

The Effectiveness of Audio-Based Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Overcoming Pronunciation Barriers Among Young Learners: Third Grade of Elementary School at Bojonegoro

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas hambatan pengucapan dan rendahnya kepercayaan diri dalam berbicara di kalangan siswa kelas tiga yang belajar bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL), yang disebabkan oleh keterbatasan paparan terhadap bahasa Inggris lisan otentik. Penelitian ini menguji keefektifan Pengajaran Bahasa Komunikatif Berbasis Audio (CLT) dalam meningkatkan pengucapan dan kepercayaan diri dalam berbicara melalui desain penelitian kuantitatif pra-eksperimental satu kelompok dengan tes awal dan tes akhir. Sebelas siswa kelas tiga berpartisipasi dalam intervensi intensif selama satu hari yang melibatkan input audio otentik, kegiatan shadowing, dan permainan peran komunikatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui penilaian pengucapan dan wawancara, serta dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan Uji Wilcoxon Signed-Rank. Temuan menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam kinerja pengucapan siswa, dengan skor rata-rata meningkat dari 70,00 pada pra-tes menjadi 83,64 pada pasca-tes. Uji Wilcoxon menghasilkan nilai signifikansi 0,009 ($p < 0,05$), yang menunjukkan adanya efek intervensi yang signifikan secara statistik. Hasil wawancara lebih lanjut menunjukkan bahwa siswa merasa lebih percaya diri dan kurang cemas saat berbicara bahasa Inggris setelah intervensi. Kombinasi antara paparan audio otentik dan latihan komunikatif membantu mengurangi hambatan linguistik dan psikologis dalam hal pengucapan. Keunikan penelitian ini terletak pada penerapan intervensi CLT berbasis audio jangka pendek yang dirancang khusus untuk pelajar usia dini. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa CLT berbasis audio merupakan pendekatan yang efektif dan praktis untuk meningkatkan akurasi pengucapan dan kepercayaan diri dalam berbicara di kelas EFL.

Kata kunci: Pembelajaran Berbasis Audio, Pengajaran Bahasa Komunikatif, Hambatan Pengucapan, Peserta Didik Muda, Kepercayaan Diri Berbicara, Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL).

Abstract

This study addressed pronunciation barriers and low speaking confidence among third-grade EFL learners caused by limited exposure to authentic spoken English. It examined the effectiveness of Audio-Based Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in improving pronunciation and speaking confidence through a quantitative pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design. Eleven third-grade students participated in a one-day intensive intervention involving authentic audio input, shadowing activities, and communicative role-plays. Data were collected through pronunciation assessments and interviews and analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test. The findings revealed a significant improvement in students' pronunciation performance, with the mean score increasing from 70.00 in the pre-test to 83.64 in the post-test. The Wilcoxon test produced a significance value of 0.009 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a statistically significant effect of the intervention. Interview results further showed that students felt more confident and less anxious when speaking English after the treatment. The combination of authentic audio exposure and communicative practice helped reduce both linguistic and psychological barriers to pronunciation. The novelty of this study lies in the implementation of a short-term audio-based CLT intervention specifically designed for young learners. The findings suggest that Audio-Based CLT is an effective and practical approach for enhancing pronunciation accuracy and speaking confidence in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: Audio-Based Learning, Communicative Language Teaching, Young Learner

INTRODUCTION

The Effectiveness of Audio-Based Learning refers to how effective audio media are in supporting the teaching and learning process (Oladele & Mccall, 2024). Audio-based learning uses sound recordings, podcasts, songs, or listening materials as the main tools to help students understand the material. In English language learning, audio-based learning can improve students' listening skills, pronunciation, vocabulary, and comprehension (Hartina et al., 2025). This method also helps students become more focused and interested during learning activities because they can learn through real pronunciation and natural communication. Therefore, audio-based learning is considered an effective way to support students in improving their English abilities.

In this study, we employed the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method, which focuses on students' ability to communicate authentically and meaningfully in everyday life (Nasimova, 2022). Through this method, students not only learn language theory but also practice it directly, enabling them to become accustomed to using English more naturally. Therefore, the CLT method is considered appropriate for use in our study titled "The Effectiveness of Audio-Based Communicative Language Teaching in Overcoming Pronunciation Barriers Among Transition-Age Students," as this method emphasizes interaction and communication practice that can help students overcome pronunciation barriers.

In the real classroom setting, especially at one of Elementary School at Bojonegoro, a major problem arises regarding young learners' confidence in speaking. Observation data shows that third-grade students face a severe lack of confidence when pronouncing English

words because they are afraid of making mistakes. This emotional barrier happens because of the huge linguistic differences between the students' native language (Bahasa Indonesia) and English. Unlike Bahasa Indonesia, where words are pronounced exactly as they are written, English has a tricky writing system where the spelling does not match the actual sounds. This difference creates confusion among nine-year-old students, making them believe that English pronunciation is too difficult and scary. As a result, students often choose to stay silent during class rather than risking wrong pronunciation. Therefore, a new teaching approach is urgently needed by introducing real audio models mixed with interactive Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). This method can bridge the gap between English spelling and sounds, making the learning process feel more natural, clear, and supportive for young learners.

The urgency of this study is based on the observation results showing that young learners are more interested and actively engaged in interactive learning activities, especially those using audio-based learning media such as songs, pronunciation practice, and simple conversations. However, many students still face difficulties in pronunciation and lack confidence in speaking English. Therefore, the implementation of Audio-Based Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is considered important to create a more enjoyable, interactive, and effective learning environment that can help students improve their pronunciation skills and speaking confidence naturally.

Research from Alzboun et al. (2023) found that learning tailored to students' learning styles, such as audio, increases motivation and academic achievement. Furthermore, in Insani et al. (2023) research, audio-visual media used in history subjects resulted in improved student interest and understanding. Audio media also offers the advantage of assisting teachers through automated classroom observations to enhance the quality of instruction (Zuolkernan, 2022). On the other hand, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method provides significant benefits by increasing fluency and confidence in speaking (Syarliza et al., 2025). Complementing these findings, Bogach et al. (2021) discusses the application of speech processing technology to provide real-time audio-visual feedback for improving pronunciation.

Several previous studies have explored the use of digital media and technology in language learning to enhance students' motivation and academic achievement (Panagiotidis et al., 2023). However, these studies often have not specifically addressed pronunciation barriers or have lacked the integration of real communicative interaction within the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) framework. On the other hand, current research on audio-visual media focuses more on general media product development or its effectiveness in non-language subjects, and does not target specific age groups in transition periods. Although speech processing technology has been developed for independent pronunciation training, the approach tends to be technical and theoretical, thereby overlooking the aspect of direct pedagogical interaction between students in the classroom.

Furthermore, previous research on CLT has mostly been conducted at the primary education level, yet there remains a lack of literature discussing the use of authentic audio materials to overcome pronunciation issues for students in the transition stage toward young adulthood. Therefore, a research gap exists where the integration between the CLT method which emphasizes real interaction and audio-based materials has not been widely tested for its effectiveness in overcoming pronunciation barriers caused by a lack of exposure to authentic spoken language.

This study intends to fill that gap by applying a treatment in the form of authentic audio materials, such as dialogues and pronunciation recordings, within a communicative classroom environment. The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on transition-age students and the unique combination of authentic audio materials with the CLT method as a practical solution to improve pronunciation accuracy while building students' speaking confidence.

Therefore, the research questions comprise as follows:

1. How is the effectiveness of the audio-based Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method in overcoming pronunciation barriers among third-grade young learners?
2. How do the students perceive their confidence and feelings after experiencing the intensive one-day audio-based CLT treatment?

Succeeding these questions, this research is aimed to examine the immediate effectiveness of integrating authentic audio materials within the CLT framework to help third-grade elementary school students overcome their specific pronunciation difficulties. Additionally, this study aims to explore the young learners' perceptions and emotional responses regarding their speaking confidence after participating in the intensive treatment.

The contribution of this study provides both theoretical and practical insights into EFL pedagogy for young learners. Theoretically, it enriches the existing literature on early childhood language acquisition by providing empirical evidence on how combining auditory input with communicative output can directly minimize pronunciation barriers. Practically, this study offers a compact, efficient, and replicable one-day instructional design consisting of audio input, shadowing, and communicative role-play—that elementary school teachers can easily adopt to create a low-anxiety, supportive, and highly motivating English learning atmosphere.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Taş and Khan (2020) introduced the concept of communicative competence, which later became the foundation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). CLT is a language teaching method that emphasizes the ability of learners to communicate meaningfully and appropriately in real-life situations. Unlike traditional methods that mainly focus on grammar mastery, CLT encourages students to actively use the target language through interaction,

discussion, role play, and problem-solving activities.

According to Pavlovskaya et al. (2022), CLT views language as a tool for communication rather than merely a system of rules. Therefore, learning activities are designed to improve students' communicative competence, including speaking, listening, fluency, and pronunciation. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), CLT is considered effective because it creates opportunities for students to practice English naturally and interactively. Through repeated communication practices, students become more confident and familiar with correct pronunciation and language use.

In this research, CLT is relevant because the method supports active speaking practice and encourages students to communicate in English continuously, which may help reduce pronunciation barriers among transition-age students.

2. Audio-Based Learning

Audio-based learning is a teaching approach that uses audio materials such as recordings, podcasts, dialogues, songs, and pronunciation models to support language learning (Aziz et al., 2025; Sadiqzade, 2024). This approach is particularly useful in improving listening and speaking skills because learners are exposed to authentic pronunciation, intonation, stress, and rhythm of the target language.

According to Stephen Krashen, language acquisition can occur effectively when learners receive comprehensible input. Audio materials provide meaningful language input that helps students become familiar with native-like pronunciation and natural communication patterns. By listening repeatedly, students can imitate sounds and improve their pronunciation accuracy.

Audio-based learning also increases students' engagement because it provides varied and interactive learning experiences (Zhang & Doss, 2025). In pronunciation learning, audio materials can help learners distinguish difficult sounds, recognize correct word stress, and develop better speaking fluency. Therefore, combining audio-based learning with CLT may create a more communicative and supportive environment for students to practice pronunciation in meaningful contexts.

3. Young Learner

Young learners refer to children or early adolescent students who are in the process of developing cognitive, social, and language skills. According to Nawaz et al. (2024), young learners tend to learn languages more effectively through active participation, repetition, games, and meaningful interaction rather than through long theoretical explanations.

In English language learning, young learners usually require engaging and interactive teaching methods to maintain their motivation and attention. They learn best when lessons involve communication, enjoyable activities, and real-life contexts. Because of their developing language abilities, pronunciation is often one of the major challenges faced by young learners, especially in EFL environments where exposure to English is limited.

Using CLT and audio-based activities can support young learners by providing

opportunities to hear and practice authentic English pronunciation regularly. Interactive speaking activities combined with audio exposure may help learners improve confidence, speaking fluency, and pronunciation skills more naturally (Sadiqzade, 2024). Therefore, these approaches are considered suitable for transition-age students who are still developing their English communication abilities.

METHOD

Research Design

This study applied a quantitative research method with a pre-experimental approach, specifically using a one-group pre-test and post-test design. This design was selected to examine the immediate effectiveness of the audio-based Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method in overcoming pronunciation barriers. The research was carried out within a single intensive day to observe the direct impact of the teaching intervention. The process started with a pre-test to measure the students' initial pronunciation skills, followed by the instructional treatment, and closed with a post-test to evaluate the final improvement and the students' perceptions.

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 11 third-grade elementary school students at Bojonegoro. The students were around nine years old, placing them in the young learner and transition-age category. This specific group was chosen because they faced significant emotional and phonological barriers, particularly a lack of confidence in speaking English due to the differences between English spelling and pronunciation. Because of the small sample size, all 11 students were included in the single experimental group to receive the intensive treatment.

Data Collection

Data collection was divided into three clear steps conducted on the same day. First, a pre-test was done through a simple individual interview where the researcher asked basic questions about personal identity and the school environment to record the students' baseline pronunciation and fluency. Second, the treatment was given, where students received auditory input from real recordings, practiced the sounds through a shadowing activity, and used the words in a communicative role-play. Finally, a post-test was conducted using the same simple interview format to measure pronunciation changes, along with additional questions to find out the students' feelings and opinions about the lesson. All interviews were audio-recorded for accurate scoring.

Data Analysis

The scores from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using SPSS software. Before the main analysis, a test was done to check if the data had a normal distribution. Because

the results showed that the data was not normally distributed, a non-parametric test was used instead. Specifically, the researcher applied the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test to compare the students' pronunciation scores before and after the one-day lesson. Even though the data was not normal, the statistical results showed a significant difference, proving that the audio-based CLT method effectively improved the students' speaking skills. Finally, the report answers about the students' feelings and perceptions were analyzed descriptively to support the numerical data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

The Improvement of Students' Pronunciation Scores

The first finding shows a clear improvement in the students' English pronunciation scores after receiving the intensive one-day treatment. To see this change, the researcher looked at the minimum, maximum, and average (mean) scores from both tests. The detailed data can be seen in Table 1 below.

Figure 1: Descriptive Statistics of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PRE TEST	11	50.00	95.00	70.0000	18.84144
PRE TEST	11	70.00	100.00	83.6364	11.85135
Valid N (listwise)	11				

Based on Figure 1, the lowest score (minimum) increased from 50.00 in the pre-test to 70.00 in the post-test. The highest score (maximum) also rose from 95.00 to a perfect 100.00. Most importantly, the average score (mean) increased significantly from 70.0000 to 83.6364. This descriptive data indicates that the combination of audio models and CLT activities helped the third-grade students achieve better pronunciation outcomes.

To choose the right statistical test for the hypothesis, a normality test was conducted using both Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk methods. The complete calculation results are presented in figure 2.

Figure 2: Test of Normality of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
PRE TEST	.248	11	.058	.826	11	.021
PRE TEST	.250	11	.054	.838	11	.029

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

As shown in Figure 2, the Shapiro-Wilk significance values (Sig.) are 0.021 for the pre-test and 0.029 for the post-test. Because both values are lower than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), it means the data was not normally distributed. Therefore, a non-parametric test named the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was used to test the hypothesis.

Figure 3: Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The median of differences between PRE TEST and PRE TEST equals 0.	Related-Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.009	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

The result of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test in Figure 3 shows a significance level (Sig.) of 0.009. Since this value is much smaller than 0.05 ($p < .05$), the decision is to reject the null hypothesis. This statistical result proves that the audio-based CLT method has a significant and positive effect on overcoming pronunciation barriers among the third-grade young learners at one of Elementary School at Bojonegoro.

2. Students' perceptions after experiencing the day audio-based CLT treatment

In terms of students' perceptions and emotional responses, the interview results provided a deeper explanation of the statistical findings. Before the treatment, many third-grade students experienced anxiety and low confidence when speaking English because English words are often pronounced differently from how they are written, unlike Bahasa Indonesia. This difference frequently caused confusion and hesitation during speaking activities. However, after being exposed to authentic audio models and participating in interactive role-play activities, the students reported feeling more confident when speaking English. The audio input and shadowing activities helped them better understand English sounds and pronunciation patterns, reducing their uncertainty when producing words. In addition, the communicative activities created an enjoyable and supportive learning environment where students could practice speaking with their peers without fear of making mistakes.

These findings highlight important differences when compared to previous

publications by other researchers. While some past studies focused generally on how audio-visual media increases motivation in non-language subjects, this study specifically proves that audio materials can directly solve specific pronunciation barriers for young learners. Furthermore, unlike speech technology research that provides technical, automated feedback for independent practice, this study combines audio input with the CLT framework to highlight the necessity of direct classroom interaction. Finally, while most CLT literature focuses on older students over long semesters, this research proves that a short, structured, and intensive one-day intervention can produce immediate improvements in both pronunciation accuracy and psychological comfort for young learners at Bojonegoro.

DISCUSSION

The improvement can be explained through the role of authentic audio input in language learning. Recent studies have demonstrated that audio-based learning provides learners with exposure to accurate pronunciation models and natural language patterns, which support the development of speaking skills and pronunciation accuracy (Hadi et al., 2024). Through repeated listening and shadowing activities, the students in this study became more familiar with English sounds, stress, and intonation, which contributed to their improved pronunciation performance.

Furthermore, the findings support the principles of Communicative Language Teaching. Previous research has shown that communicative activities encourage learners to use language meaningfully and increase their confidence in speaking English (Pavlovskaya et al., 2022). The role-play activities implemented in this study provided opportunities for students to practice pronunciation in authentic communicative situations, allowing them to apply the pronunciation patterns learned from the audio materials.

The findings also provide additional insight into why the treatment was effective. Before the intervention, many students perceived English pronunciation as difficult because English words are often pronounced differently from how they are written. This confusion created anxiety and reduced their willingness to speak. After being exposed to authentic audio models and participating in communicative role-play activities, the students reported feeling more comfortable and confident when speaking English. This finding supports previous studies suggesting that communicative learning environments encourage learners to take risks and participate actively in language use (Alkan & Bümen, 2020). In the present study, the audio materials reduced students' uncertainty about pronunciation, while the CLT activities provided a supportive context for practice. As a result, the pronunciation barrier experienced by the students was not only addressed linguistically but also psychologically.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effectiveness of Audio-Based Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in overcoming pronunciation barriers among third-grade young learners at an elementary school in Bojonegoro. The findings indicate that the integration of authentic audio materials, shadowing activities, and communicative role-plays successfully improved students' pronunciation performance and increased their confidence in speaking English. The intervention helped learners become more familiar with English sounds and provided opportunities to practice pronunciation in meaningful communicative contexts.

The results suggest that pronunciation barriers among young learners are influenced not only by linguistic difficulties but also by psychological factors such as anxiety and lack of confidence. By combining audio input with communicative interaction, students were able to develop both pronunciation accuracy and a greater willingness to participate in English communication. Therefore, Audio-Based CLT can be considered an effective approach for creating a supportive and engaging learning environment for young learners in EFL classrooms.

Nevertheless, this study was conducted with a limited number of participants and within a one-day treatment period. Future research is recommended to involve larger samples, longer intervention periods, and different educational contexts to examine the long-term effectiveness of Audio-Based CLT in improving pronunciation and speaking confidence among young learners.

The authors used Artificial Intelligence (AI) based tools, specifically ChatGPT and Gemini AI, to assist in language refinement, grammar checking, and the organization of manuscript drafts during the preparation of this article. The AI tool was used solely as a writing support instrument and did not contribute to the research design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, or final decision-making processes. All content was carefully reviewed, revised, and validated by the authors, who take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the manuscript.

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