**CHAPTER IV**

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

1. **Presentation**

In this section, 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.

* 1. **Implementation of CLT and the Effects of the Newly Implemented**

**Communicative Activities**

In this research study, at first the students’ needs and interests and the effects of using communicative activities to enhance the speaking skills of elementary students were analyzed by administering questionnaires both to teachers and students. According to the need 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 for choosing the main language points for the weeks 2, 3, 4 and 5 in the fall semester of the 2007 and 2008 academic year and then the researcher checked the date of application of the exercises (see Appendix A).

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 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. In addition to this, they were not suitable to the context as communicative activities as it is indicated below.

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

**Table 4.1:** Designing a Sample Communicative Activity

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **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. (see Appendix B) |
| **Materials:** | Face2face Elementary Course Book, Unit 2A, p. 15. as an exercise (see Appendix B) | Pictures (see Appendix B) |

Finally, the researcher prepared lesson plans (see Appendix B) 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 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 doing 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 were 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 autonomous yet 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 would use the language.

The researcher observed eight communicative activities applied in six elementary classes in Preparatory School to find out 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 attitude during the lesson. According to the results of the observations, the students participated in the communicative activities whose topics they 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 every day 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 gain 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 (see Appendix B) 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 go over the grammar points before implementing each activity so this took 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 look over grammar points before implementing the activities.

The participant teacher had trouble while giving the instruction so she had to simplify the activities. In addition to this, the teacher often gave prompts for the students during some activities because some students did not know much 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 spoke mostly 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 the classroom.

The students did not speak English fluently and accurately while doing the activities. They were insufficient in using English. They made lots of 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 made a lot of noise while they were 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.

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

**Opinions about the Speaking Skill**

As NEU is an English-medium University, the lessons are taught in English. Therefore, learners need English to communicate in such environments. At NEU Preparatory School, speaking is considered and assessed like other language learning skills but because of the loaded syllabus of the fall semester (4 months) and the learners’ anxiety in passing the Proficiency Test, enough attention cannot be given to speaking.

In each unit, elementary level students are taught English for approximately 18 hours a week out of which only 2 hours are spent on speaking. Speaking is assessed in each level even though teachers consider speaking as one of the skills which they can skip and do when they there is enough time. This is because of the fact that students would like to learn more vocabulary and grammar as their major goal is to pass the English Proficiency Test. Therefore, teachers minimize speaking time throughout the unit and the task types in speaking are just practised towards the end of the unit.

In Preparatory School, the syllabus designed for each level does not seem to focus on an analysis of students’ real interests and needs. The main course book with some modifications and supplementary materials form the content of the syllabus. Although students had fun while participating in the speaking activities, they were aware of the fact that speaking was an important skill particularly for their future careers. On the other hand, although teachers believed that speaking was an essential skill for students and they worked on this important skill, still nearly all of them complained that they did not have enough time to practise the speaking skill sufficiently.

* + 1. **The Students’ Opinions about the Speaking Skill**

As part of the questionnaire administered to the students and teachers (see Appendix C & E), there were statements designed to discover the opinions of students about the speaking skill. The results in table 3 show that respondents consider speaking as one of the most important skills in language learning.

The first statement (s18) clearly shows the speaking materials that were used in class were sufficient for improving the students’ speaking skills in English. More than half of the respondents (55.4 %) agreed with this statement whereas 22.3 % remained neutral. Similarly, more than half of the respondents (67.0%) stated that the use of authentic materials was beneficial to improve their speaking skills (s20). The next statement (s21) indicated that the speaking materials which were used in student’s book were enough for the students. Nearly half of the respondents (44.7%) agreed with this statement. On the other hand, 48.3 % of the respondents agreed that the speaking activities and materials used in the class hours were enough to improve their speaking skills in English (s26). The results indicate that the students had a positive attitude towards materials used in the classroom. Using authentic materials is one of the ways that enhance the students’ speaking skill. The students always complained about the materials in the course book and they found these materials boring and they needed to use authentic materials to improve their speaking skills. Wong, Kwok and Choi (1995, p. 318) point out that ‘‘authentic materials can help us to achieve the aims of enriching students’ experience in the learning and use of English, sensitizing them to the use of English in the real world, and helping them to generate a learning strategy for learning not only English but also other subjects’’.

**Table 3**

***The Students’ Opinions about the Speaking Skill***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S.** | **N** | **5-Strongly**  **agree****4-Agree****3-Neutral****2-Disagree****1-Strongly**  **disagree** | **Frequency** | **Percent** | **Mean** | **Std.D** |
| 1. The speaking materials that are used in class are sufficient for improving my speaking skill in English.
 | 100 | 54321 | 19432593 | 17,038,422,38,02,7 | 3,6667 | ,9897 |
| 1. Use of authentic materials is beneficial to improve my speaking skill.
 | 100 | 54321 | 34411291 | 30,436,610,78,0,9 | 4,0103 | ,9735 |
| 1. The speaking materials which are used in student’s book are enough for me.
 | 100 | 54321 | 173321189 | 15,229,518,816,18,0 | 3,3163 | 1,2234 |
| 1. The speaking activities and materials used in the class hours are enough to improve my speaking skill in English.
 | 100 | 54321 | 203424193 | 17,930,421,417,02,7 | 3,4900 | 1,1055 |
| 1. I think speaking English fluently is more important than writing.
 | 100 | 54321 | 48301471 | 42,926,812,56,3,9 | 4,1700 | ,9853 |
| 1. Fluency and accuracy have the same level of importance in speaking.
 | 100 | 54321 | 38371771 | 33,933,015,26,3,9 | 4,0400 | ,9631 |
| 1. Fluency is more important than accuracy in speaking.
 | 100 | 54321 | 173123272 | 15,227,720,524,11,8 | 3,3400 | 1,1121 |
| 1. Accuracy is more important than fluency in speaking.
 | 100 | 54321 | 223029133 | 19,626,825,911,62,7 | 3,5670 | 1,0792 |
| 1. When I participate in dialogues, conversations and role-plays, my confidence in using the speaking skill increases.
 | 100 | 54321 | 36411832 | 32,136,616,12,71,8 | 4,0600 | ,9191 |
| **S.** | **N** | **5-Always****4-Often****3-Sometimes****2-Rarely****1-Never** | **Frequency** | **Percent** | **Mean** | **Std.D** |
| 1. I prefer pair/group work to practise my speaking skill.
 | 100 | 54321 | 44361622 | 39,332,114,31,81,8 | 4,1800 | ,9143 |
| 1. 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 | 54321 | 25263982 | 22,323,234,87,11,8 | 3,6400 | 1,0102 |

 The following statement (s27) clearly shows that the students think speaking English fluently was 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 globalizing world.

 The next statement (s28) explored if fluency and accuracy had the same level of importance in speaking. 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 was more important than accuracy in the speaking (s29), 20. 5% were neutral and 25.9 % disagreed. The result indicates that the students who have background knowledge of English consider fluency more important than accuracy in the speaking skill and they only would 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 little background of 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 first would 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 (cited in Celce-Murcia 1991, p. 125) state that if language learners can have effective communication in their second or foreign language, they are regarded successful, whereas two decades ago the language accuracy was 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. 68.7 % of respondents agreed with this statements and the 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 have the opportunity to use English for real communication. Revell (1979) points out that communicative activities are the activities 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 a chance to experiment with their linguistic skills, to be more creative. Activities bridge the gap between ‘skill-getting’ in the classroom and ‘skill-using’ in real life (p. 5).

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 group work. Actually pair/group work is very important and useful for students who are learning English as a second language. Doff (1988) mentions the techniques to get the students to communicate with each other in English. He gives examples of exchanging information and guessing games. For him, in order to exchange information pair work can be useful; everyone has his 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, chatted with foreigners, sent emails to their foreign friends, spoke to their foreign friends or watched and listened to TV programs. 45.4 % of the respondents stated that they often used English outside the classroom whereas 34. 8 % of them believed 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 (1986) also point 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 attention. It is crucial because there are lots of situations in real life when we act like listeners only, such as an audience of radio or TV. Moreover, the writing and reading skills give chance to the learners to develop their communicative talents. We use some materials like magazines and newspapers to get information about the world in the reading skill and we use the writing skill for communicative purposes, too. We write letters, reports, abstracts for presentations, assignments, etc. Therefore, the writing activity is an interactive process with focus on ‘why’, ‘when’ and ‘for what audience’ writing is done. The purpose of the activity is to communicate with the audience (p. 101).

* + 1. **The Teachers’ Opinions about the Speaking Skill**

Some of the statements in the research were designed to discover teachers’ opinions about the speaking skill. The results in table 4 reveal that the students have trouble speaking in English.

The first statement (s1) which was about whether students’ major aim in studying English was to learn how to use the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) in English accurately and fluently for communication purposes. The majority of the respondents (84.4%) agreed with this statement whereas 15, 2 % of the respondent disagreed. This data shows that the instructors believe the students are eager to learn English for communication purposes in context. This might be because they will need these skills to communicate with their friends and departmental instructors when they start their studies in their respective departments.

 The next statement (s6) explored whether students paid more attention to learning grammar rules explicitly rather than focusing these rules in communicative contexts. More than half of the respondents (81, 8%) agreed with this statement, whereas 12, 1% remained neutral. This finding implies that according to the statements, the students mostly need to learn English by having a grammar-based lesson. This might be because they are eager to learn English in order to pass the English exam and study in their departments.

**Table 4**

***The Teachers’ Opinions about the Speaking Skill***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S.** | **N** | **5-Strongly**  **agree****4-Agree****3-Neutral****2-Disagree****1-Strongly**  **disagree** | **Frequency** | **Percent** | **Mean** | **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 | 542 | 14145 | 42,242,215,2 | 4,1212 | 1,0234 |
| 1. Students pay more attention to learning grammar rules explicitly rather than focusing on using these rules in communicative contexts.
 | 33 | 5432 | 42342 | 12,169,712,16,1 | 3,8788 | ,6963 |
| 1. At the end of the language program, students become proficient enough to respond directly in English without using their L1.
 | 33 | 4321 | 121551 | 36,445,515,23,0 | 3,1515 | ,7953 |
| 1. The teaching materials required by the curriculum are effective in improving the communicative language skills of students till the end of the language program.
 | 33 | 5432 | 317112 | 9,151,533,36,1 | 3,6364 | ,7423 |
| **S.** | **N** | **5-Always****4-Often****3-Sometimes****2-Rarely****1-Never** | **Frequency** | **Percent** | **Mean** | **Std.D** |
| 1. Personal observation suggests that it is important for students to use the language skills for communication purposes inside the classroom.
 | 33 | 543 | 2481 | 72,224,23,0 | 4,6970 | ,5294 |
| 1. Personal observation suggests that it is important for students to use the language skills for communication purposes outside the classroom.
 | 33 | 5432 | 171231 | 51,536,49,13,0 | 4,3636 | ,7833 |
| 1. Students understand the instructions and other written or oral language work in English.
 | 33 | 5432 | 31974 | 9,157,621,212,1 | 3,6364 | ,8222 |
| 1. Students understand the instructions and other written or oral language work in English but prefer to return the respond in L1.
 | 33 | 54321 | 814911 | 24,242,427,33,03,0 | 3,8182 | ,9504 |
| 1. Students are eager to participate in the activities which are conducted in English.
 | 33 | 5432 | 6,151,527,312,1 | 12,127,351,56,1 | 3,5313 | ,8025 |
| 1. I monitor the students’ performance in using the language skills for communication purposes.
 | 33 | 543 | 2382 | 69,724,26,1 | 4,6364 | ,6030 |
| 1. I administer communicative tests to monitor students’ progress in using their language skills communicatively.
 | 33 | 5432 | 141441 | 42,442,412,13,0 | 4,2424 | ,7917 |

The following statement (s9) in table 4 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 Preparatory School, most of the students are at elementary level and they always use their L1 in the classroom. In addition to this, although the classroom language is English in 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) which follows clearly shows that the teaching materials required by the curriculum were effective in improving the communicative language skills of students till the end of the language program. 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. Actually, these teaching materials are not effective in improving the communicative language skill of the students till the end of the program. This could be because the syllabus is mostly grammar-based and it is overloaded.

The following statement (s13) in table 4 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 (1991, p. 126) claims that the aim of a speaking part 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) for which 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 4 indicated that nearly half of the respondents (39.4%) stated that students were often eager to participate in the activities which were conducted in English whereas 51.5% of the respondents believed that students were sometimes eager to participate in the activities which 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 4 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, encouraged and motivated them to use the 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 Preparatory School, the students had two timetabled hours of speaking in a week. At the end of the term, the teachers did communicative tests to monitor students’ progress in using their language skills communicatively. However, although this essential skill was 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 loaded program.

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

The results of the research concerning the factors that prevent the elementary students from speaking show that nearly half of the respondents do not have difficulty while speaking and understanding English. The statements in table 5 were designed to investigate the factors that prevent the elementary students from speaking.

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

The first statement (s6) in table 5 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).

47.3 % 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. Besides, 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 topics did not attract their attention and interest and because of this 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 questions asked by their teacher. One of the reasons why some learners are hesitant to talk in class is the sort of diversity in the activities. Zhao (1998) points out that generally there are two factors which affect the speaking of learners in class. He states 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 comes from stressfulness and timidity while they are speaking.

**Table 5**

***Factors that Prevent the Elementary Students from Speaking***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S.** | **N** | **5-Always****4-Often****3-Sometimes****2-Rarely****1-Never** | **Frequency** | **Percent** | **Mean** | **Std.D** |
| 1. I participate in the lessons effectively.
 | 100 | 5432 | 6026111 | 53,623,29,8,9 | 4,4796 | ,7354 |
| 1. Throughout the lesson, I ask questions to make sure I understand the topic.
 | 100 | 54321 | 26422642 | 23,237,523,23,61,8 | 3,8600 | ,9213 |
| 1. I speak English when I ask and answer questions.
 | 100 | 54321 | 17373347 | 15,233,029,53,66,3 | 3,5408 | 1,0568 |
| 1. When I speak, I worry about making mistakes.
 | 100 | 54321 | 1737201312 | 15,233,017,911,610,7 | 3,3434 | 1,2548 |
| 1. When I need to speak to my teacher, I try to speak in English.
 | 100 | 54321 | 17363088 | 15,232,126,87,17,1 | 3,4646 | 1,1186 |

* 1. **Assisting Elementary Students to Participate More in Communicative Activities**

There were statements designed to investigate the ways to assist elementary students to participate more in communicative activities. The results in table 6 show that majority of the respondents assist their students to participate more in communicative activities.

* + 1. **Assisting Elementary Students to Participate More in Communicative Activities**

For the first statement (s19) the results show that more than half of the respondents (57, 6%) believe that using mechanical drills such as ‘verb correction’ and ‘gap-filling’ exercises in classroom activities often helped to improve the use of communicative skills of the students. On the other hand, the next statement clearly shows that nearly all of the respondents (97%) believed that using mechanical drills such as ‘verb correction’ and ‘gap filling’ exercises in classroom activities often helped to improve the grammatical knowledge of students (s20). These findings show that using mechanical drills did not help to improve the use of communicative skills of the students. They helped to improve the grammatical knowledge of students. The students would like to do pair and group work, information gap activities, discussions, ask and answer questions, exchanging information, talk about pictures and play games instead of doing mechanical drills in order to improve their communicative skills. In most elementary classrooms, the students were provided with new grammar topics and mechanical exercises such as gap filling in which there was very limited opportunity for the students to practise the language. However, the students in Preparatory School face the difficulty that all students of EFL in the world face: they mostly do not have the chance to live in an English-speaking environment. This fact puts the responsibility of providing students with an English-speaking environment solely on the institution and specifically on the language classroom. Nolasco and Arthur (1987) emphasize the significance of the number of activities in a lesson and states that teachers should intend to use different task types. They also add that the significance of linguistic resources students need to have to motivate them to speak.

**Table 6**

***Assisting Elementary Students to Participate More in Communicative Activities***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S.** | **N** | **5-Always****4-Often****3-Sometimes****2-Rarely****1-Never** | **Frequency** | **Percent** | **Mean** | **Std.D** |
| 1. 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 | 54321 | 910923 | 27,330,327,36,19,1 | 3,6061 | 1,2232 |
| 1. Using mechanical drills such as ‘verb correction’ and ‘gap-filling’ exercises in classroom activities help to improve the grammatical knowledge of students.
 | 33 | 543 | 19131 | 57.639.43.0 | 4,5455 | ,5640 |
| 1. I use information gap activities, information transfer activities, conversations or dialogues in order to improve the language skills of my students.
 | 33 | 543 | 2292 | 66,727,36,1 | 4,6061 | ,6092 |
| 1. 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 | 543 | 20102 | 60,630,36,1 | 4,5625 | ,6189 |
| 1. I use supplementary authentic materials while carrying out the activities.
 | 33 | 543 | 11157 | 33,345,521,2 | 4,1212 | ,7398 |
| 1. I use audio-visual materials while carrying out the activities such as pictures, video, flash cards.
 | 33 | 54321 | 514761 | 15,242,421,218,23,0 | 3,4848 | 1,0642 |
| 1. I create a suitable context and provide sufficient feedback after doing the activities.
 | 33 | 5432 | 121461 | 36,442,418,23,0 | 4,1212 | ,8199 |

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 it 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 gain self-confidence in learning the foreign language as a medium instruction for their careers. Nunan (1988, p. 78) emphasizes that the improvement of activities should be connected with what happens outside the classroom and he says 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, 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 course book and grammar pack rather than using authentic materials related to the language topics at elementary level.

Statement (s39) investigated that 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 which they can connect with real life situations so that they can comprehend better and join in more. 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 (2002) points out that it is significant to observe learners’ performance and supply them with constant and continuous feedback on their progress. Similarly, Davis (1999) proposes that the students’ achievement should be given a reward. She claims that positive feedback affects motivation more than negative feedback despite the fact that both of them are effective. She also asserts that expressing a compliment assists students to become more self-confident and teachers should also compliment meaningless efforts of the students.

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

There were statements (see Appendix C) designed to discover the opinions of respondents about the communicative activities. The results in table 7 show that more than half of the respondents find communicative activities successful to enhance their speaking skill.

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

The first statement (s9) in table 7 indicated that the students practised how to use English outside the classroom during the speaking activities. 58.9 % of the respondents agreed, 23.2 % stayed neutral and 6.3 % disagreed with this statement. The result shows that the students do not have any problems in doing the activities in class hours. However, they would also like to have extra activities to do outside the classroom. This means that they only do activities in class hours and they do not have any work to do at home.

On the other hand, more than half of the respondents (61.6 %) agreed that the speaking activities in the students’ book (Face2face) were suitable for their level (s22). In relation to this, the majority of the respondents (73.2 %) stated that the speaking activities were well-organized and easy to do (s23). Similarly, the majority of the respondents (70.6 %) agreed that the speaking activities which they did in class were sufficient (s24). More than half of the respondents (68.8 %) indicated that the speaking activities they did in class were enjoyable (s25). These findings show that the activities were suitable to the students’ level and they were easy to learn but they should be improved and varied according to the students’ needs and interests. In addition to this, although the percentages show that more than half of the respondents found the speaking activities used in teaching English enjoyable, it seemed that there were still some problems with the topics they were interested in.

The statement (s31) which follows clearly shows that the students wanted to do speaking activities outside the classroom. The majority of the respondents (71.4%) agreed with this statement. The result implies that the respondents have a positive tendency toward using English outside the classroom.

The next statement (s32) indicated that the students used more English while doing the speaking activities. More than half of the respondents (67.0%) agreed with this statement. The result shows that the speaking activities were according to the needs and interests of the students. Therefore, they used more English while doing the speaking activities. The next statement (s36) exploredwhether while doing the speaking activities the students wanted their teacher to correct their mistakes immediately. The majority of the respondents (71.4%) agreed with this statement. This indicates that the students should be encouraged to speak without being afraid of making mistakes. They need to be clearly shown that making mistakes in speaking is only a natural part of learning a language. It is the teacher’s duty to handle error correction carefully without intimidating students during their learning process. Jie (1999) points out the significance of error correction in speaking activities by saying that error correction is significant for students to talk accurately but he also states that when the learners are talking, it is not suitable and tolerable to correct their mistakes. He emphasizes the significant of writing their errors and correcting them at the end of their talk. He proposes that a teacher should write a note with the corrections or demonstrate the shared problems like language points and present the individual errors at the end of their presentation. Zhao (1998) also emphasizes that it is significant to correct students’ errors after they finish their talk.

**Table 7**

***Opinions of the Students about the Communicative Activities***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S.** | **N** | **5-Strongly**  **agree****4-Agree****3-Neutral****2-Disagree****1-Strongly**  **disagree** | **Frequency** | **Percent** | **Mean** | **Std.D** |
| 1. I practise how to use English outside the classroom during the speaking activities.
 | 100 | 54321 | 28382652 | 25,033,923,24,51,8 | 3,8586 | ,9584 |
| 1. The speaking activities in students’ book (Face2face) are suitable for my level.
 | 100 | 54321 | 274217131 | 24,137,515,211,6,9 | 3,8100 | 1,0120 |
| 1. The speaking activities are well-organized and easy to do.
 | 100 | 5432 | 3052152 | 26,846,413,41,8 | 4,0909 | ,7965 |
| 1. The speaking activities which we do in class are sufficient for my learning.
 | 100 | 54321 | 234617122 | 29,541,115,210,71,8 | 3,7600 | 1,0062 |
| 1. The speaking activities we do in class are enjoyable.
 | 100 | 5432 | 4235212 | 37,531,318,81,8 | 4,1700 | ,8294 |
| 1. I want to do speaking activities outside the classroom.
 | 100 | 54321 | 44361441 | 39,332,112,53,6,9 | 4,1919 | ,8998 |
| 1. I use English more while doing the speaking activities.
 | 100 | 54321 | 33422031 | 29,537,517,92,7,9 | 4,0404 | ,8680 |
| 1. While doing the speaking activities, I want my teacher to correct my mistakes immediately.
 | 100 | 54321 | 58221811 | 51,819,616,1,9,9 | 4,3500 | ,8804 |

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

* 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 had 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.