
TEACHING SPEAKING BY USING COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH TO SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OF LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL OECUSSE

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed: [1] to identify the effectiveness of the communicative approach in teaching speaking; [2]. to know the significant differences before and after the communicative approach used to teach speaking. The modality adopted was qualitative. Classroom action research was the research strategy. This strategy comprised four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The methods of collecting the data were observation and test. The participants of the study were forty-five (45) students of the second year. The results of data analysis confirmed that at the pre-cycle, the majority (S=25) students placed at 'average level'. In the post- cycle, the scores of the students improved. From twenty-five (25) students, thirteen students moved up to the next level. In other words, the scores of the students were better after pedagogical practice by integrating communicative approach. To sum up, using a communicative approach to teaching speaking benefited the students to build their speaking skills.

Keywords: Teaching speaking, communicative approach, students

INTRODUCTION

English, originally, is the language of United Kingdom. It was expanded to a number of countries to serve as a communication means. It is, therefore, English widely used across the world as worldwide language.

In Timor-Leste, English is considered as a language of public administration as per article 159, Constitution of Republic Democratic Timor-Leste (RDTL). It means that English enjoys considerable status in this nation. Even its status has defined as working language at the public administration, the societies of the country consider it as first foreign language. Therefore English is taken as a compulsory subject as per national curriculum of RDTL. As a compulsory subject, it integrates to linguistics development area from Lower Secondary School to Secondary School. *“English is usually a required subject for some years during compulsory education. The number of years of instruction and the age at which English instruction begins vary by country.*

Compulsory education is usually state-funded, with private schools for full-time education often only for the privileged’ (Murray & Christison, 2011, p.37).

According to national curriculum, the area of linguistic development aims to provide students with a set of learning experiences that, taking as the object of the languages with a different political, cultural, educational and social status, ensures the opportunities, attitudes and willingness to develop the linguistic knowledge necessary for the accomplishment of the goals of the life, personal enrichment, participation in the world labor and the involvement in community life (ME, 2010).

Regarding national guidelines or English program (ME, 2010), teaching English concentrates on four skills [reading, listening, writing, speaking], grammar and vocabulary. These skills and sub-skills must be taught adequately in order to develop communicative competency and linguistic competency.

This study, however, focuses on teaching speaking. In order to scaffold the learners, communicative approach is used to the 2nd year students of Lower Secondary School of *Oe-course*. *“One of our jobs as teachers is to help our students make the ‘leap’ from form focussed accuracy work to fluent, but acceptable production, by providing a bridge; a variety of practice activities, that familiarize them with the structure in the context, giving practice both in form and communicative (...)”* (Ur, 1996, p. 83).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) according to Richards & Schmidt, (2002) in Menezes (2016, p.15) is an *“approach to foreign or second language teaching which emphasizes that the goals of language learning are communicative competence and which seeks to make meaningful communication and language used of all classroom activities”*. The major principles of CLT according to the authors are as indicated below:

- a. Learners use a language through using it to communicate;
- b. Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities;
- c. Fluency and accuracy are both important goals in language learning;
- d. Communication involves the integration of different language skills;
- e. Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error.

The communicative approach stresses the equilibrium between fluency and accuracy. It is suitable for the students whose goals are to gain self-confidence in speaking and conversational abilities. It is reinforced by the statement that classroom activities provide chances for students to use the target language in speaking for meaningful activities. It is, therefore, Brown (2001, p. 267) says that “*speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning (...)*”.

However, speaking in a foreign language is often seen as the most challenging among other skills. “*While listening and reading involve the ability to correctly receive messages and are therefore referred to as receptive skills, speaking and writing, on the other hand, involve language production and are referred to as productive skills*” (Harmer 1991, p. 16).

So, Richards & Renandya, (2010) say that speaking for foreign language learners is difficult because requires effective oral communication ability to use a language.

Thus, Nunan (1992) recommends five teaching speaking activities: Each of these activities shows different ways when instructing speaking.

- a. Consider about second and foreign language learning context;
- b. Give the opportunities for the students to develop both fluency and accuracy;
- c. Give the opportunity for the students to talk about using pair and group work;
- d. Consider the negotiating for meaning;
- e. Design the classroom activities involve guidance and practice in both transactional and interactional speaking.

Therefore, the activities that are developed by the teacher in the classroom to enhance students’ ability through speaking considering as a fundamental element of the course.

METHOD

This study was conducted at Lower Secondary School of *Oe-course* with 45 students (one class) of the second year. The objectives of the study were as follows: [1].

*To identify the effectiveness of the communicative approach to teaching speaking;[2].
To know the significant differences before and after communicative approach is used to
teach speaking.*

The study was qualitative in nature and took the form of action research that according to Somekh (2008, p.6), *“individual teachers [who investigate] of their own classrooms [activities] (...). One of the most important contributions of action research as a methodology for building an understanding of change and development is its unique access to insider knowledge.* Furthermore, Ebbutt (1985) in Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007, p. 297) says that *“action research as a systematic study that combines action and reflection with the intention of improving practice”.* Cohen & Manion (1994) in Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007, p. 298.) define it as *“a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such intervention”.* Those authors suggest that *“action research should contribute not only to practice but to a theory of education and teaching which is accessible to other teachers making educational practice more reflective. The aims of [the] action research (...) are to bring about the practical improvement of social practice and the practitioners better understanding of their practices”.*

Providing adequate assistance to improve the students’ achievements must be done through penetration into the classroom to detect what the learners really need. *“Looking in classrooms we see so much going on that it becomes easy to understand why the choice of a global teaching method cannot be what really makes some classrooms better places for learners to be in than others. Unfortunately, we see so much going on in the classroom we soon realize that understanding this mysterious chemistry is becoming more complicated rather than easier. Researchers and teachers alike want to know what really matters, what really helps learners”* (Allwright & Bailey, 1991, p. 5)

In this process, two cycles were taken. Pre-cycle took one meeting. Since the pre-cycle completed, the researcher advanced the second cycle with the hope that it could improve the activities done at the level of pre-cycle. The activities were done based on Kemmis & McTaggart (1992) in Cohen et al (2007): planning, action, observation, reflection.

The techniques of data collection were mainly participant observation and test to measure the students' achievement.

Qualitative data subjected to context analysis (Bell, 2004). Quantitative data, on the other hand, was analyzed in a statistical descriptive manner (Denscombe, 1998). In this way, the standard established by Education Ministry of Timor-Leste was used.

Table 1 - Standardization

N ^o	Level	Score
1	Average	60 - 69
2	Good	70- 79
3	Very good	80-89
4	Excellent	90-100

Source: Boavida (2015).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, all information was presented. The data assembled in the form of qualitative and quantitative information. These data were obtained through observation and test and then analyzed in accordance with the objectives of the study.

The effectiveness of the communicative approach in teaching speaking

In this section, all data assembled through the test at pre-cycle and post-cycle would be presented and analyzed.

Pre-test

The data demonstrated in table 2 below gathered from the test before the pedagogical intervention.

Table 2 – Pre-test

Score	Frequency
60 – 69	25
70 – 79	16
80 – 89	4
90 – 100	-

The information on the table evidenced that 25 students or equivalent 55,6% had a score range from 60 to 69. They belonged to 'average' level. On the other side, 16 students or corresponding 35,6% earned the score range from 70 to 79, they integrated

to 'good' level. Finally, 4 students or equal 8,8% got score range from 80 to 89. They placed to 'very good' level. The result of the test provided considering several language factors as criteria of scoring: accuracy, grammar, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Observation

Once the pedagogical intervention was carried out by the teacher of the school, the researcher observed the students' participation grounded on the observational checklist.

Table 3 –Observation

Aspects observe		Put across (X)
Participation	active	X
	passive	
Attitude	good	X
	improper	
Understanding the task	yes	X
	no	
Motivation	yes	X
	no	
Attention	yes	X
	no	

The information on the table above confirmed that the students participated actively and showed a good attitude in the classroom. They shared experiences within the small group as they understood the task given during the instruction.

The integration of teaching approach was inspiring them to pay full attention and facilitating them to engage the activities. It is, therefore, we can say that communicative approach is found to eliminate the conventional approach and promoted communication as a way to acquire a language.

Post-test

The information on table 4 assembled when the pedagogical intervention by using communicative approach concluded.

Table 4 – Post-test

Score	Frequency
60 – 69	12
70 – 79	20
80 – 89	13
90 – 100	-

The data above proved that 13 students or equivalent 28,9% did very well their test. They were placed at ‘very good’ level. Furthermore, 20 students or corresponding 44,4% were to be found at ‘good’ level. Finally, 26,7% or equal 12 students belonged to ‘average’ level.

The significant differences before and after the pedagogical practice

When the results of pre-test and post-test were put in contrast, the differences appeared significantly. The ‘average’ level at pre-test was 55,6%, but this result decreased to be 26,7% at post-test. It means that from 25 students at the average level at pre-test, only 12 students remained at the same level, whereas 13 students confirmed to other levels. While ‘good’ level at the pre-test was 35,6%, however, this number turned out to be 44,4%. There was an improvement in the students’ scores. At the pre-test, only 16 students categorized good level, but at the end of the pedagogical intervention, this number increased to be 20 students. Finally, 28,9% of the students placed at ‘very good’ level after pedagogical practice. It means that 8,8% of the students who classified at ‘very good’ level at pre-test session, expressively moved up at the post-test stage.

Table 5 – Comparative table

Score	Frequency		Level
	Pre-test	Post-test	
60 – 69	25	12	Average
70 – 79	16	20	Good
80 – 89	4	13	Very Good
90 – 100	-		Excellent

The result of the post-test improved when the students were taught by using communicative approach. It is, therefore, we can say that communicative approach is

promoting the activities to assist the learners in learning the language, as it is adverted by Richards & Rodgers (1998, p.76) *“the range of exercise types and activities compatible with a communicative approach is unlimited, provided that such exercises enable learners to attain the communicative objective (...), engage learners in communication, and required the use of such communicative processes as information sharing, negotiation of meaning and interaction. Classroom activities are often designed to focus on completing the task that is mediated through language or involve negotiation of information and information sharing”*.

CONCLUSION

Teaching and learning the language of other nation like English is a difficult task. Teachers and students have to apply appropriate strategy and approach in teaching learning process. The activities develop in the school context must consider the students as central.

The implementation of Communicative Approach (CA) in speaking class showed significant improvement as it confirmed in table 5 of the previous section. The results of pre-test demonstrated that the majority of the students were placed at ‘average’ and ‘good’ levels. However, the completion of pedagogical practice by integrating CA into the classroom activities improved the students’ achievements.

It is, therefore, CA effective to apply in speaking class as one of the strategies to promote the participation of the students. From 45 students who joined the pre-test, 55,6% or equivalent 25 students integrated ‘average level’. This result decreased to be 26,7% or corresponding 12 students at post-test. These results confirmed that the differences in terms of percentage between before and after pedagogical practice appear significantly.

To sum up, CA considers an innovative strategy to provoke the students’ involvements in the classroom. This strategy, of course, stimulates the students to attach actively in speaking activities.

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