

## Developing English Foreign Language (EFL) Learners' Speaking Skills through the Effectiveness of Community Language Learning (CLL)

Afrianti Wulandari<sup>1✉</sup>, Salsabilla<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Sastra Inggris, Universitas Pamulang, Tangerang, Indonesia

✉ email: dosen01166@unpam.ac.id

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop English Foreign Language (EFL) learners' speaking skills through the effective implementation of Community Language Learning (CLL). Using a qualitative research approach, the study explored students' experiences and perceptions of CLL in an EFL speaking classroom. Data were collected through interviews, classroom observations, and students' reflective journals during several instructional sessions applying the CLL method. The collected data were analyzed thematically to identify key patterns related to students' linguistic and affective development. The findings indicate that the use of Community Language Learning effectively enhanced students' speaking skills and learning experiences. Six major themes emerged from the discussion: increased speaking confidence, reduced anxiety, peer support and collaboration, improvement in speaking fluency, learner autonomy, and the teacher's role as a counselor. Students reported feeling more comfortable and motivated to speak English in a supportive and non-threatening classroom environment. The collaborative nature of CLL encouraged active participation and mutual assistance, while the teacher's facilitative role helped students feel emotionally secure. As a result, learners demonstrated greater fluency, confidence, and responsibility for their own learning. In conclusion, the study suggests that Community Language Learning is an effective approach for developing EFL learners' speaking skills, particularly in contexts where affective barriers such as anxiety and lack of confidence hinder oral communication. By addressing both emotional and linguistic aspects of learning, CLL offers a valuable alternative for enhancing speaking instruction in EFL classrooms.

**Keywords:** *Affective Factors; Community Language Learning; EFL Learners; Speaking Skills*

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## INTRODUCTION

In today's interconnected world, English has become a key medium of international communication. It plays an important role not only in education but also in business, technology, and cultural exchange. Among the four language skills, speaking is often considered the most essential, as it allows learners to take part in direct

interaction. Through speaking, learners can express ideas, exchange opinions, and build confidence in using the target language.

Despite the importance of speaking, many Indonesian learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) continue to face serious challenges. Even after years of formal instruction, students frequently struggle with fluency and accuracy. In addition, affective barriers such as nervousness, fear of making mistakes, and a lack of peer support often discourage learners from actively participating in oral communication. These difficulties highlight the need for new approaches that can address both the linguistic and emotional aspects of language learning.

One method that has gained attention is Community Language Learning (CLL). Originally developed by Charles A. Curran, this approach views language learning as a collaborative process in which learners work together in a supportive group. The teacher acts as a counselor and facilitator, helping learners to feel secure while practicing the target language. Research in different contexts has shown that CLL can reduce anxiety, increase learner participation, and promote greater confidence in speaking. However, most of these studies are qualitative, and limited evidence exists on how CLL quantitatively affects speaking performance in Indonesian EFL settings. Considering this gap, the present study aims to explore students' experiences & perspectives of CLL in improving the speaking skills of Indonesian university students. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions, namely: How do undergraduate students perceive the use of CLL in speaking classes? What experiences do students report when participating in speaking activities through CLL? Which aspects of speaking do students perceive as being influenced by CLL?

Many Indonesian EFL learners struggle with speaking due to limited exposure, low confidence, and anxiety about making mistakes. So, to increase the ability to speak English, CLL is a significant way to reduce anxiety and to encourage students to speak with confidence, feel free, and expressive. Community Language Learning (CLL) is a method that emphasizes emotional security, peer collaboration, and teacher support (Curran, 197). According to a number of studies (Alshahrani, 2016; Mahmoud, 2014; Shabani, 2012; Sari, 2018), CLL can improve speaking performance, lower anxiety, and boost student participation.

Across this body of research, several themes emerge, there are effective benefits, CLL regularly lowers students' anxiety and boosts their self-esteem. Collaborative learning: Peer support and group interaction are beneficial to students. Teacher as counselor: A safe learning environment is facilitated by the teacher's supportive role. Most existing studies employ qualitative or small-scale classroom research designs. However, this research aims to give more insight and give novelty about CLL. Especially in Universitas Pamulang. Although earlier research has shown the benefits of CLL, there are a few methodological issues to be aware of many rely on potentially subjective self-reported data from source like journals and interviews, previous research has frequently had small sample numbers, which restricts generalizability and few studies have compared CLL directly with conventional teaching methods. Despite these limitations, previous research provides valuable insight into how emotional support and

collaborative learning influence speaking development. Affective elements are crucial for developing oral proficiency, as evidenced by the consistent findings on decreased anxiety and increased readiness to talk.

According to Curran (1976, as cited in Brown, 2001) this study is based on Humanistic Learning Theory, which emphasized learner emotions, emotional support and personal development. By portraying the teacher as a counselor who supports rather than controls communication, CLL is align with this approach. Key concepts guiding this research include; affective filter hypothesis such as anxiety and fear can hinder language acquisition (Krashen, 1982 as cited in Horwitz, 2001). Learner autonomy: Students gradually take responsibility for monitoring and producing language. Then, there is collaborative learning models: Peer support enhances participation and motivation. These concepts help explain why CLL may influence both emotional readiness and speaking performance.

Given the persistent challenges Indonesian EFL learners face in speaking, and given the limited quantitative research on CLL in this context, it is necessary to further investigate how this method affects speaking outcomes. While previous studies show promise, more systematic evidence is needed to determine whether CLL produces measurable improvement understand how CLL influences learners' experiences and speaking development in authentic classroom contexts.

## **METHOD**

This study chose a qualitative approach because it aimed to explore students' experiences, perceptions, and emotional responses to the implementation of Community-Based Language Learning (CLL) in speaking classes. The qualitative approach was considered appropriate because this study did not focus on measuring speaking performance through numerical scores, but rather on understanding the learning process, classroom interactions, and students' perspectives. Interviews, classroom observations, and reflective journals were used to collect data to gain in-depth insights into the participants' speaking development. The participants in this research were selected from approximately 10 undergraduate students of Universitas Pamulang who were enrolled in English classes. They represented learners with varying levels of English proficiency. All of them agreed voluntarily to join the study and participated in the activities and interviews related to Community Language Learning (CLL).

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and students' reflective journals. The interviews allowed participants to share their experiences and feelings about CLL, while classroom observations provided direct evidence of how CLL was applied during speaking activities. Reflective journals gave further insights into students' self-reported progress and challenges throughout the sessions.

Procedure of the study was conducted over three weeks with four sessions per week, making a total of twelve meetings. During the treatment, the researcher observed the classroom activities and took field notes. After the treatment, semi-structured interviews were carried out with selected students, each lasting about 20–30 minutes. In

addition, students were asked to submit reflective journals at the end of every week to capture their ongoing learning experiences.

The data from interviews, observations, and journals were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The transcripts and notes were read repeatedly, coded, and grouped into broader themes such as “building confidence,” “reducing anxiety,” “peer support,” and “developing fluency.” These themes were then interpreted to provide answers to the research questions and to explain how CLL influenced students’ speaking development.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

By examining the learning process of CLL in the Universitas Pamulang setting using a more comprehensive qualitative research design, the current study fills a significant gap in the literature. This study enhances our knowledge of how collaborative, emotionally supportive approaches can improve speaking ability by examining learners’ experiences and growth. It is anticipated that the outcomes would help teachers looking for practical ways to enhance oral proficiency in EFL classrooms and provide speaking environments. The analysis of interview transcripts, classroom observations, and reflective journals revealed six main themes. Students’ comments are presented to illustrate how they perceived Community Language Learning (CLL).

**Table 1. Students’ comprehension in CLL results**

No	Variable	
	Main Purpose of CLL	Description of Findings
1	Building confidence	CLL helps develop students’ confidence
2	Reducing Anxiety	CLL reduce Students’ anxiety
3	Peer support	Colaboration learning and assistance
4	Improvement	Students showed gradual improvement
5	Learner Autonomy	CLL promoted students’ speaking responsibility
6	Teacher’s Role as Counselor	her acted as a facilitator and counselor

Here will show analysis about the data above:

### 1. Building confidence

Many students admitted that they felt more confident in speaking English after joining the sessions. One student said: “Before, I never dared to raise my hand in speaking class. But in this method, I feel more brave because my friends and teacher give support.” Another participant expressed a similar view: “I am not worried if I make mistakes. I know this class is for learning, not for laughing at each other.” Confidence was also visible during observations, as more students volunteered to speak after the second week compared to the first.

## 2. Reducing Anxiety

Students consistently highlighted that CLL helped reduce their nervousness. One of them explained, “Usually, I feel my heart beating fast when I speak English. But in this class, I feel calmer because it feels like a discussion, not an exam.” Another student commented: “I used to feel very anxious in front of the class, but when the teacher acted like a counselor, I became more relaxed. It feels safe to try.”

## 3. Peer support and collaboration

The collaborative nature of CLL was strongly appreciated. Students often described how much they learned from one another: “When I forget vocabulary, my friend helps me. Later I remember it better.” “It’s good because we don’t only depend on the teacher. We can help each other and share ideas.” Journal reflections also showed that students valued teamwork: “I like when we do role-play. My group supports me when I get stuck. It makes speaking less scary.” Several participants noted that they could speak more smoothly as the sessions progressed. One student wrote in the journal: “At first I stopped many times, but now I can continue my speaking longer without many pauses.” Another reflected: “I notice that I can say sentences faster. My English flows more naturally now”.

## 4. Improvement in fluency

Some students realized that they were becoming more responsible for their own learning. Instead of waiting for teacher correction, they tried to monitor themselves. A student said: “I try to check my own words before speaking. I feel like I learn not only from the teacher, but also from myself.” Another participant added: “I am not only receiving knowledge. I am creating my own sentences, and I feel proud of that.”

## 5. Learner’s autonomy

Several students reported that they became more responsible for their own learning during the implementation of Community-Based Language Learning. Instead of relying solely on teacher corrections, students tried to monitor their own language use when speaking. One student said, “I try to check my own words before speaking. I feel that I learn not only from the teacher, but also from myself.” Another participant added, “I don’t just receive knowledge. I create my own sentences, and I feel proud of that.”

## 6. Teacher’s Role as Counselor

Students repeatedly mentioned the importance of the teacher’s role. Instead of acting as a strict rule to speak more.” Another added: “I feel the teacher is like a friend who helps me, not someone who judges me.” This approach made students feel secure and motivated, consistent with the original concept of CLL. The results show evaluator, the teacher, supported them like a guide. One student commented, “The teacher does not scold us when we make mistakes. He gives suggestions and encourages us”.

The findings of this study suggest that Community Language Learning supports students' speaking development primarily through affective and social mechanisms. Increased confidence among students can be understood through Curran's (1976) humanistic learning theory, which emphasizes emotional security as a foundation for language learning. When learners feel supported and accepted, they are more willing to take risks in speaking. The reduction of anxiety reported by students can be explained through Krashen's affective filter hypothesis. A non-threatening classroom environment lowers learners' affective barriers, allowing them to focus on communication rather than fear of making mistakes. This supports previous research indicating that emotionally supportive learning environments facilitate oral participation in EFL classrooms. Peer collaboration also played an important role in students' learning experiences. Through group discussions and role-play activities, students were able to exchange ideas and support one another. This finding aligns with Richards and Rodgers' (2014) view that interaction and cooperation are central to communicative language learning. Furthermore, the emergence of learner autonomy indicates that CLL encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning. By monitoring their language use and constructing sentences independently, students became more active participants in the learning process. The qualitative design of this study allowed for an in-depth exploration of these affective and social processes, which may not have been captured through quantitative measurement alone. Overall, the qualitative approach used in this study allows for an in-depth exploration of students' experiences. By focusing on interviews, observations, and reflective journals, this study captures the emotional and interactional aspects of speaking development that may not be apparent through numerical measurements.

## CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that the implementation of Community Language Learning (CLL) had a positive impact on students' speaking development. The results indicate that CLL successfully creates a supportive and non-threatening learning environment in which students feel safe to express themselves. Reduced anxiety and increased confidence encouraged learners to participate more actively in speaking activities, which in turn contributed to gradual improvement in speaking fluency. Furthermore, the collaborative nature of CLL promoted peer interaction and mutual assistance, allowing students to learn not only from the teacher but also from one another. This study explored the use of Community Language Learning (CLL) in developing the speaking skills of undergraduate students at Universitas Pamulang. The findings revealed that CLL created a supportive and collaborative learning environment that helped students overcome affective barriers and improve their oral performance. Through interviews, observations, and reflective journals, students reported gains in confidence, reduced anxiety, stronger peer support, improved fluency, greater autonomy, and positive guidance from the teacher as a counselor. This indicates that CLL is an effective approach not only for enhancing speaking ability but also for addressing the emotional challenges that many EFL learners face in Indonesia. By emphasizing cooperation and

counseling, CLL allows learners to practice speaking in a safe atmosphere where mistakes are treated as part of the learning process.

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