

# Communicative Approach in Teaching Grammar Among the Grade 9 Students of Ubay National High School: Basis for Instructional Development Plan

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*Abstract* — Many textbooks have been published since the advent of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to include communicative activities, authentic resources and personalized contexts. However, when the teaching and learning of grammar is concerned, most of the language teachers tend to go back to their conventional way of teaching English grammar, which consist of mainly drills and memorization of the rules involved. In this study the researcher compared the two approaches in teaching English grammar, to find out what approach is better and effective. A quasi-experimental design was used to measure the efficacy of the approaches in teaching grammar among the Grade 9 students of Ubay National High School, Labason, Zamboanga del Norte. The study revealed that the pre-test and post-test mean score of the control group is above average and the pre-test and post-test mean score of the experimental group is excellent. Also, there is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test result of the control group, while there is a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test result of the experimental group. Furthermore, there is no significant difference between the post-test results of the control and experimental group when they are exposed to communicative approach and conventional approach. An instructional development plan was proposed.

*Keywords* — *CLT, communicative approach, grammar, quasi-experimental, learner-centered, teaching English language*

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## I. Introduction

English has been one of the most widely used language across the globe and there are some who wants to be fluent in using it more than others. A lot of people today wants to improve their command in English, that opens up opportunities in learn the language. There are trainings provided in many different ways such as formal instruction, study abroad, and the use of media and the Internet. The world demand to learn the language has created an enormous opportunity for those people or agencies who will facilitate and give quality language teaching, teaching materials and resources. Employed people believed that those employees who have good English language skills, and fluency in English has an edge in achieving more promotions in the future, than those who can barely speak the language. In our generations today English is like a pre-requisite to success or a building block to achieve goals in life.

This study aims to unlock the effectiveness of Communicative Approach in teaching English grammar compared to the conventional approach. This has been a problem to some language teachers, trying to find ways to promote learning among the students with less burden and more productive results. This is also to find out if there is a need for us to change the way we teach grammar. The teachers have been using the conventional approach for a very long time, the question is, is it the right time for us to make an alternative way in how we usually do things in teaching? The results of the research will greatly influence language teachers all around the world and quenched our thirst for answers on how effective the approach really was, since grammar is one of the hardest parts in teaching a language.

### **Literature Review**

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is regarded as an approach that caters the need in language teaching. In learning a language, it is best given when students are interacting with others, completing group task, and resolving issues in real life situation as the goal of language is to develop communicative competence (Richard, 2006).

Richards (2006) revealed the advantages of CLT. In a CLT classroom, students are exposed to the language used by other members of the group, which leads to familiarization of the target language; it is an approach that can be applied to a number of languages, than other approaches. Since it is a tasked based activity and usually in a form of group activities, it makes motivation rise gradually, and lastly fluency is through the learners' exposure to authentic materials and real-life situations. He added that a CLT classroom will make the students feel comfortable, unthreatened and as a result, can avoid taking on a teacher-centered authoritarian attitude.

The study results did not indicate teachers are abandoning grammar instruction. Alternatively, the substitution of structure exercises with meaning focused activities that involves authentic or real-life communication in a language classroom was found to be more efficient way of improving communicative capacity without loss of morpho syntactic accuracy. Learner's success is evaluating discrete morph syntactic features on a set of integrative communicative tasks not a strong indicator of their results (Toro, Minuche, Tapia, Paredes; 2018).

It is based on the theory that the primary function of language use is communication. Its primary goal is for learners to develop communicative competence which is needed for the students to learn best in an interactive environment (Vu Van Tuan, 2017).

CLT represents a certain model or study framework, or communicative ability that is theoretical. In other words, its purpose is to manipulate real life circumstances that involve communication that will motivate the students to talk throughout the activity (CelceMurcia, 2001).

CLT syllabus redefined the teaching of the functions of grammar, teachers and students, the use of materials and the teaching technique for learning. CLT syllabus is defined as emphasized meaning, contextualization is important, language learning is learning to communicate, language

is produced through repeated trials and errors, fluency is primary, while accuracy is secondary (Richards, 2006).

The concepts in Long (1985) and Skehan (1998) stress the use of real-world tasks or behaviors equivalent to authentic task behavior. Carrying out real-world tasks often includes the use of natural words that helps the person comfortable in interacting with others and would set them free from hesitations.

Hymes (1971) believes that second language learners should not restrict the fact of linguistic knowledge, which seems to us to be very important and useful because it is the fundamental element of a language, but should also see the various ways of communicating with others in different circumstances and relations. This consists of the following interaction of grammatical, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, and probabilistic language components in the theory of communicative competence. Based on the theory of Hymes, Canale and Swain (1980) proposed communicative skills which show the use of the linguistic system and the important communication aspects to be used in learning the language. The preparation of English language teachers to become beacons of global competitiveness necessitates teacher education institutions in the world to put emphasis on the mentoring process (Maglente et al.,2023).

Communicative competence is the core of Communicative Approach. It is the ability to interact effectively with other people or the ability to communicate in an effective and socially appropriate manner (Trenholm and Jensen, 1988) Canale and Swain (1980), analysis shows that the communicative competence is made up of four major strands: “grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. (Canale an Swain, 1980) grammatical competence is a paragliding term that involves increasing grammar (morphology, syntax), vocabulary, and mechanics expertise. The term mechanics refers to the basic sounds of letters and syllables, word pronunciation, intonation, and stress, in terms of voice.

(Scarcella and Oxford, 1992:141) learners need to know terms and phrases in a language, it is necessity for them to know all these things to create an opportunity for them to somehow familiarize the language and most importantly they need to understand how terms are segmented into various sounds, and how sentences are emphasized in specific ways. Thus, grammatical competence helps speakers to correctly and bravely use and understand English language structures which contribute to their fluency.

Savignon (2002) Grammar is important; and when it relates to their communicative needs and experiences, learners tend to concentrate best on grammar (Ellis, 1994). Nor should specific attention to form be interpreted as being restricted to syntactic characteristics at the sentence or paragraph construction level. These can include wider features of debate, relevant sociolinguistic laws, and communication techniques themselves.

Brown (2007) describes CLT as an approach to language teaching as an approach that caters students' accuracy in the language, application of different tasks, a learner-centered

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environment that promotes interaction, performance tasks, and meaningful communication which are helpful in practical situations.

## **II. Methodology**

This chapter contains the detailed discussion of the research process undertaken, the place where the research will take place, the respondents, the data gathering procedure, validity and reliability, ethical consideration and statistical tools used.

### **Research Design**

Quasi-experimental design was used in this research to identify the effectiveness of the communicative approach in teaching grammar among the grade 9 students of Ubay National High School. "Quasi-experimental research is just like experimental research, but not like pure experimental research. Quasi-experimental and true experimental research are somewhat the same, because the independent variable is manipulated, but the participants in Quasi-experimental are not randomly assigned to any order of conditions." (Cook & Campbell, 1979).

### **Locale of the Study**

The name "Labason" had several versions but the most known among them is the word "Lab-as", in Visayan term it means "Fresh Fish". This place was known widely known for its abundance of supply of different types of fishes that attracts neighboring places. The original inhabitants of this place were Subanons and later, our Muslim brothers came and was part of the folks there. The livelihood of the people in labason is planting crops, raising all sorts of agricultural products and raising farm animals.

The study was conducted at Ubay National High School. It is located at Barangay Ubay, Labason, Zamboanga del Norte. In 1954, officially named to Ubay in honor of former Governor Alberto Q. Ubay. By virtue of SP Resolution No. 6, S. 1961.

### **Population and Sampling Design**

Random sampling was used to get the number of students who were not that good in grammar and has an average English grade of 75 to 82 percent. The researcher randomly picked 20 students for the control and 20 students for the experimental group of respondents from 163 Grade 9 students of Ubay National High School.

### **Data Gathering Tools**

The researcher administered pre-test to both control and experimental group using a questionnaire. After the application of the communicative approach on the experimental group and conventional approach on the control group they were tested again for the post-test. The test

questionnaire was composed of two grammar topics, 20 subject and verb agreement and 20 preposition questions with a total of 40 item test was given after the application of both the approaches tested.

### **Reliability and Validity**

The study was reliable because of the continuous checking and reviewing of the necessary statistical tools and teaching methods needed for the study and were validated by the experts on the field of English which resulted with an authentic result.

### **Ethical Considerations**

A letter of permission was sent to the principal of the school where the researcher conducted the study about Communicative Approach in Teaching grammar at Ubay National High School, Ubay, Labason, Zamboanga del Norte.

Following the approval of the request, the researcher informed the Grade 9 students as respondents of the study. Their consent was solicited freely, and voluntarily. The researcher discussed the objectives and guaranteed the respondents that their names are treated with confidentiality. The researcher assured that the school and the respondents would learn the result of the study.

### **Data Gathering Procedures**

The respondents of the control and experimental group were given pre-test in grammar, a 40-item test consisting of subject-verb agreement and prepositions. The communicative approach was used for the experimental group, students were grouped to perform speaking activities in an interactive way, they were given opportunities to talk and interview some of their classmates and report it within their groups, all the activities were focused on students participation in creating meaningful conversations in real life situations. The conventional approach was used in teaching the control group, they were given ample of examples and drills all the time, they were tasks to make sentences out of the topic given, as what we can perceived, it is focused on drills and memorization of the lesson taught. After the application of the said approaches, they were tested again using the same test used in the pre-test. Questionnaires were distributed to the 40 Grade 9 respondents during their advisory consultation hour. The respondents were given 40 minutes to answer the questions. The data gathered were automatically recorded by the researcher.

### **Statistical Tools**

The analysis of the data collected was subjected to the following statistical tools:

**Weighted mean** - This was used to know the mean score of the controlled and experimental group.

**T-test correlated/paired** - This was utilized to measure the significant difference of the pretest and posttest of the experimental and controlled group.

**T-test uncorrelated/unpaired** - This was utilized to measure the significant difference of the posttest of both the experimental and controlled group.

### III. Results and Discussion

This chapter deals with presenting the findings and analyzing the data gathered based on this study's research question and hypotheses. Data presentation was structured in the order according to the problem statement, in an effort to answer accordingly.

The first research question that this study sought to answer is, "What is the pretest and posttest mean score of the control group of respondents when they are exposed to conventional approach in teaching Grammar?"

**Table 1**  
**The pre-test and posttest mean score of the controlled group of respondents when they were exposed to conventional approach in teaching Grammar**

	Pretest			Posttest		
	Mean	SD	Verbal description	Mean	SD	Verbal description
Controlled Group	18.45	3.017	Above average	19.20	4.085	Above average

Legend: 20 – 25 Excellent  
 15 – 19 Above Average  
 10 – 14 Average  
 6 – 9 Fair  
 0 – 5 Poor

Table 1 shows the mean score of the controlled group after applying the conventional approach in grammar. The control group pre-test mean is 18.45 with a standard deviation of 3.017, which resulted to a verbal description of above average. The post-test mean of the control group is 19.20 with the standard deviation of 4.085, which has a verbal description of above average. The student's results increased after the application of conventional approach, but remained with a description of above average.

The study results did not suggest that teachers ignore grammar rules and instructions, but the substitution of structured exercises in a language with meaning-focused activities that promotes students' communication was strongly encouraged to find a more efficient way to improve communication skills and grammatical accuracy (Savignon, 1971).

The second research question that this study sought to answer is, “What is the pretest and posttest mean score of the experimental group of respondents when they are exposed to communicative approach in teaching Grammar?”

**Table 2**  
**The pre-test and posttest mean score of the experimental group of respondents when they were exposed to communicative approach in teaching Grammar.**

	Pretest			Posttest		
	Mean	SD	Verbal description	Mean	SD	Verbal description
Experimental Group	17.85	2.719	Above average	20.50	2.874	Excellent

Legend: 20 – 25 Excellent  
 15 – 19 Above Average  
 10 – 14 Average  
 6 – 9 Fair  
 0 – 5 Poor

Table 2 shows us the mean score of the experimental group after applying the communicative approach in teaching English grammar. The pre-test mean of the experimental group is 17.85 and a standard deviation of 2.719 which leads to the verbal description of above average. The post-test result of the experimental group with a mean of 20.50 and a standard deviation of 2.874 shows a verbal description of excellent.

Lopez & Agullo (2013) claimed that CLT’s main goal is to teach communication skills, which involves the knowledge of the building blocks of a sentence or, in other words, the basic types of grammar (e.g. parts speech, timing), a teaching approach that applies to other aspects of language, such as the use of language in different purposes and functions that can be useful in practical scenarios.

The third research question that this study sought to answer is, “Is there a significant difference in the pretest and posttests of the controlled and experimental group when they are exposed in conventional approach and communicative approach in teaching grammar?”

**Table 3**

**Significance on the Difference between the pretest and posttest results of the control and experimental group of respondents when they were exposed to communicative approach in teaching grammar**

	Pretest			Posttest			t value	P value	Decision on Ho
	Mean	SD	Verbal description	Mean	SD	Verbal description			
Controlled Group	18.45	3.017	Above average	19.20	4.085	Above average	-1.005	0.328	Accept
Experimental Group	17.85	2.719	Above average	20.50	2.874	Excellent	-3.612	0.002**	Reject

**\*\*Significant at 0.05 level of significance**

Table 3 shows the result of t-test correlated/dependent/paired between the pretest and post-test results of the control and experimental groups. The findings disclosed that the significant difference does not exist between the pretest and post-test scores of the control group with t value of -1.005 and p value of 0.328 while experimental group the significant difference does exist with t values of -3.612 and p value which is lesser than 0.05 level of significance, hence the null hypothesis is rejected since there is a statistical significant difference among the variables tested in the study. However in terms of control group, the null hypothesis is accepted since there is no statistical significant difference among the variables tested in the study. The data imply that the students who were exposed in conventional approach in teaching Grammar had not significantly improved the academic performance in Grammar. In contrast those who were exposed to communicative approach had enhanced their learning in Grammar which is very evident in the pretest and posttest of the Experimental group. Grammar is important; and when it concerns their communicative needs and experiences, learners seem to concentrate best on grammar (Ellis, 1994).

The fourth research question that this study sought to answer is, “Is there a significant difference in the posttests of the controlled and experimental group when they are exposed in conventional approach and communicative approach in teaching grammar?”



**Table 4**

**Significance on the Difference between the posttest results of the control and experimental group of respondents when they were exposed to communicative approach and conventional approach in teaching Grammar.**

	Controlled Group			Experimental Group			t value	P value	Decision on Ho
	Mean	SD	Verbal description	Mean	SD	Verbal description			
Posttest	19.20	4.085	Above average	20.50	2.874	Excellent	-1.164	0.252	Accept

**\*\*Significant at 0.05 level of significance**

Table 4 shows the result of t-test uncorrelated/independent between the post-test results of the control and experimental groups. As disclosed in the findings the significant difference does not exist in the post-test scores between the control group and experimental after the exposure of the students in both conventional and communicative approach in teaching Grammar with  $t = -1.164$  with  $p$  value greater than  $\alpha = 0.05$  level of significance, hence, the posited hypothesis is accepted since there is no statistical significant difference in the post-test scores of the students in Grammar. Evidently, the mean ratings of 19.20 and 20.50 for the control and experimental groups respectively show the level of performance in Grammar. The mean scores obtained by the students in control group and experimental group are too closed. This can be inferred that the communicative approach is just like the conventional approach in teaching Grammar in terms of effectiveness in enhancing the student's learning. Furthermore, communicative approach can't be concluded to be a good approach in teaching grammar.

CLT syllabus redefined the teaching of the functions of grammar, teachers and students, the use of materials and the teaching technique for learning. CLT syllabus is defined as emphasized meaning, contextualisation is important, language learning is learning to communicate, language is produced through repeated trials and errors, fluency is primary, while accuracy is secondary (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983).

The fifth research question that this study sought to answer is, "On the basis of the findings, what intervention plan can be designed?"

Based on the results of the gathered data, the intervention should be focused on the teacher's approach to let students participate in class, a student-centered classroom should be done for them to act and learn on their own, given the activities that will promote them to speak and interact with others. It is a way to enable them to find confidence and familiarity in using the English language, specifically in learning grammar.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendation drawn from the findings resulted from data analysis, aimed to find out how effective the communicative approach in teaching English grammar among the grade 9 students of Ubay National High School.

From the findings generated in this study, the following conclusions are stated as follows:

1. The pre-test and post-test mean score of the control group is above average.
2. The pre-test and post-test mean score of the experimental group is excellent.
3. There is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test result of the control group, while there is a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test result of the experimental group.
4. There is no significant difference between the post-test results of the control and experimental group when they are exposed to communicative approach and conventional approach.

#### **V. Recommendations**

The following recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions of this study:

##### **For the Officials of Department of Education**

The Department of education will benefit from this research in making instructional plan to improve our ways in making the curriculum specially in teaching English grammar. Communicative approach should be paired with the conventional approach, since the result shows that it is somewhat even. In the classroom setting, activities that requires speaking and interaction should be applied to enhance students learning and confidence since it clearly shows in the result of the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group that the approach is effective, after the application of the communicative approach, the conventional approach should be used.

##### **For the School Principal**

The school principal should adopt and innovate the teacher's approaches in teaching the English language, specifically in learning grammar. The need to upgrade is a necessity for the teachers. As the head of the school, teacher's should be given the opportunity to explore approaches that best suit the student's need to come up with a productive output that cater the students desire to learn.

**For the Faculty**

The faculty members should apply this approach in their lessons to further developed the student's ability in expressing themselves and gaining confidence at the same time. They will integrate the approach together with the conventional approach, to make the lesson interesting and exciting.

**For the Students**

The students should all be given opportunity to speak in all the activities, this will be the right time for them to talk and be able to use the language if not fluently, but in a meaningful way. Learning by doing is somewhat the point of this approach, for them to learn grammar and other things, they must act or perform it out using the activities given by the language teacher.

**For Other Researchers**

This could lead to another study and improve its goal into a bigger scope that will help not just a certain school but the nation as well. An approach that will generate good results and has a potential to be innovated in many ways.

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