COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES: ISSUES ON PRE, DURING, AND POST CHALLENGES IN SOUTH KOREA'S ENGLISH EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT: *This paper determined 128 Korean university students' language potentials on "pre," "during," and "post" communicative activities. Their strengths and weaknesses in the communicative challenges were investigated; particularly, their weaknesses in the three stages were determined in terms of rank of difficulty and frequency of attitude toward the activities. In the exploratory-quantitative-exploratory research method with qualitative perspectives, the findings were concluded: Not all were challenged in pre, during, and post communicative activities. Parents, English language environment, teaching approaches, and bad timing may be the culprit why students' motivation, interest, and proficiencies were in bad shape. Students' learning styles, strategies, and attitudes were also affected due to the difficulties of communicative challenges and lack of support system. Lack of support system can be characterized with lack of the proper language proficiency assessment on where to place the students in class and how much time to be allotted for each class. The students from the 22 departments attended an English class for only an hour and fifty minutes per week. With the conditions mentioned above, the students could hardly develop communicative skills because they were not able to manage learning meaningfully. Deeper insights on these three stages (such as pre, during, and post) would add literature to address students' real needs and teacher's issues on sense of commitment in the English language education. The rank of difficulty on communicative activities in each stage would provide the support system (which involves TESOL practitioners, teachers, curriculum developers, researchers, and even students) priorities on what, how, and when to implement communicative challenges. By evaluating every angle of these current data would help the support system design or develop teaching techniques, result-oriented materials, and interactive activities to accommodate the priorities. Thus, the ranks of difficulty in communicative activities as well as the rank and frequency of attitude towards these activities will serve as a basis for conducting further investigation or similar studies to fulfill the support system's objectives.*

KEYWORDS: Conversation Theory, Conversation, Communicative Competence, Communicative Activities, Teachers' and Learners' roles in the classroom, Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

INTRODUCTION

English language education (ELE) has been implemented in almost all countries, for there is a significant purpose. In South Korea, English language education began in 1883, when the Joseon government opened an English language school to train

interpreters (Kim, 2008). Since then, English language became popular, until the Korean education policy required two languages, Korean and English. Frouser (2011) reported that "English has been required from third grade of elementary school since 1997; previously, it began in middle school." Further, he reported that "policymakers logically pushed English, giving rise to elementary school English education and the listening component of the university entrance examination." He continued saying that due to the economic crisis in 1997, the policy-makers thought of "making English a national language along with Korean in 1999." Kim (2008) reported that President Lee Myung-bak's presidential transition team suggested that "all the English classes in high schools be taught in English." Since 1945, English has been given a high regard aiming to pass "university entrance examination" and promote "national competitiveness in an increasingly globalizing economy" (Frouser, 2011). Thus, communicative competence has been emphasized to achieve the two aims.

Many experts believe that communicative language teaching (CLT) is the most effective approach for second or foreign language learners. When the language curriculum for these students is goal-oriented, students' communicative competence will be developed to its full direction. However, the implementation of communicative language teaching (CLT) has been an issue among South Korean universities for several decades now, due to several factors.

Particularly in this paper, Korean university students encounter critical challenges in pursuit of academic and professional survival, where foreign professors are made to teach. It has been observed that students' previous EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom orientation and their attitudes toward it are not enough to support learning. Such attitudes display no interest to learn more as they are not well motivated. Along with this observation, these students somehow cope with grammar lessons and other written activities and tests, but not in communicative, practical type of activities. They also lack listening skills and the ability to use words in sentences for meaningful interaction. It is then important to note that CLT approach is distinguished to have its 'strong' and 'weak' versions:

> "There is, in sense, a 'strong' version of the communicative approach and a 'weak' version. The weak version which has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years, stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communication purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching… The 'strong' version of communicative teaching, on the other hand, advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not merely a question of activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself. If the former could be described as 'learning to use' English, the latter entails 'using English to learn it.'" (Howatt, 1984, p. 279, in Richards & Rogers, 2008).

Frouser (2011) then reported that "policy-makers and media pundits continue to complain about the poor overall level of English proficiency in Korea, arguing that it affects national competitiveness."

With this, the researcher sees the imperative need to conduct a needs analysis to assess students' language potentials on "pre," "during," and post communicative activities so that their specific strengths and weaknesses in communicative challenges can be identified. Whatever issues will come out will be provided with effective remedy in response to Korea's demand for globalization.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conversation Theory and Communicative Competence

Conversation practice is the best way to develop communicative competence, as simultaneous speaking and listening are part of the process. Conversation between two people by turn-taking is a way to orally communicate with each other in carrying out their interpersonal and transactional intentions (Nunan, 1999, p. 228). Components of conversation are made up based on assumptions, expectations, contributions, and interpretations of two people's utterances (Richards, 1980, p. 414; Gumperz, 1999, p. 101). In terms of absorbing inputs and performing outputs by students, Pask's (1975) Conversation Theory explains that "learning occurs through conversations about a subject matter which serve to make knowledge explicit." He explains further that "conversations can be conducted at a number of different levels: natural language (general discussion), object languages (for discussing the subject matter), and meta-languages (for talking about learning/language)." Thus, development of communicative competence will take place.

Richards (2006) defines competence as "the knowledge of a language that accounts for ability to produce sentences in a language." According to him, it refers to "knowledge of the building blocks of sentences (e.g., parts of speech, tenses, phrases, clauses, sentence patterns) and how sentences are formed." He explains further that communicative competence includes the following aspects of language knowledge: "1) knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions, 2) knowing how to vary our use of language according to the setting and the participants (e.g., knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication), 3) knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts (e.g., narratives, reports, interviews, conversations), and 4) knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge (e.g., through using different kinds of communication strategies)."

These aspects of language knowledge can be facilitated in student learning under the concept of Conversation Theory. Pask (1975) argues that "subject matter should be represented in the form of entailment structures which show what is to be learned." He further explains that "entailment structures exist in a variety of different levels depending upon the extent of relationships displayed (e.g., super/subordinate concepts, analogies)." He identified two different types of learning strategies: "serialists who progress through an entailment structure in a sequential fashion and holists who look for higher order relations."

This idea implies that a teacher has a huge role in making learning more meaningful to students. Likewise, students are held responsible for making their own classroom

language experience useful for academic and future's professional life. It is then important to note that development of communicative competence should be processed by teachers' and learners' roles in the classroom, as explained:

> "Students participate in classroom activities that are based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning; they have to become comfortable with listening to their peers in group work or pair work tasks, rather than relying on the teacher for a model; and, they are expected to take on a greater degree of responsibility for their own learning. While teachers have to assume the role of facilitator and monitor and they have to develop a different view of learners' errors and of her/his own role in facilitating language learning, rather than being a model for correct speech and writing and one with the primary responsibility of making students produce plenty of error-free sentences." (Richard, 2006)

Moreover, there are other ways to facilitate learning. Pask (1975) argues that "the critical method of learning according to Conversation theory is 'teachback' in which one person teaches another what they have learned." Learning is a continuous process developed or improvised through formal classroom set-up, personal experience in practical situation, reading, and full immersion to the second language learning/acquisition environment. 'Teachback' can be processed by these four factors to assimilate and accommodate learning and finally develop desirable communicative competence.

Construct of Communicative Activities
Communicative competence cannot be fully developed when its activities and learners' right attitude are not performed objectively. Communicative activities may refer to the spontaneous interaction between teachers and students or among students themselves with the use of appropriate materials, communicative topics, or automatic question-response based on instant thinking and feeling or creativity. Rhalmi (2010) explains that communicative activities have "real purposes such as finding and exchanging information, breaking down barriers, talking about oneself, and learning about culture." She further explains that communicative activities have advantages, such as: "1) learning is maximized when students are engaged in relevant tasks within a dynamic learning environment instead of traditional teacher-centered classes; 2) real life communication is the target. learners are trained not only to be linguistically competent but also communicatively and socio-linguistically competent; and, 3) communicative activities are motivating. Learning is achieved while learners are having fun."

For Richard (2006), communicative activities develop both accuracy and fluency. As for accuracy, students "1) reflect natural use of language, 2) focus on achieving communication, 3) require meaningful use of language, 4) require the use of communication strategies, 5) produce language that may not be predictable, and 6) seek to link language use to context." As for fluency, on the other hand, students: "1) reflect classroom use of language, 2) focus on the formation of correct examples of language, 3) practice language out of context, 4) practice small samples of language, 5) not require meaningful communication, and 6) control choice of language."

It is important to note that one of the characteristics of successful communicative activities is that "tasks should be devised in a manner that learners gain autonomy and independence while learning" (Rhalmi, 2010). It implies that conversation constructs should be created and facilitated well, based on the communicative purpose.

Kroeker's (2009) study investigated conversation classes in a South Korean university, focusing on conversation as a construct and expectations of conversation classes. As for conversation as a construct, the students illustrated it as the most simplistic. He found out that conversation may be described as verbal communication that entails thinking, understanding, and listening between at least two people as illustrated through use of 'dialogue' by the students, use of 'shared' by the teachers, and use of 'participating' by the administration. He continued reporting that "over half of the students were neutral or agreed that conversation could be practiced solitarily while the others disagreed." This scenario suggests that English conversation may be considered as "an academic endeavor rather than a social practice," according to him. And, as for expectations of conversation classes, he revealed that the uppermost level administration has not clearly defined the objectives of conversation classes. He perceived that "the administrators are disconnected from each other where their duties may not involve discussing particular course expectations and therefore course standards, definitions, goals, and evaluations." Thus, teachers should have a constant, direct dialogue with students on how to develop communicative competence. Rhalmi (2010) argues that "the role of the teachers is to give clear and to the point instructions and provide the appropriate environment for learners to interact and exchange information."

Willingness to Communicate (WTC)
Second language learners of English urge to manifest willingness to communicate when there is a significant purpose at current or future state. According to McCroskey and Baer (1985), WTC is the probability of initiating conversation in a communication process when there is an opportunity presenting itself. MacIntyre, Baker, Lement, and Donovan (2003) define WTC as "…the predisposition toward or away from communicating, given the choice" (p.538).

Under WTC, motivation and interest are activated to develop confidence and fluency in the language being learned. McCroskey and Baer (1985) find out that perception of students' communicative competence in WTC goes along with non-linguistic outcomes such as motivation and anxiety. Factors such as fear of speaking, lack of self-esteem, and issue of introversion and extroversion (McCroskey, 1992) may influence unwillingness to speak up. However, WTC does not only involve apprehension to communicate, but also a synthesis of multiple causes that affect an individual's global knowledge or orientation on speaking (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987, 1990).

Edwards' (2006) study observed that many Korean students stay unwilling to communicate whey they face communicative challenges, even they are motivated to study or learn English. To explore the phenomenon, he investigated "some underlying factors which influence Korean learners' decision over whether to use English in a

particular situation" through a series of interviews. He revealed the main finding that "the quality and quantity of previous contact with the non-Korean world, for example through travel and friendship, along with the presence and relative status of other Koreans at the communication event, significantly influence language use."

Baghaei, Dourakhshan, and Salavati's (2012) study explored the possible relationship between willingness to communicate (WTC) and its components and success in foreign language learning. There were three subscales of WTC involved, namely: 1) willingness to communicate in the school context (WTC-SC), 2) willingness to communicate with native speakers of English (WTC-NS), and 3) willingness to communicate with nonnative speakers of English (WTC-NNS). They found out that the first two were "moderately correlated with success in learning English as foreign language as measured by C-Test;" while the last subscale of WTC was "not correlated with success in foreign language learning." They interpreted that "apparently learners' WTC with non-native speakers of English is not a good motive for them to improve their English language skills, probably because learners believe they can get by even with a minimum proficiency in English when communicating with non-native foreigners."

Jing's (2013) study investigated willingness to communicate (WTC) of 282 first and second year non-English majors in a Chinese public university. With the quantitative-qualitative type of research, she revealed the results that "in the multiple regression analysis, the combination of internal interest, self-perceived communication competence, personal development, and communication apprehension could predict a large part of WTC" (p. 130). Specifically, the students were most willing to communicate in a discussion when teachers were involved and when they were grouped or paired with other students. On the other hand, they were least willing to communicate when content of textbook or vocabulary or any answer questions in the textbook were discussed or talked about by their teachers.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations can influence the amount of students' language learning or acquisition. Teachers have a huge role to facilitate learning by choosing appropriate materials and activities and exposing them to various learning styles and strategies for independent learning. However, it is believed that intrinsically-motivated students are the ones who are likely to be much more successful in meaningful language experience.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Participants
This study is exploratory-quantitative-interpretative type of research. It is exploratory in the sense that quantitative approach supported with qualitative perspectives provides deeper insights into the problems, as this is the primary objective in this paper.

Based on the quantitative approach, frequency count by the percentage formula were considered to determine the survey results through student questionnaire. The number of research participants was determined by purposive-cluster random sampling with

the Slovin's formula. This formula was also used to determine the number of students in the focused group discussion (FGD) as well as the teachers who were interviewed.

Based on qualitative perspectives, on the other hand, interviews with the English teachers and FGDs with students were considered. Further, this study employed triangulation in the sense that multiple methods of data collection and multiple sources of information were considered. Multiple methods of data collection included survey questionnaire, interview, and FGD. Multiple sources of information were 70 first year and 58 second year students, 10 English teachers (5 content professors in *Physical Therapy, Medical Technology, Nursing, Ophthalmic Optics,* and *Public Administratio*n; and 5 professional English teachers), and course outlines or syllabuses used in English classes.

Finally, the analysis of the data is primarily interpretative, since the researcher describes the students' communicative difficulties in the three activity stages (such as pre, during, and post) as well as their attitudes toward them, as stated in the research instruments.

Research Procedure
The researcher collected the data simultaneously through survey questionnaires, FGDs, and interviews. He collected them from the participants during class hours. The questionnaire had been distributed to the class before their professor started his/her class. He conducted FGDs with students in the class at any class schedule. He selected FGD members randomly and interviewed them 30 minutes before each class ended. Finally, he interviewed the ten professors after their class or office hours.

The researcher was guided with a set of guide questions while doing the FGDs and interviews. The questions asked during interviews and FGDs were not only aimed at validating the data from the questionnaires, but were also considered as additional sources of information.

To determine students' ranks of difficulties as well as rank and frequency of attitude in communicative activities, frequency count was employed with the percentage formula.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tables 1 to 3 discuss students' ranks of difficulties on pre-, during, and post-communicative activities, and Table 4 discusses rank and frequency of attitude in communicative activity.

Specifically, Table 1 presents the difficulties on pre-communicative activity.

Table 1. Rank of difficulty in pre-communicative activity

	Easy	%	Moderate	%	Difficult	%	Rank
1. Anticipating the whole process of an activity to build up confidence	18	14	74	58	36	**28**	**1**
2. Using a checklist or note for activity preparation	29	23	72	56	27	**21**	**2**
3. Following activity directions or instructions	39	30	75	59	14	**11**	**3**

In the table shown above, among the three skills, *anticipating the whole process of an activity to build up confidence* ranks first (28%); followed by *using a checklist or note for activity preparation* (21%); and *following activity directions or instructions* (11%).

The data in Table 1 explain that the students from other departments found anticipating the whole process of an activity to build up confidence the most difficult, because most of them may not have meaningful learning in their past communicative experiences. Brown (2012) explains that "meaningful learning will lead toward better long-term retention than rote learning" (p. 12). Only good students could anticipate the whole process because objectives of an activity was given beforehand and was internalized.

Further, some students used a checklist or note for activity preparation to facilitate comfortable performance because they had already perceived that communicative challenges were not easy. They were aware that most communicative activities were graded, since the objective of English classes is to spontaneously interact with classmates and teachers with the message being articulated accurately. Brown (2012) explains that "successful mastery of the second language will be, to a large extent, the result of a learner's own personal 'investment' of time, effort, and attention to the second language in the form of an individualized battery of strategies for comprehending and producing the language" (p. 12).

Only few of them found following activity directions or instructions the least difficult, because simple instructions with examples were provided. Brown (2012) explains that "the eventual success that learners attain in a task is partially a factor of their belief that they indeed are fully capable of accomplishing the task" (p. 13). In particular, some allied medical sciences students, like nursing and medical radiation, were able to follow instructions, thereby survived in the communicative activities.

Table 2 below presents the difficulties on actual participation in communicative activity.

Table 2. Rank of difficulty during communicative activity

	Easy	%	Moderate	%	Difficult	%	Rank
1. Initiating a conversation with any topic	10	8	51	40	67	**52**	**1**
2. Making follow-up questions and/or statements of other students	12	9	51	40	65	**51**	**2**
3. Interacting spontaneously with correct grammar usage and expressions	13	10	65	51	50	**39**	**3**

The table shows that among the three skills, *initiating a conversation with any topic* is the most difficult; followed by *making follow-up questions and/or statements of other students*; and, *interacting spontaneously with correct grammar usage and expressions* -- which rank first (52%), second (51%), and third (39%), respectively.

With the data in Table 2, it is understood that students in general could not initiate a conversation with any topic until a teacher started to converse with them. That was the most difficult part during communicative challenges, because the students were exposed to the concept of "Confucianism" where younger people are prohibited to speak up before older ones until they are asked to say something. In traditional classroom practices in Korea, students just passively listen and follow their teachers' command. Another factor, as emphasized in FGDs and interviews, is that the students were exposed to grammar lessons, book-based orientation, and other passive forms of learning. Brown (2012) comments that "overanalyzing language, thinking too much about its forms, and consciously lingering on rules of language all tend to impede this graduation to automaticity" (p. 12).

As for making follow-up questions and/or statements of other students, they could hardly do such thing because they lacked strategies to produce the language, not only issues on communicative competence and confidence. According to Richards and Rodgers (2008), strategic competence is "the coping strategies that communicators employ to initiate, terminate, maintain, repair, and redirect communication." It is implied that these students were not trained to interrogate other students' ideas or opinions in their previous classroom environment. In the university level, Confucianism also affects among students in one class as they are of different ages.

Finally, interacting spontaneously with correct grammar usage and expressions was the least difficult. Only few students could perform in almost activities with some errors in grammar because they were engaged in a stress-free condition. At some instances, teachers initiated free talking in which students manifested enthusiasm and a bit of automaticity. Richards and Rodgers (2008) point out that "learning activities

are consequently selected according to how well they engage the learner in meaningful and authentic use, rather than merely mechanical practice of language patterns" (p.161). However, some students failed when graded communicative activities were employed because they lacked study habits and self-awareness.

Table 3 below presents the difficulties on post-communicative activity.

Table 3: Rank of Difficulty in Post-communicative Activity

	Easy	%	Moderate	%	Difficult	%	Rank
1. Reflecting on my interaction performance	10	8	71	55	47	**37**	**1**
2. Making adjustments on my attitude and skills in the next conversation activities	11	9	74	58	43	**33**	**2**
3. Noticing good conversational strategies from other students	12	9	76	59	40	**32**	**3**

It is shown in the above table that among the three skills, *reflecting on my interaction performance* ranks first (37%); followed by *making adjustments on my attitude and skills for the next conversation activities* (33%); and *noticing good conversational strategies from other students* (32%).

The data in Table 3 explain that reflecting on interaction performance was the most difficult. Most students could only recall how the interaction went until a teacher asked them to reflect, while others were not interested to say anything at all. It implies that the students were not able to internalize the whole process of communicative challenges, probably because they were not intellectually-, emotionally-, and culturally-prepared for the conversation questions or comments that need to be reacted by them. Shumin (2012) argues that "speaking a foreign language in public, especially in front of native speakers, is often anxiety-provoking, or may sometimes cause extreme anxiety that may lead to discouragement and a general sense of failure" (p. 206). Culturally, Korean students are less (or mostly not) expressive of what they feel and think about something, and this could also be a factor that discourages them from reflecting because they were disappointed anyway.

Moreover, making adjustments on attitude and skills for the next conversation activities was difficult to manage among the students. At some point, they could seldom manage though; however, it took time to feel comfortable with other students because they did not practice with enough time in various interactive activities. Some Korean students are not used to willingly interact in English whether inside classes or outside school premises because they are very nationalistic. They are likely to promote their language, culture, and belief that negatively affect the idea of making adjustments on their attitude and skills for the next conversation activities in English. Brown (2012) points out that "although that native system will exercise both

facilitating and interfering (positive and negative transfer) effects on the production and comprehension of the new language, the interfering effects are likely to be the most salient" (p. 13).

Finally, noticing good conversational strategies from other students was the least difficult. There were still some who were willing to communicate for personal, academic, and professional growths. As emphasized in FGDs and interviews, they were excited to practice, as it is useful in job-seeking. According to Oxford (2012), "skilled L2 learners select strategies that work well together and that are tailored to the requirements of the language tasks" (p. 126).

Table 4 presents the attitudes shown in the communicative activities.

Table 4: Rank and Frequency of Attitude in Communicative Activity

	always	%	usually	%	sometimes	%	seldom	%	never	%	Rank
1. Not following the instructions because I feel confident that I can speak English	0	0	1	1	16	13	28	21	83	**65**	**1**
2. Going out or not attending the class the following day when there is a speaking activity	0	0	6	5	20	16	22	17	80	**62**	**2**
3. Feeling good when I can communicate in English	10	8	21	16	62	**48**	23	18	12	10	**3**

In the above table, among the situations, *not following the instructions because I feel confident that I can speak English* ranks first (65% indicating *never*), *going out or not attending the class the following day when there is a speaking activity* ranks second (62% indicating *never*), and *feeling good when I can communicate in English* ranks third (48% indicating *sometimes*).

The data in Table 4 explain that the students never thought of not following instructions just because they were confident to speak English. They believed that following instructions would help them succeed in the communicative activities. Instructions would help them perform pre-communicative activity so that they could manage their language investment and emotions during communicative activity. Language investment may be referred to collective knowledge and skills to be performed when a need arises. Brown (2012) argues that "successful language learners, in their realistic appraisal of themselves as vulnerable beings yet capable of accomplishing tasks, must be willing to become 'gamblers' in the game of language, to

attempt to produce and to interpret language that is a bit beyond their absolute certainty" (p. 13).

Moreover, they never went out nor skip classes the following day, whenever there was a speaking activity. As emphasized in the FGDs and interviews, the students remained in the class due to attendance which has corresponding points. Certain points would surely make them pass the course, even when exam scores are low. The school administration promotes "no-fail policy" as long as students have completed number of exams or tests and attendance, regardless of scores. In this respect, the students only exerted much effort to perform until they were promised to receive good grades. While others thought of it as tiring and useless, they were just forced to come for the sake of attendance. However, there were few of them treated communicative activity as a challenging part, especially when a teacher or an interesting topic motivated them to inhibit shyness and discomfort. Evidence shows that "a number of the best learners use affective and social strategies to control their emotions, to stay motivated, to cooperate, and to get help" (Dansereau, 1985; McCombs, 1988; cited in Oxford, 2012, p. 125).

Sometimes, they felt good when they were able to communicate in English. In fact, there were some who were excited to practice for their own benefit, and were proud eventually when they had improved or achieved something positive. Brown (2012) points out that "when behavior stems from needs, wants, or desires within oneself, the behavior itself has the potential to be self-rewarding" (p. 12). However, they still manifested their limits of communicative ability due to lack of communicative exposure.

IMPLICATION TO RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Most English language teachers make use of communicative activities with theme-based topics prepared for a class. However, they often neglect the contributing factors in pre and post communicative assessments that would serve as a mirror of student's capacity to perform the language whether they are under pressure or not. Without hesitation, teachers give communicative tasks to assess students' proficiency, confidence, and attitude or behavior on the spot, without having well-designed rubrics (or sometimes with no rubrics at all).

Dissecting pre and post communicative elements is very essential for constructing and performing communicative tasks. A teacher as 'the constructor' is obliged to anticipate students' emotional, intellectual, social, and cultural preparedness by asking students to do preliminary and closing challenges in communicative activities. On the other hand, a student as 'the performer' is expected to complete tasks that would help them reflect on their capacity to initiate conversations and respond to communicative stimuli appropriately. Teachers have a huge role in implementing techniques that would draw out students' attention to undergo pre and post communicative challenges, not only during communicative undertakings.

Moreover, constructing and performing communicative tasks also need the presence of carefully selected materials and the implementation of sufficient lecture-discussion

in English. Ramos' (2013) study, published in the *International Journal of Advanced Culture Technology (IJACT) - South Korea*, believes that with good materials selection, "topics and conversation activities can even be more flexible with the maneuver of art of questioning, various dimensions of thinking, strategic competence, learning attitude or behavior, etc. to ensure sustenance of communicative mode and level of interest and motivation in the classroom. Grammar-based instruction can only be taught when a need arises" (p. 32). Additionally, Ramos' (2014) study, published in *the International Journal of English Language Teaching (IJELT) - Canada*, emphasizes that "students' real needs on lecture-discussion in English could be processed in terms of syllabus design and materials development. He further points out that "quality support system which involves honest feedbacks from students" and that reflects in the "proper assessment and/or implementation by teachers and a curriculum developer" should be sensitive and result-oriented enough to address students' real needs. Thus, these two elements (such as materials and lecture-discussion in English) will serve as a link to further develop students' skills in the three stages of communicative activities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Not all were challenged in pre, during, and post communicative activities. Parents, English language environment, teaching approaches, and bad timing may be the culprit why students' motivation, interest, and proficiencies were in bad shape. Students' learning styles, strategies, and attitudes were also affected due to the difficulties of communicative challenges and lack of support system. Lack of support system can be characterized with lack of the proper language proficiency assessment on where to place the students in class and how much time to be allotted for each class. The students from the 22 departments attended an English class for only an hour and fifty minutes per week. With the conditions mentioned above, the students could hardly develop communicative skills because they were not able to manage learning meaningfully.

As for *rank of difficulty in pre-communicative activity*, it is concluded that the students were not emotionally- and intellectually- prepared for the entire activity. As mentioned in the FGDs and interviews, the students had been oriented with the types of communicative activity with their respective constructs before the activities were implemented, as manifested in the workbook and teacher's instructions, but still most of them could not cope with the preparatory undertakings.

As for *rank of difficulty during communicative activity*, the researcher concludes that the students' interest and willingness to communicate were drawn out mostly by extrinsic motivation such as high grade and teacher's initiative. As mentioned in the FGDs and interviews, the students lacked exposure to conversations. Middle school and high school English classes trained them with passive learning methods such as memorization of words, mastery of grammar points, and mere listening to teachers; thus, in an activity, the students with no confidence could not carry out their previous learning in actual practical conversation drills. Others, however, only survived in conversation with partners, while few in patterned/structured dialogue or substitution drills.

As for *rank of difficulty in post-communicative activity*, it is concluded that students' retention span and comfort zone in the classroom were very limited. They were not able to reflect or meditate the impact of the whole activity; only few were able to manage to see the importance of interactive participation, as exemplified in the FGDs and interviews.

As for *rank of difficulty and frequency of attitude in communicative activity*, the researcher concludes that the students had endurance and patience in a classroom due to extrinsic factors, like attendance. Some of them tended to become participative in communicative activities, only when they were not conscious of grammar and when they knew they could talk a lot freely about any interesting topics, as emphasized in the FGDs and interviews.

It is then recommended that every school year, English teachers should conduct a survey with aim to elicit students' preferred communicative topics for discussion and communicative tasks for reinforcement. Rubrics should also be formulated and implemented religiously. In this way, teachers could respond to students' interests at a maximum level. This is also to constantly assess the progress of English language curriculum set by the Department of English Language Education under the manipulation of South Korea's Language Planning and Policy.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Deeper insights on these three stages (such as pre, during, and post) would add literature to address students' real needs and teacher's issues on sense of commitment in the English language education. The rank of difficulty on communicative activities in each stage would provide the support system (which involves TESOL practitioners, teachers, curriculum developers, researchers, and even students) priorities on what, how, and when to implement communicative challenges. By evaluating every angle of these current data would help the support system design or develop teaching techniques, result-oriented materials, and interactive activities to accommodate the priorities. Thus, the ranks of difficulty in communicative activities as well as the rank and frequency of attitude towards these activities will serve as a basis for conducting further investigation or similar studies to fulfill the support system's objectives.

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