



Students' Perceptions of The Implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Enhancing Writing Argumentative Competence in Twelfth-Grade Students of MAN 2 Bengkulu

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ABSTRACT

This study examines twelfth-grade students' perceptions of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in improving their argumentative writing skills at MAN 2 Bengkulu. The research aims to explore students' views on how CLT enhances their engagement, motivation, and writing ability, as well as the challenges and benefits they experience. Using a mixed-methods design, data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and documentation from five classes. The findings revealed that students showed highly positive perceptions of CLT, with average scores ranging from 79.4% to 86.9%. They felt that CLT made learning more interactive, enjoyable, and student-centered, helping them express ideas and construct arguments more logically. Despite difficulties such as limited vocabulary and grammar mastery, students believed CLT improved their confidence, participation, and writing skills. Overall, CLT proved effective in enhancing students' communicative competence and argumentative writing in English learning.

Keywords: students' perceptions, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), argumentative writing, English learning.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the essential language skills that enables individuals to express ideas, opinions, and information in a structured and meaningful way. Through writing, students can develop creativity, linguistic accuracy, and critical thinking skills (Oktaviani et al., 2018; Widyastuti, 2018). In academic contexts, argumentative writing holds a particularly significant role, as it requires students to construct logical, coherent, and evidence-based arguments, skills that are fundamental to academic success and intellectual development.

However, many students still struggle with producing well-structured argumentative essays, often due to limited confidence, motivation, and exposure to communicative writing practices. To address these challenges, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach has been widely recognized as an effective method in English Language Teaching (ELT). CLT emphasizes meaningful language use, authentic interaction, and the integration of communicative competence in both spoken and written forms (A'yuni, 2021; Kurniawan, 2022).

In Indonesia, although teachers generally understand the concept of CLT, its classroom implementation faces practical barriers such as limited resources, time constraints, and a lack of professional development opportunities (Rizqi, 2020). Nonetheless, studies indicate that CLT can enhance students' engagement, motivation, and confidence in using English (Chang, 2020; Dewi, 2022).

At MAN 2 Bengkulu, a religion-based senior high school with strong academic standards, argumentative writing is considered an essential competency. Yet, students often face difficulties related to linguistic and cultural factors, including reliance on their mother tongue and a focus on grammar-oriented learning.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the perceptions of 12th-grade students at MAN 2 Bengkulu regarding the implementation of CLT in learning argumentative writing and to identify how this approach contributes to improving their argumentative competence. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for English teachers, curriculum developers, and policymakers in Islamic educational settings.

METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods case study design to explore twelfth-grade students' perceptions of the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in enhancing argumentative writing competence at MAN 2 Bengkulu. The case study approach was chosen because it allows an in-depth investigation of a specific educational phenomenon within its real-life classroom context. The mixed-methods design integrates quantitative and qualitative procedures to provide both measurable data and deeper insights into students' experiences and perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The population of this research consists of all twelfth-grade students at MAN 2 Bengkulu, totaling approximately 165 students across five classes (XII A–E). Using a total sampling technique, all students were included as participants since they had previously been taught argumentative writing through the CLT approach. This comprehensive inclusion ensured diverse perspectives across different learning groups.

Data were collected through two primary instruments: questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire, designed using a five-point Likert scale, measured students' perceptions across four indicators, classroom engagement, learning motivation, challenges faced, and perceived benefits of CLT. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students to gain deeper insights into their learning experiences, difficulties, and reflections on CLT-based writing instruction. Documentation such as lesson materials, classroom photos, and questionnaire samples supported data triangulation.

Data collection followed several systematic steps: an initial orientation to explain the research objectives, distribution and completion of the questionnaires, and follow-up interviews with selected participants. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed descriptively using percentage and mean score calculations to identify trends in students' perceptions. Qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed thematically through coding, categorization, and interpretation to identify recurring themes related to engagement, motivation, challenges, and benefits. Following Denzin and Lincoln's (2011) framework, the analysis was iterative and reflective, allowing the researcher to interpret both measurable outcomes and contextual classroom dynamics comprehensively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in English classes for twelfth-grade students at MAN 2 Bengkulu was analyzed to examine its effectiveness in enhancing students' engagement, motivation, and argumentative writing competence, as well as to identify the challenges and benefits experienced during the learning process. This approach aimed to improve students' communicative and writing skills through interactive, collaborative, and student-centered activities such as group discussions, peer feedback, and argumentative writing tasks. Students' engagement and motivation were influenced by internal factors such as confidence, interest, critical thinking, and willingness to express ideas, as well as external factors including teacher facilitation, peer collaboration, classroom dynamics, and the relevance of communicative tasks to real-life contexts.

Table 1. Questionnaire

No	Class	Average Score	Category
1	Class XII.A	81,6	Almost All
2	Class XII.B	82,5	Almost All
3	Class XII.C	79,4	Almost All
4	Class XII.D	82,1	Almost All
5	Class XII.D	86,9	Almost All

Based on the survey results from five twelfth-grade classes at MAN 2 Bengkulu, the implementation of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method had a consistently positive impact on student engagement, motivation, and argumentative writing skills. Average engagement scores were very high in Classes XII A (81.6%), XII B (82.5%), XII D (82.1%), and XII E (86.9%), while Class XII C showed good engagement (79.4%). CLT encouraged active participation through group discussions, idea sharing, collaborative writing, and presentations, fostering a dynamic, student-centered classroom environment. Students reported increased motivation and confidence as they could express ideas freely and relate learning to real-life contexts, although challenges such as limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, idea organization, and presentation anxiety were still observed. Despite these challenges, CLT proved effective in improving critical thinking, collaboration, communicative competence, and writing ability, demonstrating that it is a highly beneficial approach for enhancing both language skills and learning motivation.

Table 2. Interview

No	Cycle	Question/Answer
1	<i>NFP</i>	Do you feel more active during the learning activities using the CLT method?
	<i>AFD</i>	I feel much more active because CLT requires me to discuss, ask questions, and give opinions. So I can't just sit still; instead, I have to be truly involved in the learning process.
	<i>RM</i>	I became more active because this method involves all students in classroom activities.
	<i>NR9</i>	I feel more active than before, although not all the time. Sometimes I take part in the discussion, but if the material is difficult, I tend to stay quiet.
	<i>GHF</i>	feel more active because CLT makes me speak and write more often. So I am fully involved in the learning process
	<i>HAA</i>	I feel more active when learning with CLT, although not always. If the topic is interesting, I can join the discussion, but if it is difficult, I prefer to stay quiet.
2	<i>NFP</i>	How do you feel when learning with the CLT approach compared to the

		previous method?
	<i>AFD</i>	My feeling when learning with CLT is more enjoyable compared to the old method. In the past, I only listened to the teacher's explanation, but now I can directly try using English.
	<i>RM</i>	It feels more interesting because I find the learning process more lively and not boring. I also become more confident.
	<i>NR</i>	It feels quite enjoyable because the class atmosphere becomes livelier. However, I still often feel confused when asked to directly express my ideas in English.
	<i>GHF</i>	The feeling is more enjoyable because I not only listen to the teacher but also get to express my opinions.
	<i>HAA</i>	The feeling is quite different. CLT makes the class more interactive, but sometimes I get confused when I have to speak spontaneously.
3	<i>NFP</i>	How does interaction with peers during CLT activities affect your writing process?
	<i>AFD</i>	Interaction with friends really helps me. When I run out of ideas, my friends provide additional arguments that I can further develop.
	<i>RM</i>	Interacting with friends gives me many ideas. Sometimes my ideas are limited, but by listening to my friends' opinions, my writing becomes more creative.
	<i>NR</i>	Interacting with friends is quite helpful. For example, when I don't have any ideas, my friends can give input that helps me understand.
	<i>GHF</i>	Interacting with friends gives me extra motivation. During discussions, I can discover perspectives that I hadn't thought of before.
	<i>HAA</i>	Interacting with friends has its benefits, for example I can get additional ideas. But sometimes, if the discussion goes on too long, I lose focus.
4	<i>NFP</i>	In your opinion, how does CLT influence your motivation in learning argumentative writing?
	<i>AFD</i>	CLT clearly increases my motivation, because the class feels lively and not monotonous. I become more enthusiastic about writing since there is a process of thinking together.
	<i>RM</i>	CLT makes me more motivated. I feel encouraged to produce better writing because the learning environment is supportive.
	<i>NR</i>	CLT makes me quite motivated, because the learning feels more real and not monotonous.
	<i>GHF</i>	CLT increases my motivation because the learning feels more real.
	<i>HAA</i>	CLT makes me somewhat more motivated, because I am not only listening to the teacher. But to be honest, my motivation is not always stable.
5	<i>NFP</i>	Do you feel more confident in writing arguments after learning with the CLT method? Why or why not?
	<i>AFD</i>	Yes, I feel more confident. Discussions help me test my ideas before writing them down, so when I write, I am not too hesitant.
	<i>RM</i>	Yes, I am more confident because I am already used to expressing my ideas orally before writing them down.
	<i>NR</i>	I feel a little more confident than before. Discussions give me the opportunity to practice speaking, although I am still often afraid of making grammar mistakes.
	<i>GHF</i>	Yes, I feel more confident, especially when asked to express my opinion in front of the class.
	<i>HAA</i>	I have become somewhat more confident, especially when speaking in groups. However, when I have to write on my own, I still often feel uncertain

		about grammar.
6	<i>NFP</i>	Do you think the use of CLT makes you more enthusiastic about learning to write argumentative texts? Why?
	<i>AFD</i>	Yes, the use of CLT makes me more enthusiastic. I feel the learning process is more engaging because I can express my opinions freely.
	<i>RM</i>	Yes, I feel more enthusiastic. The class feels more exciting because every student is involved in the learning process.
	<i>NR</i>	Yes, this method makes me somewhat more enthusiastic. At the very least, I become more willing to try writing texts even though there are still many mistakes.
	<i>GHF</i>	I do feel more enthusiastic. This method keeps me from getting bored quickly, because there are always new activities.
	<i>HAA</i>	This method makes me more enthusiastic, although at times it also feels challenging because argumentative writing tasks are quite difficult.
7	<i>NFP</i>	What challenges do you face when learning argumentative writing through CLT?
	<i>AFD</i>	My biggest challenge is grammar. Sometimes I already have a clear idea, but it is difficult to write it with the correct grammar.
	<i>RM</i>	My challenge is vocabulary. Sometimes I already know what I want to say, but I get confused about how to write it in English.
	<i>NR</i>	My challenge is vocabulary. Sometimes I know the idea in Indonesian, but it is difficult to find the words in English.
	<i>GHF</i>	My biggest challenge is developing an argument into a long paragraph. Sometimes I stop in the middle because I get confused.
	<i>HAA</i>	My main challenge is developing ideas. Sometimes I know the core of the argument, but I struggle to explain it in detail.
8	<i>NFP</i>	In your opinion, which part of the argumentative writing process is the most difficult when using the CLT approach (for example, generating ideas, organizing arguments, or using appropriate English)?
	<i>AFD</i>	The most difficult part for me is connecting the arguments so that they are logical and not confusing. That requires a lot of practice.
	<i>RM</i>	The most difficult part for me is constructing arguments that are truly convincing and not wordy.
	<i>NR</i>	The most difficult part for me is developing the arguments. I often can only write briefly, and it's hard for me to make the writing longer.
	<i>GHF</i>	The most difficult part is constructing arguments with formal grammar.
	<i>HAA</i>	The most difficult part for me is grammar, especially tenses. I often get confused about when to use past or present.
9.	<i>NFP</i>	What main benefits do you feel from the implementation of CLT in argumentative writing lessons?
	<i>AFD</i>	The main benefit of CLT is that I have become more skilled at critical thinking and organizing my writing more coherently. I have also become more accustomed to presenting arguments in English.
	<i>RM</i>	The biggest benefit of CLT is that I can think more critically, not just write carelessly.
	<i>NR</i>	The benefit is that I can write better than before. Although I'm not very fluent yet, at least I know how to write with the correct structure.
	<i>GHF</i>	The biggest benefit of CLT is that I have become more trained in presenting arguments logically.
	<i>HAA</i>	The benefit of CLT is that I understand the structure of argumentative writing a little better.

10	<i>NFP</i>	Does the implementation of CLT help you understand argumentative writing materials more easily?
	<i>AFD</i>	Yes, CLT is very helpful. With this method, I can understand the flow of writing argumentative texts faster compared to the old, more passive way.
	<i>RM</i>	Yes, I have come to understand the structures in writing argumentative texts better.
	<i>NR</i>	CLT has helped me understand argumentative writing, although I still need a lot of practice.
	<i>GHF</i>	Yes, CLT makes it easier for me to understand the steps of writing argumentative texts.
	<i>HAA</i>	CLT helps me, although not completely. I still need guidance and practice.

Based on the overall findings from interviews with the students, the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in learning argumentative writing was perceived as an engaging and effective approach that enhanced students' motivation, participation, and writing competence. Most students agreed that CLT made the learning process more interactive and meaningful through activities such as discussions, peer feedback, and collaborative writing. These communicative tasks encouraged critical thinking, confidence, and logical organization of ideas in their argumentative essays. However, students also encountered several challenges, particularly in grammar accuracy, vocabulary use, and structuring coherent paragraphs, which sometimes affected their confidence and fluency in expressing ideas. Despite these obstacles, the benefits of CLT outweighed the difficulties, as students became more motivated, self-aware, and confident in communicating their opinions. Overall, CLT not only improved students' linguistic and cognitive skills but also fostered a supportive and student-centered learning environment that transformed argumentative writing into an enjoyable and meaningful communicative process.

The results of the questionnaire further reinforced these findings. Most students showed strong motivation in learning English: 73% stated they like learning English, 76% considered English interesting, 73% reported feeling happy in class, and 63% looked forward to English lessons weekly. The highest motivation appeared when games were incorporated: 95% felt excited, 86% less bored, 85% more focused, and 89% happier during games. Games also made learning easier to understand for 84% of students, motivated 78% to compete to win, and encouraged 83% to be more active in class. Moreover, 72% acknowledged the importance of learning English after playing games⁹, and 74% felt more confident. Students also reported enjoyment in collaboration with peers, supportive interactions, and appreciation for the teacher's strategies. Overall, the questionnaire indicated that both **internal factors** (motivation, enjoyment, confidence) and **external factors** (peer collaboration, classroom atmosphere, teacher strategies, relevance of games) significantly influenced engagement in English learning through game-based activities.

Overall, the findings indicate that game-based learning effectively supports students' motivation and engagement. The combination of interactive games, structured teacher guidance, and collaborative group activities fostered enthusiasm, active participation, focus, confidence, and peer cooperation. Both internal factors (motivation, enjoyment, self-confidence, awareness of the importance of learning English) and external factors (types of games, alignment with material, classroom atmosphere, teacher strategies) contributed to creating a dynamic and student-centered learning environment.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) significantly enhanced students' engagement, motivation, and argumentative writing skills among twelfth-grade students at MAN 2 Bengkulu. CLT transformed the classroom from a teacher-centered environment into a dynamic, student-centered space where learners actively participated in discussions, collaborative writing, and peer feedback, fostering responsibility, confidence, and a sense of ownership over their learning. Average engagement scores ranged from 79% to 86%, reflecting high involvement in communicative and interactive tasks, consistent with the principles of learner-centered and authentic language use.

Students' motivation also improved, as CLT encouraged them to express ideas freely without excessive concern for grammatical errors, making learning more enjoyable and meaningful. Through debates, discussions, and collaborative activities, learners experienced writing as a communicative process, which promoted intrinsic motivation, critical thinking, and enthusiasm for English learning. This approach allowed students to perceive writing as an opportunity for self-expression rather than a purely academic task.

Despite these positive outcomes, challenges such as limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, idea organization, and nervousness during presentations were observed. These difficulties reflect the natural adaptation process to a communicative approach and highlight the need for balanced instruction that integrates grammar and vocabulary support within interactive activities. Consistent teacher guidance and practice were found to be crucial in helping students overcome these obstacles.

Overall, CLT proved highly effective in improving argumentative writing competence, critical thinking, collaboration, and communicative confidence. Students demonstrated better logical reasoning, coherence in writing, and the ability to defend arguments, confirming that CLT not only develops linguistic skills but also fosters cognitive, social, and affective growth. This study reinforces that CLT, when adapted to local classroom contexts, is a powerful pedagogical framework for enhancing both language proficiency and students' positive attitudes toward English learning.

CONCLUSIONS

The research findings indicate that the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) effectively enhanced twelfth-grade students' argumentative writing competence at MAN 2 Bengkulu by making learning more interactive, engaging, and meaningful. Students became more motivated, confident, and actively involved in classroom activities such as group discussions and collaborative tasks, which fostered a supportive and participatory learning environment. The average engagement scores across five classes ranged from 79.4% to 86.9%, showing significant improvement in organizing ideas, connecting arguments coherently, and developing critical thinking through communicative practice. Despite challenges in grammar, vocabulary, and text development, the study confirms that CLT not only strengthens linguistic skills but also promotes confidence, collaboration, and analytical reasoning in writing.

Recommendations Based on the Research Findings:

1. For schools, strengthen support for CLT with better facilities, resources, flexible schedules, and teacher collaboration.
2. For teachers, combine communicative activities with grammar, vocabulary, and essay instruction, using debates, role-plays, and peer feedback.

3. For students, actively participate, practice writing, read argumentative texts, and collaborate with peers.
4. For future researchers, study broader contexts, explore CLT with new approaches, and examine long-term effects.

Acknowledgement

All praises be to Allah SWT, the Lord of the Worlds, for His endless blessings, mercy, strength, and guidance throughout the completion of this thesis. Peace and salutations be upon Prophet Muhammad SAW, whose noble character continues to inspire the pursuit of knowledge, truth, and integrity.

This thesis, entitled “Students’ Perceptions of The Implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Enhancing Writing Argumentative Competence in Twelfth-Grade Students of MAN 2 Bengkulu”, is submitted as partial fulfillment for the requirements of the Undergraduate Degree in English Education at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu.

The researcher’s deepest gratitude is extended to those who have provided support, encouragement, and invaluable contributions to the completion of this academic work:

- Prof. Dr. KH Zulkarnain, M.Pd., Rector of UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, for his leadership and support in creating a conducive academic environment.
- Dr. Mus Mulyadi, M.Pd., Dean of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Tadris, for his encouragement and guidance throughout the academic journey.
- Dr. M. Hidayatullah, M.Pd.I., Head of Tadris Department, for his assistance and administrative support.
- Hanura Febriani, M.Pd., Head of English Education Study Program, for her continuous guidance and encouragement during the process of completing this thesis.
- Fera Zasrianita, M.Pd., first advisor, for her valuable guidance, constructive feedback, patience, and continuous motivation that have greatly improved the quality of this work.
- Reko Serasi, S.S., M.A., second advisor, for his insightful suggestions, encouragement, and dedicated time in reviewing and refining this research.

My beloved alma mater, UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, for being the place where the researcher has learned, grown, and been inspired to pursue academic excellence.

The researcher also expresses heartfelt appreciation to all lecturers of the English Education Study Program for their dedication in imparting knowledge and shaping academic competence. Special thanks are also given to family, friends, and respondents who have provided moral support, prayers, and assistance throughout the research process.

May Allah SWT reward all kindness with abundant blessings and grant success to everyone who has contributed to this journey.

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