
Efficacy of communicative language teaching on students' speaking skills in senior secondary schools in Makurdi local government area of Benue State, Nigeria

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Article History

Submitted: 25 August 2021

Revised: 12 December 2021

Accepted: 13 December 2021

Abstract

The study set out to determine the effect of communicative language teaching on students' speaking skills in Makurdi Benue state. Nine specific objectives guided the study, nine research questions were raised and answered and nine hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The study was delimited to communicative activities like information-gap activity, role-play activities, and conversation activities, and speaking skills of fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary. The study was hinged on John Dewey's theory of learning by doing. The study adopted the non-randomized pre-test posttest control group design and the study area was Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. The population of the study was made up of all the 1312 Senior Secondary two (SS2) students in the 21 public secondary schools in Makurdi LGA. The sample for the study consisted of 173 students and was drawn using four intact classes of students. The instrument used for data collection is the English Achievement Test (EAT). The instrument was duly validated by three experts, two from the English language unit and one from Measurement and Evaluation. The English Achievement Test (EAT) yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.89. The researcher visited the sampled schools to seek permission from the principals of the various schools in which the study was carried out. The regular English language teachers in the selected schools were used as research assistants for the study. The research assistants in each school helped the researcher to collect data and the data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics of ANCOVA. The result of the findings revealed there was a statistically significant difference in the speaking skills of students taught using the communicative language teaching approach and those taught using the traditional method.

Keywords: *Communicative language teaching, speaking skills, learning by doing*

Introduction

Education is an enlightening experience, it is therefore the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of skills, values, morals, beliefs, habits, and personal development (Baum, S., Ma, J., & Payea, K. 2013). Along with the rapid development of science and technology, acquiring education also increases the function of living in the life of the nation. Education is not only a destination but also the main asset for national development (Ahmad and Rao, 2013). Therefore, for a nation to grow, the quality of education needs to be constantly improved. The core activities that improve the quality of education essentially enhance students' learning outcomes. The main goal of improving the quality of education is to improve the quality of students' learning outcomes. Students' learning outcomes are the reflection of knowledge, skills, and attitudes obtained by students in the teaching and learning process. Hence, they are shown by the students' achievements in core subjects like English language and Mathematics. Thus, the effort to improve the quality of education is essential to increase the students' learning outcomes in core subjects like English language and Mathematics (Ahmad and Rao, 2013).

That notwithstanding, the language is increasingly growing in strengths, pushing other world languages backward in the global space, opening new frontiers. Owolabi and Nnaji (2013) stated that English is an irresistible language as far as development is concerned because “for any nation particularly in the 3rd world to be relevant and derive the maximum benefit from the opportunities that abound in every area of human need, for personal advancement and national development, English is a sine qua non”. This is why English continues to hold sway as the language of development in most developing nations of the world, and even in some developed nations of the world, where it is learned and used as a foreign language (Owolabi & Nnaji, 2013).

The English language is the official language in Nigerian and mastery of the language is the defining attribute of elite status since it correlates with other social markers such as post-secondary or professional education, a good job, and comfortable incomes that come with it.

Also, acquiring a mastery of English is one of the goals of those aspiring to elite status (Evue, 2013). According to Ghofar in Nurdin (2016), of all heritage left behind by the British at the end of the colonial administration, the English language is probably the most important legacy. This, he pointed out, is now the language of government, business and commerce, education, the mass media, literature, and internal, as well as external communication.

However, despite this emphasis, the English language is still in a state of the quandary in various schools of learning in Nigeria. This is evidenced by the number of failures that have been recorded at various levels of education, particularly at the secondary school level. Part of the comments of WAEC Chief Examiner's report for English Language (May/June 2017) says:

...contrary to expectation, the performance of the candidates was awfully poor. Some of the candidates scored zero in the paper, having failed to write an answer that could earn a single mark in any section of the paper. It appears that a good number of schools.

In any sociolinguistic context, the teacher of English needs to be acquainted with the historical and theoretical bases of language teaching. English as a language according to Evue, (2013) has been witnessing unprecedented changes in curriculum, teaching methodology, and application of learning theories. Teaching and learning English relies heavily on communication, students must enhance their speaking skills.

Speaking skill is one of the four skills that must be mastered in learning a language, in addition to reading, writing, and listening. According to Bahadorfar (2014), of the four skills of the language, speaking is considered the most important in learning. He considered that the world currently requires teaching speaking that must improve the communicative abilities of students because only in that way, students can express themselves and learn how to follow the rules of social and cultural rights in every communicative circumstance. Additionally, it is often the first impression in one's abilities based on their ability to speak fluently and

comprehensively. However, speaking in English is considered by most secondary school students as still difficult. This perception continues to build into the belief by most students that English speaking skills are difficult to achieve Ghofar in Nurdin (2021). In order to change the mindset of students related to the perception of spoken English from difficult to easy, it is based on the opinion of Nazara (2011) that the perception of the students about their abilities related to the level of speaking skill will motivate them to develop English speaking skill. Teachers in guiding the learning activities are also a major influence on perceptions of learners' understanding of the English-speaking activities they learned. Perceived difficulty in speaking English experienced by the students triggered their shame and fear when they are asked to communicate using the English language. Bashir, Azeem, & Dogar (2011), found out that difficulty in speaking English starts from being shy to express it. Shyness makes it difficult for students to develop their speaking abilities and this leads to their inability to speak English both inside and outside the classroom (Latha & Ramesh, 2012).

It is believed that speaking skills can be developed to provide some topics to discuss or to make learners speak on certain topics. Learning to speak the English language requires more than just knowing the system of grammatical or semantic rules. Therefore, the goal in language classes is to get students to learn and use the target language. The best thing teachers can do is to get them involved in the learning process. There are several reasons for approaches undertaken by a teacher which is less effective in improving students' English speaking skill fluency. According to Liao (2009), the causes are (1) English speaking skill is not taken seriously, teachers prioritize reading and writing, (2) the learning activities are still dominated by traditional methods, such as reading the dialogue, reading and translating the text, (3) Many teachers only put pressure on accuracy without thinking fluency, consequently, students are too worried about their faults, (4) teachers are reluctant to use the communicative approach because of their inability to speak their students, (5) the attitude of the students to the learning process.

Teachers' skill in providing materials is also an important factor in determining the success of the students' learning process in the English language. There are two popular methods of language learning which emphasize the teaching of speaking skills, and each method claims to be the most effective method to improve students' English-speaking skills. The two popular methods are the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLTA) and The Audio Lingual Approach (ALMA). The Communicative Language Teaching Approach is also a way of teaching which is based on the principle that learning a language successfully involves communication rather than just memorizing a series of rules. The approach emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of study. Students in environments utilizing communicative approach techniques, learn and practice speaking through interaction with one another and with instructors, the study of "authentic texts" (those written in the target language for purposes other than language learning), and through the use of the language both in class and outside of the realm of traditional grammar, to promote language skills in all types of situations. This approach also helps to encourage students to incorporate their personal experiences into the learning environment, and to focus on the experience in addition to the learning of the language. According to Afrizal (2012) during the CLTA, students are expected to communicate orally and master all components of communicative competence as a teacher and motivator, assessor, facilitator, and corrector for students' discussion or speak to the class.

The English Language is the instrument of communication in the primary, secondary and higher institutions as well as the official language of the country. Therefore, secondary school students need effective English language to function properly or perform better. Learning the English language by students makes no sense if they cannot communicate with it successfully when the opportunity arises, as the essence of teaching is to enhance student communicative skills as it is in that way that students can express themselves and learn how to follow the social and cultural rules appropriate in each communicative situation. Learning of English

language helps develop students' abilities to express themselves through speech. The ability to speak skillfully provides the students with several distinct advantages. This is evident in their capacity to put words together in a meaningful way to reflect thoughts, opinions, and feelings.

However, it is disheartening to note that students are now finding it difficult to express themselves in good English and to perform tasks that require high cognitive thinking in the English language. Specifically, they find it difficult to perform well in tasks that require them to apply, analyze, synthesize and evaluate within the context of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives. This learning difficulty is evident in problem-solving skills as demonstrated by their consistent poor performance in the English Language in both internal and external examination. Despite efforts made by an educational stakeholder to address the root causes of this abysmal performance of students in the English language, the problem persists. If solutions are not proffered to this problem, it poses a great danger to the larger society, as these students are seen to be leaders of tomorrow.

However, since teaching and learning rely heavily on communication, it may be true to say that students can enhance their speaking skills and subsequently their academic performance if teachers employ a communicative language teaching approach rather than the traditional approach, as almost every activity in the classroom necessitates communication. It is on this basis that this study is necessitated to determine the effect of the communicative language teaching approach on speaking skills of students in the English Language in secondary schools in Makurdi Benue state.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to determine the effect of the communicative language teaching approach on students' speaking skills in Makurdi Benue state. Specifically, the study will determine: the effect of information-gap activity on students' fluency skills; the effect of information-gap activity on students' pronunciation skills; the effect of information-

gap activity on students' vocabulary skills; the effect of role-play activity on students' fluency skills; the effect of role-play activity on students' pronunciation skill; the effect of role-play activity on students' vocabulary skill; the effect of conversation activity on students' fluency skill; the effect of conversation activity on students' pronunciation skill; and the effect of conversation activity on students' vocabulary skill.

Methodology

The quasi-experimental research design was employed in this study; the population of the study was 1312 Senior Secondary two (SS2) students in the twenty-one (21) public secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State (Benue State Teaching Service Board, 2019). The sample size for the study was 173, the sample size was arrived at using four intact classes of students for suitability purposes. A simple random sampling technique was used to select two schools out of the 21 secondary schools in the Makurdi metropolis of Benue State. Four arms of classes were selected from the two schools for the study. One arm was used as the control group while the other three arms were used as the experimental group. The class used for the control group had 43 students, the class used for experimental group one (those taught using information gap activity) had 47 students, the class used for experimental group two (those taught using role-play activity) had 45 students and the class used for experimental group three (those taught using conversation activity) had 38 students.

The instrument used for data collection is a test titled "English Speaking Skills Achievement Test (ESSAT)". The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using the Cronbach Alpha method and a reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained. Data for the study was collected by the researchers with the aid of research assistants from the sampled schools. Data collected for the study were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses formulated were tested using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA).

Results and discussion

What is the effect of information-gap activity on students' fluency skills?

The result of the effect of information-gap activity on students' fluency skills is analyzed using mean and standard deviation and presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean achievement scores and standard deviation of the effect of information-gap activity on students' fluency skill

Groups	N	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Information gap	47	45.13	12.88	60.55	8.32
Traditional	43	49.00	12.13	53.65	11.00
Mean Diff.	90	3.87		6.9	
N Total					

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

The result of data presented in Table 1 shows the mean achievement score and standard deviation ratings of students taught using information-gap activity and the traditional method. The result shows that the students in both groups had improved scores in the post-test (60.55 for information gap activity and 53.65 for the traditional method) compared to the pre-test (45.13 for information gap activity and 49.00 for the traditional method). The mean score difference in the post-test examination between the experimental and control groups is 6.90 and this is in favor of the experimental group. This is an indication that the fluency skills of the students improved when they were taught using the information-gap activity of the communicative teaching language approach. To ascertain if the observed difference in the fluency skills of the students in the experimental and control groups is statistically significant, the corresponding hypothesis was tested.

Information-gap activity has no significant effect on students' fluency skill

The result of the Analysis of Covariance presented in Table 2 shows that the P-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance at 1 degree of freedom. This shows that the test is significant. The result implies that there is a

statistically significant difference in the fluency skill of students taught using information gap activity and those taught using the traditional method. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is hereby rejected.

Table 2. Analysis of Covariance of Significant Difference in the Fluency Skill of Students taught with the Use of Information Gap Activity and Traditional Method

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3165.507 ^a	2	1582.753	22.443	.000
Intercept	8761.657	1	8761.657	124.236	.000
PreTest	2095.769	1	2095.769	29.717	.000
Groups	1550.648	1	1550.648	21.987	.000
Error	6135.615	87	70.524		
Total	304339.000	90			
Corrected Total	9301.122	89			

Effect of information-gap activity on students' pronunciation skill

Table 3. Mean achievement scores and standard deviation of the effect of information-gap activity on students' pronunciation skill

Groups	N	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Information gap	47	44.83	13.00	61.94	9.62
Traditional	43	46.28	13.53	53.09	11.07
Mean Diff.	90	1.45		8.85	
N Total					

Source: Field work (2020)

The result of data presented in Table 3 shows the mean achievement scores and standard deviation ratings of students taught using information-gap activity and the traditional method. The result showed that the students in both groups had an improved score in the post-test (61.94 for information gap activity and 53.09 for the traditional method) compared to the pre-test (44.83 for information gap activity and 46.28 for the traditional method). The mean score difference in the post-test examination between the experimental and control groups is 8.85 and this is in favor of the experimental group. This is an indication that the pronunciation skill of the students improved when they were taught using

the information gap method of communicative teaching language approach. To ascertain if the observed difference in the pronunciation skills of the students in the experimental and control groups is significant, the corresponding hypothesis was tested.

Information-gap activity has no significant effect on students' pronunciation skill

Table 4. Analysis of Covariance of Significant Difference in the Pronunciation Skill of Students taught with the Use of Information Gap Activity and Traditional Method

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	4409.247 ^a	2	2204.623	28.303	.000
Intercept	9960.981	1	9960.981	127.877	.000
Pretest	2761.328	1	2761.328	35.449	.000
Groups	1886.555	1	1886.555	24.219	.000
Error	6776.853	87	77.895		
Total	309439.00090				
Corrected Total	11186.100	89			

The result of the Analysis of Covariance presented in Table 4 shows that the P-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance at 1 degree of freedom. This shows that the test is significant. The result implies that there is a statistical significant difference in the pronunciation skill of students taught using information gap activity and those taught using the traditional method. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is hereby rejected.

Effect of information-gap activity on students' vocabulary skill

Table 5. Mean achievement scores and standard deviation of the effect of information-gap activity on students' vocabulary skill

Groups	N	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Information gap	47	44.60	9.76	63.77	8.85
Traditional	43	46.49	12.21	54.93	12.20
Mean Diff.	90	1.89		8.84	
N Total					

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

The result of data presented in Table 5 shows the mean achievement scores and standard deviation ratings of students taught using information gap activity and the traditional method. The result showed that the students in both groups had an improved score in the post-test (63.77 for information gap activity and 54.93 for the traditional method) compared to the pre-test (44.60 for information gap activity and 46.49 for the traditional method). The mean score difference in the post-test examination between the experimental and control groups is 8.84 and this is in favor of the experimental group. This is an indication that the vocabulary skill of the students improved when they were taught using the information gap activity method of communicative teaching language approach. To ascertain if the observed difference in the vocabulary skills of the students in the experimental and control groups is significant, the corresponding hypothesis was tested.

Information-gap activity has no significant effect on students' vocabulary skill

Table 6. Analysis of Covariance of Significant Difference in the Vocabulary Skill of Students taught with the Use of Information Gap Activity and Traditional Method

	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3510.345 ^a	2	1755.172	18.852	.000
Intercept	8094.204	1	8094.204	86.938	.000
PreTest	1757.239	1	1757.239	18.874	.000
Groups	2056.061	1	2056.061	22.084	.000
Error	8099.977	87	93.103		
Total	330709.000	90			
Corrected Total	11610.322	89			

Table 6 shows that the P-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance at 1 degree of freedom. This shows that the test is significant. The result implies that there is a statistical significant difference in the pronunciation skill of students taught using information gap activity and those taught using the traditional method. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is hereby rejected.

Effect of role play activity on students' fluency skill

Table 7. Mean achievement scores and standard deviation of the effect of role-play activity on students' fluency skill

Groups	N	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Roleplay	45	45.58	10.71	61.24	8.00
Traditional	43	48.84	12.31	53.67	10.94
Mean Diff.		3.26		7.57	
N Total	88				

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

The result of data presented in Table 7 shows the mean achievement score and standard deviation ratings of students taught using role-play activity and the traditional method. The result showed that the students in both groups had an improved score in the post-test (61.24 for role-play activity and 53.67 for the traditional method) compared to the pre-test (48.84 for role-play activity and 48.84 for the traditional method). The mean scores difference in the post-test examination between the experimental and control groups is 7.57 and this is in favor of the experimental group. This is an indication that the fluency skills of the students improved when they were taught using the role-play activity method of communicative teaching language approach. To ascertain if the observed difference in the fluency skills of the students in the experimental and control groups is significant, the corresponding hypothesis was tested.

Sole play activity has no significant effect on students' fluency skill

Table 8. Analysis of Covariance of Significant Difference in the Fluency Skill of Students taught with the Use of Role Play Activity and Traditional Method

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3214.069 ^a	2	1607.035	23.192	.000
Intercept	6960.963	1	6960.963	100.460	.000
Pretest	1954.004	1	1954.004	28.200	.000
Groups	1713.965	1	1713.965	24.736	.000
Error	5889.749	85	69.291		
Total	300514.000	88			
Corrected Total	9103.818	87			

The result of the Analysis of Covariance presented in Table 8 shows that the P-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance at 1 degree of freedom. This shows that the test is significant. The result implies that there is a statistical significant difference in the fluency skills of students taught using role-play activity and those taught using the traditional method. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is hereby rejected.

Effect of role-play activity on students' pronunciation skill

The result of data presented in Table 9 shows the mean achievement scores and standard deviation ratings of students taught using role-play activity and the traditional method. The result showed that the students in both groups had an improved score in the post-test (63.20 for role-play activity and 53.33 for the traditional method) compared to the pre-test (46.21 for role-play activity and 53.33 for the traditional method). The mean score difference in the post-test examination between the experimental and control groups is 9.87 and this is in favor of the experimental group. This is an indication that the pronunciation skill of the students improved when they were taught using the role play activity method of communicative teaching language approach. To ascertain if the observed difference in the pronunciation skills of the students in the experimental and control groups is significant, the corresponding hypothesis was tested.

Table 9. Mean achievement scores and standard deviation of the effect of role-play activity on students' pronunciation skill

Groups	N	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Role play	45	42.91	13.75	63.20	9.87
Traditional	43	46.21	13.55	53.33	11.12
Mean Diff.		3.30		9.87	
N Total	88				

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Roleplay activity has no significant effect on students' pronunciation skill

Table 10. Analysis of Covariance of Significant Difference in the Pronunciation Skill of Students taught with the Use of Role Play Activity and Traditional Method

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	4219.848 ^a	2	2109.924	23.875	.000
Intercept	13365.675	1	13365.675	151.238	.000
PreTest	2017.574	1	2017.574	22.830	.000
Groups	2707.014	1	2707.014	30.631	.000
Error	7511.868	85	88.375		
Total	312305.000	88			
Corrected Total	11731.716	87			

The result of the Analysis of Covariance presented in Table 10 shows that the P-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance at 1 degree of freedom. This shows that the test is significant. The result implies that there is a statistical significant difference in the pronunciation skill of students taught using role-play activity and those taught using the traditional method. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is hereby rejected.

Effect of role-play activity on students' vocabulary skill

Table 11. Mean achievement scores and standard deviation of the effect of role-play activity on students' vocabulary skill

Groups	N	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Role play	45	46.09	10.01	64.87	8.10
Traditional	43	46.26	12.35	54.81	12.29
Mean Diff.		0.17		10.06	
N Total	48				

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

The result of data presented in Table 11 shows the mean scores and standard deviation ratings of students taught using role-play activity and the traditional method. The result showed that the students in both groups had an improved score in the post-test (64.87 for role-play activity and 54.81 for the traditional method) compared to the pre-test (46.09 for role-play activity and 46.26 for the traditional method). The mean score difference in the post-test examination between the experimental and control groups is 10.06 and this is in favor of the experimental group. This is an indication that the vocabulary skill of the students improved when

they were taught using the role-play activity method of communicative teaching language approach. To ascertain if the observed difference in the vocabulary skills of the students in the experimental and control groups is significant, the corresponding hypothesis was tested.

Roleplay activity has no significant effect on students' vocabulary skill

Table 12. Analysis of Covariance of Significant Difference in the Vocabulary Skill of Students taught with the Use of Role Play Activity and Traditional Method

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	4016.920 ^a	2	2008.460	22.980	.000
Intercept	8083.995	1	8083.995	92.495	.000
PreTest	1794.814	1	1794.814	20.536	.000
Groups	2252.131	1	2252.131	25.768	.000
Error	7428.898	85	87.399		
Total	327766.000	88			
Corrected Total	11445.818	87			

The result of the Analysis of Covariance presented in Table 12 shows that the P-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance at 1 degree of freedom. This shows that the test is significant. The result implies that there is a statistical significant difference in the pronunciation skill of students taught using role-play activity and those taught using the traditional method. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is hereby rejected.

Effect of conversation activity on students' fluency skill

Table 13. Mean achievement scores and standard deviation of the effect of conversation activity on students' fluency skill

Groups	N	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Conversation	38	43.97	8.71	63.00	8.76
Traditional	43	48.84	12.32	53.67	10.94
Mean Diff.		4.87		9.33	
N Total	81				

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

The result of data presented in Table 13 shows the mean score and standard deviation ratings of students taught using conversation activity and the traditional method. The result showed that the students in both groups had an improved score in the post-test (63.00 for conversation activity and 53.67 for the traditional method) compared to the pre-test (43.97 for conversation activity and 48.84 for traditional method). The mean scores difference in the post-test examination between the experimental and control groups is 9.33 and this is in favor of the experimental group. This is an indication that the fluency skill of the students improved when they were taught using the conversation activity method of communicative teaching language approach. To ascertain if the observed difference in the fluency skills of the students in the experimental and control groups is significant, the corresponding hypothesis was tested.

Conversation activity has no significant effect on students' fluency skill

Table 14. Analysis of Covariance of Significant Difference in the Fluency Skill of Students taught with the Use of Conversation Activity and Traditional Method

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2951.655 ^a	2	1475.828	17.263	.000
Intercept	6996.414	1	6996.414	81.840	.000
PreTest	1197.295	1	1197.295	14.005	.000
Groups	2355.122	1	2355.122	27.549	.000
Error	6668.147	78	85.489		
Total	282568.000	81			
Corrected Total	9619.802	80			

The result of the Analysis of Covariance presented in Table 14 shows that the P-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance at 1 degree of freedom. This shows that the test is significant. The result implies that there is a statistical significant difference in the fluency skills of students taught using conversation activity and those taught using the traditional method. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is hereby rejected.

Effect of conversation activity on students' pronunciation skill

Table 15. Mean achievement scores and standard deviation of the effect of conversation activity on students' pronunciation skill

Groups	N	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Conversation	38	39.79	9.38	64.95	9.00
Traditional	43	46.21	13.55	53.33	11.12
Mean Diff.		6.42		11.62	
N Total	88				

Source: *Fieldwork* (2020)

The result of data presented in Table 15 shows the mean achievement scores and standard deviation ratings of students taught using conversation activity and the traditional method. The result showed that the students in both groups had an improved score in the post-test (64.95 for conversation activity and 53.33 for the traditional method) compared to the pre-test (39.79 for conversation activity and 46.21 for traditional method). The mean score difference in the post-test examination between the experimental and control groups is 11.62 and this is in favor of the experimental group. This is an indication that the pronunciation skill of the students improved when they were taught using the conversation activity method of communicative teaching language approach. To ascertain if the observed difference in the pronunciation skills of the students in the experimental and control groups is significant, the corresponding hypothesis was tested.

Conversation activity has no significant effect on students' pronunciation skill

Table 16. Analysis of Covariance of Significant Difference in the Pronunciation Skill of Students taught with the Use of Conversation Activity and Traditional Method

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	5427.579 ^a	2	2713.790	38.596	.000
Intercept	7882.309	1	7882.309	112.103	.000
PreTest	2702.916	1	2702.916	38.441	.000
Groups	4112.631	1	4112.631	58.490	.000
Error	5484.421	78	70.313		
Total	290753.000	81			

Corrected Total	10912.000	80
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The result of the Analysis of Covariance presented in Table 16 shows that the P-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance at 1 degree of freedom. This shows that the test is significant. The result implies that there is a statistical significant difference in the pronunciation skill of students taught using conversation activities and those taught using the traditional method. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is hereby rejected.

Effect of conversation activity on students' vocabulary skill

Table 17. Mean achievement scores and standard deviation of the effect of conversation activity on students' vocabulary skill

Groups	N	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Conversation	38	44.79	7.27	65.16	7.53
Traditional	43	46.26	12.35	54.81	12.29
Mean Diff.		1.47		10.35	
N Total	48				

Source: *Fieldwork* (2020)

The result of data presented in Table 17 shows the mean achievement scores and standard deviation ratings of students taught using conversation activity and the traditional method. The result showed that the students in both groups had an improved score in the post-test (65.16 for conversation activity and 54.81 for the traditional method) compared to the pre-test (44.79 for conversation activity and 46.26 for the traditional method). The mean score difference in the post-test examination between the experimental and control groups is 10.35 and this is in favor of the experimental group. This is an indication that the vocabulary skill of the students improved when they were taught using the conversation activity method of communicative teaching language approach. To ascertain if the observed difference in the vocabulary skills of the students in the experimental and control groups is significant, the corresponding hypothesis was tested.

Conversation activity has no significant effect on students' vocabulary skill

Table 18. Analysis of Covariance of Significant Difference in the Vocabulary Skill of Students taught with the Use of Conversation Activity and Traditional Method

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3561.454 ^a	2	1780.727	19.745	.000
Intercept	6567.838	1	6567.838	72.825	.000
PreTest	1403.019	1	1403.019	15.557	.000
Groups	2403.902	1	2403.902	26.655	.000
Error	7034.546	78	90.186		
Total	298965.000	81			
Corrected Total	10596.000	80			

The result of the Analysis of Covariance presented in Table 18 shows that the P-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance at 1 degree of freedom. This shows that the test is significant. The result implies that there is a statistical significant difference in the pronunciation skill of students taught using conversation activities and those taught using the traditional method. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is hereby rejected.

Discussion of findings

The findings of the study based on research question one and research hypothesis one revealed that there is a statistical significant difference in the fluency skill of students taught using information gap activity and those taught using the traditional method. This implied that students taught using information gap activity had a better fluency skills than those taught using the traditional method. The finding agrees with that of Ahmad, Mansor, Ibrahim, Salam, Mamat, and Nordin (2015) who conducted a study on the impact of communicative approach teaching on students' speaking skills (fluency and language accuracy) and found a positive increase in students' fluency skill when taught using information gap activity. The finding of this study may be since when teaching using information gap activity, the students are actively involved in the teaching and learning process, as they can communicate with one another and by

so doing can help build their confidence and their fluency skill. The finding of this study also supports earlier finding by Nurdin (2021) who conducted a study on the effect of the communicative language teaching method and the audio-lingual method for students' English speaking skills in Universities in Yobe State and found that the average value of the English speaking skill (fluency and vocabulary) in Communicative Language Teaching Method and the Audio-Lingual Method is significantly different and this was in favor of the students taught using information gap activity.

The finding is in agreement with that of Ahmad & Rao (2013) who carried out a study on the topic "applying the communicative approach in teaching English as a foreign language and found that CLT approach like role-play activity is more suitable for teaching English as a foreign language than the traditional method. The finding agrees with that of Ahmad, Mansor, Ibrahim, Salam, Mamat, and Nordin (2015) conducted a study on the impact of the communicative approach on students' speaking skills and found that **the** communicative approach has indeed succeeded in promoting and boosting students' vocabulary.

The finding also agrees with that of Ahmad & Rao (2013) who carried out a study on the topic "applying the communicative approach in teaching English as a foreign language and found that students taught English language using conversation activity were more fluent than those taught using the traditional method.

Conclusion and recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that the communicative language teaching approaches in information gap, role play, and conversation activity improve students' speaking skills in terms of their fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary. In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

Teachers should adopt the use of information gap activity in the teaching of the English language as it has been shown in the findings of this study that information gap activity enhances students' fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary skills. In the teaching and learning of the English language,

students should be engaged in role-play activities as this can improve students' fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary skills.

The teaching of the English language should mostly be centered on a conversation between the teacher and the students as this has been shown to help improve students' speaking skills. To ensure that students speaking skills in terms of their fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary are improved upon, relevant teaching techniques are to be employed in the teaching of the English language

Declaration of conflict of interest

We hereby declare that there is no conflict of interest in this work, as the paper is written with a collective effort of all of us

Sources of funding

There are no sources of funding to report.

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How to cite:

EGWUDA, L. E., ADELABU, B. S., ATIM, G. D., & IKYASE, A. V. (2021). Efficacy of communicative language teaching on students' speaking skills in senior secondary schools in Makurdi local government area of Benue State, Nigeria. *TARAN-AWAN Journal of Educational Research and Technology Management*, 2(1), 94-105.