



**Enhancing EFL Learners' Communicative Competence
through Interactive Activities: A Case Study of Grade Four
Students at an Educational Complex in Fujairah**

**تعزيز الكفاءة التواصلية لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من خلال الأنشطة
التفاعلية: دراسة حالة لطلاب الصف الرابع في مجمع تعليمي في الفجيرة**

by

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of the requirements for the degree of
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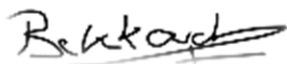
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Abstract

The attainment of communicative competence stands as a basic goal for learners of the English language. Interaction and communication play significant roles in the language development of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Interactive activities provide opportunities for students to engage in meaningful interactions, practise language in a communicative setting, negotiate meaning, and develop their fluency and accuracy in English. This study aims to uncover the connection between interactive activities in the classroom and the communicative competence of primary school EFL students. Many such students encounter difficulties in language learning, whether related to acquiring a second language or experiencing challenges in communication. Exploring communicative competence allows for the identification of the specific challenges faced by young learners, facilitating the creation of targeted interventions or instructional approaches to improve their language development. Integrating interactive activities in the EFL context emerged as a promising solution. This study sought to investigate the impact of incorporating interactive activities on the communicative competence of primary EFL students. These activities were grounded in principles aimed at enhancing students' communicative competence. This qualitative research involved 30 participants (10 males and 20 females), all fourth-grade students at an educational complex in Fujairah during the 2023/2024 academic year. Various interactive activities, including role-playing, pair-work, discussions, and online vocabulary games, were designed and implemented in the classroom to foster the development of the students' communicative competence. Data were collected through classroom observations and reflections, with qualitative data being analysed based on the observations.

The findings demonstrated a significant enhancement in the communicative competence of the students participating in the interactive activities. Enhancing language skills is of greater significance during the elementary school years. Therefore, examining how children develop their communicative competence in this context provides insights into language acquisition and enhancement. The findings of this research offer valuable guidance for EFL educators and curriculum developers, highlighting the benefits and challenges associated with integrating interactive tasks into language instruction aimed at improving communicative abilities.

Keywords: communicative competence, communicative language teaching, interactive activities, EFL classroom, primary schools.

خلاصة

يعد تحقيق الكفاءة التواصلية هدفًا أساسيًا لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية. يلعب التفاعل والتواصل أدوارًا مهمة في تطوير اللغة لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. توفر الأنشطة التفاعلية فرصًا للطلاب للمشاركة في تفاعلات هادفة، وممارسة اللغة في بيئة تواصلية، وتطوير الطلاقة والدقة في اللغة الإنجليزية. الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو الكشف عن العلاقة بين الأنشطة التفاعلية في الفصل الدراسي والكفاءة التواصلية لدى طلاب المرحلة الابتدائية في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المدارس الابتدائية، يعد تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية أو أجنبية أمرًا محوريًا في إرساء الأساس لإتقان اللغة وقدرات التواصل لدى الطلاب. تمثل مرحلة المدرسة الابتدائية فترة حاسمة لاكتساب اللغة وتنمية الكفاءة التواصلية. ومع ذلك، يواجه العديد من طلاب المدارس الابتدائية صعوبات في تعلم اللغة، سواء كانت تتعلق باكتساب لغة ثانية أو مواجهة تحديات في التواصل. يتيح استكشاف الكفاءة التواصلية حصر التحديات التي يواجهها الطلاب، مما يسهل إنشاء تدخلات مستهدفة أو أساليب تعليمية لتحسين تطورهم اللغوي. وقد ظهر دمج الأنشطة التفاعلية في سياق تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة كحل واعد. وترتكز هذه الأنشطة على مبادئ تهدف إلى تعزيز الكفاءة التواصلية لدى الطلاب. سعت هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة أثر دمج الأنشطة التفاعلية على الكفاءة التواصلية لدى طلاب المرحلة الابتدائية في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. وشمل البحث 30 مشاركاً (10 ذكور و20 إناث)، جميعهم من طلاب الصف الرابع في مجمع تعليمي بالفجيرة خلال العام الدراسي 2024/2023. تم تصميم وتنفيذ العديد من الأنشطة التفاعلية، بما في ذلك لعب الأدوار والعمل الثنائي والمناقشات وألعاب المفردات عبر الإنترنت في الفصل الدراسي لتعزيز تنمية الكفاءة التواصلية لدى الطلاب. تم جمع البيانات من خلال الملاحظات الصفية، مع فحص البيانات النوعية بناءً على الملاحظات. أظهرت النتائج تحسناً كبيراً في كفاءة التواصل باللغة الإنجليزية لدى الطلاب الذين شاركوا في الأنشطة التفاعلية وتطور في مستويات دافعية التعلم والاهتمام بين المشاركين. تعتبر تنمية اللغة أمرًا هامًا خلال المرحلة الابتدائية. ومن خلال النظر في الكفاءة التواصلية في هذا الإطار، يمكننا معرفة المزيد حول كيفية اكتساب الأطفال لقدراتهم اللغوية وتحسينها. ستقدم نتائج هذه الدراسة نصائح مفيدة للمعلمين ومطوري المناهج من خلال تسليط الضوء على مزايا وصعوبات دمج الأنشطة التفاعلية في تدريس مهارات التواصل.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكفاءة التواصلية، تعليم اللغة التواصلية، الأنشطة التفاعلية، فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية،

المدارس الابتدائية.

Dedication

To the Souls of My Parents.

In the loving memory of my parents.

Your unwavering support, wisdom, and love have been my guiding lights throughout this journey. Though you are no longer with me in the physical realm, your spirits live on in every page of this dissertation. This achievement is a testament to the values and lessons you instilled in me. Thank you for inspiring me.

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I express my heartfelt appreciation to the participants; my students, as this study would not have come to fruition without their involvement.

Lastly, I am profoundly grateful to my husband and children for their patience, endless encouragement and understanding during the demanding phases of this academic endeavor.

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List of Abbreviations

CA: Conversation Analysis

CALL: Computer-Assisted Language Learning

CC: Communicative Competence

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

CLA: Communicative Language Ability

CLLAs: Communicative Language Learning Activities

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

CSs: Communication Strategies

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESE: Emirates Schools Establishment

ESL: English as a Second Language

IC: Interactional Competence

L2: Second Language

LBA: Language-Based Activities

MALL: Mobile-Assisted Language Learning

MOE: Ministry of Education

PBL: Project-based Learning

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

SPCC: Self-Perceived Communicative Competence

TBLT: Task-Based Language Teaching

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Overview

In an increasingly interconnected and globalised world, proficiency in English as a foreign language (EFL) has become a vital skill for individuals seeking to participate effectively in international communication. The ability to communicate in English extends beyond mere linguistic competence; it involves the mastery of communicative competence, which encompasses the integration of linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). In the realm of language education, there is a growing acknowledgment that traditional, teacher-centred approaches may fall short in developing the nuanced communicative skills required for real-world interaction.

This dissertation addresses the imperative to cultivate EFL students' communicative competence through the lens of interactive activities. The incorporation of interactive elements into language learning environments has gained traction in recent years, reflecting a pedagogical shift towards student-centred methodologies that emphasise engagement, collaboration, and experiential learning. This study focuses on investigating the efficacy of interactive activities as a means to enhance EFL students' communicative competence, with a specific emphasis on activities that promote authentic, contextually relevant language use.

Interaction and communication play significant roles in the language development of students studying English as a foreign language. According to research, fostering interaction is the primary objective for language proficiency, providing students with opportunities to articulate their thoughts (Gibbons, 2015). Furthermore, it is essential for students to engage in social settings where they use English as a means of comprehensible expression. When learning environments emphasise spoken language and the articulation of knowledge, thoughts, and opinions, learners naturally develop grammatical skills (Gibbons, 2015). Despite

this, various studies indicate that some students lack the confidence and motivation to participate in communicative tasks in every classroom and learning situation (Savasci, 2014).

While EFL learners are generally more willing to engage in reading, writing, and listening activities, they often exhibit reluctance when it comes to speaking English. To cultivate speaking proficiency, it is imperative for teachers to deliberately employ diverse strategies in learning contexts, encouraging students to participate in a variety of communicative activities.

Proficient communication is a crucial ability enabling us to foster connections, share thoughts, and accomplish objectives. Yet, it transcends mere language mastery; it entails employing language appropriately for the given context and audience, termed as communicative competence. This competency is fundamental for achieving effective communication.

The practice of teaching languages through interactions in meaningful circumstances is known as communicative language teaching. This kind of teaching provides an opportunity for real learning beyond the simple memorising and repetition of grammar rules on their own. The essential idea of communicative competence is the learner's ability to understand and use language appropriately for communication in real-world social and academic contexts, as opposed to artificial ones. Sociolinguist H. Paul Grice created the foundation for this term, which was coined in the 1970s by linguists Dell Hymes and John Gumperz. Communicative competence includes the skill to use language effectively and appropriately in various communication settings, encompassing both linguistic competence (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) and sociolinguistic competence (which involves understanding cultural norms, social contexts, and the pragmatic aspects of communication).

Teaching English as a second or foreign language in primary schools plays a crucial role in laying the foundation for students' language proficiency and communication skills. The

primary school years provide a critical window for language acquisition and the development of communicative competence. Primary school English language instruction typically aims to develop students' basic language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, focusing solely on isolated language components may not adequately prepare students for effective communication in real-world contexts. Hence, there is a growing emphasis on incorporating communicative competence teaching approaches that promote authentic and meaningful language use.

In communicative competence teaching, the focus shifts from the rote memorisation of vocabulary and grammar rules to developing students' ability to use language meaningfully and appropriately. The goal is to empower students to engage in genuine communication tasks, express their thoughts and ideas, and understand others in authentic and purposeful ways.

Various instructional strategies and activities are employed in primary school English classrooms to cultivate communicative competence. These may encompass role-playing, group discussions, problem-solving tasks, information gap activities, project-based learning, and utilising authentic materials like songs, stories, and videos. These methodologies promote active student involvement, collaboration, and the application of language skills within meaningful contexts. The integration of interactive activities into the teaching of communicative competence in primary school English has garnered attention due to its potential to enrich students' language learning experiences and outcomes. Interactive tasks offer opportunities for students to engage in meaningful exchanges, practise language within communicative settings, negotiate meanings, and refine their fluency and accuracy in English.

Through prioritising communicative competence instruction in the primary school English classroom, educators strive to furnish students with the linguistic abilities and self-assurance necessary for effective English communication, both within and beyond the

classroom setting. This approach fosters not solely language proficiency but also cultivates critical thinking, problem-solving, cultural awareness, and social interaction skills, all of which are indispensable for thriving in an ever more globalised and interconnected world.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The research problem for investigating the communicative competence teaching of English at the primary level focuses on assessing the impact of interactive activities on students' development of communicative competence in the English language. Specifically, the study aims to explore how the integration of interactive activities within the English language curriculum in primary schools' influences students' language skills, their ability to effectively communicate in English, and their overall communicative competence.

The problem with investigating communicative competence in a grade four EFL setting lies in the need to comprehensively understand and address the effectiveness of the current instructional approaches. This includes assessing the proficiency levels, linguistic challenges, and interactive abilities of grade four EFL students. Additionally, the research will explore the potential hurdles faced by both educators and learners in achieving optimal communicative competence. By delving into these aspects, the study aims to identify gaps in the existing teaching methodologies and propose recommendations for improving communicative competence in the grade four EFL setting, thereby contributing to the enhancement of English language education at this crucial developmental stage.

Although the existing literature indicates that interactive activities can greatly enhance the acquisition of communicative competence (refer to the Literature Review chapter), there is a notable gap in research that thoroughly investigates the particular strategies, obstacles, and results linked with incorporating these activities into EFL classrooms in primary schools in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). To the best of the researcher's understanding, there has not

been any investigation conducted within primary schools in the UAE to uncover the impact of interactive activities in EFL classrooms on the communicative competence of elementary - level students.

1.3 Rationale

The rationale for this dissertation stems from the recognition that while traditional language instruction may build foundational language skills, it may not sufficiently equip EFL learners with the practical communicative competence required for effective interaction. By delving into the impact of interactive activities on enhancing EFL students' communicative competence, this study seeks to contribute valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on effective language pedagogy. Understanding how interactive activities influence language acquisition and application can inform educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in refining language teaching methodologies to better meet the evolving needs of language learners.

Indeed, the motivation for undertaking this research is primarily professional. As an English teacher in a primary school, this study is deemed beneficial as it will assist educators in enhancing the students' communicative competence via interactive activities. Primary school students who cultivate proficient communication skills are poised for a more robust academic trajectory. Effective communication skills contribute to language proficiency and facilitate the progression of socio-emotional development and problem-solving aptitudes. Delving into communicative competence provides insights into fostering comprehensive skills that support students across their academic journey.

1.4 Research Purpose and Research Question

The aim of this study is to investigate the efficacy of incorporating interactive activities in enhancing students' communicative competence within a primary education setting in a

UAE educational complex. The objective is to evaluate the impact of utilising interactive lessons on bolstering students' language proficiency, promoting coherent communication, and fostering the overall development of their communicative competence. The research endeavours to address the following research question:

- What is the effect of interactive activities on enhancing the communicative competence of grade four EFL students?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Language acquisition holds greater significance during the elementary school years. Examining communicative competence within this context provides valuable insights into how children acquire and enhance their language skills, encompassing speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This exploration yields understanding of the fundamental principles underpinning effective communication.

Classroom interaction holds significant importance in second language acquisition (SLA) and is believed to enhance learners' cognitive abilities (Walsh, 2002; Matsumoto, 2010). Given that interaction is central to communication in the context of communicative language teaching (Brown, 2007), it is imperative for teachers to understand how their classroom strategies genuinely contribute to language learning. Therefore, this study aims to uncover the connection between interactive activities in the classroom and the communicative competence of primary EFL students.

Through examining the influence of interactive activities on the instruction of communicative competence in English within a primary school setting, this research endeavours to provide insights that can guide teaching methods, curriculum design, and policy formulation. The ultimate goal is to improve the language learning experiences and achievements of primary school students.

The existing literature lacks sufficient coverage on enhancing communicative competence among primary EFL students through interactive activities in schools within the UAE. Recognising this significant gap, the researcher initiated the present investigation. The primary objective of this study is to provide insights for teachers, curriculum designers, and researchers on effectively fostering communicative competence among elementary students through the incorporation of interactive activities in the UAE context.

1.6 Dissertation Structure

The dissertation comprises the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction; this chapter provides a clear and concise introduction to the subject of the dissertation and establishes the relevance and significance of the chosen topic within the broader academic context. It clearly articulates the problem or gap in the existing knowledge that the dissertation aims to address and outlines the specific goals or research question that the dissertation seeks to answer. Furthermore, this chapter justifies why the chosen topic is important and why it merits scholarly investigation, highlighting the potential contributions of research to the field. Overall, the introductory chapter serves as a foundation for the entire dissertation, offering readers a clear understanding of the research context, objectives, and methodology.

Chapter 2: Literature Review; this chapter aims to place the study in the larger context of previous scholarship, gives a thorough examination of the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the research, and offers a guide for filling in the gaps in the literature that have been found. The empirical research that investigates how interactive activities affect the communicative ability of EFL students is also the main emphasis of this chapter. Any gaps or discrepancies in the body of existing literature will be the focus of attention throughout the literature review. These gaps will help explain the current study's rationale and point out areas

that require future investigation to provide a more thorough knowledge of how interactive activities affect the communicative skills of EFL students.

Chapter 3: Methodology; this chapter focuses on the research design, methods, instrument, setting, participants, and data collection/analysis procedure. It justifies the chosen methodology and explains how it aligns with the research objectives. Moreover, the research reliability, validity, and ethical considerations are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion; the findings of the qualitative data collection and a thorough examination of the methodology's data are presented in this chapter. The analysis draws attention to the study's conclusions to shed more light on how interactive activities affect the communicative skills of elementary EFL students. The research question based on the study is answered in this chapter. Also, this chapter discusses the detailed analysis of the data based on the methodology and findings. In order to gain a better understanding of how interactive activities affect the communicative competence of EFL students, the analysis highlights the study's findings.

Chapter 5: Pedagogical Implications; this chapter deals with the significance of the study's outcomes in the educational context. The research findings carry pedagogical implications for professionals in the field of English as a foreign language (EFL), including educators, those involved in curriculum design, and individuals engaged in teacher training and professional development.

Chapter 6: Conclusion; this concluding chapter provides a recapitulation of the conducted research, outlining the limitations of the study and offering recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter is designed to offer a comprehensive exploration of the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of the research, position the study within the broader context of the existing scholarship, and provide a roadmap for addressing the identified gaps in the literature. Through this examination, the chapter aims to establish a foundation upon which the subsequent chapters of the dissertation are structured.

The chapter also focuses on empirical studies that have investigated the impact of interactive activities on EFL students' communicative competence. Throughout the literature review, attention will be given to any identified gaps or inconsistencies in the existing body of knowledge. These gaps will inform the rationale for the present study, highlighting the need for further research in certain areas to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the effect of interactive activities on EFL students' communicative competence.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

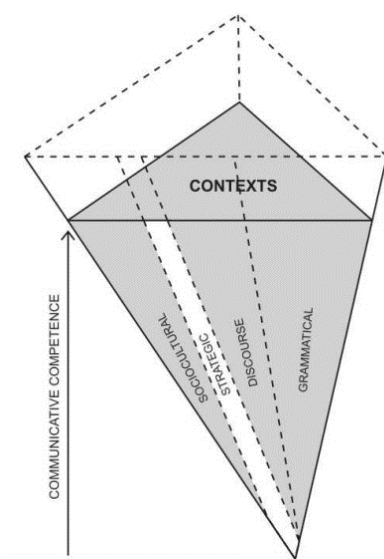
2.1.1 Communicative Competence (CC)

Sociolinguist Dell Hymes introduced the term communicative competence (CC) in 1972. Savignon (2004) revisited this concept while examining the evolution of communicative language teaching (CLT) since the 1970s. She defined CC as the ability to communicate, comprehend, and negotiate meanings through interpersonal interactions, emphasising its dynamic nature rather than a static concept. Canale and Swain (1980) identified four components of communicative competence. The first component is grammatical competence, which refers to the understanding of language rules and the capacity to accurately interpret and convey the literal meanings of spoken words. Discourse competence, or the ability to work with language forms and meaning to produce coherent, cohesive language that serves several objectives, comes in second. Thirdly, the ability to accomplish communication objectives

across a range of social contexts is referred to as sociolinguistic competence. The final characteristic is strategic competence, which indicates how well a language user understands both verbal and nonverbal communication methods.

Figure 1

Communicative Competence Model (Savignon 1983)



Note. The Communicative Competence Model presented by Savignon in 1983.

2.1.2 Classroom Interaction

Interaction was defined by Brown (2007) as the cooperative sharing of ideas, feelings, and thoughts by two or more individuals that has a reciprocal influence on one another. The importance of language use in negotiating meaning in diverse contexts is highlighted by theories of communicative competence. In other words, interaction is the process of conveying a thought from one person to another, and vice versa. Based on the definitions given above, it can be concluded that an interaction is any verbal or nonverbal relationship in which two people convey meaning to each other, to a group of people, or between groups of people.

Interaction can occur in a variety of social contexts, including business meetings,

leisure gatherings, sporting events, arts activities, and educational events. According to Brown (2007), the interpersonal context in which a learner functions assumes significant importance; hence, the interaction between learners and others is the subject of observation and explanation. For the communicative process to be achieved, there must be interaction between at least two parties that exchange messages. According to Wagner (1994), "interaction is reciprocal events that require at least two objects and two actions" (p. 8). These things and occasions interact when they naturally have an impact on one another.

Classroom interaction is the term used to describe all forms of interaction between students in a classroom, such as shared activities, oral exchanges, and nonverbal interactions. All classroom interactions, whether verbal or non-verbal, are included in the term "classroom interaction". As stated by Meng (2011), "teachers should include both verbal and non-verbal languages. Verbal interaction covers written interaction and oral interaction" (p. 98).

On the other side, nonverbal engagement describes actions taken in the classroom, including head nodding and hand raising, that do not include the use of words. Successful interactions can also improve learning, inspire students, and encourage participation from both the teacher and the class. According to Crago (1997), "[the] teacher and students also build on each other's communicative behavior as they collaborate to meet curriculum demands, relate experiences, and achieve goals" (p. 246).

According to Anderson et al. (1997) and Greeno (1997), learning and instruction research has placed a strong emphasis on the social aspects of the human learning process. Several studies done by Palincsar in 1986, Lemke in 1990, Fisher in 1993, and Tuyay, Jennings, and Dixon in 1995 focused on the behaviours, procedures, and environments that contribute to the social development of knowledge in various educational settings. As noted by Grossen (1994) and Perret-Clermont, Perret, and Bell (1991), the emphasis of analysis has

moved from external factors influencing learning outcomes and processes, to the learner's involvement in the learning activity and changing perceptions of it.

2.1.3 Interactive Activities in EFL Instruction

Huff (2012) and Fang (2010) discovered that traditional approaches based on grammar are occasionally blamed for failing to provide a curriculum that satisfies students' real and productive needs, as well as for failing to use effective teaching strategies. Interactive activities are essential for improving language learning in EFL instruction. In addition to adding interest to the learning process, interactive exercises give students the chance to practise and apply their language abilities in authentic contexts. Through interactive activities, students can communicate meaningfully in the target language - English in this case - and place more emphasis on the meaning of the messages they create than on their grammar and structure. This will enable pupils to obtain what is necessary and desired for usage in everyday life. Teachers may establish a productive and engaging learning environment in the classroom by implementing interactive teaching techniques.

For students to improve their communication skills, they must participate in class activities. The English language has developed and spread over time (Fang, 2010), and today, many people believe it to be an international medium of instruction (Gladday, 2011). The idea behind this is to increase the students' proficiency in communication. The following interactive exercises can be included in EFL lessons: role-playing, group discussions, debates, storytelling, language games, simulations, collaborative writing, interactive multimedia, jigsaw activities, guessing games, and role reversal.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Communication is at the core of language learning, particularly in EFL contexts where students often face limited opportunities for authentic language use. The aim of this section is

to analyse and offer profound insights into the theoretical frameworks that underpin the current research: the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, and communicative competence (CC). Understanding these theoretical foundations sets the stage for exploring the role of interactive activities in enhancing EFL students' communicative competence.

2.2.1 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001):

The origins of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) are to be found in the changes in the British language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960s. Until then, Situational Language Teaching represented the major British approach to teaching English as a foreign language. In Situational Language Teaching, language was taught by practicing basic structures in meaningful situation-based activities. But just as the linguistic theory underlying Audiolingualism was rejected in the United States in the mid-1960s, British applied linguists began to call into question the theoretical assumptions underlying Situational Language Teaching. (p. 153)

British applied linguists highlighted an essential aspect of language that was not adequately addressed in the language teaching approaches of that era – the functional and communicative potential of language. They argued for a shift in language teaching, emphasising the development of communicative proficiency over the mere mastery of linguistic structures. Advocates of this perspective, including Christopher Candlin and Henry Widdowson, drew inspiration from British functional linguists like John Firth and M. A. K. Halliday; American sociolinguists such as Dell Hymes, John Gumperz, and William Labov; and philosophers like John Austin and John Searle.

The communicative approach to language teaching is rooted in the notion of language as a tool for communication. Its aim is to foster what Hymes (1972) referred to as

"communicative competence". Hymes introduced this term to differentiate the communicative viewpoint on language from Chomsky's competence theory. According to Chomsky, linguistic theory primarily revolves around an ideal speaker–listener within a perfectly uniform speech community, possessing flawless language knowledge and unaffected by grammatically irrelevant factors such as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying language knowledge during actual performance (Chomsky, 1965, as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001). While there are several ways to teach languages, communicative language teaching is the most widely used method globally. Through group projects and cooperative learning, the CLT approach gives language learners a platform to communicate who they are and what they think.

CLT, according to Savignon (1987, 2002), is characterised as an approach instead of a theory. In contrast to conventional theories, the CLT approach offers a wide array of opportunities and flexibilities that both educators and learners can employ as needed (Kennedy, 2002). Not confined to Western practices, CLT is described as a "universal effort" drawing inspiration and direction from various theoretical and applied initiatives across diverse contexts (Savignon, 1987, 2002).

CLT is the most widely used theoretical model in English language instruction, according to Celce-Murcia (2002). As stated by Richards and Rodgers (2001), linguists and language instructors alike see CLT as an approach rather than a method. The goal of CLT is to increase language learners' capacity for communication. CLT poses a challenge to the traditional approach to language instruction, which places an emphasis on memorisation and "structurally (grammatically) sequenced curriculum", according to Brown (2007). Brown (2007), Brumfit and Finocchiaro (n.d.) assert that learning takes place in a CLT setting "through the process of struggling to communicate".

Based on CLT proponents, as long as the intended meaning is communicated, accuracy in grammar can be enhanced later. Learning a language should involve both the development of communication skills and the acquisition of linguistic structures, as noted by Lasala (2013) and Widdowson (1983). It is believed that language learners actively engage in the process of teaching and learning. The core of CLT is the learner. Teachers therefore help language learners communicate and become more motivated to learn the target language (Savignon, 2004). Traditional/classical learning, on the other hand, is deductive in nature and is straightforward, drawing specific concepts from broader ones (Prince & Felder, 2006). Furthermore, traditional methods such as the deductive technique, according to educational psychologists, are less engaging to pupils during the learning process (Elison, 2010; Davtyan, 2014; Rodriguez González et al., 2016; Saumell, 2012; Slavin, 2010).

To maximise language use and production, CLT uses communicative activities and task-based instructions. The primary goal of CLT activities is to facilitate communication in genuine and real-world tasks and situations. Similarly, Losada et al. (2016) contended in their experimental study that real tasks and materials greatly and favourably influenced the learners' acquisition of competencies in textual, grammatical, oral, illocutionary, and sociolinguistic domains – some of the sub-skills of communicative competence.

2.2.1.1. Principles of CLT. Some features of CLT can be summarised as follows.

- 1) Emphasise genuine communication as the primary goal of language acquisition.
- 2) Prioritize the development of communication skills through active engagement with the target language.
- 3) Incorporate authentic texts into the learning environment.
- 4) Provide opportunities for learners to focus not only on acquiring language

but also on the learning process itself.

- 5) Recognize the importance of learners' personal experiences as valuable components of classroom learning.
- 6) Aim to bridge the gap between classroom language learning and its real-world application.

(Nunan, 1987, p. 279)

In the EFL context, CLT focuses on two key areas. It identifies CC as its main objective and develops methods for teaching writing, speaking, listening, and reading (Daisy, 2012, p. 259). It is through interactions within a multidisciplinary framework comprising educational research, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, and sociology (see Savignon's (1991) "State of the art"). Farrell and Jacobs (2003) summarised the main concepts and focuses of CLT using eight principles that are based on the foundation of communicative competence:

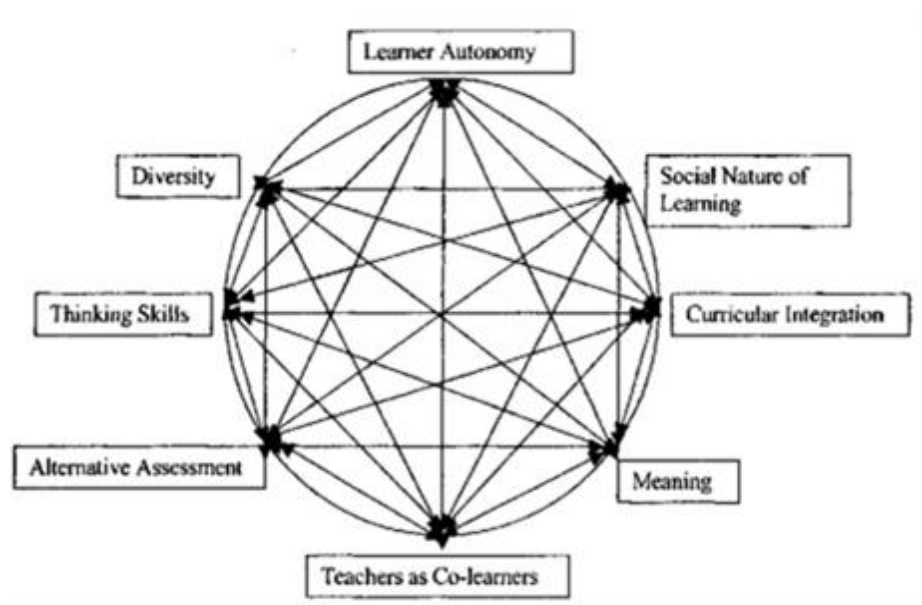
- 1) Foster independent learning among learners.
- 2) highlight the social aspect of the learning process.
- 3) integrate curriculum development.
- 4) prioritise the significance of meaning.
- 5) acknowledge and embrace diversity.
- 6) enhance thinking skills.
- 7) employ alternative methods for assessment; and
- 8) advocate for English language teachers as collaborative learners.

According to Farrell and Jacobs, these eight principles represent the guidelines for teachers when implementing CLT in classrooms. These principles play a crucial role in cultivating learners' communicative competence by fostering independence among them and

celebrating their individual differences. Additionally, they redefine the role of teachers, shifting it from dominance to collaboration within the learning process. Moreover, these principles emphasise the importance of creativity and highlight the social context in understanding meaning. The interdependence of the principles that CLT relies upon is illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 2

The Communicative Language Teaching Principles (Farrel & Jacobs, 2003)



Note. The Eight Communicative Language Teaching Principles introduced by Farrel and Jacobs in 2003.

2.2.1.2 The Classroom Implications of Communicative Language Teaching.

Teachers' attitudes towards the application of CLT in the classroom vary. According to Savignon, there are educators who recognise the challenges of imparting communication skills, meaning negotiation and the absence of individual assessment and scales. As stated in "State of the Art" (p. 266), other educators seem to be in agreement and welcome the opportunity to handle the CLT in addition to giving students communicative tasks.

Research has explored the feasibility of implementing CLT across various social settings. While some studies emphasise the attitudes and viewpoints of educators towards CLT, others examine the potential barriers and challenges associated with its application. In the pursuit of implementing CLT, a study conducted in the Pakistani educational context at intermediate levels involved ten selected teachers in secondary schools participating in semi-structured interviews. The respondents identified four difficulties related to CLT implementation, including issues with teachers, students, the Pakistani educational system, and the actual theory and application of CLT (Ahmad & Rao, p. 188). An additional study in the Bangladeshi context examined teachers' perceptions of CLT, involving interviews with eighteen secondary school teachers. The findings revealed that approximately 70% of the interviewees lacked knowledge about CLT and were unable to provide clear definitions (Hossen).

A study carried out in the Arab Gulf nations to assess the implementation of the communicative approach reveals that, although there are encouraging signs favouring the use of CLT in the Arab Gulf states, there are still notable constraints. These limitations are described as challenges in establishing a conducive environment for teaching communicative objectives, issues related to inappropriate texts, and a lack of competence among Arab teachers (Bahumaid, 2013, p. 448). Additional studies conducted in Yemeni secondary school settings, as identified by Al-Sohbani (2015), uncovered that not only were Yemeni secondary school teachers unfamiliar with the communicative language teaching principles, but they were also uncertain about how to implement them in the classroom (p. 40). In contrast, Bataineh et al. (2017) discovered that while Yemeni English teachers were acquainted with the principles of CLT at both the primary and secondary levels, their instructional methods did not align with their stated perceptions (p. 859).

2.2.2 Communicative Competence (CC): Models and Components

A normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others. (Hymes, 1972, p. 277)

With the quotation above, Hymes is attempting to convey the idea that children may select words and situations appropriately as they learn the language. Researchers referred to this type of competency as communicative competence. The concept of communicative competence was developed in response to Chomsky's (1965) idea of linguistic competence, which has been criticised for being overly restrictive (Brown, 2000). Munby (1978) asserts that the capacity to "perform communicative acts and to understand the communicative functions of sentences and their relationships to other sentences" (p. 26) is a necessary component of communicative competence. According to Savignon (1976), communication competence necessitates far more than linguistic code knowledge, whereby she emphasises that "The native speaker understands when and what to say in addition to knowing how to say something" (p. 4).

Scholars have tried to categorise the concept of communicative competence according to several knowledge and skill areas. Grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence are some examples of the components that make up communicative competence, according to Canale and Swain (1980). Moreover, in addition to the preceding three subcategories, Canale (1983) adds a fourth component called "discourse competence". However, every element in the teaching of foreign languages is essential for students to acquire in order to become proficient in the language (Tarone, 1983).

2.2.2.1 Models of Communicative Competence. According to Bin Hady (2016, p. 42), there has been a need for theoretical frameworks to direct the application of communicative skills in second/foreign language instruction and assessment ever since anthropologist Dell Hymes first came up with the idea in 1972. Under numerous headings and nomenclature, the word "competence" has developed. The term "ideal native speaker/listener" was first used by Chomsky. Later, Dell Hymes revised the term to "communicative competence", emphasising knowledge, skill, and use guidelines by adding the word "communicative" to the original. In 1990, Bachman coined the phrase "communicative language ability", which encompasses pragmatic and linguistic skills. The phrase "communicative language competence" was introduced by the European Council. The last framework for communicative competence was created by Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor, and it incorporates all four linguistic abilities.

Dell Hymes's Model

Dell Hymes was among the early linguists to critique Chomsky's competence theory (Kamiya, 2006), asserting that his understanding of competence lacked the capacity to elucidate an individual's "language behavior as a whole" (Ohno, 2006, p. 26). Hymes contended that competence extends beyond merely understanding language forms and structures; it also encompasses how individuals employ language in authentic social contexts (Young, 2008). It's crucial to emphasise that Hymes's main concern was not language acquisition but rather "language as social behavior" (Savignon, 2002, p. 2). Nevertheless, the more comprehensive concept of communicative competence prompted a reassessment of established language teaching objectives, eventually giving rise to the communicative approach in language instruction (Thornbury, 2006).

Canale and Swain's Model

Canale and Swain introduced their model of CC with the aim of applying it to both language instruction and assessment. They sought to evaluate the feasibility and usefulness of evaluating CC among students enrolled in a core French as a second language programme at elementary and secondary school levels in Ontario. Canale and Swain's model is widely regarded as one of the pioneering and highly influential frameworks for understanding CC. Linguists active in the field of second/foreign language teaching and assessment, such as Savignon, Celce-Murcia, and Ellis, acknowledge Canale and Swain's model as a standout framework in language instruction and assessment. It effectively builds upon Hymes's concept of communicative competence by providing a contextualised framework. Initially, Canale and Swain's 1980 model consisted of three components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Later, Canale expanded the original model by introducing a fourth component, discourse competence, in 1983 (Bin Hady, 2016, pp. 42–43).

Bachman and Palmer's Model

In the late 1980s, Bachman introduced a new model of communicative competence known as communicative language ability (CLA), which was subsequently refined by Bachman and Palmer in the mid-1990s (Bagaric & Djigunovic, 2007). CLA consists of two crucial elements: (1) language knowledge, and (2) strategic competence. Language knowledge comprises two primary components: organisational knowledge and pragmatic understanding. Organisational knowledge governs the formal structures of language, facilitating the creation or comprehension of grammatically correct utterances or sentences (grammatical knowledge). Additionally, it involves the organisation of these utterances or sentences into oral and written texts (textual knowledge). Bachman and Palmer's concept of grammatical knowledge aligns closely with Canale and Swain's notion of grammatical competence, as noted by Kamiya in

2006. Textual knowledge encompasses an understanding of cohesion and rhetorical organisation.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) Model

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) serves as a theoretical framework for curriculum design, assessment, teaching, and teacher training across Europe. The CEFR model consists of three competences, (1) linguistic competence, (2) sociolinguistic competence, and (3) pragmatic competence, as outlined by North in 2014. Each of these competencies is understood as a combination of knowledge about its content and the ability to apply that knowledge. For instance, linguistic competence entails language users' understanding and proficiency in employing various language resources to construct well-organised messages. In contrast, sociolinguistic competence involves the knowledge and skills necessary for the appropriate use of language in social contexts, as highlighted by Bagaric and Djigunovic in 2007. Pragmatic competence further breaks down into functional competence, which includes activities like producing language functions and speech acts, and discourse competence, which encompasses cohesion and coherence (Abu-Ayyash & Nishad, 2019).

2.2.2.2 Components of Communicative Competence. A learner of a second or foreign language must acquire both linguistic knowledge and knowledge about the target language. This entails understanding how morphemes form words and how words form sentences, which falls under linguistic or grammatical competence. However, possessing linguistic knowledge alone does not indicate the mastery of language learning. While grammatical competence is crucial for acquiring a new language, it is not sufficient on its own. Learners must also understand how to apply this knowledge effectively in social contexts, including comprehending speech acts (such as requests, suggestions, arguments, etc.) and politeness, which falls under sociolinguistic or pragmatic competence. In addition to these

competencies, other components are essential. Learners need the ability to produce coherent and cohesive texts, whether in written or spoken form, which relates to discourse competence. As learners may not fully understand the underlying system of a language, they also require skills to address communication breakdowns, known as strategic competence (Bin Hady, 2016, p. 29).

The four components of CC are linguistic/grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. This framework was developed based on the research of Canale and Swain in 1980.

Linguistic (Grammatical) Competence

In Canale and Swain's framework (1980, 1981), grammatical competence is primarily defined in alignment with Chomsky's linguistic competence. Consequently, some scholars (e.g., Savignon, 1983), whose theoretical and/or empirical work on communicative competence heavily relies on Canale and Swain's model, may interchangeably use the term "linguistic competence" to refer to "grammatical competence". As per Canale and Swain, grammatical competence pertains to the mastery of the linguistic code, whether verbal or non-verbal, encompassing vocabulary knowledge as well as the understanding of morphological, syntactic, semantic, phonetic, and orthographic rules. This competence empowers the speaker with the knowledge and skills necessary for comprehending and conveying the literal meaning of utterances (Bagarić, 2007, p. 97).

Discourse Competence

Discourse competence refers to a language user's capacity to create texts or expressions that are both coherent and cohesive, necessitating communication skills beyond the level of individual sentences. Canale (1983, 1984) defined discourse competence as the proficiency in rules governing the combination of forms and meanings to create a meaningful unity in spoken

or written texts. The cohesion in form and coherence in meaning contribute to the overall unity of a text. Cohesion is attained through the utilisation of cohesive devices (such as pronouns, conjunctions, synonyms, parallel structures, etc.) that connect individual sentences and utterances into a cohesive structure. Achieving coherence involves employing methods like repetition, progression, consistency, and relevance of ideas to organise meaning and establish a logical relationship between groups of utterances.

Sociolinguistic (Pragmatic) Competence

According to Hymes's view, language use should be appropriate for a range of social situations, and his model considers sociolinguistic competence. This involves understanding the rules and principles governing appropriate language use and comprehension in various sociolinguistic and sociocultural settings. Sociolinguistic competence can be defined as the collection of skills and knowledge about the cultures, norms, and traditions of a particular speech community. The definition and classification of sociolinguistic competence have been subject to differing interpretations and ambiguous terminology. Linguists not only disagree on their definitions, but also suggest different subcategories within sociolinguistic competence. According to Bachman (1990, as cited in Bin Hady, 2016), sociolinguistic competence entails "sensitivity to, or control of the conventions of language use determined by the features of the specific language use context; it enables us to perform language functions in ways that are appropriate to the context" (p. 62).

Strategic Competence

Strategic competence refers to the capability of language users to navigate challenges that may arise when facing gaps in knowledge during conversations, ensuring the smooth continuation of communication. Effectiveness in communicative strategies involves sustaining the flow of communication. To encapsulate the integration of strategic competence into the

theoretical frameworks discussed earlier, Canale and Swain break down strategic competence into two distinct categories: grammatical competence and sociolinguistic competence.

In a similar vein, Bachman (1990) outlines three components of strategic competence that centre on utilising linguistic expertise to achieve communication objectives via preparation, evaluation, and implementation. Additionally, Celce-Murcia (1995) distinguishes between three categories of strategic competence: memory-related strategies, cognitive strategies, and meta-cognitive strategies. Lastly, Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2008) relate communication methods and learning comprehension to strategic competence ("Teaching Learners", p. 161).

Figure 3

Theory of Communicative Competence (Canale & Swain, 1980)



Note. Communicative Competence components according to Canale and Swain framework (1980).

2.2.3 Teaching Communicative Competence

"The role of the language teacher is to help learners get along in real-life situations" (Savignon, 1997, p. 114). EFL/L2 learners need the ability to comprehend and engage with the

language they encounter to thrive in their sociocultural surroundings. Whether in educational settings, daily errands like shopping, or professional environments, lacking proficiency in the language restricts L2 speakers, limiting their opportunities and influence in social engagements. CC, pursued through diverse CLT approaches, equips L2 speakers with the necessary cultural and linguistic understanding to navigate and address the challenges they face in interactions. To adequately prepare L2 speakers for authentic interactions in the target language, teachers must acknowledge that proper L2 grammar and denotative meanings are insufficient for teaching L2 speakers to learn a second or foreign language. For L2 speakers to completely exhibit CC, they must comprehend the meaning of communication as it is rooted in particular cultural contexts (Savignon, 1997).

Numerous applied linguists assert that the primary goal of instructing a second or foreign language is to enable its practical use in communication. However, there is limited research exploring the potential methods of teaching communicative competence. The existing studies either concentrate on specific facets of communicative competence or incorporate competence instruction into tasks and activities, as evidenced by Mustadi. Additionally, some studies, such as those by Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor in "*Teaching intercultural*", emphasise the teaching of competencies across the four language skills.

Scholars such as Canale and Swain, Canale, Celce-Murcia, Usó-Juan, and Martínez-Flor have all emphasised the basic connection between the communicative approach in language teaching and the teaching of communicative competence. Widdowson asserts that it takes a lot of work to teach English for communication. Effective discourse, according to Widdowson, is not only accomplished by articulating particular ideas and functions, since he contends that discourse processes lead to communication. Negotiation is the means via which statements are extended instead.

Conversely, certain linguists express uncertainty regarding the feasibility of explicitly teaching communicative competence, viewing it more as an outcome arising from the learning and teaching processes. Dekdouk recognises the significance of communicative competence not only in language teaching but also across various fields of study. The prevailing perspective is that communicative competence is something to be acquired, developed, or potentially lost, rather than directly taught as a formal skill. Consequently, teachers are encouraged to prioritise understanding learners' communicative requirements and offering models that address those needs, thereby promoting and enhancing their competence.

Other linguists connect the acquisition of communicative competence to the learners, emphasising that they are aware of the specific areas they need to focus on, practice, and enhance. As a result, Widdowson (1979, as cited in Bin Hady, 2016) states:

Competence ... is not something that is directly taught but something that learners fashion for themselves by recognizing the need for conventional controls over their creative efforts in the interest of better communication. In this way, competence comes as a corollary to effective communicative use. And correctness is what the learner moves towards, not what he begins with; something he achieves and not something that is thrust upon him. (p. 80)

The CLT approach, according to Dos Santos (2020), continuously highlights how important it is for instructors and students to get their teaching and learning resources from their local communities, surroundings, and cultures. Teachers can create visual teaching and learning materials based on the communities of their students, for example, according to recent research by Dos Santos (2019a, 2019b). Materials taken from a variety of community aspects, such as shopping centres, school residential dormitories mayors, city halls, and school buildings, serve as pertinent and interesting materials that encourage students to talk about

their everyday lives.

To help students improve their reading, speaking, and writing abilities, Dos Santos (2019a, 2019b) recommends that teachers set up social media-based discussion groups and chat platforms, in addition to using resources from the students' homes. According to Han (2017), this method works very well in East Asian teaching and learning contexts. In order to promote full participation in the English learning environment, students are asked to refrain from utilising their native language throughout these activities. Teachers fix any language problems that may come up during conversations by introducing pertinent sentence structures, grammar, or words following the exercise.

2.2.4 Assessing Communicative Competence

When addressing the enhancement of CC in EFL/L2 speakers, the utilisation of conversation analysis (CA) can assist in recognising alterations in the language and interaction choices of EFL/L2 speakers. According to Hall (2009), CA is grounded in the notion that people engaged in conversation are competent participants who, through shared social group membership, possess common knowledge utilised in their interactive activities. CA, unconcerned with language correctness, observes how interlocutors use language and other resources in a given interaction, focusing on unscripted speech (Pekarek Doehler, 2013). Hall and Pekarek Doehler (2011) suggest that the development of second language interactional competence (IC) can be understood and examined in terms of shifts in the participants' strategies for engaging in second language conversation. Analysing the changes made by a second language speaker in a repetitive interactive task over time can reveal the acquisition of both language and socio-culturally appropriate behaviours (Hall & Pekarek Doehler, 2011, cited in Tarvin, 2014, p. 25).

2.3 Related Studies

2.3.1 Previous Studies on Communicative Competence

Research on CC has been conducted in various social contexts worldwide. Some studies focus on theoretical aspects, aiming to comprehend the term and define its scope. Meanwhile, other studies take a practical approach, exploring the significance of improving students' communicative competence within educational settings. The goal of any teaching or learning process is often argued to be the attainment of communicative competence. Researchers in this field aim to explore theoretical or practical models and conduct quantitative or qualitative studies to enhance students' communicative competence (Bin Hady, 2016, p. 73).

2.3.2 Studies on Developing the Students' Communicative Competence

The language teaching field has decisively moved away from conventional methods that prioritise teacher-centric approaches and passive student orientations. The emergence of the communicative approach, which prioritises placing learners in central roles and engaging them actively in classroom activities, has spurred numerous studies in diverse settings to investigate its consequences. A study carried out by Dekdouk (2013) in the Algerian context aimed to "explore the importance of oral presentations in enhancing students' communicative competence at the college level". According to the study's results, both the students and their instructor acknowledged the significance of oral presentations in enhancing students' CC across the linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences, and fluency. Students can enhance their CC when provided with opportunities to engage in classroom tasks.

These activities should be tailored to align with students' interests and cater to their communicative needs, such as reflecting societal norms, social life, and beliefs. Incorporating genuine materials into the classroom significantly motivates students to participate in various

tasks and activities. Gilmore (2008) conducted research on how to improve students' CC in a Japanese classroom by utilising authentic materials. For ten months at Kansai Gaidai University, some students were instructed with authentic materials, while others received instruction from traditional textbooks. Assessments were given to both groups, which included recorded interviews covering listening, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. The results revealed that the group that received instruction using the experimental programme showed better discourse comprehension than the peers who received instruction using traditional methods. Furthermore, the authentic task-based materials successfully met their communication needs.

2.3.3 Previous Research on the Impact of Interactive Activities on EFL Students'

Communicative Competence

This section aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the relevant studies and findings that contribute to understanding how interactive activities influence the development of communicative competence among EFL students. Many researchers have tried to address the problem of ESL/EFL learners' delayed development of communicative competence, despite spending many years in language classes.

Chaundhury (2015) employed language-based activities (LBA) in her quasi-experimental study to help ESL undergraduate students improve their communicative competence. The investigation was completed in a single academic year, and the findings were encouraging. As per Chaundhury's (2015) results, the data analysis indicated that the language-based activities led to a considerable improvement in the communicative ability of the students in the experimental group. Since those communicative activities give students a real or authentic experience of the functional or communicative side of language in a real communication environment, it is possible to draw the conclusion that they are essential to the

development of students' communicative competence.

In a similar vein, Owen and Razali (2018) demonstrated that interactive communicative activities are a better way to practise language and enhance communicative competence, particularly the speaking ability. Furthermore, interactive communicative activities in language instruction are more effective than traditional techniques at developing language skills, claim Ismaili and Bajrami (2016). Nonetheless, according to a study by Shoomossi and Ketabi (2007), non-genuine resources are just as valuable as authentic materials, particularly for students with low receptive skill proficiency. Moreover, according to a study by Kienbaum et al. (2014, as cited in Losada et al., 2017), students who are given the choice between communicative and non-communication tasks may develop a parallel degree of communicative competence.

The experimental research conducted by Abu Bakar et al. (2019) aims to enhance the oral communication skills of Malaysian English language learners. Project-based learning activities were implemented as an intervention during instruction for a duration of 12 weeks. Project-based learning (PBL) has its roots in constructivism, where students work on a specific project over an extended period of time while creating or constructing knowledge. In their study, they concluded that PBL activities significantly raised the oral communicative ability of Malaysian English language learners. Additionally, these kinds of exercises are ideal for educating students with little English competence. Further, all group presentations and collaborations offer opportunities for English language communication (Shanthi & Rao, 2015; Habók & Nagy, 2016).

The goal of language teaching and learning is to improve students' communicative proficiency. When genuine communication is incorporated through interactive activities, learning is promoted. Language games, for instance, are communicative activities that

encourage and assist learners in using the target language and sharing information through interaction with other interlocutors in meaningful contexts. As a result, they maximise the educational impact of language (Dewi et al., 2016; Wang, 2010). In addition, interactive activities foster communicative competence, and CLT enhances motivation and speaking abilities, according to Efrizal (2012) who conducted classroom action research. Moreover, Ahmed et al. (2014) found that communicative activities enhanced students' speaking abilities in a mixed-methods study involving nearly 300 pupils from different Malaysian schools. Several researchers like Dorathy and Mahalakshmi (2011) and Patel (2017) have suggested role-play as a communicative activity within task-based learning. This is because tasks in TBLT are purposeful activities that aid learners in communicating effectively in the target language, according to Ellis (2009), Nunan (1991), and Willis (1996). Role-playing gives students the chance to apply the target resources for communication, including language, that encourages genuine dialogue in various social roles and settings (Al-Senaidi, 2010; Richards, 1985, as cited in Waluyo, 2019).

According to Waluyo (2019), numerous studies have revealed positive outcomes concerning the influence of role-playing on improving students' communicative ability. Investigations have demonstrated that engaging in role-play allows students to utilise the newly acquired target language, enhancing their ability to express themselves and boosting self-confidence in overcoming speaking inhibitions. This, in turn, holds the potential to enhance their overall speaking skills (Islam & Islam, 2013; Ampatuan & San Jose, 2016).

Using the IELTS speaking exam as both a pre- and post-test, Jamalvandi and Aliakbari (2010) investigated how role-playing improved the speaking ability of sixty Iranian EFL second-year students. The post-test findings showed a noteworthy improvement in the learners' speaking skills. Furthermore, non-scripted role play, as opposed to the scripted

counterpart, gives learners better opportunities to address conversational challenges and practise pertinent aspects of the target language in real interactions, according to a study by Chotirat and Sinwongsuwat (2014) that involved 26 second-year English majors at Songkhla Rajabhat University, Thailand. This suggests an increased likelihood of improving their CC.

Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that regular non-scripted role-playing improves the speaking abilities of Thai EFL students with different levels of English competency, especially in areas like taking turns, organising sequences, using turn-holding, extending greetings, and employing delay devices in conversation (Sinwongsuwat & Naksevee, 2014, as cited in Waluyo, 2019).

In a qualitative study published in 2013, Xue examined the effects of using group work to improve students' communication competence. This study was carried out by Xue with fourteen Chinese students who were enrolled in master's or doctoral programmes in the United States, where the study participants had been in the nation for at least a year. The findings showed that group work improved the students' communicative skills.

The self-assessed communication proficiency of students of engineering studying both English for specific purposes and general English was investigated in three-year longitudinal research conducted by Safran (2009). The students knew they had improved their communicative skills, according to the results.

Studies by Ampatuan and Jose (2016) and Bang (2003) concluded that drama activities are effective in establishing interactive settings where students can practise using the target language in authentic contexts. Both studies advocate for the utilisation of role-playing as a communicative strategy to foster the development of students' CC. Class reporting has also been shown as a successful method in improving students' communication skills, self-assurance, and soft skills, as reported in Catoto & San Jose (2016) noteworthy study.

The quantitative study conducted by Sadeghi et al. (2017) reveals that in order to promote student involvement in language acquisition, self-evaluation and task-based assessment are invaluable tools.

Nguyen and Le (2012) discovered through their qualitative investigation that language assessments frequently fail to capture learners' ability to effectively communicate in the desired language. In contrast, Chesebro et al.'s (1992) extensive quantitative research revealed that students facing academic challenges exhibit higher levels of anxiety when it comes to interpersonal communication. Gómez Palacio's (2010) mixed-method inquiry suggests that employing methods such as independent reading, storytelling, role-playing, information gap activities, and peer tutoring can significantly enhance the communicative skills of ESL learners.

Al Alami (2014) conducted an experimental study at a university in Dubai investigating the role of a literature-based course in developing undergraduate students' CC. Based on the research findings, literature has proven to be a highly effective tool for developing communicative competence among EFL university students studying in the UAE. Al Alami's study recommends reading literature to help EFL students improve their communicative skills.

2.4 The Gap in the Literature

It is clear from reading the literature that interactive classroom activities are essential to helping EFL students improve their communicative competence. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no empirical research has been done to examine the impact of these kinds of activities on students' CC in the setting of UAE primary schools. There has only been one study done in the UAE at the university level that investigated the effect of reading literature on undergraduate students' CC, a case study by Suhair E. Al Alami (2014).

There is a lack of literature addressing improving primary EFL students' communicative competence using interactive activities in UAE schools. Therefore, the current investigation was undertaken by the researcher due to this crucial need. This study aims to inform teachers, curriculum designers, and researchers on how to develop elementary students' communicative competence through interactive activities in the UAE setting.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter three offers an overview of the research design, data collection, and analysis procedures employed in the pursuit of answering the research question. It serves as a guide to the research process, offering transparency and rigour in the execution of the study. By providing a detailed account of the philosophical foundations, research design, participant selection, data collection, and analysis procedures, this chapter aims to establish the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings.

3.1 Research Paradigm and Design

3.1.1 The Qualitative Research Paradigm

This study adopts interpretivism (or constructivism) as its guiding framework. Social constructivism, which posits that knowledge emerges from interactions within authentic environments, serves as the cornerstone of qualitative research, which has its roots in the fields of sociology and anthropology (Creswell, 2013). Researchers have established qualitative approaches that are consistent with social constructivism as a result of this epistemological stance. Investigating particular human interactions in various social circumstances is the main goal of qualitative research. Marshall and Rossman (2011) recommend that researchers immerse themselves in the real-life settings of the participants to gain a deeper understanding of the meanings conveyed through their interactions.

3.1.2 Research Design

In this dissertation, the qualitative observational design has been chosen, aligning with the research question and objectives. Creswell (2013) defines this design as "... a design of inquiry coming from anthropology and sociology in which the researcher studies the shared patterns of behaviours, language, and actions of an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time" (p. 14). Hence, the design seeks to explore naturally

occurring behaviours in particular settings, which is precisely consistent with the goals of this study: to get a full understanding of how primary EFL students develop their communicative abilities as a result of their participation in classroom interactive activities through classroom observations.

3.2 Research Instrument

3.2.1 Classroom Observations

According to Creswell (2012, p. 212):

When educators think about qualitative research, they often have in mind the process of collecting observational data in a specific school setting. Unquestionably, observations represent a frequently used form of data collection, with the researcher able to assume different roles in the process (Spradley, 1980).

He defined observation as "the process of gathering open-ended, firsthand information by observing people and places at a research site". It has some advantages, such as "the opportunity to record information as it occurs in a setting, to study actual behaviour, and to study individuals who have difficulty verbalizing their ideas (e.g., preschool children)" (Creswell, 2012, p. 213).

To investigate the influence of interactive exercises on the communicative competence of primary students, a qualitative research approach was employed, utilising classroom observations as the primary research instrument. This method seeks to explore the natural dynamics of the classroom environment and gain insights into how interactive tasks contribute to the enhancement of primary students' CC through systematic and in-depth observations.

The research seeks to comprehend the communicative behaviours of students and assess how interactive activities influence their language skills in the classroom environment. Class observations involve systematically watching and recording events, behaviours, or

interactions in a classroom setting. This instrument allows researchers to gather first-hand data on how students engage with and respond to the interactive activities introduced in the EFL curriculum. In this study, a class observation form was utilised for the purpose of documenting and noting any alterations observed in the students' communicative abilities both prior to (during explicit instruction) and following their engagement in interactive activities. (Refer to the class observation forms in appendices C & D.)

Throughout the classroom observations, the researcher, an EFL teacher, employed an observation tool (observation checklists and rubrics) to document alterations in her students' communicative competence. The focus of the notes included changes in engagement, language use, collaboration, confidence, and risk-taking, as well as non-verbal communication both before and after the introduction of interactive activities. This instrument fits the research objectives and provides data to help address the research inquiry: what is the effect of interactive activities on enhancing the communicative competence of grade four EFL students? It was useful to reveal the impact of interactive activities on primary students' CC as it allowed the researcher to record and compare her students' communicative competence level before and after using interactive activities in the EFL lessons.

3.3 Setting

The case study was conducted in one of the researcher's grade four EFL classes at an educational complex in Fujairah. The fact that the researcher is an English teacher likely influenced the decision to carry out the study in one of her own EFL primary classrooms. Moreover, the familiarity with the environment and the students can provide a more insightful analysis of the impact of interactive activities.

The classroom setting where the study was conducted is characterised by being a safe, friendly, inclusive, supportive, and comfortable environment. Indeed, this educational complex

represents a modern, developed, and well-equipped educational setting established by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and Emirates Schools Establishment (ESE).

Since the primary goal of the study is to evaluate the impact of interactive activities on the communicative competence of EFL primary students, conducting the study in the classroom allows for the integration of these activities into regular English lessons. The researcher, being an English teacher, strategically chose her own grade four EFL class as the setting for the study. This choice allows her to implement interactive activities during English lessons and to assess how these activities impact the communicative competence of her primary students. Familiarity with the class and the context enhances the authenticity of the study.

3.4 Sampling and Participants

According to Turner (2020), "sampling is the process of choosing a subset of the population for a study that the researcher intends to use". Wang (2006) emphasises how time, funds, and geographical restrictions make it impossible to include everyone in a study.

The demographic under study in this research is primary students who study English as a foreign language (EFL). Thirty participants, comprising 20 females and 10 males aged 9–10 years old, were selected from the fourth-grade level at an educational governmental complex in Fujairah. The curriculum employed in this educational complex aligns with the Ministry of Education (MOE) curriculum.

Conducting the study in a specific fourth-grade class where English proficiency was notably lacking, the researcher, who also serves as the instructor for five grade four classes in this educational complex managed by the Emirates Schools Establishment (ESE), employed purposive sampling. The primary objective was to enhance the communicative competence of the students by incorporating interactive activities into their regular EFL lessons.

The selected sample size for this study is deemed suitable, considering the aim of assessing the influence of interactive activities in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context on improving the communicative competence among primary EFL students within a particular classroom setting.

The participants were briefed on the study during their routine English lessons of Term 2, with the researcher serving as their English teacher. The researcher elucidated those various interactive activities, including role-playing, group discussions, pair-work, interactive online vocabulary games, and picture description, that would be incorporated into the English lessons. The students were encouraged to actively participate in these interactive activities, fostering a friendly and comfortable environment for speaking and interacting with their classmates.

3.5 The Procedure

The following procedure was followed throughout the study. The classroom observations were conducted during the first and the second terms of the current academic year, 2023–2024. In the first term (September to November), the researcher implemented explicit instruction in the EFL curriculum. During the English lessons, it was observed that the students in the selected class exhibited deficiencies in their communicative skills.

Moving into the second term, during the period of January–February, the researcher introduced interactive activities, including role-playing in real-life situations, group discussions, peer work, interactive online vocabulary games, and picture description. The researcher scheduled the periods for implementing these activities as follows: role-playing was planned for the week of 2–5 January; group discussions took place during the week of 8–12 January; peer work from 15–19 January; interactive online vocabulary games from 22–26 January; and picture description from the 29th of January to the 2nd of February. These

activities were strategically designed to enhance communication skills by placing emphasis on real-world language usage and interaction across diverse contexts.

Being their English teacher, the researcher consistently observed the selected grade four class, comprising 30 students, using the provided observation form during their regular English lessons. The classroom observations aimed to assess the impact of interactive activities on the students' communicative competence.

The research employed the observation form as the primary tool, focusing on specific criteria related to communicative competence, particularly the speaking skill. Key areas of assessment included student engagement, language use, collaboration, confidence, risk-taking, and non-verbal communication.

3.5.1 The Researcher's Role

The researcher is an experienced EFL teacher who has taught various grade levels and students from diverse backgrounds. She has been teaching the selected class since September 2023, cultivating positive and friendly relationships with the students participating in this case study. Therefore, the researcher is familiar with the context, and the participants.

Before starting the classroom observations, the researcher designed the observation form – a checklist with specific criteria related to communicative competence – and prepared the question types that need to be asked during the class interactive activities to answer the research question. She decided what information should be recorded and the activity that will be implemented during each observation (See appendices C & D).

During the classroom observations, the researcher conducted the observation as an observer. This means that the students were the only participants in the interactive activities. The researcher played the role of facilitator, introducing and explaining the interactive activity being implemented in the lessons. She clarified the activities' instructions as well as the roles

of the students, whether it was a peer, group, or individual activity. The interactive activities included role-playing, group discussions, pair-work, interactive online vocabulary games, and picture description. Then, using the observation tool, the English teacher – the researcher – took notes about the students' engagement, collaboration, language use, confidence, and risk-taking, as well as non-verbal communication. These notes were later categorised into the following themes: language accuracy, fluency, vocabulary usage, and overall communicative effectiveness.

3.6 Data Collection

Data were collected through classroom observations conducted during the English lessons in the second term of the current academic year, from the 2nd of January to the 2nd of February, encompassing Monday to Friday, to assess the impact of interactive activities on my grade four students' communicative competence. Throughout this period, various interactive activities were incorporated into the English curriculum (role-playing, group discussions, pair-work, interactive online vocabulary games, and picture description), with the researcher ensuring the inclusion of at least one interactive element in each lesson, as mentioned earlier. The observation process remained consistent over this period.

The primary aim of these activities was to enhance the students' communicative competence by fostering interaction, engagement, and collaboration, particularly focusing on improving their speaking skills. Detailed notes were recorded during the classroom observations using a pre-designed observation form.

The researcher, whose students comprised the selected grade four participants, maintained a positive rapport with them. The classroom environment is friendly, comfortable, inclusive, and supportive. The students were well-informed about the type and purpose of each activity, and actively encouraged to participate. Notably, the majority of the students

demonstrated excitement and enthusiasm for engaging in the interactive activities integrated into the English lessons. Numerous classroom observations were conducted, and following a month of implementing interactive activities into the second term curriculum, the researcher initiated the data analysis phase.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data were carefully prepared and documented by the researcher, ensuring that detailed and comprehensive notes were taken during the classroom observations. Special attention was given to the context, behaviours, and interactions among students. Following this, the researcher analysed the data by generating codes, revising them, and then combining them into cohesive themes. These themes were presented in a cohesive way as well.

To categorise the observed behaviours, a coding system was devised, encompassing aspects of communicative competence such as effective communication (clear expression of ideas and appropriate language use), engagement (participation in interactive activities), and language accuracy (grammar and vocabulary use).

In general, the qualitative analysis of the data included thematic examination of the student interactions, identification of patterns in language use, and assessment of the impact of specific activities on communication skills.

3.8 Reliability and Validity

According to DeMonbrun, Finelli, and Shekhar (2015), classroom observations prove to be a valuable technique for researching a diverse range of interactions and occurrences within an educational setting. Observations, particularly those conducted in educational contexts, serve as a research approach within the broader spectrum of ethnography, a field rooted in 19th-century Western anthropology. Ethnography has evolved into a widely recognised qualitative research method, particularly when researchers aim to portray their

subjects within their natural environments. As reported in DeMonbrun, Finelli, and Shekhar (2015, as cited in Mitchell, 1979), "Good reliability in an observation protocol certifies that observations will be consistent across time or observers" (p. 376). "Good validity in an observation protocol ensures that the observation instrument actually measures what it is intended to measure" (Maxwell, 2012).

3.8.1 Reliability

Qualitative research often emphasises a deep understanding of the context. The reliability of the study can be strengthened by providing rich contextual information that allows readers to interpret the findings in relation to the unique characteristics of the EFL classroom.

The classroom observations conducted in this study were consistent over time, observing the same class, using the same observation tool. There was consistency in the data collection procedures as well. The same aspects of communicative competence were assessed across observations with detailed documentation of the observations' criteria and the students' interactions. The research provides detailed descriptions of the context, participants, and activities that were implemented in the classroom.

3.8.2 Validity

The reliability of an observed behaviour is intricately connected to the validity of the observation. As stated by Gardner (2000), "it is important to note that reliability of a measure sets limits on its validity" (p. 188). This means if there is not a valid observation protocol in place, the reliability of the measuring tool becomes ineffective. In other words, the reliability of observations depends on the validity of the assessment instrument.

In the current study, the research instrument was designed to measure the effect of interactive activities on students' communicative competence in an EFL setting. The classroom

observation tool is appropriate for the context as it covers aspects of communicative competence, the interactive activities being used in the classroom, and the students' communicative skills being assessed. Furthermore, clear, detailed, and specific questions related to the research objective were listed in the classroom observation form and rubric.

3.9 Ethics

Concerning ethical considerations, prior to initiating this research, authorisation was obtained from the Research Office of the Emirates Schools Establishment, as the educational complex where the study was conducted is a governmental entity managed by the latter organisation. Following the submission of the necessary documentation, approval was granted via email. In addition, permission for the case study was granted by the principal of the educational complex, where the researcher also serves as an instructor.

The research participants' confidentiality and anonymity were preserved in accordance with the university's research ethics policies. Given that the participants in the study are children aged 9–10 years old, parental consent was essential. A consent form was distributed to the parents.

The participants were well-informed about the specific interactive activities incorporated into their regular English lessons. Moreover, they were given the autonomy to either accept or decline participation in these activities. Furthermore, the identities of the participants remain confidential, and the study exclusively relied on class observations without the use of video recording or photography. It is important to note that involvement in this research was entirely voluntary.

The objective of this chapter has been to provide an overview of the research design, data collection, and analysis procedures employed in the case study. Additionally, this section has presented the research reliability and validity, along with the ethical considerations. In the

next chapter, the research findings after analysing the data will be presented and described to reveal how classroom interactive activities affect primary EFL students' communicative competence.

Chapter 4: Findings & Discussion

The aim of this chapter is to present and discuss the research findings collected through the classroom observations, considering the research question that seeks to investigate the impact of classroom interactive activities on EFL primary students' communicative competence.

4.1 Findings

4.1.1 Comparison of Pre- and Post-Intervention Communicative Competence Levels

The findings of the classroom observations are presented in terms of four major themes: language accuracy, fluency, vocabulary usage, and overall communicative effectiveness.

Language Accuracy: The students engaged in the interactive activities implemented in the classroom demonstrated a higher degree of language accuracy. The use of language in real-life situations allowed for immediate feedback and correction, leading to more accurate language production. While explicit instruction provided a solid foundation for grammatical rules, the students exhibited hesitancy in applying these rules spontaneously in communicative situations. The observations revealed that interactive activities contribute to improved language accuracy among EFL primary students. The students demonstrated a better understanding and application of grammatical structures and syntax during the interactive tasks. Instances of corrected pronunciation and usage of language rules may be more prevalent during and after interactive activities.

Fluency: The students participating in the interactive activities showed enhanced fluency. Regular interaction promoted a natural flow of language as the students practised expressing themselves in real time, leading to improved speaking skills compared to explicit instruction, which contributed to understanding the language structures; but, the students showed a

tendency to overthink and speak more cautiously, potentially hindering fluency. The research uncovered that the interactive activities implemented in the classroom positively influenced the students' fluency in English. They exhibited a smoother and more natural flow of speech during communicative tasks. Increased participation in conversations and a reduction in hesitations or pauses were observed, indicating enhanced fluency.

Vocabulary Usage: The use of interactive activities positively influenced vocabulary acquisition. The students were observed employing a broader range of vocabulary in context, indicating a more dynamic and practical grasp of the language. While explicit instruction facilitated vocabulary learning through structured lessons, the students displayed a tendency to use a limited set of words in communicative situations. The observations indicated a broader and more varied vocabulary usage among the students engaged in interactive activities. They demonstrated an ability to apply the newly learned vocabulary in context. Interactive tasks facilitated the incorporation of idiomatic expressions and phrases into the students' language repertoire.

Overall Communicative Effectiveness: The students engaged in interactive activities demonstrated higher overall communicative effectiveness. The ability to engage in authentic communication allowed for the integration of multiple language skills, contributing to a holistic development of communicative competence. However, although explicit instruction led to a foundation for language understanding, the students faced challenges in seamlessly applying their knowledge in real-world communication, potentially affecting the overall communicative effectiveness. The research revealed a positive correlation between the interactive activities and overall communicative effectiveness. The students engaged in interactive tasks exhibited a better ability to convey ideas, opinions, and emotions in English. Increased non-verbal communication skills, such as gestures and body language, contributed

to enhanced overall communicative competence.

Student Engagement and Motivation: The observations revealed higher levels of student engagement and motivation during the interactive activities, fostering a positive attitude towards language learning. While explicit instruction is valuable, it did not always generate the same level of enthusiasm, potentially impacting long-term motivation. The findings suggest that interactive activities positively influence student engagement compared to explicit instruction. The observations revealed increased enthusiasm, participation, and sustained focus during the interactive tasks, indicating that the students are more involved and interested in the learning process.

Social Interaction: The classroom observations indicated increased social interaction among the students during the interactive activities, contributing to the development of interpersonal communication skills as opposed to explicit instruction which focuses more on individual learning, potentially limiting opportunities for social interaction and collaborative language use.

4.1.2 Students' Communicative Competence across Classroom Interactive Activities

In what follows, the students' communicative competence across various interactive activities is presented.

A. Role-Playing

The implemented role-playing activities were effective in the primary EFL classroom. They provided the students with opportunities to practise language in context, develop communication skills, and enhance their creativity. These role-playing activities not only engaged the students in meaningful conversations, but also allowed them to use language in real-life situations. The following are some examples of student interactions during the role-playing activities:

Travel Agency Scenario:

Student A: "Hello, I'd like to book a vacation to a tropical island."

Student B (playing the travel agent): "Sure! When would you like to travel, and how many people will be in your group?"

Doctor and Patient Dialogue:

Student A: "Doctor, I have a headache and a sore throat."

Student B (playing the doctor): "I'm sorry to hear that. When did your symptoms start? Any other issues you'd like to share?"

At the Grocery Store:

Student A: "Excuse me, where can I find the fruits and vegetables?"

Student B (playing the store clerk): "Certainly! They're in aisle 3. Can I help you find anything else?"

Restaurant Conversation:

Student A: "Good evening! I'd like to order a pizza, please."

Student B (playing the waiter/waitress): "Of course! What toppings would you like on your pizza? And would you like anything to drink?"

Community Helpers:

Student A: "I'm a firefighter. We need to put out the fire!"

Student B (playing a fellow firefighter): "I'll grab the hose. You get the extinguisher! We need to work together to save the building."

Supermarket Shopping:

Student A: "I need to buy some bread, milk, and eggs."

Student B (playing the cashier): "Alright, your total is \$10. How would you like to pay?"

Job Interview:

Student A (applicant): "I'm applying for the position of a teacher. I have experience working with children."

Student B (playing the interviewer): "That's great! Can you tell me more about your teaching experience and why you want to work at our school?"

Weather Forecast:

Student A: "Good morning! Today's weather forecast is sunny with a high of 25 degrees Celsius."

Student B (playing the weather reporter): "Thank you! Don't forget your sunscreen if you're heading out today!"

Animal Doctor (Veterinarian) and Pet Owner:

Student A: "My dog is not feeling well. Can you help?"

Student B (playing the veterinarian): "Of course! What symptoms are your dog experiencing, and when did they start?"

Book Characters' Meeting:

Student A (playing a character from a book): "Hello, I'm Harry Potter. Who are you?"

Student B (playing another character): "I'm Hermione Granger! Do you want to join us on our magical adventure?"

B. Group Discussions

It was observed that interactive discussions among students fostered engagement, collaboration, and critical thinking.

Improved Speaking Skills: In a classroom discussion about a short story, the students were encouraged to express their opinions on characters, events, and the overall theme. They not only practised forming coherent sentences, but also developed the ability to articulate their thoughts clearly. Through such discussions, the students gradually became more confident in

expressing themselves in English. The researcher observed an increase in the length and complexity of the students' spoken responses over the classroom observation period. For instance, a student who initially provided brief answers progressed to offering detailed explanations and insights during the discussions.

Enhanced Listening Skills: During a group discussion about a video or audio clip, the students were required to actively listen to their peers' contributions. They learned to identify key points, ask clarifying questions, and respond appropriately. This activity helped them develop better listening comprehension skills, crucial for effective communication. The teacher noticed the students paraphrasing or summarising their peers' ideas, indicating an improved ability to grasp and retain information conveyed through spoken language.

Ability to Express and Exchange Ideas in Pair or Small Group Discussions: Utilising pair or small group discussions, the students engaged in conversational exchanges, negotiated meaning, and jointly arrived at conclusions. For instance, they may discuss cultural differences, compare perspectives on a topic, or brainstorm solutions to a problem. It was observed that the students used new vocabulary or language structures learned in class during these discussions, demonstrating their ability to utilise their acquired knowledge in authentic communicative contexts.

Increased Confidence in Spoken English: Regular class discussions establish a supportive setting in which learners feel encouraged to express themselves without fear of judgment. Over time, this contributes to increased confidence in using English for oral communication. The researcher observed that students who were initially hesitant or reserved in participating in discussions became more proactive, initiating conversations and contributing willingly. Discussions in the EFL classroom are essential for fostering primary students' communicative competence. Through these interactions, the students develop and refine their speaking and

listening skills, become adept at expressing ideas, and engage in meaningful exchanges that contribute to their overall language proficiency.

Below are some examples of discussion activities conducted in the classroom:

Discussion Cards

Favourite Activities:

- What is your favourite after-school activity?
- Why do you enjoy it?
- Would you recommend it to a friend?

Dream Vacation:

- If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
- What activities would you do there?
- Why does this destination interest you?

Pets and Animals:

- Do you have a pet? If yes, describe it.
- If you could have any animal as a pet, what would it be?
- Why do you like that animal?

Favourite Food:

- What is your favourite meal or snack?
- Can you describe how it tastes?
- Do you know how to cook it?

Memorable Vacation:

- Share a memorable vacation experience.
- What made it special?

- Would you like to go back to that place?

C. Pair-Work

Pair-work activities in the EFL primary classroom can have significant outcomes in terms of collaborative learning and communication. These activities were designed to engage students in interactive tasks, providing them with opportunities to practise and apply language skills in a social context. Here are some explored outcomes and examples:

Enhanced Collaborative Learning: In a pair-work activity where the students were asked to create a dialogue or role-play, they collaborated to generate ideas, share perspectives, and negotiate the structure of their conversation. This collaboration fosters a sense of teamwork and mutual support.

Improved Communication Skills: Through pair discussions or debates, the students learned to express their opinions, listened actively to their partner's ideas, and responded thoughtfully. This type of interaction helped them develop not only their speaking skills, but also their ability to comprehend and respond appropriately to different viewpoints.

Increased Participation and Engagement: In a pair activity such as a language game or a problem-solving task, the students may feel more comfortable contributing to the discussion compared to a whole-class setting. This increased participation can lead to greater engagement and enthusiasm for the subject matter.

Development of Peer Feedback Skills: In collaborative writing tasks, the students can provide feedback to each other on language usage, sentence structure, and overall coherence. This process helps them improve their critical thinking skills as well as gaining awareness of the effect of their language choices.

Negotiation of Meaning: In pair-work activities like information gap exercises, where each student has unique information, the learners must negotiate meaning to complete the task

successfully. This negotiation involves clarifying doubts, confirming information, and ensuring mutual understanding.

Increased Language Exposure: Pair activities often expose students to a variety of language forms and expressions used by their peers. This exposure contributes to the expansion of their vocabulary and the development of more natural and contextually appropriate language use.

Building Confidence: Regular pair interactions provide a supportive environment where the students can take risks with language without fear of judgment. This contributes to the development of confidence in using English for communication.

Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity: Pair activities that involve discussing cultural topics or comparing cultural differences can enhance the students' awareness and sensitivity to diverse perspectives. This promotes intercultural communication skills.

Transfer of Learning to Real-Life Situations: Through role-playing scenarios related to daily life, the students can practise language in context. This application of language skills in real-life situations enhances their ability to communicate in English outside of the classroom. Pair-work activities in the EFL primary classroom have multifaceted positive outcomes, ranging from improved collaborative learning and communication skills to enhanced confidence and cultural awareness. The observed changes in the students' ability to interact with peers and negotiate meaning underscore the effectiveness of such activities in facilitating language acquisition and application.

Here are some examples of pair-work activities through interview questions and scenarios applied in the classroom:

Getting to Know Each Other:

- What is your favourite colour, and why?

- Can you tell me about your favourite toy or game?
- What do you like to do after school?

Family and Friends:

- Do you have any siblings? Can you describe them?
- Who is your best friend, and what do you like to do together?
- What is a special tradition you have with your family?

Hobbies and Interests:

- What is your favourite hobby, and how did you get interested in it?
- Can you tell me about a book or TV show you enjoy?
- Do you play any sports? Which one is your favourite?

School Life:

- What is your favourite subject in school, and why?
- Can you share a memorable moment from a school day?
- Who is your favourite teacher, and what do you like about them?

Dreams and Aspirations:

- What do you want to be when you grow up, and why?
- Can you share a goal you have for this school year?
- If you could visit any place in the world, where would you go?

D. Online Vocabulary Games

Online vocabulary games have become increasingly popular tools in the field of EFL education, particularly in primary classrooms. This discussion aims to present the findings related to the effectiveness of these games in enhancing communicative competence among primary EFL students. We will explore whether the students exhibit increased vocabulary

retention, usage, and motivation through engaging in these activities.

Effectiveness in Vocabulary Retention: Numerous studies suggest that online vocabulary games can be effective in promoting vocabulary retention among primary EFL learners. For instance, a study conducted by Castro-Garces and Guaqueta in 2018 examined the impact of language learning apps – Kahoot and Duolingo – and found that students who regularly played vocabulary games demonstrated a significant improvement in long-term retention compared to those who relied solely on traditional learning methods. The interactive and engaging nature of these games seems to facilitate better memory consolidation. In a vocabulary-building game where students match words with corresponding images, researchers observed that the recall of words increased by 25% after a week, showcasing the potential for enhanced vocabulary retention.

Enhanced Vocabulary Usage: The incorporation of online vocabulary games in primary EFL classrooms has shown promise in not only increasing the students' vocabulary knowledge, but also in promoting the practical application of words in various contexts. Interactive games often present words in real-life scenarios, encouraging learners to use them in sentences or short paragraphs. In a game where students engage in virtual conversations, incorporating newly learned words, the teachers noticed a higher frequency of these words being used in subsequent writing assignments and class discussions.

Increased Motivation: Online vocabulary games have a unique ability to enhance the students' motivation in the process of learning a language. The gamified elements, such as competition, rewards, and immediate feedback, contribute to a more engaging and enjoyable learning experience. This heightened motivation can lead to increased participation and sustained effort in vocabulary acquisition.

Considerations and Challenges: While the findings generally support the positive impact of

online vocabulary games, it's crucial to acknowledge the potential challenges. For instance, not all games may be equally effective, and the level of difficulty must align with the students' proficiency. Moreover, the accessibility of technology and potential distractions may pose barriers in some educational settings. The integration of online vocabulary games in primary EFL classrooms appears to be a promising strategy for enhancing communicative competence. The evidence suggests that these games contribute to improved vocabulary retention, increased usage, and heightened motivation among students. However, ongoing research and the thoughtful planning of implementation techniques are essential to optimise the advantages of these tools in diverse educational contexts.

The following online vocabulary games were conducted during the classroom observations:

Virtual Flashcard Challenge: A set of virtual flashcards was created with images and corresponding vocabulary words. The students took turns describing the images or defining the words for their classmates to guess.

Virtual Vocabulary Charades: Each student was assigned a vocabulary word, and they acted it out without speaking. The classmates guessed the word based on the actions and discussed their reasoning.

Guess the Emoji: Emojis representing various vocabulary words were shared. The students said the word they thought the emoji represented, explaining their choice.

Vocabulary Quiz Show: Online quiz shows were hosted, where the students answered questions related to vocabulary. Friendly competition and discussion of the correct answers were encouraged.

Online Crossword Puzzle: An online crossword puzzle was provided with vocabulary. The students solved the puzzle and discussed the meanings or used the words in sentences.

E. Picture Description

During classroom interactive activities where picture description was used, the researcher observed the following:

Developing Descriptive Language:

Before the Picture Description Activity – Weak Description: "There is a cat."

After the Picture Description Activity – Improved Description: "In the picture, a sleek, grey cat with bright green eyes is lazily stretching on a sunlit windowsill."

Impact: Picture description activities compel students to go beyond basic vocabulary and employ adjectives, adverbs, and descriptive phrases. This helps in building a richer and more nuanced descriptive language.

Improving Overall Communicative Skills:

Before the Picture Description Activity – Limited Communication: "There are people in a park."

After the Picture Description Activity – Enhanced Communication: "The bustling park is filled with families having picnics, children playing on swings, and elderly couples enjoying a leisurely stroll amidst the blooming flowers."

Impact: Describing pictures requires students to express their thoughts clearly. This improves their ability to provide detailed information and engage in meaningful conversations, essential for effective communication.

Building Vocabulary:

Before the Picture Description Activity – Limited Vocabulary: "There are birds."

After the Picture Description Activity – Expanded Vocabulary: "A myriad of vibrant birds – from the resplendent peacock to the tiny hummingbird – adorn the lush branches of the flowering trees."

Impact: Picture descriptions necessitate the use of a diverse vocabulary, aiding students in expanding their word choices and expressing themselves more precisely.

Picture description activities in the EFL classroom have a transformative impact on the students' language skills, fostering improvement in descriptive language, storytelling, communication, critical thinking, and vocabulary. Through engaging with visual stimuli, students not only learn language but also acquire the ability to effectively convey their thoughts and ideas in a foreign language.

4.1.3 Summary of the Findings

The present study's findings indicate that the students exhibited enhanced communicative abilities in interactive and engaged learning as opposed to explicit teaching. The classroom observation results unveiled several key themes: "increased student participation", "improved fluency", "enhanced listening skills", and "effective peer interaction". Examining the effects of incorporating interactive activities in the EFL classroom to improve students' CC showed favourable results in the qualitative analysis. Through both the class observations and data analysis, it becomes evident that interactive activities positively influenced the students' communicative competence.

Firstly, the integration of interactive activities heightened student participation and engagement. During activities like group discussions or role-playing, the students actively contributed to conversations, expressed ideas, and interacted with peers. This active engagement elevated their oral communication skills, encouraging meaningful language use.

Secondly, interactive activities contributed to improved language fluency and accuracy. The students had the chance to hone their speaking abilities in an interactive, supportive environment. Interaction with peers provided immediate feedback and corrections, refining language skills.

Thirdly, interactive activities facilitated the development of effective collaborative skills. Working in pairs or groups, the students learned cooperation, meaning negotiation, and conversational turn-taking. They developed skills such as active listening, empathy, and respect for diverse perspectives – essential for real-life communication and enhancing students' confidence.

The findings also suggest that using interactive activities in the EFL classroom heightened the students' motivation and language engagement. The dynamic nature of these activities, combined with a sense of ownership, fostered a positive learning environment. The students were more motivated to participate, take risks, and overcome the fear of mistakes, contributing to the overall communicative competence development.

The data analysis highlights the positive impact of integrating interactive activities in EFL classrooms to cultivate students' CC. These activities enhance participation, improve language fluency and accuracy, foster collaborative skills, and boost motivation. The incorporation of interactive activities into EFL instruction is crucial for creating a communicative, engaging learning environment that enhances the students' language proficiency and prepares them for effective real-life communication.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Impact of Interactive Activities on Students' Communicative Competence

According to Dewi et al. (2016) and Wang (2010), communicative exercises like role-playing, language games, and simulations – which were observed in the present study's classroom – were emphasised as methods to motivate and assist students in utilising the target language proficiently. These activities facilitate meaningful interactions with both peers and instructors, thereby maximising the benefits of language learning.

Every teaching strategy used in the classroom followed the CLT approach, in which the

instructor led class discussions. According to Savignon (2004), the methodology was heavily student-centred, with each lesson or instructor interaction comprising only a small percentage of the allotted time. Activity preparation and presentation took up most of the time.

During activities that required speaking, the researcher observed some students facing challenges in verbalising their thoughts in English. Nevertheless, it was clear that they remained actively engaged in the class. This observation aligns with the claim made by Brumfit and Finocchiaro (n.d.), which was noted by Brown (2007), that in language classrooms employing communicative language teaching, learning occurs "through the process of struggling to communicate".

The communicative language learning activities implemented in this study, such as discussions, role-plays, picture description, online vocabulary games, and pair-work, facilitated the application of CLT in the language classrooms. CLT offered the learners of language opportunities the ability to engage with the practical aspects of language, enabling them to pursue self-expression, discourse interpretation, and meaning negotiation in the English language.

Based on the findings of the current study, one can infer that the students who participated in communicative language learning activities (CLLAs) demonstrated notable enhancement in their CC level. Additionally, the participants in the interactive activities demonstrated a higher increase in communicative competence. Moreover, it can be concluded that the CCCAs used in the language lessons in this research were successful in improving the students' sociolinguistic, grammatical, discourse, and strategic competences, all of which added to their overall CC.

4.2.2 Discussion of the Relationship between Interactive Activities and Communicative Competence

The connection between interactive activities and CC is integral to language learning and proficiency. Interactive activities are dynamic exercises that involve active participation, engagement, and real-time communication. Communicative competence, on the other hand, encompasses the capacity to communicate clearly and appropriately in a range of social and cultural settings. Let's delve deeper into the key aspects of this relationship:

Application of Language Skills: Interactive activities provide a practical platform that allows learners to apply the language skills they've acquired in real-life situations. This application is crucial for moving beyond rote memorisation and integrating language into practical usage.

Contextual Understanding: Real-life scenarios in interactive activities often simulate real-world situations, forcing learners to understand and adapt to different contexts. This contextual understanding is essential for communicative competence as it goes beyond mere grammatical correctness.

Dynamic Exchange of Information: Two-way communication in interactive activities, unlike passive learning methods, involve a dynamic exchange of information. This dynamic interaction helps learners develop the ability to express themselves coherently and understand others in real time.

Feedback and Error Correction: Immediate feedback during interaction, where interactive activities allow for such feedback. Learners receive feedback on their language use, pronunciation, and overall communication skills, which is vital for self-correction and improvement.

Social and Cultural Competence: Engagement with diverse perspectives, where many interactive activities involve interaction with peers from diverse backgrounds. This exposure helps learners to develop social and cultural competence, an integral part of communicative competence, as effective communication requires sensitivity to cultural nuances.

Pragmatic Competence: Interactive activities often involve the negotiation of meaning, where the participants work together to ensure understanding. This process contributes to the development of pragmatic competence, enabling learners to use language appropriately in various situations.

Integration of Skills: The holistic development of language skills, with interactive activities integrating all the skills of language – listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This holistic approach ensures that learners develop a well-rounded set of skills, contributing to their overall communicative competence.

Motivation and Engagement: Interactive activities often foster intrinsic motivation as learners are actively engaged and see the immediate relevance of what they are learning. This motivation is essential for sustained language development and the acquisition of communicative competence.

Functional Language Use: The application of functional language, whereby through interactive activities, learners practise using language for various functions such as making requests, giving opinions, or negotiating. This functional use is a key component of communicative competence.

Collaborative Learning: Interactive activities often involve collaboration and learning from peers. Learners can observe different communication styles, language use, and strategies, enhancing their own communicative competence through shared experiences.

In essence, the relationship between interactive activities and communicative competence is symbiotic. Interactive activities provide the environment for learners to actively engage with language, receive feedback, and refine their communicative abilities, thereby fostering a more profound and effective grasp of the language.

4.2.3 Linking the Research Findings to the Literature Review

The findings of this research are consistent with those of the previous literature. For instance, Chaundhury's (2015) study revealed a significant improvement in students' communicative abilities through language-based activities. Owen and Razali (2018) further emphasised the effectiveness of interactive communicative activities, particularly those focused on speaking, in practising language and enhancing communicative competence. Supporting these findings, studies by Ismaili and Bajrami (2016), Wang (2010), Efrizal (2012), and Dewi et al. (2016) were conducted. Ismaili and Bajrami (2016) argue that interactive communicative activities in language instruction are more effective in developing language skills compared to traditional techniques.

Communicative activities such as language games play a crucial role in encouraging students to use the designated language and exchange information with other participants in meaningful contexts through interaction. This, in turn, maximises the educational impact of language, as highlighted by Dewi et al. (2016) and Wang (2010). Additionally, Efrizal (2012), who conducted classroom action research, asserts that interactive activities not only foster CC but also contribute to increased motivation and speaking abilities through the implementation of CLT. Furthermore, in a mixed-methods study involving nearly 300 students from various Malaysian schools, Ahmed et al. (2014) discovered that communicative activities positively impacted the students' speaking abilities.

Waluyo (2019) highlighted recent studies showing the positive outcomes of role-play on learners' CC. Role-playing is also recommended as a communicative task in task-based learning by researchers such as Dorathy and Mahalakshmi (2011) and Patel (2017). Role-playing offers students the chance to apply communication resources, including language, in diverse social roles and settings, fostering genuine dialogue (Al-Senaidi, 2010; Richards,

1985, as cited in Waluyo, 2019).

Xue's (2013) qualitative study explored the impact of enhancing students' CC through the implementation of group work. Therefore, this study provides valuable insights into the positive impact of interactive activities on EFL students' CC, reinforcing the importance of incorporating such activities into language teaching methodologies.

In this chapter, the study's findings have been demonstrated and discussed to reveal that classroom interactive activities in the EFL classroom have a positive impact on primary students' CC. According to the study's findings, the research question can be answered: interactive activities in the primary EFL classroom enhance students' communicative competence, leading to better speaking skills.

Chapter 5: Pedagogical Implications

This chapter revisits the key findings of the study, emphasising their significance in the context of educational practice. The study has pedagogical implications for EFL educators, curriculum designers, and teacher training and professional development.

5.1 Recommendations for EFL Educators

Based on the research findings, some specific recommendations for EFL educators can be made. EFL teachers can design captivating and interactive learning opportunities that empower students to enhance their communicative competence efficiently. These methodologies will equip students with the confidence and skill to employ English effectively and proficiently in real-world situations, thereby readying them for effective communication in academic as well as professional environments. Such outcomes can be realised through the integration of various communicative approaches within the classroom.

The research suggests that interactive activities are effective in enhancing communicative competence. Teachers should incorporate more active learning strategies, such as role-playing, group discussions, language games, and collaborative projects, into their EFL classrooms. Moreover, teachers should facilitate effective communication skills by focusing on the development of not just language skills, but also communication skills, which means teaching students how to express ideas clearly, listen actively, and engage in effective communication in various contexts. Teachers are encouraged to emphasise authentic communication in the classroom by creating opportunities for the learners to apply English in meaningful and everyday scenarios. This can be achieved through activities that simulate everyday communication scenarios. Also, implementing task-based language teaching approaches is useful since language learning is embedded in purposeful tasks. This can include problem-solving activities, project work, and other tasks that require communication in

English.

EFL educators need to explore the integration of technology to enhance interactive activities. Virtual platforms, online communication tools, and multimedia resources can be utilised to provide engaging and interactive language learning experiences.

Integrating cultural aspects into language teaching to enhance students' cultural competence is another effective method to enhance EFL students' CC. Interactive activities that involve discussions about cultural differences, traditions, and customs can contribute to a more holistic language learning experience.

To improve students' CC, EFL instructors need to recognise the importance of establishing a welcoming and inclusive learning atmosphere, one that promotes risk-taking and open communication. This entails cultivating a supportive and inclusive environment where students feel at ease expressing themselves in English.

Using formative assessment strategies during and after interactive activities to gauge students' progress and provide constructive feedback is crucial. This can guide future instruction and help address individual learning needs.

EFL educators are advised to foster student independence by motivating students to take ownership of their language learning and designing interactive activities that allow for autonomy and self-directed learning, cultivating a feeling of accountability for their language development.

5.1.1 Classroom Activities to Improve EFL Students' CC

Ahmed and Pawar (2018) suggest some activities that can help in the development of EFL students' CC.

A. Dialogues and Oral Discussions in Groups or Pairs

EFL educators should recognise that the classroom serves as the primary environment

for EFL learners to practise and immerse themselves in English. Unlike children who naturally develop communication skills in their native language by being immersed in it, EFL learners lack such exposure to the target language in non-classroom settings. Therefore, it is imperative for educators to motivate students to engage in English interactions within the classroom, particularly through paired and group activities. These interactions have proven to be highly beneficial in nurturing students' communicative competence, offering increased exposure opportunities, and aiding in the development of confidence while alleviating language anxiety.

Overcoming these hurdles of confidence-building and reducing language anxiety is crucial for effective language acquisition, as highlighted by scholars such as Krashen (1981), Daly, Caughlin, and Stafford (1997), and Park and Lee (2005). Pair and group activities not only encourage language practice, but also foster exposure and usage opportunities. Their effectiveness lies in their ability to enhance various facets of communicative competence, ensuring the development of both macro and micro language skills.

B. Facilitating Teacher–Student Interaction

In the realm of EFL education, the teacher assumes the role of a facilitator to promote effective language learning. Establishing an enthusiastic classroom atmosphere and actively engaging with students are crucial aspects. Research, including observations and studies like Wang and Castro (2010), consistently shows that teachers who encourage more interaction achieve positive results, producing proficient speakers. In contrast, teachers who predominantly lecture with passive student involvement often fail in cultivating communicative competence, yielding students with insufficient English proficiency. To maximise language learning, teachers should interact individually with each student, fostering an environment that motivates the students to engage in meaningful interactions.

C. Utilising Literature for Language Development

Literature, spanning various genres such as drama, short stories, and novels, proves valuable in enhancing EFL students' CC. It offers genuine language inputs and imparts insights into English culture. Exposure to films featuring native English actors aids in understanding pronunciation, interaction norms, and cultural nuances. Literary texts contribute to linguistic competence by providing a rich vocabulary and grammatical rules repository. Additionally, they help learners comprehend English culture and guide language use in diverse contexts. Incorporating storytelling as a classroom activity further enhances communication skills. Students can read and narrate stories to classmates, promoting linguistic competence and effective communication.

D. Simulation and Role-Play to Enhance Communicative Competence

Role-playing and simulation activities emerge as highly useful tools for fostering students' CC. The critical factor in their success lies in students immersing themselves as authentically as possible in the given scenarios. These activities have consistently demonstrated their effectiveness in advancing communicative competence while simultaneously injecting a sense of interest and interactivity into the classroom.

The impact of simulation and gaming activities on the development of communicative competence in a foreign language was studied by García-Carbonell, Rising, Montero, and Watts (2001), and it was found that these activities are more successful than formal instruction. Role-playing exercises are emphasised as essential to improving students' communicative proficiency. In these kinds of situations, EFL students act out scenes from plays or create their own original theatrical works. Both Quing's (2011) and Ampatuan and San Jose's (2016) studies focus on role-playing as a method of improving students' communicative ability. Their results emphasise that role-playing proves to be a successful approach for fostering both communicative competence and cultural awareness. Furthermore,

these activities offer students valuable opportunities to articulate their ideas, enhance their self-assurance in language usage, and refine their communication abilities.

E. Integration of Technology in Language Education

English language educators should leverage the advantages of computers and modern technology in their teaching practices. In the current landscape, there is an abundance of videos, recordings, and programmes in English that can aid students in learning the English language and honing their CC. Incorporating such technological tools into teaching methods can significantly enhance the competence of EFL learners and contribute to language acquisition. The utilisation of computer-based oral activities within the classroom offers students exposure to native English speakers, an experience often unavailable in their immediate surroundings.

Chun (1994) conducted a study exploring the use of computers in classroom discussions to facilitate the development of interactional competency among German first-year students studying foreign languages within written discourse. The findings indicated that the students felt more liberated to suggest topics, participate in interactions, and ask questions compared to traditional instruction, given the decentralised role of the teacher. Chun proposes that the findings from this study can also be applied to improve students' oral proficiency.

By implementing these recommendations, EFL educators can create a dynamic and effective language learning environment that enhances primary students' communicative competence through engaging and interactive activities.

5.2 Strategies for Integrating Interactive Activities into the EFL Curriculum

To ensure an effective communicative curriculum, it is crucial for designers and policymakers to focus on components related to communicative competence. If the goal is to enhance learners' communicative competence, the curriculum content should draw from

disciplines such as linguistics, anthropology, cultural studies, sociolinguistics, and other pertinent fields within humanities and the social sciences (Celce-Murcia, p. 55). Likewise, Savignon (2002) suggested five components for creating a curriculum that fosters communication, where her five CLT curriculum components are "language arts, teaching language for a purpose, learning English for personal use, theatre arts, and preparing learners for the world beyond the classroom" (Savignon, 2002, as cited in Bin Hady, 2016, p.104). In short, any communicative curriculum should be designed to meet the communicative requirements of learners in all the aspects and areas of CC.

5.2.1 Functional–Notional Syllabuses

The terms "function" and "notion" are closely associated with the British applied linguist David Wilkins, according to M. Berns (1990, p. 79). His work in the Council of Europe-sponsored Modern Languages Project informs his recommendations for syllabuses that centre on the functions of language rather than its forms. The goal of this project was to provide a structured curriculum for adult learners of foreign languages in Western Europe.

Wilkins proposed adding two fresh frameworks for structuring language instruction content – conceptual and functional syllabuses – in place of the structural and situational syllabus categories. The semantic and behavioural anticipation of learner requirements would be the first elements of a hypothetical syllabus. The term "notional" here denotes meaning-based, suggesting that this kind of syllabus was created to specify the tasks students were expected to complete with language and the meanings they would have to express. A meaning-based curriculum "considers the communicative aspects of language from the outset while still acknowledging grammatical and situational factors", according to Wilkins. Because it can develop communicative ability, it can perform better than the grammatical syllabus (Wilkins, 1976, p. 19). The phrases "communicative function" and "functional syllabus" have come to

be associated with Wilkins, who views them as his most notable contribution to syllabus design. He does, however, accept Halliday as a partial basis for his understanding of communication functions and does not claim to have invented or discovered these ideas.

5.3. Addressing the Challenges and Barriers

According Brandle (2021, p. 21), implementing CLT poses various challenges. These difficulties are related to decisions about the kinds of content to include, the setting in which the content is chosen, certain knowledge domains (such as grammar and vocabulary), and the assignments that make up a curriculum. These decisions are closely connected to inquiries about the definition of "knowing" a language, achieving proficiency in a language, and understanding the implications of communicative abilities.

Communicative abilities go beyond the conventional categorisation of the classic four-skills methods of speaking, listening, reading, and writing capabilities. When two people are having a discussion, for example, active communication tactics such as asking for clarification and modifying language to ensure mutual understanding are used in addition to the speaking and listening abilities. There are several obstacles in the way of successfully incorporating the four skills into daily and long-term curriculum when teaching languages in a way that encompasses all skills and is based on an interactive perspective of language use.

Brandle (2021) states:

The teaching of proficiency and communicative-based skills raises the question not only about content but also about the choice of learning tasks or best teaching practices. CLT does not promote one standardized method or curriculum but is eclectic in its approach. Being eclectic means it promotes the best or most effective techniques or methodologies. At the same time, the choice of techniques and learning tasks is not an arbitrary decision but is firmly grounded in principles of learning as they are

motivated by research in SLA and educational psychology. Learning what constitutes effective ways of learning and teaching initially requires intensive training and in the long run involves staying in touch with current SLA research findings. (p. 21)

Alharbi (2022) provides a summary of Li's (1998) structure for addressing obstacles related to the application of CLT. Based on this framework, various issues can be categorised into four overarching challenge types based on their characteristics. These challenges are linked to teachers, students, policies, and CLT.

5.3.1 Challenges Pertaining to Teachers

Li (1998) conducted an initial inquiry to pinpoint the principal concerns linked with the implementation of the CLT approach within South Korean educational institutions. This investigation elucidated numerous primary hurdles that educators confront within a CLT environment, including inadequacies in oral English proficiency, strategic and sociolinguistic competence in English, a scarcity of CLT training, restricted opportunities for CLT retraining, and insufficient time and expertise for the development of communicative materials. Despite the participants' confidence in their grammar, reading, and writing abilities, they expressed reservations regarding their proficiency in English speaking and listening, deeming it insufficient for the successful implementation of communicative classes.

5.3.2 Challenges Related to Students

Another set of difficulties originates from the students and is categorised as challenges associated with them. The research identified that a considerable number of students showed limited motivation to improve their communicative competence, prioritising their grammar proficiency over their ability to communicate effectively. Additionally, the students displayed considerable reluctance towards shifting from a teacher-centred classroom to one that prioritised student involvement. They expected the teacher to impart knowledge directly while

they took notes passively since they were used to the old classroom style, which placed a heavy emphasis on passive learning (Li, 1998, p. 691).

5.3.3 Challenges Associated with Policies

The third set of challenges, as outlined by Li, pertains to obstacles within the educational system or challenges linked to policies. Within this category, one of the primary concerns identified is class size. Numerous teachers emphasised that the size of these classes is excessively large, making it extremely challenging to implement CLT activities. The main source of this issue is because communicative activities in large courses can be noisy and challenging to control, necessitating constant supervision. Error-correction procedures have been found to suffer in overly big classes because it is difficult for the teachers to move around and properly supervise and monitor groups. Exam design, which mirrors conventional teaching techniques and is set up to evaluate the four skills – reading, writing, speaking, and listening – with a focus on grammatical correctness is the source of the second problem associated with the educational system. As a result, educators are forced to devote a large portion of their class time to teaching grammar.

5.3.4 Challenges Specific to CLT

The final set of obstacles pertains to the core essence of CLT and its global implementation. Li (1998) suggests that there exists a qualitative difference between EFL and ESL. He suggests that CLT might not seamlessly align with the EFL context, as its application in such environments often leads to clashes of the "social, cultural, and physical conditions of the recipient countries". It's important to highlight that this discrepancy is not attributable to the approach itself but due to the educational policies governing the adoption of CLT and the inclination of language instructors to embrace CLT without the necessary adjustments (Batawi, 2006).

Implementing interactive activities in the EFL classroom to enhance students' CC can be highly beneficial, but it also comes with certain challenges and barriers. Many studies have revealed the obstacles below:

Limited Resources: The lack of access to appropriate technological tools or materials for interactive activities, such as computers, the internet, or language learning apps, can hinder implementation.

Class Size: Managing interactive activities in large classes can be challenging. It may be difficult to ensure that every student actively participates and receives adequate feedback.

Teacher Training: Teachers may not be adequately trained to design and implement effective interactive activities. This lack of training can result in the ineffective use of class time and resources.

Cultural Sensitivity: Due to cultural barriers, some interactive activities may not align with the cultural norms or expectations of the students, making it challenging to engage them fully.

Student Motivation: Students may not be motivated to participate in interactive activities, especially if they do not see the relevance of these activities to their language learning goals.

Assessment Challenges: Assessing interactive activities can be challenging, as traditional assessment methods like exams may not capture the full range of communicative competencies.

Time Constraints: Limited class time within the curriculum may limit the incorporation of interactive activities, making it challenging to cover all the necessary content.

Language Proficiency Levels: In a diverse classroom, students may have varying levels of language proficiency, posing a challenge to designing activities that address the requirements of every student.

Classroom Management: Some interactive activities may lead to disruptions or discipline

issues, particularly if the students are not accustomed to this teaching approach. Overcoming these challenges requires a combination of teacher training, careful planning, adaptability, and fostering a supportive learning environment. Teachers should also continuously seek feedback from students and be willing to adjust their strategies based on the evolving needs of the class.

5.4 Implications for Teacher Training and Professional Development

Teacher professional development is important in enhancing educators' skills and strategies, including the employment of communicative strategies in EFL classes. Professional development can enhance teachers' proficiency in utilising communicative strategies through various means, including:

Workshops and Training Sessions: Conduct workshops specifically focused on CLT methods. These sessions can include demonstrations, practice activities, and discussions about how to integrate communicative strategies into the classroom.

Observation and Feedback: Encourage peer observations or mentorship programmes where teachers can observe each other's classes. This allows for the sharing of effective communicative strategies and provides opportunities for constructive feedback.

Modelling by Experts: Bring in experienced EFL teachers or language teaching experts to model effective communicative strategies in real classroom settings. Teachers can learn a lot from observing experienced practitioners.

Reflective Practices: Facilitate regular reflective sessions where teachers can analyse and discuss their teaching experiences. Encourage them to reflect on how communicative strategies were implemented, what worked well, and what could be improved.

Collaborative Lesson Planning: Promote collaborative lesson planning sessions where teachers can collectively brainstorm and design lessons that incorporate communicative strategies. This fosters a collaborative learning environment among teachers.

Technology Integration: Provide training on how to incorporate technology into the instruction of languages to enhance communication skills. This could include the use of online resources, interactive platforms, or language learning apps.

Resources and Materials: Offer access to several materials and resources that support CLT. This can include textbooks, online materials, authentic materials, and teaching aids that align with communicative language learning objectives.

Continuous Learning Opportunities: Support teachers in pursuing ongoing professional development opportunities such as attending conferences, webinars, and online courses focused on communicative language teaching. This helps them stay updated on the latest trends and methodologies.

Incorporating Student Feedback: Encourage teachers to seek feedback from their students regarding the effectiveness of communicative strategies. Students' perspectives can offer valuable perspectives on how these strategies influence their language learning experience.

Cultural Competence Training: Provide training on intercultural communication and sensitivity, as effective communication in a language class often involves understanding and navigating cultural nuances. This helps teachers create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. In summary, teacher professional development should be comprehensive, interactive, and ongoing to effectively support the integration of communicative strategies in EFL classes. It's essential to create a supportive and collaborative learning community among teachers, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation in language education.

In this chapter the pedagogical implications of the research findings for EFL educators, curriculum designers, and teacher training and professional development have been presented and discussed.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion

The primary aim of this study was to examine how interactive learning influences the communicative skills of primary EFL learners, uncovering positive results in terms of improving students' communicative abilities. By incorporating interactive activities in the classroom, the fundamental objective of language instruction, which is to cultivate communicative competence, is effectively fulfilled.

This dissertation tackled the necessity of developing EFL students' CC by utilising interactive activities. The integration of interactive elements into language learning settings gained popularity in recent years, indicating a pedagogical transition towards student-centred approaches that highlighted engagement, collaboration, and experiential learning. This study concentrated on examining the usefulness of interactive exercises for enhancing the communicative competence of EFL students, particularly focusing on activities that encouraged authentic, contextually relevant language usage.

The qualitative study engaged 30 participants (10 males and 20 females), who were fourth-grade students at an educational complex in Fujairah during the 2023/2024 academic year. Different interactive activities, such as role-playing, pair-work, discussions, and online vocabulary games, were created and introduced within the classroom to foster the advancement of the students' CC. Data were gathered through classroom observations and reflections, and qualitative data analysis using the observations. The results indicated a noteworthy enhancement in the CC of the students who took part in the interactive activities.

Interactive learning serves as a catalyst for educators to promote speaking abilities and establish real-life conversational exchanges in diverse social contexts and roles within the classroom. It becomes a vehicle for authentic language practice, enriching the learning

experience for EFL students. The design and planning of interactive activities, along with delineating the roles and responsibilities of both students and teachers, become pivotal elements for the effective application of interactive teaching strategies.

In the pursuit of developing communicative skills, the triplet of accuracy, complexity, and fluency emerge as critical considerations. These three factors serve as guiding principles in the design and execution of interactive instruction. The careful integration of interactive activities, like role-playing and classroom discussions, helps bridge the essential connection between language instruction within the class and the everyday application of the targeted language. Ultimately, this study underscores the importance of thoughtfully crafting interactive learning experiences to not only advance language proficiency but also reduce the gap between academic language teaching and the real-world application of language skills by EFL learners.

6.2 Recommendations

While incorporating communicative competence teaching into primary school foreign language classrooms offers a host of advantages, it is essential to recognise and address certain challenges inherent in the implementation. Limited instructional time, large class sizes, and varying student abilities pose significant obstacles to the effective integration of communicative activities. The need for future research becomes evident, with a specific focus on exploring strategies to overcome these challenges and devising assessment methods that align seamlessly with communicative competence objectives.

Expanding on the findings of the study, language instructors and students might discover advantages in incorporating communicative language learning activities (CLLAs) into their educational settings to attain communicative objectives. Nevertheless, it is essential to conduct additional research to confirm the efficacy of CLLAs with diverse groups of

language learners, including EFL and ESL students across different educational contexts and disciplines. Additionally, replicating the study in a more supportive classroom environment, with greater access to teacher-generated communicative resources, could provide insights into the broader utility of these activities.

In the context of the ever-evolving technological landscape, leveraging rapidly advancing technology becomes a potential avenue for transformation in language learning. The adaptation of communicative language learning activities into electronic formats and alternative media could open new possibilities. This shift could facilitate "computer-assisted language learning" (CALL) and "mobile-assisted language learning" (MALL), extending the advantages of communicative language learning to a wider spectrum of language learners. Exploring these technological avenues aligns with the contemporary educational landscape and offers innovative solutions to enhance the accessibility and efficacy of communicative language learning tasks.

6.3 Limitations

The researcher acknowledges the following limitations in this study:

6.3.1 Limited Sample Size and Specific Context

The conclusions drawn from this study are based on a relatively small sample size and are specifically focused on a particular school environment. It's essential to recognise that the unique characteristics and dynamics of this specific context may not fully reflect those of a broader population. As a result, the applicability of the findings to a wider educational setting may be limited due to the restricted diversity within the sample and the concentrated nature of the setting.

6.3.2 Potential Bias in Data Collection

The data collection method, relying on self-reports, introduces the possibility of bias in

responses. The participants might have provided responses they believed are socially favourable or consistent with the researcher's anticipated expectations. This potential bias could affect the findings' accuracy and reliability, as the data may not fully reflect the participants' true experiences or perspectives. To mitigate this limitation, future research could consider incorporating multiple data collection methods or triangulating data from different sources.

6.3.3 Case Study Approach and Generalisability

The utilisation of a case study approach inherently restricts the applicability of the findings to a specific context. Case studies are designed to provide in-depth insights into a specific phenomenon in its actual context. While this approach ensures a rich and detailed comprehension of how interactive activities affect students' CC within the chosen setting, caution must be exercised when attempting to generalise these findings to different educational environments. However, the depth and richness of the qualitative data obtained through the case study approach contribute valuable insights that can inform future research and educational practices within similar contexts.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Observation Rubric to Explore the Impact of Interactive Activities on Grade 4 EFL Students' Communicative Competence

Communicative Competence Criteria	Questions	Notes
Student Engagement	• Are students actively participating in the interactive activities? • Do they show enthusiasm and motivation during the activities? • Are students engaged in meaningful communication and interaction?	
Language Use	• What language(s) are students using during the activities? Is it the target language? • Are students able to express themselves clearly and fluently? • Do students use appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures?	
Collaboration	• How do students interact and collaborate with their peers during the activities? • Do they engage in effective communication, listening, and turn-taking? • Are students respectful of each other's ideas and opinions?	
Confidence And Risk-Taking	• Do students demonstrate increased confidence in using the target language? • Do they take risks in expressing themselves and experimenting with new language structures? • Are students willing to engage in discussions and share their ideas openly?	
Non-Verbal Communication	• Do students use non-verbal cues, such as gestures and facial expressions, to support their communication? • Are they attentive to non-verbal cues from their peers during interactions? • How effectively do students utilize non-verbal communication to convey meaning?	

Appendix B

Research Tool: Classroom Observation Form

Research Objective:

To assess the impact of interactive activities on primary EFL students' communicative competence.

Observer Information:

Observer Name: _____

Date of Observation: _____

Grade/ Class: _____

Duration of Observation: _____

Classroom Information:

Classroom Setup:

☐ Traditional seating arrangement

☐ Group seating arrangement

Materials Used:

☐ Textbooks

☐ Interactive whiteboard

☐ Visual aids

Other (specify): _____

Part 1: Pre-Activity Assessment

1. Lesson Objectives:

Are the objectives clear and related to communicative competence?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. Teacher Preparation:

Did the teacher prepare materials for the interactive activity?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Part 2: During-Activity Observation**1. Type of Interactive Activity:**

- ☐ Group discussions
- ☐ Role plays
- ☐ Pair work
- ☐ Interactive games
- ☐ Other (specify): _____

2. Student Engagement:

- ☐ Highly engaged
- ☐ Moderately engaged
- ☐ Low engagement
- ☐ Uneven engagement

3. Teacher Facilitation:

- ☐ Provided clear instructions
- ☐ Monitored and assisted students
- ☐ Encouraged student participation
- ☐ Adjusted activities based on student needs

4. Communication Modes:

- ☐ Speaking
- ☐ Listening
- ☐ Reading
- ☐ Writing

Part 3: Post-Activity Assessment**1. Student Participation:**

- ☐ All students participated
- ☐ Most students participated
- ☐ Some students participated
- ☐ Minimal student participation

2. Student Collaboration:

- ☐ Strong collaboration
- ☐ Moderate collaboration
- ☐ Limited collaboration
- ☐ No collaboration observed

3. Language Use:

- ☐ Varied vocabulary
- ☐ Appropriate language structures
- ☐ Use of target language

4. Non-Verbal Communication

- ☐ Gestures
- ☐ Facial expressions

Part 4: Overall Reflection

1. Teacher Reflection:

- ☐ Teacher reflection on the effectiveness of the interactive activity in promoting communicative competence.

2. Suggestions for Improvement:

- ☐ Strategies to enhance interactive activities.

- ☐ Additional resources/materials needed.

- ☐ Other recommendations:

Additional Comments:
