

Individual, Pair and Group EFL Activities for Aviation Students at a Thai University: A Closer Look at Language Achievement and Attitudes

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Abstract

For successful English language communication, EFL students are not only required to have effective language skills for the workplace, but also be able to use the language socially. This study aims to 1) examine student progress in language achievement in the airline context and 2) to investigate student attitudes towards the use of CLT activities in developing English communication skills. The participants were 27 EFL students from one public university in Thailand. The data were collected quantitatively from a language achievement test in the airline context and from a questionnaire. SPSS was used to analyze the data to determine mean scores and standard deviations. The findings from a paired t-test revealed significant differences between the pre-test and the post-test scores at the .05 confidence level. Specifically, the students who engaged in CLT activities had a better understanding of English used in the airline context compared to those who did not, showing marked improvement in vocabulary skills, colloquial language ability and grammatical competency. Furthermore,

	the results from the questionnaire reflected that students in the study viewed CLT activities (i.e., individual, pair and group activities) as a productive method for developing their English communication skills in the airline context. As a result, students who engage in CLT activities gained a better understanding of English compared to those who did not.
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Introduction

Numerous past studies have looked at the effects of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach on English language learning. For example, in a study led by AL-Garni and Almuhammardi (2019) employing CLT activities, students' communicative abilities were seen to improve when a problem-solving, interviewing, or role-playing pedagogy was used. These activities were classified into two types: pair and group activities. The results did not compare the results between pair and group activities, but did demonstrate that students improved their speaking skills in areas of pronunciation, accent, vocabulary use, fluency and accuracy via CLT activities. Kaweera et al. (2019) further discussed how individual, pair and group activities could support EFL students' practical skills, including those of writing, thinking, participation and communication in distinct ways.

Undeniably, CLT has been used extensively in English language learning and teaching and it has had a significant impact on the development of communication skills among EFL students. Listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are crucial for communicating in global communities, especially across diverse industries such as hotel and tourism, education, and aviation. In this regard, it is important for EFL students intending to work in such fields to develop an interest in improving their English communication skills so that they may deepen their knowledge and be ready for potential careers where English is relevant.

Despite its importance, many studies have found Thai students in higher education face problems in developing their English communication skills (Boonpanya & Pojchanaphong, 2018; Lalrozari & Fonjiachaleke, 2018). Some difficulties in English language learning stem from the teaching methods used, personal background, and the surrounding environment (Lalrozari & Fonjiachaleke, 2018). Therefore,

teachers should ensure they give clear and instruction to avoid any confusion in the language learning process (West, 2016) to overcome such impediments. Designing CLT activities that use authentic content and promote student-centered learning in autonomous learning environments are also important. These factors provide greater opportunity for students to develop their English communication skills more readily.

In the aviation industry, communication skills are of vital importance. Activities such as handling passenger check-in, food and beverage services, and flight announcements involve interactions with international co-workers and travelers. Without clear and effective communication, misunderstandings can easily develop into potentially grave aviation hazards. To this end, the CLT activities utilized in this study seek to ascertain if individual, pair and group activities can help students make progress in their overall language achievement while also strengthening their English communication skills in various airline-related situations. Specifically, such development would mean that students should have both grammatical knowledge and communicative proficiency (Nunan & Lamb, 1996) which includes the ability to use language logically and appropriately (Canale & Swain, 1980; Mede & Dikilitas, 2015). In relation to the current study, the students would better grasp how to apply their English communication skills in various facets of airline services effectively, ultimately supporting their potential future careers in the industry.

Literature Review

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach was chosen for this study as it has been widely used in diverse settings for developing student communicative abilities (Masoudzadeh & Lahijani, 2021; Toro et al., 2018). Students are considered to have achieved *communicative competence* if they have sufficient knowledge of grammar to apply vocabulary, to create sentences, and to produce accurate and appropriate pronunciation in various social contexts. Furthermore, students are said to be able to communicate successfully when they can select words, phrases and sentences to convey meanings appropriately in both speaking and writing modes. This includes being able to effectively use verbal and non-verbal strategies to solve unexpected problems (Canale & Swain, 1980). With the core of CLT processes aimed at

developing students' communicative abilities (Phothongsunan, 2020; Savignon, 2002), the CLT approach is considered appropriate for providing fundamental skills that lead to the development of the four competences for successful communication.

Moreover, CLT is also considered to be a student-centered approach (Eisenring & Margana, 2019) that promotes student participation in classroom activities. Through CLT, students take an active learning role, which promotes the development of effective communicative abilities (Rouf & Sultana, 2018). Under this approach, teachers act as facilitators and are required to organize communicative activities similar to that of real world situations (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011) so that the students have opportunities to practice their communication skills productively. These findings are supported by Brown (2007), and highlight how CLT fosters meaningful communication in authentic environments. Furthermore, CLT has been found to also activate classroom interactions by developing EFL students to become better learners without adhering to rote methods characteristic of traditional language learning methods (Toro et al., 2018).

Many types of CLT activities were considered for this study. Beginning with individual activities, a shadowing technique was used, as this technique could not only be applied to any activity type but also heighten multiple skills simultaneously (Devon, 2019). Several previous studies have also used this technique to strengthen students' communicative abilities with positive results (Junipisa & Aristana, 2021; Yavari & Shafiee, 2019). Through individual activities, students in this study were able to experience the personal accountability involved in producing announcements on board flights, and develop their learning autonomy.

For the pair activity, students were assigned to write and present dialogue conversations about checking in at an airport. Through this type of activities, students improve their English communication skills in areas involving vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and confidence (Huriyah et al., 2020). Moreover, relationships between students and their partners can be positively forged as students have multiple opportunities to work on activities with each other (Kaweera et al., 2019).

Lastly, in the group activities, students were assigned to do role plays about food and beverage services according to given key language features. Role plays can reinforce student communicative abilities found in real-life situations without pressure (Rojas & Villafuerte, 2018;

Siraranghom, 2020). As a result, students can feel relaxed and confident in communicating in English without reservation (AL-Garni & Almuhammardi, 2019).

Language skills cover the four basic domains of speaking, listening, reading and writing. These skills allow people to share and exchange messages through verbal and non-verbal features (Moradi, 2020). For EFL students seeking a career which requires the use of English, these are essential communication skills, as they would help support their future careers. In their personal and professional lives, students who have good communication skills will be able to express and clarify their thoughts, which will facilitate developing relationships (Sabbah et al., 2020), not to mention providing opportunities to enhance their work performance. With improved job performance as a result of effective communication skills, students can get promoted and better paid, bolstering their livelihood.

Professionals who work in the airline business in particular need to have effective communication skills as they often have to communicate with international travelers both on board the plane and on the ground. As a result, aviation professionals should place special importance on these skills because the way they communicate could affect the image they project and customer relationships (Pupphavesa, 2017). In terms of English communication skills, a study led by Srisang (2017) acknowledged that there are two major problems regarding communication in English among airline staff. The first problem concerns listening skills, and covers three areas including fast native speaking rate, various English accents, and unknown English words. For speaking skills, the airline staff generally have problems emerging from grammatical and lexical contexts and from the use of technical terms. Therefore, CLT activities that highlight English communication skills and give students opportunities to learn and practice their skills in various airline situations would help them communicate more effectively in those situations.

As mentioned earlier, the CLT approach has been widely used in language learning and teaching for developing students' communicative competence. However, few studies by scholars (Pupphavesa, 2017; Srisang, 2017) have surveyed the needs and problems within English communication skills in the aviation context. Therefore, the various CLT activities developed in this study, consisting of individual, pair and group activities, are intended to not only help EFL students gain better

understanding of the English language used in the airline context, but also to reinforce their English communication skills more broadly. As a result, students in such EFL classrooms considering careers in the airline industry would have the applicable skills that would best support their career in the future.

Research Questions

The present study aims to investigate the effectiveness of CLT activities on both the progress in language achievement and specifically in the development of English communication skills among EFL students in regards to the airline context. The research questions are specified below.

1. To what extent can individual, pair and group activities improve student English language use in the airline context?
2. What are EFL students' attitudes towards the use of individual, pair and group activities for developing their English communication skills in the airline context?

Scope of the Study

This study on CLT activities, including individual, pair and group activities, examines whether such activities can help students improve their understanding of the English language used in the airline context. It covers grammatical knowledge, lexical knowledge and social use of language, as well as overall English communication skills. The content covered in the activities was derived from the students' regular course books relevant to the airline context. Examples of the activities are detailed below.

Table 1

The Details of CLT activities

Types of CLT Activities	Content	Characteristics of the Activities	Functions	Features
Individual	Announcements on board the plane	Shadowing Technique	- Making announcements to prepare for descent and arrival, descent,	Passive voice structures

			landing, taxiing and arrival	and word meanings
	For example: Please make sure <i>your seat belt is fastened, and all electronic devices are turned off.</i>			
Pair	Checking in at the airport	English Conversation Dialogue	- Asking for ticket and passport - Dealing with luggage - Asking for the airport tax - Requesting a seating preference	Verb types, verb forms and question words
	For example: <i>Can I have your ticket and passport, please?</i> <i>Do you have any luggage to check with you?</i>			
Group	Food and beverage service	Role play	- Making an offer of dishes and desserts - Offering a choice of dishes and desserts - Checking if the passenger is enjoying the meal - Asking why the passenger hasn't eaten	Verb types, question words and the phrases 'there is/are'
	For example: <i>Would you like some salad, sir?</i> <i>Is there anything wrong, madam?</i>			

Research Methods

This study employed the one single group pre and post-test design as this design was frequently used to determine the impact of a treatment on a formed group of participants under the same conditions. The participants were assessed before and after applying the treatment (Allen, 2017). The study examines student progress in language achievement in the airline context, covering grammar, vocabulary, and the social use of language. Additionally, the study also investigates student attitudes towards the use of individual, pair and group activities and whether they are seen as effective methods for developing English communication skills.

Participants

To recruit participants for this study, an intact group was selected. The participants were third-year students from the Department of English for International Communication in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at a public university in Thailand enrolled in a compulsory course entitled, 'English for Airline Business' in the second semester of the 2021 academic year. The inclusion criteria were both male and female students aged between 18 and 21 years old, and who volunteered to participate in the study. Students who were unable to complete all of the activities included in the study were excluded. Additionally, students were able to withdraw from the study at any time if it became inconvenient for them to continue with the activities.

Instruments

In this study, the research instruments consisted of a language achievement test for the airline context, covering grammar, vocabulary and the social use of language, as well as a questionnaire surveying students' attitudes towards the use of individual, pair and group activities for developing English communication skills in the airline context. The quantitative and qualitative data are described below.

The Language Achievement Test for the Airline Context

The students were given a language achievement pre-test and post-test for the airline context before and after providing individual, pair and group activities. Scores of both tests were then compared to measure the increase of student understanding of the English used in the airline industry. The content of the test was adapted from three sources relevant to airlines. These titles include "English in airline business" published by Chulalongkorn University Press (Parasakul, 2010), "English for cabin crew" published by Oxford University Press (Ellis & Landsford, 2015) and "English for airline personnel" published by Kasetsart University Press (Hitakorn, 2019). Three topics in the airline context were selected to test the students' knowledge and understanding. These topics include making announcements on an aircraft, checking travelers in at the airport, and

providing food and beverage services. The linguistic functions and features of the test are explained below.

Table 2

The Linguistic Functions and Features of the Language Achievement Test

Aspects	Topics	Functions	Features
Grammar	- Checking in at the airport - Announcements on board the plane	- Asking for ticket and passport - Dealing with luggage - Asking for the airport tax - Requesting a seating preference - Making announcements	Verb types, Verb forms, question words and passive voice
Vocabulary	Announcements on board the plane	- Making announcements	Word meanings
Social use of language	Food and beverage service	1) Making an offer of dishes and desserts 2) Offering a choice of dishes and desserts 3) Checking if the passenger is enjoying the meal 4) Asking why the passenger hasn't eaten	Verb types and question words

The test was in the form of multiple choice with mixed exercises including gap-filling, cloze and dialogue exercises. With a total of 30 items covering grammar (10 items), vocabulary (10 items) and the social use of language (10 items), these questions were designed to assess language knowledge and skills. For the reliability values and the validity claims of the test, an index of item-objective congruency (IOC) form was used, and the contents of the test were evaluated and validated by three scholars from university English departments prior to conducting the study.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used to investigate the students' attitudes towards the use of individual, pair and group activities for developing English communication skills in the airline context. The questionnaire was designed according to the theoretical framework of the CLT approach addressing the four English communication skills (i.e., speaking, listening, reading and writing skills) to assess communicative competence. The questionnaire was distributed to students after they took the language achievement test for the airline context. The questionnaire was divided into three main parts: students' general information, student attitudes towards the use of CLT activities categorized by individual, pair and group activities, and open-ended questions about the skills students felt they had most improved as a result of participating in individual, pair and group activities. The questionnaire also looked at the major obstacles to developing English communication skills. Moreover, the content in the questionnaire was assessed and validated by three scholars from university English departments using the IOC process for reliability and validity values.

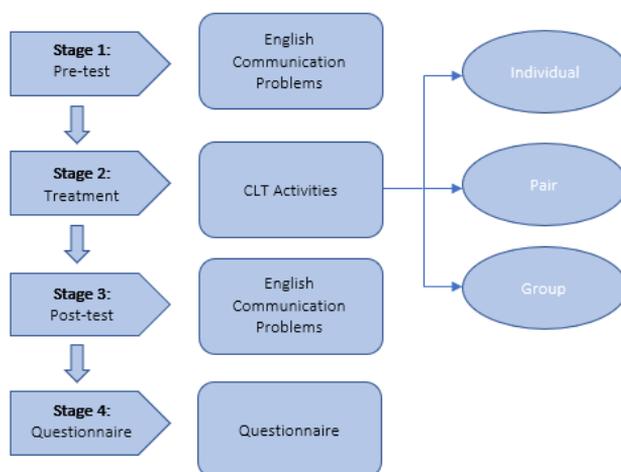
Data Collection

The data were collected using two instruments, namely the language achievement test for the airline context and the questionnaire surveying students' attitudes toward the use of individual, pair and group activities for developing English communication skills in the airline context.

Initially, the students took the pre-test to determine their current English ability in the airline context. Then, individual, pair and group activities were introduced to the students as a treatment of the study. After that, the students were asked to complete the post-test followed by the aforementioned questionnaire.

The procedure was carried out over four weeks and organized into four stages (i.e., pre-test, treatment, post-test and questionnaire) as displayed in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

The Procedure for Data Collection**Data Analysis**

A paired simple t-test and the SPSS program were collectively employed to calculate the results from the language achievement test for the airline context and the questionnaire for surveying students' attitudes.

For quantitative data, a paired t-test was employed to analyze the results of the language achievement pre-tests and the post-tests. Then, both the pre-test and post-test data were compared to see if there were any significant differences between the two. After conducting the CLT activities as a treatment, the results were assessed to evaluate the effectiveness of individual, pair and group activities on student language achievement.

Apart from a paired simple t-test, the SPSS program was utilized to analyze the results of the students' responses on the questionnaire. The students' attitudes towards the use of CLT activities were assessed based on the 5-point Likert scale. The interpretation of the students' attitudes towards the use of CLT activities was based on information obtained from the 5-point Likert scale ratings. This scale is considered appropriate for exploring students' attitudes as it is widely employed by researchers

(Thedpitak & Somphong, 2021). The scale includes five degrees, namely, strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree, and is supported by (Sözen & Güven, 2019). A degree value higher than 3.00 was determined as 'positive' in terms of students' attitudes towards the use of CLT activities (Alkurdi & Alghazo, 2021).

Results

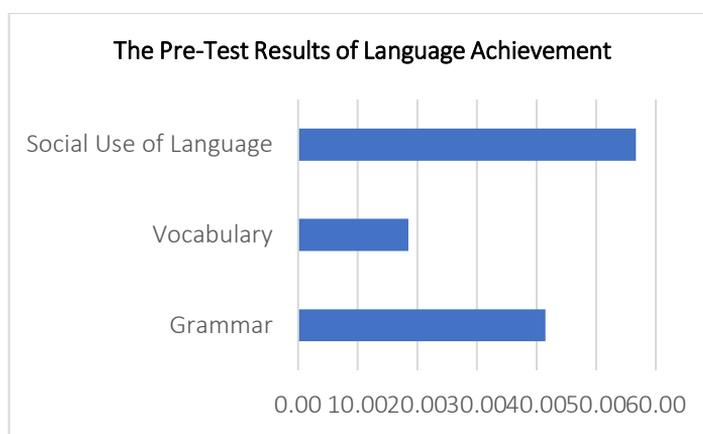
This research presents two major results of the study, namely, student language achievement in the airline context (with focus on grammar, vocabulary and the social use of language), and student attitudes towards the use of individual, pair and group activities for developing English communication skills. The results of the study as they pertain to the research questions are addressed below.

RQ1: To what extent can individual, pair and group activities improve student English language use in the airline context?

First, the language achievement pre-test showed results in regards to grammatical and lexical difficulties, but not in the social use of language as illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 2

The Pre-Test Results of Language Achievement



In Figure 2, it can be clearly seen that the students encountered problems in vocabulary and grammar. The percentages of these total

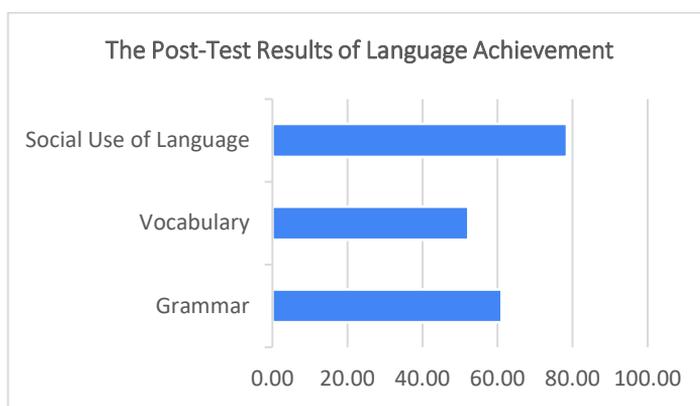
scores show that the students had problems in vocabulary the most (18.52%), followed by grammar (41.48%). Even though most students passed the test with respect to the social use of language, the percentage of their total score was only 56.67% out of 100%.

When these three components were evaluated by the rater, the overall results showed that only 8 out of 27 students passed the test. In this regard, it is clear that the EFL students had problems in grammar, vocabulary and in the social use of language. Consequently, these three elements were determined to be the key area of focus.

After the students finished individual, pair and group activities, they took the language achievement post-test, which had the same format as the pre-test. The findings show that the students increased their understanding in all aspects as displayed below.

Figure 3

The Post-Test Results of Language Achievement



The results in Figure 3 reveal that the students had gained a better understanding of the social use of language the most (78.52%), followed by grammar (61.11%) and vocabulary (52.22%), respectively. However, most students were quite weak in vocabulary, scoring just over 50% on average. Thus, it can be summarized that the group activity, based mainly on the use of social language, had the greatest impact, followed by pair and individual activities, which focused more on grammar and vocabulary. To summarize, the students who used their linguistic knowledge gained from the group activity performed better on the language achievement

test than those who engaged in both pair and individual activities. The individual activity showed the least improvement.

To clearly tabulate the results of the students' improvement, the scores of both tests were compared and analyzed by a paired simple t-test as described in Table 3 below.

Table 3

The Pre-test and Post-test Results of Language Achievement

Pair	Pre-test and Post-test	N	Paired Differences							
			\bar{X}	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
						Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-total and Post-total	27	-7.518	4.246	.8171	-9.198	-3.838	-9.201	26	.000
Pair 2	Pre-grammar and Post-grammar	27	-1.963	2.084	0.401	-2.788	-1.138	-4.893	26	.000
Pair 3	Pre-vocabulary and Post-vocabulary	27	-3.370	2.169	0.417	-4.228	-2.512	-8.075	26	.000
Pair 4	Pre-social use of language and post-social use of language	27	-2.185	2.149	0.414	-3.035	-1.335	-5.284	26	.000

*P < .05

From Table 3, it can be seen that the paired simple t-test revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the pre-test and post-test scores in all areas of English difficulties: grammar, vocabulary and the social use of language at the .05 confidence level ($t = -9.201$, $df = 26$, $p < .05$). As is apparent from Table 1, the students had improved their scores in vocabulary the most ($\bar{X} = -3.370$, $S.D. = 2.169$, $t = -8.075$), followed by the social use of language ($\bar{X} = -2.185$, $S.D. = 2.149$, $t = -5.284$) and lastly their usage of grammar ($\bar{X} = -1.963$, $S.D. = 2.084$, $t = -4.893$). At the same

time, the comparison between the pre-test and post-test scores emphasizes the students' progress in their language achievement in the airline context as a total 21 out of 27 students passed the post-test. In this light, it could be said that individual, pair and group activities all increased the students' understanding of the English used in the airline context across vocabulary, the social use of language and grammar respectively. When looking at the levels of improvement, the individual activity showed the highest gains, followed by the group activity, and the pair activity mixed with the individual activity respectively. To clarify, the students' linguistic knowledge obtained from the individual activity to perform in the language achievement test was better than the group activity and the pair activity mixed with the individual activity.

RQ2: What are EFL students' attitudes towards the use of individual, pair and group activities in the airline context for developing English communication skills?

The results from the questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale reflect the students' attitudes towards the use of individual, pair and group activities for developing English communication skills. The students were invited to rate their opinion of the effectiveness of each type of activity as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4

The Students' Attitudes towards the Use of CLT Activities

No.	CLT Activities	\bar{X}	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1	Individual	3.94	0.59	Agree
2	Pair	4.19	0.51	Agree
3	Group	3.85	0.73	Agree

From the above table, the results show that the mean scores of all types of CLT activities were above 3.41, which is regarded as 'agree'. The highest mean score went to the pair activity (4.19), followed by the individual activity (3.94) and the group activity (3.85), respectively. As such, it can be inferred that the students felt that all CLT activities were positive and could increase their English communication skills in the airline context.

When each type of CLT activity is considered and examined by item, it provides a revealing overview of the students' development of English communication skills as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5

The Students' Attitudes towards the Use of CLT Activities

No.	Statements	\bar{X}	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Individual				
1	I think the activity helps me speak English more fluently.	4.10	0.79	Agree
2	I think the activity helps me speak English more correctly.	4.10	0.72	Agree
3	I think the activity helps me listen to the pronunciation of English speakers better.	3.85	0.81	Agree
4	I think the activity helps me understand the meaning of what I hear better.	3.95	0.83	Agree
5	I think the activity helps me add vocabulary about the airline business.	4.10	0.79	Agree
6	I think the activity helps me become familiar with groups of vocabulary used in the airline business.	4.10	0.72	Agree
7	I think the activity helps me write grammatically correct sentences.	3.60	0.75	Agree
8	I think the activity helps me use vocabulary in the airline business properly in writing.	3.75	0.91	Agree
Pair				
1	I think the activity helps me speak English more fluently.	4.25	0.79	Strongly Agree
2	I think the activity helps me speak English more correctly.	4.10	0.64	Agree
3	I think the activity helps me listen to the pronunciation of English speakers better.	4.30	0.57	Strongly Agree
4	I think the activity helps me understand the meaning of communication easier from listening.	4.20	0.70	Agree

5	I think the activity helps me add more vocabulary about the airline business.	4.35	0.67	Strongly Agree
6	I think the activity helps me become more familiar with groups of vocabulary used in the airline business.	4.20	0.70	Agree
7	I think the activity helps me write grammatically correct sentences.	3.95	0.60	Agree
8	I think the activity helps me use vocabulary about the airline business properly in writing.	4.15	0.59	Agree
Group				
1	I think the activity helps me speak English more fluently.	3.95	0.89	Agree
2	I think the activity helps me speak English more correctly.	3.90	0.97	Agree
3	I think the activity helps me listen to the pronunciation of English speakers better.	3.85	0.81	Agree
4	I think the activity helps me understand the meaning of what I hear better.	3.85	0.75	Agree
5	I think the activity helps me add more vocabulary about the airline business.	3.80	0.77	Agree
6	I think the activity helps me become familiar with groups of vocabulary used in the airline business.	3.90	0.72	Agree
7	I think the activity helps me write grammatically correct sentences.	3.80	0.77	Agree
8	I think the activity helps me use vocabulary about the airline business properly in writing.	3.75	0.79	Agree

The results from Table 5 show that the students agreed with all statements regarding the individual activity. The students acknowledged that the individual activity could reinforce their communication skills, especially in speaking and reading. This is demonstrated by the mean scores of the students' rating of speaking skills (item 1 and 2) being equal to that of reading skills (item 5 & 6), which ranked the highest among the other four items (item 4, 3, 8 and 7). With reference to listening skills, the students felt that when they listened, the individual activity extended their understanding of communication meaning (item 4). Also, the mean score

of this item (3.95) was higher than item 3 (3.85), which shows that the students could listen to the English pronunciation of English speakers and understand it better (item 3). For writing skills, the students rated higher in agreement on item 8 than on item 7. The students felt that the individual activity could help them apply vocabulary in the airline context as far as writing properly (3.75), and that they could write grammatically correct sentences (3.60). Overall, it could be said that the students agreed that the individual activity was productive for developing English communication skills, especially in areas of speaking and reading followed by listening and writing domains, respectively.

With regard to the pair activity, the students rated 'strongly agree' for three items: 1, 3 and 5, with the highest mean score being for item 5 (4.35). The students had strongly felt that the pair activity helped them add more vocabulary in the airline context, and that they could listen to and understand the English pronunciation of the speakers more easily (4.30). Moreover, the students strongly believed that the pair activity had supported their speaking ability as it helped them to speak English more fluently (4.25). Considering the 'agree' attitudes, the students rated five items: 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8. Equal scores were given for items 4 and 6 at 4.20. The students revealed that the pair activity helped them catch the meanings of communication easier as a result of their familiarity of vocabulary groups that they had used in the airline context. The next highest scores were for item 8, followed by items 2 and 7, respectively. The students agreed that the pair activity helped them use vocabulary in writing appropriately (4.15), and that when they produced messages for communication, they felt that it enabled them to speak English more correctly (4.10) and to write more grammatically correct English sentences (3.95). As a result, it could be concluded that the pair activity was an effective activity for EFL students to improve their English communication skills. After each skill was compared, the results revealed that the skill with the greatest improvement was that of reading, followed by listening, speaking and writing skills, respectively.

Similarly, the above table also shows that the students felt that the group activity supported them in speaking more fluently, given that the highest mean score was item 1 (3.95), followed by items 2 and 6, which presented the same results with mean scores of 3.90. The students agreed that the group activity boosted their speaking ability as they could speak more accurately, and they also felt more familiar with the groups of

vocabulary used in the airline context. In addition, the students rated their agreement with the statements in items 3 and 4 equally at 3.85. When the students reflected upon their listening ability, they discovered that they became better listeners, were more accurate with their English pronunciation, and could understand meanings being communicated much more clearly. As for items 5 and 7, the equal mean scores of 3.80 demonstrated that students jointly agreed that the group activity could increase their vocabulary size as well as their ability to create grammatically correct sentences in the airline context. Lastly, the mean score of item 8 showed that the group activity assisted the students in writing by being able to apply vocabulary appropriately in the airline context. Therefore, it can be concluded the students held positive attitudes towards the group activities used in the study, and that the group activities could enhance the students' English communication skills in relation to speaking the most, followed by listening and reading with the same mean scores, and writing, respectively.

Similarly, the students also rated their positive agreement with the statements on the questionnaire about the CLT activity environment, as displayed in Table 6 below.

Table 6

The Results of the Students' Attitudes towards the CLT Activity Environment

No.	Statements	\bar{X}	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1	I think CLT activities support students' participation in learning.	4.00	0.79	Agree
2	I think CLT activities promote interaction between students and students and teacher and students.	3.95	0.76	Agree
3	I think CLT activities support students in self-learning as students can practice communication skills by themselves.	4.10	0.85	Agree
4	I think CLT activities extend my English knowledge and application in airline business.	4.05	0.60	Agree
5	I think the results of learning English through CLT activities can be	3.95	0.83	Agree

applied in real life situations,
especially in the airline business.

The results from Table 6 point out that the students had positive attitudes towards the CLT activity environment as the mean scores of their agreement were above 3.41. Particularly with item 3, the mean score ranked the highest compared to the other items ($\bar{X} = 4.10$). The students felt that CLT activities supported their autonomous learning as they were able to practice their communication skills by themselves. Item 4 ranked second with a mean score of 4.05. The students felt that CLT activities could extend their English knowledge and language ability in the airline context. Moreover, the students realized that CLT activities could allow them to participate in the instruction ($\bar{X} = 4.00$). The students also felt that CLT activities did not only facilitate their interactions with their peers, but also with their teachers ($\bar{X} = 3.95$). They considered CLT activities as effective methods that enabled them to use English communication skills in real life airline situations ($\bar{X} = 3.95$).

In addition, the open-ended questions provided the students' in-depth responses about their skills improvement as a result of CLT activities and the major obstacles to developing English communication skills. The overall results are summarized and described in Table 7 below.

Table 7

An Overview of the Responses to the Open-Ended Questions

Aspects	English Communication Skills			
	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Improving Skills	To be able to understand the conversation more easily	To be more confident in speaking English	To add more vocabulary and have better comprehension	To increase grammatical knowledge
Major Obstacles	Not acquainted with new vocabulary, sentences and pronunciation of the speakers	Lack confidence and interactions due to the COVID-19 pandemic	-	Be unable to create sentences for communication because of inadequate knowledge of grammar

The above table contains the results of responses to the open-ended questions on students' attitudes towards improving communication skills through CLT activities and the major obstacles reported by students in further developing their English communication skills. To understand the students' attitudes more clearly, two aspects are described in detail below.

The students' most improved skill after CLT activities

The students explained that the CLT activities helped them improve their overall English communication skills. In other words, they affirmed that the CLT activities provided opportunities for them to practice English in the airline context, especially in speaking and listening skills. The activities included listening to audio tracks and doing reading aloud exercises, which supported them in their speaking and listening abilities. In addition, when the students acquired extra vocabulary in the airline context, they felt more confident speaking English. They also felt the knowledge they had gained from the CLT activities also helped develop their critical thinking skills. In other respects, the students felt that the CLT activities helped them improve their grammar and reading skills. The activities also extended their vocabulary size, including specific terms in the airline context. They also had a greater appreciation of the importance of English for airline services.

The major obstacles for students in developing English communication skills

In regards to the major obstacles affecting the improvement of English communication skills, students stated that they felt unconfident and shy to speak English. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the students were not allowed to attend classes in person at their university for safety reasons. Unlike with face-to-face learning, they did not have physical interactions in classrooms, making it more difficult for them to understand and learn how to speak English in the airline context. The students also did not have opportunities to use their English skills to communicate with real foreigners. For listening skills, the students admitted that they were not well-acquainted with some of the vocabulary and sentences used. Many did not know the vocabulary before, not to mention having any

familiarity with the pronunciation such words, causing difficulties in grasping the meaning or responding to their interlocutors. With reference to writing, the students confessed that they were unable to create sentences for communication as they the lacked ability in grammar—an obvious problem. The students did not address the obstacles to acquiring better reading skills. They realized that they needed to learn and develop their communication skills more in order to be able to speak English more fluently and effectively.

Discussion

RQ1: To what extent can individual, pair and group activities promote student English language use in the airline context?

Difficulties in English language learning can be the result of many factors, from teaching methods, personal background, and the surrounding environments (Lalrozari & Fonjiachaleke, 2018). CLT activities were implemented as the teaching method in this study in the forms of individual, pair and group activities to ascertain to what extent these activities could improve student English language ability in the airline context. The results from the post-test indicate that student language achievement was improved due to the fact that individual, pair and group activities could help students overcome their problems in linguistic aspects while gaining a better understanding of the English language used in the airline context. For example, the students were better able to use the linguistic knowledge for social contexts gained from the group activity on food and beverage services, which showed the greatest improvement in the language achievement test. This was followed by improvements in grammar as a result of pair activity mixed with individual activities on topics related to checking-in and flight announcements. The vocabulary was developed from the individual activity on flight announcements. In this regard, it can be inferred that vocabulary is the most urgent problem for students, followed by grammar and the social use of language.

With respect to vocabulary, the students had lacked an understanding of word meanings for vocabulary in contexts involved with making announcements as they were unable to select the correct words in the texts correctly and meaningfully. Vocabulary is like the initial blocks for language learning. Without vocabulary, students are unable to use their linguistic knowledge to produce messages for communication as it is

the medium for bundling all parts of language (Richards, 2000), and required in the use of all English communication skills include speaking, listening, writing and reading as a composite (Kesmez, 2021). Thus, students must have a large vocabulary to be successful in language learning. They need to be able to utilize vocabulary in communication effectively. Similarly, with grammar, the students had problems with the use of verb forms and were unable to select auxiliary verbs or question words to form interrogative sentences accurately. They also struggled with problems involving passive voice in the checking-in and announcement-making contexts. This is the reason why grammatical problems have undeniably affected EFL students in their language learning to a large degree. Even though English grammar has been taught in EFL classroom for ages, it is still a major concern in English language learning and teaching, especially in writing. To explain further, EFL students often make numerous grammatical errors when they produce written messages, (Boonyarattanasoontorn, 2017; Kampookaew, 2020) as they lack the necessary grammar and vocabulary knowledge (Boonyarattanasoontorn, 2017). Grammar affects writing quality because it is a crucial factor for competent writing (Kampookaew, 2020). Therefore, if students had better grammar and vocabulary ability, it would lead to more effective communication skills (i.e., speaking, listening, reading and writing skills) which contribute to communicative competence (Shobikah, 2020). Even if students improve their linguistic knowledge in this aspect the most, most students still struggle with problems using English in social contexts. For example, some students are not able to select auxiliary verbs, WH-question words or other words needed to complete sentences correctly and properly. This struggle can be seen in the context of food and beverage services. Since communication is associated with social interaction, it is essential for EFL students to the necessary language skills for communication. They must have the linguistic knowledge be able to use language appropriately and politely to achieve communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980).

When the results from both tests were compared, it was found that the students improved their scores in vocabulary from individual activities the most, followed by gains in the social use of language as a result of pair activities mixed with individual activities on grammar. The individual activities demonstrated the highest level of student improvement among all linguistic aspects. To interpret, the students had a larger vocabulary

relating to the airline context, and they better understood the meanings of the words in given situations. They were able to select the most appropriate and polite words used for airline services. Even though grammar is often regarded as the most difficult skill for EFL students, their major grammatical problems were largely eliminated and resulted in positive outcomes. Therefore, the results attest to the fact that students may see improvements in vocabulary, in the social use of language and in grammar when there are individual, pair and group activities as intervention. The more activities that are introduced in classes, the more opportunities students have to practice and strengthen their English skills to more successfully achieve communicative competence.

RQ2: What are EFL students' attitudes towards the use of individual, pair and group activities in the airline context for developing English communication skills?

The results from the questionnaire revealed that the students considered individual pair and group activities as effective methods for improving their communication skills, including speaking, listening, reading and writing abilities. In the CLT activities, the students had opportunities to do various kinds of activities. The most effective activity rated by students was that of pair activities, followed by the individual and group activities, respectively. This is supported by Jatmiko (2017) whose study revealed that pair activities could improve students' speaking abilities in numerous aspects, including areas of fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and content. In pair activities, the students had opportunities to work on activities with their peers, which help forge positive relationships (Kaweera et al., 2019). These activities helped improve students' communicative performance in the airline context as well as their interactions among their peers and teachers. To this extent, communication skills can evolve considerably (Suryati, 2015). In a study by Suryati (2015), researchers found that through individual pair and group activities, students' learning autonomy was boosted. In other words, students become more responsible for their own learning, which is reinforced by their communicative ability.

Autonomous learning is a vital characteristic that has helped language learners become successful (Tuan, 2021). As CLT is an approach that focuses on student-centered learning (Eisenring & Margana, 2019), students also view individual pair and group activities as being able to

motivate them to engage in classroom activities. As a result, the students become more active in learning, so their English communication skills can be developed productively (Rouf & Sultana, 2018). In fact, the students in this study admitted that they gained more knowledge and ability in how to use English in the airline context from individual pair and group activities. It is clear that students can experience authentic language in classrooms similar to real situations (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011), which can contribute to successful language learning.

Conclusion

The present study has demonstrated that individual pair and group activities promote students' linguistic knowledge and understanding in the airline context as well as their overall communicative competence. With respect to linguistic knowledge, the individual activities helped the students improve their understanding in vocabulary the most. Additionally, the group activities developed the students' knowledge in the social use of language, and the pair activities mixed with the individual activities were able to largely eliminate the students' major grammatical errors in using English in the airline context. It is clear that the students made progress in their language achievement as they had better linguistic knowledge of the English language used in the airline context in all aspects. Students who have communicative ability which covers both lexical and linguistic knowledge (Shobikah, 2020), as well as the appropriate use of language in social contexts, are better able to achieve communicative competence (Mede & Dikilitas, 2015). As a result, teachers should foster positive attitudes and focus on pair activity first as this activity has shown the highest improvement among students in this study in regards to the airline context. Individual and group activities also showed measureable gains. Additionally, the language learning environment established through individual pair and group activities not only encourages students to work more collaboratively, but it also promotes interactions among peers and teachers (not to mention autonomous learning). Through these methods, CLT activities can increase students' linguistic knowledge in the airline context greatly. Furthermore, in this environment, students' awareness of the importance of learning English in the airline context may also be raised. Such learning promotes the utilization of English communication skills in real-life situations. As a result, EFL students can

have more effective language skills, becoming more ready for careers such as in the airline industry.

In the study, it was still unclear why the individual activity with a shadow technique improved the students' linguistic knowledge on vocabulary the most, while the students reported that the pair activity developed their English communication skill the most. These points could merit further investigation.

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