# Contextual Teaching and Learning: A Practical Approach to Improving Hospitality Students' Speaking Skills

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**Abstract**. *Contextual teaching and learning (CTL) is recognized as a teaching approach rooted in real-world situations. This research aimed to assess whether the application of CTL can enhance the speaking abilities of hospitality students. The study utilized classroom action research with a total of 27 participants. Participants were chosen through a purposive sampling method. Data collection involved three techniques, including tests, observations, and interviews. The assessment tools utilized in this research comprised authentic assessments, observation checklists, and interview questionnaires. The data were subsequently analyzed using reduction analysis techniques. The findings indicated that in the initial test, only 59.26% of students achieved speaking scores above the benchmark score. In cycle 1, there was an improvement of 25.93%, followed by an additional 29.63% increase in cycle 2. This demonstrates that CTL can effectively aid students in enhancing their speaking skills.*

*Keywords: Contextual teaching, Hospitality students, Learning, Speaking, Teaching method*

**Abstrak**. *Contextual teaching and learning* (CTL) sudah dikenal sebagai salah satu metode pembelajaran yang berbasis pada konteks kehidupan nyata. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apakah implementasi CTL dapat meningkatkan keterampilan *speaking* mahasiswa perhotelan. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian tindakan kelas dengan responden sebanyak 27 orang. Responden dipilih dengan *purposive sampling technique*. Data diambil dengan tiga metode yaitu test, observasi dan wawancara. Instrumen pada penelitian ini menggunakan authentic assessment, lembar observasi dan daftar pertanyaan wawancara. Data kemudian dianalisis dengan metode analisis reduksi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pada *pre-test*, hanya 59,26 % mahasiswa yang mendapat nilai *speaking* di atas standar nilai. Kemudian pada siklus 1 mengalami peningkatan sebesar 25,93 % dan pada siklus 2 mengalami peningkatan sebesar 29,63 %. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa CTL dapat membantu mahasiswa untuk meningkatkan kemampuan *speaking*.

**Kata kunci**: *Contextual teaching*, Keterampilan berbicara, *Learning*, Mahasiswa perhotelan, Metode pembelajaran

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English language skills are something that needs to be possessed to maximize a job or activity that is done. The four basic skills in English are speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Each skill consists of several language elements that must be mastered. Speaking skills are one of the important English language skills for communication. In addition, this ability can be a basic skill that needs to be learned in college. In addition, speaking is very important for two-way communication, so various learning models and approaches must be used to improve this ability.

Brown referenced in (Liunokas, 2023) outlines several traits that distinguish written language from spoken language. These traits include permanence, production time, distance,

orthography, complexity, formality, and vocabulary. In addition, Brown identifies additional aspects of speaking that can facilitate or complicate oral performance. These aspects include clustering, redundancy, reduced forms, performance variables, colloquial language, delivery speed, stress, rhythm, intonation, and interaction.

In fact, getting students to speak English in class is difficult. Students experience difficulties caused by many factors such as reluctance to try, fear of trying, lack of motivation to learn, less interesting learning methods, and so on (Ulrica et al., 2013). Based on this problem, lecturers or educators are challenged to develop learning methods in the teaching and learning process to be more interesting and can create a good learning atmosphere so that the goal of improving students' speaking skills can be achieved.

The learning methods that can be implemented in learning are increasingly varied, following the development of technology and information, as well as the development of learning media. Methods that are widely considered to be applied in learning include contextual teaching and learning (CTL). CTL emphasizes the concept of learning based on the context of everyday life (Rusman, 2016). This method has been developed by researchers to improve speaking skills at elementary, middle, and college levels.

Several previous studies have implemented CTL in learning to improve speaking skills. Research by (Roza et al., 2019) examined the application of CTL to enhance students' speaking abilities in public speaking, focusing on storytelling and speeches through a three-cycle action research approach. The findings indicated an improvement in the average student scores from cycles I to III. In the third cycle, student scores saw an increase of 15.88%, with 82.24% of students achieving good results. This demonstrates that CTL can effectively serve as a method to enhance students' speaking skills.

Further research was conducted by (Shanty, H., & Naely, 2015) on the implementation of CTL to enhance the speaking abilities of students in Padang. The research was structured as a case study. This study took place over two cycles. In the second cycle, 80% of the students reached the minimum passing score of 70. The participants in this study were sixth semester students enrolled in the Engineering English course.

A study by (Yusyac et al., 2021) utilized a pre-experimental design. The participants involved in the research were eighth-grade students at MTsN 04 Pidie. Findings indicated that the application of CTL enhances students' speaking abilities regarding accuracy, clarity, and fluency.

Following the explanation provided, the author conducted a study intended to assess how CTL can enhance speaking abilities among hospitality students. This research specifically targets the Hospitality English course offered in the third and fourth semesters.

## 2. THEORITICAL BACKGROUND

### Speaking Skill

In the process of learning English, the ability to speak is often viewed as more practical than listening, reading, and writing abilities. This is primarily due to the fact that the essential purpose of language is communication, and speaking skills can be utilized during conversation practice throughout the learning process. As stated by Tarigan in (Hastensi, 2020), speaking is the capability to articulate sounds or words in order to express, declare, and communicate thoughts, ideas, and emotions. This definition aligns with the idea that speaking is the skill of articulating a sequence of words in such a way that the thoughts in one's mind can be effectively conveyed and understood by listeners (Helmanda & Nisa, 2018). Additionally, according to , speaking serves as a means of expressing our emotions, which is then realized through an oral communication exchange between two or more individuals (Gustian et al., 2022). Based on this explanation, it can be inferred that speaking skills involve the ability to share thoughts, ideas, and feelings through verbal language, ensuring that they are comprehensible to others.

Vanderkevent in (Kuwarso & Karlina, 2024) explains that speaking skill involves three components: speakers (those who produce sound and are able to convey their thoughts or emotions to an audience), listeners (those who perceive or comprehend the speaker's thoughts or emotions), and utterances (the words or phrases used by speakers to convey their thoughts). Moreover, Bygate, as referenced by Luoma in (Hanna et al., 2022), suggests that the distinctive characteristics of speaking arise from two types of conditions that affect how people communicate: processing and reciprocity. Processing refers to the fact that speaking entails actions that occur at the same time. Reciprocity indicates that a speaker's words are influenced by the listener's responses. This also means that the speaker must adjust their communication and remain attentive to the listener.

### Contextual Teaching and Learning

CTL represents a teaching and learning approach that connects subject matter to real-world contexts and establishes links between knowledge and its practical applications in everyday scenarios as family members, citizens, and employees (Yusyac et al., 2021). In

addition, (Fauziyah et al., 2024) stated that CTL is an educational strategy that emphasizes active involvement of students to help them gain and connect knowledge in a real-life context. This approach seeks to develop students' capability to utilize their understanding in practical circumstances, thus improving the significance and usefulness of the learning experience. In particular, when discussing materials that require opinion and response, students use their comprehension to articulate their viewpoints, ideas, arguments, and the nature of their responses. Moreover, (Kuwarso & Karlina, 2024) simplifies that in the CTL learning method, students engage actively in their educational experience instead of merely attending lectures and jotting down notes. In summary, CTL approach can be utilized as an instructional method in developing speaking skills for hospitality students within the hospitality sector, as this method motivates students to communicate drawing from their personal experiences.

(Yusyac et al., 2021), (Arifin et al., 2017), (Supriyatmoko et al., 2023), and (Shanty, H., & Naely, 2015) stated that the procedures of applying CTL in teaching and learning process involves seven components, they are:

## Constructivism

Constructivism is a learning process that emphasizes the active, creative and productive development of students' own understanding based on previous knowledge and meaningful learning experiences. It implies that knowledge is developed by students in a systematic manner. Knowledge is not merely the facts, concepts, or techniques to be memorized. Instead, individuals need to create knowledge and assign significance through genuine experiences.

## Inquiry

Inquiry is a fundamental aspect of CTL's activities. The skills and knowledge gained by students stem not from merely reviewing a collection of facts, but from a process of self-discovery. In other words, this component enables students to uncover knowledge they were previously unaware of on their own. The aim of this inquiry method is to assist students in enhancing their intellectual capabilities and skills that emerge from their queries. The process of inquiry begins with observing, questioning, investigating, analyzing, and concluding.

## Questioning

Asking questions is one of the key methods for facilitating and expanding students' learning capabilities. It can assist educators in crafting their approach to improve students' engagement and cognitive development. Consequently, it is most effective when it encourages students to be actively participating in the educational experience. For students, engaging in

questioning activities is a crucial aspect of inquiry-based learning, which involves uncovering information, validating existing knowledge, and highlighting elements that are still unknown.

**Learning Community**

Learning communities provide a welcoming way to begin engaging in group work. Being involved in learning communities enables individuals to improve their interactions with peers in collaborative settings and enhances their teamwork skills. Students can be divided into heterogenous groups, students who are knowledgeable instruct those who are less capable, those who possess information share it with those who lack it, those who learn swiftly support their slower peers, those who have creative thoughts readily offer advice, and so forth.

**Modeling**

By engaging in social learning, an individual can acquire knowledge by observing a model (observational learning). A model can be imitated by students during teaching and learning process. Individuals who can serve as models in this educational process may include teachers, students, parents, or native speakers who assist students in their learning.

**Reflection**

Reflection is a method for considering what students have acquired. Both students and educators reflect on and react to various events, activities, and experiences. They also document what they have learned, how they felt, and any emerging ideas. This aspect typically takes place after activities have concluded (post-activities).

**Authentic Assessment**

Implementing authentic assessment is essential for accurately representing students' true proficiency in the subject. Authentic assessment involves gathering diverse data that illustrates student learning growth. Teachers need to understand the portrayal of student learning progress to guarantee that students engage in the learning process effectively. There are four categories of assessments: work assessment, portfolio assessment, project assessment, and written assessment.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The structure of this study is classified as classroom action research (CAR). CAR is defined as a type of action research aimed at enhancing the quality of teaching practices in the classroom (Jaya, 2017). As stated by Lewin (Kunandar, 2010), the process of CAR comprises four phases: planning, action, observation, and reflection within every cycle. If the goals for improving speaking abilities have not been achieved, the cycle may be repeated. Given the timeframe of the research, this study was conducted over two cycles. According to (Herlina et al., 2021), CAR is considered successful when the target set by the researcher is met, which is for 80% to 100% of students to enhance their English skills. Hence, in this research, the success criterion indicates that the study will be deemed successful if 80% of students manage to achieve a score higher than the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM), which is set at 69. The sampling method for this study involved purposive sampling based on specific criteria (Sugiyono, 2014). The subjects of the research consisted of 27 students in a hospitality program. Data collection methods employed included tests (pre-test and post-test), observations, and interviews. Additionally, the data were analyzed using data triangulation, which involves comparing the accuracy of specific information through various methods and data collection approaches (Herlina et al., 2021).

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of the study are presented from the results of CTL implementation and the improvement of speaking skills. As stated in research methodology, the criterion of the success for the study is that 80% of the respondents achieve scores over the KKM. Thus, the study has been successfully upgraded students' scores in speaking.

**The Implementation of CTL**

**Pre-test (Pre-cycle)**

A pre-test was administered through conversations with partners centered around themes introduced in the initial three weeks. These themes involved scenarios such as becoming a bellboy, telephone operator, and receptionist. The pre-test results showed that 59.26 % of the students achieved scores above 60; however, these scores cannot be considered satisfactory. As illustrated in Table 1, only 11 students passed the KKM, while the majority scored below 69.

**Table 1. The Results of Pre-Test Scores**

| No | Category | Range Scores | Frequency | Percentage |
|----|----------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Very Good | 81-100 | - | - |
| 2 | Good | 69-79,9 | 11 | 40.74 % |
| 3 | Fair | 60-68,9 | 16 | 59.26 % |
| 4 | Poor | 49 – 59,9 | - | - |
| 5 | Very Poor | <49 | - | - |
| Total | | | 27 | 100 % |

In the activities leading up to the cycle, CTL has not been utilized to enhance students' speaking abilities. The teaching and learning process relies on traditional methods such as presenting information, providing examples, and evaluating students' speaking skills. It makes students feel bored and the teaching method used by lecturers in learning English so far is not attractive to most students (Lukman, 2024). Consequently, it is crucial to keep advancing integrative methods in educational materials and strategies so that the primary aim of English education extends beyond merely obtaining passing or failing grades. Instead, it should be reflected in students' social interaction habits in their daily lives. Nevertheless, this cannot be detached from all the previously described learning processes; it is essential to emphasize that fostering a love for learning is significantly more valuable than pressuring students to aspire to be top performers or achieve particular results or accomplishments (Lukman, 2024). The success of students who excel through such means is unlikely to be sustained over time.

Based on observational findings, students experience anxiety when attempting to communicate in English. They expressed that speaking is more challenging compared to other skills in the English subject due to their high school experiences which lacked speaking practice. In their previous schools, teachers did not motivate them to engage in speaking activities. Rather than focusing on speaking, the emphasis in English learning has been solely on achieving good grades through reading and writing. This situation leads students to feel less confident, results in minimal speaking practice, and contributes to a limited vocabulary. Thus, CTL is required to implement in developing students' speaking skills.

**Cycle 1**

In order to implement CTL in the first cycle, seven components of CTL were integrated into the teaching and learning activities, which include constructivism, inquiry, questioning, learning community, modeling, reflection, and authentic assessment. The first cycle started by ensuring that students had a shared understanding of the theme, allowing them the opportunity to explore it on their own. Next, the students were paired up. In these pairs, they were tasked

with creating a simple dialogue based on the assigned theme. They were given time to practice independently with their partners. Following their practice, the students took turns performing their dialogues in front of the class. If they encountered challenges with pronunciation, the lecturer provided assistance by offering corrections using an online dictionary. Through this speaking practice, assessments were then carried out to determine how effectively CTL could help students address their speaking difficulties and enhance their speaking skills.

Following the post-test in cycle 1, there was an enhancement in the students' scores, although nine students still fell short of the KKM. Nevertheless, the outcomes revealed that 66.67 % of the students attained scores classified as good and very good. This indicates that the implementation of CTL has a positive effect on improving students' speaking skills. The detailed scores are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. The Results of Post-Test Scores in Cycle 1**

| No | Category | Range Scores | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Very Good | 81-100 | 2 | 7.41 % |
| 2 | Good | 69-80 | 16 | 59.26 % |
| 3 | Fair | 60-68,9 | 9 | 33.33 % |
| 4 | Poor | 49 – 59,9 | - | - |
| 5 | Very Poor | <49 | - | - |
| Total | | | 27 | 100 % |

Based on the findings from the interview, students expressed increased enthusiasm for participating in the teaching and learning process because it allows them to engage in more precise speaking practices. Additionally, they can engage with partners who assist in enhancing their speaking abilities. Students mentioned that learning within a real-world hospitality context helps them expand their vocabulary and boosts their confidence to attempt speaking. A key factor that contributes to students' willingness to try is that lecturers serve as facilitators and role model in speaking, especially when students encounter challenges in pronouncing words or sentences in English during dialogue creation. (Rofikoh et al., 2020) stated that students expressed that they enjoyed learning English with the learning method that had been implemented and could increase students' motivation in learning English. Students became accustomed to pronouncing simple conversational words or sentences in English.

Despite an increase observed in cycle 1, the study's target of 80% of students improving their speaking skill scores was not met. As a result, the cycle was extended to strive for this goal. In cycle 1, only 66.67% of students achieved the KKM. Analyzing the results from the pre-test, it was evident that students' speaking abilities had improved by 25.93% in cycle 1.

This indicates that CTL can motivate students to enhance their speaking skills through a more engaging and enjoyable learning experience.

**Cycle 2**

In the second cycle, the learning activities are conducted by repeating the methods used in the first cycle. The distinction in cycle 2 lies in the theme being explored. Students are provided with the chance to develop their speaking skills. They are encouraged to create dialogues with various partners. This approach is informed by the reflections made during the first cycle. Three groups have been reorganized because their initial composition was not effective and hindered collaboration in developing the assigned dialogues. The groups have been rearranged based on their speaking skills, mixing students with higher abilities with those who have lower abilities. This is designed to encourage collaboration, allowing students to assist each other in mastering the prepared dialogues. Following this, students are instructed to practice the dialogues they have created through live demonstrations, simulating the experience of serving guests at a hotel. The results of cycle 2 can be seen in the following table.

**Table 3. The Results of Post-Test Scores in Cycle 2**

| No | Category | Range Scores | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Very Good | 81-100 | 8 | 29.63 % |
| 2 | Good | 69-80 | 18 | 66.67 % |
| 3 | Fair | 60-68,9 | 1 | 3.70 % |
| 4 | Poor | 49 – 59,9 | - | - |
| 5 | Very Poor | <49 | - | - |
| Total | | | 27 | 100 % |

Based on Table 3, it can be seen that students' speaking scores are highly increased. A total of 96.30% of students attained scores above the KKM, with only one student receiving a score of 68. This indicates that Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) can serve as an effective alternative teaching strategy to enhance the speaking abilities of hospitality students. The remarkable increase of 29.63% in scores from cycle 1 to cycle 2 demonstrates that experiential learning can boost students' motivation to improve their speaking skills. Furthermore, this approach allows students the opportunity to actively engage and tackle the challenges they encounter during the learning experience. This aligns with the findings of research by (Intan, 2024) which suggests that there are three key reasons why CTL is beneficial for enhancing student learning outcomes. First, it enables students to actively participate in the learning process, enhancing their understanding and skills. Second, the practical application of CTL assists students in addressing their challenges and discovering appropriate solutions.

Lastly, CTL encourages students to independently seek answers and solutions, fostering critical and creative thinking.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The outcomes of cycle 2 have achieved the intended objective in the study, where 96.30% of students exceeded the minimum competency standard (KKM), which indicates that Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) has successfully enhanced the speaking abilities of students. By applying CTL as a learning approach in the Hospitality English course, students are able to engage more actively in their learning process. Moreover, students take on a central role in their education, reducing their reliance solely on lecturers or the teaching materials provided in class. There are several benefits that can be considered when implementing CTL, including increased involvement from students, practical learning experiences (specifically tailored to the context of serving guests at a hotel), and enhanced collaboration and problem-solving skills among students.

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