

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

English is widely recognized as an international language that plays an important role in various aspects of life, including education, technology, economy, and global communication. In the era of globalization, English proficiency has become an essential competence that individuals need in order to participate actively in the global community. It functions not only as a means of communication but also as a tool for accessing information, expanding knowledge, and improving competitiveness in the job market (Datu, 2024). Therefore, English language learning at all levels of education has a strategic role in developing students' communicative competence in line with global demands.

Based on the EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) 2025/2026 report, Indonesia is ranked 80 out of 116 countries with a score of 471, which is categorized as low proficiency. This ranking indicates that English proficiency in Indonesia is still relatively behind compared to several countries where English is used as a second language. In this context, the use of English in Indonesia is generally limited to certain situations, especially in higher

education environments and specific professional contexts (Wahyuni et al., 2025). As a result, English has not yet fully become part of students' daily communication practices, making opportunities to use the language directly outside the classroom very limited (Yuliafasyah, 2025). This condition indicates the need to strengthen approaches that can provide wider opportunities for students to actively use English in various situations, so that it can bridge the gap between the objectives of English learning and the reality of its use in the classroom (Akhyar et al. 2026).

The importance of effective communication is also emphasized in Islamic education. Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala says in QS. Al-Ahzab verse 70:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا

This verse emphasizes that good communication is not only related to the ability to deliver messages, but also includes accuracy, clarity, and truthfulness in conveying them. Thus, the development of English communication skills should not only focus on linguistic aspects, but also on the ability to use language effectively and appropriately in various situations (Abdillah et al., 2025). However, the problems in English language learning become more complex when it is related to vocational education, particularly in Vocational High Schools (SMK). SMK students are prepared to enter the workforce after graduation, so they are required to have practical skills relevant to industrial needs. In this context, English learning in SMK should not only

focus on mastering linguistic theory, but also facilitate students in developing applicable and contextual communication skills in accordance with workplace demands.

At SMK Negeri 2 Banjarmasin, English communication skills are one of the essential competencies that students need to master as preparation for facing increasingly competitive job market demands. This competence does not only include linguistic knowledge, but also the ability to use English actively, functionally, and contextually in various communicative situations. However, based on preliminary observation conducted by the researcher on October 23, 2025, the teaching and learning process in the classroom still faces several significant challenges. Most students experience difficulties in using English actively; they tend to be passive, lack confidence, and are not fully involved in communicative activities during classroom learning. This condition shows that the learning process has not yet fully provided sufficient interaction opportunities for students to develop their communication skills optimally.

Although the curriculum and syllabus of English learning have directed the use of a communicative approach that emphasizes English as a means of communication in the learning process, there is still a gap between instructional planning and classroom implementation. On the other hand, contextual factors such as students' prior knowledge, learning motivation, classroom environment, and limited learning facilities also influence students'

participation in learning activities. Active student involvement is one of the key elements in developing communication skills, especially in foreign language learning. Therefore, English learning requires not only good planning, but also adaptive, flexible, and responsive implementation to real classroom conditions, so that it can accommodate students' learning needs more optimally.

This principle is in line with the perspective of Islamic education which emphasizes the importance of delivering knowledge wisely, appropriately, and in accordance with the conditions of the learners. Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala says in QS. An-Nahl verse 125:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ

This verse emphasizes that in the process of delivering knowledge, including English language teaching, a wise approach that suits students' conditions is required. Therefore, teachers are not only required to design good learning plans, but also to implement them flexibly and adaptively according to students' needs and characteristics so that learning objectives can be achieved optimally (Uctuvia et al., 2025). Therefore, a learning approach is needed that can accommodate students' active involvement while also providing opportunities for them to use language in real communicative contexts. In this regard, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is considered as one of the relevant approaches in English language learning (Asmadewi, 2025). This approach emphasizes the use of language as a means of communication through

various interactive activities that actively involve students. Through communication practice activities such as role play, group discussion, information gap, simulation, and dialogue, students are given opportunities to use English in meaningful contexts, so that they not only understand linguistic aspects but also are able to apply them in more real communicative situations (Alfian et al., 2026).

Previous research conducted by Asmadewi (2025) shows that the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in EFL contexts can improve students' speaking fluency through communicative activities such as authentic tasks, meaningful interaction, and collaborative learning. These findings emphasize that CLT provides wider space for students to use language actively in more natural and meaningful situations. In line with this, Siregar et al. (2025) also found that CLT is able to create a communicative and interactive learning environment, while also increasing students' participation and confidence through activities such as role play, group discussion, and dialogue. These findings indicate that communicative activities play an important role in encouraging student involvement in English learning processes. In addition, Yuliafasyah & Mandarani (2025) revealed that English learning in EFL contexts still faces various challenges, such as low student motivation, limited exposure to English outside the classroom, and lack of learning facilities. These conditions show that the effectiveness of English learning is not only

determined by the teaching approach used, but is also strongly influenced by contextual factors in the learning environment, including the teacher's role in managing classroom activities.

Although these studies have confirmed the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in improving students' communication skills, most of them still focus on learning outcomes such as speaking ability improvement, students' perceptions, and general implementation challenges of CLT. Studies that specifically examine communication practice activities used by teachers and how these activities are implemented in real English learning processes covering listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, especially in vocational school (SMK) contexts, are still relatively limited. This condition indicates a research gap that needs to be further investigated in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of communicative-based English learning practices in the classroom.

Based on this research gap, it is crucial to conduct this study at SMK Negeri 2 Banjarmasin, focusing on examining the types of communication practice activities used in the English Club. This program serves as one of the school's strategic efforts to prepare vocational students for the workforce by improving their English communication skills. This study also aims to investigate how these communication activities are implemented in the English Club learning process. Furthermore, this research is directed to explore how

these communication activities contribute to students' engagement in English language learning. Accordingly, this study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of communicative-based English teaching practices and contribute to improving the quality of English learning through English Club activities in vocational high schools.

B. Definition of Key Terms

1. Communication Practice Activities

Communication practice activities refer to various classroom activities designed to encourage students to use English actively in meaningful communication. These activities include role play, group discussion, information gap, dialogue, and other interactive tasks used by teachers in the teaching and learning process.

2. Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) refers to the context of English language teaching in which English is not used as a daily communication language. In this study, EFL refers to English learning conducted in Indonesia, particularly at SMK Negeri 2 Banjarmasin.

3. Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach to language teaching that emphasizes the use of language as a tool

communication. In this study, CLT refers to the instructional approach used by teachers to develop students' communicative competence through interactive and meaningful classroom activities.

C. Research Questions

1. What types of communication practice activities are used by the English teacher in teaching English at SMK Negeri 2 Banjarmasin?
2. How are the communication practice activities implemented in the teaching and learning process of English at SMK Negeri 2 Banjarmasin?
3. How do the communication practice activities contribute to students' involvement in English learning in the EFL context at SMK Negeri 2 Banjarmasin?

D. Objectives of Study

1. To identify the types of communication practice activities used by the English teacher in teaching English at SMK Negeri 2 Banjarmasin.
2. To describe how the communication practice activities are implemented in the teaching and learning process of English at SMK Negeri 2 Banjarmasin.
3. To find out the contribution of communication practice activities to students' involvement in English learning in the EFL context at SMK Negeri 2 Banjarmasin.

E. Significance of Study

1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the development of knowledge in English language teaching, particularly related to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The findings of this study can enrich the understanding of how communication practice activities are implemented in EFL classrooms, especially in vocational school contexts. In addition, this study may serve as a reference for further research related to communicative approaches in language learning.

2. Practical Significance

a. For English Teachers

For English teachers, the findings of this study are expected to provide insights into various communication practice activities that can be applied in English language teaching. These activities may help teachers to create more interactive, communicative, and engaging classroom environments, as well as improve students' participation and communication skills.

b. For Students

For students, this study is expected to help them become more active and confident in using English in classroom communication. Through communication practice activities, students are expected to

have more opportunities to practice English in meaningful contexts, which may improve their speaking ability and overall involvement in learning activities.

c. For Other Researchers

For other researchers, this study is expected to serve as a reference for conducting further research related to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and communication practice activities in EFL classrooms, especially in vocational school contexts.