

Student's Attitudes towards Communicative Activities on EFL Student's Speaking Performance

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ABSTRACT

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Speaking proficiency is regarded as one of the essential language skills presumed successful when learners can use what they learn to communicate well. However, many English as a foreign language (EFL) students struggle to master this ability due to a lack of exposure to communication situations. The study aims to determine students' attitudes towards communication activities in the language learning process. This study was conducted with the participation of 21 grade 5 in Vinh Binh Primary School, located in Ben Tre province, to give the answers to the questionnaire with items about using communicative activities in the classroom to enhance students' speaking skills. The findings revealed that communicative activities had a considerable impact on improving experimental students' speaking performance. Moreover, students showed positive views on using communicative activities in their speaking classrooms.

Introduction

Language is an essential human communication tool. Speaking skills, on the other hand, demand the learners to participate in dialogues in which they become members, as opposed to writing, where each student can proceed alone, without disturbing their classmates, at their own pace (T. T. L. Tran, 2022). According to Harmer (1982), everything is 'communicative' nowadays. The use of language for thought and communication is the ultimate goal of language instruction. So the only way to effectively learn a language is to focus on the conversation. Learning a language becomes engaging for students and removes monotony through dialogue. Language structure is a determining factor, and communication is the capacity to convey ideas, views, and feelings through verbal or nonverbal cues. It also encourages two-way communication by being as compelling and straightforward as possible. These are two crucial factors that English learners need to focus on. However, in Vietnam's current English teaching context, there is still a heavy emphasis on grammar and vocabulary without focusing on communication. Speaking instruction and learning have received much attention from educators and students (Nguyen & Pham, 2022). We are all aware that education is a collaborative process and that collaboration is necessary for us to learn. Speaking ability is

crucial for pupils because English is the language of education. The students cannot communicate in this language in the classroom. In that situation, it is understandable that students will not feel confident or at ease speaking English in casual discussions outside the classroom. Therefore, students must practice and become proficient in speaking (Islam et al., 2022)

Studying for the final exam is the reality of most schools today because English is a compulsory subject, and most students learn to cope, not learn to use it. The teacher's teaching method only revolves around the problem of how to make students do their best on the exam. In English class, teachers only teach about English grammar, vocabulary, structures, and grammar formulas. Sometimes they also teach about stress, but they are not detailed and are primarily introduced briefly. As a severe consequence: most students cannot pronounce English words correctly and cannot communicate in English. Due to the heavy emphasis on grammar and vocabulary, a 45-minute lesson is not enough for teachers to teach other skills such as communication and listening. The world's most widely used official language is reportedly English. The language of international communication is English. Everyone should learn to speak English as a foreign language because speaking is the final spoken output of the learning process (T. H. T. Tran, 2022).

With the current state of practice, teaching methods that focus on communication face significant obstacles and difficulties for both learners and teachers. The current education sector is still struggling, emphasizing knowledge and a lack of practice. At the same time, a foreign language is a subject that requires a lot, of course, to use it fluently. Learning to communicate is defeated in a fight to learn to read. That is not to mention the larger purposes, such as connecting information, expanding knowledge, and increasing career opportunities. It must be added that the level of teachers in high schools is not high. They only focus on teaching grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, so they lack the experience or skills to teach communication or listening skills. Moreover, most students learning English is still not reasonable; learning new words is simply memorizing them for a test, not applying them to speaking, so students do not clearly understand the meaning of words and sentences, leading to the inability to speak.

People must remember and understand vocabulary, grammar, and proper pronunciation to communicate effectively. Especially teachers should regularly organize activities to encourage students to use English in the classroom to enhance students' English-speaking ability. The impacts of communicative activities on the speaking abilities of EFL primary school pupils are examined in this essay.

Literature review

Definitions

Communicative activity

The communicative approach's purpose can be accomplished in CLT through various communicative-based activities (Richards, 2005). Littlewood (1981) distinguished between "functional and social actions" in communication. Functional movements, such as information

gap or jigsaw exercises, are employed by teachers when they want their students to utilize language to convey meaning as clearly as possible and when doing so necessitates the use of language resources to close a knowledge gap or resolve a problem. Role-playing, information-transfer, solving puzzles, and playing games, among other social interaction activities, are examples of how language is associated with certain social situations. The current study chose information gap and language game communicative activities to concentrate on functional and social activities and examine their communication. The information gap and language game communicative activities were selected for the current study to focus on both active and social activities and examine their effects on Libyan students' speaking abilities.

Speaking

Speaking is recognized as a crucial ability in learning and teaching English as a foreign language since it is defined as "the process of generating and communicating meaning via the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a range of circumstances" (Chaney & Burk, 1998, p. 13). Speaking has been underestimated, and its significance unacknowledged for a long time; many professors used to instruct it by practicing it repeatedly and memorizing dialogues (Kayi-Aydar, 2019). However, it is now widely understood that speaking skills instruction aims to improve students' communication abilities so they can freely express themselves and interact with others effectively (Kayi-Aydar, 2019). However, many students struggle to translate their thoughts verbally into a second or foreign language. Students must master a sizable amount of vocabulary and comprehend the basics of grammar. A confident speech also requires good pronunciation. Furthermore, communicating is speaking's primary purpose. Due to these difficulties, teaching and learning speaking has drawn much attention from educators and students (Chau, 2021).

Relevant researches

Through communicative activities, Nanthaboot's (2014) research would look at how employing communicative activities affects the English-speaking ability of Mattayomsuksa 3 students as well as the students' opinions. The quantitative data's pre-test, post-test, and self-rating scores comprised the information gathered for this study. The study discovered three students' speaking skills improved after learning communicative exercises. Students' speaking abilities have improved because of communication exercises in the classroom.

The study by Oradee (2012) compares and contrasts the English-speaking abilities of Grade 11 students using discussion, problem-solving, and roleplaying before and after they learn communicative activities. It also examines the students' attitudes when the teacher employs the three communicative activities to improve their English-speaking abilities. Research techniques such as the study's scope, tools, data gathering, and analysis were used. The pre-test mean score was 60.80%, while the post-test mean score was 85.63% after conducting education by communicating, gathering, and processing study results. After utilizing the three communicative activities, the students' English-speaking abilities significantly increased. The three communicative activities received positive ratings from the students for their ability to teach English.

Phisutthangkoon (2012) conducted research with the following three objectives to explore

students' attitudes about the use of communicative activities in the classroom, to investigate students' perceptions of the use of communicative activities in the classroom, and to examine the effect of communicative activities on first-year diploma students' English-speaking skill. The approaches used in this study were the variables, data, population, sample, study context, and research tools. Following the use of these techniques, the study's findings about the improvement in speaking ability following the experiment and the difference between the overall mean score of the pre-test and post-test are as follows: the difference in catch function mean scores between the pre-and post-tests, as well as students' attitudes on the usage of communicative activities as revealed by their responses to a self-rating questionnaire.

Hernandez-Cherrez et al. (2021) used methods like giving subjects and following the influence of employing communication games to build speaking abilities in high school tenth-grade students at Unidad Educativa General Eloy Alfaro Delgado will be studied by groups of students from the morning and afternoon schedules. The final data gathering and analysis for the study will be done using data collection tools. There was a slight enlargement in the group of students as a result. Games are a popular way for students to improve their English communication abilities. Think about how using communication games in the classroom will help students learn English.

Bashir et al. (2011) promote the use of English in teaching and learning, study the factors influencing students' English-speaking abilities, and seeks to increase speaking abilities for both teachers and students in the classroom. The study employed techniques to help teachers and students improve their speaking abilities, including minimal responses, identifying scripts, and talking about language. Consequently, English is the natural language of instruction used by more than half of the teachers. Students also reported the same. In the teaching-learning process, interactive technology is used by both teachers and students. Educators and students think English is a superior teaching medium to Urdu.

The goal of the study "Teaching communicative activities in learning English language speaking and its challenges for the young aspirants: a schematic view" (Dandu et al., 2021) is to provide more information about a few communicative English language activities that English language teachers can use to improve speaking abilities in L2 students. Information-Gap, Pair-Taping, Role-Play, and Seminar presentations were some of the activities employed in the study for students acquiring language speaking. As a result, the young L1 English language learners will be more engaged, focused, and inspired to improve their English-speaking skills.

Derakhshan et al. (2016) present readers with engaging information, intriguing activities, and techniques to enhance their speaking skills when developing EFL learners' accuracy and fluency. Role-playing, films, flashcards, and graphs are the exercises utilized in the study to help students improve their speaking skills. Role-playing, images, flashcards, charts, chants, and interviews are excellent teaching techniques that help students with their pronunciation, grammar, everyday speech, and real-world activities. Additionally, it can help adults and kids increase their speaking accuracy and fluency to achieve their objective of speaking English effectively and eloquently. Further, the above elements significantly impact how well-rounded attitudes are formed toward studying English as a foreign language.

The purpose of the study (Lumettu & Runtuwene, 2018) on enhancing students' English-speaking skills through impromptu speaking is to ascertain (1). Why is impromptu speaking essential in speaking instruction? (2). How may impromptu speaking help students improve their communication skills? The impromptu speaking approach is used in the research. Through interviews, speeches, presentations, discussions, storytelling techniques, and the qualitative method, the students are taught to interact more quickly, naturally, and impulsively while expanding their vocabulary and knowledge of general science to help the growth of speech. According to the research paper's two findings, the initial class of pupils to engage in impromptu speaking techniques spoke more fluently and naturally since they had mastered the art of developing their speaking through creative sentences. The second group of students, who attempted to memorize the entire book, largely failed because they became anxious if they forgot a single phrase or word that caused them to forget the whole passage.

Discussion, problem-solving, and roleplaying are the three communicative activities that the researcher will examine to see how they affect students' speaking abilities and attitudes toward employing these three communicative activities to teach English. Communicative activity research examines pupils' English-speaking abilities (MOE et al., 2019). This study used a research design, tools, data collection techniques, and data analysis techniques. The student's attitude toward employing the three communicative activities to teach English was good.

The study "The Effect of Communicative Activities on Libyan Secondary School Students' Speaking Performance in Malaysia" (Owen & Razali, 2018) examined the impact of implementing communicative activities, particularly linguistic games, and a knowledge gap, on students' speaking abilities in secondary schools in Libya. The study used research subjects, tools, and data-gathering procedures. The study's findings show that various communicative activities improved students' oral speaking abilities. The study's exercises can give pupils practice speaking the language in open communication. Compared to their mean pre-test scores, the experimental group's mean post-test scores improved.

The current study attempted to ascertain the effect of employing communicative language teaching (CLT) activities at the English Language Institute in the research on utilizing CLT activities on EFL students' speaking abilities at the University of Jeddah (AL-Garni & Almuhammadi, 2019). The study used participants, resources, and data gathering techniques. In terms of speaking improvement, the experimental group outperformed the control group.

Research Questions

The survey aimed to provide answers to the following research questions to accomplish the study's objectives.:

1. What are student's attitudes towards communicative activities on EFL student's speaking performance
2. What are the effects of communicative activities on EFL students' speaking performance?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

Out of the roughly 120 pupils in grade 5 at Vinh Binh Primary School, 21 were the participants in this study. To give the researcher a balanced sample to compare gender issues, an effort was made when choosing students to include nearly equal percentages of male and female students from various levels. Surveys served as the study's instruments. Most qualitative research questions on students' attitudes toward communicative activities were modified from Gardner's in Vietnamese. The survey was first translated from English into Vietnamese and then updated. The updated questionnaire was divided into two sections: perspectives and personal information. The attitudes section covered attitudes toward communicative activities on a cognitive, emotional, and behavioral level. A list of open questions was created as a framework for conversation to learn more about the participants' attitudes regarding communicative activities.

Data collection & analysis

On the 30th of June, 17 questionnaires were collected, but seven were incomplete or contained unanswered questions. Therefore, they were not studied.

Results

The first question was to identify the benefits of communicative activities in the classroom. A large number of students (90,5%) strongly agree that communicative activities in English class benefit them. Academically, teachers used communicative activities in teaching to support teaching speaking skills so that they could enhance their competencies. Predominantly, students think communicative activities are beneficial in studying in class and social communication.

The quantitative analysis of the findings from the student survey is presented in this section. To ascertain students' attitudes toward communicative activities, statistical data was evaluated.

Table 1. Student's attitudes toward communicative activities

Questionnaires	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Communication activities in English class are beneficial for me.	0%	0%	0%	9,5%	90,5%
2. Communication activities in English class make me learn English better.	0%	0%	0%	38,1%	61,9%
3. The English class communication activities help me have better opportunities in my future work.	0%	0%	0%	23,8%	76,2%
4. I cannot succeed without English communication	0%	4,8%	0%	19%	85,8%
5. Communication activities motivate me to learn English better.	0%	4,8%	4,8%	38,1%	52,3%
6. I enjoy learning English when the teacher integrates communication activities into the class.	0%	4,8%	4,8%	9,6%	80,8%
7. Communication activities help me improve my English-speaking skills.	0%	0%	0%	14,4%	85,7%

According to the study, female elementary students engage in more positive communication behaviors than male pupils. Like the views of others, cultural perspectives on communication and the effects of the social environment have some bearing on primary students' attitudes. The students in this study understand the benefits of engaging in communicative activities in their English learning. However, qualitative research demonstrates that primary children's views toward and adoption of communicative activities are negatively impacted by the complexity/simplicity of those activities.

Table 2: Student's feelings toward communicative activities

1. You feel hesitant when participating in English communication activities in the classroom?	33,3%	38,1%	0%	0%	28,6%
2. You feel comfortable participating in classroom English communication activities?	0%	0%	0%	42,8%	57,2%
3. You feel confident when participating in English communication activities in the classroom?	0%	0%	4,8%	19%	76,2%
4. You feel talkative when participating in English communication activities in the classroom?	0%	4,8%	14,4%	4,8%	76,1%
5. You feel cooperative when participating in English communication activities in the classroom?	0%	0%	4,8%	14,4%	80,8%

According to the study, students feel comfortable participating in communicative activities in class. The difficulty of acquiring real-world communicative competence, passing tests, and balancing the time given for major study and English instruction is revealed by further studies to cause students' anxiety and unfavorable attitudes toward studying English. However, this study shows that even in English classrooms where the traditional method of instruction is the rule, students' attitudes toward communicative activities are positively influenced by their social environment, including communicative activities and the attitudes of parents, peers, and classmates.

Table 3: Student's behaviour toward learning English

1. I participate in communication activities in English class.	0%	4,8%	0%	23,8%	71,4%
2. I speak English when I meet friends, teachers and English speakers.	0%	23,8%	0%	9,6%	66,6%
3. I like the communication activities in English class.	0%	0%	0%	23,8%	76,2%
4. I show my English-speaking ability to the people I meet.	4,8%	9,6%	0%	28,6%	57%
5. I practice speaking English as much as possible before I go to class	4,8%	0%	0%	33,3%	61,9%

Numerous studies on students' attitudes toward communicative activities have been conducted in response to the widespread usage of these activities in instruction. This study investigated the attitudes of Vinh Binh Primary School's fifth-graders regarding communicative activities.

Primary pupils often bring a good attitude toward expressive activities into the classroom. However, communicative activities are far from being included in the curriculum and are seldom employed in English classrooms daily.

Additionally, the participants in the qualitative study expressed concerns about how well-suited communicative activities are to the curriculum and school policy aims. According to the study, females have better perception than males, exhibit more interest in and confidence in their use of English, and as a result, have more positive attitudes about communicative activities in English learning. Additional studies reveal students' anxiety and unfavorable attitudes toward learning English, which is brought on by the challenge of developing real-world communicative competence, passing exams, and juggling the time allotted for major study and English instruction. However, in this study, students' attitudes toward communicative activities are positively impacted by their social environment, such as communicative activities and the attitudes of parents, peers, and classmates, even in English classrooms where the traditional method of instruction is the norm. The absence of genuine communicative tasks in English classes and the teachers' lack of expertise are significant barriers for the students to learning the language. Most subjects concur that engaging in communicative activities will improve our learning environments, schools, or personal life (76,2 percent). The participants in this study are aware of the benefits of communicative activities for learning English and the significance of communicative activities for careers.

Discussion

The study's conclusions highlighted the advantages of incorporating communicative activities into the instruction of spoken English. This finding is in line with researchers (Phisutthangkoon, 2021; Bashir et al., 2011) who consider that communicative activities encourage students' interest in the subject and connect prior knowledge to newly learned information. Additionally, they concur that utilizing communicative activities improves students' speaking abilities. In addition, communicative sentences are well known as scaffolding to assist pupils in gradually acquiring knowledge. The authors show how practicing sentences can help students become more fluent speakers of English. The findings align with some researchers (Dandu et al., 2021; AL-Garni & Almuhammadi, 2019).

Furthermore, communicative activities help to create classroom interaction, and speaking skills improve after learning communicative exercises. This view is in line with researchers like Nanthaboot (2014). Communicative activities to enhance their English-speaking abilities increase classroom interaction. This is in line with Oradee (2012). As discovered by this study, the use of communicative activities in classrooms attempts to make students more engaged because they must interact with their classmates. The results reveal that every student thinks that using these strategies engages students in activities, fosters critical thinking and other skills, and promotes learning.

The findings of this study are consistent with earlier research on the following variables influencing learners' attitudes: perceived communicative activity qualities, perceived communicative activity attributes in different cultural contexts, and communicative confidence. Students' favorable attitudes and willingness to use communicative activities in their English

learning can be attributed to the perceived benefits of communicative activities as teaching tools. Data from the study, however, indicate that respondents have concerns about the compatibility of communicative activities with school policy and curriculum and that students are less optimistic about the features of communicative activities' simplicity. The results of this study also show that the third best predictor of students' attitudes toward communicative activities is cultural views of communicative activities. The tendency for young students and their professors to approach novel situations from different perspectives could be one cause. Another possibility is a disconnect between EFL teachers' expectations and ideas and what students require from their foreign language study. The quantitative study's findings indicate that having more positive views about communicative activities in learning English relates to communicative experience. However, in this study, students' attitudes in English classrooms where the traditional method of instruction is still used were not influenced by their teachers, even though the social environment, such as the communicative activities and attitudes of parents, peers, and classmates, had a very positive impact on student's attitudes. This discrepancy with earlier research findings can be explained by the lack of communicative activities used by English teachers in this study. The results of earlier studies usually support that participants' views toward communicative activities employed in foreign language teaching and learning are positively impacted by communicative skills. However, it was discovered in this study that there was no meaningful relationship between communicative attitudes and communicative competence.

According to the study, elementary school girls develop more positive attitudes toward communicative activities than boys. The results of this poll indicate that women were more adept at communication and showed greater interest in and confidence in using English than men. According to Rogers (2003), adopting a new idea is one thing; putting the innovation to use is quite another, as difficulties with the invention's precise application arise during the implementation phase. The fact in this study can be connected to the academic setting. Due to a lack of practical communicative activities used in English classrooms and a lack of professional support from teachers in the use of communicative activities outside of English classrooms, students struggle to effectively integrate communicative activities into their learning of English, which significantly contributes to their negative attitudes toward these activities. In addition, passing English exams is typically the sole incentive for students to study the language to graduate. Some participants asserted that the inapplicability of communicative activities in non-society renders learning English unproductive.

Conclusion

The study's findings show that students agree that communicating with others is generally stimulating. Students are more self-assured when they assist one another during group conversations, group oral presentations, roleplays, games, pair work, and group work. The most engaging communicative activities in the EFL classroom were rated highly by both students and teachers as activities like games, pair work, small group work, and roleplays. They feel that these exercises increase the ability to communicate in English in a lighthearted and realistic way. There were slight discrepancies in how teachers and students perceived oral production interaction. Teachers believe that their pupils are only somewhat motivated because they have

trouble understanding them when they speak in the target language, on the one hand. The fact that students view their professors as a reliable source of guidance and explanation may help explain why students believe they are highly motivated.

Additionally, there were minor differences in how people perceived verbal correction communication behaviors. Although pupils are very driven, teachers think their students are entirely motivated when they receive incorrect feedback. This discrepancy may be because students frequently view teachers' error correction as a crucial element in developing their speech performance. To motivate students to learn the target language and help them understand the purposes of communicative activities, teachers should always establish an enjoyable learning environment in the classroom. Teachers should employ games and roleplaying more regularly because they promote possibilities for language practice, learner freedom, and a positive, supportive, and productive learning environment. Games can also be utilized to enhance grammar exercises those pupils find tedious. Teachers should keep giving students the proper feedback and correcting their errors while working on communicative tasks since these actions motivate pupils. Additionally, educators must be aware that disrupting oral production may need students to return to studying language form or meaning. Teachers must be cautious when organizing and carrying out communication activities, considering fair chances for involvement and engagement to achieve effective results.

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Biodata

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