

**Using the Communicative Approach to  
Develop EFL Secondary School Students'  
Speaking Skills.**

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**ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study was to use the Communicative Approach to develop EFL secondary school students' speaking skills. This study employed a pre/post-one group design. An intact class (45 females) from the first-year secondary students were randomly selected from one of the public secondary schools, "Omar Ibn Al-Khatib Secondary school for girls", in Qalubiyah Governorate in the first term of the scholastic year 2018-2019. The tools used in this study were a speaking skills checklist, a pre-post speaking test to measure first-year secondary students' speaking skills, a proposed program designed in the light of Communicative Approach, and finally a success criteria used for students' reflection on their learning. The oral performances in the pre/post-test were analyzed to measure the speaking sub-skills output. The collected data were statistically analysed using t-test. The findings revealed that communicative language teaching had a positive effect on the students' speaking skills. therefore, It is recommended that teachers might find increasing the students' talk time beneficial to help the students improve their speaking skills by designing effective communicative activities.

**Keywords:** speaking skills, oral performances, communicative approach, communicative language teaching, secondary school, Egypt.

**ملخص الدراسة**

هدفت هذه الدراسة بشكل رئيس إلى التحقق من تأثير المدخل التواصلي على تطوير مهارات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لطلاب المدارس الثانوية. استخدمت هذه الدراسة تصميم المجموعة الواحدة قبل/ بعد، حيث تم اختيار صف دراسي كامل (45 طالبة) من طالبات الصف الأول الثانوي عشوائياً من إحدى المدارس الثانوية العامة، "مدرسة عمر بن الخطاب الثانوية للبنات" في محافظة القليوبية في الفصل الدراسي الأول من العام الدراسي 2018-2019. استخدمت هذه الدراسة اختباراً قبلياً / بعدياً لقياس مهارات التحدث لدى طلاب الصف الأول الثانوي، وبرنامج مقترح مصمم وفقاً للمدخل التواصلي، وأخيراً معايير النجاح التي استخدمت لاستجلاء الطلاب لتجربتهم في التعلم، وتم تحليل الأداء الشفهي في الاختبارات قبل وبعد الدراسة لقياس مخرجات مهارات التحدث الفرعية، كما تم تحليل البيانات المجمعة إحصائياً باستخدام اختبار (t-test). وكشفت النتائج أن المدخل التواصلي له تأثير إيجابي في تحسين مهارات التحدث لدى الطالبات لذلك؛ فإنه من المفيد أن يُزيد المعلمون من وقت تحدث الطلاب لمساعدتهم على تحسين مهاراتهم في التحدث من خلال تصميم أنشطة تواصلية فعّالة.

**كلمات مفتاحية:** مهارات التحدث، الأداء الشفهي، المدخل التواصلي، تعليم اللغة التواصلي، المدرسة الثانوية، مصر

**Introduction**

English is widely spoken as a second or foreign language by millions of people worldwide (Crystal, 2003: 2). English is a globally recognized language with diverse styles and sociolinguistic and political power, used by people worldwide for

communication, cooperation, and global change, and mastering it has significantly impacted various fields (Xue & Zuo, 2013).

Speaking is crucial for effective communication, especially in teaching second or foreign languages, as it significantly impacts students' classroom achievement. Teaching EFL speaking skills is crucial for global language learners to improve proficiency and achieve success, as traditional methods have not yielded desired learning outcomes. Apparently, EFL students are considered successful learners if they can effectively communicate in English (Graves, 2008; Nazara, 2011). These days, the competence to speak English fluently has become a necessity for a variety of reasons, especially for EFL students who strive for a better future. EFL students' need to speak fluently is ranging from a mere ambition to feel confident when talking to others in English, to an urgent need to pass a language test of spoken English (Derwing, Rossiter, Munro, and Thomson 2004).

Society relies heavily on speaking, especially in the classroom, for thinking, learning, and communication. Effective speaking and listening are crucial for effective communication, as inattentive speaking can impact discussions and hinder understanding of intended messages. Language is used to communicate and promote efficiency, but students often struggle with speaking English. This issue stems from three sources:

students' lack of confidence, teachers' time constraints, and the curriculum itself. Students often lack motivation and are shy, while teachers struggle with teaching speaking due to time constraints and traditional teaching approaches. The curriculum is overstocked and lacks effective materials for speaking, limiting students' practice. To address this, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is used to develop students' speaking abilities through communicative activities.

Haryani and Ainur (2020: 138) claimed that the CLT approach is the most recommended method in EFL classes worldwide as it enables students to attain a finer success in speaking in English. The Communicative Approach emphasizes language learning through authentic communication, allowing learners to use their natural language acquisition strategies and experiment with the targeted language. CLT emphasizes student-centered language learning, focusing on authentic communication and real-life activities, unlike traditional approaches that focus on grammatical rules and structures. It is a superior classroom strategy. According to Moss and Ross-Feldman (2003), all activities that encourage and require the learners to speak with and listen to each other are Communicative activities which fulfill crucial language requirements of preparing learners to use language in real life contexts and supporting language knowledge.

### Statement of the Problem

Secondary stage EFL students exhibit subpar speaking performance, possibly due to traditional teaching methods used by most teachers to achieve learning objectives. Therefore, this study attempted to use Communicative Approach to improve the students' speaking skills by answering the following main question:

"What is the effectiveness of Using the Communicative Approach to develop the EFL secondary school students' speaking skills?"

In answering this main question, the following sub-questions were also answered:

- 1- What are the speaking skills necessary for the first-year secondary stage students in the light of the aims of instruction at this stage?
- 2- What are the features of the proposed Communicative Approach program to develop the first-year secondary stage students' speaking skills?
- 3- How far is the proposed program effective in developing Egyptian first-year secondary students' overall speaking performance and their speaking sub-skills?

## Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

- 1- There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the research group on the speaking pre and post-test administration in their overall speaking skills in favor of the post-test scores.
- 2- There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre and post-test administration in each speaking sub-skill in favor of the post-test scores.

## Definition of Terms

### Communicative Language Teaching

The Communicative language teaching (CLT) emphasizes authentic communication, student-centered classrooms, and natural, contextualized topics in language learning. Richards and Rodgers (2001: 159) and Richards, (2006: 3) claimed that “Communicative competence” Communicative language teaching emphasizes the significance of language use for various purposes, including adapting to contexts, understanding diverse texts, and maintaining communication despite language knowledge limitations.



### **Operational Definition**

In this study Communicative Approach was used as Communicative activities that develop the study participants' speaking ability, requiring them to interact with each other in pairs or groups inside the classroom. This was achieved through activities such as: jigsaw, role play, think-pair-share, discussion, hot chair, and picture description.

### **Speaking:**

Speaking is a crucial oral skill in learning a foreign language, requiring mastery to effectively achieve communicative EFL purposes. As stated by Rickheit & Strohner (2008: 207) Speaking involves utterances with intention recognition by the speaker and receiver, requiring rapid response and contribution from both parties involved.

### **Operational Definition**

This study defines speaking as the secondary stage students' ability to express themselves orally, fluently, and comprehensively in a meaningful context to communicate their ideas without difficulty, using correct pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, effectively interacting, and demonstrating reasonable speech rate contexts.

### **The Significances of the Study**

This study aims to enhance secondary students' speaking abilities using the Communicative Approach in English classrooms.

- It suggests effective activities and helps EFL teachers understand students' needs.
- The approach is beneficial to curriculum designers and developers, as it allows them to adapt innovative techniques and activities to improve students' speaking and listening comprehension.
- This study provides the researchers with further suggestions and recommendations on the use of the Communicative Approach to enhance students' English skills.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Speaking:**

Spratt et.al (2005:34) claimed that Speaking is a productive skill requiring fluency in pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, and body language, influenced by context, experiences, physical surroundings, and purposes. It's spontaneous, open-ended, and evolves, but can also be identified by recurring language functions.

#### **Nature of Speaking**

According to Hybel et.al. (2001:6) Speaking involves sharing thoughts, knowledge, and feelings through verbal and non-verbal

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communication, differing from writing in incomplete sentences, repetition, contractions, and word usage.

### **Aspects of speaking**

The study of speaking skills involves identifying challenges, understanding principles, and developing teaching activities to prepare learners for effective communication in real-world scenarios.

#### **Speaking is face to face**

Face-to-face communication enhances nonverbal cues like body language, gestures, and facial expressions over verbal communication, providing immediate feedback to speakers.

#### **Speaking is interactive**

The conversational process typically goes smoothly, with participants contributing at the right times and no unnecessary pauses or overhearing, whether in person or over the phone (Cornbleet and Carter, 2001: 6). Turn taking is a common aspect of interaction across diverse cultures and languages, often unintentionally occurring in communication. (McDonough and Mackey, 2000: 84).

#### **Speaking occurs in real time:**

Communication involves spontaneous and unplanned responses, which are expressed through language (Foster, Tonkeyn and

Wigglesworth, 2000: 368). Time restrictions affect a speaker's ability to plan, organize, and maintain linguistic control, leading to false starts, lengthy sentences, and occasional forgetting or repetition (Miller, 2001: 27).

### **Purpose of speaking**

The primary objective of speaking can be transactional, aiming for successful information transfer, or interactional, utilizing language for social interaction and establishment.

- In transactional discourse, language is primarily utilized for conveying information. Nunan, (1989: 27) Language is 'message' oriented, requiring precise and consistent conveying of information to ensure comprehension in this interaction. news broadcasts, descriptions, and narrations are examples of language used for these purposes (Richards, 1990: 45-55).
- In contrast, Interpersonal use of language is a type of conversation used to establish or maintain relationships, playing a crucial role in lubricating social interactions (Yule, 1989: 169). Interactional language, such as greetings, and praises, is used by listeners, with speakers often being brief and concise (Dornyei & Thurrell, 1994: 43 and Richards, 1990:54-55).

**Speaking genres:**

Genre theory posits that different speech occurrences create distinct text types with distinct structure and grammatical elements (Hughes, 2002: 83). Carter and McCarthy (1998: 30-38) categorize speaking excerpts into various genres as follows:

- **Narrative:** A series of everyday anecdotes told with active listener participation.
- **Identifying:** Extracts in which people talk about themselves.
- **Language-in-action:** Data recorded while people are doing things such as cooking, packing, moving furniture... etc.
- **Comment-elaboration:** People giving casual opinions and on things, other people, or event.
- **Debate and argument:** Data, in which people take up positions, pursue arguments and expound on their opinions.
- **Decision-making and negotiating outcomes:** Data illustrating ways in which people negotiate towards solutions for problems.

**Criteria of good speaking skills**

Speaking is simply more than expressing ideas orally as it has several aspects that must be obtained by learners to possess good speaking abilities. Those aspects include pronunciation, fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary (Brown, 2001:268). In addition, Brown (2004:172-173) expanded on the previous list by

including comprehension. The explanations of each are as follows:

- **Pronunciation**

Pronunciation implies the speaker needs to master the ability to send apparent messages to the listeners. According to Cornbleet & Carter, (2001: 18) Pronunciation includes elements such as: sounds, intonation, rhythm, linking and assimilation.

- **Fluency**

Fluency is defined as the ability to speak swiftly and naturally (Harris and Hodges, 1995:14). It depends on the speaker's capacities to utilize facilitation and compensation skills to control fast and continuous communication.

- **Accuracy**

Brown (2001:268) stated that a speaker is considered accurate when they make obvious, expressive, grammatically, and phonologically correct language. It indicates that the speaker adheres to the language grammatical and structural rules.

- **Vocabulary**

Longman Dictionary (2002: 580) defined vocabulary as a collection of lexemes typically used during communication. Luoma, (2004: 24) implies that learning vocabulary is one of the skills necessary for speaking English. A speaker of a foreign

language will speak fluently and proficiently if they master enough vocabulary or use it accurately.

- **Comprehension:**

In this study, the researcher called it comprehensibility. Comprehensibility refers to the ability to comprehend speech stretches, indicating a thorough understanding of the topic, particularly in complex procedures involving risks (Cohen et al, 2005: 51).

### **Types of Classrooms Speaking Performance**

Six categories of classroom speaking performance were established by Brown (2001:266-268), as follows:

**Imitative speech** is a limited part of classroom time where learners practice intonation contours or vowel sounds, highlighting specific language structures without meaningful interaction.

**Intensive speech** is a performance aimed at practicing a specific grammatical concept, often conducted in self-initiated or pair work engagements.

**Responsive speech**, which includes short responses to teacher or student queries or comments, is a crucial aspect of classroom communication, often not extending into dialogues.

**Transactional speech** is a form of responsive language used in dialogue to exchange specific information within a specific context.

**Interpersonal speech** preserves social bonds rather than disseminating knowledge.

**Extensive** (Monologue), Advanced and intermediate learners may be required to provide an extensive monologue, including oral reports, summaries, or brief speeches, in a more formal and deliberate manner.

### **Studies Related to the Speaking Skill**

- Abdelmageed (2018) investigated the effect of digital storytelling on learners' oral proficiency. The sample of the study consisted of eight first-year college students at Zewail University of Science and Technology in Egypt who participated in the treatment that lasted for five weeks in the summer of 2017. The instruments employed for data collection constituted a pre-post speaking proficiency test, an interview, and written reflections. The findings revealed that digital storytelling had positive effect on learners' oral performance.
- Shunnar & Altweissi, (2023) conducted a study on the effect of applying Podcasts and Vodcasts on developing speaking skills for Ninth graders in King Abdullah II Schools for



Excellence. The study used the quasi-experimental approach by dividing the study sample into three groups: Podcasts group (23) students, Vodcasts group (27) students, and the control group (25) students. The instruments employed for data collection constituted An oral test scale for students' speaking skills The results indicated that the use of Podcasts and Vodcasts had a positive effect on the students' acquisition of speaking skills in the English language compared to their peers in the control group.

## **Communicative Language Teaching**

### **The Concept of CLT**

According to Harmer (2007:84) Communicative language teaching emphasizes the significance of language functions and self-sufficiency in language learning, requiring ample exposure and opportunities for students' knowledge and skill development

### **The Goal of CLT**

CLT aims to achieve communicative competence, which involves using language for purposeful communication (Richards, 2006:3). Richards added that the following linguistic skills are part of communicative competence:

- 1- Using language for a variety of purposes and functions,
- 2- Varying our use of language according to the context,
- 3- F

roducing and understand different types of texts, and

4- Maintaining communication despite limited knowledge.

It means that to achieve communicative competence, students must understand the targeted language usage, its aims, and functions, and maintain effective communication in various contexts.

### **Communicative Activities**

#### **+ Definition of Communicative Activities**

According to Harmer (2000:85), communicative activities usually include getting learners involved in genuine or realistic conversation. Below are the features of communicative activities suggested by Harmer:

- 1- Students should have a desire to communicate something.
- 2- Students should have a purpose for communicating
- 3- Students should be focused on the content of what they are saying rather than on a particular language form.
- 4- Students should use a variety of language rather than just one language structure,
- 5- no teacher intervention to stop the activity, and
- 6- The materials the teacher relies on will not dictate what specific language forms the student uses either.

### Purposes of Communicative Activities

Communicative activities involve engaging learners in language learning and contributing to the development of the target language. Littlewood (2002:17-18) proposed four purposes of communicative activities as follows:

- 1- They offer practice on the entire activity.
- 2- Practice in the entire skill is equally important as practice in the individual parts of a language.
- 3- They boost motivation in language acquisition, as engaging in interpersonal conversations is the primary goal.
- 4- They foster spontaneous learning by improving positive interpersonal interactions between students and teachers.

### Studies Related to The Communicative Approach

- Phisutthangkoon (2012) investigated the effect of using communicative activities to develop English speaking ability of the First-year Diploma Vocational Students. The sample of the study consisted of 32 students from the Accounting 1 class. The results illustrated that learning through communicative activities improved students' speaking ability.
- Hayat, (2017) investigated the impact of using Communicative Language Teaching Method to improve the students' speaking skill at the tenth grade of SMAN 3 Polewali. The total sample of this research consists of 20 students of one class. This study

applied pre-experimental method with one group pre-post-test design. The result of the study showed that there was difference between the students' achievement before and after giving treatment by using Communicative Language Teaching

## **Research Method**

### **Design of the Study**

The study employs a pre/post one group design, randomly selecting an intact class to represent the study group, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.

### **Participants of the Study**

A group of 45 (female) first-year secondary students were randomly selected from one of Qalubiya public secondary schools: "Omar Ibn Al-Khatab Secondary School for girls", in the first semester of the scholastic year 2018-2019. They were assigned as the treatment group. The students' ages ranged from fifteen to sixteen years old.

### **instrumentation:**

The present study made use of three main tools:

- 1- A pre-post speaking test to measure first-year secondary students' speaking skills; designed by the researcher.

- 2- A proposed program designed by the researcher in the light of Communicative Approach to train the participants on the specified speaking skills.
- 3- Success criteria used for students' reflection on their learning.

### **The Speaking Test**

#### **Objectives of the Test**

The researcher conducted a pre/post speaking test to assess students' speaking performance before implementing a program, indicating that the progress achieved by the treatment group can be attributed to the program.

#### **Description of the Test**

**The pre /post speaking test included three sections. They are:**

##### **1- Section One (the warm-up)**

The stage aimed to warm-up and facilitate personal information exchange, creating a friendly atmosphere and allowing students to express themselves freely without pressure.

##### **2- Section Two (the main interview)**

**This stage consisted of the following:**

- Describing people's characters and appearance.
- Talking about interesting past events or narrating a story,

- Giving opinions, agreeing, disagreeing with others' Giving advice, accepting, or refusing others advice
- Making polite requests, accepting, or refusing requests.

### 3- Section Three (winding down)

The researcher greeted the students and thanked them.

#### Validity of the Test

The test's validity was confirmed by an EFL specialized jury, who assessed its suitability for EFL learners. The amendments made based on the suggestions of the jury members were as follows:

- 1- The questions were reduced to just five questions.
- 2- Questions with short answers were omitted.
- 3- Allowing students to freely express their thoughts, guided questions were omitted.

#### Time of the Test

The time of the test was calculated. This was done by calculating the time that each student response, and then calculating the average time for the whole group. The required time was estimated by using the following formula: The required time for the test =

$$\frac{\text{The total time of each student of the treatment group}}{\text{Number of the students of the treatment group}} = \frac{270}{45} = 6$$

Thus, it was clear that the average time needed to finish the test was found to be 6 minutes.

### **Calculating Internal Consistency**

Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the internal consistency of speaking skills measured through the test, subtracting the targeted skill from the total score. The following table shows Pearson's correlation coefficients:

Table (1) Correlation coefficients between the degree of each speaking skill and the total test score

Speaking skills	Its correlation coefficient to the total score
1.Pronunciattion	0.56
2. Grammar	0.56
3. Vocabulary	0.56
4. Comprehensibility	0.56
5. Fluency	0.56

Table (1) indicates that all the speaking skills are statistically significant. This indicates the internal consistency of the test.

### **Reliability of the Test**

The test-retest reliability method was employed to assess pre/post-test reliability in a randomly selected class of 45 first-year secondary students at Omar Ibn Al-Khatib secondary school for girls. The test's reliability was confirmed by a high cronbach's

alpha of 0.83 and a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.93 for the study's purposes.

## **Program**

### **Description of the Program**

The study program aims to enhance students' talk time and reduce teacher use of communicative activities, following literature review and related studies, focusing on the communicative approach to language learning.

### **Aims of the program**

The proposed program aims to develop speaking skills for first-year secondary students through communicative activities, focusing on pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, comprehensibility, and fluency.

### **Learning objectives of the program:**

**By the end of this program, the students should be able to:**

- pronounce clearly and accurately,
- use the basic grammatical rules within the proficiency level of 1st secondary year student,
- use relevant and correct sets of vocabulary
- respond appropriately to audience and situation,
- use a range of language functions, and



- speak effectively with limited self- correction, pauses or hesitation.

#### **Content of the program:**

The study utilized two books and supplementary materials to reinforce EFL speaking skills, teaching sub-skills like pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, comprehensibility, and fluency in five units from the "New Hello7" course book. Each unit has five lessons and aims at developing a certain spoken function or a range of functions.

#### ▪ **Communicative activities included in the units:**

Throughout the lessons of the five chosen units, the students were required to perform the following activities:

- Role-play situations.
- Describing and finding the difference between identical pictures.
- Hot seating strategy to practice interactional functions.
- Collaborative learning (jigsaw and think pair share strategies).
- Conducting interviews.

In addition, each lesson includes supplementary listening materials to which students were exposed before carrying out the activities. The researcher planned (25) twenty-five lessons of the five units chosen to be supplemented and retaught through using communicative activities.

### **Students' correction**

The researcher prioritized allowing students to express their thoughts, rather than directly correcting them, and corrected them indirectly at the end of classes or at the beginning of subsequent ones.

### **Statistical Methods**

SPSS statistical package was used to calculate the following:

- Calculate the correlation coefficient between the score of the individual and the total score of the test to determine the internal consistency of the test items.
- Calculate the value of the coefficient of Alpha Cronbach to see the total reliability of the test.
- Calculate the correlation coefficient between the test score in the two applications to determine the reliability of the test.
- Calculate the differences between the average scores of students in the applications before and after the test of English language skills test as an overall performance and sub-skills using the t-test for two related groups.
- Calculate the size of the effect using the ETA squared.

### **Results of the Study**

#### **Testing the validity of hypothesis 1**

Hypothesis 1 states that There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the treatment group on the speaking pre-test and post-test in overall speaking proficiency in

Speaking Skills	Mean	Std. Deviation		t-test	Anwa Sig	Effect size ( $\eta^2$ )	
		pre-application	post-application				
overall speaking proficiency	9.94	17.00	5.14	2.66	5.917	0.00	0.473

favor of the post-test scores. To verify this, the paired-samples t-test was used to detect the significance of differences between the pre- and post-application. Table 2 illustrates this.

Table (2) T-test Results for the significance of Differences between the Mean Scores of the Participants' 'overall speaking performance' on the Pre and Post speaking performance

Table (2) shows that the significance level (sig) is less than (0.01). This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference at the 0.01 level between the mean scores of the participants of the study on the pre and post administration of the test in terms of the „overall speaking performance“ in favor of the post-test scores. This means that the hypothesis was confirmed.

### Testing the validity of hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 states that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on

the pre-test and the post-test in each speaking sub-skill in favor of the post-test scores.

Table (3) T-test Results for the significance of Differences between the Mean Scores of the students' 'Meaning Construction' on the Pre and Post speaking performance Test.

SKILs	Mean		Std. Deviation		t-test	Sig	Effect size ( $\eta^2$ )
	pre-application	post-application	pre-application	post-application			
Pronunciation	1.33	3.25	1.44	0.53	6.713	0.000	0.536
Grammar	2.43	2.95	0.81	0.72	2.296	0.027	0.119
Vocabulary	2.50	3.70	0.94	0.71	4.309	0.000	0.322
Comprehensibility	2.33	3.45	0.95	0.73	4.529	0.000	0.345
Fluency	1.33	3.60	1.37	0.53	6.855	0.000	0.546

Table (3) shows that in terms of the grammar sub-skill the significance level (sig) is greater than 0.01 and less than 0.05

This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level between the mean scores of the students on the pre and post speaking performance test in favor of the post-test. In addition, in terms of „pronunciation, vocabulary, comprehensibility and fluency“ the significance level (sig) is less than 0.01 This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference at the 0.01 level between the mean scores of the students on the pre and post speaking performance test in favor of the post-test This means that the second hypothesis was confirmed as well.

### **Calculating the effect size of the proposed program to develop the first- year secondary students' EFL speaking skills.**

To know the effect size of the proposed program to develop the first-year secondary students' EFL speaking skills, the effect size was calculated using the following mathematical formula:

Effect size ( $\eta^2$ ) =  $t^2 / (t^2 + df)$  df= degrees of freedom = (n-1) t= t-calculated

$\eta^2$  is interpreted as follows:

If ( $\eta^2$ ) < 0.010, then the effect size or the relation is weak. If  $0.010 \leq (\eta^2) < 0.059$ , then the effect size is small.

If  $0.059 \leq (\eta^2) < 0.138$ , then the effect size is medium. If  $0.138 \leq (\eta^2) < 0.232$ , then the effect size is large.

If  $0.232 \leq (\eta^2)$ , then the effect size is very large.

The following table shows the effect size of the proposed program to the first-year secondary students' EFL speaking skills. Table (4) Effect size ( $\eta^2$ ), t-test and Degree of freedom .

At table (4), it is clear that the calculated effect size, expressed by the ETA squared, equals 0.119 in terms of grammar which is medium effect size, and greater than 0.232 in terms of "pronunciation, vocabulary, comprehensibility, fluency and

Speaking sub-skills	t-test	D.F	Effect size ( $\eta^2$ )
Pronunciation	6.713	39	0.536 - very large
Grammar	2.296	39	0.119 - medium
Vocabulary	4.309	39	0.322 - very large
Comprehensibility	4.529	39	0.345 - very large
Fluency	6.855	39	0.546 - very large
overall speaking proficiency	5.917	39	0.473 very large

overall proficiency" This indicates that the proposed program based on the Communicative Approach is highly effective in developing the first-year secondary school students' EFL speaking skills which is the answer of the third question of this study:

"How far is the proposed program effective in developing

Egyptian the first-year secondary students' overall speaking performance and their speaking sub-skills?

### **Discussion and interpretation of the Results**

The previous statistical analysis was performed to answer the study questions and its hypotheses. They also show that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the current study participants on the pre/post-test in terms of the development of the participants' overall performance in favor of the post-test scores. This is presented through the first hypothesis and table (2) and emphasises the effectiveness of using communicative language learning and teaching on developing EFL first-year secondary students speaking skills.

Looking deeper at each speaking sub-skill, the statistical analysis results for the five components measured throughout this study indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in each sub-skill between the participants' mean scores on the pre/post-test in favor of the post-test scores. Therefore, it can be inferred that communicative language learning and teaching can be used effectively to develop EFL first-year secondary students speaking sub-skills. Also results show variation in the significant difference among the speaking-subskills as the following: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, Comprehensibility, and fluency. According to the order of the significant difference and

the effect size among the speaking sub-skill, fluency comes first. Then pronunciation, comprehensibility, vocabulary and finally grammar subskills.

- Concerning fluency, it comes first with the significant difference (0.000) and its effect size was very large because it reaches (0.546). it may be attributed to the nature of the program as it provided authentic life situations through which the students found it uncomplicated to express themselves freely without feeling pressurized. This finding is in consistence with previous study of Hayat, (2017) which indicated that the CLT method is effective to increase the students' speaking ability in terms of Fluency
- Pronunciation comes after fluency with the significant difference (0.000) and its effect size was very large because it reaches (0.536) it may be attributed to the fact that the students had different opportunities to practice pronunciation. However, it is more difficult and needs more effort. Here comes the role of the teacher to expose their students to more listening periods to correctly pronounce English. This finding coincides with the findings of other previous studies such as Guado & Mayorga, (2021). The results showed that the increase in speaking ability of the experimental group was greater than in the control group due to using communicative language teaching.



- Comprehensibility comes third with the significant difference (0.000) and its effect size was very large because it reaches (0.345). It is, maybe, attributed to the age of the students as they could comprehend the authentic life situations provided by the proposed program through which the students reflected intelligibly
- Vocabulary comes fourth with the significant difference (0.000) and its effect size was very large because it reaches (0.322). It may be because the students were exposed to different varieties of vocabulary and engaged in different types of practices.
- Finally comes grammar with the significant difference (0.027) and its effect size was medium because it reaches (0.119). It may be owing to the age of the students and the nature of grammar itself which requires overwhelming concentration when speaking.

The former two findings are in line with those of Hayat, (2017). Hayat concluded that Using CLT method in teaching speaking can increase the students' accuracy (pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar) and fluency

Based on the discussion of the result above the communicative activities employed in the program of this study such as the jigsaw, Role play, interviews and presentations motivated the

students to take the risk and speak English. Those findings were in consistency with previous studies related to using the communicative language teaching to develop the students EFL speaking skills such as Phisutthangkoon, (2012) which indicated that communicative language activities have their positive effect on the students' speaking skills which were developed after they had been exposed to several communicative activities.

The results of the study emphasized that communicative activities such as jigsaw, think pair share, hot chair, interviews, presentations, and role play improved students' speaking performance by motivating them to speak English, addressing different speaking functions, and increasing their confidence in speaking spontaneously and fluently.

The study aimed to boost students' talk time by creating an English language community both inside and outside the classroom. Students were encouraged to speak English, using cooperative, pair, or group interaction models. Outside, they were encouraged to create WhatsApp groups for assistance and practice.

The research initially faced challenges due to students' unfamiliarity with communicative activities in the classroom, necessitating extensive demonstrations and assessment of students' understanding. Therefore, the researcher helped the teacher to establish a rapport between the teacher and students by

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creating a stress-free atmosphere, reducing anxiety, and encouraging risk-taking and language expression.

The students also were taught new vocabulary through communicative activities, enhancing their remembrance. They engaged in role plays, acting in authentic situations, such as a radio talk with an interviewer and a famous Egyptian female. This increased self-confidence, preparedness for new activities, and excitement about the researcher's teachings and classroom activities. In addition, The research planned to allocate time to practice listening which helped the students improve their pronunciation by trying to imitate the speakers in the audios listened to or the video clips they watched.

### **Conclusions**

A communicative approach-based program significantly improved EFL speaking skills among first-year secondary school students. Previously, students struggled with fluency and showed little interest in oral activities. However, after the program's implementation, they showed notable gains in their speaking fluency skills, possibly due to the program's effective use.

### **Recommendations**

- The communicative approach should be utilized in early grades, particularly for young learners, to teach them social roles.

- The communicative approach should be considered when enhancing students' English language skills, not just those related to speaking.
- The communicative approach fosters a stimulating and engaging learning environment, requiring teachers to be well-trained in this method to effectively achieve desired learning outcomes.

### **Suggestions for further research**

For further research, there are still many sides that must be investigated in the following research that are related to curriculum and EFL instruction. The researcher suggests the following studies:

- Using the Communicative Approach to develop secondary students critical Thinking.
- The effect of the Communicative Approach on the secondary students' creative writing.
- The effect of the Communicative Approach on the secondary students' motivation and involvement in the educational process.
- The effect of a Communicative training program on the teachers' performance at various educational stages.

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