

## **AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF THE USE OF COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN DEVELOPING THE LISTENING SKILL OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

Phuu Ei Kyaw<sup>1</sup> and Wai Wai Oo<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract**

The main purpose of this study was to study the effect of communicative approach in developing the listening skill of high school students. The design adopted in this study was a quasi-experimental design, viz. non-equivalent control group design. The subjects were 61 Grade Ten students from No. (14) Basic Education High School and 104 Grade Ten students from No.(16) Basic Education High School, Chan Aye Tharsan Township, Mandalay. The instruments for this study were a pretest, teaching materials, lesson plans and a posttest. The subjects were pretested before the treatment. The experimental groups were taught through communicative approach whereas the control groups were not taught using this approach. After five weeks' treatment, a posttest was administered to examine whether there was a positive effect of communicative approach on the students' listening skill. In order to satisfy the research questions, the obtaining data were analyzed by using the independent samples *t* test and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to compare the listening achievement of the students between the experimental and control groups. The findings showed that there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups for the scores on listening achievement test in HS 14 ( $p = .008$ ) and HS 16 ( $p = .000$ ) at the levels of  $p < .01$  and  $p < .001$  respectively. The result of this study, therefore, indicated that communicative approach has positive effect on developing the listening skill of high school students.

**Keywords:** approach, communicative approach, listening skill

### **Introduction**

The trend of modern education directs to the needs of language competency to enhance the demands. Global language, the English, became the first priority many decades ago. TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) and TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) programmes were developed all over the world as soon as the acceptance of the significance of English. In order to be proficient in global language, English, all four skills of language must be provided equally and orderly. In most of the Myanmar classrooms, reading and writing skills are the major focus more than the other two skills. Speaking and listening skills are rarely taught in schools since these skills are not assessed in examinations. As a consequence, the proficiency of speaking and listening skills are extremely limited. It, therefore, is a high time to promote these skills. For communicative competence, receptive skill should be given priority to naturally lead to the productive skill. The most widely used teaching in the world today is communicative approach or communicative language teaching (CLT) which is advocated by many applied linguists and English teachers.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To compare the listening skill achievement of students who were taught by communicative approach and those who were not.

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- To highlight the importance of listening skill in language learning.
- To improve student's listening skill through communication.
- To give some suggestions on the use of communicative approach in English language teaching.

### **Research Questions**

- Does the use of communicative approach have positive effect on improving the listening skill of Grade Ten students?
- Does the use of communicative approach have positive effect on improving the listening for specific information of Grade Ten students?
- Does the use of communicative approach have positive effect on improving the listening for phonemic distinctions of Grade Ten students?
- Does the use of communicative approach have positive effect on improving the listening for sequencing of Grade Ten students?
- Does the use of communicative approach have positive effect on improving the listening for transferring information of Grade Ten students?

### **Review of Related Literature**

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), at the level of language theory, Communicative Language Teaching has "a rich, if somewhat eclectic, theoretical base". Some of the characteristics of the communicative view of language are as follows:

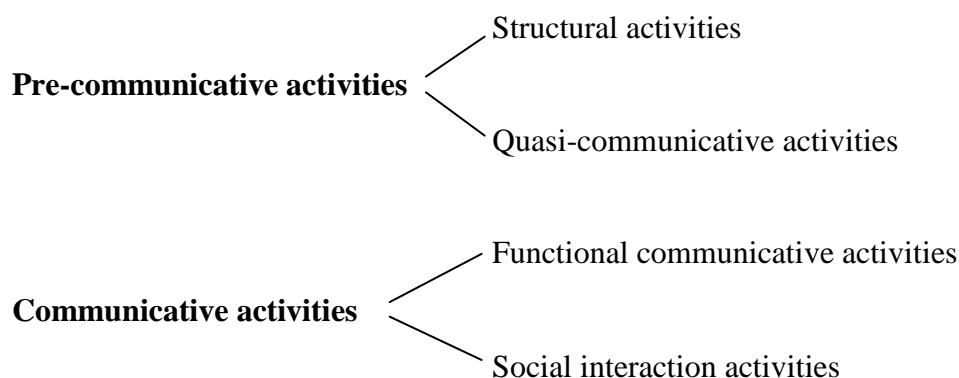
1. Language is a system for the expression of meaning.
2. The primary function of language is to allow interaction and communication.
3. The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses.
4. The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

The influential interpretation of Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) upon the distinctive features of communicative approach is as follows:

1. Meaning is paramount.
2. Dialogues, if used, center around communicative functions and are not normally memorized.
3. Contextualization is a basic premise.
4. Language learning is learning to communicate.
5. Effective communication is sought.
6. Drilling may occur, but peripherally.
7. Comprehensible pronunciation is sought.
8. Any device that helps the learners is accepted – varying according to their age, interest, etc.
9. Attempts to communicate may be encouraged from the very beginning.
10. Judicious use of native language is accepted where feasible.
11. Translation may be used where students need or benefit from it.
12. Reading and writing can start from the first day, if desired.
13. The target linguistic system will be learned best through the process of struggling to communicate.
14. Communicative competence is the desired goal (i.e., the ability to use the linguistic system effectively and appropriately).

15. Linguistic variation is a central concept in materials and methodology.
16. Sequencing is determined by any consideration of content, function, or meaning that maintains interest.
17. Teachers help learners in any way that motivates them to work with the language.
18. Language is created by the individual, often through trial and error.
19. Fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal: Accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context.
20. Students are expected to interact with other people, either in the flesh, through pair and group work, or in their writings.
21. The teacher cannot know exactly what language the students will use.
22. Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in what is being communicated by the language (Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) cited in Brown, 2001).

Moreover, Littlewood (1981) diagrammatically provided a methodological framework for communicative activities as follows:



Through pre-communicative activities, the teacher isolates specific elements of knowledge or skill which compose communicative ability, and provides the learners with opportunities to practice them separately. The learners are thus being trained in the part-skills of communication rather than practicing the total skill to be acquired. The different types of drill or question-and-answer practice are included. These aim to provide learners with a fluent command of the linguistic system, without actually requiring them to use this system for communicative purposes. Accordingly, the learner’s main purpose is to produce language which is acceptable (i.e. sufficiently accurate or appropriate) rather than to communicate meanings effectively. The activities which attempt to create links between the language forms being practiced and their potential functional meanings can be categorised as ‘quasi-communicative’ because they take account of communicative as well as structural facts about language.

In communicative activities, the learner has to activate and integrate his pre-communicative knowledge and skills, in order to use them for the communication of meaning (Littlewood, 1981).

## **Research Method**

### **Research Design**

The design adopted in this study was a quasi-experimental design, viz. non-equivalent control group design (see Table 1).

**Table 1 Experimental Design**

| Group        | Assignment | No. of Students |      | Pretest | Treatment              | Posttest |
|--------------|------------|-----------------|------|---------|------------------------|----------|
|              |            | HS 1            | HS 2 |         |                        |          |
| Control      | Intact     | 30              | 51   | UBLLT   | Conventional Methods   | PILLT    |
| Experimental | Intact     | 31              | 53   | UBLLT   | Communicative Approach | PILLT    |

**Note:** UBLLT = Upper Beginner Level Listening Test  
 PILLT = Pre-Intermediate Level Listening Test  
 HS1 = BEHS (14)  
 HS2 = BEHS (16)

The independent variable was the use of communicative activities to develop the students' listening skill, and the dependent variable was the student's listening skill. The data collected in this study were the scores of the posttest for quantitative data.

### Subjects

Two basic education high schools from Chan Aye Tharsan Township: No. (14) Basic Education High School and No. (16) Basic Education High School, were selected by using a simple random sampling method. A sample of (61) students was selected from a population of (94) Grade Ten students of No. (14) Basic Education High School. A sample of (104) students was selected from a population of (283) Grade Ten students of No. (16) Basic Education High School. Table 2 showed the number of population and sample size used in this study.

**Table 2 Population and Sample Size**

| Name of School | No. of Population | No. of Sample |
|----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| No. (14) BEHS  | 94                | 61            |
| No. (16) BEHS  | 283               | 104           |

### Instruments

#### (a) Pretest

The pretest consisted of (50) items for specific information, phonemic distinctions, transferring information and sequencing. The items in the pretest are upper beginner level. The test was constructed according to the advice and guidance of the supervisor. For the validation of the pretest, the test was delivered to three experienced and expert teachers and modified the test according to the suggestions of the experts. A pilot test was administered with (47) Grade Ten students from Basic Education High School, Patheingyi. But due to the inconvenience in playing one audio file, this pilot test was rejected. The second pilot test was administered with (50) Grade Ten students from No. (33) Basic Education High School, Aung Myae Tharsan Township, Mandalay. According to the pilot test, the item responses showed that the estimate of reliability was 0.79. Then, on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018, the pretest was held at No.(14) BEHS and No.(16) BEHS.

#### (b) Teaching Materials and Lesson Plans

Teaching materials ranging from upper beginner to pre-intermediate levels were compiled into three categories: dialogues and conversations, short stories and various topics which are relevant to the high school level. They were collected from various sources such as English

workbooks, graded story books, internet websites. The collected teaching materials were designed for the study under the guidance and suggestions of the experienced and expert teachers. Teaching materials for the listening skills were planned as the following table.

**Table 3 Teaching Materials**

| Types of Materials          | Listening Skill  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Dialogues and conversations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General idea</li> <li>• Ordering</li> <li>• Specific information</li> <li>• Transferring information</li> </ul> |
| Stories                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phonemic distinctions</li> <li>• Specific information</li> <li>• Sequencing</li> </ul>                          |
| Topics                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phonemic distinctions</li> <li>• Transferring information</li> </ul>  |

As regard with the lesson plan, it was divided into pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening for both groups. The distinction between conventional teaching and communicative approach for teaching listening is focus on form of the language and focus on function of the language. Especially for post-listening section, conventional teaching emphasizes on the analysis of language in the text and on listen and repeat, whereas, communicative approach targets at the examining functional language and inferring vocabulary meaning (Field, 2002). To examine practically and revise as necessary, the lesson plans were pilot tested for one week with (47) Grade Ten students from Basic Education High School, Patheingyi.

### (c) Posttest

The posttest consisted of (60) items of pre-intermediate level for specific information, phonemic distinctions, transferring information and sequencing. The posttest was administered to investigate whether the use of communicative approach has positive effect on improving the listening skill of Grade Ten students. The test items were constructed according to the advice and suggestions of the supervisor. The test items were validated by three experienced and expert teachers. The allocated time was (45) minutes and the given marks were 50 marks. The test items were modified again in accordance with the suggestions of those experienced teachers. Then, the posttest was administered at the selected high schools on December 12, 2018.

### Analysis of the Data

Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to process the results of the groups statistically. The pretest scores of the experimental and control groups were compared by using the independent samples *t* test. According to the *t* test result, the levels of the two groups were not the same before the treatment. Therefore, the posttest scores of the two groups were compared after controlling the pretest scores by using the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to find out whether there was a significance difference between the two groups from each selected school.

## Procedure

Research methodology was studied to understand the nature of the research and the researcher's ethics. For the theoretical foundation, relevant information were explored and collected through books, educational journals, theses and Internet websites. After that, the literature review was made on the basis of communicative approach and listening skill. At the same time, the research design was chosen and the instruments were constructed under the guidance of the supervisor. In order to carry out the experimental study, quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group design was used. The two high schools, No. (14) Basic Education High School and No. (16) Basic Education High School, Chan Aye Tharsan Township, Mandalay, were selected by using a simple random sampling method. Non-equivalent control group design allows random assignment of intact groups not individuals. "An advantage of this design is that since classes are selected "as is", possible effects from reactive arrangements are minimized. Groups may not even aware that they are involved in a study" (Gay & Airasian, 2003).

The pilot study was carried out for the pretest and lesson plans. Then, the pretest was administered before the treatment was provided. Afterwards, the treatment was given to the experimental groups for five weeks. The posttest was administered to both groups after giving the treatment. The data were analysed by using the independent samples *t* test and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

## Findings

### Findings on the Equivalence of the Intact Groups

The non-equivalent control group design requires to consider whether the groups are equivalent because "the more similar the intact groups are, the stronger the study" (Gay & Airasian, 2003). To examine this question, the pretest scores of the both groups in each school were calculated by using the independent samples *t* test as shown in the following table.

**Table 4** The Result of *t* Test for Independent Samples on Pretest Scores

| School | Group | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> |
|--------|-------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| HS 1   | C     | 30       | 32.33    | 8.93      | -2.37*   | 59        | .021     |
|        | E     | 31       | 37.16    | 6.85      |          |           |          |
| HS 2   | C     | 51       | 36.39    | 8.07      | -4.43*** | 79.12     | .000     |
|        | E     | 53       | 42.13    | 4.63      |          |           |          |

**Note:** \**p* < .05      C = Control Group      HS 1 = No. (14) BEHS, Mandalay  
 \*\*\**p* < .001      E = Experimental Group      HS 2 = No. (16) BEHS, Mandalay

According to the results as shown in Table 4, it was found that the means of the experimental groups were higher than that of the control groups in both schools. Then, the null hypothesis, 'there is no difference between the groups', was rejected because the *p* values were .021 (*p* < .05) and .000 (*p* < .001) respectively. Therefore, there were significant differences between the control and experimental groups in both schools. Consequently, it can be said that the listening skill of the experimental groups was significantly higher than that of the control groups before the treatment. According to this result, to display the findings on the research questions, the pretest scores were needed to equate statistically in using the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

**Findings on Research Question (1)**

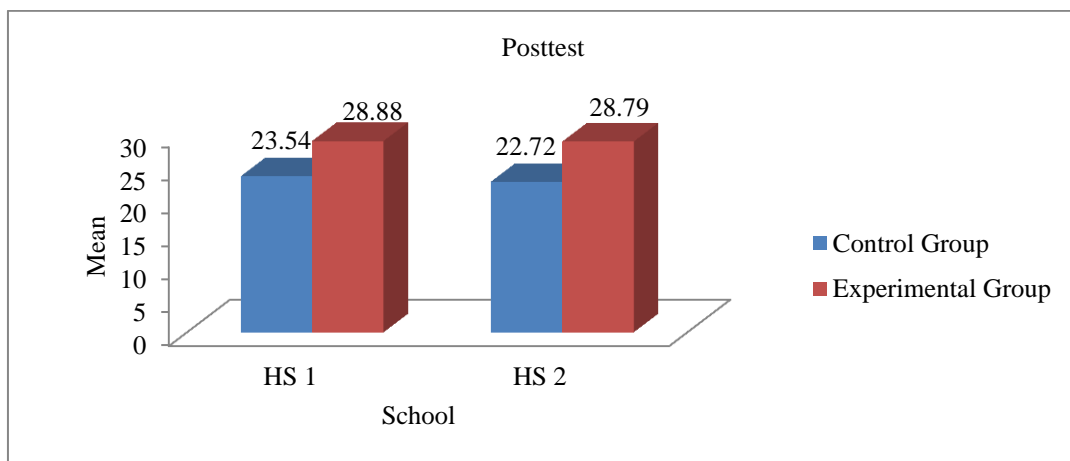
Research question (1) is whether the communicative approach has positive effect on improving the listening skill of Grade Ten students. To examine this question, the pretest and the posttest scores of the experimental groups and control groups in both schools were calculated by using the analysis of covariance as in the following table.

**Table 5 The Result of Analysis of Covariance on Posttest Scores Using Pretest Scores as a Covariate**

| School | Source | N  | Unadjusted |      | Adjusted |      | df | Ms     | F        | p    |
|--------|--------|----|------------|------|----------|------|----|--------|----------|------|
|        |        |    | M          | SD   | M        | SE   |    |        |          |      |
| HS 1   | C      | 30 | 22.70      | 7.62 | 23.54    | 1.36 | 1  | 395.85 | 7.50**   | .008 |
|        | E      | 31 | 29.69      | 7.78 | 28.88    | 1.34 |    |        |          |      |
|        | Error  |    |            |      |          |      |    |        |          |      |
| HS 2   | C      | 51 | 20.45      | 8.52 | 22.72    | .98  | 1  | 798.22 | 17.94*** | .000 |
|        | E      | 53 | 30.97      | 8.21 | 28.79    | .96  |    |        |          |      |
|        | Error  |    |            |      |          |      |    |        |          |      |

**Note.**\*\* $p < .01$  C = Control Group HS 1 = No. (14) BEHS, Mandalay  
 \*\*\* $p < .001$  E = Experimental Group HS 2 = No. (16) BEHS, Mandalay

According to the results as shown in Table 5, after controlling the pretest scores, there was a significant difference between the control and experimental groups in each school,  $F(1,58) = 7.50, p = .008$  and  $F(1,101) = 17.94, p = .000$  respectively. Moreover, as it is evident from this table, the adjusted means of the experimental groups are significantly higher than those of the control groups in both schools (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1** Comparison of means of the two groups on the posttest

These results showed that the use of communicative approach has positive effect on improving the listening skill of Grade Ten students.

**Findings on Research Question (2)**

Research question (2) is whether the communicative approach has positive effect on improving the listening for specific information of Grade Ten students. To satisfy this question, the overall pretest scores and the posttest scores in relation to the specific information items of

the experimental groups and control groups in both schools were analyzed by using the analysis of covariance as shown in the following table.

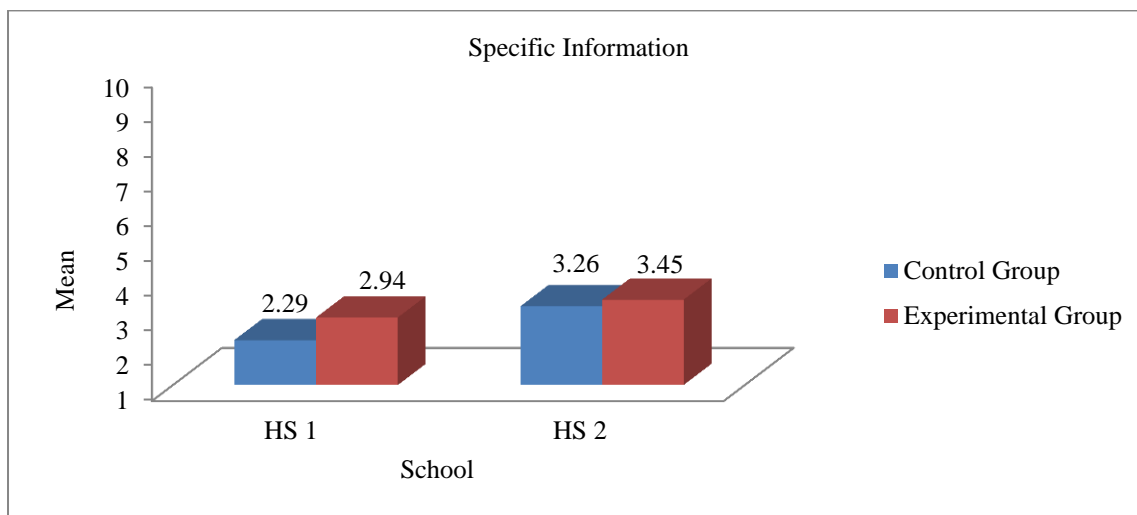
**Table 6 The Result of Analysis of Covariance on Specific Information Items Using Pretest Scores as a Covariate**

| School | Source | N  | Unadjusted |      | Adjusted |     | df  | Ms   | F    | p    |
|--------|--------|----|------------|------|----------|-----|-----|------|------|------|
|        |        |    | M          | SD   | M        | SE  |     |      |      |      |
| HS 1   | C      | 30 | 2.17       | 1.05 | 2.29     | .24 | 1   | 5.83 | 3.60 | .063 |
|        | E      | 31 | 3.06       | 1.55 | 2.94     | .23 |     |      |      |      |
|        | Error  |    |            |      |          |     | 58  | 1.62 |      |      |
| HS 2   | C      | 51 | 2.86       | 1.90 | 3.26     | .26 | 1   | .08  | .26  | .613 |
|        | E      | 53 | 3.83       | 2.04 | 3.45     | .25 |     |      |      |      |
|        | Error  |    |            |      |          |     | 101 | 3.13 |      |      |

**Note:** C = Control Group  
E = Experimental Group

HS 1 = No. (14) BEHS, Mandalay  
HS 2 = No. (16) BEHS, Mandalay

According to the results of the Table 6, after controlling the pretest scores, there were no significant differences between the control groups and experimental groups of the posttest scores on specific information items in both schools,  $F(1,58) = 3.60$ ,  $p = .063$  and  $F(1, 101) = .26$ ,  $p = .613$  respectively. And the means of the experimental groups and those of the control groups were also almost the same in both schools (see Figure 1).



**Figure 2** Comparison of means of the two groups on the specific information items

These results lead to the conclusion that the use of communicative approach does not have positive effect on improving the listening skill of Grade Ten students in relation to the specific information.

### Findings on Research Question (3)

Research question (3) is whether the communicative approach has positive effect on improving the listening for phonemic distinctions of Grade Ten students. To answer this question, the overall pretest scores and the posttest scores in relation to the phonemic distinctions



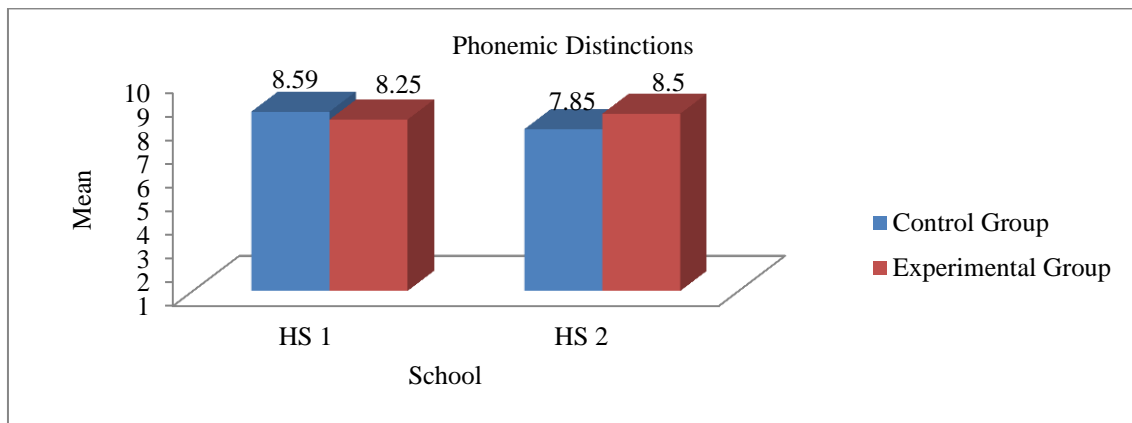
items of the experimental groups and control groups in both schools were analyzed by using the analysis of covariance as shown in the following table.

**Table 7 The Result of Analysis of Covariance on Phonemic Distinctions Items Using Pretest Scores as a Covariate**

| School | Source | N  | Unadjusted |      | Adjusted |     | df | Ms   | F    | p    |
|--------|--------|----|------------|------|----------|-----|----|------|------|------|
|        |        |    | M          | SD   | M        | SE  |    |      |      |      |
| HS 1   | C      | 30 | 8.40       | 1.33 | 8.59     | .24 | 1  | 1.65 | 1.01 | .320 |
|        | E      | 31 | 8.44       | 1.49 | 8.25     | .24 |    |      |      |      |
|        | Error  |    |            |      |          |     |    |      |      |      |
| HS 2   | C      | 51 | 7.35       | 2.26 | 7.85     | .29 | 1  | 9.08 | 2.37 | .127 |
|        | E      | 53 | 8.98       | 2.23 | 8.50     | .28 |    |      |      |      |
|        | Error  |    |            |      |          |     |    |      |      |      |

**Note:** C = Control Group  
 E = Experimental Group  
 HS 1 = No. (14) BEHS, Mandalay  
 HS 2 = No. (16) BEHS, Mandalay

The results in the Table 7 showed that after controlling the pretest scores, there were no significant differences between the control groups and experimental groups of the posttest scores on phonemic distinctions items in both schools,  $F(1, 58) = 1.01, p = .320$  and  $F(1, 101) = 2.37, p = .127$  respectively. Also, the adjusted means of the experimental groups and those of the control groups are about the same in both schools (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3** Comparison of means of the two groups on the phonemic distinctions items

This means that the use of communicative approach does not have positive effect on improving the listening skill of Grade Ten students in relation to the phonemic distinctions.

**Findings on Research Question (4)**

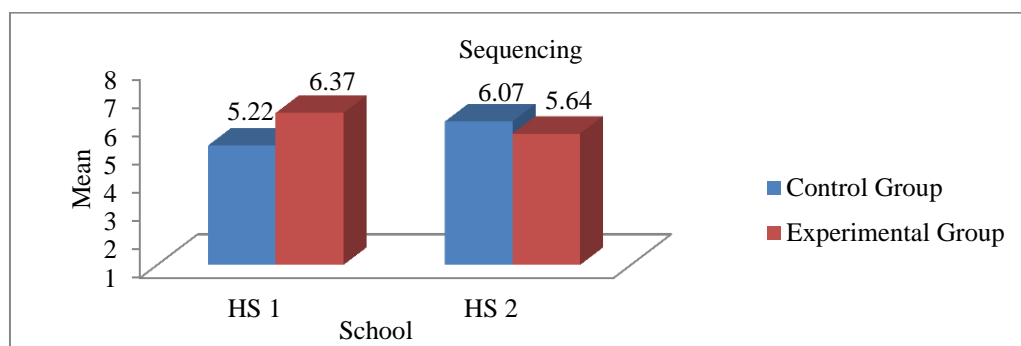
Research question (4) is whether the communicative approach has positive effect on improving the listening for sequencing of Grade Ten students. To examine this question, the overall pretest scores and the posttest scores in relation to the sequencing items of the experimental groups and control groups in both schools were analyzed by using the analysis of covariance as shown in the following table.

**Table 8 The Result of Analysis of Covariance on Sequencing Items Using Pretest Scores as a Covariate**

| School | Source | N  | Unadjusted |      | Adjusted |     | df | Ms    | F     | p    |
|--------|--------|----|------------|------|----------|-----|----|-------|-------|------|
|        |        |    | M          | SD   | M        | SE  |    |       |       |      |
| HS 1   | C      | 30 | 5.00       | 2.23 | 5.21     | .38 | 1  | 18.56 | 4.52* | .038 |
|        | E      | 31 | 6.58       | 2.03 | 6.37     | .37 |    |       |       |      |
|        | Error  |    |            |      |          |     |    |       |       |      |
| HS 2   | C      | 51 | 5.51       | 3.23 | 6.07     | .39 | 1  | 4.05  | .57   | .454 |
|        | E      | 53 | 6.17       | 2.62 | 5.64     | .30 |    |       |       |      |
|        | Error  |    |            |      |          |     |    |       |       |      |

Note: \* $p < .05$  C = Control Group HS 1 = No. (14) BEHS, Mandalay  
E = Experimental Group HS 2 = No. (16) BEHS, Mandalay

The results in the Table 8 revealed that after controlling the pretest scores, there was a significant difference between the groups in BEHS (14) since  $F(58, 4.11) = 4.52$ ,  $p = .038$  ( $p < .05$ ) and the adjusted mean scores of the experimental groups were higher than those of the control groups. For BEHS (16), however, there was no significant difference between the groups,  $F(101, 7.15) = .57$ ,  $p = .454$  and the adjusted means were almost the same (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4** Comparison of means of the two groups on the sequencing items

These results lead to the conclusion that the use of communicative approach has positive effect on improving the listening for sequencing of students in BEHS (14) but not on that of students in BEHS (16).

### Findings on Research Question (5)

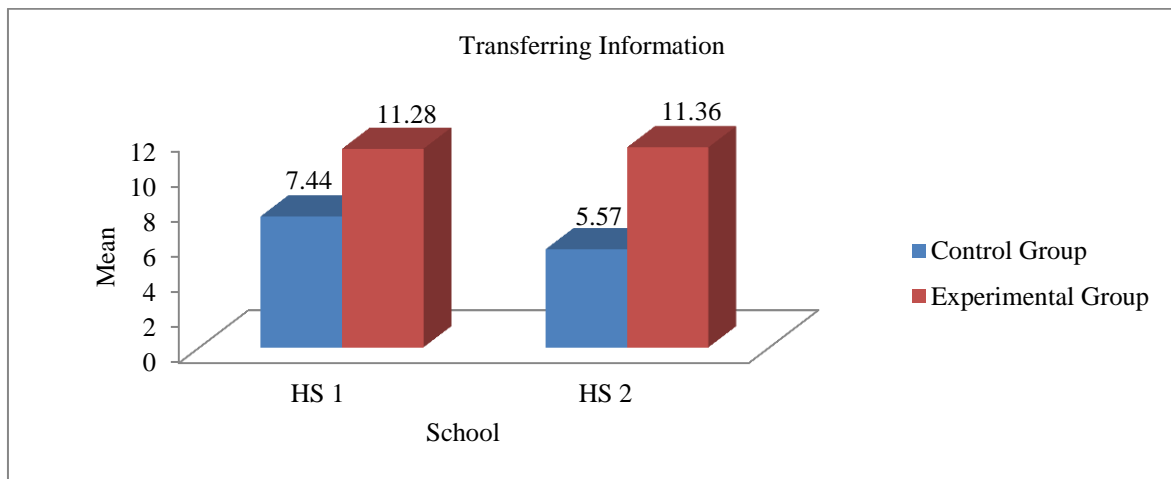
Research question (5) is whether the communicative approach has positive effect on improving the listening for transferring information of Grade Ten students. To examine this question, the overall pretest scores and the posttest scores in relation to the transferring information items of the experimental groups and control groups in both schools were analyzed by using the analysis of covariance as shown in following table.

**Table 9**The Result of Analysis of Covariance on Transferring Information Items Using Pretest Scores as a Covariate

| School | Source | N  | Unadjusted |      | Adjusted |     | df | Ms     | F        | p    |
|--------|--------|----|------------|------|----------|-----|----|--------|----------|------|
|        |        |    | M          | SD   | M        | SE  |    |        |          |      |
| HS 1   | C      | 30 | 7.13       | 5.04 | 7.44     | .85 | 1  | 205.67 | 9.98**   | .003 |
|        | E      | 31 | 11.58      | 4.15 | 11.28    | .83 |    |        |          |      |
|        | Error  |    |            |      |          |     |    |        |          |      |
| HS 2   | C      | 51 | 4.75       | 3.69 | 5.57     | .49 | 1  | 727.39 | 64.20*** | .000 |
|        | E      | 53 | 12.15      | 3.95 | 11.36    | .48 |    |        |          |      |
|        | Error  |    |            |      |          |     |    |        |          |      |

Note. \*\* $p < .01$  C = Control Group HS 1 = No. (14) BEHS, Mandalay  
 \*\*\* $p < .001$  E = Experimental Group HS 2 = No. (16) BEHS, Mandalay

Table 9 displayed that after controlling the pretest scores, there were significant differences between the control groups and experimental groups in both schools,  $F(1, 58) = 9.98$ ,  $p = .003$  and  $F(1, 101) = 64.20$ ,  $p = .000$ . As it is obvious from this table, the means of the experimental groups are significantly higher than those of the control groups in both schools (see Figure 5).



**Figure 5** Comparison of means of the two groups on the transferring information items

Therefore, the use of communicative approach has positive effect on improving the listening for transferring information of Grade Ten students.

### Conclusion

#### Discussion

In this study, the achievement test for the listening skill was developed with four sub-skills: listening for specific information, phonemic distinctions, sequencing and transferring information. The data were also analyzed according to each sub-skill to examine if there is a significance difference between the groups.

The sub-skills of listening were arranged in the order of more challenging ones. The results on each listening sub-skill highlighted that the effect of using communicative approach

and conventional teaching had no difference in less challenging sub-skills such as specific information and phonemic distinctions. When it came to the more challenging sub-skills as sequencing and transferring information, however, using communicative approach had a relatively positive effect on them.

To examine the effectiveness of communicative approach on developing the listening skill, the overall posttest scores were analyzed statistically. As a result, the experimental groups which were treated by communicative approach had higher means on the listening test than the control groups which were treated by conventional teaching. This result advocated that “the communicative language teaching – the idea the student learns through the act of communication – increased the role of listening” (Helgesen, 2003).

In language teaching, all four skills are equally important and should be prioritized equally in the textbooks and tests. Nevertheless, listening skill is still excluded in the text content. This study, therefore, tried to highlight the importance of listening skill in language teaching.

Through the study, one surprising fact to the researcher was that all students had the listening ability to some extent although listening skill was not practiced in class. If the students were given the opportunity for practice, their listening skill could be developed in no time. Furthermore, owing to the lack of practice, their listening skill was somewhat lower in comparing with their reading and writing skills.

It was also found that the students had lack of confidence in listening and communication during the first week of the study because it was quite unfamiliar to them. But they gradually enjoyed and actively participated in the listening processes; pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening. This proved that even though listening is a receptive skill it is not necessarily a passive one and a listener can either be active or passive (Lindsay & Knight, 2006).

As regard with the communication during the lesson, the researcher could not expect the students could communicate successfully using the target language due to the less significance of speaking section in the textbook and exclusion in the achievement tests. That is why, according to the continuum of communicative approach from pre-communicative to communicative activities (Littlewood, 1981), the researcher could design the lessons only around the pre-communicative activities and the judicious amount of using the mother tongue was allowed (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983, cited in Brown, 2001).

The most time-devoting task in this research was developing the teaching materials. In designing them, the most commercial syllabuses which seemed reflected the communicative approach were studied. The researcher had to consider the background knowledge of students based on the English syllabuses used in Myanmar as well as trying to make the teaching materials including in the communicative continuum. The researcher also had to take the suggestions and help of the expert teachers in designing the materials which is “tailored for a particular group of learners in a particular place, studying for particular purposes in a given amount of time” (Brown, 2001).

The main differences of the lesson plans between conventional teaching and communicative approach were classroom setting, classroom language and different focuses on language. For conventional teaching, the classroom setting remained unchanged as it was and the teacher led the explanation of the language which was emphasized on grammar and new vocabularies. For communicative approach, the students were cooperated in groups and the

teacher manipulated the members of the groups during the study. The intervention of the teacher in communicative approach was much less than that of in conventional teaching. The teacher's explanation emphasized mainly on examining functional language and usage of new vocabularies. For classroom language, the teacher used the target language in communicative approach and the students also tried to use the target language as much as they could during the communication with each other, but not in conventional teaching. The findings of the study also statistically approved the relatively positive effect of communicative approach in compared with the conventional teaching.

As regard with the study period, the schools allowed four days per week because the listening skill was excluded in the textbook and the researcher could not substitute the existing period of English subject teachers. The schools had to draw the new timetables that include the period for this research. At the high school level, therefore, only Grade Ten was available for this study owing to the matriculation exam preparation of Grade Eleven.

In addition, the class size of a school was very big, up to (53) students in each classroom. The researcher, therefore, found that it was difficult to give individual attention to each student. In every group, few students who had enough confidence to speak usually led the group to discuss and the others seemed less active in communicating with the whole group. However, their contributions to group performance by taking notes and delivering the ideas were prominent due to the fact that "communicative competence implies a set of strategies for getting messages sent and received and for negotiating meaning as an interactive participant in discourse, whether spoken or written" (Brown, 2001). So, it can be said that those less active students could be more active in communication if the group size was small enough to enhance their confidence and the teacher's attention could be given individually to encourage them.

Moreover, noise was also an important factor to control in listening and communication processes. Although the researcher tried to reduce the noise by choosing the classrooms which was not very close to the others, noise from the other classes was still disturbed the listening process to some extent. Similarly, the noise from the communication of students also disturbed the other classrooms in some ways. Accordingly, rooms like language laboratory become necessity for listening sessions, whereas the language laboratory with the individual seats which prevent communication with each other would also be useless in implementing communicative language teaching.

In this study, only classroom activities and teaching materials for listening could be developed to implement communicative approach. Since communicative approach leads to "re-examination of language teaching goals, syllabuses, materials, and classroom activities" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002), the underlying communicative theories of language should also be reflected in the syllabuses.

To sum up, the listening skill of the students could be developed if the special attention is given to it in the textbooks and syllabuses. As regard with the language teaching methods, the results of this study clearly revealed that using communicative approach is far more effective than using the conventional teaching.

### **Suggestions for Further Studies**

In order to provide the enriched information of the integration of communicative approach to language teaching, suggestions for further studies are as follows:

1. Researchers should use the communicative approach in developing the other skills of language: speaking, reading and writing.
2. Researchers should arrange to get as much study period as possible.
3. Researchers should compare the use of communicative approach not only to conventional teaching but also to other language teaching methods.
4. Researchers should widen the scope of the study by choosing more than two schools.
5. Researchers should study the effectiveness of communicative approach at other school levels such as primary and middle school levels.
6. Researchers should strengthen the experimental study by combining with the study of students' perception on the communicative approach using questionnaires or interviews.

### **Conclusion**

In language teaching, listening was the ignored skill all over the world a long time ago. Nunan (2002), therefore, called it "the Cinderella skill" in second language learning since it was overlooked by "its elder sister, speaking skill". However, listening became fashion in language learning since 1960s and many appropriate approaches were developed. Here, communicative approach is the latest trend in the field of language teaching. In this study, therefore, communicative approach was selected to develop the listening skill which is still ignored in Myanmar with the intention of showing the equal paramount importance of developing language skills and adopting appropriate teaching approach for teachers.

The importance of listening skill was highlighted in the literature review and also the findings of the study showed that although students had lower level in listening skill than their existing level of reading and writing skills, it could develop when great attention was given to it. This means that if the listening skill was integrated in syllabus and given the special attention, this could lead to the significant development of students' listening skill.

Moreover, the results of this study revealed that as regard with the teaching to develop the listening skill, the use of communicative approach was better than the use of conventional teaching. Therefore, when it comes to the language teaching, this study has manifested that communicative approach is the solution.

To sum up, in the context of ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language), the ultimate aim of the language is to use it as a means of communication for learning. The listening and speaking skills are given special status in language teaching as equally as reading and writing skills which have never been ignored in teaching language. Therefore, in order to enhance the development of all four skills of language in students, effective language teaching materials and syllabuses should be designed to reflect the theories of language and to accompany with the most suitable teaching methods.

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