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The Effect of the Communicative Approach on the Listening and Speaking Skills of Saudi Secondary School Students: An Experimental Study

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master's Degree in Applied Linguistics

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عمادة الدراسات العليا
قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وآدابها

**تأثير مذهب تدريس اللغة الاتصالي على مهارتي الاستماع والتحدث لدى
مجموعة من طالبات الصف الثالث الثانوي بالدمام في المملكة العربية
السعودية: دراسة تجريبية**

بحث مقدم ، استكمالاً لمتطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير في اللغويات التطبيقية ،

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The Effect of the Communicative Approach on the Listening and Speaking Skills of Saudi Secondary School Students: An Experimental Study

Abstract

This thesis attempts to measure the effect of the implementation of the communicative approach (CA) on the listening and speaking skills of Saudi third year secondary students. In order to address this issue, a quantitative study was conducted on two randomly selected intact classes at Dammam Tenth Secondary School. These two classes were assigned as experimental group (37 students) and control group (41 students). It was particularly hypothesized that the students taught according to the CA would score higher in the post-test than in the pre-test and that there would be statistically significant differences at the level of .05 between the post-test mean scores of the experimental group and the control group. Various communicative activities were used with the experimental group while the control group was exposed to traditional, non-communicative, instruction using structurally based methods, such as the audio-lingual method. A pre-test was administered to both groups at the beginning of the experiment to ensure that they had the same language background. At the end of the experiment, a post-test was assigned to both groups to determine whether the CA had positively affected the

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students' listening and speaking abilities. The experiment lasted approximately seven weeks of the first semester of 1428 (2007).

The study has revealed that: (1) the CA had a positive effect on the students' listening and speaking skills; (2) the experimental group obtained somewhat higher scores in the post-test than in the pre-test, making the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores statistically significant; (3) the difference between the pre-test and the post-test for the control group was not statistically significant; and (4) the experimental students were more differentiated than the control students, as shown by a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of both groups in the post-test in favor of the experimental students.

In light of these results, the following recommendations were made: (1) that a shift should be made from non-communicative to communicative ELT; (2) that educational policy-makers should consider the applicability of the CA in the Saudi context; (3) that EFL teachers should receive in-service training in applying CA principles; (4) that students should be encouraged to speak the target language with their colleagues; and (5) that local ELT textbook writers should work along communicative lines.

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تأثير مذهب تدريس اللغة الاتصالي على مهارتي الاستماع والتحدث لدى مجموعة من طالبات الصف الثالث الثانوي بالدمام في المملكة العربية السعودية: دراسة تجريبية

ملخص الدراسة

تهدف الدراسة إلى معرفة إمكانية تطبيق مذهب تدريس اللغة الاتصالي في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية في المملكة العربية السعودية وقياس قدرته على تحسين مهارتي الاستماع والتحدث لدى طالبات الصف الثالث الثانوي. وللتحقق من ذلك شكّلت مجموعة تجريبية (37 طالبة) ومجموعة ضابطة (41 طالبة) واختيرت المجموعتان بطريقة عشوائية من المدرسة الثانوية العاشرة بمدينة الدمام.

قامت الدراسة على افتراض أن الطالبات اللاتي سيدرسن وفقاً للمذهب التواصل سيحققن درجات أعلى في الاختبار البعدي، وأنه سيكون هناك فرق دال إحصائياً عند مستوى ثقة 05. بين درجات طالبات المجموعة التجريبية ودرجات طالبات المجموعة الضابطة لصالح طالبات المجموعة التجريبية.

لتطبيق التجربة درست طالبات المجموعة التجريبية وفقاً لمبادئ الطريقة التواصلية وبالتحديد استخدام أنشطة لتعزيز مهارتي الاستماع والتحدث وذلك لقياس مدى تحسنهن. أما المجموعة الضابطة فقد درست وفقاً للطرق التقليدية في تدريس مهارتي الاستماع والتحدث. وتم إجراء اختبار قبلي للتأكد أولاً من أن التأثير الإيجابي على مهارتي الاستماع والتحدث- إن وجد- سببه تطبيق مبادئ المذهب الاتصالي، وثانياً للتأكد من أن المجموعتين لديهما نفس الخلفية اللغوية فيما يخص هاتين المهارتين. وفي نهاية التجربة أُجري اختبار بعدي للمجموعتين. هذا وقد طُبقت التجربة في الفصل الدراسي الأول من العام الهجري 1428 لمدة تقارب سبعة أسابيع.

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وقد أظهر التحليل الإحصائي النتائج الآتية: (1) أن تأثير المذهب الاتصالي على مهارتي الاستماع والتحدث لدى المجموعة التجريبية كان إيجابياً؛ (2) أن هناك فرقاً دالاً إحصائياً بين الاختبار القبلي والاختبار البعدي لطالبات المجموعة التجريبية؛ (3) أنه ليس هناك فرق دال إحصائياً بين الاختبار القبلي والاختبار البعدي للمجموعة الضابطة؛ (4) أن هناك فرقاً دالاً إحصائياً بين متوسط درجات المجموعة التجريبية ومتوسط درجات المجموعة الضابطة في الاختبار البعدي لصالح طالبات المجموعة التجريبية.

وفي ضوء تلك النتائج تم اقتراح التوصيات الآتية: (1) أن تحلّ الطرق التواصلية محل الطرق التقليدية في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية؛ (2) أن يدرس واضعو السياسات التعليمية إمكانية تطبيق المذهب الاتصالي في البيئة السعودية؛ (3) أن يتلقى معلمو ومعلمات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية تدريباً أثناء الخدمة على استخدام مبادئ المذهب الاتصالي؛ (4) أن يقوم المعلمون والمعلمات بتشجيع الطلبة والطالبات على التحدث بالإنجليزية مع زملائهم وزميلاتهن؛ (5) أن يراعي مؤلفو كتب تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية المبادئ التواصلية فيما يؤلفون.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Different language teaching methods have been introduced in order to improve the quality of teaching and achieve the desired impact on students. Some of these methods could not develop the learners' ability to speak the target language fluently. This has given rise to new methods designed to overcome the limitations of the previous ones.

One of the most accepted trends in the field of foreign language teaching (FLT) is the communicative approach (CA), which was introduced in the 1970s by a group of European Council experts (Galloway, 1993). The basic principle that underlies the CA, as stated by Nunan (1988), is that "learners must learn not only to make grammatically correct, propositional statements about the experiential world, but must also develop the ability to use language to get things done" (p. 25). Basically, the CA "emphasizes the fact that the students and their communicative purposes are at the very core of the teaching program" (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983, p. 17). Thus, the main aim of this approach is to enable EFL learners to communicate in the target language fluently and freely. This particular aim is significant because it is based on the recognition that "we learn language most effectively by

using it in realistic situations" (ibid, p. 90). This, it may be argued, requires more concentration on language use than on language usage.

Due to its noticeable effectiveness, the communicative syllabus has recently been adopted in Saudi Arabia. This new direction started in 1990 with textbooks written by experts at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM). Although the books have been in use for quite a long period of time, it is still hard to recognize a significant change in the Saudi students' ability to speak English appropriately and effectively. Abu-Ras (2002), in a study conducted in order to investigate the applicability of the CA in the Saudi context, argues that "after almost sixteen years of its application, the communicative ability of the Saudi students graduating from the secondary schools is still very poor" (p. 17). The reason, in my opinion, could be attributed to EFL teachers' ignorance of the main principles of the CA. Bakarman (2004) has found out that "most [Saudi] EFL female teachers [had] only a shallow knowledge of the theory and principles of the CA" (p. 6). Consequently, they could not help students to improve their ability to speak the target language effectively.

From my experience as a teacher of English and as a supervisor of educational research, I can say that there is a good deal of evidence to prove that many Saudi EFL teachers still use traditional approaches to the teaching of English, such as the grammar translation method and the

audio-lingual method, which have been described by many practitioners as untrustworthy guides to classroom instruction (Gage, 1975). This fact has been addressed by Al-Subahi (1991), who says that

The current English syllabuses ... could not modify the traditional role played by the teacher, neither could it decrease the [teacher's] domination [of] the English class. The grammar translation method is still followed by most English teachers interchangeably with the direct method, both of which offer little chance for students to participate and consequently carry the students towards memorization instead of understanding (p. 37).

What makes the situation even worse is that many teachers have not had pre- or in-service training in how to manage the classroom communicatively. Abu-Ras (2002) found 89 % of EFL teachers had not received enough pre-service training in communicative language teaching. In addition, Al-Qurashi (1990) and Al-Hajailan (1996) argue that "EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia are not qualified and trained enough to teach English using the CA" (cited in Abu-Ras, 2002, p. 15).

Another possible reason for the students' limited ability to speak the target language fluently could be the textbooks. Their designers claim that they have been written according to the CA; however, in reality, they are largely structurally based. Al-Qurashi (1990) and Al-Hajailan (1996) assert that these books are "organized according to ... communicative functions and notions even though [they are] graded according to ... grammatical complexity" (cited in Abu-Ras, 2002, p.15). In addition, the

linguistic content of these books, they add, is of low communicative value. Furthermore, listening and speaking skills are left out of the final exams. It is little wonder, then, that the students' ability to communicate fluently and confidently in English is generally so poor.

A review of the related literature has revealed that most previous studies involved identifying hindrances to the application of the CA in different contexts rather than experimentally investigating its effect on students' ability to produce and to understand communicatively meaningful messages. Examples include studies by O'Sullivan (2001) in Namibia, Musthafa (2001) in Indonesia, Yoon (2004) in Korea, Jarvis and Atsilarat (2004) in Thailand, Menking (2001) in Japan, Zhang (1997) in China, Gahin and Myhill (2001) in Egypt, Bakarman (2004) and Abu-Ras (2002) in Saudi Arabia.

Since no previous study has – to the best of my knowledge – attempted to carry out such an experiment in the Saudi context, the present investigation seeks to fill an important gap in the literature regarding measuring the effect of the CA experimentally. In addition, it is expected that the study would inspire other researchers to conduct further empirical studies on how to effectively implement the CA in Saudi schools.

To sum up, a likely candidate for helping foreign language learners develop their ability to speak the target language fluently is the CA. It

focuses on language use but at the same time attaches importance to language knowledge. Many researchers, such as Nattinger (1984), maintain that "new methods often go unmeasured and their claims remain unevaluated" (p. 404). This experimental study, therefore, aims at measuring the effect of the CA on the communicative abilities of some Saudi secondary students. In addition, the findings would guide EFL teachers in choosing the most effective classroom interactions and would facilitate the selection of items for the syllabus.

1.1. Statement of the problem

Foreign language teaching in Saudi Arabia seems to have been long out-dated. Traditional methods continue to be used regardless of the more recent ones. Altwaijri (1982) insists that

Methods used in teaching English in ... Saudi schools failed to motivate the students and instigate their involvement in class activities; these methods were, generally, of the grammar-translation type (p. 143).

Accordingly, textbooks are structurally oriented and often not relevant to students' needs; too much emphasis is placed on the learning of grammar and vocabulary. The four macro-skills are taught according to the audio-lingual approach, where they are introduced in the following order: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Little effort is made to actually

help students learn to speak English as it is spoken by native speakers. In addition, the books concentrate on mechanical and formally meaningful drills, but do not allow for communicative ones.

Moreover, I have found out, from my experience, that teacher-centered language instruction is the dominant form of ELT in Saudi Arabia, where most teachers seem to prefer to focus on teaching grammar because, apparently, it does not require a high level of English proficiency on the part of the instructor. This assumption has been corroborated by Abu-Ras (2002), who found out that the traditional methods are compatible with the teachers' competence and training. He also found out that most teachers "do not feel linguistically, communicatively, and educationally competent" (p. 10). Consequently, they are likely to feel insecure about their English proficiency and would not be able to express themselves or to hold a conversation with a native speaker.

Add to that secondary students' limited ability to speak and understand English. They are not only unable to speak English fluently, but also get low marks and experience failure in their structurally based final exams. According to Mula (1979), "the general English proficiency and achievement of the majority of Saudi students is completely unsatisfactory and disproportionately low" (cited in Jan, 1984, p. 4). Altwaijri (1982) also found out that "Saudi students spend at least ten

years learning English, ... but their English proficiency is generally unsatisfactory when compared to the amount of time spent in learning it" (p. 6).

To rectify the current situation, a shift from structural approaches to the CA is critically needed. The latter has been accepted by many practitioners worldwide as a promising method for enhancing students' ability to communicate successfully in the target language.

In line with the previous discussion, the problem addressed by the present study will be confined to measuring the effect of the CA implementation on the listening and speaking skills of some secondary female students in Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

1.2. Research questions

The Primary purpose of this study is to measure the effect of the implementation of the CA on the listening and speaking skills of third-year secondary female students in Dammam, Saudi Arabia. The results of the study would determine whether the application of the CA experimentally in the Saudi context would be successful and promising or not.

In order to help Saudi students learn English effectively, so that they can use it for real-life purposes after completion of secondary school, this study seeks to answer the following question: Will the implementation of

the CA have a positive effect on the listening and speaking skills of third-year secondary students? To answer this overarching question, the following subordinate questions will also be answered:

1. Will students who are taught according to the CA principles score higher on the post-test than on the pre-test for the listening and speaking skills?
2. Will students who are taught according to the traditional approach score higher on the post-test than on the pre-test for the listening and speaking skills?
3. Will the means of the experimental group (EG) in the post-test be the same as the means of the control group (CG)?

1.3. Research hypotheses

In order to investigate the problem raised by the study and to answer the related questions, the following null hypotheses will be tested:

1. The implementation of the CA will have a negative effect on the listening and speaking skills of third-year secondary students.
2. Students who are taught according to the CA principles will score higher on the post-test than on the pre-test for listening and speaking skills.

3. Students who are taught according to the traditional approaches will score higher on the post-test than on the pre-test for listening and speaking skills.
4. The means for the experimental group in the post-test will be the same as the means for the control group.

1.4. Significance of the study

This study is expected to have theoretical and practical importance, as shown below:

Theoretical importance:

1. It is important to get an insight into the effect of the CA on students' ability to understand English as used by native speakers of English.
2. The findings of this study would enrich the ELT literature.
3. The study would make recommendations about improving ELT methodology in Saudi Arabia.
4. It would attempt to provide Saudi EFL teachers with knowledge about the principles of the CA.
5. There is a need to keep up with nations where more up-to-date TEFL approaches are adopted.

6. It is useful to appreciate the relation between theory and practice.
7. It can be said that this study – to the best of my knowledge – is the first to investigate the effect of the CA experimentally in Saudi Arabia.

Practical importance:

1. The recommendations of the study would help Saudi students to overcome or at least reduce the difficulties that they encounter when trying to communicate using English inside and outside the classroom.
2. The study would stimulate researchers to apply this approach to other Saudi students in order to explore its positive and/or negative effects.
3. The findings of the study would help to influence the Ministry of Education to take into account the importance of implementing the CA and to provide teachers with pre- and in-service training in communicative teaching.

1.5. Research variables

The study consists of two variables: (1) an independent variable, which is the implementation of the CA; and (2) a dependent variable,

which is the students' listening and speaking scores. The study will try to measure the effect of the independent variable on the dependent one by using a pre-test and a post-test to measure the listening and speaking scores.

1.6. Definition of terms

The important terms used throughout this study are as follows:

Communicative activity: An activity in which the student uses a second language to provide or elicit from other students information or opinions hitherto unknown (Gower, Phillips, & Walters, 1995, p. 209). (see pp. 30–43)

Communicative approach: The communicative approach – or communicative language teaching (CLT) – is the name which was given to a set of beliefs which included not only a re-examination of what aspects of language to teach, but also a shift in emphasis in how to teach (Harmer, 2003, p. 84). Basically, it aims at developing students' communicative competence. It makes use of real-life situations that necessitate communication (Galloway, 1993, p. 2). (see pp. 23–25)

Deductive teaching: A type of teaching in which "ideas proceed from generalizations, principles, rules, laws, propositions, or theories to

specific applications" (Regina, 1991, p. 2). It "involves presenting a generalization and then seeking or providing examples" (ibid, p. 2). Therefore, it emphasizes "grammar at the expense of meaning" (Shaffer, 1989, p. 395). In such process, the teacher is the center of the class and is responsible for all of the presentation and explanation of the new material. S/He presents a general concept by first defining it then providing examples or illustrations that demonstrate the idea. Therefore, it is more predictable and faster than inductive teaching (Regina, 1991, p. 2 & "Using Varied," 2005, p. 1) and tends to "promote passive rather than active participation of the students" (Shaffer, 1989, p. 395). (see pp. 64–66)

Function: Categories of social behavior, e.g. requests, apologies, complaints, greetings, invitations, etc (Gower et al., 1995, p. 210). For every function, there are many different ways in which the function could be expressed; to invite someone we might say: *Would you like us to go to a coffee shop? How about going to a coffee shop?, etc.* (see pp. 64–66)

Inductive teaching: A type of teaching which is "based on the claim that knowledge is built primarily from a learner's experience" "Using Varied," 2005, pp. 1–2). This means that "learners are not taught grammatical or other types of rules directly but are left to discover or induce rules from their experience of using the language" (Gower et al., 1995, p. 211). In

other words, the "learners' attention is focused on grammatical structure used in context so that students can consciously perceive the underlying patterns involved" (Shaffer, 1989, p. 395). Naturally, with this type of teaching, learners "tend to understand, remember and participate more actively" (Regina, 1991, p. 2). On the other hand, the "teacher's role is to create the opportunities and the context in which students can successfully make the appropriate generalizations, and to guide students as necessary" ("Using Varied," 2005, p. 1–2). (see pp. 64–66)

Interaction: Two-way communication between language users, where they are engaged in exchanging information based on their own knowledge and experience. Munck and Mayer (2000) describe interaction as "the process of having a mutual effect, involving transferal of information with or without an intention behind it" (cited in Moura, 2006, p. 1). (see pp. 30–43)

Jigsaw: A pedagogical techniques helps to create information gaps in the classroom used primarily in group and has a task-oriented or problem-solving nature (Taylor, 1983). In this kind of activity, each group has one piece of a puzzle and has to cooperate with the other groups to fit all the pieces into a whole picture. The puzzle piece could be one photo from a set that tells a story or one sentence from a written narrative (The

National Capital Language Resource Center [NCLRC], 2004, p. 2). (see p. 35)

Listening: An active process requiring the same skills of prediction, hypothesizing, checking, revising, and generalizing that writing and reading demand (Ronald & Roskelly, 1985 as cited in Hyslop & Tone, 1988, p. 1). The purpose of listening instruction is to make students active listeners to the same "inner voice" one hears when writing (ibid, p. 1). It is a receptive, or passive, skill comprising both a physical process and an interpretive, analytical process (Gower et al., 1995, p. 212; Mead & Rubin, 1985, p. 1). (see pp. 30–43)

Monitoring: A teacher's role in which s/he listens to the students and compares what is being said with what is intended. It is also used to refer to the teacher's checking that an activity is going according to plan, that the students are following instructions correctly, etc. (Gower et al., 1995, p. 211). (see pp. 28–30, 42, & 65)

Notion: One of "certain basic dimensions of thought and meaning", such as, "time, space, classification, comparison, cause effect, etc" (Matreyek, 1983, p. 8). Thus, "notions are meaning elements which may be expressed through nouns, pronouns, verbs, prepositions, conjunctions, adjectives, or adverbs" (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983, p. 14). For a

particular notion, three factors should be taken into account: the functions, the elements in the situation and the topic being discussed (Mora, 2002). The notion of shopping, e.g., requires numerous language functions, including asking about price or features of a product and bargaining (ibid, 1983). (see pp. 64–66)

Speaking: An "activity requiring the integration of many subsystems.... all these factors combine to make speaking a second or foreign language a formidable task for language learners.... yet for many people, speaking is seen as the central skill" (Bailey & Savage, 1994, as cited in Celece-Murcia, 2001, p. 103). It is a productive, or active, skill (Gower et al., 1995, p. 212). Speaking, in the present study, means "using language for a purpose" (Baker & Westrup, 2003, p. 7). In other words, instead of asking students to repeat sentences or recite English words, they practice real communication to talk about their real lives, ideas, etc. (see pp. 30–43)

Task dependency: An activity which requires students to practice a variety of communicative skills. Similar to jigsaw this kind of activity requires students to work on groups by taking the responsibility to carry out the activity using their own way, e.g., when a group of students is planning to make a trip. In order to choose the best route, they need first to complete some sub-tasks, such as searching for road maps, weather

reports, etc. The major task of selecting the best route encourages students to undertake the sub-tasks where they would engage in evaluating the obtained information by using the relevant and rejecting the irrelevant (Taylor, 1983). (see p. 35)

Traditional approach: An approach such as the grammar-translation and audiolingual method, which "focus[es] on grammatical rules [and] memorization of vocabulary" (Brown, 2000, p. 97). Basically, it relies on repetition and drills (Ann, 1993, p. 4). Wilkins (1976) defines it as "one in which the different parts of the language are taught separately and step-by-step" (cited in Ellis, 1993. p. 99). As Hill (1974) reminds us, "everything [is] arranged in a strictly grammatical order, without any regard for difficulty or ease of learning" (p. 84), where textbooks start with the regular nouns, then irregular ones, then pronouns, then adjectives, and so on. After that, they move on to morphology, and then to syntax, which deals with word-order and the uses of the different parts of speech. (see pp. 18–22)

1.7. Summary

Having introduced the subject under study, this chapter has stated the problem addressed, set out the research questions and variables, and defined the key terms that will recur below. The next step will be to review the literature related to the CA, which is the subject of Chapter 2.

The focus will be on the practicality of this conception of ELT inside the classroom as well as its overall effectiveness.

Chapter Two: Literature review

The review to be made below is mainly intended to directly link the CA to particular classroom practices, an issue that has been addressed by many practitioners. In addition, the state of ELT in the Saudi context, past and present, will be reviewed.

2.1. Methods of English language teaching prior to the communicative approach

Methods of English language teaching define language in different ways. Some of them identify language with grammar and vocabulary. Others see language as an abstract set of semantic, syntactic, and lexical features. For some others, language is the ideas, concepts, and norms of social and linguistic behavior which are manifested in daily life (Richards, 1984). ELT methods before the emergence of the CA can be classified, as we shall see below, into traditional and pre-communicative methods. Each type claims to aim at helping students to communicate in the target language (Larsen-Freeman, 2004). However, some methods have succeeded to some extent in producing competent speakers whereas others have failed to achieve such goal.

The grammar-translation method, the audio-lingual method, and the direct method are examples of the traditional methods. The grammar-translation method, as Brown (2000) explains, makes an extensive use of the mother tongue with little concentration on the target language, focuses on forms and inflection of words, begins reading of difficult classical texts earlier, introduces vocabulary in the form of lists of isolated words, and emphasizes long elaborating explanations of grammar, with little attention to pronunciation. Richards and Rodgers (2006) have also described it as unable to help students to speak the target language fluently, frustrating the students and making few demands on the teachers. The opposition the grammar-translation method faced in the mid- and late nineteenth century laid the "foundations for the development of new ways of teaching languages" (ibid, p. 7) that grew "out of naturalistic principles of language learning, such as are seen in first language acquisition" (p. 11). This again led to the emergence of the 'natural methods', which resulted in what is known as the direct method.

The new method (the direct method) is described by Richards (1984) as "a philosophy of instructional procedures rather than a specification for syllabus design and materials production", since "it could not readily be translated into textbooks and materials. And this was one reason why it failed to survive despite the support it received in high places" (p. 15)

because, specifically, "it overemphasized and distorted the similarities between naturalistic first language learning and classroom foreign language learning and failed to consider the practical realities of the classroom" (pp. 12–13).

Next, the audio-lingual method came forward, to become the most common and universally used of the traditional approaches. It resulted from the combination of structural linguistic theory, contrastive analysis, aural-oral procedures, and behaviorist psychology (Richards & Rodgers, 2006), focusing on the principles of structural linguistics, "whose main tenets were that language is primarily oral, and that it is a rule-governed system" (Knight, 2003, p. 149). Therefore, its main concern is teaching students grammatical sentence patterns.

As Papalia (1976) reminds us, "the product of the techniques in the audio-lingual classroom is memorization"(p. 59). Thus, "the most common kinds of pattern drill for presenting structure are repetition drills, transformation drills, substitution drills, and integration drills" (ibid, pp. 58–59). Furthermore, since no emphasis is placed on meaning, students are made to repeat and say things without making sense of what is repeated (Larsen-Freeman, 2004). Thus, "the theoretical failure (and greatest practical problem) of the audio-lingual method was its inability to show how to move from learned sentences to creativity" (Spolsky, 1989, p. 150).

Overall, the previous three methods stress the structural aspects of the target language, requiring accuracy through drills and repetitions. Many linguists believe that such methods failed to help learners speak the target language fluently. This led to the emergence of alternative directions for language teaching and learning.

These alternative, pre-communicative, methods are total physical response, the silent way, and community language learning. The total physical response method was introduced by James Asher in the 1960s "to provide language learning experiences that reduce the stress and anxiety adults experience in foreign language learning" (Richards, 1984, p. 11). Basically, this method, which involves a link between physical activity and learning, is not based on a particular model of language. The teacher is expected to direct the class whereas the learners are required to listen and act according to the instructions given by the teacher. Thus, this method is rarely used beyond beginner level, which could be one reason for its unpopularity (Knight, 2003).

Another innovative method is the silent way, devised in the 1970s by Galeb Gattegno, who believed that "to teach means to serve the learning process rather than to dominate it" (Larsen-Freeman, 2004, p. 54). Therefore, "the teacher should be silent as much as possible in the classroom but the learner should be encouraged to produce as much language as possible" (Richards & Rodgers, 2006, P. 81).

The community language learning method was the third pre-communicative answer to the problem of FL teaching. It was developed from the counseling-learning approach introduced by Charles Curran in the 1970s. The main concern of this method is to consider students as whole persons, with teachers caring for their students' intellect as well as the relationship among their feelings, physical reactions, instinctive protective reactions, and desire to learn (Larsen-Freeman, 2004). In this way, "the teacher acts as the 'counsellor', and the learners as the 'clients'" (Knight, 2003, p. 153).

Although the pre-communicative methods reviewed above can be said to be superior to the traditional methods presented earlier, both types of methods have been found to lack the ability to develop the students' communicative competence in the target language, particularly beyond classroom walls. Evidently, a shift to a method where this particular aim could be achieved is needed.

Against this backdrop of ineffectiveness, the communicative approach came into existence, to be one of the most successful innovative approaches in the history of ELT. It focuses on developing students' communicative competence, as shown in the next section.

2.2. The communicative approach

Although they were introduced in order to help learners to communicate effectively using the target language, most of the previous methods were unable to fulfill this goal. Some educators and linguists began to feel that students were "at a loss to communicate in the culture of the language studied" (Galloway, 1993, p. 1) "despite years of language instruction" (Taylor, 1983, p. 69). Some others, such as Widdowson (1989), believe that learners need knowledge of the language as well as the ability to use this knowledge in real-life situations.

Therefore, the communicative approach (CA), which is also known as the functional-notional approach (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983), and communicative language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2006), has been designed "to provide learners with opportunities for communicating in the second language" (Ellis, 1993, p. 91). Thus, "it stresses the development of the learners' communicative competence and performance" (Pattison, 1989, p. 19).

Hence, the very starting point for the CA as described by D. A. Wilkins was how, when, and where the learner can express himself; not "what the student communicates through languages" (Yalden, 1996, p. 67). This means that a great deal of emphasis is placed on "the communicative purpose(s) of a speech act" (Finocchiaro & Brumfit,

1983, p. 13). More specifically, the interest shifted from form to meaning. In addition, the main principles of the education process within the CA are "the learner's needs, motivation, characteristics, abilities, limitations, and resources" (Yalden, 1996, p. 69).

As pointed out earlier, the CA, having emerged from a dissatisfaction with traditional methods, such as the audio-lingual and grammar-translation method, is based on the belief that "the second language learner must acquire not just control of the basic grammar of the sentence but all the communicative skills of a native speaker" (Spolsky, 1989, p. 139). Thus, the CA came to have characteristics that set it apart from the methods reviewed in section 2.1. These characteristics are outlined by the International Teacher Training Organization [ITTO] (2001) as follows:

- (1) It is assumed that the goal of language teaching is learner ability to communicate in the target language,
- (2) it is assumed that the content of a language course will include semantic notions and social functions, not just linguistic structures,
- (3) students regularly work in groups or pairs to transfer (and, if necessary, negotiate) meaning in situations where one person has information that the other(s) lack,
- (4) students often engage in role-play or dramatization to adjust their use of the target language to different social contexts,
- (5) classroom materials and activities are often authentic to reflect real-life situations and demands,
- (6) skills are integrated from the beginning; a given activity might involve reading, speaking, listening, and perhaps also writing,
- (7) the teacher's role is primarily to facilitate communication and only secondarily to correct errors,

and (8) the teacher should be able to use the target language fluently and appropriately (para. 1).

However, being concerned with helping learners to communicate fluently in the foreign language, the CA requires a special classroom, which is described as learner-centered.

2.2.1. The communicative classroom

The communicative classroom has come to have characteristics that differentiate it from the non-communicative classroom. Basically, it is an environment where "features of genuine communication are evident" (Cullen, 1998, p. 1). Below, we shall look at specific defining properties of the communicative classroom, purpose of materials, role of students, and role of teachers.

A communicative classroom, according to Taylor (1983), requires an atmosphere, which "encourage[s] learners to exercise their own initiative in communicating" (p. 69) and "in which communication can take place comfortably" (p. 70). Therefore, its primary goal is to "enable EFL learners to communicate in the target language fluently and freely. . . and to emphasize the communicative use of language in everyday, real world situations" (Abu-Ghararah, 1998, p. 5).

1. Materials

There is quite an array of materials designed especially to direct and support communicative learning. Generally, these materials, which are "as a way of influencing the quality of classroom interaction and language use" (Richards & Rodgers, 2006, p. 168), meet the following requirements: (1) facilitating the communicative abilities of interpretation, expression, and negotiation; (2) focusing on understandable and relevant communication rather than on grammatical form; (3) commanding the learners' interests and involving their intelligence and creativity; and (4) involving different types of text, and different media, so that the participants can develop their competence through various activities and tasks (ibid, p. 162).

In addition, Richards and Rodgers (2006) specify three kinds of CA materials: (1) text-based materials, which are organized, graded, and sequenced in communicative items; (2) realia, authentic materials, such as magazines, newspapers, advertisements, etc.; and (3) task-based materials, which, as will be shown in section 2.2.2., include various activities.

2. Students

In a communicative classroom learners are provided with opportunities to rely on themselves (Woods, 1996) and to acquire the

target language "by using it rather than ... by studying it" (Taylor, 1983, p. 70). In other words, students will be responsible for the process of their own learning and will acquire the language when it is presented to them implicitly rather than explicitly and directly. Therefore, they must be encouraged to use the target language for problem-solving, communicative tasks, information exchange, and meaningful interaction (Richards, 1984, p. 19). More specifically, classroom instruction should incorporate the following features:

(1) opportunities for students to be exposed to real communication, (2) opportunities for students to engage in using real communication, and (3) activities which are meaningful to students and which will motivate them to become committed to sustaining that communication to accomplish a specific goal, such as solving a problem or completing a task (Taylor, 1983, p. 72).

Rodgers (2001) describes the students in a communicative classroom as negotiators and improvisers. Knight (2003) echoes this view and asserts that each learner is expected to be an active participant who interacts with other learners and asks for information and feedback. Through group work, according to Gutierrez, (2005), the learners can assess themselves, modify their oral production, and have much confidence in speaking. In addition, the supportive communicative classroom, which provides a collaborative environment, helps the students to interact effectively by getting rid of their fear of making

mistakes (ibid, 2005). Moreover, the learners will be analyzers, guessers, monitors of their own speech, and individuals who are willing to make mistakes for the sake of communication with others (Crookall & Oxford, 1990).

3. Teacher

The teacher in a communicative classroom has totally different roles from her/his counterpart in the traditional classroom, who claims superiority over her/his students, leaving no chance for them to practice the target language or to express their attitude regarding their learning (Hedge, 2003). Communicatively speaking, the teacher interacts "with students, giving feedback, offering solutions and assign speaking in a collaborative way" (Gutierrez, 2005, p. 7). S/He is also a guide, a planner, an organizer, an inspector, an assessor, a prompter, a resource, a facilitator of learning, an instructor, a curriculum-developer, a classroom manager, a consultant, and a monitor (Zuo, Zhilu, & Doris, 2005; Harmer, 2003; Crookall & Oxford, 1990; Hedge, 2003; Littlewood, 1981). Knight (2003) summarizes the role of the teacher by saying that,

The CLT teacher is often more autonomous than the audio-lingual teacher because classroom practices are usually less predictable, and in his/her role as facilitator of communication the teacher often interacts with the learners in ways which mirror interaction outside the classroom, e.g., by asking real questions about the learner's background, opinions, etc (p. 158).

However, the most important thing regarding the teacher's role in a communicative classroom is providing students with opportunities to talk and to speak the target language. One way of doing that, as proposed by Gower et al. (1995), is good control of teacher talking time. Gower et al. also believe that an EFL teacher needs to know how to balance between teacher talking time and students talking time. The purpose, according to Gower et al., is to give the students maximum opportunity to talk, to listen closely enough to them, and to appreciate their efforts. However, the teacher, they add, needs to talk more than students when presenting, clarifying, modeling or revising language, setting up activities, giving instructions and feedback, providing language input, and establishing rapport by chatting with students (ibid, p. 33). In order to avoid much teacher talking time, Gower et al. set out the following steps:

- (1) The teacher can choose language the students already know (usually below their level) to give instructions and explanation,
- (2) the teacher should not describe her every intention, such as *Now I am going to check your comprehension*,
- (3) the teacher can use gestures when instructing students, such as *Repeat* (Also miming and showing pictures or real objects can convey the meaning unambiguously),
- (4) the teacher should not repeat herself, such as asking question twice (Silence and waiting is necessary because students may need time to process the question), and
- (5) the teacher should not repeat what a student says because this might make the other students not to pay any effort to understand their friend but they might wait until the teacher interprets it (p. 34–35).

Generally speaking, the communicative classroom requires less teacher-centered instruction. However, this does not mean omitting the teacher's authority inside the class. The focus, then, should be placed on providing many opportunities for the students to practice the target language and on fulfilling the teacher's various roles.

2.2.2. Communicative activities for listening and speaking

Communicative activities have an important role in creating opportunities for students to use the language for communicative purposes. Generally, communicative activities are "fluency-based activities" (Tait, 2001, p. 1), which encourage meaningful and purposeful interaction between students, where they bridge an information or opinion gaps, ask for or give real information, find out about the opinions of the other students, etc. (Gower et al., 1995; & Harmer, 2003). However, for a successful implementation of communicative activities, the classroom must be student-centered and the activities must be "interactive, authentic, purposive, and contextualized" (Richards & Rodgers, 1982, p. 163). Basically, communicative activities are based on the following characteristics: (1) a desire to communicate, (2) a communicative purpose, (3) a focus on language content not language forms, (4) a variety of language used, (5) no teacher intervention, and (6) no control or simplification of the material (Longman English Language Teaching

[LELT], 2007, para. 5). For purposes of the present study, this section will review various communicative activities designed specially to promote listening and speaking.

1. Listening activities

Different factors should be taken into account when preparing listening exercises, such as the kind of real-life situations, the specific difficulties students are likely to encounter, and need practice to overcome (Ur, 1984). Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) describe specific listening tasks which can be used in a communicative classroom. Some of these are:

1. Students listen to the teacher when she/he gives instruction, reads, asks questions, tells stories, describes, etc.
2. Students can listen to other students giving directions, asking questions, giving summaries, recounting incidents (e.g., describing what they saw or what happened on their way to school).
3. Students can engage in dialogue dramatization and role-playing of modules.
4. Students listen to the same recordings of language lesson segments.

5. Students listen enough to cassette or tape recordings of oral materials so that they anticipate or supplement what they are about to hear.
6. Using films that can be watched several times and listening to selected radio and television programs.
7. Making telephone conversations through simulation in the class.
8. Interviewing people where possible.
9. Playing language classroom games.
10. Perform problem-solving tasks through working in pairs and/or groups.
11. Taking part in spontaneous role-playing exercises (pp. 138–139).

The above specific tasks can be carried out through the four general activity types presented on pp 34–39.

2. Speaking activities

To develop their speaking skills, students should be encouraged to work with each other as well as with their teacher. Specific tasks for doing so are listed below.

1. Responding to directions or questions given by the teacher or another student.

2. Giving directions for other students.
3. Preparing original sentences with communicative expressions, structures or notions which have been presented.
4. Answering questions asked by other students about any class or out-of-class experiences.
5. Asking the teacher or other students questions about reading or common experience.
6. Describing objects from a picture or a chart.
7. Using their own words to tell or retell a well-known story or experience.
8. Reporting a prepared topic and be ready to answer questions on it.
9. Improvising realistic conversations about a class shop, a library, or other appropriate resources.
10. Taking a role in a communicative language game.
11. Participating in some oral group activities, such as a debate, a discussion, a forum, based on research, where students are forced to listen attentively to the previous speaker in order to agree, disagree, express uncertainty, or add other relevant information.

12. Giving a report in the target language about a newspaper article written in the native language (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983, p. 141–142).

The following four activity types underlie the specific listening and speaking tasks listed above.

Information-gap activity

Information-gap activity is defined as "a situation where information is known by only one or some of those present. Students use the language they have at their command to bridge the information gap – by asking questions, giving information, etc." (Gower et al., 1995, p. 211).

However, Taylor (1983) warns that

If the speaker and hearer are both in possession of the same information prior to beginning their communication, communication cannot, technically, be said to take place. Therefore, a communicative methodology will need to create situations in which students share information not previously known by all participants in the communication (p. 73).

Taylor (1983) explains that "activities which require the bridging of information gaps provide students with opportunities to learn how to deal with extended discourse above the sentence level, and to cope with receiving information which is new and unexpected" (p. 79). Taylor

further adds that this kind of activity can be established by using *jigsaw*, which creates a real need for students to communicate with each other (as both giver and receiver of information), and *task dependency*, which provides opportunities for students to practice a variety of communicative skills (p. 79–80).

Role-play activity

Role-play is "a classroom activity which gives the student the opportunity to practice the language, the aspects of role behaviour, and the actual roles he may need outside the classroom" (Livingstone, 1983, p. 6). Furthermore, "it is a largely spontaneous dramatic activity usually performed by a small group of persons whose goal is to explore some problematic social encounter, an exploration intended to provide both participants and observers with a learning experience" (Sharan & Sharan, 1976, p. 160). Krish (2001) further clarifies what is meant by a role-play. He defines it as a "highly flexible learning activity which has a wide scope for variation and imagination". Back in 1976, Wilkins illustrated the importance of role-play in the classroom by pointing out that

Role-playing is likely to be a most important technique in teaching to a notional, and particularly a functional, syllabus. It will ensure that all utterances are properly contextualized and it will require the learner to attempt to exhibit the very language behavior that we have defined as the principal objective of language learning (p. 81).

Clearly, role-play has many advantages, such as maximizing the students' activity, increasing the possibility of effective learning and the motivation to learn, giving the students a chance to use the language by themselves without the teacher's direct control, allowing the students to explore feelings and beliefs within a framework that is non-threatening to themselves or others, improving the students' speaking skills in various situations, and helping them to interact (Livingstone, 1983; Liao, 2006; Krish 2001). In particular, role-play is a kind of mask for shy learners, in which difficulty in conversations can be liberated; furthermore, it is fun and brings enjoyment, which leads to better learning as agreed by both learners and teachers (Krish (2001).

However, certain disadvantages are associated with the application of role-play. These are related to small-size classes with huge student numbers, the noise created by role-play groups in a small classroom, and the long time it requires (Livingstone, 1983).

Conversation activity

Conversation activity stimulates students to speak using the target language by discussing subjects with their partners (Walcyn-Jones, 2002).

Basically, it helps students to use "verbal strategies in natural, true-to-life situations" (Wall, 1987, p. 6).

Recently, there has been a consensus in the literature about the importance of conversation activity in language teaching. Judy (1981) addresses this issue by saying that "when acknowledged as important, conversation will become the foundation for the entire spoken language program. Indeed, without students who are secure and competent conversationalists, other oral language activities will be dull, static, or ineffectual" (p. 250). Speaking of the centrality of conversation, Wilkins (1976) asserts that

Dialogues in teaching are far more crucial than is the case in synthetic approaches, that such dialogues should be based much more closely on the kinds of linguistic interaction that take place in real language use and should not be treated simply as ways of contextualizing particular grammatical structures, and that the contribution of the learner should be to play those roles in the dialogues that we can predict he will take subsequently in real acts of communication (p. 81).

Typically, conversation can be used "when students are practicing giving opinions and showing agreement or disagreement" (Watcyn-Jones, 2002, p. 9). Generally, conversation helps students to be responsible for their own learning and to be confident in using the target language (Galloway, 1993).

Gaming activity

The best way to reduce the stress inside the classroom, as many practitioners believe, is through games. A game is "an activity in which people agree to abide by a set of conditions in order to achieve a desired state or end" (Shirts, 1972, cited in Sharan & Sharan, 1976, p. 188). Many writers have highlighted the increasing popularity of gaming in language learning. Crookall and Oxford (1990), for example, maintain that "gaming embodies the communicative approach, the goal of which is to develop communicative competence" (p. 111). It, they add, "provides active involvement of the whole person (intellectual, physical, social, and emotional) and uses all four language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing)" (p. 111).

Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) insist that games can be used as "an enjoyable change of pace while reinforcing language" (p. 182). Likewise, McCallum (1980) argues that

When one considers the importance of communicative competence in the target language, a major goal of all language acquisition, and the need for spontaneous and creative use of that language, one recognizes the significant role of word games in achieving these objectives. Students, in the formal atmosphere of game play, are less self-conscious and therefore more apt to experiment and freely participate in using the foreign language. In addition, games automatically stimulate student interest; a properly introduced game can be one of the highest motivating techniques (p. 4).

Overall, games are used to learn, in a fun way, specific forms and vocabulary and to encourage students to interact fluently with each other when using the target language. Ice-breakers and scavengers, for example, are two of the best game playing inside the communicative classroom. Ice-breakers, one can observe, are used to break the barriers among students, whereas the scavenger is a kind of game where students ask each other questions to find out certain information. Both game types, according to Frank (2001), help the students increase confidence and cooperate with each other.

The activities and techniques reviewed previously are all fine in principle, but they cannot be carried out without effective implementation of pair and small-group work, which aims to "encourage fluent, uninterrupted communication" (Gower et al., 1995, p. 50).

Generally, working in small groups, as admitted by many practitioners, such as Jaques (1984), Witteman (1997), Judy (1981), Gower et al. (1995), and Menking (2001), has various advantages: (1) small groups encourage a conversational tone that the large class does not, (2) they provide good opportunities for the students to interact with one another and help them to become independent of the teacher, (3) they draw out the quiet students who do not contribute to the whole class, (4) they provide change in pace and add variety to the lessons, (5) they encourage rapport between students, and (6) they are considered valuable

in students' overall education. Moreover, small group work, compared to dealing with the whole class, saves the teacher's time and they provide the teacher with opportunities to monitor individual performance.

Ironically, as Sharan & Sharan (1976) observe, "although many teachers would like to experiment with work in small-group settings, they are unlikely to do so" (p. 4). Brumfit (1984) substantiates this view, saying that "in spite of the impressive agreement by theories that group work is desirable, we should note a recent observation that group work is rarely used by teachers" (p. 75). The reason, according to Witteman (1997), is that teachers

hesitate to switch to cooperative and collaborative forms of learning, because they feel that traditional classroom instructions allows them to exercise direct control over the learning process. They argue that both teachers and students feel more secure, when they operate within the responsibility of the teacher (p. 25).

Similarly, Menking (2001) found out, in a study he conducted to investigate pair and small group activities, that the majority of the participants utilized pair and small group exercises, but their implementation was not as effective as it should have been. Some of the hindrances reported (see pp. 53–56) were due to the limited time of the class period.

Communicatively speaking, Gower et al. (1995) believe that pair and group work can be used for most types of lessons. They can be used when students want to ask about unknown words, compare their answers to tasks, correct each other's work, practice dialogues, engage in information gap activities and role-plays, discuss topics and play games, etc (p. 45).

It is worth pointing out here that the biggest problem that confronts the teacher is the selection of group members. Crookall and Oxford (1990) classify groups into two types: homogeneous versus heterogeneous groups. In homogeneous groups, all group members can participate equally, without having certain personality barriers. Heterogeneous groups, on the other hand, comprise unequal members. They allow weaker students to acquire the target language via comprehensible input, that is, from their peers during communicative interaction.

However, before arranging the groups, the teacher should take into account the size of the class, the size of the groups, the type of activity, and the style of the furniture. For activities which require four or five students per group, such as exercises and projects, the best arrangement is to have students sit round the desks, which is known as café style as shown in Figure 1. This modular arrangement is advocated for classes in

which student-student interaction is most important, where they work either as pairs or as groups.

In addition, this arrangement maximizes interaction among groups (McCroskey & McVetta, 1995). The teacher in this kind of arrangement must move between groups in order to monitor and give feedback (Miller 2000 & Clark, 2001). However, the "dark seats represent the areas where the most participation should be expected and the white seats represent the areas where the more apprehensive students will probably choose to sit" (Miller 2000, p. 98).

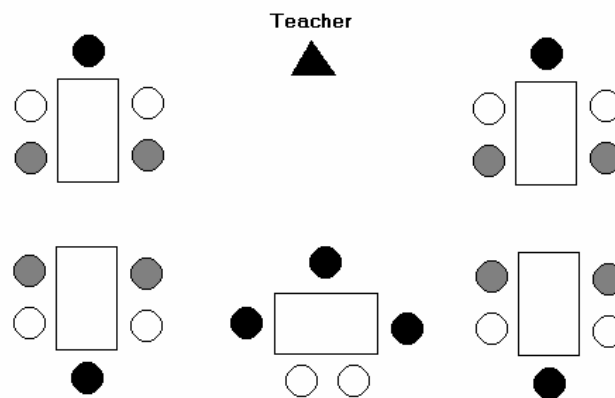


Fig. 1 *Modular Classroom Arrangement*
(Adapted from Miller 2000, p. 98)

Clearly this arrangement does not go with a class of 30 or 40 students. For such large classes, the best arrangement could be the double horseshoe arrangement, shown in Figure 2 below.

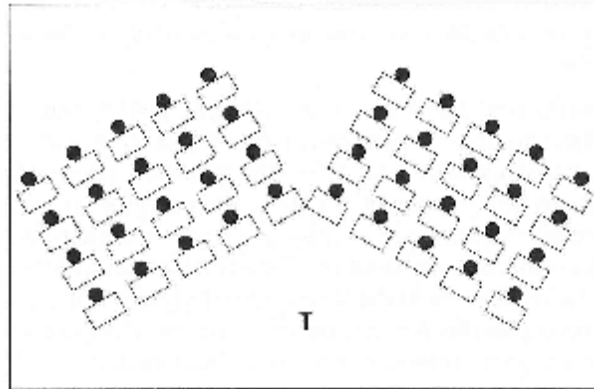


Fig. 2 *Double Horseshoe Arrangement*
 (Adapted from Gower et al., 1995, p. 22)

To sum up, an ideal communicative classroom requires a friendly environment, which "provide[s] rich and meaningful exposure to the foreign language, and reason and opportunity to use it" (Tongue & Gibbons, 1982, p. 68). It also allows the students a reasonable degree of responsibility over their own learning, and enables the teacher to work as a facilitator of the process of learning through different types of activities and materials, "which will help the learners to acquire language through classroom situations" (ibid, p. 68).

2.3. English language teaching in Saudi Arabia

Since the present study is designed to measure the effectiveness of the CA in the Saudi school system, it may be useful to place the approach in context, nationally and internationally. Below, we will look at the present

state of ELT in Saudi Arabia, which combines communicative and non-communicative elements, as well as the implementation of the CA internationally. However, the survey is going to be started with the most basic issues, the early beginnings of ELT in Saudi Arabia.

2.3.1. The early beginnings of ELT in the Saudi context

English language teaching in Saudi Arabia started in 1929 with only four hours per week. The number kept increasing over the years, so that the situation now is as follows:

Table 1

Overview of ELT in Saudi Arabia

Year	Stage	Grade	Hours/Wk
1929	Elementary stage	1 - 4	4
1942	Secondary stage	4, 5 & 6	4
1944	Secondary stage (scholarship school)	1, 2, & 3	12
	Secondary stage (scholarship school)	4 & 5	8
1953	Secondary stage (included six years)	1, 2, & 3	11
	Secondary stage	4	9
	Secondary stage (arts section)	5 & 6	9
	Secondary stage (science section)	5 & 6	8

Year	Stage	Grade	Hours/Wk
1958	Intermediate stage (In this year, secondary schools divided into intermediate and secondary)	1, 2 & 3	6
	Secondary stage	1	8
	Secondary stage (arts sections)	2 & 3	8
	Secondary stage (science section)	2 & 3	5
1963	Intermediate stage	1, 2 & 3	8
1970	Intermediate stage	1, 2 & 3	6
1974	Secondary stage	1, 2 & 3	6
1979	Intermediate & secondary stages	1, 2 & 3	4
*2002	Elementary stage	6	2
*2007	Elementary stage (introduced experimentally in few schools)	4	2
*2008	Elementary stage (introduced experimentally in few schools)	5	2

Adapted from Al-Hajailan, (2003)
*Adapted

Throughout the history of English language teaching in Saudi Arabia, different teaching methods have been used. In the 40's, as reported by Al-Hajailan (2003), "the core emphasis of the courses were [sic] to teach reading, ... writing and grammar". In addition, "the prevailing method",

he adds, "was called Michael West's Method" (p. 13). Moreover, the textbooks were based on English rather than Saudi culture (ibid, 2003).

In 1958, the aural-oral approach was adopted, which used a lot of repetition, imitation, and drills. The emphasis was on language rules, writing different topics, reading short stories and novels, and translating from and into Arabic and English (ibid, 2003). Accordingly, students were unable to speak or understand the language. Moreover, their writing and reading were very weak (Al-Saloum, 1416 & Faraj, n.d., as cited in Al-Twairish, 2002).

After that, the communicative approach was adopted through new sets of books published by Macmillan. These books taught all skills integrated together. Later, due to administrative problems, Macmillan's books were replaced with a new series known as *English for Saudi Arabia*. The new books, which were written by an expert group from King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM), were based on the communicative approach with topics completely related to the local Saudi culture (Al-Hajailan, 2003).

However, some shortcomings have been identified in these textbooks. The clearest is that they are structurally oriented. From my experience as a teacher of English in the intermediate and secondary stages, I realized that these textbooks support the traditional methods of teaching. That is because they do not include many functions and notions. Rather, they

focus on teaching grammar and vocabulary. In addition, most of the exercises require mechanical rather than communicative drills.

2.3.2. CA implementation in the Saudi context

Although the communicative approach was adopted in the Saudi schools, "the philosophy of Saudi Arabian educational system ... is contradictory to the essential nature of the CA" (Abu-Ras, 2002, p. 183). As a result, EFL teachers still use the traditional approaches in teaching English to the intermediate and secondary stages. Agreeing with Abu-Ras, Bakarman (2004) says EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia "have not completely discarded the traditional methods. Most of [them] spend much time in drilling without providing opportunities for the students to communicate in the target language" (p. 143).

A number of factors can be said to account for the failure to make the expected shift. The most significant one is that "EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia are not qualified and trained enough to teach English using the CA" (Al-Qurashi, 1990 & Al-Hojailan, 1996, as cited in Abu-Ras, 2002, p. 15). Additional factors were reported by Abu-Ras (2002) in a study designed to investigate the applicability of the CA in the Saudi context. He conducted his study on 180 EFL teachers in Makkah using a questionnaire related to the factors that hinder the effective use of the CA. The results of the study led the author to certain conclusions, such as (1)

some EFL teachers do not have a clear idea about the CA; (2) the CA goes against the beliefs of some EFL teachers about EFL learning; and (3) some EFL teachers are not communicatively competent in English (Abu-Ras, 2002, p. 152).

In addition to the above, he identified other problems related to Saudi EFL students (e.g., Communicative activities are boring for the students), syllabus (e.g., language functions are not stressed in the syllabus), and setting (e.g., grammar-based evaluation is imposed by the Ministry of Education) (Abu-Ras, 2002, p. 140).

In order to correlate teachers' theoretical knowledge and their practice in classroom teaching, a similar study was conducted by Bakarman (2004). She investigated the extent to which female EFL intermediate school teachers were aware of the CA and the extent to which this impeded the implementation of this approach in teaching English in the intermediate schools. The most important result she made was the teachers' unawareness of the theory underlying the CA. Consequently, they did not apply the principles of the CA in their teaching. What complicates the situation, according to Bakarman, is that Saudi EFL teachers cannot distinguish between the principles of different methods of teaching English, to the extent that they are not following any particular approach. In addition, she found out that the number of students in each class, which exceeded 40, prevented them from

participating in effective communicative activities, such as group work and role-play. Furthermore, only four forty-five-minute periods per week are provided, which does not offer much exposure to the target language (pp. 142–145).

Bakarman's results agree with Abu-Ras's (2002) results as regards the EFL syllabus. Both echo the view that textbooks do not focus on notions and functions of the language and do not include a variety of communicative activities.

2.4. Research into the CA

It has been admitted by many linguists, researchers and practitioners that the CA is the dominant view of learning and one of the ideal teaching approaches over the last few decades (Peter, 1996 & Choi, 1999). Furthermore, it "has been widely accepted as an effective way of teaching in ESL/EFL context" (Yoon, 2004, p. 2). Despite certain shortcomings (see pp. 53-56) identified by such scholars as Widdowson (1989), the practicality of the CA (as will be shown below) has been proved by many empirical studies, e.g., Savignon (1972) as cited in Friedenberg & Bradley (1981), Stepp (1996), Flannigan (1999), Liao (2003), Tuncel (2006), Adams (2004), Konstantyuk (2003), Su (2002), Gutierrez (2005), and Chen (2000).

Cited in Friedenberg and Bradley (1981), Savignon (1972) compared the communicative competence of three groups of college students learning French. Her first group followed a modified audio-lingual approach and used the language lab once a week. The second group followed the same traditional approach and engaged in French cultural activities once a week. The third group also followed the modified audio-lingual method, but they engaged in communicative activities with native speakers once a week. All the three groups were, then, given a traditional discrete-point exam as well as a test on oral communication. The results showed no significant differences among the three groups on the traditional test of linguistic competence; whereas for the test of communicative competence, the third group performed considerably better than the first and the second groups (p. 404).

Several studies have shed light upon the effect of the CA in improving students' oral proficiency, for example, Gutierrez (2005) observed the teachers' and the students' roles during the development of oral tasks. He found out that his students attained proficiency in language use where they could speak fluently through asking and giving information and through supporting their ideas (ibid, p. 7).

Additionally, some researchers (Adams, 2004; Konstantyuk, 2003; Chen, 2000) have argued that students' oral proficiency could be improved when they engage in communicative activities, mainly by

interacting with each other. Adams (2004), asserts that conversational interaction can promote second language learning. For her experimental study, she used a treatment group, which participated in task-based interactions in dyads and a control group which did not receive interactional opportunities. The results of the study showed that learner-learner interactions were more effective in promoting the emergence of higher-level syntactic forms and the acquisition of morphology. Similarly, Konstantyuk (2003) supports the view that interactive techniques, such as drama, poetry, role-plays, dialogues, discussions, simulations, language games, problem-solving activities are an integral part of the methodology. This particularly lends empirical support for communicative teaching methods that advocate interactions between learners in the classroom. In the same way, Chen (2000) had discovered a development in the students' communicative styles when he examined four ESL undergraduate students' experiences with CLT through an experiment in which he used in-class tasks and after-class newsgroup discussion.

Stepp (1996) also carried out a study to explore the differences between teachers who use a communicative approach and those who use a noncommunicative one. The study revealed that teachers using a communicative approach paid more attention to the affective domain, which refers to how individuals feel emotionally and physically while

learning. Another important result indicated that teachers using a communicative approach employed a wider variety of materials, activities, and student groupings than teachers using a noncommunicative approach.

Without the teachers' awareness of the principles of the CA, an effective implementation of the approach would be impossible. This, indeed, would indicate a gap between theory and practice. In this connection, Yembise (1994) investigated the theoretical and practical relevance of the communicative approach to Indonesian EFL teachers. His study was based on the assumption that teachers' understanding of the theoretical knowledge underlying the approach they adopt will be reflected in their classroom teaching. The results indicated that the teachers' knowledge of the CA was minimal. The same result was obtained by Bakarman (2004), who found out that most Saudi EFL teachers lack awareness of the CA principles. Clearly, this indicates the inconsistency between theory and practice. Therefore, preparing teachers before practicing teaching is evidently of great importance.

Another indication of the substantial gap between theory and practice has been reported by Flannigan (1999), in a study conducted to explore the development of student teachers' beliefs and perceptions about CLT in the foreign language classroom. Although their perception of CLT emphasized inductive teaching practices, deemphasized formal grammar

instruction and depended on the use of the target language in the classroom, the participants did not follow their perception during practice. Due to this repeated result, Flannigan argues that "it is very difficult for inexperienced pre-service teachers to put into practice something about which they have a minimal understanding, particularly when the classroom environment works against the implementation of communicative language teaching practices" (ibid, p. 3).

Similarly, Liao (2003), for example, used a questionnaire, observation, and an interview in a study that revealed favorable attitudes towards CLT by most of the teachers. On the other hand, some teachers had misconceptions of CLT, such as teachers' dominance on the classroom. These misconceptions made the teachers unable to overcome hindrances such as grammar-based textbooks and students' low level of English. Interestingly, through the process of observation, Liao found one teacher who had a clear understanding of CLT and was able to overcome the situational constraints. Therefore, Liao concluded that situational constraints can be overcome and CLT cannot be viewed as impossible. This leads us to say that in order for EFL teachers to overcome hindrances to the application of the CA, they must be trained adequately during pre-service training.

On the other hand, some researchers (e.g., Zhang, 1997; Gahin & Myhill, 2001; Menking, 2001) have listed a number of hindrances to

effective CA implementation. Some of the challenges facing teachers in adopting the CA were the pressure of external examinations, teachers' feeling of frustration and stress, teachers' distrust of educational administrators and their ideas, teachers' low levels of English language proficiency, absence of teaching resources and support materials, economic factors, and influences of colleagues. At the same time, some students could not favor CA implementation for several reasons, such as their reactions and attitudes towards pair and group work (e.g., the difficulty of interacting verbally), embarrassment to make mistakes, students' low level, their responsibility, their reluctance to question the teacher, their learning styles such as shyness, and overwhelming preference for a deductive teacher-centered learning style. Other constraints were related to the educational environment and system, such as class size, the time period of lessons, the textbook-centered nature of the uniform curriculum, poor facilities, problems inherent in ethnic minority education, lack of good, authentic learning materials, and the absence of visible social uses of the language outside the walls of the classroom.

Other studies have shown that the Western version of the CA is inapplicable in certain contexts. That is because it has been designed by native English speakers for non-native speaking students who study English in Western countries. These assumptions were explored by

O'Sullivan (2001), who found out that the CA was inappropriate to the Namibian context due to the professional weakness of the teachers. A similar view was expressed by Jarvis and Atsilarat (2004), who found that although all teachers claimed to understand and use the approach, they reported having some problems during implementation. Musthafa (2001), holding the same view, argues that "the communicative approach has failed to help students become any more competent in the use of the English language for real-life purposes" (p. 1). He believes that CLT requires special conditions, which is not easy to create in schools. In this regard, O'Sullivan (2001) asserts that "Western communicative approaches are transferable to developing country contexts ... if simplified and prescribed lesson plans and training is provided" (p. 59).

To promote meaningful language leaning, Musthafa (2001) advices EFL teachers to inform their students about the objectives of learning. This is particularly significant because "a language activity is meaningful when learners see in what they are doing clear and reasonably good reasons why they do what they do" (ibid, p. 7). Moreover, classroom activities should have some personal relevance to the students. Therefore, teachers must base "the learning materials on some things dear to the learners" (ibid, p. 7). Although Musthafa believes that the CA has failed in some cases to make the students communicatively competent in the target language, he recommends following the principles of the CA,

such as focusing on students' needs and informing them about the objectives of learning.

The central idea of the foregoing review was the effectiveness of the CA and its applicability in certain context. The review has provided evidence regarding the improvement of students' ability to speak the target language fluently and appropriately when following the CA. On the other hand, the literature has also shown various hindrances that might impede effective CA implementation.

2.5. Summary

The previous studies reviewed above are particularly interesting because they give some indication of the possible effect of the CA on students' overall performance in English as a second or foreign language. However, the most obvious conclusion from the foregoing review of literature is that the implementation of the CA in schools is faced by myriad of constraints. On the other hand, many empirical studies have shown its effectiveness in promoting students' communicative competence. However, in my opinion the most significant hindrance to an effective implementation is teachers' ignorance of the principles that underlie the CA. Other constraints are related to the educational system, local settings, and cultural factors. Accordingly, some researchers, such

as O'Sullivan (2001), insist on not using the Western version of the CA before modifying it according to the context in which it is going to be implemented. This could be done by simplifying it in accordance with the various contextual constraints involved (p. 59).

As many studies have shown, "teachers' beliefs could filter the way they perceive their teaching and influence their practice" (Mak, 2004, p. 1). Thus, if they have a clear understanding of the CA, all the reported constraints would be overcome even though they are powerful. Moreover, as Westrup (1992) suggests, teachers need a significant change in their responsibilities and relationship with learners. In addition, they need considerable knowledge about communicative and cooperative strategies. Menking (2001) recommends that instructors persevere for a period of time – during which their teaching might not be as smooth as desired – before the students accept the CA (p. 37). Furthermore, Huang (2005) argues that "although barriers need to be removed, teachers need to reconceptualize communicative teaching and seemingly negative factors, such as tests, lack of time, and poor skills of students" (p. 3).

The fact to bear in mind is that successful implementation of the CA is an area of controversy. However, apparently lost in this debate is enough empirical evidence of the effectiveness of the CA in certain context. The related literature revealed only an investigation of teachers' opinion regarding the implementation. Perhaps with increased efforts in

controlling the contextual constraints, the CA will work effectively. If seen as a complicated effort, the implementation of the CA can be understood as complex and difficult, but quite not impossible.

Therefore, this study will attempt to implement the CA, taking into account the need for controlling the reported hindrances. Such control would focus on time, place, textbooks, and students. To accomplish that, I believe, simplified, authentic and short activities could be used in accordance with the twenty-four minute period. Limited place could be managed by prior instruction given to students for daily smooth arrangement of groups. Supplementary materials would be used to enhance the textbooks, such as materials from commercial communicative books. Students would be familiarized with the CA principles in order to cope with their modified role in the classroom.

Overall, it should be noted that no empirical evidence has been provided from the Saudi context indicating whether the implementation of the CA experimentally would be effective or not. The related literature, as far as Saudi Arabia is concerned, only includes investigations of Saudi teachers' opinions regarding CA implementation. Therefore, this study will seek to provide such empirical evidence, particularly as regards the skills of listening and speaking. Additionally, since many previous studies have reported factors, which might impede effective implementation of the CA, the results of the study, I hope, will

inspire the Saudi educational system to facilitate this process for EFL teachers in the Saudi schools.

Chapter Three: Methods and procedures

This chapter provides a detailed description of the population under study, sample selection, the test employed to measure the targeted skills, the ways of ensuring test validity and reliability, the scoring method, and finally the type of statistical methods used.

3.1. Research population and sample

The population selected for this experimental study was third year students at the Tenth Secondary School for Girls in Dammam, Saudi Arabia. The school was chosen because it is equipped with many facilities, such as language labs and spacious classrooms. It was expected that such facilities would enable the procedures for doing communicative activities.

In Saudi secondary schools, third year students are divided into two sections: science and arts. Two of the science classes were selected to be experimental group and control group. The reason for this choice is that science students are usually more motivated than arts students. The class which was chosen to be the experimental group had the smallest number of students (37). This way, hindrances to communicative language teaching resulting from large classes might be avoided.

Both groups consisted of a total number of 78 students: 37 experimental and 41 control. They were all aged between 17 and 18 as shown in Table 2 and Figure 3 below.

Table 2

Age distribution of participants

		EG	CG	Total
Age	17.00	25	32	57
	18.00	12	9	21
Total		37	41	78

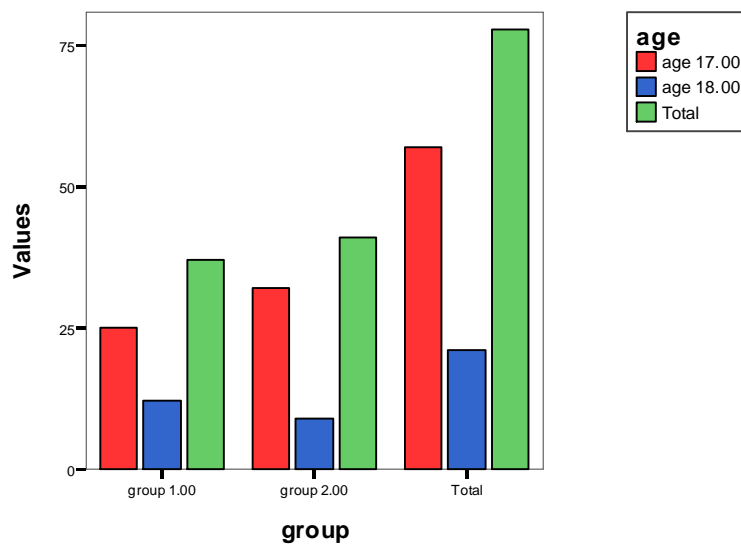
Age Distribution of Participants

Fig. 3

Age Distribution of Participants

(Group 1: Experimental Group; Group 2: Control Group)

Additionally, they all had the same exposure to English through formal classes in intermediate and secondary school. Similarly, since they came from the same country, it is reasonable to assume that they shared a homogeneous EFL background. They also matched each other in grade (third, or twelfth), major (science), and school (the Tenth Secondary School for Girls). Moreover, they came mostly from the same neighborhood and were the same gender and age.

The Experimental group, as shown in Table 3, represents 47.43 % of the sample of the study; whereas the control group represents 52.56 %. Hence, the whole sample represents 67.24 % of the population of the study.

Table 3

Sample distribution

	Frequency	Percentage
Experimental Group	37	47.43
Control Group	41	52.56
Total	78	67.24

The experimental and the control group were selected according to the randomized pretest-posttest experimental/control group design (see Figure 4).

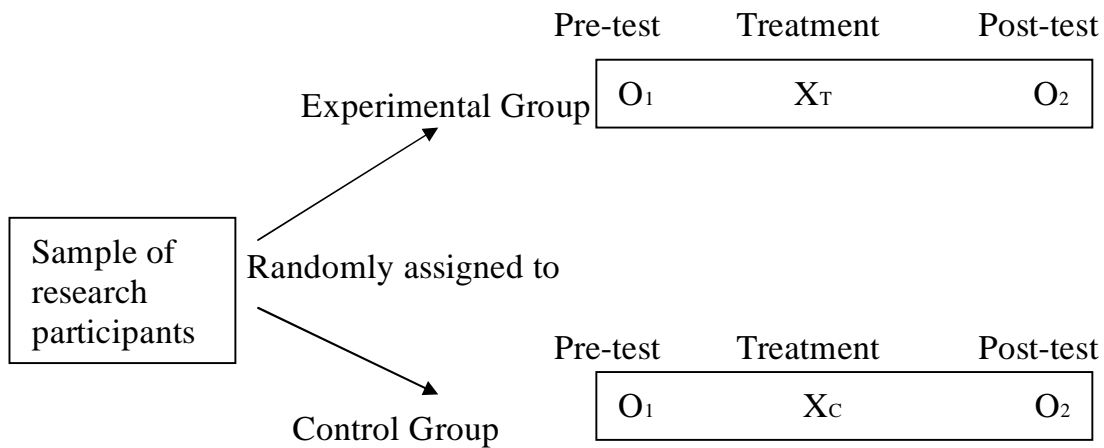


Fig. 4 Pretest-Posttest control-group design
(Adapted from Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 283)

Where:

O₁ and O₂ represent the pre-test and post-test assessment of the dependent variable.

X_T represents the treatment condition.

X_C represents the control or standard treatment condition.

As shown above, two groups were used for this study: an experimental and a control group. Random assignment was used to form the two groups. A pre-test was administered to both groups at the same time. The experimental group studied English according to the CA and the control group studied according to the traditional approach. I taught listening and speaking to the EG myself whereas the CG was taught by another teacher. Resources other than the textbook were used in order to

gather communicative materials. At the end of the experiment, which lasted seven weeks in the first term of 1428 (2007), a post-test was administered to both groups. Moreover, of the total sample of the control group, which reached 41, only 32 completed the pre-test and the post-test. Comparisons of performance across pre-test and post-test were therefore restricted to the data of 69 subjects for both experimental and control group.

3.2. Treatment

The independent variable used in this study consisted of two conditions: an experimental condition in which the students practiced listening and speaking skills according to the principles of the CA and a control condition in which the students practiced listening and speaking skills according to the traditional methods. Both groups had the same number of hours of instruction, which was four periods weekly, forty-five minutes each. The dependent variable was the listening and speaking skills of both groups.

The experimental group interacted in a learner-centered class. At the beginning, I explained the aims of the experiment and the principles that underlie the CA (see Appendix C). I also familiarized the students with a few communicative language functions, such as greeting, apologizing, making an excuse, etc. In addition, the students were asked to learn some

basic expressions necessary for expressing forgiveness, appreciation, joy, etc. Structure was mostly taught implicitly (inductively) and sometimes explicitly (deductively) whenever needed because "both usage and use are essential elements of communicative competence" (Tongue & Gibbons, 1982, p. 65). This means that students are to acquire language structures simultaneously while they are engaged in group interactions, that is, without forcing them to participate and without necessitating mastery of certain rules. In order to do that, I avoided long presentations. Furthermore, I focused on the use of dialogues in everyday situations, using different and various authentic listening materials (see Appendix D for the instructional resources). In the language lab, the students' seats were arranged in groups of four or five in order to practice conversation easily. I introduced and facilitated the communicative activities, and I acted as an observer and a monitor while the students performed the tasks. Whenever needed, the teacher should, as Taylor (1983) says, offer forms, introduce new patterns and notions, explain structures, provide vocabulary, identify errors, etc.

In addition, lesson plans, using a model known as the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), were used (see Appendix E). The SIOP model, according to Haynes (2004), "includes teacher preparation, instructional indicators such as comprehensible input and the building of background knowledge" as well as "strategies for classroom

organization and delivery of instruction" (para. 1). Several researchers have pointed out the effectiveness of SIOP model. Hanson & Filibert (2006), for example, indicate that "years of research have proven that students in classrooms implementing the SIOP model understand what is being taught and have experienced success in learning grade-level content while developing their ability in English language skills" (para. 1).

3.3. Instrument (test)

3.3.1. Description

The study involved a pre-test and a post-test, which covered the listening and speaking skill (see Appendixes A & B). I designed the tests according to: (a) the CA principles; (b) the related literature, particularly procedures of similar studies; and (c) the textbook series *English for Saudi Arabia, Third Year Secondary, First Term*.

The listening test targeted the following sub-skills: (1) understanding functions: listening for specific information (focusing on meaning rather than form) through multiple choice items in order to observe the students' ability to comprehend a short talk; (2) sound discrimination and recognition of phoneme sequences by asking the students whether the pronounced words are the same or different and by circling the words they hear; and (3) guessing meaning from context by listening to short

conversations and choosing the correct definition of the underlined words.

The speaking test targeted the following sub-skills: (1) discourse management: coherence and cohesion devices by reading about a given situation then choosing the best response orally; (2) making the best choices for real-life situations by providing contextually appropriate responses orally after reading four personalized situations which are described in a few sentences and end with a question; (3) pronouncing words correctly and with appropriate intonation; and (4) engaging in an interview with the examiner. Unfortunately, the third and the fourth tasks were accomplished in the pre-test only and could not be done for the post-test for administrative reasons; I had been told to stop the experiment due to the dissatisfaction of some parents with the CA treatment. Therefore, both tasks were excluded from statistical analysis.

3.3.2. Test validity

A test is valid when "it measures what it is supposed to measure" (Oller, 1979, p. 70). Therefore, to ensure that the test employed in the present investigation is valid, I used internal, face, construct, trustees, and content validity. The test items were evaluated by some experts in the field (see Acknowledgments) to validate the suitability of the tasks to the students' abilities, the clarity of the instructions, the feasibility of test

items, the suitability of the allotted time, and test organization. Necessary changes to the test items were made based on the feedback from the experts.

3.3.3. Test reliability

For external reliability, I used the test-retest method, where a pilot study was conducted on 37 students. The test was piloted to make sure that the written format and the length of time allowed were appropriate. The test was administered for approximately 45 minutes.

After an interval of three weeks, the same test was retested on the same students. Pearson Product Moment Coefficient was used to measure the correlation between the test-retest results. The results of the test showed a high correlation, which reached .881. The consistency of the correlations between test-retest scores suggested that the listening and speaking test was correlated and thus had a high reliability.

For further investigation of the test's internal consistency, Cronbach's Alpha formula was applied to the data from the pilot study mentioned above. The value of Alpha reached .90, which is considered quite high. Thus, the test was found statistically reliable.

3.3.4. Scoring

For the total test performance, scores are tabulated out of 29. For the listening test, task one is tabulated out of 4, task two out of 7, task three out of 6, and task four out of 4. One mark is assigned for every correct answer. On the speaking test, task one is tabulated out of 4, task two out of 4, task three out of 16, and task four out of 20. As mentioned earlier, task three and four of the speaking test were excluded from the total test performance. The listening and speaking test was administered in one period of approximately 45 minutes.

3.3.5. Statistical methods

In order to analyze the pre-test and post-test, the data was computed by means of the statistical package SPSS. The kinds of analyses that were used included Pearson Product Moment Coefficient, which indicates the degree of relationship between two sets of numbers as well as the frequencies, percentage and means. The pair and the independent sample's *t*-test was also used to determine whether the difference in means between the two groups – if it existed – was significant at the .05 level. The above statistical types were additionally used to compare the following: the pre-test means for both groups, the pre-test and post-test means for both groups, and the post-test means for both groups.

In order to control the influence of the pre-test on the post-test, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), which is a "method of statistically controlling for extraneous variables" (Lauer, 2006), was used. That is to say, it was employed to adjust "the post-test scores for the influence of the pre-test so that the adjusted post-test scores are not biased due to the pre-test" (ibid, p. 58).

3.4. Summary

In this chapter, I presented the population and sample under study, the design of the experiment, a detailed description of the research tool (a listening and speaking test), test validity and reliability, ways of scoring, and statistical methods used. In the next chapter, we will look at the statistical analyses as well as the findings.

Chapter Four: Statistical analyses and results

The main aim of this study was to explore whether an experimental application of the CA could positively affect third-year secondary students' overall listening and speaking skills. In this chapter, I will discuss the research questions and hypotheses related to this problem. The mean scores of both the experimental and control group will be used to verify or reject the research hypotheses. In addition, a *t*-test and a two-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) will be applied to see whether the differences were significant or not. The computer program called SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) will be used since it has been admitted by many researchers in the field as being the best program used for the analysis of results.

4.1. Testing the hypotheses and answering the research questions

In order to measure the effect of the CA on the students' listening and speaking skills, a number of questions were raised (see pp. 7–8). To answer these questions, this section will present the results of the statistical analyses of the experimental and the control group's pre-test and post-test, as well as the results of ANCOVA.

4.1.1. Statistical analysis of the EG's pre-post tests

In order to find out an answer to the main research question, which is "Will the implementation of the CA have a positive effect on the listening and speaking skills of third year secondary students?" the subordinate questions will have to be answered first.

The first subordinate question was: "Will students who are taught according to the CA principles score higher on the post-test than on the pre-test for the listening and speaking skills?" and the first hypothesis was: "Students who are taught according to the CA principles will score higher on the post-test than on the pre-test for listening and speaking skills." The scores obtained by the students in this group were computed to compare the pre-test with the post-test. Next, the scores were calculated to find the difference between the two mean scores. Table 4 below presents these mean scores along with the standard deviation.

Table 4

Overview of mean scores of the listening and speaking pre-post-tests for the experimental group

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Score 1	37	18.2432	6.12103	1.00629
Score 2	37	21.4054	4.36819	.71813

The previous table shows clearly the fairly big difference between the experimental group's pre-test mean and post-test mean. More precisely, the analysis (as illustrated in Figure 5) revealed that the experimental group achieved a mean score of about 18.2432 in the pre-test; whereas for the post-test, the mean score increased to 21.4054.

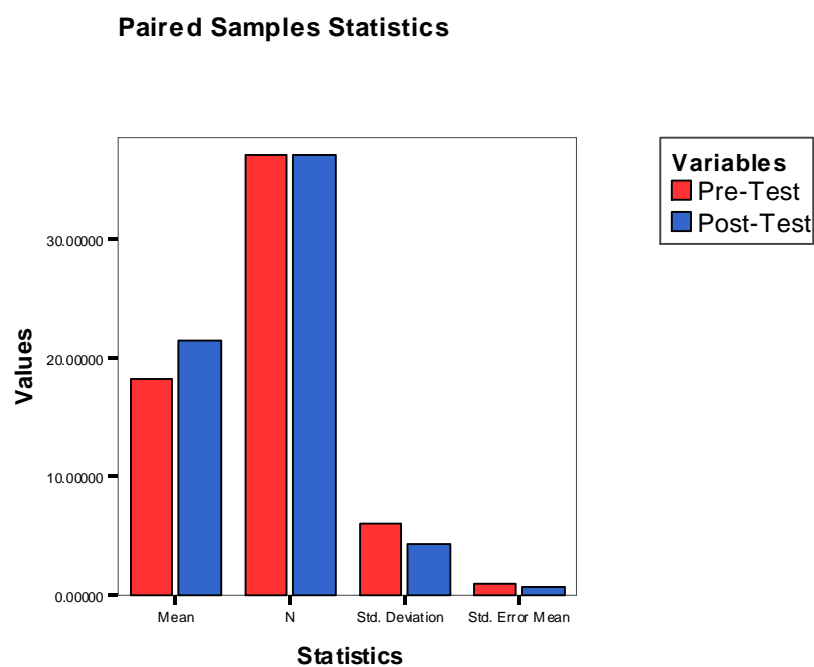


Fig. 5
Pre-Post-Tests Overall Mean Scores for the Experimental Group

To determine whether this difference between the pre-and the post-tests is statistically significant, a *t*-test was applied as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5

Overview of t-test value of the listening and speaking pre-post-tests for the experimental group

df	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T. Test Value	Sig. (2-tailed)
36	-3.16216	3.36249	.55279	-5.720	.000

Significant at the level of $p < .05$

From the above table, which shows the *t*-test value of the pre-post-tests of the experimental group, we can see that the *t*-test value was -5.720, which is greater than the tabulated *t*-test value. The correlation between the pre- and the post-tests was significant ($r = -3.16216$, $p < .05$). This means that there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental group's pre- and post-tests. Hence, the null hypothesis, which stated that "Students who are taught according to the CA principles will score higher on the post-test than on the pre-test for listening and speaking skills" was retained. Such result indicated that the listening and the speaking skills of this group improved since the application of the experiment. One can conclude, then, that the CA positively affected the students in the measured skills.

4.1.2. Statistical analysis of the CG's pre-post tests

The second question was: "Will students who are taught according to the traditional approach score higher on the post-test than on the pre-test for the listening and speaking skills?", and the second hypothesis was: "Students who are taught according to the traditional approaches will score higher on the post-test than on the pre-test for listening and speaking skills." The scores obtained by this group were computed to make a comparison between the pre-test and the post-test scores. The scores were, then, calculated to ascertain the difference between the two mean scores. The results are shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Overview of mean scores of the listening and speaking pre-post-tests for the control group

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Score 1	32	17.4688	4.98374	.88101
Score 2	32	18.2500	5.62827	.99495

As the above table indicates, the mean score of the control group's pre-test was 17.4688 and the mean score for the post-test was 18.2500.

Clearly, the difference between both tests was, as illustrated in Figure 6, not large enough.

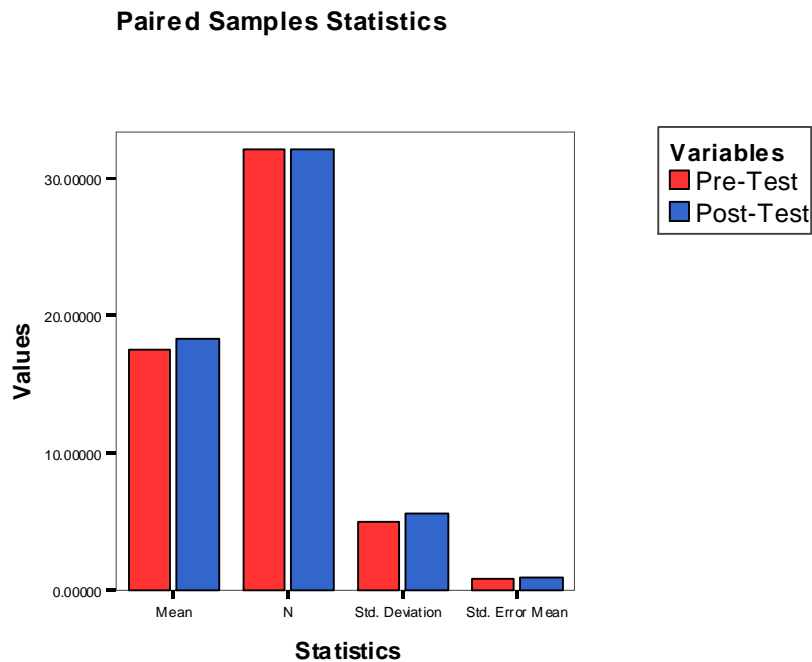


Fig. 6
Pre-Post-Test Overall Mean Scores for the Control Group

Much evidence can be illustrated through the following table, which shows the *t*-test value and whether it is statistically significant or not.

Table 7

Overview of t-test value of the listening and speaking pre-post-tests for the control group

df	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T. Test Value	Sig. (2-tailed)
31	-.78125	2.63640	.46605	-1.676	.104

As shown in Table 7, the t -test value was -1.676 and the significance was .104. The correlation between the pre- and the post-test was not significant ($r = -.78125$, $p > .05$). Since -1.676 was less than the t -test tabulated value, no statistically significant difference was shown. Hence, the hypothesis which assumed higher scoring in the post-test than in the pre-test for the control group was totally rejected.

4.1.3. Statistical analysis of the EG's and CG's post-tests

The third question, the most important issue in the study, was stated as follows: "Will the means of the EG in the post-test be the same as the means of the CG?" The hypothesis related to this question was: "The means for the EG in the post-test will be the same as the means for the CG." The scores obtained by both groups were computed to verify whether the score means of both groups were the same or different. The data for question three is presented in Table 8 below.

Table 8

Overview of mean scores of the listening and speaking post-tests for experimental and control groups

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std Error Mean
Exp.	37	21.4054	4.36819	.71813
Con.	32	18.2500	5.62827	.99495

The above table shows the mean score for the experimental group to be 21.4054 and that for the control group to be only 18.2500. This is illustrated in Figure 7 below.

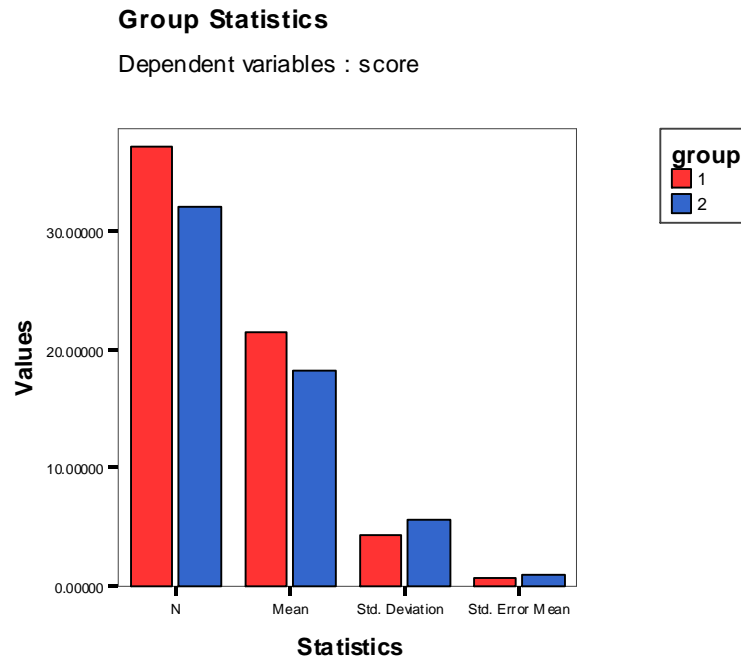


Fig. 7

Post-Test Overall Mean Scores for the Experimental Group and Control Group

(Group 1 ■ : Experimental Group; Group 2 ■ : Control Group)

Although the difference between the mean scores for the experimental group and the control group was fairly large, a *t*-test was applied in order to ensure that this large difference was statistically significant. Table 9 shows this clearly.

Table 9

Overview of t-test value of the listening and speaking post-tests for the experimental and control group

N	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	T. Test Value	Sig. (2-tailed)
67	3.15541	1.22704	2.572	.013

The *t*-test value in the above table reached 2.572. Since it is larger than the tabulated *t*-test value, it can be concluded that the *t*-test value was significant at the level of .05 ($r = 3.15541$, $p < .05$), a result that was in favor of the experimental group. This is proof that the experimental group outdid the control group with a statistically significant difference. Hence, it can be said that the CA had a strong positive effect on the students' listening and speaking skills. Thus, the null hypothesis, which stated that: "The means for the EG in the post-test will be the same as the means for the CG", was not supported because results showed a significant difference between the experimental group and the control one. The following chart illustrates the difference between the experimental and the control group as far as the post-test is concerned.

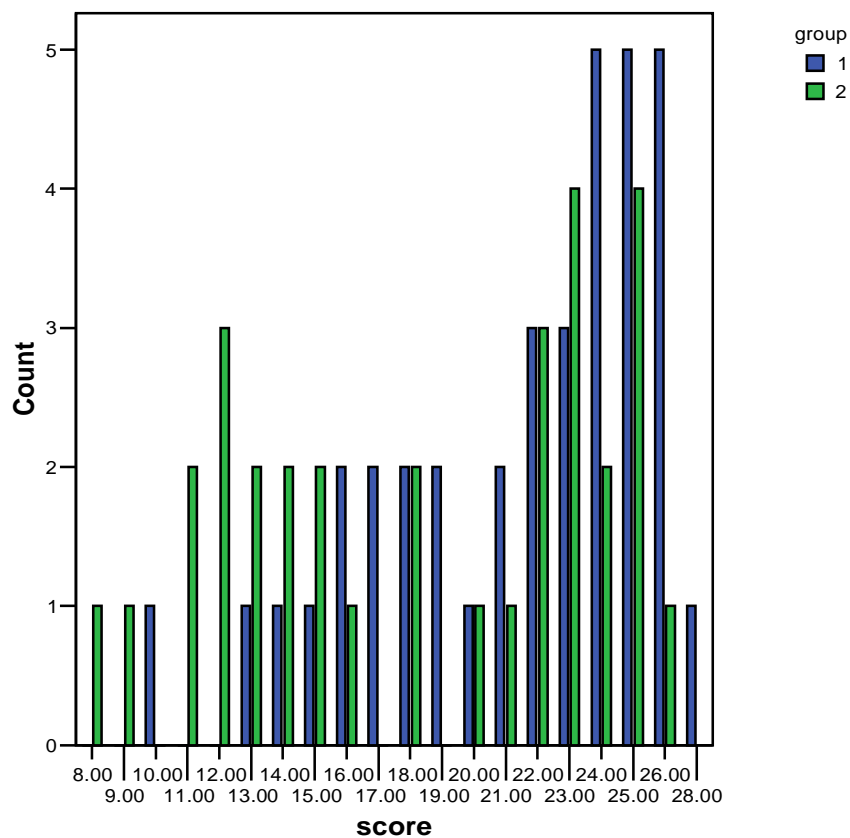


Fig. 8
The Difference Between the Experimental and the Control Groups' Post-Test Scores
 (Group 1 ■ : Experimental Group; Group 2 ■ : Control Group)

4.1.4. Statistical analysis of the EG's and CG's pre-tests

To ensure that the experimental and the control group have the same level of language proficiency and that the superiority of the experimental group was not due to different language backgrounds, an analysis of the

experimental and the control group's pre-tests was made. The outcome of the results is presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Overview of mean scores of the listening and speaking pre-tests for the experimental and control group

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std Error Mean
Exp.	37	18.2432	6.12103	1.00629
Con.	32	17.4688	4.98374	.88101

The above table makes it clear that the mean score of the experimental group reached 18.2432 whereas the mean score for the control group was 17.4688. The graph in Figure 9 below shows that.

However, to see whether this slight difference between the experimental group and the control group was statistically significant or not, a *t*-test was used (see Table 11 below).

Table 11

Overview of t-test value of the listening and speaking pre-tests for the experimental and control group

N	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	T. Test Value	Sig. (2-tailed)
67	.77449	1.35754	.571	.570

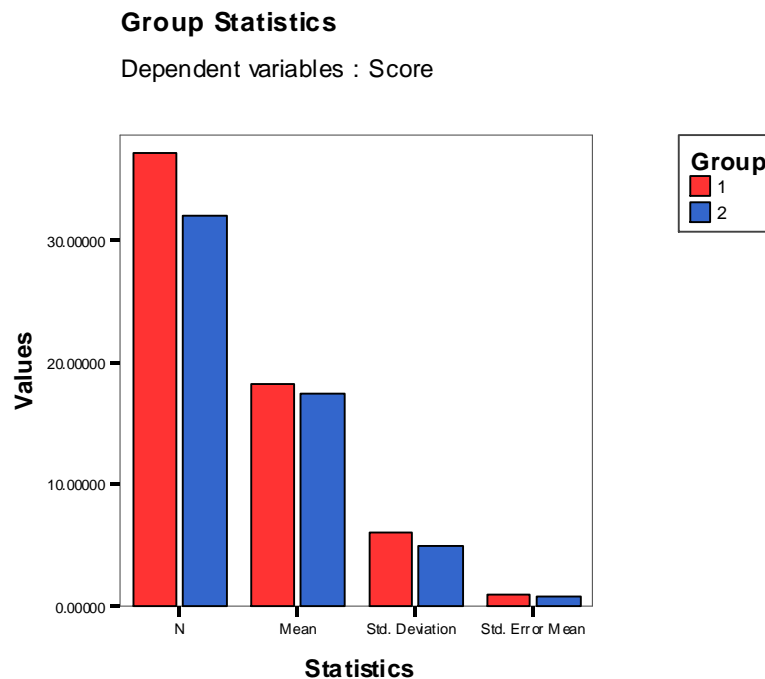


Fig. 9
Pre-Test Overall Mean Scores of the Experimental Group and Control Group
(Group 1 ■ : Experimental Group; Group 2 ■ : Control Group)

The *t*-test value, as table 11 shows, was .571, larger than the tabulated value. The significance of the *t*-test value was .570 ($r = .77449$, $p > .05$), which was not statistically significant. Hence, it can be concluded that there was not a large difference between the experimental and the control group in terms of their English language level. This is so because they both had the same language background, which is further evidence that the improvement of the listening and speaking skills of the experimental group can be attributed to the application of the CA. Figure 10 offers a

graphic representation of the pre-test difference between the experimental and the control group.

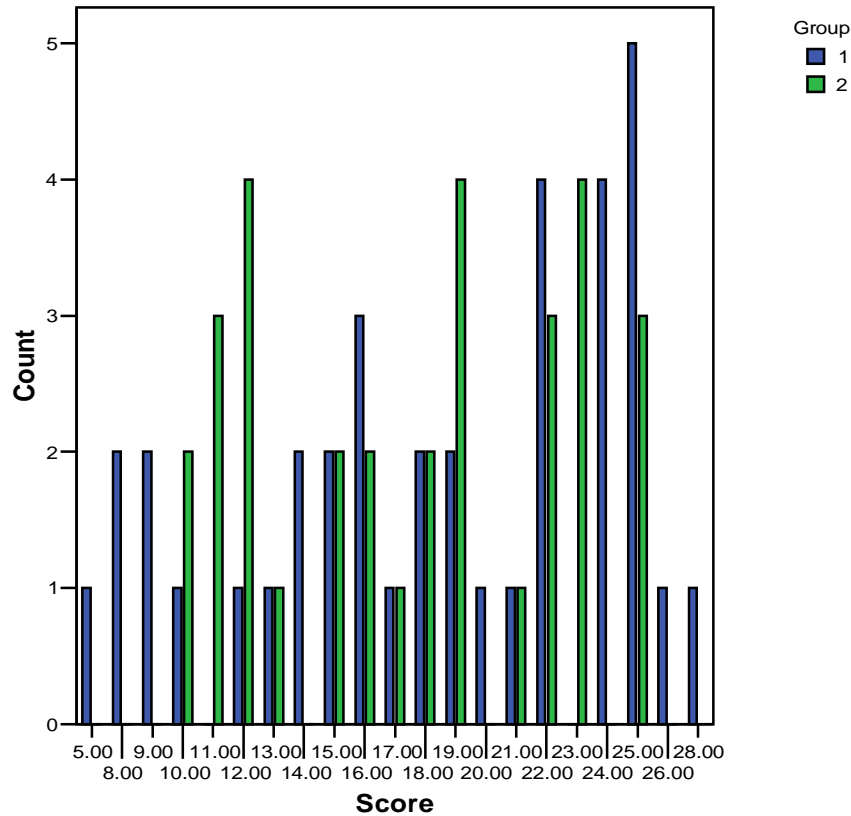


Fig. 10

The Difference Between the Experimental and the Control Groups' Pre-Test Scores

(Group 1 ■ : Experimental Group; Group 2 ■ : Control Group)

The final step now is to examine the major research question set for the present study, which was: "Will the implementation of the CA have a positive effect on the listening and speaking skills of third-year secondary students?" The substantial difference between the pre-test and the post-test scores for the experimental group permits me to confirm that the CA

did have a strong positive effect on the students' listening and speaking skills. Hence, the null hypothesis "The implementation of the CA will have a negative effect on the listening and speaking skills of third-year secondary students." is completely rejected because results showed that the CA had a strong positive effect on the listening and speaking skills of the experimental group. However, some researchers assumed that the superiority of the experimental group could be attributed to external factors other than the treatment, such as the effect of the pre-test on the post-test. Therefore, in order to adjust the post-test scores for the influence of the pre-test, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used. The results are reported in the following section.

4.1.5. ANCOVA results for both groups

The previous results showed a significant difference between the pre- and post-test in favor of the post-test for the EG and no significant difference between the pre- and post-test for the CG. However, to ensure that the external validity of the adopted tool was not affected by an interaction of the pre-test with the experimental treatment, a two-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used. In other words, the purpose was to make sure that the extraneous variables were effectively controlled. Such analysis was used because "ANCOVA adjusts the post-test scores for differences between the experimental and control group on

the corresponding pre-test" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 677). The ANCOVA is shown in Table 12.

Table 12

Summary of two-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA)

Dependent Variable: score

Source	Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1352.958	2	676.479	91.715	.000
Intercept	255.222	1	255.222	34.602	.000
Pre-test	1182.108	1	1182.108	160.266	.000
Error	486.811	66	7.376		
Total	29280.000	69			

a. Computed using alpha= .05

b. R Squared= .735 (Adjusted R Squared= .727)

Using the level of significance .05, I found that $F= 91.715$ exceeds 3.07, the value of F for 2 and 66 degrees of freedom, and that $F= 160.266$ exceeds 3.92, the value of F for 1 and 66 degrees of freedom. This indicates that the main effect of ANCOVA was not significant. Therefore, it would seem reasonable to conclude that the pre-test had no influence on the mean score of the EG's post-test and that the difference between the score means for the post-tests of both groups were significant. This proves that the superiority of the EG was not due to the effect of the pre-test on the post-test.

As a final comment on the contents of Table 12, it would seem perfectly natural to be fairly confident that the high EG's listening and speaking scores were due to the effect of the CA. A thorough discussion of the study findings will be presented in the following chapter.

4.2. Summary

This chapter has presented the statistical analyses along with the results. It has also examined the research hypotheses and answered the research questions. Next, in Chapter Five, a discussion of results along with the pedagogical implications, recommendations and suggestions for further research that follows from those insights.

Chapter Five: Discussion, implications, and recommendations

5.1. Discussion of results

The main finding of the analysis shown in Tables 1-12 indicated a positive answer to the major question of the study. It was found that the CA had a positive effect on the students' listening and speaking skills. This was proved through the higher mean scores that the experimental group obtained in the post-test. Specifically, the experimental group's performance was more differentiated than that of the control group in the post-test. Furthermore, the pre-test results for both groups did not reveal any statistically significant difference between the two groups. This means that before the application of the experiment they both had nearly similar listening and speaking levels. That is to say, they had the same language background.

In addition, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), which "provides us with an elegant means of reducing systematic bias, as well as within-groups error, in the analysis" (Coakes & Steed, 2001, p. 135), was used "to determine whether the independent variable is indeed having an effect" (ibid, p. 135). Based on the results, the main effect of ANCOVA was not significant and thus the pre-test was statistically controlled.

The findings of the present study, as mentioned elsewhere, showed that the experimental group had higher gain scores on the post-test than the students in the control group did. Thus, there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the control group.

The big difference between the experimental group and the control group could be attributed to many reasons. Firstly, during the seven weeks of the experiment, the experimental group used to listen daily to native speakers through tapes in the language lab. On the other hand, the control group did not have that opportunity. Such listening materials can be said to have enhanced the experimental group's listening abilities in an effective way. Secondly, the daily pair and group work used for the experimental group provided the students with opportunities to speak most of the duration of the English period. As a result, they became more confident and more willing to speak the target language. Fortunately, the experimental students – as shown through a survey of their attitudes regarding studying in a communicative classroom (see Appendix F & G) – had preference for the communicative atmosphere that made that possible. Seventy-one percent of the students favored studying in pairs and groups whereas only 48 % preferred the traditional classroom. Latragna (1997) indicated similar findings, where he found that the

students in his study had more preference for a nontraditional learning style, cooperative learning, and student-centered instruction.

It is undeniable that the superiority of the EG could be attributed also to communicative activities, which resemble real life, promote speaking, and improve listening comprehension. The fact to bear in mind is that communicative activities such as games (e.g., ice-breakers and scavengers), conversation practice, role-playing, information-gap, etc. generally require students to work in pairs or groups. However, the activities that were most interesting to participants in the present study were game playing activities, such as ice-breakers and scavengers. The secret behind their interest could be the unconventionality of these communicative activities as compared to traditional activities, such as pattern practice. Such finding confirms the findings of Su (1990), where a review of research and literature led him to conclude that "role-play might be a valuable and valid means for helping students gain communicative competence in the classroom because it provides EFL learners with a close-to-real-life speaking situation conducive to the development of oral communicative skills" (p. 1). In addition, the findings of his study showed significant improvement in his subjects' communicative competence, especially their oral language skills. This also agrees with the findings of Green (1993), where he found that the

communicative activities rated as more enjoyable than the non-communicative ones.

Similarly, Tuncel (2006), who used supplementary communicative and authentic materials with his subjects, suggested, "The addition of a communicative element leads to higher student achievement in measuring their test scores, and later in their specialist studies" (p. 2). Moreover, Konstantyuk (2003) found out that the inclusion of communicative language teaching, through drama, role-play, games, poetry, dialogues, discussions, simulations, language games, and problem solving, was an important factor in making learning effective and enjoyable.

However, though the experimental group involved in the present investigation appeared at first to be willing to participate in the experiment, they showed some unwillingness during the mid-term exams. Because of examination stress, most of them came to care more about their grades. After seeing that they had done fairly well on the tests, they became more relaxed and enthusiastic about the experiment. In spite of the tests and the extra effort the experimental group had to make, their listening and speaking skills showed improvement that was recognized by the English supervisor, who was astonished to see the degree of fluency that the experimental group had attained, as against the control group. This was in part due to the conversational interaction the students engaged in with each other and with their teacher, which matches the

findings of Adams (2004), whose study lends empirical support to communicative teaching methods which advocate interactions between learners in the classroom.

Based on the results of the present study, there was no statistically significant difference between the control group's pre-test and post-test. One can argue that this was expected, since the control group most probably had no opportunities to do communicative activities. Practitioners (e.g. Gage, 1975; Peter, 1996; Berns, 1985) argue that traditional methods are untrustworthy and inadequate because they do not help students to use the target language as it is used in real-life situations, where they need to communicate effectively with others. In other words, traditional methods fail to take into account the students' oral proficiency. Learner-centered strategies, therefore, can be used to enhance language and communicative skills acquisition and to gain more positive attitudes towards language learning (Tamburo (1986).

Unlike 'communicative students', students who study in a traditional classroom do not also have the opportunity to be responsible for their own learning. They only do what they are told to do by their teacher. In addition, the traditional arrangement of the classroom, which is probably in rows, does not allow the students to engage in meaningful conversations, role-plays, problem-solving, etc. Add to that the dependency on their almost traditional textbook, where much emphasis is

laid on grammatical rules along with mechanical drills. Since studying according to the traditional methods did not help them to cope with the target language in what Widdowson (1983) would describe as its normal communicative use, the control group could not improve their listening and speaking skills. In the traditional classroom, much of the students' time is devoted to learning and memorizing language forms. However, knowing grammatical rules would not build the learners' ability to speak the target language automatically. A similar conclusion had been made by Bialystok (1982), who argued that "knowing a form does not ensure that the form will or can be used in appropriate situations when the circumstances change"(p. 205).

What makes the situation more complicated is the fact that the listening and speaking skills are left out of the final exams in Saudi schools. Students and even teachers in the traditional classroom cannot be expected to care for skills that are not tested. This evidently explains the small difference between the control group's pre-test and post-test.

In conclusion, although the application of the experiment was faced with myriads of difficulties caused by the students themselves, the textbooks, and the school administration, it appeared clear that the listening and the speaking skills of the experimental group improved in nearly the desirable way. This, it may be argued, would not have been attained without the application of the CA.

5.2. Implications and recommendations

Several pedagogical implications emerged from the results of the present study. To begin with, the study could be an attempt to contribute to the Saudi educational reform process, encouraging an effective implementation of the CA in Saudi schools. This, of course, implies good control of the difficulties and challenges that might impede the implementation. Such control would encourage Saudi EFL teachers to adopt the CA in teaching English. The present study suggests a number of other procedures before the implementation, such as promoting students' oral communication through listening to English native speakers on tape, at least, concentrating on pair and group work, reducing the number of students in each class to at a maximum of twenty-five students, etc. However, the reduction of students' number would not be possible without increasing the number of classes per school.

An idea that is central to this issue is that the contribution of this study to educational theory lies in its attempt to link the CA to classroom practices. For much pedagogical practice, this will need a modification in teachers' role in the classroom in order to allow some opportunities for learners to rely on themselves. However, the dominance of teachers' traditional role could be reduced through pre-service and in-service training on the principles of the CA.

This study also indicated that textbooks which are more communicative could enhance students' communicative competence. With the absence of such textbooks, the present study suggests looking for supplementary materials in order to bridge the gap that can be found in the traditional textbooks.

Overall, the study results indicated that the communicative approach is as applicable to the Saudi context as it is to other contexts. Thus, its adoption in Saudi schools may be extremely necessary.

The recommendations that can be drawn from the foregoing conclusions and implications are:

1. Educational policy-makers should consider the applicability of the CA in the Saudi context.
2. A shift should be made from non-communicative to communicative ELT. The same suggestion was expressed by Al-Subahi (1988), who, on the basis of an analysis of the English program in Saudi intermediate schools, raised a serious demand for a new syllabus which should be based on the communicative-functional approach.
3. Recent methodological developments should be taken into consideration by EFL teachers.
4. EFL teachers should receive in-service training in applying CA principles.

5. English language teaching supervisors should facilitate the process of the CA implementation.
6. Each school should be equipped with a language lab in order to provide learners with opportunities to be exposed to the target language as used by native speakers.
7. Students should work in pairs and groups to promote their speaking skills.
9. Students should be encouraged to speak the target language with their classmates.
10. Local ELT textbook writers should work along communicative lines.

5.3. Suggestions for further research

In order to complement the findings of the present study, some further research can be suggested:

1. Much empirical research is needed world-wide to further our understanding of the positive effects of the CA on both receptive and productive skills.
2. Further investigation is needed to find ways to facilitate the adaptation of the CA to the Saudi EFL classroom and thereby enhance students' opportunities to speak English fluently and accurately.

3. Similar studies are critically needed in other parts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in order to see whether the results will be the same as or different from the results of the present study.

5.4. Final thoughts

The present study tried to measure the effect of the CA on the listening and speaking skills of some secondary students. As discussed in detail in Chapter One, different factors have made Saudi students unable to speak English fluently and appropriately. Among these factors is the dominance of traditional methods. A possible answer to this problem would be implementation of the CA. After the CA implementation in the present study, the experimental group outperformed the control group with a statistically significant difference. Overall, such result yielded an evidence of the positive effect of the CA on students' ability to understand and speak the target language effectively. Therefore, the present study recommends effective implementation of the CA with careful control of any constraints.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Pre-test and post-test students' version

Name: _____

Class: *Third Year, Section ()*

Total time: *45 minutes*

Listening Test

(1) Look at the picture and read the four questions below. (You have 2 minutes to do this.) Then listen to the talk and try to answer the questions. (You have 7 minutes to do this.): (Total: 9 minutes)



Adapted from Gill & Hartmann, (2005)

1. The speaker gives suggestions about

- (a) studying English inside the classroom
 (b) how to learn English very fast
 (c) coming to class everyday
 (d) how to be a teacher of English

2. According to the speaker, students can learn more English

- (a) by taking some magical English pill
(b) outside the classroom
(c) when everything is explained to them
(d) by attending class every day

3. In order to be a good English learner, a student must

- (a) control his own language learning
(b) depend on the teacher
(c) stop attending classes
(d) come to class every day

4. Who is the best teacher, according to the speaker?

- (a) a strict teacher who gives a lot of homework
(b) a friendly teacher who lets the students talk a lot
(c) you, the learner
(d) a teacher who does all of the talking

**(2) (A) Listen to the following words. Are the words said the same or different? Write (S) for 'same' and (D) for 'different'.
(Total: 5 minutes)**

1. ()

2. ()

3. ()

4. ()

5. ()

6. ()

7. ()

(B) Listen to the word pairs. Circle the word you hear.
(Total: 5 minutes)

1. thigh sigh
2. thin sin
3. throat tote
4. three tree
5. tenth tense
6. mouth mouse

(3) Listen to the following short conversations. Then guess the correct definition of the underlined words. (Total: 10 minutes)

- (1) Jack: Nancy, I heard you were late for class this morning.
Nancy: I **overslept** and missed the bus.

- (a) didn't sleep enough
(b) slept too late
(c) heard the bell
(d) got up early

- (2) Sally: Where did Joe and Nancy go for their **honeymoon**?
Mona: They were going to go to Puerto Rico, but they couldn't afford it, so they went to St. Augustine instead for one week.

- (a) a holiday for a religious celebration
(b) a holiday for a married couple
(c) a holiday after school
(d) a holiday to celebrate mother's day

- (3) George: Did James return the books to the library?
Secretary: No, he had them **renewed**.

- (a) photocopied the books
(b) borrowed some more books
(c) extended the borrowing
(d) read all of the books

- (4) James: How long are you going to be away?
Martha: I'm planning on spending the weekend at the **beach** as long as the weather stays nice.

- (a) a place in the desert
(b) a place beside the sea
(c) a place inside a garden
(d) a place on the mountains

Speaking Test

- (1) *Select the best of the choices offered for each situation. (Total: 8 minutes)*

1. Someone calls and asks for your mother. She has gone out. You say:

- a. *I'm sorry. She isn't at home.*
b. *You can't speak to her, please.*
c. *Sorry. She's a day off.*
d. *You can't call back later.*

2. A stranger stops you in the street and says, "Excuse me. Could you tell me the way to the police station, please?" You can't help him, so you say:

- a. *Excuse me. I don't know it.*
b. *Please. Don't know.*
c. *I'm afraid I don't know where it is.*
d. *Thank you. I can't help.*

3. You have been very busy preparing for a special examination for several weeks. A friend meets you by accident and says, "Hello! I haven't seen you for weeks." You reply:
- a. *I'm passing an exam.*
 - b. *I have been studying for an exam.*
 - c. *I work very hard for an exam.*
 - d. *I shall take an exam.*
4. The bus on which you were going to school stopped and the driver could not start it again. All the students had to get off and walk some distance to the next bus stop. As a result, you were late for school. When the headmistress asks you why you were late, you reply:
I'm sorry,
- a. *we broke up*
 - b. *we had an accident*
 - c. *the bus broke down*
 - d. *we stopped*

(2) What will you say in the following situations? (Total: 8 minutes)

1. A friend of yours has forgotten where she has put her glasses. She cannot see too well without them.
2. Someone you've just met is talking about an English exam that she has to take tomorrow. She says, "I'm certain I'm going to fail it".
3. You are buying a T-shirt in a shop. You want to see if it fits you before you buy it.
4. Your friend has just returned from a holiday abroad. What will you say to her?

(3) Read the following passage silently (5 minutes). Then read it aloud clearly (5 minutes). After that answer the questions orally.

The most important product in Saudi Arabia is what is called "Black Gold," lying beneath the desert sands of the Eastern Province. It is estimated that Saudi Arabia possesses about one quarter of the proven oil reserves in the world.

By 1945, there was an oil industry of international importance in Saudi Arabia. The original American company involved in the drilling and exploration, known as the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) has been renamed "Saudi Aramco." The discovery of the oil has led to many changes. Aramco built roads, houses, work camps, airfields and industrial complexes.

Saudi Arabia is the world's largest exporter of oil. Tankers ship most of it to Europe, America, and Japan to be refined. Some of it is also refined in Saudi Arabia, in refineries at Ras Tanurah on the Gulf and Jeddah on the Red Sea.

(4) Interview with the instructor.

Thank You

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Appendix B

Pre-test and post-test

Teacher's version with answers

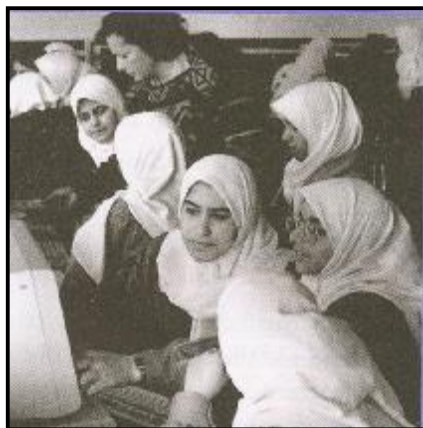
Name: _____

Class: *Third Year Section* ()

Total time: *45 minutes*

Listening Test

(1) Look at the picture and read the four questions below. (You have 2 minutes to do this.) Then listen to the talk and try to answer the questions. (You have 7 minutes to do this.): (Total: 9 minutes)



Adapted from Gill & Hartmann, (2005)

Listen to the following lecture

Uh, because it's the beginning of the trimester, I'd like to give you some suggestions as to how you can learn English really fast. And most of my suggestions have nothing to do with this classroom. A lot of you told me that you think the most important thing is to come to class every day. I'm very happy that you're going to come to class every day, umm. But I think you can probably learn more English outside the classroom than inside. I think you can make the whole world into your classroom. You can make every person around you into a teacher. But, in my mind, the best teacher in the world is yourself because each person learns differently, and you know how you learn best. I think you can be a really good teacher to yourself. You can use me, you can use your other teachers, as helpers, but I can't give you some magical English pill. You can't come to class and open your mouth and – ping!–put in the pill and – ah! You – learn English. That doesn't work. But I can help you. I can answer your questions, and I can guide you a little bit, but basically I want you to be in control of your own language learning career here at this school.

1. The speaker gives suggestions about

- (a) studying English inside the classroom
 (b) how to learn English very fast
 (c) coming to class everyday
 (d) how to be a teacher of English

2. According to the speaker, students can learn more English

- (a) by taking some magical English pill
 (b) outside the classroom
 (c) when everything is explained to them
 (d) by attending class every day

3. In order to be a good English learner, a student must

- (a) control his own language learning
 (b) depend on the teacher
 (c) stop attending classes
 (d) come to class every day

4. Who is the best teacher, according to the speaker?

- (a) a strict teacher who gives a lot of homework
 (b) a friendly teacher who lets the students talk a lot
 (c) you, the learner
 (d) a teacher who does all of the talking

(2) (A) Listen to the following words. Are the words said the same or different? Write (S) for 'same' and (D) for 'different'. (Total: 5 minutes)

1. (D)

2. (D)

3. (D)

4. (D)

5. (D)

6. (D)

7. (D)

(B) Listen to the word pairs. Circle the word you hear. (Total: 5 minutes)

1. thigh sigh2. thin sin3. throat tote4. three tree5. tenth tense6. mouth mouse

(3) Listen to the following short conversations. Then guess the correct definition of the underlined words. (Total: 10 minutes)

(1) Jack: Nancy, I heard you were late for class this morning.
Nancy: I overslept and missed the bus.

(a) didn't sleep enough

(b) slept too late

(c) heard the bell

(d) got up early

 b

(2) Sally: Where did Joe and Nancy go for their honeymoon?
Mona: They were going to go to Puerto Rico, but they couldn't afford it, so they went to St. Augustine instead for one week.

- (a) a holiday for a religious celebration
 (b) a holiday for a married couple
 (b) (c) a holiday after school
 (d) a holiday to celebrate mother's day
- (3) George: Did James return the books to the library?
 Secretary: No, he had them **renewed**.
- (a) photocopied the books
 (c) (b) borrowed some more books
 (c) extended the borrowing
 (d) read all of the books
- (4) James: How long are you going to be away?
 Martha: I'm planning on spending the weekend at the **beach** as long as the weather stays nice.
- (a) a place in the desert
 (b) (b) a place beside the sea
 (e) a place inside a garden
 (f) a place on the mountains

Speaking Test

(1) Select the best of the choices offered for each situation. (Total: 8 minutes)

1. Someone calls and asks for your mother. She has gone out. You say:

- (a) a. *I'm sorry. She isn't at home.*
 b. *You can't speak to her, please.*
 c. *Sorry. She's a day off.*
 d. *You can't call back later.*

2. A stranger stops you in the street and says, "Excuse me. Could you tell me the way to the police station, please?" You can't help him, so you say:

- a. *Excuse me. I don't know it.*
 b. *Please. Don't know.*
 c. *I'm afraid I don't know where it is.*
 d. *Thank you. I can't help.*

3. You have been very busy preparing for a special examination for several weeks. A friend meets you by accident and says, "Hello! I haven't seen you for weeks." You reply:

- a. *I'm passing an exam.*
 b. *I have been studying for an exam.*
 c. *I work very hard for an exam.*
 d. *I shall take an exam.*

4. The bus on which you were going to school stopped and the driver could not start it again. All the students had to get off and walk some distance to the next bus stop. As a result, you were late for school. When the headmistress asks you why you were late, you reply:
I'm sorry,

- a. *we broke up*
 b. *we had an accident*
 c. *the bus broke down*
 d. *we stopped*

(2) What will you say in the following situations? (Total: 8 minutes)

1. A friend of yours has forgotten where she has put her glasses. She cannot see too well without them.
2. Someone you've just met is talking about an English exam that she has to take tomorrow. She says, "I'm certain I'm going to fail it".
3. You are buying a T-shirt in a shop. You want to see if it fits you before you buy it.

4. Your friend has just returned from a holiday abroad. What will you say to her?

(3) *Read the following passage silently (5 minutes). Then read it aloud clearly (5 minutes). After that answer the questions orally.*

The most important product in Saudi Arabia is what is called "Black Gold," lying beneath the desert sands of the Eastern Province. It is estimated that Saudi Arabia possesses about one quarter of the proven oil reserves in the world.

By 1945, there was an oil industry of international importance in Saudi Arabia. The original American company involved in the drilling and exploration, known as the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) has been renamed "Saudi Aramco." The discovery of the oil has led to many changes. Aramco built roads, houses, work camps, airfields and industrial complexes.

Saudi Arabia is the world's largest exporter of oil. Tankers ship most of it to Europe, America, and Japan to be refined. Some of it is also refined in Saudi Arabia, in refineries at Ras Tanurah on the Gulf and Jeddah on the Red Sea.

Answer the following questions orally.

1. What is the most important product in Saudi Arabia?
2. What does "Black Gold" mean?
3. What was "Saudi Aramco" called before?

(4) *Each student will have an interview with the instructor (5 minutes) related to:*

1. Personal information
2. Different topics (the weather, school, home town or village, hobbies, etc).

Examples of interview questions:

- *What is your name?*
- *Where do you live?*
- *Describe your city/town/village.*
- *What is your father's name?*
- *Tell me about your family members.*
- *What do you study at school?*
- *What do you dislike most about your studies?*
- *What is the weather like in your city?*
- *What kind of weather do you prefer?*
- *Talk about your hobbies?*
- *When do you practice your hobbies?*
- *Do you like cooking? Why?*
- *Do you like eating in restaurants? Why?*
- *How do you come to school everyday?*
- *What do you do during holidays?*
- *Do you travel outside your country?*
- *Who would you like to go on vacation with?*

Thank You

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Appendix C

What is the communicative approach?

ما هو المنهج الاتصالي؟

عزيزتي الطالبة

المنهج الاتصالي هو طريقة حديثة لتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية تهدف إلى تمكين الطلاب من استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية والتخاطب بها بطلاقة . و يعد المنهج الاتصالي بديلا عن الطرق التقليدية التي تعتمد على تدريس الأنماط النحوية وتهمل مهارتي التحدث والاستماع . نتيجة للاعتماد على هذه الطرق القديمة، يتخرج الطالب من الثانوية وهو غير قادر على التحدث بطلاقة، بل غير قادر على تكوين جمل صحيحة باللغة الإنجليزية كما ويعتمد المنهج الاتصالي على تنمية المهارات اللغوية الأربعة بالتساوي، وهي التحدث والاستماع والقراءة والكتابة . من أجل تيسير التواصل أو التخاطب داخل الصف الدراسي يُنظم الصف على شكل مجموعات تتكون كل منها من أربع طالبات . ستستمع الطالبات إلى حديث الناطقين بالإنجليزية من الأشرطة المسجلة، وسيعطين فرصة للتعبير عن آرائهن في المواضيع التي يدرسنها وذلك بتكوين محادثات حرة . وسيكون التركيز في الصف على الطالبات لأنهن سيتحدثن ما يقارب ثلاثة أرباع الوقت .

في المنهج الاتصالي يختلف دور المعلمة عن دورها في الطرق التقليدية . ففي هذا المنهج، يقتصر دورها على كونها مشرفة وموجهة لعمل الطالبات أكثر منها متحدثة و مصححة . معنى هذا أنها تتحدث قليلا لتعطي الفرصة للطالبات . وتستنعين المعلمة ب مواد تعليمية مستمدة من أحاديث الناطقين الأصليين باللغة الإنجليزية . أي أنها لن تكون مواد مبسطة معدة أصلا لتعليم اللغة الإنجليزية، وذلك لأن الطالبة عندما تتخرج تواجه مواقف اجتماعية تتطلب منها الفهم الجيد للغة كما تستعمل في خارج الصف الدراسي .

إن الهدف من استخدام المنهج الاتصالي في هذه الدراسة هو مساعدتك على تطوير مهاراتك اللغوية في مجال الاستماع والتحدث . ومساعدتك أيضا على تطوير مهارة الكتابة والقراءة . يعد هذا أمرا مهما بالنسبة لك

لأنك قد تعجزين عن استخدام المفردات والقواعد اللغوية التي تعرفينها في التحدث أو في فهم ما تسمعينه، وذلك لأن تعلم لغة ما لا يعني فقط دراسة قواعدها اللغوية، بل يستلزم معرفة كيفية استخدام تلك القواعد أثناء المحادثات في مختلف المواقف في الحياة الاجتماعية في خارج الصف الدراسي.

لا بد أنك سألت نفسك يوماً عن سبب عدم قدرتك على التحدث بطلاقة أو متابعة فيلم أو برنامج تلفزيوني باللغة الإنجليزية بالرغم من السنوات العديدة التي قضيتها في دراسة تلك اللغة. لاشك أن ذلك ليس خطأك، فهو نتيجة للطريقة التقليدية التي تدرسين بها هذه اللغة، والتي تركز على تنمية محفوظاتك من المفردات والقواعد فقط.

إذاً علاج تلك المشكلة يكمن في الدراسة بواسطة المنهج الاتصالي، والذي سيساعدك على اكتساب مهارات تواصلية متعددة وعلى التعبير عن رأيك (ما تحبين وما لا تحبين) بكفاءة. وعليه ستكون هناك أنشطة تواصلية متعددة ستطلب العمل على شكل مجموعات وثنائيات. مثال ذلك الألعاب اللغوية وتمثيل الأوار والمناقشات والمناظرات والمحادثات القصيرة والطويلة وتبادل المعلومات. وستستعين أيضاً لمتحدثين أصليين للغة عن طريق الأشرطة. سيتطلب ذلك منك الجرأة في التحدث وعدم الاكتراث بالأخطاء اللغوية التي قد تعترضك. وأنا لن أوقفك كي أصحح خطأك، بل ستتعلمين التعبير الصحيح من خلال الممارسة. لذلك يرجى عدم التردد أو الخوف من التحدث أمام زميلاتك وسترين بعد مدة قصيرة أن قدرتك على التحدث والاستماع قد تحسنت عن ذي قبل.

Appendix D

Instructional materials

- Al-Twairish, B. N. (2002). *Improve your English*. Saudi Arabia, Riyadh: Al-Mutanabi Bookshop.
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Appendix E

Lesson plan outline with guidelines as devised by Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)

STANDARDS: Select standards from your standards and benchmarks document.

THEME: Think of the broad understanding that the lesson includes, such as cooperation, courage, environment, justice, perseverance, or diversity.

LESSON TOPIC: What is the lesson about? For example, protecting coral reefs.

CONTENT OBJECTIVES: What will the students know and be able to do as a result of this lesson? For Example, students will:

- *Understand the fragility of coral reefs.*
- *Form an opinion as how to protect the reefs.*

LANGUAGE OBJECTIVES: How will listening, speaking, reading, and writing be included in the lesson? For example, students will:

- *Read information about the coral reefs.*
- *Orally state one or more ways coral reefs can be preserved.*
- *Summarize their opinion in writing.*

LEARNING STRATEGIES: Select a strategy or strategies that will assist and support student understanding. For example, teach the students to use the “gist” method, which assists students in summarizing.

Steps for this strategy include the following:

- *The teacher and students read a section of the text together.*
- *Together, they select 10 or more words that are most important to understanding the text.*
- *Together, they use as many of the 10 words as possible to write a summary sentence.*
- *The process is repeated with the remainder of the text.*
- *At the conclusion, a main idea or topic sentence is added to the beginning of the summary sentences.*
- *The students now have a summary paragraph.*

KEY VOCABULARY: Select a few vocabulary words that are essential to the understanding of the material to be taught as well as the academic words needed to process the concepts, such as the word summarize. Provide user-friendly definitions, examples of the words from different contexts, multiple exposures, and active involvement with the words.

MATERIALS: List what you will need in order to teach the lesson. For example, paper, pencil, chart paper, pictures.

LESSON SEQUENCE:

MOTIVATION (Building background; links to background and to past learning)

- What activities, pictures, experience, and vocabulary development do you need to provide the students to build the background needed?
- How can you link the new material to something the students are familiar with?
- What have you taught them in the past that will help them learn the new material? Connect past learning with the new learning by referring to a chart, a book, or a lesson that the students have done previously.
- How can you get them excited about the new learning?

PRESENTATION (Content and language objectives, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, feedback; modeling)

- Place the content and language objectives on the board for the students to see as well as state them orally or have them read aloud.
- Comprehensible input:
 - Use speech appropriate to the language level of the students.
 - Enunciate clearly and speak slowly.
 - Avoid jargon, such as, “It’s like the pot calling the kettle black.”
 - Provide hands-on experiences.
 - Teach vocabulary so they can learn and retain the words.
 - Use gestures, body language, pictures, and real objects when possible.
 - Model what you want them to do.
 - Provide step-by-step directions both orally and in writing.

Strategies: Model the strategies you want the students to use.

Interaction: Provide a variety of grouping patterns where students have an opportunity to talk with each other and learn from each other. For example, small groups, pairs, individuals.

PRACTICE/APPLICATION (Meaningful activities, interaction, strategies, practice/application [guided and independent practice], feedback)

- Provide guided practice where the teacher helps lead the students before they are expected to independently apply the new learning.
- Some examples of meaningful activities are:
 - Writing in a journal.
 - Participating in discussion circles.
 - Partner sharing using new vocabulary.
 - Solving problems in cooperative groups.
 - Using graphic organizers to scaffold learning.
 - Conducting science experiments.

REVIEW/ASSESSMENT (Review objectives and vocabulary, assess learning [individual, group, written, oral])

- Review the objectives on the board and ask the class if they were met.

- Use Outcome Sentences (complete orally or in journal writing).
- I wonder . . .
- I discovered . . .
- I still want to know . . .
- I learned . . .
- I still don't understand . . .

EXTENSION (this part of the lesson is optional)

- Assign “big idea” questions that relate to the topic for homework, such as, “Why do you think . . . ?”

(Adapted from Echevarria, Vogt, and Short, *Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners*, 2004, Pearson, cited in Hanson & Filibert, 2006, p.15).

Appendix F

Attitude questionnaire about learning English through the Communicative Approach

(English version)

Name: (Optional) _____

Class: _____

Date: _____

Directions:

Put a (√) under the number that corresponds to your degree of agreement with the statements listed on the left of the schedule below.

- 5 = Strongly Agree
- 4 = Agree
- 3 = Don't know
- 2 = Disagree
- 1 = Strongly Disagree

Example:

Items	5	4	3	2	1
Learning English helps me to read English books.	√				

No.	Items	5	4	3	2	1
	General Attitudes Towards Learning English					
1.	I think learning English is very important in my life.	94.3	5.7			
2.	I want to use English to contact foreign speakers.	82.9	11.4	5.7		
3.	Four periods a week is enough to learn English.	25.7	25.7	31.4	11.4	5.7
4.	Forty-five minutes in four days a week is a sufficient time to learn English.	14.3	31.4	28.6	17.1	8.6
	Attitudes Towards Traditional English Teaching Methods					
5.	I like studying in a traditional classroom.	20.0	28.6	40.0	5.7	5.7
6.	The English textbooks I use now are boring.	37.1	20.0	17.1	17.1	8.6

No.	Items	5	4	3	2	1
7.	The English textbooks I use now have much concentration on how to speak English fluently.		14.3	17.1	34.3	34.3
8.	The English textbooks I use now offer me much help in listening to native speakers.	14.3	25.7	20.0	28.6	11.4
9.	Structure is the focus of the English textbooks I use now.	37.1	25.7	20.0	17.1	
10.	The English textbooks I use now provide me with many opportunities to express myself.	8.6	8.6	20.0	28.6	34.3
11.	I prefer following the English textbooks I use now to learning through struggling to communicate by myself.	17.1	5.7	11.4	31.4	34.3
12.	Listening to recordings is seldom used in traditional classroom.	34.3	22.9	8.9	25.7	8.6
13.	I prefer repetition after the teacher when learning English.	22.9	45.7	14.3	8.6	8.6
14.	I prefer reading aloud.	28.6	40.0	8.6	17.1	5.7
15.	I prefer accurate to fluent English.	20.0	17.1	28.6	20.0	14.3
Attitudes Towards Communicative Teaching						
16.	I prefer learning English through groups and pairs.	45.7	25.7	5.7	11.4	11.4
17.	Working in pairs and small groups helps to improve my skills.	31.4	28.6	14.3	20.0	5.7
18.	Working in pairs and small groups increases my self-confidence.	31.4	28.6	14.3	17.1	2.9
19.	It is more important for me to be able to speak English than to write it.	80.0	5.7	8.6	5.7	
20.	I prefer speaking English during small group work.	31.4	37.1	17.1	11.4	2.9
21.	I like speaking English in front of the class.	14.3	28.6	22.9	17.1	17.1
22.	I prefer listening to educational cassettes in English classes.	25.7	34.3	17.1	17.1	5.7
23.	I prefer studying English classes in the language lab.	37.1	22.9	22.9	5.7	11.4
24.	I prefer studying English in the classroom.	14.3	11.4	28.6	22.9	22.9
25.	I like the way I learn English now.		34.3	34.3	11.4	20.0
26.	My linguistic skills can be enhanced when I depend on myself.	42.9	22.9	11.4	17.1	5.7
27.	I always feel embarrassed when I try to speak English in front of the class.	31.4	25.7	8.6	11.4	22.9
28.	I always feel afraid of making mistakes in front of the class.	34.3	22.9	5.7	17.1	20.0
29.	I always feel hesitant to ask questions in front of the class.	34.3	22.9	2.9	25.7	14.3
30.	I prefer listening to native speakers.	62.9	17.1	17.1		2.9
31.	I like activities that allow free expressions.	48.6	37.1	8.6	2.9	2.9

Appendix G

Attitude questionnaire about learning English through the Communicative Approach (Arabic version)

استبيان عن دراسة اللغة الإنجليزية باستخدام المنهج الاتصالي

عزيزتي الطالبة

أنت مدعوة للمشاركة بالإدلاء بوجهة نظرك بخصوص طريقتك المفضلة في دراسة اللغة الإنجليزية. لذا فإن الاستبيان المرفق يهدف إلى التعرف على رأيك ووجهة نظرك فيما يخص دراسة اللغة الإنجليزية باستخدام المنهج الاتصالي.

أمل أن لا تعتبره امتحاناً لأنه ليس كذلك، وأيضاً ليست هناك إجابة خاطئة أو صحيحة. بل مجرد عبارات، والمطلوب معرفة رأيك بها. وعليه فأني أتمنى منك الإشارة إلى العبارة التي تمثل رأيك بحسب الدرجة التي تؤيدونها بكل صدق وأمانة. شاكرة لك حسن تعاونك الدائم، وأفيدك بأن هذا الاستبيان لن يستخدم إلا لأغراض علمية بحتة.

الاسم: (اختياري) _____
الفصل: _____
التاريخ: _____

تعليمات:

ضعي إشارة (√) تحت الرقم الذي يمثل درجة موافقتك على العبارة الموجودة في يسار الجدول التالي.

(5) = أوافق بشدة؛ (4) = أوافق؛ (3) = لا أدري؛ (2) = لا أوافق؛ (1) = لا أوافق بشدة

مثال:

1	2	3	4	5	العبارة
				√	تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية يساعدني على قراءة الكتب الإنجليزية.

1	2	3	4	5	العبارة	م
وجهة نظرك في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بصفة عامة						
			5.7	94.3	أعتقد أن تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية مهم في حياتي.	1.
		5.7	11.4	82.9	أريد أن أستخدم اللغة الإنجليزية للتواصل مع المتحدثين الأجانب.	2.

م	العبارة					
3.	5.7	11.4	31.4	25.7	25.7	أربع حصص في الأسبوع كافية لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية.
4.	8.6	17.1	28.6	31.4	14.3	خمس و أربعون دقيقة لمدة أربع أيام أسبوعياً كافية تماماً لدراسة اللغة الإنجليزية.
وجهة نظرك حول تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بالطرق التقليدية						
5.	5.7	5.7	40.0	28.6	20.0	أحب تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية باستخدام الطرق التقليدية.
6.	8.6	17.1	17.1	20.0	37.1	كُتِبَ اللغة الإنجليزية التي استخدمها الآن مملّة.
7.	34.3	34.3	17.1	14.3		تُركز كُتِبَ اللغة الإنجليزية التي استخدمها الآن على كيفية التحدث بطلاقة باستخدام اللغة الإنجليزية.
8.	11.4	28.6	20.0	25.7	14.3	توفر كُتِبَ اللغة الإنجليزية التي استخدمها الآن مواد تساعدني على الاستماع للمتحدثين الأصليين للغة الإنجليزية.
9.		17.1	20.0	25.7	37.1	دراسة القواعد اللغوية هو التركيز الأساسي لكُتِبَ اللغة الإنجليزية التي استخدمها الآن.
10.	34.3	28.6	20.0	8.6	8.6	توفر لي كُتِبَ اللغة الإنجليزية التي استخدمها الآن فرص عديدة للتعبير عن نفسي.
11.	34.3	31.4	11.4	5.7	17.1	أفضل متابعة كُتِبَ اللغة الإنجليزية التي استخدمها الآن بدل من التعلم خلال محاولة التواصل مع الآخرين.
12.	8.6	25.7	8.9	22.9	34.3	نادر ما تستخدم أشرطة التسجيل في حصص اللغة الإنجليزية التقليدية.
13.	8.6	8.6	14.3	45.7	22.9	أفضل التردد بعد المعلمة أثناء دراسة اللغة الإنجليزية.
14.	5.7	17.1	8.6	40.0	28.6	أفضل القراءة بصوت عالٍ.
15.	14.3	20.0	28.6	17.1	20.0	أفضل اللغة الإنجليزية الصحيحة على الطليقة غير الصحيحة.
وجهة نظرك حول تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بطريقة المنهج الاتصالي						
16.	11.4	11.4	5.7	25.7	45.7	أفضل دراسة اللغة الإنجليزية باستخدام المجموعات والثنائيات.
17.	5.7	20.0	14.3	28.6	31.4	العمل من خلال المجموعات والثنائيات يساعد على تحسين مهاراتي.
18.	2.9	17.1	14.3	28.6	31.4	العمل من خلال المجموعات والثنائيات يزيد من ثقتي بنفسي.
19.		5.7	8.6	5.7	80.0	من المهم جداً بالنسبة لي التحدث باستخدام اللغة الإنجليزية أكثر من كتابتها.
20.	2.9	11.4	17.1	37.1	31.4	أفضل التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية أثناء عمل المجموعات.
21.	17.1	17.1	22.9	28.6	14.3	أحب التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية أمام الفصل.
22.	5.7	17.1	17.1	34.3	25.7	أفضل استخدام أشرطة التسجيل في حصص اللغة الإنجليزية.
23.	11.4	5.7	22.9	22.9	37.1	أفضل أن تكون حصص اللغة الإنجليزية في معمل اللغة.
24.	22.9	22.9	28.6	11.4	14.3	أفضل أن تكون حصص اللغة الإنجليزية في الفصل.
25.	20.0	11.4	34.3	34.3		أحب دراسة اللغة الإنجليزية باستخدام طريقة المنهج الاتصالي.
26.	5.7	17.1	11.4	22.9	42.9	الاعتماد على نفسي في دراسة اللغة الإنجليزية يساعدني على تقوية مهاراتي اللغوية.
27.	22.9	11.4	8.6	25.7	31.4	أشعر بالارتباك دائماً عند محاولة التحدث باستخدام اللغة الإنجليزية أمام الفصل.
28.	20.0	17.1	5.7	22.9	34.3	أخشى دائماً ارتكاب الأخطاء اللغوية أمام الفصل.
29.	14.3	25.7	2.9	22.9	34.3	ينتابني التردد دائماً عندما أسأل سؤال أمام الفصل.
30.	2.9		17.1	17.1	62.9	أفضل الاستماع للمتحدثين الأصليين للغة الإنجليزية.
31.	2.9	2.9	8.6	37.1	48.6	أحب الأنشطة التي تسمح لي بالتعبير عن رأيي بحرية.