**CHAPTER V**

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **Presentation**

This chapter summarizes the study and its major findings first. Then it gives pedagogical implications, recommendations and finally it presents implications for further research.

* 1. **Summary of the Results**

As mentioned in the first chapter, this study was designed to investigate the effects of using communicative activities to enhance the speaking skills of elementary students and find 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 aim 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?
   * 1. **Implementation of CLT and the Effects of the Newly Implemented Communicative Activities**

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 and they were not suitable to context as 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 lots of mistakes. The students made a lot of noise during the speaking activities. Thus, the teacher had trouble 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.

* + 1. **Role and Place of the Speaking Skill and the Students’ and the Teachers’ Opinions about the Speaking Skill**

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 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 enough and 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 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 got 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 a pair or group to practise their speaking skills.

There were 11 statements generated to assess opinions of the teachers about the speaking skill. Most 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 till 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 which were conducted in English. The teacher monitored the students’ performance in using the language skills for communication purposes and they did communicative tests to monitor the students’ progress in using their language skills communicatively.

* + 1. **Factors that Prevent the Elementary Students from Speaking**

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 great variety of answers were collected. It can be concluded that the following are the factors which 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 necessary vocabulary items.
* Teacher’s attitude: Students expected a positive and encouraging attitude from 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 wait for them to think after a question is asked by the teacher.
  + 1. **Assisting Elementary Students to Participate More in Communicative Activities**

From the analysis of the findings regarding assisting elementary students to participate more in communicative activities, it can be concluded 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 that they are interested in.
* 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 which they can connect with real life situations so that they can comprehend better and join in more.
* 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, shows interest in their ideas, 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 (1986, p. 76) state 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’’. Similarly, Jie (1999) and Ur (1988, p. 19) state that if the subject does not arouse curiosity and learners have little information about it or if they are shy of expressing themselves in English, they cannot be successful in exchanging information. On the other hand, Kleban (2002) emphasizes the significance of the teacher’s attitude and states that a language teacher has an important role to assist his/her students to improve their speaking skills.

* + 1. **Opinions of the Students about the Communicative Activities**

From the findings it can be inferred that the students liked to participate in the activities and found them really 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 ones were useful and effective for them. All of the students agreed that the activities were useful and effective and they all participated in the activities.

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 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.

* 1. **Recommendations**

The results of the study indicate that a lot of practice is required and is necessary to learn how to speak a foreign language. Moreover, the elementary students want to learn English to pass the level test or English Proficiency Test and develop their communication skills to be successful in their social lives and departments. In addition to this, the results of the study indicated that learners were willing to join in communicative activities and they got benefit from them.

It is essential to gather data about the learners’ language interests and needs in order to prepare the EFL syllabus. The syllabus should contain communicative activities to be carried out in the classroom and assignments for completing outside the classroom in order to develop learners’ communication skills as much as possible in using English accurately and fluently.

The researcher would like to present the following recommendations based on the conclusions and findings of the present study.

* The teaching hours should be increased to integrate CLT into classrooms. Therefore, the learners can have enough time to learn, practise and produce the language fluently and accurately.
* In order to increase students’ motivation, the Proficiency Exam at the end of the course should involve the speaking skill.
* The teachers and syllabus designers should take into consideration the learners’ preceding language experiences, interests, expectations and needs while preparing English courses.
* In order to motivate and encourage learners to learn English to communicate outside the classroom, the instructors should do more communicative activities.
* The instructors should put communicative activities in their syllabus to teach the students how to use English communicatively rather than doing mechanical exercises.
* The EFL syllabus should be communicative rather than structural because the learners do not learn English for tests. They learn it for communication in real life situations. The syllabus should include authentic materials replacing the ones in the course book or elementary students have communicative materials apart from the course book.
* Thinking about the students interests is a very important aspect when incorporating communicative activities into the syllabus and at the end of the year their English should be tested and evaluated according to the four skills rather than just ‘Reading’ and ‘Writing’.
* The Preparatory School should focus on developing NEU language learners’ oral proficiency. This can be implemented by increasing speaking activities in the classroom.
* The syllabus designers should redesign the whole curriculum of the Preparatory School in such a way that it contains speaking in the same ratio as the other primary language skills.
* Language teachers should agree on and implement a sufficient number of speaking activities in order to promote oral communication in the target language in class. They should also attempt to organize classroom activities between pairs and groups of language learners in a meaningful way.
  1. **Recommendations for Further Research**

This research provides a number of solutions for the development of the speaking and communication skills problem encountered amongst elementary students. One of the main outcomes of this study reveals the significance of having background information in speaking activities and in language learning as a whole. Therefore, students are advised to be given some background information about the topics they are studying. Also, it was noted that contextualization would assist the students in improving their learning skills. As a result of this, it is recommended that a further study on ways of giving background information and context for the topics should be conducted.

The analysis of the types of communicative activities and topics that students are interested in the classroom should be another area for further research. Such research should include assigments to be completed outside the classrom in order to improve students’ speaking and communication skills. This research could also be used to produce an inventory of activities and topics that would be helpful for the cultural background of the specific language learners and the age group under exploration. In addition to this, the findings of such research could form a database that could be used by the syllabus designers to provide more effective teaching materials.

Student error correction should be another research topic since the nature and structure of error correction can be important in language learning. On the other hand, waiting time and vocabulary input are two other areas on which detailed research can be carried out.

In contrast with the above, the teachers should be more involved in obtaining valuable information for the preparation of speaking materials. This is the only way teachers can be more productive and efficient in supporting their students to make good progress in language and communication skills. By investigating the recommendations for further research on the speaking skills, teachers can come up with helpful insight information from which everyone in the profession could benefit. In this respect, further detailed research should be conducted on the teacher’s approach and its effects on student performance in language learning.