

## Conference Paper

# Communicative Language Teaching and its Achievements: A Study of In-Country Program in Indonesia from 2013-2015

**Gatut Susanto**

Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

### Abstract

This paper aims to discuss the result of the study on the implementation of communicative language teaching and its impact on the language achievements of the students. In this study, the data is collected from classroom observation, interview, and examination of various Indonesian curricula, syllabi, and teaching materials. The subjects of the study are students, peer tutors, and instructors involving in the CLS Malang programs in the summers of 2013–2015 at Indonesian for foreign speakers (or locally known as *Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA)*), State University of Malang. The result of the study shows that the implementation of communicative language teaching approach is very effective when it is combined with extracurricular activities. The combination of these two can significantly increase students' skills in Indonesian language as the students are able to use it effectively and meaningfully in "real-world" contexts afterwards. Moreover, based on the results of OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview), this approach enables students to practice Indonesian language through real-life interactions. Higher levels of students' achievement are predicted to result from this approach because the OPI interviews emphasize oral proficiency based on communicative and cultural skills in real-life settings. The limitation and suggestion for further research will also be discussed.

Corresponding Author: Gatut Susanto; email: gatutus@yahoo.com

Received: 1 March 2017

Accepted: 27 March 2017

Published: 12 April 2017

**Publishing services provided by Knowledge E**

© Gatut Susanto. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the LSCAC Conference Committee.

**Keywords:** communicative language teaching, achievement, BahasaIndonesia, in-country program, Indonesia

## 1. Introduction

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is widely used in the field of a foreign language teaching around the world. CLT theory was promoted in the 1960s in Britain as a response to the earlier structural methods, like grammar translation method (GTM) and audiolingual method (ALM). The CLT theory starts growing up with the support of the theories of American sociolinguists, such as Hymes, Gumperz and Labov and the writings of Austin and Searle on speech acts that said "current standard structural theories of language were incapable of accounting for the basic characteristics of language creativity and uniqueness of sentences".

The emergence of communicative language teaching in the 1980s had changed views of syllabuses and methodology, which are continuing to shape approaches to

### OPEN ACCESS



Figure 1: Communicative Competence.

teaching speaking skills today. Fluency becomes a goal for speaking courses and this could be developed through the use of information-gap and other tasks that require learners to experience real communication, despite limited proficiency in English. In line with this, Ur (1995) considers speaking as the most important skill because people who know a language are referred to as speakers of that language, and this indicates that using a language is more important than just knowing about it because there is no point knowing a lot about language if they cannot use it (Schrivener, 2005). Nonetheless, Zhang (2009) argues that speaking remains the most difficult skill to master for the majority of English learners as they are still incompetent in communicating orally in English.

As argued by Hymes (1972) that the goal of communicative language teaching is “communicative competence,” and being “communicative” here does not necessarily mean to focus only on the speaking ability, instead it refers to how the students can use the language correctly and appropriately. This is in line with what has been discussed by Canale and Swain (1980: 160). In relation to the communicative competence, they propose four dimensions, namely grammatical competence, sociolinguistics competence, strategic competence, and discourse competence as can be seen in Figure 1.

**Grammatical competence** means that the students know how to use grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of a language, while **sociolinguistics competence** means that the students know how to use and respond to language appropriately, given the setting, the topic, and the relationships among the people who communicate. **Strategic**

**competence**, in addition, means that the students know how to recognize and repair communication breakdowns, how to work around gaps in one's knowledge of the language, and how to learn more about the language and in the context. Finally, **discourse competence** means that the students know how to interpret the larger context and how to construct longer stretches of language so that the parts will be coherent.

There are some other dimensions of communicative competence as proposed by a number of experts. Faerch, et al. (1984), for instance, argue that communicative competence consists of phonology/orthography, vocabulary, grammar, pragmatic, discourse, strategies to communicate, and fluency. On the other hand, Bachman (1990) proposes that there are only two dimensions of communicative competence, i.e., organizational competence (covering the grammar) and textual competence (covering any kinds of sub-skills of a language).

Related to the above-mentioned explanation, this paper will focus on the teaching Indonesian which implementing CLT and its effects on the learners' achievement in communicative competence, as shown in the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) test results. OPI by LTI is a 30-minute oral exam conducted via phone between trained OPI examiners and the learners; these two are engaged in a live conversation. OPI measures oral communicative competence in a language that is rated based on the oral proficiency levels described in the guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) to determine the students' ability to effectively and appropriately use the language in real-life situations, regardless of how proficient they are.

This approach is, then, implemented in an in-country program in which it is an Indonesian intensive summer program. Within this program, there is a program named Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) that is sponsored and funded by the United States Department and administered by the American Councils for International Education (ACIE). This program is carried out and implemented in BIPA Program at the State University of Malang (UM), Indonesia. The program runs for eight weeks from mid-June through mid-August. The students participating in this program have to live with host families, have extra-curricular activities, and participate in experiential visits or excursions during the weekends. Besides having regular five-hour-a-day classes, the students have to spend time with staff members, Indonesian friends, as well as peer-tutors, and/or take cultural classes, so that the goal to enable the students to communicate in Indonesian as the way Indonesian do can be achieved. This is also the one that make CLS different with other Indonesian abroad program since the students spend practically the whole day every day engaging in formal and/or informal learning communicative activities with native speakers of Indonesian language.

## 2. Method

In this study, the data is collected from classroom observation, interview, and examination of various Indonesian curricula, syllabi, and teaching materials. The subjects of the study are students, peer tutors, and instructors during the CLS Malang programs in the summers of 2013–2015 at Indonesian for foreign speakers, known as *Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA)*, in State University of Malang.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

### 3.1. The Implementation of CLT for CLS Program in Indonesia

As discussed earlier, the general objective of the implementation of CLT is that to make the students communicative, and to make it happens – of course – the teaching and learning activities should focus on the students' need. In line with this, as proposed by Wilkins (1976), the syllabus used is the notional and functional syllabus. Simply defined, notion refers to the one that the students might use; while function refers to the one that the students might need in using the language. In other words, it can be stated that a notional-functional syllabus is one "in which the language content is arranged according to the meanings a learner needs to express through language and the functions the learner will use the language for.."

Related to this, the teaching and learning activities should make the students actively engaged in communication, and the teacher might become a facilitator, a resource person, a guide, as well as a researcher. Moreover, the material is structurally organized and built on themes, tasks, situations, or stimulus which can trigger the students to actively communicate in Indonesian language. Theoretically, there is no standard way of implementing CLT, but there are common procedures that are used in CLT; they are oral practice, question and answer (either based on dialogue or based on students' personal experience), meaning clarification, learning discovery, and of course oral production.

In relation to this, the implementation of CLT in CLS program can be described as follows. The students participating in this program will have 5-hour classes from Monday-Friday. In addition, while in Indonesia, they have to stay with host family in Indonesia, so that they are accustomed on how Indonesian people communicate and behave in their everyday lives. In one classes, there are 4 instructors with additional 2 tutors for each student. These activities intend to make them immersed in learning Indonesian language. Besides having 5-hour classes, living with the host family, and interacting with instructors as well as peers, they are required to take 1 or 2 practical elective courses, like traditional dance, batik, and Indonesian culinary. The visitation on a number of local industries is also put within the agenda. So far, they have visited some

places, like food industry, traditional medicine, and ceramics industry. They also have guest speakers during the weekdays and cultural excursion during the weekends. As the final stage, the students have to make a final presentation, and to make this happens there are lots of staffs that are ready to assist the students whenever they have problems, especially in using Indonesian language.

The following is the curriculum that is used during CLS program from 2013 to 2015. Basically, there are four different levels: beginning, advanced beginning, intermediate, and advanced. Further explanation can be seen in Table 1.

The increasing significance of global communication, which necessitates foreign language learning, and a strong interest in learning Indonesian have encouraged many institutions in Indonesia and abroad to offer Indonesian classes. Using different approaches, curricula, methods, and materials with creative activities, most of these institutions claim to have successful language programs. As explained previously that the most commonly agreed-upon and promoted method is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes communicative competence using a notional-functional syllabus and authentic materials [7]. CLT, furthermore, has led to creative and communicative learning activities using task-based, text-based, and content-based methods [9]. However, dealing with assessment, they have different standards and methods of assessment to determine success. In CLS program which is conducted in Malang, the standards and methods used are OPI and CLT. The students' achievement in using Indonesian language can be seen further as follows. Table 2 shows the students' achievement in 2013. Table 3 and Table 4 show the students' achievement in 2014 and 2015 respectively.

The result of the study shows that the implementation of communicative language teaching approach is very effective when it is combined with extracurricular activities. It can significantly increase students' Indonesian language skills and use it effectively and meaningfully in "real-world" contexts. The results of this study, confirms that the use of CLT approach can be implemented in the teaching and learning a foreign language for an in-country program. Providing the best trained staffs, instructors, peer tutors, leaders and host families to actively encourage the students' enthusiastic participation in the program are the other factors.

All in all, to supports [12] that there are four things that contributed to the learners' success in learning Indonesian language. First, the kind of students who participated in the program contributed greatly to the success of the program.

Secondly, is that the host institution was highly dedicated to making the program successful, by providing the best trained staffs, instructors, peer tutors, leaders and host families to actively encourage the students' enthusiastic participation in the program. The staff, instructors, and peer tutors are employed full-time during the summer program with above-average salaries, so that they can focus their time and energy on facilitating the program activities and the students' success. Third, all those involved

<b>Subject: Indonesian Language</b>
<b>1) Beginning Level</b>
<b>INDO 111 Beginning Indonesian I (1.0 Unit)</b>
This course is designed for students who have had little or no previous study of <i>Bahasa Indonesia</i> . The goal of the course is to teach students to be able to use <i>Bahasa Indonesia</i> to communicate in their daily activities, focusing on speaking abilities. The skills of listening, reading, writing, and grammar will be oriented to support the speaking abilities. Focus areas include but are not limited to: Indonesian alphabet, numbers, spelling and pronunciation rules; pronouns and other terms of address; question words (both formal and informal); Indonesian word order and basic grammar; time and place indicators; negation. At the end of the course, students will be able to understand (through speech and reading) and communicate (orally and in written form) in most situations related to work, school, and social life.
<b>INDO 112 Beginning Indonesian II (1.0 Unit)</b>
This course is designed for students who have had some initial (beginning-level) study of or exposure to <i>Bahasa Indonesia</i> . The goal of the course is to teach students to be able to use <i>Bahasa Indonesia</i> to communicate in their daily activities, as well as discuss personal interests, education, work and job-related interests, future goals, and other related topics. The focus is on speaking abilities, which will be integrated with listening, reading, and writing skills, and basic grammar. At the end of the course, students will be able to: understand key words, true aural cognates, and formulaic expressions that are highly contextualized and highly predictable, such as those found in introductions and basic courtesies; express ideas and thoughts as coherent entities and support opinions; and demonstrate good grammatical control and clear pronunciation and intonation.
<b>2) Advanced Beginning Level</b>
<b>INDO 211 Advanced Beginning Indonesian I (1.0 Unit)</b>
This Novice High/Advanced Beginning sublevel is designed for students who have had significant study (usually, but not always, the equivalent of one year of college study) of Bahasa Indonesia. The goal of this course is to teach students to be able to understand and synthesize written and oral texts with some contextual support, and to summarize that information effectively, albeit basically, in oral and written form. Focus areas include but are not limited to food and nutrition, Indonesian myths, legends, and folktales, and Indonesian traditions (e.g., <i>mudik</i> ) regarding topics such as family, pastimes, hobbies, etc. The tasks also include findingspecific locations while asking for and giving directions, relaying experiences and events, dreams, hopes, and ambitions; and primary-level discussions of current events. At the end of the course, students will be able to understand (through speech and reading) standardized expressions of personal meaning by combining and recombining what is known with what they hear from their interlocutors into short statements and discrete sentences.
<b>INDO 212 Advanced Beginning Indonesian II (1.0 Unit)</b>
This course is designed for students who have had significant study (typically, but not always, more than the equivalent of one year of college study) of Bahasa Indonesia. The goal of the course is to teach students to use Indonesian for concrete topics such as self, family, occupation, travel, school, leisure activities, including discussion of their fields of academic specialty or interest. The course continues to develop the productive skills of speaking and writing at the Novice High level, using understood—but not necessarily internalized—grammatical skills. At the end of this course, students will be able to use more complex topics and communicate orally and in written form with some degree of fluidity. They will communicate spontaneously and with increasing levels of intelligibility in regular interactions with native speakers. Students will produce clear, detailed texts on a wide range of straightforward subjects explaining their basic viewpoints on an issue, or listing the advantages and disadvantages of various options. The course emphasizes open dialogue and discussion with native speakers, interviewing people and reporting on the interview activities, and presentations stressing oral proficiency in situations such as promotion for selling goods, or reporting on situations. Students will develop writing skills reflecting practical situations do develop greater control of basic Indonesian sentence structure and verb forms.

TABLE 1: Curriculum used in CLS Program from 2013 to 2015.

**3) Intermediate Level****INDO 311 Intermediate Indonesian I (1.0 Unit)**

This course is designed for students who have had significant study (usually but not always the equivalent of one year of college study) of *Bahasa Indonesia*. The goal of the course is to teach students to be able to listen to and/or read about topics and synthesize and summarize that information effectively in oral and written form. They will also speak and write about common topics such as relating experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions, etc., including expressing their opinions about such experiences. Focus areas include but are not limited to: food and nutrition, Indonesian myths, legends, and folktales; Indonesian traditions (e.g., *mudik*) with regard to family, pastimes, hobbies, etc.; findings specific locations and asking for and giving directions, relating experiences and events, dreams, hopes, and ambitions; discussion of current events. At the end of the course, students will be able to: understand (through speech and reading) and communicate (orally and in written form) personal meaning by combining and recombining what they know and what they hear from their interlocutors into short statements and discrete sentences.

**INDO 312 Intermediate Indonesian II (1.0 Unit)**

This course is designed to teach students to be able to use *Bahasa Indonesia* to communicate effectively areas of concrete topics such as self, family, occupation, travel, school, leisure activities, including discussions in their fields of academic specialty or interest. At the end of the course, students will be able to understand (through both speech and reading) more complex topics and communicate (orally and in written form) seamlessly and spontaneously in regular interactions with native speakers. Students will produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain their viewpoints on an issue, explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options. The course emphasizes open dialogue and discussion with native speakers, interviewing people and reporting on the interview activities, and presentations stressing oral proficiency in situations such as promotion for selling goods, or reporting on situations. Students will be able to meet a number of practical writing needs, showing evidence of control of basic sentence structure and verb forms. Writers at this level can be readily understood by native speakers used to the writing of non-native speakers.

TABLE 1: Table continued.

were expected to expand and maximize learners' input and output activities, using CLT creatively and providing as much real-life communication as possible. For productive CLT to be successfully implemented in and outside of class, intensive training was conducted for the instructors and peer tutors throughout the year in order for them to cooperate with each other in the development of the curriculum, materials and syllabi for coherent goal-oriented activities. The last but not the least, CLS Malang is also committed to implementing an immersion program with a language pledge taken by students, as required by ACIE. Among a few agreements that the students must sign to be selected for this scholarship program is a signed language pledge that stipulates that students are required to use the target language throughout the duration of the program.

## 4. Conclusions and Suggestions

The result of the study shows that the implementation of communicative language teaching approach is very effective when it is combined with extracurricular activities. It can significantly increase students' Indonesian language skills, and use it effectively and meaningfully in "real-world" contexts afterwards. Moreover, based on the results

**4) Advanced Level**

**INDO 411 Advanced Indonesian I (1.0 Unit)**

This course is designed to teach students to be able to understand a wide range of longer, more challenging subjects and vocabulary, and to recognize implicit meanings in *Bahasa Indonesia*. They will be able to express themselves fluently and spontaneously without searching for words. Speakers at the advanced low level demonstrate emerging ability to describe and narrate. Focus areas include but are not limited to: concrete topics such as personal and social contexts, but also more abstract topics such as social problems, economic issues, development, politics, etc. These topics will include those suggested by the students themselves. At the end of the course, students will be able to use Indonesian rather flexibly and effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes, and produce writing that is clear, structured, and provides details about complex subjects. They will have incorporated some communicative strategies such as asking for clarification. They are able to make more complete comparisons and utilize a wider variety of connectors.

**INDO 412 Advanced Indonesian II (1.0 Unit)**

This course is designed to teach students to use Indonesian communicatively, interactively and effectively focusing on all aspects of language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). The course flow will be adjusted and guided to fulfill the need of students based upon their specific needs and/or requests. Students will be able to comprehend fluently what they hear or read. They will be able to summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments with a cohesive presentation. They will be able to express themselves spontaneously, very fluently and accurately, knowing the difference in meaning even in complex situations. At the end of the course, students will be able to follow most lectures, discussions and debates with relative ease, understanding spoken language even when it is not clearly structured and when ideas and thoughts are not expressed in an explicit or simple way. They will be active and equal conversational participants demonstrating some emerging skill at tailoring language registers to the sociolinguistic setting although they generally use the standard language. They will be able to write about complex subjects in an essay or a report, underlining the most important points, and write different kinds of texts in a confident and personal style that is appropriate to the reader in mind, maintaining good grammatical control and a wide range of vocabulary.

TABLE 1: Table continued.

Proficiency Levels	Pre-program		Post-program	
	Number of Students	Percentage of Students	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
Novice Low	12	42	0	0
Novice-Mid	3	10	0	0
Novice-High	0	0	0	0
Intermediate-Low	5	17	0	0
Intermediate-Mid	2	7	0	0
Intermediate-High	6	21	12	42
Advanced-Low	0	0	1	3
Advanced-Mid	1	3	6	20
Advanced-High	0	0	9	32
Superior	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>97</b>

TABLE 2: The Students' Achievement in 2013.



Proficiency Levels	Pre-program		Post-program	
	Number of Students	Percentage of Students	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
Novice Low	4	15	0	0
Novice-Mid	9	33	0	0
Novice-High	4	15	0	0
Intermediate-Low	0	0	1	4
Intermediate-Mid	4	15	1	4
Intermediate-High	6	22	15	56
Advanced-Low	0	0	3	11
Advanced-Mid	0	0	5	18.7
Advanced-High	0	0	2	7
Superior	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>

TABLE 3: The Students' Achievement in 2014.

Proficiency Levels	Pre-program		Post-program	
	Number of Students	Percentage of Students	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
Novice Low	9	36	0	0
Novice-Mid	1	4	0	0
Novice-High	0	0	0	0
Intermediate-Low	0	0	1	4
Intermediate-Mid	8	32	2	7
Intermediate-High	4	16	10	40
Advanced-Low	1	4	8	32
Advanced-Mid	0	0	2	7
Advanced-High	1	4	2	7
Superior	1	4	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

TABLE 4: The Students' Achievement in 2015.

of OPI, this approach enables students to practice Indonesian language via real-life interactions. Higher levels of students' achievement are predicted to result from this approach because the OPI interviews emphasize oral proficiency based on communicative and cultural skills in real-life settings.

The implementation of CLS is caused by the selection of the best students with the highest potential for success, the highly dedicated institutions including the well-trained staff, peer-tutors, instructors, and host families, the implementation of CLT that emphasizes real-life communicative skills, the immersion program with the language pledge, and the teaching of descriptive language. It has been acknowledged that other Indonesian abroad programs might have implemented similar principles, although based on my observations, not to the same degree as CLS Malang has done.

To better understand the reasons behind the success of CLS Malang as shown by ACIE, other factors need to be considered and extensive studies comparing in-country programs need to be conducted.

## References

- [1] H. D. Brown, *Principles of language learning and teaching*, Pearson Education, Inc, New York, 2007.
- [2] C. J. Brumfit and K. Johnson, (1979): *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [3] A. Chaney, *Teaching Oral Communication in Grades K-8*, A Viacom Company, USA, 1998.
- [4] S. Ash, "The handbook of sociolinguistics, Ed. by Florian Coulmas," *Language*, vol. 74, no. 2, pp. 379-382, 1998.
- [5] F. Genesee, "Second Language Learning Through Immersion: A Review of U.S. Programs," *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 55, no. 4, pp. 541-561, 1985.
- [6] E. Geva, "Second-language oral proficiency and second-language literacy," in *Developing literacy in second-language learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth*, D. August and T. Shanahan, Eds., Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ, 2006.
- [7] P. H. Hiep, "Communicative language teaching: unity within diversity," *ELT Journal*, vol. 61, no. 3, pp. 193-201, 2007.
- [8] W. Littlewood, *Communicative language teaching*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981.
- [9] J. C. Richards, *Communicative language teaching today*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006.
- [10] S. J. Savignon, *Communicative competence: Theory and classroom practice*, Addison-Wesley, Massachusetts, 1983.
- [11] M. A. Snow, "Language immersion: An overview and comparison," in *Foreign language education: Issues and strategies*, A. M. Padilla, H. H. Fairchild, and C. M. Valadez, Eds., pp. 109-126, Sage, Newbury Park, CA, 1990.
- [12] P. Suwarno, "Teaching Descriptive Language for Communicative and Cultural Competence: Learning from CLS Malang In-Country Program 2010-2012," *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, vol. 10, pp. 264-275, 2013, <http://e-flt.nus.edu.sg/>.