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EFFECTS OF USING COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE SPEAKING SKILLS OF ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study examines and reports on the effects of using communicative activities to enhance the speaking skills of elementary students studying in the Preparatory School of Near East University. It analyzes the responses of students (n=100) who are currently studying in the Preparatory School and the instructors (n=33) who are currently employed as English language teachers in Preparatory school. The study addresses five issues: How is CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) implemented in the Preparatory School of NEU (Near East University) and what are the effects of the newly implemented communicative activities on the elementary students' performance in speaking? What is the role and place of speaking in learning English as a foreign language in the Preparatory School of NEU and what are the students' and teachers' opinions about the speaking skill in terms of students' needs? What are the factors that prevent the elementary students in Preparatory School from speaking? How can elementary students in Preparatory School be assisted to participate more in communicative activities that focus on speaking? And finally, How do students perceive the communicative activities used in the class to enhance their speaking skills? Detailed student and teacher questionnaires, feedback forms and observation forms were used to investigate the effect of using communicative activities to enhance the speaking skills of elementary students studying in the Preparatory School of Near East University. The findings indicate that it is necessary to use extra communicative activities and materials besides the ones in the students' books to help and encourage students to use the language accurately and fluently outside the classroom and continue their careers in the real community. Moreover, carrying out communicative activities in the classroom gives an opportunity to the students to act in real life situations and use English accurately and fluently. These activities also encourage them to join in the activities and explain their ideas to their classmates to develop their communication skills. The findings of this article suggest that before designing an English teaching syllabus based on the students' level, it is important to find out the students' interest and design activities to develop students' communication skills in learning English.

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Introduction

English language teaching and learning techniques have been continually modified according to the students' needs and interests in order to discover the most effective way to improve the quality of learning. An English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lesson has been taught in line with grammatical rules and practised utilising mechanical activities in a traditional manner. However, during recent studies, it has been proven that researchers consider investigating the learners' interests as an important aspect of learning. As a result of this, EFL instructors have been working on various methods and techniques with the intention of improving students' learning abilities as well as encouraging them to be more motivated to learn English. EFL instructors have realised that it would be more suitable for the students to learn a language for communicative use rather than basic grammatical use. This is due to the fact that basic grammar does not actually teach students how to use the language in real life scenarios and rather concentrates on teaching the language based on a set of rules. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach was introduced to overcome this concern.

Nunan[1] identified that the communicative views of language teaching were incorporated into syllabus design during the 1970's. The main question for the supporters of this approach was 'What does the learner want/need to do with the target language?' rather than 'What are the linguistic elements that the learners need to master?' According to him, language teaching is based on the students' interest in the target language. The instructors teach the language structures to students. Although this can be beneficial, the ability to use the language in a suitable context outside the classroom can be considered as an important aspect as well. If students do not know how to use the language, communication will not occur between peers. This will result in the inability to express their needs and it will defeat the purpose of learning English. Therefore, students should learn the language for communicative aims as well. He also stated that this new syllabus contains both linguistic structures as well as communicative functions and it truly reflects what the students want to do with the target language. Before designing the syllabus, the needs of students in the target language are investigated and finally determined, as learning the language in the classroom is not only based on linguistic rules. Learning how to use a language in suitable contexts in real situations is also important and necessary. Students should learn the language for communication in real situations rather than mechanically established contexts where they only focus on grammatical rules.

Savignon[2] stated that Communicative Language Teaching is the integration of a number of multidisciplinary perspectives such as sociology, psychology, linguistic educational research and philosophy. The aim of focusing on these concepts is to advance the improvement of functional language ability and participation in communicative events. Communicative Language Teaching focuses on the needs of the learner and therefore supplies a framework for detailed programme aims. According to Savignon, the fundamental purposes of CLT consist of developing learners' communicative competence and improving the objectives of a programme according to the learners' needs. Developing the learners' language skills by using CLT techniques may help to develop the learners' accomplishment levels in line with the programme goals and in reality, a needs analysis

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[1] D. Nunan, The Learner-Centered Curriculum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
[2] Sandra J. Savignon, Communicative Language Teaching: Linguistic Theory and Classroom Practice, in Savignon (Ed.), Interpreting Communicative Language Teaching (New Haven: Yale Up, 2002).

may not be necessary since CLT prepares the learners for successful management of most situations in the target language.

Finnocchiaro and Brumfit[3] stated that the traditional teaching methods limit the production of the foreign language of learners because the teachers focus on forms rather than language usage. In the classroom, the teacher performs accuracy-based work like presentation of linguistic rules and the application of them in exercises. Hence, there is an artificial environment in the classroom. Furthermore, the students cannot communicate naturally inside the classroom yet alone outside the classroom; people pay attention to students' ideas or views to understand the message and they do not attempt to correct their incorrect sentences. Therefore, it is necessary to participate in conversations, share ideas or views and to be comprehended by the listeners. Learning the language for communicative needs is also an important aspect.

Richards and Rodgers[4] found that the variations in language teaching methods are to be expected as students' needs change from reading to oral proficiency. They also stated that when we choose the method and materials for classroom use, we should think about our learners' needs as well as the teachers' preferences and limitations of the school.

Kleban[5] indicated that knowing how to speak is vital for students because it gives them an opportunity to communicate by describing their thoughts, ideas and feelings and also allows them to achieve social ranking, social solidarity and professional advancement. Teachers believe that students' interests are in communication and that they are taking English courses with the aim of being able to communicate in English. Firstly, they need this skill to communicate with their English teachers and department instructors when they study in their department. Secondly, communicating in English accurately and fluently will be a beneficial competence in their future careers and finally, speaking practice will not only give students the opportunity to communicate in another language, but will also assist them in gaining self-confidence in learning the foreign language for their future professions. However, the teachers often cannot spend sufficient time on this skill because the syllabus is overloaded. The students are taught grammar topics and then given mechanical exercises such as "fill in the gaps". Mechanical exercises limit the students' ability to practise the language in a communicative way. However, the main problem that students in the Preparatory School face is similar to all other students of English Foreign Language (EFL) around the world. The majority of students do not have the opportunity to live in an English-speaking country. This problem illustrates the importance of providing students with an English-speaking environment in the classroom, which enables students to learn English without translating it into their native language. The students actually have difficulties with the classroom's atmosphere, background information, error correction, the topics and the teacher's attitude while participating in speaking activities.

On the other hand, Zhenhui[6] identified that "with the rapid development of English language teaching in non-English speaking countries, English teachers have become

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[3] M. Finnocchiaro & C. Brumfit, The Functional-Notional Approach (England: Oxford University Press, 1983).
[4] J. C. Richards & T. S. Rodgers, Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
[5] M. Kleban, Developing Speaking Skills. Retrieved from March 21. 2002, from http://www.iatefl.org
[6] S. Zhenhui, "Modern vs. Traditional", English Teaching Forum, Vol: 37 num 3 (1999): 27-29.

more aware that the exclusive use of either the Communicative Language Teaching or Grammar Translation method does not suit all English teaching situations. Teachers have also discovered that no single teaching method deals with everything that concerns the form, the use, and the content of the language''.

Communicative Activities

Types of Communicative Activities

There are many different examples of communicative activities that are suggested by language researchers in Communicative Language Teaching Approach.

Littlewood[7] states that there are two different communicative activities. These are ''social interaction activities'' and ''functional communication activities''. Social interaction activities contain simulations and skits, conversations, dialogues and role-plays and discussion. Functional communication activities contain such tasks as comparing a set of pictures, noting similarities and differences, putting the events in order in a set of pictures, giving instructions on how to draw a shape or picture, how to complete a map and solving problems from shared clues.

Roles in Communicative Activities

The roles of the teacher and the students in CLT are different from those in other methods.

Richards and Rodgers[8] describe the teacher's roles as a counsellor, a group manager and a needs analyst. For them, first, the CLT teacher should decide and give an answer to the student's language needs as a need analyst. It can be done formally or informally. The teacher personally talks to the learners one by one about their needs, learning goals and interests. Needs analysis can also be done by supplying and directing a needs assessment instrument. Therefore, the teacher organises his/her lesson that incorporate the students' needs and interests.

The teacher is mostly a facilitator and a guide in our classrooms. He/she helps students if they cannot use the language. He/she gives examples by writing similar dialogues on the board or demonstrating the activities. He/she decides the roles of the students and prepares cue cards for them and while they are joining in the activities, he/she listens to them and gives feedback on the language forms that they use. Therefore, we can say that the teacher is also an organizer and controller while doing communicative activities.

Nunan[9] describes the different roles of the student in the classroom. These are: first, the students join in a social activity and the interpersonal and the social roles of the student cannot be separated from psychological learning processes. Second, the student is a negotiator and interactor who is talented and having the tendency to give and take.

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[7] W. Littlewood, Communicative Language Teaching (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
[8] J. C. Richards & T. S. Rodgers, Approaches and Methods in Language…
[9] D. Nunan, Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Third, the students have to take responsibility for their own learning, improving skills in learning how to learn and autonomy. Fourth, the students join in a process of a personal growth. Fifth, the students are an inactive recipient of outside stimuli. Finally, the student is a performer and listener who has little control on the content of learning.

Authenticity in Communicative Language Teaching

The teaching materials have an important role in CLT. They have been prepared to enhance communicative use of language in the classroom. In the traditional way, the materials are prepared structurally as course books that involve a common type of mechanical exercises, listening tasks and reading texts for practising and learning the language in the classroom but these do not motivate and encourage learners to learn language use rather than forms and join in classroom interactions. Therefore, CLT has designed authentic materials to provide a real life situation in the classroom to practise and learn the language for communication like the social life.

Authentic materials are the materials that the teacher uses in the classroom. These materials are taken from real life. Newspapers reports, radio reports, magazines, advertisements, visual sources and film reviews are all text-types that are used every day as authentic communication.

Spelleri[10] points out that real life is reflected by authentic materials that mean high interest. They have a high interest because there are three categories of learning that are cultural insights, language learning and practical application. These categories can be combined in the classroom by using authentic materials. Except for the textbooks, the students' reality is reflected by these materials and make a connection between a classroom lesson and real life by combining events, factual information, names and places which the student use to enrich his/her life.

Significant of the Study

It is anticipated that the findings of this study will help the teachers in the EFL field understand the English language interests of elementary students and their preferences in the communicative activities that are based on speaking in English. Through considering these factors, it is trusted that this study will be beneficial in proposing effective and suitable communicative activities and techniques to encourage and motivate students to speak. It is also expected that this study will contribute to the development of students' whole performance on communication skills and to the preparation of materials for teaching the speaking skill.

Research Questions

R.Q.1. How is CLT implemented in the Preparatory School of NEU and what are the effects of the newly implemented communicative activities on the elementary students' performance in speaking?

R.Q.2. What is the role and place of the speaking skill in learning English as a foreign language in the Preparatory school of NEU and what are the students' and teachers' opinions about the speaking skill in terms of students' needs?

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[10] M. Spelleri, From Lessons to Life: Authentic Materials Bridge the Gap. Retrieved September 26, 2018, from http://eslmag.com/marapr02art.html

R.Q.3. What are the factors that prevent the elementary students in Preparatory School from speaking?

R.Q.4. How can elementary students in Preparatory School be assisted to participate more in communicative activities that focus on speaking?

R.Q.5. How do students perceive the communicative activities used in the class to enhance their speaking skills?

Method

A naturalistic research design was employed in this study. Naturalistic research is part of ethnographic research, which aims to analyse and understand things as they emerge in their naturalistic settings. In other words, it is often used to gather evidence on language learning and where the data is gathered in genuine classrooms through observations. Steven and Shirley[11] stated that "during the past decade, research in English education has seen an increased use of ethnography to document the teaching and learning of English language arts in classrooms and other naturalistic settings. At its best, ethnography can provide researchers, teachers, and other educators with rich documentation of learning as it unfolds and varies over time, leading potentially to insights into cultural patterns, formulation of hypotheses for testing, and support for generation of theory".

The primary tool used in naturalistic research is observation. The researcher gathers the significant information during the observations of the classrooms. Notes are taken and students' performance levels in the activities in the natural setting are determined.

Fraenkel[12] summarised five characteristics of naturalistic research. These are: first, the researchers are not only concerned with the process, they are concerned with the product as well. Second, the researchers would like to analyse their data inductively. Third, the natural setting is a direct source of information and the researcher is the key tool in this research. Fourth, the main concern of the researchers is how people make sense out of their lives. Finally, the primary data is gathered in the form of pictures or words rather than numbers.

Sample / Participants

The study participants consisted of 50 elementary and 50 pre-intermediate and intermediate level students as well as 33 instructors teaching at elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate level in the fall and spring semesters of the 2017 and 2018 academic year at NEU Preparatory School.

Data about the students' gender, age, years learning English, native language, year of graduation from high school and proficiency level in the English Preparatory School were collected from the students through questionnaires.

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[11] Z. A. Steven & B. H. Shirley, Ethnography in the Study of the Teaching and Learning English. Abstract. Retrieved February 16, 2018, from National Council of Teachers of English, Stanford University. 1995. http://www.jstor.org/pss/40171429
[12] J. R. Fraenkel & N. E. Wallen, How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education. Boston: Mc Graw-Hill Higher Education, 1993).

As illustrated in Table 1, a total of 100 students participated in this study. Closer examination of the participants shows that there were 45 male participants and 55 female participants in total. According to the table below, there were 86 students within the 17-20 age group and 14 within the 21-25 age group. On the other hand, in terms of the number of years learning English, 33 students in the 1-3 year range, 10 students in the 4-6 year range and 57 students had over 7 years of learning English. As shown in the table below, there were 97 Turkish, 1 Bulgarian and 2 Arabic students who participated in this survey. The information on the year of graduation from high school has also been divided into two groups. The number of students who graduated between 2009 and 2013 was 8, while 92 students graduated from high school between 2014 and 2018.

Gender distribution	Gender	Male	Female	
	Number of students	45	55	
Age distribution	Age	17-21	21-25	
	Number of students	86	14	
Distribution of the number of years learning English	Years of learning English	1-3	4-6	7-over
	Number of students	33	10	57
Distribution of native language	Native language	Turkish	Other	
	Number of students	97	3	
Distribution of the year of graduation from high school	Years of graduation from high school	2009-2013	2014-2018	
	Number of students	8	92	
Distribution of the proficiency level in English Preparatory School	The proficiency level in English	Preparatory first	Preparatory second	
	Number of students	50	50	

Table 1
Background Information of Students

Data about the participant instructors' gender, age, date of graduation, native language and years of teaching experience were collected through teachers' questionnaires.

As can be seen in Table 2, there were 33 instructors who participated in this survey. Out of the 33 participants, 31 of them were female and 2 of them were male. According to the table below, there were 9 instructors between 22-25 years of age, 13 instructors between 26-30, 1 instructor between 31-35, 3 instructors between 36-40 and 7 instructors in the 41 and over age group. The teachers who participated in this study graduated from various universities in different years. The number of teachers who graduated between 1983 and 1987 was 2, 5 of the teachers graduated between 1988 and 1992, 1 of them between 1993 and 1997, 11 of them between 1998 and 2002 and 14 of

them graduated between 2003 and 2005. As demonstrated in the below table, 19 teachers had Turkish, 11 teachers had English, 1 teacher had Bulgarian and 2 teachers had Russian as their native languages. Years of teaching experience have been divided into four main categories. According to the below table, 10 instructors had 1-3, 10 instructors had 4-6, 4 instructors had 7-10 and 9 instructors had 11-over years of experience.

Gender distribution	Gender		Male	Female			
	Number of instructors		2	31			
Age distribution	Age		22-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-over
	Number of instructors		9	13	1	3	7
Distribution of the date of graduation	Date of graduation		1983-1987	1988-1992	1993-1997	1998-2002	2003-2005
	Number of instructors		2	5	1	11	14
Distribution of native language	Native language		Turkish	English	Other		
	Number of instructors		20	10	3		
Distribution of the years of teaching experience	Years of experience		1-3	4-6	7-9	11-over	
	Number of instructors		10	10	4	9	

Table 2
Background Information of Instructors

Instrument(s)

In this research, two questionnaires, students' feedback forms and observations were used as a means of data collection.

The students' questionnaire was written in both Turkish and English. The students' questionnaire consisted of two main parts and one part at the end for suggestions, comments or criticism. In the first part, there were questions about the students' gender, age, years of learning English, native language, year of graduation from high school, proficiency level in the English Preparatory School and specialist department. In the second part, there were four main headings for collecting information about various issues. The first heading was about the aims of students in learning English. There were 4 statements in this part. The second heading was about the learning and study habits of students. There were 9 statements about this heading. The third heading was about the students' opinions about the teachers' way of teaching. There were 13 statements in this part. The fourth heading was about the students' opinions about preferences, expectations and believes. There were 12 statements about this heading.

The rest of the questionnaire consisted of five-point Likert scale in which participants were asked to indicate their responses to what extent they agreed with each

statement. The scale is from 5 to 1 in which 5 is very important/always/strongly agree, 4 is important/often/ agree, 3 is moderately important/sometimes/neutral, 2 is unimportant/rarely/disagree, 1 is entirely unimportant/never/strongly disagree.

The teachers' questionnaires were given to thirty-three English language instructors working in the Preparatory School. It was prepared by the researcher to gather information about the effects of using communicative activities to enhance the speaking skills of elementary students. The teachers' questionnaire was written in both Turkish and English. This questionnaire consisted of two main parts and one part at the end for suggestions, comments or criticism. The first part was about general background information of the instructors. There were questions about the instructors' gender, age, date of graduation, department of graduation, native language, years of teaching experience, other course/s they have taken so far, course/s taught this year and main textbook/s used in this course. In the second part, there were 45 statements for gathering information about the instructors' opinions on observations.

The statements were mostly concerned with the experiences of the instructors. The rest of the questionnaire was formed by a 5-level Likert Scale in which the choices were always/strongly agree, often/agree, sometimes/neutral, rarely/disagree, never/strongly disagree.

The researcher selected the activities from the Face2face elementary course book and improved them as communicative activities. She used some extra materials in the elementary teachers' book and modified some activities in the course book according to these materials. She made these activities communicative and implemented them to gather information about the elementary students' overall performance on communicative activities by carrying out observation in this study.

A students' feedback form was prepared by the researcher to get feedback from students after each communicative activity. In this form, there were five open-ended questions to collect data about the students' opinions and reaction to the activities.

An observation form was developed by the researcher to obtain information about the students' performance during the communicative activities. There were two parts in the observation form. In the first part, there was information about the teacher's name, class, duration, number of students and main goal(s) of the lesson. In the second part, there were 7 headings about which the researcher recorded. These headings include type of activity, topic of the activity, materials, timing, language skills, the students' attitude and teacher's attitude.

Data Collection Procedures

Throughout the process of data collection, the researcher first contacted the assistant director of the Preparatory School in order to inform him about the aim of the research and to obtain the necessary permission to conduct the research. As a second stage, after getting the permission from the director, the students' questionnaires were administered to ten elementary class instructors in the fall semester and ten pre-intermediate and intermediate class instructors in the spring semester. The students' questionnaires were given at the end of the class hour or during the break.

As a third stage, the teachers' questionnaires were distributed to instructors' offices to be filled in during breaks and the researcher was present to give information about the research and explain any unclear questions.

After respondents had completed the questionnaires, the questionnaires were collected and the data was entered into the computer on a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) spreadsheet to be analyzed.

As a fourth stage, the researcher developed the exercises from the Face2face elementary course book and prepared them as communicative activities depending on the needs and interests of the students and applied in the elementary classroom. During the application of these activities, the researcher carried out observations to obtain natural and reliable data about the students' performance on communicative activities.

Finally, the students completed a feedback form that contained five open-ended questions after each lesson.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The data has been analyzed by using SPSS statistical package version 23. It was also used to find the frequencies that are necessary for the interpretation of the data. A frequency table was prepared to see what level the most of the respondents agreed or disagreed with the statements. The Descriptive Statistics Test was used to find out the percentages and the frequencies among the different groups within each variable. The responses to the questionnaire were calculated and frequencies, means and standard deviations were computed. The Scale Reliability Analysis was conducted to find the reliability of the questionnaire. The analysis was done using the Alpha Model. The qualitative analysis was done through observations of communicative activities in the classroom, students' feedback forms and observations of elementary students and their instructors in the classroom atmosphere.

Results and Discussion

In this section of the article, the results of the students' and teachers' questionnaires, students' feedback forms and observations of communicative activities in the classroom will be discussed. This chapter also includes the students' needs and interests and the effects of communicative activities implemented on the students' overall performance in learning English.

In this research study, the students' needs and interests and the effects of using communicative activities to enhance the speaking skills of elementary students were firstly analysed by administering questionnaires to both teachers and students. According to the needs analysis, some activities were changed to communicative activities to be implemented in the classroom.

The researcher followed some steps in order to prepare the communicative activities. First, the researcher checked the syllabus of the elementary level in order to choose the main language points for weeks 2, 3, 4 and 5 in the fall semester of the 2017 and 2018 academic year and then the researcher checked the date of application of the exercises.

As a second step, the researcher checked the Face2face elementary course book exercises for the production part of the lesson. Then, according to the results of the needs analysis of the students' questionnaire (78.6% of the students wanted to learn English in order to communicate with other people outside the classroom), the teachers and the students stated that some activities did not focus on the students' needs. Additionally, they were not suitable to the context as communicative activities, as indicated below.

As a third step, these course book activities were modified as communicative activities, as indicated in the following chart:

	Course book Exercise	Communicative Activity
Topic:	Personal possessions	Personal possessions
Skills:	Writing	Writing and Speaking
Goal:	The students will practise personal possessions with 'have got/has got' in order to fill in the gaps.	The students will practise questions and answers about their personal possessions by using 'have got' and 'has got'.
Materials:	Face2face Elementary Course Book, Unit 2A, p. 15. as an exercise	Pictures

Table 3
Designing a Sample Communicative Activity

Finally, the researcher prepared lesson plans to replace the activities in the course book and the teachers of the elementary groups implemented them in their classes.

Before the implementation of the activities in the elementary class, the researcher had a meeting with the teacher of the elementary group who was teaching that hour before the lesson. In that meeting, the researcher handed the lesson plan and the materials to the participant teacher and explained to them how he/she would conduct the communicative activities in class. During this research study, a total of eight communicative activities in weeks 2, 3, 4 and 5 were practised in six lessons.

The activities in the course book were changed to communicative activities for teaching English communicatively rather than completing mechanical exercises. The activity topics were chosen from the course book, but they were connected with real life situations such as describing a room, personal possessions, daily routines, etc. The activity types such as role-plays and conversation were appropriate to the students' level and they could use the language in the activities. Before doing the activities, the students needed to revise the grammar points even though they had been taught them in the previous lesson. The teacher also presented what the students were going to do during the activities. In other words, the elementary students were not yet autonomous and they still needed assistance. Furthermore, the teacher presented the grammar points again in each lesson. This shows that the students were not taught how they should use the language.

The researcher observed eight communicative activities applied in six elementary classes in the Preparatory School to determine how communicative activities worked in the elementary classes. The researcher recorded the activity topics, types of activity, materials and language skills used and the students' and teacher's attitudes during the lesson. According to the results of the observations, the students participated in the communicative activities related to the topics the liked because they thought they were

close to real life. This shows that it is essential to provide different activities other than those in the course book because focusing on the same type of exercise on a regular basis cannot be interesting. The students had a material pack including supporting materials for the course book. However, they needed to practise the language in various communicative activities rather than those in the course book**.**

The speaking skill was mostly practised during the activities. This was because the speaking activities in the course book were not sufficient for the students to improve their speaking. Thus, the speaking skill focused on communicative activities. The other three language skills such as listening, reading and writing were also integrated into the Preparatory School syllabus, but the speaking activities were not sufficient for the students to increase their competency in English language. Speaking activities in the course book mainly focused on talking about pictures or discussions, but the students stated that these activities were not sufficient for them to develop their speaking skill.

Pictures, cue cards and forms were used during the communicative activities. The teacher prepared the activities for implementation but in some activities, the teacher shortened the duration because the time was limited. The teacher had to review the grammar points before implementing each activity, which reduced the available time. This was because the teacher did not teach the grammar points effectively. The students learned the rules, but they could not use the language fluently and accurately. Furthermore, the teacher needed to review the grammar points with the students before implementing the activities.

The participant teacher experienced problems while giving the instruction, so she had to simplify the activities. In addition to this, the teacher often gave prompts to the students during some activities, because some students did not have a high level of English. The teacher also had to explain the language structures that the students would use in each activity. She also had to give examples before each activity.

The students mostly spoke their native language during the pair or group work activities at the preparation stage. The participant teacher did not motivate and encourage the students to speak English in the classroom and she did not warn or stop the students who used their native language in this way.

The students did not speak English fluently and accurately while doing the activities. They were insufficient in using English and made numerous mistakes. The students could not speak fluently while they were trying to use grammar structures correctly. Besides, it was difficult for the teacher to manage the classroom during the communicative activities because the students were noisy while speaking to their classmates. The participant teacher tried to monitor them, but it was difficult for her because there were more than 20 students in the classroom.

s	n	f	p	m	std. d.	
18. The speaking materials that are used in class are sufficient for improving my speaking skill in English.	100	19	17,0	3,6667	,9897	
		43	38,4			
		25	22,3			
		9	8,0			
		3	2,7			

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20. Use of authentic materials is beneficial for improving my speaking skill.	100	34 41 12 9 1	30,4 36,6 10,7 8,0 ,9	4,0103	,9735
21. The speaking materials that are used in the student's book are enough for me.	100	17 33 21 18 9	15,2 29,5 18,8 16,1 8,0	3,3163	1,2234
26. The speaking activities and materials used in the class hours are enough to improve my speaking skill in English.	100	20 34 24 19 3	17,9 30,4 21,4 17,0 2,7	3,4900	1,1055
27. I think speaking English fluently is more important than writing.	100	48 30 14 7 1	42,9 26,8 12,5 6,3 ,9	4,1700	,9853
28. Fluency and accuracy have the same level of importance in speaking.	100	38 37 17 7 1	33,9 33,0 15,2 6,3 ,9	4,0400	,9631
29. Fluency is more important than accuracy in speaking.	100	17 31 23 27 2	15,2 27,7 20,5 24,1 1,8	3,3400	1,1121
30. Accuracy is more important than fluency in speaking.	100	22 30 29 13 3	19,6 26,8 25,9 11,6 2,7	3,5670	1,0792
33. When I participate in dialogues, conversations and role-plays, my confidence in using the speaking skill increases.	100	36 41 18 3 2	32,1 36,6 16,1 2,7 1,8	4,0600	,9191
34. I prefer pair/group work to practise my speaking skill.	100	44 36 16 2 2	39,3 32,1 14,3 1,8 1,8	4,1800	,9143

37. I use English outside the classroom by reading novels, English newspapers, chatting with foreigners, sending emails to my foreign friends, speaking to my foreign friends or watching and listening to TV programs.	100	25	22,3	3,6400	1,0102
		26	23,2		
		39	34,8		
		8	7,1		
		2	1,8		

Table 4
The Students' Opinions about the Speaking Skill

The following statement (s27) clearly shows that the students thought that speaking English fluently is more important than writing. More than half of the respondents (69.7 %) agreed with this statement, whereas 15.3% of them disagreed. This data shows that the students need to learn English to communicate fluently. This might be because firstly, they will need the speaking skill to communicate with their classmates and departmental instructors when they start their studies in their respective departments. Secondly, being able to communicate in English fluently will be an invaluable asset in their future careers in a globalising world.

The next statement (s28) explored whether fluency and accuracy had the same level of importance in speaking. In total, 66.7% of the respondents agreed with this statement, whereas the minority of respondents (15.3%) stated that they disagreed. This result shows that fluency cannot be used without accuracy. The students would like to speak English both fluently and accurately; they do not want to separate them. On the other hand, there is a finding that 42.9% of the respondents agreed that fluency is more important than accuracy in speaking (s29), 20.5% were neutral and 25.9% disagreed. The result indicates that the students who have a background knowledge of English consider fluency to be more important than accuracy in the speaking skill and they would only like to practise what they know without considering accuracy. On the contrary, 42.9% agreed that accuracy was more important than fluency (s30), 25.9% were neutral and the minority of the respondents (14.3%) disagreed with this statement. This finding implies that the students who have a minimal background in English consider accuracy more important than fluency in the speaking skill. One of the causes may be their proficiency exam at the end of the course, which does not involve their speaking skills. Another cause may be the students would firstly like to learn more language structures and then use them in a suitable context fluently. However, in most elementary and pre-intermediate and intermediate classes, the students are not able to speak English accurately and fluently. Riggenbach and Lazaraton[13] stated that if language learners can have effective communication in their second or foreign language, they are regarded as successful, whereas two decades ago, language accuracy was considered the important criterion that contributes to the evaluation of a pupil's success or lack of success.

The next statement (s33) indicated that when the students participated in dialogues, conversations and role-plays, their confidence in using the speaking skills increased. A total of 68.7% of respondents agreed with this statement and a minority of respondents (4.5%) disagreed. This implies that the students need to practise English for meaningful and communicative purposes rather than doing mechanical exercises. Therefore, they will ave the opportunity to use English for real communication. Revel[14]

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[13] M. Celce-Murcia, Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (USA: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1991).
[14] J. Revell, Teaching Techniques for Communicative English (London: The Macmillan Press Limited, 1979).

identified that communicative activities are those in which the students can transfer their learning to real situations. These activities can be dialogues, role-plays, cue cards, questionnaires, miming, etc. which are designed to give learners to the opportunity to experiment with their linguistic skills and to be more creative. Activities bridge the gap between 'skill-getting' in the classroom and 'skill-using' in real life.

According to the questionnaire, the majority of respondents (71.4%) stated that they often preferred pair/group work to practise their speaking skills (s34). The result shows that the students preferred pair/group work instead of working on their own. This might be because they feel relaxed in the pair/group work and they can talk and share their ideas in English with each other. In other words, when they share the responsibilities in the pair/group work, they can practise their speaking skill easily. Although the students did not seem to have any problems in doing the activities, there were still some problems in using English while doing activities as a pair or in group work. Actually pair/group work is very important and useful for students who are learning English as a second language. He gave examples of exchanging information and guessing games. For him, in order to exchange information, pair work can be useful; everyone has his/her own information and tells each other. Thus, the learners use the language communicatively.

The next statement (s37) explored whether the students used English outside the classroom. In other words, they were asked whether they read novels, English newspapers, chat with foreigners, send emails to their foreign friends, speak to their foreign friends or watch and listen to TV programs. According to the findings, 45.4% of the respondents stated that they often used English outside the classroom, whereas 34.8% of them indicated that they sometimes used English outside the classroom. This indicates that the students prefer to use English in a natural environment and they need to learn English for communication outside the classroom. Dubin and Olshtain[15] also pointed out that the other skills such as reading, writing and listening are also used for communicative goals. In communicative courses, the listening skill has a special focus. It is crucial because there are many situations in real life in which we only act as listeners, such as an audience of radio or TV. Moreover, the writing and reading skills provide the opportunity to learners to develop their communicative talents. We use some materials like magazines and newspapers to obtain information about the world in the reading skill and we also use the writing skill for communicative purposes. We write letters, reports, abstracts for presentations, assignments, etc. Therefore, the writing activity is an interactive process with a focus on 'why', 'when' and 'for what audience' the writing is done. The purpose of the activity is to communicate with the audience.

s	n	f	p	m	std. d.	
1. Students' major aim in studying English is to learn how to use the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) in English accurately and fluently for communication purposes.	33	14 14 5		42,2 42,2 15,2	4,121 2	1,023 4

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[15] F. Dubin & E. Olhstain, Course Design (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

6. Students pay more attention to learning grammar rules explicitly rather than focusing on using these rules in communicative contexts.	33	4 23 4 2	12,1 69,7 12,1 6,1	3,8788	,6963
9. At the end of the language program, students become proficient enough to respond directly in English without using their L1.	33	12 15 5 1	36,4 45,5 15,2 3,0	3,1515	,7953
10. The teaching materials required by the curriculum are effective in improving the communicative language skills of students by the end of the language program.	33	3 17 11 2	9,1 51,5 33,3 6,1	3,6364	,7423
13. Personal observation suggests that it is important for students to use the language skills for communication purposes inside the classroom.	33	24 8 1	72,2 24,2 3,0	4,6970	,5294
14. Personal observation suggests that it is important for students to use the language skills for communication purposes outside the classroom.	33	17 12 3 1	51,5 36,4 9,1 3,0	4,3636	,7833
16. Students understand the instructions and other written or oral language work in English.	33	3 19 7 4	9,1 57,6 21,2 12,1	3,6364	,8222
17.Students understand the instructions and other written or oral language work in English but prefer to respond in L1.	33	8 14 9 1 1	24,2 42,4 27,3 3,0 3,0	3,8182	,9504
18. Students are eager to participate in the activities that are conducted in English.	33	6.1 51.5 27.3 12.1	12,1 27,3 51,5 6,1	3,5313	,8025
43. I monitor the students' performance in using the language skills for communication purposes.	33	23 8 2	69,7 24,2 6,1	4,6364	,6030

45. I administer communicative tests to monitor students' progress in using their language skills communicatively.	33	14	42,4	4,242	,7917
		14	42,4	4	
		4	12,1		
		1	3,0		

Table 5
The Teachers' Opinions about the Speaking Skill

The following statement (s9) in Table 5 indicated that at the end of the language program, students became proficient enough to respond directly in English without using their L1. More than half of the respondents (60.2%) agreed with this statement, whereas 33.3% stayed neutral. This result shows that the students would be able to speak English without using their L1 at the end of the language program. However, in the Preparatory School, most of the students are at an elementary level and they always use their L1 in the classroom. In addition to this, although the classroom language is English in the Preparatory School, because of the students' level, some of the teachers use students' L1 while giving instructions. Therefore, the students cannot respond in English without using their L1 at the end of the language program.

The statement (s10) that follows clearly shows that the teaching materials required by the curriculum were effective in improving the communicative language skills of students by the end of the language program. In total, 60.6% of the respondents agreed with this statement, whereas 33.3% remained neutral. This data shows that the teachers have a positive tendency towards teaching materials. In fact, these teaching materials are not effective in improving the communicative language skill of the students by the end of the program. This could be because the syllabus is predominantly grammar-based and it is overloaded.

The following statement (s13) in Table 5 indicated that nearly all of the respondents (96.4%) stated that it was often important for students to use the language skills for communication purposes inside the classroom. On the other hand, 87.9% of the respondents believed that it was often important for students to use the language skills for communication purposes outside the classroom (s14). These findings imply that the students try to learn English for communication purposes both inside and outside the classroom. Celce-Murcia[16] claimed that the aim of speaking in a language class should be to develop real communication inside and outside of the classroom and to encourage the acquisition of communication.

The next statement (s16) clearly shows that more than half of the respondents (66.7%) stated that students often understood the instructions and other written or oral language work in English. Similar results can be identified in statement (s17), where 66.6% of the respondents believed that students often understood the instructions and other written or oral language work in English but preferred to respond in L1. On the other hand, the statement in table 5 indicated that nearly half of the respondents (39.4%) stated that students were often eager to participate in the activities that were conducted in English, whereas 51.5% of the respondents believed that students were sometimes eager

[16] M. Celce-Murcia, Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language…

to participate in the activities that were conducted in English (s18). These findings imply that the students understood instructions and other written or oral language work in English, but they did not respond in L1. Therefore, they were not willing to participate in the activities. This might be because they had little knowledge of English and they were afraid of making mistakes while talking. In addition to this, the students would like to be presented with some background information connected with the topic before starting to talk about it. They would also like to be presented with some vocabulary connected with the topic before starting to talk about it. In other words, the teachers should present their students with the necessary vocabulary before each speaking activity.

The following statement (s43) in Table 5 indicated that nearly all of the respondents (93.9%) stated that they often monitored the students' performance in using the language skills for communication purposes. This data shows that all the teachers monitored their students' performance, while and encouraging them and motivating them to use their language skills for communication purposes.

The next statement (s45) showed that the majority of the respondents (84.4%) stated that they often administered communicative tests to monitor students' progress in using their language skills communicatively. In the Preparatory School, the students have two timetabled hours of speaking per week. At the end of the term, the teachers administer communicative tests to monitor students' progress in using their language skills communicatively. However, although this essential skill is tested with the speaking test, the elementary and pre-intermediate/intermediate level teachers complained that they could not spend enough time on this essential skill because of the heavy load of the program.

s	n	f	p	m	std. d.
6. I participate in the lessons effectively.	100	60 26 11 1	53,6 23,2 9,8 ,9	4,4796	,7354
7. Throughout the lesson, I ask questions to make sure I understand the topic.	100	26 42 26 4 2	23,2 37,5 23,2 3,6 1,8	3,8600	,9213
8. I speak English when I ask and answer questions.	100	17 37 33 4 7	15,2 33,0 29,5 3,6 6,3	3,5408	1,0568
10. When I speak, I worry about making mistakes.	100	17 37 20 13 12	15,2 33,0 17,9 11,6 10,7	3,3434	1,2548

13. When I need to speak to my teacher, I try to speak in English.	100	17 36 30 8 8	15,2 32,1 26,8 7,1 7,1	3,4646	1,1186

Table 6
Factors that Prevent the Elementary Students from Speaking

The first statement (s6) in Table 6 indicates that the students participated in the lessons effectively. More than half of the respondents (76.8%) stated that they often participated in the lessons effectively. The next statement (s7) is about whether students asked questions to make sure they understood the topic throughout the lesson. The majority of the respondents (60.7%) stated that they often asked questions to understand the topic throughout the lesson. However, there is a finding that nearly half of the respondents (48.2%) stated that they often spoke English when they asked and answered questions (s8). In addition to this, nearly half of the respondents (48.2%) believed that when they spoke, they often worried about making mistakes (s10).

A total of 47.3% of the respondents stated that when they needed to speak to their teacher, they often tried to speak in English (s13). In most elementary classes, there seemed to be a problem in speaking and understanding English. Furthermore, the students were not able to speak English accurately and fluently. This might be because first, the students expected to participate in meaningful and communicative activities rather than mechanical activities. Second, the students did not pay much attention to some topics, because some did not attract their attention and interest and as a result, they were reluctant to talk about the topic. Third, the students did not have enough background information about the topic to express their ideas. Fourth, the students had trouble in comprehending and expressing themselves correctly and properly. Fifth, the students did not know the necessary vocabulary items to express themselves in spoken English. Sixth, the students expected a positive and encouraging attitude from their teachers. Seventh, the students expected to be corrected after they finished talking - they did not want to be interrupted and corrected while they were speaking. Finally, the students would like to be given a longer waiting time to respond to questions asked by their teacher. One of the reasons why some learners are hesitant to talk in class is diversity in the activities. Zhao[17] identified that generally, there are two factors that affect the speaking of learners in class. He stated that one of them is the reality that they cannot discover the proper words to express themselves and the other reality is that they are afraid of making mistakes that come from stressfulness and timidity while they are speaking.

s	n	f	p	m	std. d.
19. Using mechanical drills such as 'verb correction' and 'gap-filling' exercises in classroom activities help to improve the use of communicative skills of students.	33	9 10 9 2 3	27,3 30,3 27,3 6,1 9,1	3,6061	1,2232

[17] B. Zhao, How to Motivate Students to Speak English. TEFL China Teahouse. 1998 from http://www.quadernsdigitals.net/datos/hemeroteca/r_1/nr_18/a_239/239.htm

20. Using mechanical drills such as 'verb correction' and 'gap-filling' exercises in classroom activities help to improve the grammatical knowledge of students.	33	19 13 1	57,6 39,4 3,0	4,5455	,5640
27. I use information gap activities, information transfer activities, conversations or dialogues in order to improve the language skills of my students.	33	22 9 2	66,7 27,3 6,1	4,6061	,6092
28. When I use communicative activities such as information gap activities, information transfer activities, conversations or dialogues in order to improve the language skills of my students, I pay attention to engage my students in situations within which they can use their grammatical knowledge effectively.	33	20 10 2	60,6 30,3 6,1	4,5625	,6189
35. I use supplementary authentic materials while carrying out the activities.	33	11 15 7	33,3 45,5 21,2	4,1212	,7398
36. I use audio-visual materials while carrying out the activities such as pictures, video, flash cards.	33	5 14 7 6 1	15,2 42,4 21,2 18,2 3,0	3,4848	1,0642
39. I create a suitable context and provide sufficient feedback after doing the activities.	33	12 14 6 1	36,4 42,4 18,2 3,0	4,1212	,8199

Table 7
Assisting Elementary Students to Participate More in Communicative Activities

According to the questionnaire, the following statement (s27) indicated that nearly all of the respondents (94%) stated that they often used information gap activities, information transfer activities, conversations or dialogues in order to improve the language skills of their students. Similarly, nearly all of the respondents (90.6%) stated that when they used communicative activities such as information gap activities, information transfer activities, conversations or dialogues in order to improve the language skills of their

students, they often paid attention to engage their students in situations within which they could use their grammatical knowledge effectively (s28). As can be seen from the findings, teachers used communicative activities in the classroom. These communicative activities will not only enable students to communicate in another language but also help them to gain self-confidence in learning the foreign language as a medium instruction for their careers. Nunan[18] emphasized that the improvement of activities should be connected with what happens outside the classroom and stated that ''teachers are exhorted to develop information-gap activities, and one- and two-way tasks in which learners must negotiate with each other to redress imbalances in the distribution of knowledge''. These activities can be games, simulations and role-plays rather than controlled drills and they can be beneficial for the students to use the language outside the classroom. For instance, in a role-play, the teacher asked the students to show how a customer and a waiter have a conversation in a restaurant. The students are taught some language items like 'I would like ... or what would you like...?' that are appropriate for this context and then the students use it in role-play. It involves real language which is used in a real context. By performing such practice, students are expected to learn how the language can be used in real life.

The next statement (s35) indicated that the majority of the respondents (78.5%) believed that they used supplementary authentic materials while carrying out the activities. Similarly, more than half of the respondents (57.6%) stated that they often used audio-visual materials while carrying out the activities such as pictures, video, and flash cards (s36). These results imply that the teacher used authentic materials and audio-visual materials while carrying out the activities. The students can easily learn English by seeing how the language can be used. However, because of the limited time, it was impossible to use materials from outside and the course book together. The students only had twenty teaching hours per week. Thus, it was difficult to use all the materials during the class hours. Besides, there was a syllabus to follow for each week and the teachers should cover all materials in the course book and grammar pack rather than using authentic materials related to the language topics at elementary level.

Statement (s39) investigated whether the teacher created a suitable context and provided sufficient feedback after doing the activities. The result shows that the majority of the respondents (78.8%) stated that they often created a suitable context and provided sufficient feedback after doing the activities. Topics should be given in a suitable context. Students want to have meaningful activities that they can connect with real life situations so that they can comprehend better and increase their participation. In addition to this, they participate more in communicative activities if they are interested in the topics. On the other hand, providing feedback after doing the communicative activities is important to students. Kleban[19] identified that it is significant to observe learners' performance and supply them with constant and continuous feedback on their progress. She claimed that positive feedback affects motivation more than negative feedback despite the fact that both of them are effective. She also asserted that expressing a compliment assists students to become more self-confident and teachers should also compliment the meaningless efforts of the students.

The last part of the student's questionnaire had open-ended questions for suggestions, comments or criticism. The following shows the students' comments:

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[18] D. Nunan, The Learner-Centered Curriculum…
[19] M. Kleban, Developing Speaking Skills…

- The students would like to speak English with foreign people.
- The students would like to learn English in a group outside the classroom.
- The students would like to go to foreign countries to speak English fluently.
- The students should be aware that English is the most important language in their lives and education.
- The speaking lessons were important to the students.
- Fluency and accuracy were important to the students.
- The duration of speaking lessons was not enough for the students and they would like to do more speaking lessons.
- The speaking activities used in the student's book were insufficient for the students and they would like to do various speaking activities.
- The speaking activities used in the classroom were not useful and efficient for the students.
- The teachers must use various speaking materials.
- The students knew grammar, but they could not speak fluently and accurately.
- The students would prefer to practise English in a pair or group work.
- The students did not have confidence to speak English with foreign people.
- The classrooms should be arranged according to the students' level.
- The students would like to do listening and read a lot of story books to improve their vocabulary.
- The teacher should be less tolerant of the students using L1.
- However, one of the students indicated that she first studied English at Primary School, but she did not learn anything. She also added that when she started studying in Preparatory School in NEU, she started learning English and she could speak fluently now.

The last part of the teacher's questionnaire included open-ended questions for suggestions, comments or criticism. Only one of the teachers stated that most of the students were willing to use their first language in the classroom, but the teachers should not allow them to use their first language.

Conclusion

This study was designed to investigate the effects of using communicative activities to enhance the speaking skills of elementary students and to determine the students' performance in communicative activities through feedback forms and observations. This study considered the speaking-related problems that NEU students encountered in the fall and spring semester and focused on the effects of using communicative activities in the Preparatory School. Thus, in the fall and spring term, the researcher aimed to investigate the factors that prevent the elementary students from speaking as well as their opinions about the speaking skill and their choices in the communicative activities. Then the researcher prepared newly-designed materials and applied them in order to realize the aims of the study. The questions of the study were:

1.- How is CLT implemented in the Preparatory School of NEU and what are the effects of the newly implemented communicative activities on the elementary students' performance in speaking?
2.- What is the role and place of the speaking skill in learning English as a foreign language at the Preparatory School of NEU and what are the students' and teachers' opinions about the speaking skill in terms of students' needs?

3.- What are the factors that prevent the elementary students in Preparatory School from speaking?
4.- How can elementary students in Preparatory School be assisted to participate more in communicative activities that focus on speaking?
5.- How do students perceive the communicative activities used in the class to enhance their speaking skills?

Regarding the implementation of CLT, it can be concluded that some activities in the course book did not focus on the students' needs and interests, they were not a suitable context for communicative activities and they were not sufficient for the students to improve themselves and their speaking skill. Therefore, the researcher designed communicative activities and applied them to the elementary classroom to find the effect of these communicative activities on students' performance.

From the data analysed from observations, it can be concluded that the students benefited from the newly-designed materials in terms of gaining encouragement and tried to speak more. Furthermore, these materials enhanced the elementary level students' performance in speaking and motivated them in a positive way.

The activity types were suitable to the students' level and they could use the language in the activities. On the other hand, the students liked doing the activities and they were eager to participate in communicative activities. They participated in the activities because they thought that they were close to real life.

The participant teacher had difficulty while giving the instructions, so she had to simplify the activities according to the students' level. She did not motivate and encourage the students to speak English in the classroom and she allowed the students to use their native language.

The students did not speak English fluently and accurately during the activities. They were not efficient in using English. They made numerous mistakes. The students made a lot of noise during the speaking activities, which meant that the teacher experienced problems in managing the classroom during the communicative activities. The teacher also attempted to monitor them, but she found it difficult because there were more than 20 students in the classroom.

From the data analysed from the questionnaire, it can be ascertained that speaking was regarded like other language learning skills. However, because of the students' anxiety to be successful in the proficiency test and the overloaded syllabus, the teachers did not pay much attention to the speaking skill. Moreover, teachers regarded speaking as one of the skills that they could skip and only do when they found time. The syllabus designed for each level did not focus on the students' real interests and needs. Although students enjoyed participating in the speaking activities, they were aware of the fact that speaking was a crucial skill, especially for their future careers. The teachers also considered speaking as an important skill for students and most of them complained that they did not have enough time to practise the speaking skill.

The students found the speaking activities and materials that were used in the class and in the course book sufficient to improve their speaking skill in English. However, they always complained about the activities and materials that were used in the course book and they found them boring and they needed to use authentic materials to improve

their speaking skills. On the other hand, the students believed that fluency cannot be used without accuracy. They considered accuracy and fluency to be more important than the other language skills. They wanted to speak English both fluently and accurately but in fact, they had trouble in using English fluently and accurately for communicative aims. Moreover, the students became bored doing mechanical exercises and they needed to practise English for communicative purposes and learn English outside the classroom. They also wanted to work in pairs or groups to practise their speaking skills.

There were 11 statements generated to assess the opinions of the teachers about the speaking skill. The majority of the students were willing to learn the four language skills in English accurately and fluently for communication purposes. On the other hand, the students focused more on learning grammar rules rather than the rules in communicative contexts. The teachers believed that the students would be able to speak English without using their L1 at the end of the language program. Moreover, the teaching materials were effective in improving the language skill of the students by the end of the language program. The students needed to learn English for communication purposes inside and outside of the classroom. They understood the instructions and other written or oral language work in English, but they did not respond in L1. They were unwilling to participate in the activities that were conducted in English. The teacher monitored the students' performance in using the language skills for communication purposes and they administered communicative tests to monitor the students' progress in using their language skills communicatively.

Regarding the third research question, the study has revealed that of the 5 statements designed to assess factors that prevent the elementary students from speaking, a wide variety of answers were collected. It can be concluded that the following are the factors that prevent the Intermediate level students from talking:

- Activity types: Students preferred to participate in meaningful and communicative activities rather than mechanical activities.
- Topics: Some topics did not attract the students' attention and interest and therefore, they are not eager to talk about the topic.
- Background information: Students were not able to express their ideas because they do not have enough background information about the topic discussed.
- Contextualization (lack of context): When topics were not given in a suitable context, students had difficulty in understanding and expressing themselves properly.
- Vocabulary input (lack of vocabulary): Students were not able to express themselves in spoken English because they did not know the necessary vocabulary items.
- Teacher's attitude: Students expected a positive and encouraging attitude from the teacher.
- Error correction: Students did not want to be interrupted and corrected while they were talking. They preferred to be corrected at the end of the speaking activity.
- Waiting time: Students would like their teacher to give them to think after a question is asked.

From the analysis of the findings regarding assisting elementary students to participate more in communicative activities, it can be concluded that it is important and necessary to discover their interests and needs in speaking as well. The elementary level

students' choices about speaking were gathered through feedback forms and observations. There are points to consider while preparing speaking activities:

- Students would like to do pair work, group work, information gap activities, discussions, ask and answer questions, exchanging information, talk about pictures and play games.
- Students would like to talk about daily events and topics in which they are interested.
- Students would like to be presented with some background information connected with the topic before starting to talk about it.
- Topics should be given in a suitable context. Students want to have meaningful activities that they can connect with real life situations so that they can comprehend better and increase their participation.
- Students would like to be presented with some vocabulary connected with the topic before starting to talk about it. In other words, teachers should present their students with the necessary vocabulary before each speaking activity.
- A teacher should be encouraging, friendly, guide his/her students, use mimics and facial expressions, show interest in their ideas, and nominate them with their names.
- Students do not want to be interrupted and corrected while they are talking. They prefer to be corrected at the end of the activity.
- Students will benefit more when the seating arrangement changes according to the task types. In other words, when students sit face to face in some activities like discussions, they benefit more.
- Students would like their teacher to wait for them to think or give them enough time to think after a question had been asked.

Richards and Rodgers[20] stated that ''communicative activities are exercises that enable learners to attain the communicative objectives of the curriculum, engage learners in communication, and require the use of such communicative processes as information sharing, negotiation of meaning, and interaction''. Ur[21] stated that if the subject does not arouse curiosity and learners have little information about it or if they are reluctant to express themselves in English, they cannot be successful in exchanging information. On the other hand, Kleban[22] emphasized the significance of the teacher's attitude and stated that a language teacher has an important role in assisting his/her students to improve their speaking skills.

From the results, it can be inferred that the students liked to participate in the activities and found them particularly motivating. Besides, the activities were different from the ones in the course book. Almost all of the students in each lesson indicated that they liked the materials and had fun while doing the activities during the lesson.

Some of the students talked about having learnt vocabulary or grammar and they also indicated which aspects were useful and effective for them. All of the students agreed that the activities were beneficial and effective and they all participated in the activities.

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[20] J. C. Richards & T. S. Rodgers, Approaches and Methods…
[21] P. Ur, Grammar Practice Activities (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
[22] M. Kleban, Developing Speaking Skills…

The students did not have any trouble while doing the activities in the classroom. They wanted to do speaking activities outside the classroom. More than half of the students found the speaking activities that were used in the classroom and in the students' book suitable, enjoyable, sufficient, well organised and easy to learn. The speaking activities were designed according to their needs and interests. Thus, they used more English while doing the speaking activities. The students wanted their teacher to correct their mistakes immediately while doing speaking activities.

As a consequence, the results show that it is necessary for the students to improve their communication skills through communicative activities in which they have an opportunity to use their knowledge of grammar in suitable contexts.

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