



Teachers' Speaking Strategies in Grade VIII: A Case Study in an Islamic Junior Secondary School in Lampung

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: March 05, 2026 Revised: April 09, 2026 Accepted: April 13, 2026	This study explores English teachers' strategies for developing eighth-grade students' speaking skills and the challenges encountered during classroom implementation. Using a qualitative descriptive case study design, the research was conducted at an Islamic junior secondary school in Lampung Province, Indonesia, MTs Alpha. Two grade VIII English teachers participated as the primary informants. Data were collected through six classroom observations, two semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The data were analyzed thematically through systematic coding and categorization, informed by the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The findings show that the teachers employed a range of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), oriented strategies to promote students' oral participation, including role-play, group work, and language games. However, strategy implementation was constrained by low learning motivation, speaking anxiety, limited vocabulary, frequent reliance on the first language, and limited instructional facilities. These findings highlight the importance of pedagogical scaffolding and context-sensitive support when enacting CLT-oriented speaking instruction in EFL classrooms. The study offers practical implications for English teachers and may inform the development of speaking instruction in similar EFL contexts.
Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), English Foreign Language, Instructional challenges, Speaking proficiency, Teacher strategies	
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How to cite:

Akmalia, N. S., Hidayat, A., & Rahmawati, I. N. (2026). Teachers' Speaking Strategies in Grade VIII: A Case Study in an Islamic Junior Secondary School in Lampung. *Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pembelajarannya (JBSP)*, 16(1), 75-87. <https://dx.doi.org/10.20527/jbsp.v16i1.25670>

INTRODUCTION

Speaking proficiency is a core skill in English language learning because it enables learners to express ideas and communicate ideas orally in real time. Mastery of speaking skills is particularly important since English has developed into a global language widely used in various fields, such as education, business, technology, and international communication. Therefore, the ability to speak English has become an essential skill, especially in the era of globalization, where individuals are expected to communicate effectively with people from different parts of the world (Abrar et al., 2024).

In the context of English as a foreign language (EFL), developing speaking competence remains a significant challenge for many learners. This is because speaking requires not only mastery of vocabulary and grammar but also fluency, confidence, and the ability to convey meaning appropriately during interaction (Kadamovna, 2021). Furthermore, many EFL learners face persistent barriers to speaking, including speaking anxiety, low self-confidence, limited vocabulary, and a strong tendency to rely on their first language during classroom communication activities. These challenges were also observed at the research site, MTs Alpha. Preliminary classroom observations suggested that speaking instruction had not been fully optimized due to limited instructional facilities, low student motivation, and limited variation in speaking instructional strategies. As a result, speaking opportunities were uneven, and students' oral participation remained limited.

Previous studies have examined teachers' strategies in teaching speaking skill EFL classroom. For instance, Anggraeni et al. (2020) identified various instructional strategies, such as discussion, role-play, and brainstorming, that can enhance students' speaking participation. Similarly, Duriyah (2023) emphasizes the importance of intensive speaking practice (plenty of practice) and collaborative activities in improving students' speaking competence. Another study by Amsa (2022) highlighted the use of strategies such as role-play, group discussion, and creative tasks to promote students' interaction in speaking activities. However, most of these studies primarily focus on identifying the types of strategies used by teachers in a general school context, particularly at the senior secondary level. This study examining how speaking strategies based on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) are implemented in Madrasah Tsanawiyah contexts remains limited. In fact, contextual conditions such as limited instructional resources, low student motivation, and students' speaking anxiety may significantly influence the effectiveness of speaking instruction. Furthermore, limited attention has been given to how teachers adapt their instructional strategies to address these challenges in real classroom situations.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the implementation of CLT- oriented speaking instructional strategies and the challenges encountered by teachers in an Islamic junior secondary school context. In addition, this study seeks to identify the instructional adaptations employed by teachers to support students' speaking participation in a resource-constrained EFL classroom. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to a better understanding of speaking instruction practices in Madrasah environments

and provide practical insight for teachers in implementing communicative speaking strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking

Speaking is a crucial productive skill in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. It reflects learners' ability to use the language to express ideas, emotions, and thoughts orally. As Nunan (1991) states, the success of language acquisition is often measured by a learner's ability to communicate effectively in the target language. Speaking skills do not develop automatically, they require continuous practice and systematic training through structured learning programs and classroom activities (Margareta, 2020). Communication is a functional activity that serves specific purposes and is intended to produce a particular effect within interactions between speakers and listeners. The development of speaking skills begins early in the school environment, where students gradually build their communicative competence through guided learning experiences. In the process of language learning at school, students develop these abilities in a structured and measurable manner through various interactive activities.

When teachers employ effective instructional strategies, such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the silent method, or the Audio-Lingual, speaking functions not only as a skill to be developed but also as a medium for acquiring other language skills, including listening, reading, and writing (Islam & Stapa, 2021). These competencies are mutually interdependent. English-speaking skills require students to be brave and practice skills every day (Asmawati & Asmara, 2023). Mastery of speaking skills is essential for enabling effective communication with others. Conversely, limitations in speaking ability may hinder the fluency and effectiveness of communication between speakers and listeners.

Aspect Speaking

Speaking is a complex and multidimensional linguistic skill requiring mastery of multiple interrelated components, as supported by established linguistic research. To attain comprehensive proficiency- as emphasized by Nunan (1999), this competence encompasses several key aspects: pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, and the ability to convey ideas or information clearly and coherently. Speaking skills are essential in the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context, particularly at the secondary school level, as they empower students to express ideas and opinions confidently while fostering effective interaction with peers and teachers. Achieving a level of proficiency in speaking abilities is regarded as the most crucial element in the process of acquiring a foreign language (Segaran et al., 2021). Communication is a broad concept encompassing not only grammar and vocabulary but also pronunciation, fluency, and an understanding of social and cultural context. In language teaching, an emphasis on fluency helps learners build confidence, which in turn enhances their capacity to engage meaningfully in the target language. Effective speaking skills involve

not only the ability to convey messages clearly but also to comprehend and respond appropriately to others in spoken discourse (Dwijayani & Musigrungsi, 2022). Therefore, the development of speaking skills in the EFL classroom should be designed as an integrative process that synergizes technical practice, the creation of authentic communicative context, and the cultivation of learners' psychological confidence.

Teaching Speaking in the EFL Classroom

The EFL classroom context, characterized by English language instruction in non-native speaking countries such as Indonesia, involves inherent limitations in daily English use. According to Richards (2008), a variety of teaching methods should be implemented to accommodate students' diverse learning styles and preferences. This reality presents significant challenges to teaching speaking skills at the junior secondary level, including learner anxiety, restricted lexical resources, and scarce opportunities for authentic oral practice (Getie, 2020). Consequently, effective speaking instruction in these settings must prioritize meaningful communicative practice, cultivate a supportive assessment sustained by ongoing feedback to develop students' speaking proficiency, such as teaching methods and approaches referring to an examination of the instructional strategies utilized by Madrasah teachers to foster the development of students' speaking proficiency. Students are encouraged to use language as a communicative tool in various authentic situations, such as discussion (group work), role-play, debates, and problem-solving, enabling them to communicate effectively beyond the classroom (Ray, 2020). This may include interactive methods, communicative language teaching approaches, and other teacher voices, such as motivational techniques that explore how teachers inspire and motivate students to actively engage in speaking activities (Maimun, 2020). English-speaking skills are instrumental in preparing students. The ability to speak English proficiently empowers students to participate confidently in class interactions.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach to English language teaching that emphasizes the use of language for meaningful communication. As Adem & Berkessa (2022) state, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach is one of the most important and applicable teaching and learning theories in the contemporary language teaching profession. Richard & Rodgers (as cited in Haliwanda, 2021) state that this approach focuses on developing students' speaking abilities, particularly in terms of fluency, accuracy, clarity, intonation, and context. Through communicative activities, students are encouraged to actively use English in contexts that resemble real-life situations. In practice, CLT employs various interactive techniques such as Role – play, information-gap activities, group work, interviews, opinion-sharing, and language games. These techniques help improve students' participation, confidence, and oral communication skills. One of the other significant advantages of the CLT approach is the interaction between teachers, students, and peers. For the CLT approach, the relationships between both peers and teachers are significant increased and highly considered (Alharbi, 2021).

Despite its widely recognized advantages in promoting communicative competence, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) also presents several limitations in the EFL classroom context. This approach often assumes that the learning process is sufficient for vocabulary and basic linguistic competence to participate actively in communicative activities. However, in many EFL setting, particularly at junior secondary school level, students frequently have limited vocabulary and low confidence in using English communication. Moreover, the effective implementation of CLT requires supportive learning conditions, including adequate instructional resources, manageable class sizes, and teachers who are well-trained in communicative teaching methodologies. In the absence of these conditions, communicative activities such as group discussion or role-play may be difficult to implement and manage effectively. Therefore, teachers often need to adapt CLT strategies to accommodate classroom realities and facilitate students' active participation in speaking activities. Therefore, the use of CLT in this study is relevant because it supports the development of speaking skills through authentic interaction and collaborative learning, and it provides a strong theoretical framework for analyzing teachers' strategies in improving students' speaking performance.

METHOD

This study utilized a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design to investigate teacher strategies in developing the speaking skills of eighth-grade students at an Islamic junior secondary school in Lampung Province, Indonesia, MTs Alpha. According to Kalpokas & Radivojevic (2021), qualitative research is an investigative process aimed at understanding social or human problems through multiple perspectives. The case study design was selected to facilitate a deep, contextualized understanding of speaking instruction and the contextual constraints influencing strategy implementation.

The research subject consisted of two eighth-grade English teachers, selected through purposive sampling based on their active involvement in teaching speaking skills and their implementation of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. The data were collected through six classroom observations conducted across three meetings over a period of three weeks, two semi-structured interviews lasting 30-45 minutes each, and an analysis of teaching documents. The research instruments include observation guides, interview protocols, field notes, and instructional documents. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, which involved the stages of data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the research data. Data validity test in qualitative research includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Koporcic & Törnroos, 2019). Source triangulation was applied by cross-checking data gathered from observation. Interview and documentation. In addition, member checking was conducted by confirming interview summaries with the participants to ensure the accuracy of data interpretation. Peer debriefing was also carried out through discussion with fellow researchers to review the coding process and emergent themes, thereby enhancing the credibility and reliability of the research findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Implementation of Communicative Language Teaching Role-Play in the Classroom

The research findings indicate that Teacher A and B implemented role-play strategies in teaching speaking skills in the classroom. This strategy received positive responses from students, as reflected in their increased participation and active engagement during the learning process. Most students demonstrated enthusiasm in playing the assigned roles and showed improved confidence in expressing themselves orally in English. These findings are supported by interview data. The teacher's statement can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Implementation Role-Play in the Classroom

Aspect	Finding observation	Finding Interviews
Participation and Engagement	Students' participation and active engagement increased significantly during the role-play session. An enhancement in students' confidence to express ideas verbally was observed.	Teacher A: "That Role-play encourages students to be more active and confident in speaking." Teacher B: "The relaxed learning atmosphere created through role-play makes students more willing to use English."
Motivation and Enthusiasm	While the majority of students demonstrated enthusiasm in performing their assigned roles, a number of them encountered pronounced difficulties in articulating specific vocabulary	
Overall Impact	The strategy is effective for creating contextualized and engaging speaking practice, yet it remains insufficient in addressing linguistic accuracy issues. Teachers perceive role-play as a highly positive and effective strategy for speaking skill development.	

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of role-play activities increased students' motivation and their willingness to participate in speaking activities. This result is consistent with the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT), which emphasize the importance of meaningful communication and interaction among

students in the language learning process (Alharbi, 2021). Through role-play, students are encouraged to use language actively in communicative contexts and to practice speaking in situations that resemble real-life interaction, which contributes to greater confidence and classroom participation (Ray, 2020). However, the findings also reveal that improvements in affective aspects, such as confidence and willingness to speak, were not consistently accompanied by improvements in linguistic ability, particularly in pronunciation. Some students continued to experience difficulties in pronouncing certain vocabulary items and relied on pronunciation models from the teachers or peers. This suggests that while communicative strategies can enhance students' participation, they do not automatically ensure improvement in language accuracy. Consistent with previous studies showing that discussion and role-play strategies increase speaking participation, this study further highlights that increased communicative engagement does not necessarily lead to better pronunciation accuracy. Therefore, communicative strategies should be complemented with explicit pronunciation instruction to ensure that students' confidence develops in balance with their linguistic accuracy.

The Implementation of Communicative Language Teaching Group Work in the Classroom

The research findings indicate that Teacher A implemented group work strategies to enhance students' speaking skills. In this strategy, students were asked to spontaneously compose and practice conversations in small groups. This approach provides opportunities for direct peer-to-peer interaction and allows students to develop speaking skills more naturally, without excessive reliance on written text. The finding is supported by interview data. The teacher's statement can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Implementation Group Work in the Classroom

Aspect	Finding observation	Finding interview
Participation and Engagement	Group work actively encouraged student participation. Less confident students tended to follow and imitate phrases used by their more fluent peers.	The teacher stated, "Group work helps students practice speaking because they feel more comfortable speaking with their friends than speaking alone."
Motivation and Enthusiasm	Students were observed exchanging ideas, sharing phrases, and supporting one another during speaking practice. Less confident students demonstrated a clear increase in participation, particularly among those reluctant to speak individually.	

Aspect	Finding observation	Finding interview
Overall Impact	This strategy is effective in creating collaborative, interactive, and student-centered speaking practice, as evidenced by empirical data on idea exchange and support.	

Classroom observations indicate that group-work strategies effectively encourage students’ active participation. During speaking practice, activities such as exchanging ideas, sharing phrases, and providing mutual peer support were observed within groups. As recorder in the observation sheet: “Students actively engaged in discussions within their groups, and those with lower levels of confidence tended to imitate phrases spoken by more fluent group members”. Thus, group work contributes to creating a learner-centered learning environment and promotes increased participation, particularly among students who are less inclined to speak independently.

This phenomenon is related to the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT), which emphasize meaningful communication, learner interaction, and collaboration in language learning (Salam & Luksfinanto, 2024). Peer modeling within group activities functions as scaffolding, allowing less confident students to participate actively and gradually develop their communicative competence. However, reliance solely on limitation may limit the development of spontaneous and authentic speaking skills if not guided strategically.

These results are consistent with previous research in EFL speaking contexts, which emphasizes that intensive speaking practice promotes active student engagement and that group discussions enhance peer interaction (Duriyah, 2023). This study extends those findings by showing that, although group work increases participation, teachers need to provide strategic facilitation and scaffolding to prevent over-reliance on peer imitation and to ensure that students continue to develop independent and authentic speaking abilities.

The Implementation of Communication Language Teaching Language Games in the Classroom

The research findings indicate that Teacher B implemented language games combined with clue-based speaking tasks, primarily implemented by Teacher B. In this learning design, students were given a set of clues to serve as a framework for composing and delivering stories or ideas orally. This approach fosters creative thinking skills and supports the development of students’ confidence and fluency in speaking. Based on interview results, the teacher stated in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Implementation of Language Games in the Classroom

Aspect	Finding observation	Finding interview
Participation and Engagement	Language games created an active and engaging learning atmosphere. Students demonstrated a greater willingness to participate in speaking activities. They composed and delivered stories or ideas spontaneously based on the clues provided.	The teacher stated, "The clue helps students organize their ideas so they know what to convey when speaking."
Motivation and Enthusiasm	Students demonstrated high levels of enthusiasm during the game activities. Several students voluntarily came forward to speak without being prompted. An active, engaging, and expressive learning atmosphere was created.	
Overall Impact	This strategy is effective in creating active, creative, and student-centered speaking practice, as evidenced by empirical data on students' voluntary participation and their efforts to express ideas.	

Observation findings indicate that language games create an active learning environment, enhance student participation, and reduce learners' anxiety, which aligns with the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT) (Aprilianin et al., 2025). Emphasize student-centered language learning through meaningful interaction, authentic communication, and a focus on fluency rather than solely on grammatical accuracy (Teng, 2023). In this context, language games function as scaffolding, enabling students to feel safe in expressing themselves, lowering the affective filter, and increasing active engagement in communication. Students demonstrated high enthusiasm and greater willingness to participate in speaking activities. One observation note stated, "Some students voluntarily took turns speaking during the game activities and attempted to convey ideas based on the given speaking prompts". Such activities help students express their ideas more freely and reduce anxiety in using English.

Nevertheless, the freedom of expression gained by students through language games has not yet been fully accompanied by improved grammatical accuracy. Grammatical errors continued to appear fairly frequently in students' speech, particularly in the use of tenses, sentence structure, and appropriate word choice.

These findings present a contrast with previous studies. While earlier research emphasizes the use of creative tasks and picture descriptions to enhance students'

participation in speaking activities, the present study indicates that the implementation of language games remains effective in boosting students' speaking confidence and developing their linguistic accuracy. Therefore, teachers should consider integrating fluency-oriented game activities with instructions that explicitly address the linguistic aspect.

Challenges and Teacher Adaptation in Implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) for Speaking Skills

In implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) for speaking skills, and the subsequent adaptation employed by teachers to address them. All EFL students highlighted that the decline in their confidence was mainly due to weaknesses in vocabulary acquisition and a lack of understanding of grammar (Akbar et al., 2022). The primary obstacles encountered include students' limited vocabulary mastery, pronunciation difficulties, and low self-confidence in using English. These conditions resulted in a lack of active participation from some students during speaking activities. These findings are supported by interview data. Teacher A stated that students often face speaking barriers due to vocabulary limitations, while Teacher B emphasized that pronunciation remains a dominant issue. Classroom observation further revealed that some students tended to be passive, preferring to allow activities without initiating speech.

In response to these challenges, the teachers implemented various instructional adaptations. These adaptations included the use of group work to enhance student confidence, the provision of key vocabulary before speaking tasks, and the modeling of pronunciation during the learning process. Observation notes indicate that teachers actively provided pronunciation examples and repeated essential vocabulary before students proceeded with speaking tasks. These adaptations helped create a more supportive learning environment and enabled students to participate gradually in speaking activities.

The adaptation strategies implemented by teachers reflect an effort to bridge the gap between the demands of the communicative approach and the actual proficiency conditions of students in the classroom. The provision of key vocabulary before speaking tasks, for instance, not only functions as linguistic scaffolding but also helps reduce students' cognitive load when they are required to produce spontaneous speech. Similarly, the repeated modeling of pronunciation provides students with opportunities to hear and imitate accurate speech forms before attempting to produce them independently. This approach aligns with the principles of learner-centered instruction, in which the teacher acts as a facilitator who responsively adapts teaching strategies to meet students' needs and proficiency levels.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that CLT-oriented speaking strategies, such as role-play, group work, and clue-based language games, effectively promote students' oral participation and foster a student-centered classroom environment. However, their

implementation is constrained by limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, low confidence, reliance on their first language, and restricted instructional resources. The findings suggest that teachers should integrate fluency-focused activities with explicit linguistic support, including pre-teaching key vocabulary, modeling pronunciation, and organizing collaborative tasks that encourage peer assistance. For future research, it is recommended to include a larger and more diverse sample to enhance the generalizability of findings and investigate the effectiveness of language games across different classroom contexts and proficiency levels. Explore the integration of technology or supplementary instructional media further to support vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and speaking confidence.

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