ENHANCING LIBYAN STUDENTS' ENGLISH SPEAKING PERFORMANCE THROUGH LANGUAGE GAME AND INFORMATION GAP ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

The importance of English as a foreign language EFL in Libya has increased significantly throughout the years and the language has become essential in all disciplines. However, one of the essential challenges that needs to be explored is the lack of speaking competence of the Libyan students. There has been little research, which adopts an experimental design to determine the causal effects of certain teaching methods, particularly the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach on Libyan students' English speaking performance. Against this backdrop, this research sets out to assess the effects of selected Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) activities (i.e., Information gap and Language games) on Libyan first-year secondary school students' English speaking performance. Using a sample of 124 students from a public secondary school in Sabratha, Libya, and adopting the quasi-experimental pre-test, post-test non-equivalent groups design (NEGD), first year classes were randomly assigned as three experimental groups (i.e., Experimental Language Game group (G1), Experimental Language Game and Information Gap group (G2), and Experimental Information Gap group (G3)) and one Control group (G4). Treatments were given to the experimental groups and paired sample t-test results reveal significant differences between the groups' in the post-test English language speaking scores. While an ANOVA test, comparing the scores between the four groups reveals a substantial difference between Information Gap group and the control group through a post-hoc test. It is therefore concluded that implementing communicative activities based on the principles of CLT in the Libyan English language classroom helps to enhance students' English speaking performance.
Keywords: *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), English as a foreign language (EFL); information gap and language games activities; quasi-experiment speaking performance.*

Introduction

Learning the English language is crucial in the rapid developing world we live in, as it has become part of all fields. Libya is no exception, as the English language is necessary in the country in areas such as education, business health, media, etc. The significance of learning the English language for Libyan students was underscored by Libyan researchers (e.g. Bin Hamid, 2010; Hmaid, 2014; Mohamed, 2014; Orafi; 2008; Shihiba, 2011) in the field of English language education. These researchers suggested that one of the essential challenges that needs to be investigated urgently is the lack of communicative competence of the Libyan

students. Communicative competence is important because we need to communicate to express and convey thoughts, ideas, wants and needs through the language we are learning. Hence, there was a need to focus on communicative competence while learning the second language (or in the case of Libya the foreign language) through the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in schools. However, there has been little empirical research, such as those, which adopt the experimental design, to determine the effectiveness of certain teaching methods, particularly the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach on Libyan students' English speaking skills (Hmaid, 2014). Research as such is important because students in the English as a foreign language (EFL) context face many difficulties in learning English and using it for communication. Grabaj (2005) and Khater (1997) corroborated that EFL students are either shy, incapable, or they just do not make an effort to try to speak in the English language, and hence suffer incompetence in speaking. On the other hand, this issue is also due to the lack of suitable teaching techniques, methods and activities exercised by Libyan English teachers. These obstacles have been linked to what and how the language is being taught in the classrooms, and by teachers' and schools' persistence on the use of traditional approaches such as the Grammar translation method (GTM), even though the current curriculum is based on the CLT approach (Altaieb, 2013; Bin Hamid, 2010; Orafi & Borg, 2009). An important issue also is that many teachers are not fully convinced that the communicative activities and generally the CLT approach are effective (Orafi, 2008).

Bin Hamid (2010) reported that the emphasis on traditional methods in the classroom is a substantial reason for low proficiency levels in the English language speaking skill among students because invariably the speaking skill has not been focused on in the Libyan classroom. Libyan students do not pay attention to English language speaking or just neglect it and concentrate on the other English language skills and also because speaking skills are generally not usually tested in schools (Shihiba, 2011). Abukhattala (2014), posited that CLT is a Western approach, which should be further investigated to explore its effectiveness, the implementation of the different activities, and its general principles are applicable in the Libyan context. Spawa and Hassan (2013) explained that language teachers believe that the most important skill in language learning is speaking because it prepares students for the real world. However, in the Libyan English education context, these beliefs could not be put into practice because of the neglect of English speaking skills in the Libyan national examinations. Therefore, it is necessary to explore if and how effective are the activities based on the CLT approach in enhancing Libyan students' English language speaking abilities.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach: Information
Gap and Language Games Activities

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is an approach, in which the process of classroom learning starts with a theory of language as communication, and its goal is 'communicative competence'. The communicative activities in CLT can be unlimited, however, they should stress using language within a communicative context and where authentic information is exchanged (Richards, 2006). Communicative activities consist of role-plays, drills, games, small-group information-gap exercises, etc., (Brown, 2001). This research focused on two types: information gap and language games activities.

Asrobi, Seken, and Suarnajaya (2013) and Ismaili and Bajrami (2016) by using experimental designs, explained that information gap activities are more efficient than the traditional techniques of teaching such as rote learning, drilling and memorization. Ismaili Baijrami (2016) studied 56 university students who learned the English language using information gap activities, which are based on real-life situations through pair and group work, concluded that the treatment enhanced students' speaking levels. Information gap activities

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provide students with more flexibility to practice speaking in the English language. Utomo (2016) also pointed out that information gap activities can raise the comprehension levels of the spoken language as well as increase student's vocabulary.

In their research, Watamni and Gholami (2012) found that after elementary students had adopted information gap activities in the class, their interaction with the language teacher and their peers improved and the activities provided the opportunity to speak in the English language. Meanwhile, another study was by Jondeya's (2011), which used different information gap activities (i.e., role-play, jigsaw, describe and draw, ask and answer, fill the gap, and puzzles) as a treatment for the experimental group. The researcher's findings depict that after the treatment, students' oral speaking scores in a post-test for the experimental group were significantly higher from that of the control group.

Language games are an effective tool for teaching a foreign language, and they promote student's oral competence for children to speak and interact with their classmates (Carabajo Vellejo, 2011). They are compatible with the CLT approach and help teachers create contexts where students can engage in useful English language. Savignon (1976) illustrated that games and discussion topics do provide emotional interest in a subject and captivate attention for an authentic interaction in the English language classroom. Wang (2010) added that children naturally enjoy playing games and they help learners to improve the ability in the target language through a fun and an enjoyable process. The researcher stated that in English language teaching, the advantages of using communicative language games motivate students' learning with fun, enjoyment, and enthusiasm, while through playing students learn the language unconsciously. Dewi, Kultsumi, and Armadi's (2016) also found that in using communicative games as a means of instruction, students' performance results improved in the speaking skill. They also found that students were interested in learning using communicative games approach and that they were confident while responding in the target language.

Chanseawrassamee (2012) used eight language game activities; English reading-aloud contest, lesson presentation, Dictation, Timing grammar test, Publishable essays, English song contest, cloze test and vocabulary book. The researcher used these activities as games in his teaching of the English language, and to make things more interesting, occasionally winners of some of the games may receive some presents. He concluded that language games motivated learners to learn the target language. It was found that communicative activities help enhance student's speaking ability.

It is evident that from the studies cited above, language games and information gap activities are helpful for English language learners. However, it needs to be mentioned that the studies cited above focused mostly on one group and one type of communicative activity. As such, there is very limited research in the combination of more than one type of CLT-based activities in one research in the Arab world, and in particular, on Libyan secondary school students. As such, the researchers of this research suggest assessing the effect of selected Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) activities (i.e., information gap and language games) on Libyan first-year secondary school students' speaking performance. Second, the researchers also intend to compare between the effectiveness of language games and information gap and a combination of these two activities to find out which of them is more helpful in terms of students' speaking performance. Therefore, in the present research, the researchers investigated further into the subject by incorporating three groups; 1) information gap activities; 2) language games activities, and 3), information gap and language games.

Information Gap Activities

Liao (1997) explains the activities as the essence of communication that occur when the student receiver does not know in advance the information in the message of the sender.

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Information gap activities in the present research are those, which require the students to obtain the information they do not have from another/other students that have it. This research used Directed Dialogue, Picture strips, Pictures with Differences and Ordering Pictures for information. Information gap activities serve many purposes such as gathering information and solving problems, and they are important in the classroom because all students have the opportunity to use the target language. Language learning happens through cognitive development that gives emphasis on the role of culture, which is crucial in contemporary research. Pica, Klang, and Sauro (2006) indicated that information gap activities promote interaction and orient students' attention to form, function, and meaning.

Language Game Activities

Hadfield (1990, p.5) views games as "activity with rules, a goal, and an element of fun". In this research, the term refers to any language activity that requires communication, participation and interaction to accomplish a set goal, which is initially restricted by a set of rules, and participants usually take part for pleasure and are likely to receive a reward. The language games activities applied in the present research are Board Games, Guessing Game, Passing on Information, and Describing and Drawing. The principal reason for choosing these types is that they serve some of the language functions of the course book and stress the curriculum used for first-year secondary students, and at the same time they could serve the principles and characteristics that CLT approach promotes. All these activities display an important characteristic of classroom tasks in CLT that are designed to be implemented in pairs or in small groups. This, in turn, can benefit learners by listening and using language from other members of the groups, increasing motivational levels and developing fluency (Richards, 2006).

Research Questions

The following questions guided the research:
1. How effective are communicative language games in enhancing students' speaking scores?
2. How effective are communicative information gap activities in enhancing students' speaking scores?
3. How effective are the combination of communicative information gap and language game activities in enhancing students' speaking scores?

Theoretical Framework

The postulations of the sociocultural theory underpin the objective of this research. Proposed by Vygotsky (1978), the theory considers learners as respondents in activities that need cognitive and communicative functions. Vygotsky emphasized the social activity of speech or speaking, in which the notion of 'speech' comprises aspects of communication, which is not limited only to language systems. The theory proposes that language learning, just as other learning activities, should be dealt with as procedure where learners participate in communities of practice.

According to Vygotsky, learning a language involves the capability to interact with an interlocutor. This illustrates that interaction with others surrounding the learners, such as with peers or teachers in the classroom, they can learn beyond as compared to when they are alone. According to Vygotsky, the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is where the learner is helped through interaction or guidance of the surrounding people and as a result, their mental

development level can be extended and argues that the interaction between the sociocultural and cognitive factors plays a crucial role in learners' development.

The transition from other regulation to self-regulation consists of four levels i.e., how to move to independent problem-solving ability in a task. This strategy is called 'Scaffolding'. The first level is during certain task or activity a child may not understand the adult's utterances. In the second level, the child may respond to the adult's words or speech and may know it is concerning a specific task but may still encounter difficulties in utilizing the commands as required. The third level is when the child will be able to participate and the process of shift from other-regulation to self-regulation will start to take place. The fourth level: The problem-solving activity takes place and shifts from inter-psychological to the intra-psychological position. That means the child performs the task with the help of the adult or peer.

Bruner (1960) agrees with Vygotsky that language helps to mediate between environmental stimuli and the person's response. They both focus on the social nature of learning that occurs through the help of other, through the process of scaffolding (Wood et al., 1976). The purpose of education is to facilitate a child's or a learner's problem –solving skills which may be transmitted to a variety of situations (Burner, 1960). According to Gilles and Pierce (2003), it is difficult to separate language from learning and at the same time, it is not easy to separate them both from interaction. Social constructivism focuses on the role of culture in the development of learning while, other theories such as the sociocultural theory focuses on interaction as well as the role of the environment.

Methodology of Research

General Background

The researchers adopted the quasi-experiment pre-test, post-test non-equivalent group design (NEGD) for the current research. Campbell and Stanley (1963) clarified that quasi-experimental approaches share with other experiments the testing of the descriptive results, hypothesis and manipulating causes. Whereas, they add that a fundamental difference in the quasi-experimental design is the optimal control, but this type is worth carrying out where other designs are impossible and when interpreting the findings of such experiments, focus on validity factors becomes crucial. The quasi-experiment method was selected because random sampling is not suitable in the school settings where the classrooms are intact. The key assumption of employing this method is that in using the non-random sampling, the independent variables or the IVs (i.e., language game and information gap activities) can also be manipulated to adequately address the objectives of the research. The treatment in the present research was the implementation of the CLT approach, particularly language games and information gap activities, which are explained in the following sections. By using the quasi-experimental approach, this research assessed whether or not the communicative interactive activities can influence Libyan students' speaking outcomes and performances.

Sample Selection

The sample for the current research was a total of 124 students drawn from four classrooms of the first-year secondary students (i.e., 15-16 years old) from one public secondary school in Sabratha, Libya. To achieve the required number to implement the research, first-year secondary students (registered for the academic year 2016- 2017) were chosen because the number of classrooms per school is larger than the other grades. The number of first-year classrooms per school is usually from 2-6 and the number of students ranges from 28-40

students in each classroom. The sample of the research was selected non-randomly because it was not possible for either classroom division or engaging in random assignment of subjects to take place, due to the position of the respondents of the research location, setting, timetable, and administration procedures. However, it is important to note that the school administration informed the researcher that all their students were allocated to the classrooms at the start of the academic year according to their overall grades. This ensures that all classrooms have a similar number of students with similar overall academic grades distributed across the different classes.

Instruments and Procedures

In the initial stage of the research, the researcher conducted a pre-test (speaking test) on the students' English spoken skills. The speaking test was carried out for the four groups of respondents, which are three experimental groups and the control group (i.e., Experimental Language Game group (G1), Experimental Language Game and Information Gap group (G2), and Experimental Information Gap group (G3) and a Control group (G4)). The oral speaking test was conducted for all groups on the same day. The test involved a conversational exchange, as illustrated by Kitao and Kitao (1996), in which each student is given a situation, but no guidance is given on how to respond. Therefore, the student can respond without restrictions. The speaking test was adapted from questions on topics from the textbook that were given to the students by their English language teacher. This was because when preparing any test in the Libyan schools, it is compulsory that all questions are based on the syllabus and topics of the textbook.

Underhill (1987) states "the single most effective way of getting around the central problem of lack or reliability is to use more than one assessor" (p. 89). In this research, in order to get inter-rater reliability, both the researcher and the subject teacher conducted the pre-test. The topics are general, and students must have come across them during their studies (e.g. school, social media, friends and family) The English language teacher as well as the researcher informed students that there were no passing or failing grades, and it is not part of their academic grade. The same test was done for both the control and experimental groups. The students also had the right to withdraw from the lessons and they were not obliged to answer any of the questions if they do not want to, but at the same time, they were encouraged to take part in the research. This was so students might feel less anxious about the speaking tasks.

The speaking post-test was also given to both the control group and the experimental groups to measure their speaking performance levels, and to examine if there was a significant difference as compared to the pre-tests that all groups took. The test was conducted at the end of the semester, where they were asked the same questions, but not in the same order. To ensure the results are not biased, the test was the same for both the control and experimental groups, and the scoring of the oral post-test similarly combined work of the teacher and the researcher as they both discussed the scoring, then two scores were given separately, and the average was recorded.

Students' Speaking Performance Assessment

Thornbury (2005) submitted that there are two main types of scoring of speaking assessments, i.e., holistic and analytic scoring. The holistic scoring is by giving a score for an overall grade. This is quite adequate for informal progress testing, but there should be more than one person to assess the grades. Whereas, the analytic scoring is by giving separate scores for different aspects of the task. It takes a longer time, but it is considered fairer and more reliable than the first type of scoring. According to Kitao and Kitao (1996), when scoring speaking the aspects to be considered in assessing the skill are grammar, pronunciation, fluency, content,

and vocabulary. In this regard, the present research employed an analytic scoring that includes 5 criteria (i.e., grammar, pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension of content), and each criterion consists of two levels based on the English language inspectors' division in Sabratha, Ministry of Education, 2014. This criterion is also adapted from Harris (1969) testing rubric with slight modifications, in which instead of having all levels, only the first two levels were used.

Treatments (Information Gap and Language Game Activities)

The Information Gap and Language Game activities were based on the principles of CLT, which include the use of authentic materials, indirect presentation of grammar rules, infrequent correction of errors, limited use of L1, and realistic interaction in a student-centred classroom (Richards, 2006). Students were given five lessons per week and each lesson was conducted for 45 minutes. The students, belonging to different experimental groups were exposed to their particular kind of treatment in their respective groups (i.e., Experimental Language Game group (G1), Experimental Language Game and Information Gap group (G2), and Experimental Information Gap group (G3)). They were exposed throughout the month of April 2017, in which the researcher taught them five lessons per week, a total of 20 sessions. The time permitted by the Ministry of Education in Sabratha for carrying out the research was one month due to the political situation in Libya, in which schools were on and off due to safety issues. The experimental groups used different activities according to the treatments given to each group, in which the first group used language games; the second group used both language games and information gap activities, while the third used only information gap activities. Table 1 shows examples of the different types of activities that were used in the research for the three experimental groups.

Table 1. The communicative activities used in the treatment.

	Information Gap activities	Language Game activities
1	Pictures with Differences	Guess my Profession / Country
2	Ordering Pictures to Give Information	Describing and Drawing
3	Directed Dialogue	Instruction Cards / Board Games
4	A Strip of Pictures	Passing on Information

Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected from the pre-tests and post-tests were scored according to the scoring criteria by the examination sector of the Ministry of Education of Sabratha, Libya. The skewness and kurtosis of data were checked to determine the normality of data distribution. For all the four experimental groups, skewness ranged from 0.40 - 1.73, and kurtosis from -0.42 to -0.73 in the pre-test. In post-tests across all the groups, the skewness ranged from 0.15 - 1.18 and kurtosis from -0.64 to -1.21. According to George and Mallery (2003), data is considered normally distributed when the values fall between ± 2, thus the condition for parametric analysis in the research was met.

Paired sample *t*-test parametric analytical technique was used to verify the statistical significance of the differences between two mean scores for pre and post-test. Subsequently, a one-way ANOVA was run to assess the significance of the differences of the effect of language game and information gap activities learning in improving speaking performance between the different groups.

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Results of Research

Reliability of Test Scores

The reliability of the speaking test scores was determined with the use of Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability test, which is the reliability of the test components. Cronbach's alpha for the participants scores on components was 0.916, which is quite a highly acceptable value as it is greater than 0.7, which is considered very reliable (George & Mallery, 2003). The inter-rater reliability of the two raters was computed using Cohen's. The results showed that the strength of agreement Cohen's Kappa for the pre-test was $k = 0.784$ and for the post-test, $k = .650$, $p < .0001$.

Effects of Communicative Activities on Students' English Speaking Performance

To assess the effect of information gap and language games on students' speaking scores, a paired sample *t*-test was used for testing the significance of differences between two mean scores (pre-test and post-test). Hence, for the groups, the following were posed to test the hypothesis:

Ha1: There is a significant difference between students' mean speaking scores before and after treatment among the four groups in the study.

The results revealed that the students performed better in the post-test, $M = 44.88$, $SD = 16.527$ as compared with the pre-tests $M = 34.31$, $SD = 15.885$, with a mean difference of $M = 10.573$. Based on the results of paired samples t-test, $t(123) = 18.679$, $p = .0001$, 95% CI [-11.693, -9.452], since the significance value was smaller than alpha .05, the Ha1 hypothesis is confirmed. It is concluded that the treatments had a significant effect on students' speaking performance for the overall score for all the groups as shown in Table 2.

Ha2: There is a significant difference between the five speaking criteria's mean scores before and after treatment among the four groups of the study.

From the paired sample t-test on the five test sub-categories, as depicted in Table 2, it is observed that the mean and standard deviation scores for *fluency* in the post-test ($M = 6.82$, $SD = 3.616$) was better as compared to the pre-test score ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 3.339$). The respondents' mean and standard deviation scores in vocabulary use in pre-test mean was $M = 7.26$, $SD = 3.381$, which highly increased in the post-test to $M = 10.21$, $SD = 3.398$. The mean and standard deviation scores of the respondents in the third sub-category, comprehension, in the pre-test ($M = 7.33$, $SD = 3.554$), which were significantly different from the respondents' scores in the post-test ($M = 9.75$, $SD = 3.662$). The mean and standard deviation scores for the respondents' grammar aspect also improved in the post-test to $M = 9.10$, $SD = 3.484$ from the initial scores $M = 7.21$, $SD = 3.355$ in the pre-test. Whereas, the fifth sub-category, the respondents' mean and standard deviation scores for pronunciation in the pre-test were $M = 7.57$, $SD = 3.410$, whereas in the post-test were $M = 8.88$, $SD = 3.814$. It shows that all sub-sections of the speaking scores increased, therefore, the Ha2 hypothesis is confirmed and the researchers conclude that when indicating the overall score for all the groups there is a significant difference between the five speaking criteria's mean scores before and after treatment.

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Table 2. Paired Sample t -test differences between pre-test and post-test among all the groups of the research.

	Paired Differences							
Variable	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	p
Pair				Lower	Upper			
Fluency Pre-test – Fluency Post-test Score	-1.887	1.599	.144	-2.171	-1.603	-13.143	123	.0001
Vocabulary Pre-test Score - Vocabulary Post-test	-2.952	2.197	.197	-3.342	-2.561	-14.960	123	.0001
Comprehension Pre-test Score - Comprehension Post-test Score	-2.419	1.781	.160	-2,736	-2.103	-15.26	123	.0001
Grammar Pre-test – Grammar Post-test	-1.887	1.968	.177	-2.237	-1.537	-10.677	123	.0001
Pronunciation Pre-test - Pronunciation Post-test	-1.306	1.844	.166	-1.634	-.979	-7.888	123	.0001
Scores for the pre-test – Scores for the Post-test	-10.573	6.303	.566	-11.693	-9.452	-18.679	123	.0001

The researchers also ran Levene's statistic to determine the homogeneity of variance, in which they found the results were not significant for both the pre-test (.746) (p =.527), and for the post-test (.622), (p = .602). Hence, the assumption was met for running a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Ha3: There is a significant difference between Experimental group (1) (Language Game group) and Experimental group (2) (Language Game and Information Gap) speaking mean scores.
Ha4: There is a significant difference between experimental group (1) (Language Game) and Experimental group (3) (Information Gap) speaking mean scores.
Ha5: There is a significant difference between Experimental group (1) (Language Game) and Control group (4) speaking mean scores.
Ha6: There is a significant difference between Experimental group (2) (Language Game and Information Gap) and Experimental group (3) (Information Gap) speaking mean scores.
Ha7: There is a significant difference between Experimental group (2) (Language Game and Information Gap) and Control group (4) speaking mean scores.
Ha8: There is a significant difference between experimental group (3) (Information Gap) and control group (4) speaking mean scores.

In this section, the above hypotheses were raised to isolate the treatments' effectiveness across groups. The researchers ran a one-way ANOVA test to compare the variances between the groups in the research so as to assess if there are significant differences in the mean scores across all of the groups. (i.e., Experimental Language Game group (G1), Experimental Information Gap and Language Games group (G2), Experimental Information Gap group (G3) and Control group (G4)).

Table 3. ANOVA to compare the variances between the different groups.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	p
Scores for the Pre- test	Between Groups	580.151	3	193.384	.762	.518
	Within Groups	30456.204	120	253.802		
	Total	31036.355	123			
Scores for Post-test	Between Groups	2331.901	3	777.300	2.984	.034
	Within Groups	31263.284	120	260.527		
	Total	33595.185	123			

Table 3 shows $F (3, 120) = 0.762$, $p = .518$, which implies there is no significant difference between the four different groups (i.e., Experimental Language Game group (G1), Experimental Information Gap and Language Games group (G2), Experimental Information Gap group (G3) and Control group (G4)) in the pre-test scores of the speaking performance ($p= 0.518$, $p> .05$). Whereas, in the post-test, the results indicated $F (3, 120) = 2.984$, $p = .034$, $p < .05$. Concluding that there was a significant difference between the experimental group and control group speaking scores. To further filter the significance of differences in the post-test scores, a multiple comparison post hoc test between and within all the experimental and control groups was run.

The post Hoc test results conducted a multiple comparison between the four groups, G1, G2, G3, and G4. Table 4 shows significant difference only between the Control group (G4) and the Experimental Information Gap group (G3) in the post-test scores, with a significance value of $p = .031$, $p < .05$. Whereas, the rest of the results showed no significant differences between the groups as p- values ranged from .506 to 1.000, $p> .05$. Therefore, all corresponding hypotheses (Ha3, Ha4, Ha5, Ha6, and Ha7) failed to be met. It is thus concluded that there is no significant difference between the post-test scores between the groups, except between the Experimental Information Gap group (G3) and the Control group (G4. With a significant value of ($p= .031$) between the two groups (G3 and G4) hypothesis (Ha8) is confirmed. Table 4 summarizes the results of the post hoc test.

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Table 4. Post – hoc test comparing the four groups.

					95% Confidence Interval		
			Multiple comparisons				
Tukey HSD							
Dependent Variable	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	p
Scores for the pre-test	Experimental Language games (G1)	Experimental Lang games and info gap (2)	-.168	4.080	-10.80	10.46	1.000
		Control (4)	-4.168	4.080	-14.80	6.46	.737
		Experimental information gap (3)	-4.604	3.985	-14.99	5.78	.656
	Experimental Lang games and info gap (G2)	Experimental Language games (1)	.168	4.080	-10.46	10.80	1.000
		Control (4)	-4.000	4.113	-14.72	6.72	.765
		Experimental information gap (3)	-4.436	4.019	-14.91	6.03	.688
	Control (G4)	Experimental Language games (1)	4.168	4.080	-6.46	14.80	.737
		Experimental Lang games and info gap (2)	4.000	4.113	-6.72	14.72	.765
		Experimental information gap (3)	-.436	4.019	-10.91	10.03	1.000
	Experimental information gap (G3)	Experimental Language games (1)	4.604	3.985	-5.78	14.99	.656
		Experimental Lang games and info gap (2)	4.436	4.019	-6.03	14.91	.688
		Control (4)	.436	4.019	-10.03	10.91	1.000
Scores for the Post-test	Experimental Language games (G1)	Experimental Lang games and info gap (2)	-3.406	4.134	-14.18	7.36	.843
		Control 4)	2.294	4.134	-8.48	13.06	.945
		Experimental information gap 3)	-9.079	4.037	-19.60	1.44	.116
	Experimental Lang games and info gap (G2)	Experimental Language games (1)	3.406	4.134	-7.36	14.18	.843
		Control 4)	5.700	4.168	-5.16	16.56	.522
		Experimental information gap (3)	-5.673	4.072	-16.28	4.94	.506
	Control (G4)	Experimental Language games (1)	-2.294	4.134	-13.06	8.48	.945
		Experimental Lang games and info gap (2)	-5.700	4.168	-16.56	5.16	.522
		Experimental information gap (3)	-11.373ˉ	4.072	-21.98	-.76	.031
	Experimental information gap (G3)	Experimental Language games (1)	9.079	4.037	-1.44	19.60	.116
		Experimental Lang games and info gap (2)	5.673	4.072	-4.94	16.28	.506
		Control (4)	11.373ˉ	4.072	.76	21.98	.031

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

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In order to determine how much the independent variables (i.e., communicative activities) had an effect on the dependent variable (i.e., speaking scores) or how much variance was observed from the communicative activities, Cohen's (1988) rule of thumb formula was used. The results showed it has a medium effect at .069.

Estimated Marginal Mean result of pre-test and post- test as shown in Figure 1 indicates that the post-test marginal mean is higher than the pre-test one across all the groups. The Experimental Information Gap group (G3) observed the highest mean score increase from $M=$ 36.64 in the pre-test, to $M=$ 51.2 in the post-test, followed by the Experimental Information Gap and Language Game group (G2), which increased from $M=32.2$ to $M=45.6$. The Experimental Language Game group (G1) came in third, with increased mean scores from $M=32.03$ to $M=$ 42.19. The least increase was for the Control group (G4) with the mean score for the pre-test $M=36.2$, to post-test at $M=39.9$. The mean score differences for all groups were G1 ($M=14.56$), G2 ($M=13.4$), G3 ($M=10.16$), and G4 ($M=3.7$), respectively. Figure 1 indicates an increase in students' speaking scores for the experimental groups after implementing the information gap and language games communicative activities.
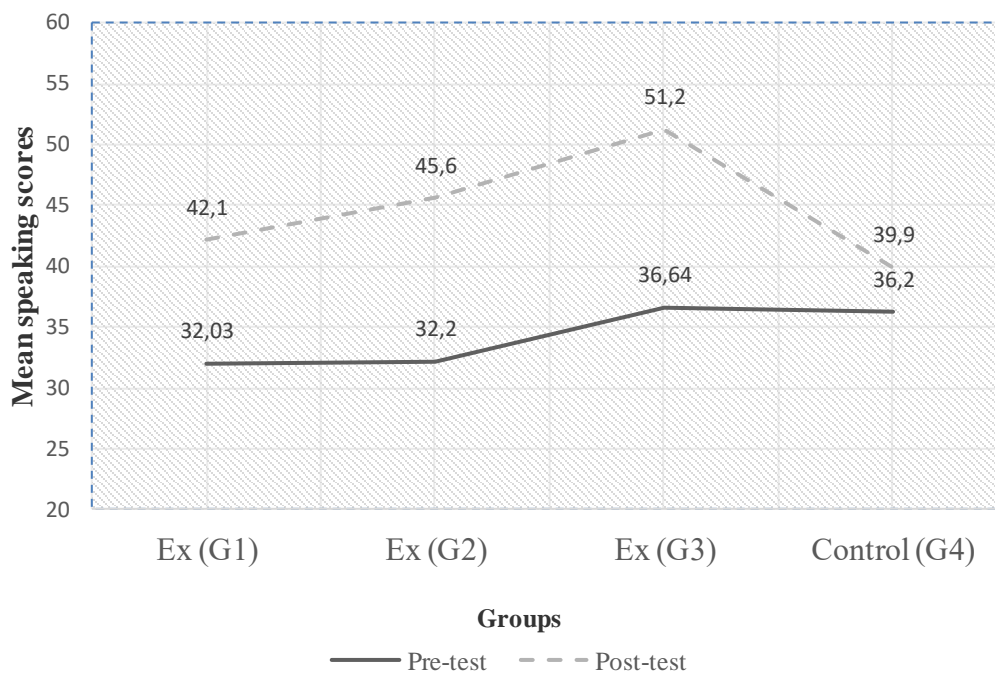

Figure 1. Estimated marginal mean of pre-tests and post-tests.

The results indicate that the implementation of communicative activities in the classroom developed the students' speaking performance. In addition, when examining the five criteria of the overall speaking grades (as discussed earlier in table2) the results from the paired sample-t test showed highest improvement in vocabulary as compared to the other criteria of the oral speaking tests (i.e., fluency, comprehension, grammar, and pronunciation). It can be concluded that the use of communicative activities (i.e. information gap and language games) can play a role not only increasing the speaking skill rather than pronunciation, grammar, comprehension, fluency and particularly students' vocabulary.

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Discussion

This research revealed the importance of implementing different communicative activities in the language classroom and in particular the information gap activities. The results from this research support and are consistent with the results from previous studies such as (Al-Nawrasy, 2013; Carabajo Vallejo, 201; Ismaili & Barjrami, 2016; Oradee, 2012). While other research indicate that language games based on pair work play an important role in improving the target language (Bakhsh, 2016; Wingate, 2016).

Whereas, within the five different criteria it is crucial to indicate that all section increased but the highest substantial improvement was in vocabulary. This is consistent with previous studies, which indicate that CLT plays a significant role in increasing levels of vocabulary (see Dewi et al, 2016; Efrizal, 2012; Jue, 2010; Utomo, 2016). On the other hand, the findings are in contrast with the results by Difrioka (2017), which point out that the application of information gap activities influences learners' fluency more than vocabulary, while there was no improvement in levels of pronunciation.

According to the previous research, it is clear that since the existence of CLT approach it has played a crucial role in language learning and teaching and has provided learners and teachers with a wide range of possibilities towards learning (Altaieb, 2013; Ismaili & Barjrami, 2016). Focusing on communicative activities that are based on CLT is important because they help learners provide the opportunity to communicate in the target language. Research around the world has shown that implementing different communicative activities in the classroom has enhanced learners' language performance and in particular, the speaking skill but it was essential to understand if they were also useful in the Libyan context. According to the current research, communicative activities were effective in the Libyan setting and students' speaking performance increased when information gap activities were implemented more than when language games were used. Therefore, it is necessary to encourage their use in the language classroom and focus on information gap activities more while language game activities can be used as an alternative.

Conclusions

Based on the empirical evidence in the present research, it is illustrated that the communicative activities approach is a strong viable alternative to teach English-speaking skills, especially the communicative information gap method. Therefore, the researchers posit that this research provides language teachers in Libya with some answers towards their doubt of the effectiveness of the CLT approach that the Libyan Ministry of Education selected to be applied in the Libyan classroom. The findings of the present research are significant to all the stakeholders that are interested in this topic and those in the field of EFL English education in Libya as they provide them with ideas for language learning and teaching for the future. It is thus concluded that implementing communicative activities based on principles of CLT in the Libyan English language classroom helps enhance students' speaking performance.

There was initially fear that the idea of introducing communicative activities developed in the Western society might not be assimilated well in the Libyan society. However, now, the findings of this research rule out the anticipated difficulty by concluding that this was not the case in the Libyan classroom, at least in the context and scope and limitation of this research. This is because the communicative activities can improve Libyan EFL students' English speaking performance. Therefore, it is necessary to include the EFL student as well as the teacher in the process of implementing any methodology and its principles due to their fundamental role in the learning process.

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Findings of the present research also provide support potential for Vygotsky's Social Cultural and the constructivist theories that focus the role of culture and interaction during the process of learning. EFLs' performance levels can increase significantly language goals achieved whenever learners perform tasks and activities in groups (with peers) rather than individually. This contributes to the explanations of language learning theories by providing examples of some of the techniques required for the English language classroom. When knowledge is presented in an authentic context and setting, learning can occur unintentionally rather than posed or deliberate because learners become involved in the process of learning. The researchers believe that further research on the perceptions of the language games and Information gap in future is needed to explore further the relevance of the activities from students and teachers' point of view in Libya.

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