

## **Comparative Effect of Communicative Approach of teaching on Male and Female Students' Retention in L2**

**Bilques Tarranum**

Hazara University, Mansehra

**Muhammad Iqbal Majoka**

Hazara University Mansehra

The foremost objective of this research paper is to scrutinize the effect of Communicative Approach, in contrast to Traditional Approach, on male and female students' retention of the learnt material in English, at Secondary level. For this purpose, pre-test Post-test equivalent group design was adopted. After ensuring feasibility of the experiment, Pakistan International Public School and College (PIPS), Abbottabad was selected for the research. Both male and female students of 10<sup>th</sup> grade were taken as target population for the study. A teacher made test covering the proposed units for treatment was administered to students of 10<sup>th</sup> class, and 100 students (male=60, female= 40) were selected as sample and were consigned to experimental (n=50) and control (n=50) groups, using matched random sampling technique. The control group was imparted by dint of traditional teaching method in contrast, experimental group was treated by teaching through Communicative approach, for a period of twelve (12) weeks. The factors of learning material, learning time, and teacher were controlled to maintain the conditions for both the groups. After one month of the completion of the experiment, once again the achievement test was given out as retaining test to experimental and control groups. The post-test scores were used as data for the study; t-test and ANOVA were used as statistical tools. The analyzed data indicated a significant effect of treatment on students' retention of the learnt material. It further revealed that girls' retention level of learnt material was same as the boys. It is concluded that communicative approach for teaching and learning L2 is an effective pedagogy.

*Keywords:* communicative approach, traditional approach, comparison groups, retention, secondary level.

Teaching and learning second language (L2) has always remained a challenge for the teacher as well as the students. However, innovative practices and approaches may turn it into a vital process especially at secondary education level. In Pakistan, English language is emphasized as an important L2 to withstand modern day science and technology and to commune with dissimilar background people internationally through internet and e-mail. Being an international language, its learning and teaching have been a special point of focus throughout the world. Consequently, various teaching methodologies and certain teaching approaches have emerged including Direct Approach, The Silent

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Bilques Tarranum, Ph. D Scholar, Hazara University, Mansehra, Pakistan, Email: [bil\\_ques12@yahoo.com](mailto:bil_ques12@yahoo.com)

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Way, Grammar-Translation Method, Community Language Learning, Audio-lingual, Reading Approach, Communicative Method, Total Physical Response and Functional-Notional.

The CLT emphasizes on the English textbooks which could take in the communicative syllabus as CLT spotlights the communicative expertise rather than mastering the structures only (Richards & Rogers, 2003). But, CLT's role in Asian classrooms is still debatable (Chang, 2011). According to Howatt (1984), CLT is strong when it defends communicative features whereas its weaker aspects incorporate structural practice into the communicative elements.

Learning a language by the conventional methods create problems in speaking, listening and comprehending it (Palmer, 1987). Because enjoying full control over the mother tongue enables learner to use innumerable phrases for a single expression as compared to a newly learnt language (Atta-Alla, 2012). Word for word translation is generally unacceptable, nonfunctional and uninteresting for the learner of a new language (Joodi, 2012), and restrict him/her to think in the newly learnt language in order to write or converse fluently (Hall, 2001), because, the use of the expression of the newly acquired language cannot become automatic and often after considerable time of studying it, the person remains uncertain in many informal absurdities (Stern, 1992).

Communicative Approach, being learning-centered, is known to be a teaching technique which focuses on assisting learners to communicate eloquently in the newly learnt language (Macmillan Dictionaries, 2012) and comes to the aspirations of learners as well as teachers concerned in the course of action in order to outline courses and to pick up appropriate methodology (Hutchinson & Water, 1984). Hence, being a virtual and vibrant approach based on interpersonal teaching schemes and methodologies, the communicative competence, simultaneously control communication, knowledge proficiency, ruling, linguistic capacity along with operational, collective and intentional ability, as interdependent factors (Light, 1989).

As ascertained by The Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, the Communicative Methodology or Communicative Language Teaching ensures the aspiration of second language learning as to make the learner competent in communication (Richards et al, 1992), which is quite flexible rather than a meticulous collection of teaching procedures based on the learner's particularized requirements and aspirations, rapidly but amiably (Nunan, 1991). Therefore, in accordance with Richards and Rogers (2003), the Communicative Language Teaching needs not to be considered as a method but an approach to create an absolute communicative vision which retains long afterwards (Littlewoods, 1981). Students, therefore, steadily build up their self-confidence to employ the second language, broadly and to retain their knowledge about it (Larsen-Freeman, 1986).

According to developmental psychologists and psycholinguists, children learn by their observation, copy what they hear, comprehend grammar and retain specific rules. But, Hymes (1972) considers the retention of material is based on four kinds of judgments; potentiality, implementation viability, usage and evaluation in a given context, and practicality with requirements. EFL teaching in China, with its traditional setting, is although different for its conduction in entirely Chinese social and cultural contexts which again proves that the communicative approach is also applicable in such a circumstance (Zhenhui, 2002).

Lectures, based on real life situations and discussions prove to be the fore most device for communicative acts in order to engage learners in valid functional appropriate language, where communicative proficiency is the pet aspiration. An accent on acceptable pronunciation, cluster and

personal practice with dependable listening and interpretation, proper feedback and correction after the lesson, encouragement of the students to communicate at the initial stage and gradually putting accuracy together via trial and error provided with no disruption at any point in discourse and thought process make retention easy for them (Hart, 2007).

Dewey advocates that students imperatively retain language learning when they get an option to select their own way of studying with proper coordination. It facilitates them to deal with all the necessities of the process, express themselves and retain their learning (Fragos, 2004). To admire learners' notions, rituals and characteristics prove to be the essential most tools than any other practices to instruct them (Kouzelis, 1999). Oxford (1996) states that the learner's affective side is actually responsible for language learning and retention or turning it into a flop process. Krashen (1982) supports that easy but motivating learning circumstances help the students to experience a sense of success. In accordance with Krashen's hypothesis and apparent analysis of Schinke-Llano and Vicars (1993); Pennington (1996); Dodson (2000); songs, games, movies and further communicative skills should be used during the language acquiring processes. As, low ability learners can also join in such activities exclusive of grammatical accuracy (Radzi et al., 2007).

CLT Approach assists teachers in planning keeping in view their revised adaptations along with their students' varied traits and necessities in association with their precise class perspectives together with existing resources, size of class, and the students' age group (Mangubhai et al, 2007). Jue (2010) declares that pupil's vocabulary improves in the group interaction and s/he stimulates during real life settings to take language learning as his/her own responsibility and to retain it successfully. Communicative approach leads towards an environment in the classroom where students frequently interact with each other or with teacher and actively participate in communication and other learning activities (Menking, 2002; Qinghong, 2009). It further results in enhanced negotiation of meaning, fluency-based communication, and deep learning.

Being students' centered, the CLT requires the teacher to simply intervene or observe the class giving them a room to remain active enough and easily control or retain their learning (Jin, 2008). The expertise to connect sentences, phrases and clauses and to differentiate question, statement or any other kind of sentence depend upon spoken speed, pauses, stress and accent which can well be acquired by an unfamiliar narrator in the course of CLT. (Nurhayati et al, 2008). Hence, in 1977, the communicative syllabus was employed as the latest module, in the upper secondary schools (Chan & Helen, 2006).

As far as communicative competence and retention is concerned, Hymes (1972) presented grammatical, strategic, sociolinguistic and discourse competences as four main aspects which were later supported and developed by Swain and Canale (1980, as cited in Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006). If these aspects are properly covered, they not only help students in the learning process of a language but also retaining it. Because, in this way CLT approach play a role in developing their ways and beliefs, linguistic discussion and word choice (Richards & Rodgers, 2003) so as to emphasize on grooming in order to build up the communicative adeptness.

Burgner and Hewstone (1993) and Gargano (1998) in their studies on attribution pattern of boys as compared to girls signified that boys are quite dissimilar from girls in their patterns of attribution and accomplishment. But, other researches on male and female students' distinction with reference to cognitive and intellectual capabilities by Klein (2004), Hyde (2004) and Maccoby (1987)

revealed that the divergence between boys and girls had faded away with an overlap. The results' analysis further illustrated that variation in retention is not significant on gender basis. In the same way, Maccoby (1987) accomplished that the oral variations on retention of learnt material between boys and girls had almost vanished, except for math and visuo-spatial areas of studies. But, researchers (like Hyde 1993, 2004; Hyde & Mezulis, 2001) ponder that cerebral dissimilarities of the girls besides boys have been overstated and apart from mathematics and science, overall girls were found to be much better at producing superior grades than boys in reading.

Hutchinson and Waters (2004) and Walia (2012) regarded CLT as the foremost common language teaching methodology in the forthcoming years as it enables the learner to control and retain his/her learning. Yet, CLT conceptions and methods endure separate tackling in an EFL class (Anderson, 1993; Ellis, 1994; Li, 1998; Liao, 2011; Takanashi, 2004). Ahmad and Rao (2013) brings about with the indication of two experimental researches that Pakistani students may boost their communicative potential, at the higher secondary level, under encouraging circumstances. As communicative approach is known to be the most effective method to teach L2, a number of researches have been carried out to study its efficiency, worldwide. However, number of researches to find its usefulness regarding retention of learnt material is scarce. Retention is a skill to maintain, retain and memorize the learnt material (Wittig, 2001). Three sorts of storage i.e. the sensory storage, short term storage and the long term storage facilitate us in this process. The communicative approach has a set of activities that support all the three memory storage kinds, during the learning process and may give rise to retention of the learnt material. For example, students have to participate actively in different activities organized for the implementation of communicative approach, which tangles the new knowledge with real-word events and activities. Consequently, information and knowledge gained through this approach is assimilated into long-term memory is easier to retrieve (Doughty & Long, 2003). In short, communicative approach encompasses various aspects of language learning

In Pakistan, communicative approach is not a new concept but it is not fairly practiced in the language classroom. It is also least researched pedagogy and still needs exploration in our cultural context. Therefore, exploring the effectiveness of communication approach regarding retention of learnt material among boys and girls was considered significant so as to make decisions about the choice of communicative approach to teach L2 for the entire partners of the Education System including strategy designers, syllabus and course developers, tutors' mentors, educators and academics investigators in this field. Keeping all this in view, a study with title "Comparative Effect of Communicative Approach of teaching on Male and Female Students' Retention in L2" was conducted. To accomplish the aims of this study, followings speculations were tested:

- H<sub>0</sub>1. There is significant difference between the mean academic achievement scores of students taught English through traditional lecture approach and communicative method.
- H<sub>0</sub>2. There is significant difference between the mean retention scores of students taught English through traditional lecture method and communicative approach.
- H<sub>0</sub>3. There is no significant difference in retention of boys and girls taught English through traditional lecture method and communicative approach.

### **Method**

Gay (2000) states almost all traces of external and internal validity can be managed by true experimental strategies. Therefore, "The pre-test, post-test equivalent group design" was taken as main functional design, for this study. All 245 students of 10th class in Pakistan International Public

School and College composed the population of this research. An accomplishment test was administrated as pre-test to select the sample of the study and to form experimental and control groups on the basis of pre-test scores. By using matched random sampling method, out of 245, one hundred (100) students were partitioned into two groups i.e. experimental and control groups so that that both the groups had equal mean score on pre-test. Each of these groups had equal proportion of boys and girls (boys=30, girls=20 in each group). The achievement test was constructed from the part of English text-book and the course at secondary level that was to be taught during treatment. This test was constituted of 100 MCQs with reliability coefficient 0.812. It was utilized as pre-test, post-test and retention test to assess the outcome of treatment on the learners. On the other hand, the traditional manner of teaching was used to train the controlled group. For treatment, one of the researchers taught both experimental and control groups for a period of 12 weeks. Same lesson plans, worksheets and teaching-learning materials were used for teaching both the groups with a single difference of teaching method. The control group was taught by using traditional lecture method and the experimental group was taught by using communicative approach. While teaching through communicative/task-based approach, the lesson was based on pre-task, task, planning, report, analysis and practice stages which continued for five days in a week consistent with the time table outlined for the task. Subsequent to twelve weeks treatment, the achievement test was again conducted as post-test. After four weeks, this test was another time processed as to assess the retention of students' learning. Thus, scores obtained by the pre-test were consumed to form the experimental and controlled groups whereas, the data acquired from post along with retention test scores worked as data to examine the consequences of treatment. The pre-test, post-test and retention-test scores were tabulated for interpretation. En route for analyzing the obtained data, significance of differences between the mean scores of comparison groups (Experimental and Control, and Boys and Girls of these groups) were tested at 0.05 level by applying 't-test' and 'ANOVA'.

### Results

**Table 1**

*Difference of mean academic scores of experimental and control groups on different observations*

Observation	Comparison Groups	N	M	SD	t	P
Pre-test	Experimental	50	25.16	8.232	0.198	0.844
	Control	50	24.88	5.702		
Post-test	Experimental	50	49.64	16.348	5.56	0.000
	Control	50	34.36	10.503		
Retention Test	Experimental	50	50.32	19.95	4.039	0.000
	Control	50	36.58	13.45		

On pre-test,  $p > 0.05$  which indicates that no significance difference was between pretest scores of experimental and control group. Hence, both the groups were at the same attainment level before treatment. On post-test,  $p < 0.05$  and mean score of experimental group (49.64) is greater than that of control group (34.36). Hence treatment had substantial effect on the academic achievement of students in L2 class. Similarly, statistical values for retention test ( $p < 0.05$ , mean score for experimental group=50.32, and mean score for control group= 36.58) also indicate that mean retention score of experimental group was greater than that of the control group and this difference was significant.

**Table 2***ANOVA showing significance of difference among scores of boys and girls on different observations*

Observation	Source of Variance	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	p
Pre-test	Between groups	2.577	3	0.859	0.017	0.997
	Within Groups	4913.383	96	51.181		
	Total	4915.960	99			
Post-test	Between groups	6123.550	3	2041.183	10.758	0.000
	Within Groups	18214.550	96	189.734		
	Total	24338.000	99			
Retention Test	Between groups	4996.33	3	1665.444	5.694	0.001
	Within Groups	28078.417	96	292.484		
	Total	33074.750	99			

The table shows that there is no significant difference between and within comparative groups at pre-test scores ( $p > 0.05$ ). Whereas, a significant difference is indicated by post-test results ( $p < 0.05$ ). In the same way,  $p < 0.05$  for retention-test scores indicating a significant difference between and within comparative groups. Further difference between different comparison groups is highlighted in the following Post-Hoc test.

**Table 3***Post-Hoc test showing significance of difference between groups of boys and girls on post-test and retention test*

Observation	Comparison groups		Mean difference (I-J)	S.E	P
	I	J			
Post-test	Exp. boys	Exp. girls	-4.6000	3.97632	0.721
		Cont. boys	14.1000	3.55653	0.002
		Cont. girls	12.4500	3.97632	0.025
	Exp. girls	Cont. boys	18.7000	3.97632	0.000
		Cont. girls	17.05000	3.97632	0.003
	Cont. boys	Cont. girls	-1.65000	3.97632	0.982
Retention Test	Exp. boys	Exp. girls	-4.55000	4.93697	0.837
		Cont. boys	12.53333	4.41576	0.051
		Cont. girls	11.0000	4.93697	0.182
	Exp. girls	Cont. boys	17.08333	4.93697	0.010
		Cont. girls	15.55000	5.40818	0.047
	Cont. boys	Cont. girls	-1.53333	4.93697	0.992

The table shows that on post-test there was no significant difference between experimental boys and experimental girls ( $p > 0.05$ ), whereas a significant difference was observed between the post-test scores of experimental boys and control boys ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $i-j=14.100$ ), and experimental boys and control girls ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $i-j=12.4500$ ). Similarly, a significant difference was found between post-test scores of experimental girls and control boys ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $i-j=18.7000$ ). Also, there was found a significant difference between experimental girls and control boys ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $i-j=17.0500$ ) showing the supremacy of experimental groups.

As far as the retention-test is concerned, there is no significant difference between the scores of experimental boys and experimental girls ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, a significant difference was found between experimental boys and control boys ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $i-j=12.53333$ ), and between experimental boys and control girls ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $i-j=11.0000$ ) on retention test scores. Similarly, there was a significant difference between retention test scores of experimental girls and control boys ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $i-j=17.08333$ ), and experimental girls and control girls ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $i-j=15.55000$ ). However, there was no significant difference between the retention scores of experimental boys and control girls, as indicated by the value of  $p$ , which is 0.182 and is quite higher than 0.05. On the other hand, there is a significant difference of retention-test scores between control boys and control girls ( $p < 0.05$ ).

### Discussion and Conclusions

Data Analysis divulged that mean scores of experimental groups on retention test were better on a significant level ( $p < 0.05$ ) than that of control group on both post-test and retention test. Similarly, boys and girls of the experimental group had significantly higher academic score ( $p < 0.05$ ) than the academic scores of boys and girls from control group. However, there was no significant difference between the academic score of boys and girls of the experimental group. On retention test, experimental group had significantly better score ( $p < 0.05$ ) as compared to the control group. Also, the retention score of the girls of experimental group was greater than that of girls and boys of the control group at a significant level ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, the retention score of experimental group was significantly greater than that of the girls of control group ( $p < 0.05$ ), but there was no significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) between retention score of boys of experimental and control groups. These findings are similar to the findings by Ahmad and Rao (2013) in the case of academic performance. Different steps and activities, involved in communicative approach, as described by Hart (2007), guarantee the active engagement of students in listening, speaking, reading and writing and hence result in better academic performance. It also provides the situation of hand on experiences which ensures the prolonged retention of learnt material as argued by Doughty and Long (2003). Specially, in Pakistan, where English is an unavoidable language, on almost all the forums, communicative approach, on the basis of its retention quality, may prove to be more successful to teach English as a language. Moreover, the circumstances to teach English in Pakistan are unluckily quite discouraging. Jilani (2004) makes it obvious that teaching of English language and its purposeful learning in Pakistan is still a desired objective i.e., communicative competence, which can surely be attained through CLT. In their study Ahmad and Rao (2013), signifying the prospect of implementing the CLT approach in Pakistan ultimately conclude that the communicative approach is much beneficial in contrast to the traditional method (GTM) while teaching English, in Pakistan because, under favorable circumstances, Pakistani students can be motivated to enhance their communicative ability. Hence, it is concluded on the basis of results and references that communicative approach for teaching and learning L2 is an effective pedagogy especially in Pakistani context in order to attain as well as retain the learnt material and to apply it significantly in practical and making L2 learning a successful process.

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