ ). In contrast, the control group showed a t-test result ( $1.393 < 2.682$  with df 48 at 10%) and a probability value of 0.170, which was higher than the significance level ( $0.170 > 0.05$ ). Based on the hypothesis analysis, the score of the experimental group was higher than that of the control group, leading to the conclusion that using CLT based on local culture (Budaya Gayonese) in language teaching effectively improves students' speaking ability.

**Keywords:** *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Speaking, Gayonese Culture*

### INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, the practice of English has been focused on preparing students to communicate effectively. However, most students in junior high schools, especially in rural areas of Indonesia, find few opportunities for real-life

communication. According to data from the Ministry of Education (2023), only 25% of students in rural areas are able to communicate effectively in English, compared to 60% in urban regions. This disparity is largely due to the lack of learning innovations in schools. Often, teaching methods seem to focus solely on helping student's complete tasks, rather than encouraging language practice. Many teachers still use the old strategies, such as repetitive textbook exercises, to prepare students for exams. As a result, students find it difficult to practice English conversation in real-world contexts.

According to the (Cuong, 2021) Students in rural Indonesia using survey responses and interview data. His study shows that the majority of the participants were aware of the value of learning English for their upward social mobility and developed diverse visions of language use. They claimed to expend effort to learn English and adopt various learning strategies; however, there is no evidence that any of them were following a plan or had any pedagogic guidance; activities appeared to be idiosyncratic and spontaneous; these students also showed their lack of confidence in using English for communication. (Pratiwi, 2024) According to Aditomo, Head of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology's Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment Agency, the emphasis on English use is not limited to grammar alone, but focuses more on practical communication and comprehension of information. (Permendikbut. Nomor 12 Tahun 2024, 2024) English as a subject in elementary schools, or equivalent institutions, will be offered as an elective course that schools can implement based on their readiness up to the 2026/2027. Starting from the 2027/2028 academic year, it will transition to a mandatory subject.

English is currently not only a compulsory subject but has become a Fundamental need for people to communicate with the global community, therefore various efforts are made to support the success of students in communicating using English, one of which is widely applied by using the communicative language teaching approach (CLT), this approach is seen as a solution for students to be able to practice English directly and the communicative language teaching approach (CLT) is combined with local culture to direct students

in using English in real and authentic ways. (Rahman, 2024) Interaction between children and adults is essential for language development. Preschool children learn to speak by listening and interacting with others. Essential for language development since it gives students a lot of linguistic exposure and serves as an example of how to communicate effectively. Through these encounters, preschoolers are exposed to vocabulary, sentence structures, and spoken language rhythm, which helps them learn how to speak. Children can improve their understanding and expressive abilities by practicing answering questions, using new words, and replying in conversation. Furthermore, as students develop, these interactions foster social skills and an awareness of conversational signs like sharing. These are essential for successful communication.

Effective language learning requires the development of communicative competence, which refers to the ability to use the language in social interactions (Hymes, 1972) and (Savignon, 2002) defines Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as a method that emphasizes both processes and goals in classroom learning, with the primary focus being communicative competence. This concept involves not just mastering language structures but using them in meaningful social contexts. Language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a medium for creating and maintaining social relationships among speakers. In this study, this social context is embodied in cultural activities.

Its means that an English teacher must develop new methods in teaching that encourage students to engage in authentic communication. Rather than strictly correcting every error, the focus should be on fostering meaningful interaction. To achieve this, teachers can incorporate cultural elements as familiar reference points, allowing students to use cultural contexts as a foundation to practice their English skills in a way that feels relevant and accessible to their everyday lives. (Mitchell & Myles, 2004) argue that language and culture are interdependent; they are acquired together, each supporting the other's development. Therefore, language teaching in schools must integrate both theoretical knowledge and practical application. Theory helps introduce students to language structures, while practice allows them to use the language within their social environment.

According (Nggawu. & Thao, 2023) the Communicative Language Teaching approach in English classes with a purpose to improve students' communication skills. The fact that classrooms in Indonesia are dominated by students coming from various cultures, native languages, different personality, and different language strategies as well, challenges English teachers to be able to create and to design an effective way to achieve learning objectives. Teachers' awareness of personality differences combined with their language learning strategy could possibly construct learning environments that take advantage of students' individual strengths. (Sudartini, 2012) suggests that incorporating local culture into English language teaching can be achieved through selecting materials that reflect cultural norms. (Ratminingsih et al., 2020) support this idea, stating that students are more engaged when reading materials that are relatable to their cultural background. This not only increases comprehension but also encourages students to enjoy the learning process. The use of local culture texts provides an "authentic" learning experience, as they are more aligned with the students' everyday lives.

Moreover, students benefit from lessons that integrate local culture with language learning. According to (Fu, 2018) materials based on local culture make it easier for students to understand the lessons, as they build upon prior knowledge. (Saraswati et al., 2018) emphasize that local culture is a crucial element in intercultural communication, while (Kamilah et al., 2019) integrating local culture can increase students' interest in speaking English. As a result, students are not only more motivated but also improve their language skills more effectively. (Mustofa & Martina, 2019) add that in Indonesia, source culture consists of local customs, traditions, and historical elements that, when combined with target culture, help students express themselves and enhance their speaking abilities.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is particularly well-suited to the goal of improving students' speaking abilities through local culture. (Darmawan et al., 2020) state that CLT aims to enhance students' oral communication skills. In the context of teaching English in junior high schools, (Yasin et al., 2017) argue that teachers using the CLT approach should encourage the use of the target

language in every classroom activity to motivate students to communicate in English. In many junior high schools, insufficient attention is given to fostering communication between students and teachers. Designing effective language classes requires teachers to use appropriate techniques, such as incorporating lesson plans that draw from students' cultural backgrounds and environments. This approach not only makes learning more relatable but also more effective, as students are able to practice language in familiar contexts.

By using CLT based on local culture, such as Gayonese traditions, the challenges students face in speaking can be addressed, and they will become more interested in learning English. Teachers can design activities that involve students in real-life communication using various techniques, such as language games, motion pictures, and authentic communication in the classroom occurs when students engage in language practice that goes beyond mere form-focused exercises. Based on the identification of these problems, the focus of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of using Communicative Language Teaching based on Gayonese culture in developing the speaking abilities of junior high school students at SMP 18 Central Aceh. The research seeks to answer the following question: Is there any significant difference in speaking ability between students taught using Communicative Language Teaching based on Gayonese culture and those taught using conventional methods.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Communicative Language Teaching**

(Savignon, 2002) Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), emphasizes that the primary goal of language education should be to develop "communicative competence," which she describes as the ability of learners to effectively and appropriately use language in various contexts. Savignon views communicative competence as central to the language-learning process, encompassing more than just grammatical accuracy. Instead, it involves understanding cultural and social elements of communication, thus enabling meaningful interactions that reflect real-life usage.

### **Local Culture (Gayonese Culture)**

(Tantri & Santosa, 2024) The incorporation of local culture in language learning has become prominent. Numerous studies on developing local culture-based materials and English skills from elementary school up to tertiary level have been conducted by many researchers currently. (Syukri, 2023) In Indonesia, Gayo is one of the tribes that inhabit the central Aceh region, divided into several regencies. These regencies include Central Aceh, Southeast Aceh, Gayo Lues, and Bener Meriah. The Urang Gayo in Central Aceh region has been familiar with and understands the *Peri Mestike* philosophy used in education and socialization. Gayo culture is rich in local wisdom, values, arts, customs, and education. *Peri Mestike* (PM) philosophy is a traditional language with a high local wisdom value because it is used in communication, education, traditional ceremonies, and social conflict resolution.

### **Teaching Speaking with CLT**

(Darmawan et al., 2020) Speaking is one of four language skills that play an important role in the context of global communications and The ability of oral communication in English actively is a key requirement for students who take speaking courses. Therefore, in every meeting, a lecturer is required to apply the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. It is expected that students' oral communication ability will increase after taking Speaking course. However, there are many students whose speaking ability has not improved yet.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

In this research, two groups were given the same materials and topics. The difference between these groups was that the experimental group was taught using communicative language teaching (CLT) based on Gayonese culture, which was the study's focus, while the control group was taught using a traditional method commonly used by English teachers for speaking instruction. This traditional method was typically conducted in the classroom. A pre-test was administered to both the experimental and control groups before the treatment, and a post-test with

the same instrument was given to both groups afterward. The pre-test and post-test scores were then compared to identify any differences. The sample for this study was selected through random sampling.

This meant that the researcher selected two groups at random. The process of selecting a random sample involved placement the names of all subjects in a group and then collected out 50 names. This process is known as 'drawing.' These 50 students were then divided into two groups: the experimental group, consisting of 25 students, and the control group, also consisting of 25 students. Class VIII A was designated as the experimental group, while Class VIII B served as the control group. These classes were chosen because they had similar average intelligence levels, and the number of students in each group was equal.

**Table.1. Research Design**

Group	Test	Treatment	Test
Experimental	Pre-test	CTL	Post-Test
Control	Pre-test	Commonly used	Post-Test

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis is a process of organizing and summarizing the data into pattern or categories in such a way in order to arrive at the result and conclusions of the research. The researcher will do some procedures in the data analysis. They are: Descriptive Analysis The data which are obtained from this research are generally analyzed with the aid of descriptive statistic used to describe the different aspect of the data which include the mean and the standard deviation (SD) and the researcher used the statistical software package SPSS for data analysis.

### **Hypothesis**

To demonstrate that communicative language teaching is effective for teaching speaking skills based on Gayonese local culture, the probability value (P) and the critical value ( $t_t$ ) can be compared. If the probability value (P) is less than 0.05, or if the calculated t-value ( $t_0$ ) is greater than  $t_t$  ( $t_0 > t_t$ ), the hypothesis stated in Chapter II is accepted.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis of the speaking scores included the mean, standard deviation, maximum score, and minimum score of the control group. A summary of the data distribution for the pre-test of the control group is shown in Table 2.

**Table. 2. Mean scores of pre-test and post-test in control group before treatment**

Control Group	Students	Mean	Standard deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score
Pre-test	25	39.33	7.971	53	30
Post-test	25	42.26	7.800	63	30

In the pre-test for the control group, the total number of students in the experimental group was 25. The data showed that the highest score was 53 and the lowest score was 30. The analysis of the data indicated that the mean score was 39.33, with a standard deviation of 7.971.

For the post-test in the control group, the total number of students was 25. The data showed that the highest score was 63, and the lowest score was 30. The analysis of this data revealed a mean score of 42.26, with a standard deviation of 7.800.

### Comparison between pre-test and post-test in control group

The T-test formula was applied to determine whether there were any significant differences between the two groups before the treatment was given to the control group. The results of the T-test are shown in Table 3

**Table 3. The Results control of the T-test in the pre-test and post-test**

	$T_0$	$t_{10\%}$	$Df$	p	Interpretation
Control Group	1.393	2.682	48	170	$t_t < t_t$ there was no significant difference between the two group

Table 4.5 displayed the  $t_0$  value as 1.393, while the  $t_{10\%}$  value was determined to be 2.682. This comparison indicated that the  $t_0$  value was significantly lower than the  $t_{10\%}$  value ( $1.393 < 2.682$ ). As a result, this finding suggested that there was no statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores within the control group. Therefore, the data demonstrated that



the instructional methods used for this group did not lead to noteworthy improvements in speaking skills following the intervention.

The data analysis of speaking test scores included the mean, standard deviation, maximum score, and minimum score of the pre-test, a summary of the data distribution for the speaking test in the experimental group is presented in table below

**Table 4. The Result of the Pre-Test of the Experiment group**

Experiment	Number of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	Maximum Score	Minimum Score
Pre-test	25	40.27	8.472	70	30
Post-test	25	55.37	13.645	83	33

Based on the post-test data presented in Table 4, it was observed that the highest score achieved in the post-test was 70, while the lowest score recorded was 30. The analysis of this data indicated that the mean score of the participants was 40.27, accompanied by a standard deviation of 8.472, reflecting the variability of scores among the control group. In contrast, the post-test results for the experimental group revealed that the highest score was significantly better at 83, whereas the lowest score was 33. Further analysis indicated that the mean score for this group was 55.37, with a standard deviation of 13.645, suggesting that the students in the experimental group performed better overall compared to their counterparts in the control group

#### **Comparison between pre-test and post-test in experimental group**

The T-test formula was utilized to determine whether significant differences existed between the two groups prior to administering the treatment to the experimental group. This statistical analysis is crucial for understanding the effects of the intervention. The results of the T-test, which included various statistical metrics, were comprehensively detailed in Table 5. By analyzing these results, researchers could evaluate the effectiveness of the treatment and assess the implications for further studies. This method allowed for a rigorous examination of the data collected, ensuring the validity of the findings.

**Table 5. The Results experimental of the T-test in the pre-test and post-test**

Group	$t_0$	$t_t 10\%$	Df	p	Interpretation
Experimental	3.404	2.682	48	001	$T_0 > t_t$ there was significant difference between the two group

Table 5. Presented data showing that the calculated value of  $t_0$  was 3.434, while the critical value at a significance level of 10% ( $t_{t10\%}$ ) was 2.682. This comparison revealed that to exceeded  $t_{t10\%}$ , as indicated by the inequality ( $3.434 > 2.682$ ). This outcome suggested that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores within the experimental group. Such findings highlight the effectiveness of the treatment administered to this group, reinforcing the importance of using appropriate statistical methods to analyze educational outcomes.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this research indicated that there was a significant difference between teaching speaking using communicative language teaching based on local culture, such as Gayonese culture, and teaching speaking through conventional activities aimed at training and developing students' communication skills in English. The calculation of the t-value revealed that the observed scores from the speaking tests of the experimental group were higher than those of the control group. This finding proved that using communicative language teaching based on their culture made students more active in speaking classes. (Saripudin & Komalasari, 2016) noted that education should be contextual, meaning that social studies material should reflect students' everyday lives.

According (Fu, 2018) Therefore using the local culture-based materials can make learned easier in learning the contents because they are familiar with those topics and have previous background knowledge about them. (Hussain, 2017) teaching learning strategy should differ greatly, there is a dire need of paradigm shift on teaching and learning speaking skill through focus deviation towards oral orientation, training the teachers. (Farizi & Herwiana, 2022) Teaching speaking

skills in English as a foreign language needs good treatments to give good results for the learners, such as, conversation, discussion, storytelling, presenting, speech.

(Romrome & Ena, 2022) argue that combining the English materials with the local culture contents minimize unfamiliarity and enable students to understand better. In other word, by using local culture contents in the process of teaching speaking, and it allows them to communicate efficiently. In this case, it could be seen that local culture must be used and developed in learning English. When it is used in the learning process, it will help the students to enhance their skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Experiment statistic score showed that the teacher using local culture in teaching speaking can make students interesting in doing conversation, on the other hand, (Nambiar et al., 2020) Statement, the teachers will be able to increase students' skills by using local culture contents. (Tanjung & Fitri, 2020) expressed the same thought that teaching speaking methods requires strategies and approaches. (Butarbutar et al., 2019) Meanwhile, learning with the culture means the teacher uses the local culture as a medium in the learning process. Essentially, all the teachers aimed to make English language learning interesting and, most importantly, to enable students to communicate with their peers in English. However, encouraging students to actively communicate with one another was not easy, as English was a foreign language for them. As students incorporated their own culture into English language learning, teachers were able to utilize local culture as a medium to enhance English learning

By integrating local culture into English teaching, educators make the language more meaningful and relatable for students. Local culture provides familiar contexts, reducing the alienation students often feel when dealing with entirely foreign topics. This approach allows students to connect new language concepts to their personal experiences, improving comprehension and retention. Additionally, cultural relevance fosters confidence and active participation, as students feel more capable discussing topics they understand deeply. In this way, local culture acts as a bridge, making English learning both accessible and engaging for students.

(Ghafar et al., 2020) Communicative language teaching is to give students chances or opportunities to practice the target language to use it more effectively in everyday situations or real-life communications. English language learning based on local culture using the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach was not only a transfer of knowledge about culture but also served the purpose of facilitating students' memorization of vocabulary and its use in communication. Without memorizing vocabulary, students could not effectively use the English language to communicate. Additionally, communication would not run smoothly if it was not applied in a social context. Therefore, the use of media that supported students in familiarizing themselves with the English language as a means of communication in language classes took advantage of local culture. This integration made English learning more relevant and accessible, enabling students to better retain vocabulary and apply their language skills in practical, real-life interactions.

## **CONCLUSION**

The objective of this study was to determine whether teaching speaking skills in an English class using communicative language teaching (CLT) based on Gayonese culture at SMPN 18 Takengon in Central Aceh was more effective than the use of conventional methods. This research specifically aimed to assess if integrating local cultural content could enhance students' ability to communicate in English more effectively. Based on the findings and discussions presented in the previous chapter, the results demonstrated that incorporating Gayonese culture into CLT methods significantly benefited students' speaking skills compared to the use of conventional teaching methods.

The English speaking performance of the two groups of students those taught using CLT based on Gayonese culture and those taught with conventional methods showed distinct differences. For the experimental group, the mean pre-test score was 40.27, and the post-test score rose to 55.37, indicating a notable improvement in their performance. Before the treatment, 13 students were in the 'poor' category, and seven were in the 'very poor' category. After the treatment, the number of

students in the 'poor' category dropped to 11, and only one student remained in the 'very poor' category, reflecting positive progress in their speaking abilities.

The results for the English speaking class taught using conventional methods (control group) indicated minimal improvement. The mean pre-test score was 39.30, which increased slightly to 42.26 in the post-test. This small increase indicates no substantial progress in speaking ability between the two assessments. Unlike the experimental group, which showed more evident gains, the control group's scores reflected a minimal impact from conventional activities on enhancing students' English speaking skills. Thus, the conventional teaching method did not significantly elevate students' performance from the pre-test to the post-test.

There was a significant difference between the students who were taught using Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) based on Gayonese culture. The scores of the experimental group, taught with CLT rooted in Gayonese culture, were higher than those of the control group. The data showed that the t-observed value of 3.404 exceeded the t-table value of 2.682 at a 10% significance level, with a significance value below 0.05 ( $0.001 < 0.05$ ). These results indicated that the use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) based on Gayonese culture significantly enhanced students' speaking skills in English. By integrating local cultural elements into language instruction, students became more engaged and motivated to communicate. This approach fostered meaningful interactions among peers, allowing them to practice their English in a supportive environment. Consequently, the use of culturally relevant teaching methods not only improved linguistic proficiency but also encouraged students to connect more deeply with their language learning experience.

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