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The Title of the Project: EEC Students' preferences for Communicative activities

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Partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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We hereby approve that this MA thesis

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EEC Students' preferences for Communicative activities

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to find out and compare learners' preferences and their teachers preferences for 16 communicative activities. Furthermore, it studied the students' attitude towards the communicative activities and their level of engagement while doing communicative activities. The final purpose of this project was to design a list of recommendations that can support EEC teachers while doing communicative activities in the classroom.

The qualitative data was pulled together with the help of the observations in 10 EEC (Experimental English Classes) groups by using the observation chart as a guide and taking notes for getting information about the communicative activity types performed in these groups. The current thesis also aimed to find out students' attitude towards those activities and their teachers' role as an engager of the activities. The Questionnaire was applied to 10 groups involving 104 EEC students and their 4 teachers. The questionnaire for the students and teachers included 13 activities and three types of participation modes in the activities.

The data collected through the observations and surveys were analyzed qualitatively. The outcomes demonstrate that communicative activities are mostly engaging and interesting for learners. They found them exciting, enjoyable and relaxing.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The present MA Thesis is proposed for Experimental English Classes (EEC), which is an afterschool English program for 6-17 year old school children. The following program suggests communicative student-centered English classes for children and young adults. Its main purpose is to give students an opportunity to learn English with the aid of Communicative method. Moreover MA TEFL students, as a part of their program, do their practicum and independent teaching in Experimental English Classes.

I have chosen this topic since I was interested in communicative approach as a recent method for teaching a foreign language. While doing the course "Introduction to TEFL methodology" an idea came to my mind, that it would be compelling to study and compare students' and teachers' views towards communicative activities.

The current MA Thesis aims to investigate, find out, analyze and compare EEC students' preferences with their teachers' preferences for 16 communicative activities. Furthermore it studied the students' attitude towards the communicative activities and their teachers' role to engage students into those activities. The final purpose of this project was to design a list of recommendations that can support EEC teachers while doing communicative activities in the classroom.

The purpose of the present research is to answer the following questions:

-What communicative activities do the students enjoy/don't enjoy taking part in?
  What are the reasons?

-What are the similarities and differences between the students' preferences and their teachers' preferences for communicative activities?

-What pedagogical implications can be made?

Thus to find out their attitude towards the communicative approach and activities a survey and observations were conducted. A survey was conducted to 10 groups involving 104 EEC students and their 4 teachers to find out and compare students' and teachers' preferences for communicative activities.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Language is a social tool that is used for expressing meaning, communicating with others for a variety of purposes, either orally or in a written form (Savignon, 2002). According to Seaton (1982), "Language is communication, the intimation to another being of what one wants and thinks; language is activity, basically of four kinds (listening, speaking, reading and writing), as well as body language and semiology" (p. 52).

During the last 20 years, many teachers have been using various kinds of teaching methods, but Communicative language teaching (CLT) is the most favorite among them. The term 'communicative' wraps various approaches and methodological procedures. The Communicative approach was suggested and introduced into L2 classrooms in the late 1970s and the 1980s of the 20th century as an alternative to the previous L2 teaching methods, mainly to Audio- Lingual method (Nizegorodcew, 2007, Zhong-guo & Min-yan, 2007, Celce-Murcia, Dornyei & Thurrell, 1997, Wong, 2012). CLT has increasingly developed into a teaching suggestion which has been proved by the language teachers throughout the world during its growth for the last 20 years (Wyatt, 2009, Thompson, 1996). CLT puts the stress on communication by means of the foreign language. CLT is a set of principles about the objectives of language teaching, that is, how learners acquire a language, activity types that best coincide with students' needs and learning styles and the role of teachers and students in the classroom (Richards, 2006, Savignon, 2002, Thompson, 1996, Shawer, 2010, Xiaoqing, 2000). In brief, CLT tends to improve the

students' communicative competence and to get over the disadvantages of traditional teaching approach.

CLT puts the emphasis on the learner. In L2 communicative classrooms students work in groups or pairs and they practice both listening and speaking concentrating on specific topics or on particular tasks. It gives students a chance to be involved in tasks that are relevant to real life (Nizegorodcew, 2007). On the other hand it is stated that CLT is not entirely face-to-face oral communication. It also concerns to reading, writing, grammar and culture (Savignon, 2002, Wong, 2012). Working in groups or pairs is not the crucial feature in CLT, since it can be improper in some cases. The direct approach, in contrast, recalls the traditional methods of teaching grammar, whereby new linguistic information is passed on and practiced explicitly. It stresses only language structures, sounds or words, thus separating language from use, situation and role (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei & Thurrell, 1997, Xiaoqing, 1997).

According to Brown (2007) competence is "a nonobservebal ability to do something, to perform something" (p. 14). The aim of CLT is to teach communicative competence, which consists of grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. "Communicative competence" is the main theoretical principle in language teaching. It expresses, defines and negotiates the meaning. It concerns to our knowledge of a language and knowing how to make sentences in that particular language (Richards, 2006, Savignon, 2002, Nizegorodcew, 2007, Xiaoqing, 2000, Wong, 2012).

2.2. Communicative Activities

Communicative activities can be used to train all the four skills, not only listening and speaking but also reading and writing, thus ensuring an all- round improvement of the four skills (Xiaoqing, 1997).

There exists an unlimited number of communicative activities. Littlewood (1981) differentiates between "functional communication activities" and "social interaction activities" as main activity types in CLT. Students are expected to use their language resources to complete information gap or solve a problem while doing functional communication activities. They include activities such as learners comparing pictures, finding similarities and differences and so on. The CLT insists that interactional speaking activities used in the classroom be instances of real communication, based on information gap (Xiaoqing, 1997). There is an information gap, which is filled by the message. In classrooms, the gap exists when a teacher/student in an exchange knows something that the other student does not.

Students need to concentrate on the context and the roles of the people included while coping with social interactional activities. They involve conversations and discussions, dialogues and role plays, debates, simulations and improvisations (Richards, 2006, Rodgers & Richards, 2001, Thompson, 1996, Xiaoqing, 1997).

One of the main goals of CLT is to develop fluency while using the language. Fluency takes place when a speaker engages in meaningful communication and keeps clear and constant interaction in spite of the constraints in his or her communicative competence. Students improve their language fluency when they negotiate the meaning, apply to communication strategies and correct misinterpretations while doing classroom activities (Richards, 2006). Fluency practice can be opposed to accuracy practice. Differences between activities that concentrate on fluency and those that concentrate on accuracy are the following.

Activities concentrating on fluency

- Reflecting natural use of language
- Concentrating on acquiring communication

- Require meaningful use of language

- Require the use of communication strategies

- Produce language that may not be predictable

Activities concentrating on accuracy

- Reflecting classroom use of language

- Focusing on the formation of correct examples of language

- Practicing language out of context

- Practicing small samples of language

- Do not require meaningful communication

Communicative practice refers to activities, where the accent is on practicing language within a real communicative situation. For example, students can draw a map of their neighborhood and answer questions about the location of various places, such as the nearest café, etc (Richards, 2006).

2. 3. The relationship between traditional English grammar teaching and Communicative Language teaching

Teachers should not disregard grammar teaching though they put CLT in the first place. The purpose of Communicative Approach, as already mentioned, is to develop the students' sociolinguistic competence and their linguistic competence. Sociolinguistic competence implies that the students are able to apply the accurate language on various circumstances (Zhong-guo & Min-yan, 2007, Shawer, 2010). CLT considers giving students the language situation in the classroom the best way. Therefore, teachers must think of different kinds of situations for conducting in classroom in order students have a chance to practice.

Task-based teaching is an essential approach of CLT. Real classrooms have tasks that are suitable for learning activities. The tasks are defined based on complexity.

According to Shawer (2010) "The whole-class activity consists of a pedagogic dialogue in which the teacher's questions are, as in other classrooms, invitations to the students to demonstrate their ability as learners, not from assumed roles in simulated situations or from their individual lives outside the classroom" (p. 28). Educational assessment relies on the validity of the tasks and their effectiveness as vehicles for the students.

The language competence implies that one can communicate, comprehend and write in grammatically accurate foreign language. If mistakes were made in one's pronunciation, grammar or words spelling, it will bring to confusion and dullness to others, and even harm their relationship. Thus, teachers' aim is to improve the students' communicative competence, that is, they should make an effort to improve the students' capacity for using language in communication in an accurate way. It is obvious that language practice is crucial for the enhancement of communicative competence (Zhong-guo & Min-yan, 2007, Shawer, 2010, Xiaoqing 2000, Wong, 2012).

How to teach students the grammar with the CLT?
Grammar ability is a piece of the communicative competence. Grammar is a means for teaching. The connection between grammar competence and communicative competence is that between "absorbing" and "practicing" (Xiaoqing, 1997). First, knowledge comes from practice. Students must take part in the reading and listening activities to study and comprehend the structure and function of the grammar. Then they should sum up the rule of grammar with their teachers, and absorb the sentence easily. Second, teachers should make "absorbing" in reference to "practicing", and support students to use the recently learned grammar in different kinds of "practicing" to make them comprehend.

The CLT encourages some grammar inaccuracy. However, this problem can be solved by adding language-knowledge teaching into the communicative teaching practice. Collecting many advantages from other methods, including the techniques from

the grammar translation method to teach students language knowledge. Thus, both linguistic and communicative competences can be fully developed. CLT classroom activities can be prepared to improve students' communicative competence by learning grammar in context. Activities can also concentrate on need for communication, communication and negotiation of meaning. In such a CLT classroom, grammar learning can occur in inductive and deductive ways. We should help students to summarize the rules of grammar, and simultaneously connect them with their daily life. Today in real language environment, it is significant for the English teachers to use different teaching ways to make the communicative useful activities among students (Zhang, 2006). Moreover, cultural differences and speaking rules of the target language should be learned by EFL students. To some extent, TEFL is really a process of learning the target culture (Xiaoqing, 1997, Zhong-guo & Min-yan, 2007, Zhang, 2006).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The following study was intended to find out and compare learners' preferences with their teachers preferences for 16 communicative activities. Furthermore it studied the students' attitudes towards the communicative activities and their level of engagement while doing communicative activities. This chapter presents the setting, the participants, the stakeholders and the instruments of data collection.

Setting

The study was conducted in Experimental English Courses (EEC) and the observations were carried out in 10 EEC groups.

Participants

The participants of the study were 104 EEC students and 4 teachers from 10 EEC groups. The proficiency levels of the students engaged in the current study were pre-intermediate, intermediate and upper-intermediate. The participants age varied from 11-16.

Stakeholders

The stakeholders of this study were the teachers, the students and the director of EEC program.

Instrumentation and procedure

The data for the qualitative study were collected with the help of classroom observations, survey for the students and survey for the teachers.

Observations- Observations were conducted in 10 EEC groups with the help of an observation chart; 6 groups were observed twice, 4 groups were observed once because

of some obstacles, to find out what type of activities students were performing and their attitudes and level of engagement (Appendix1; Table 1).

Survey – Similar questionnaires for the teachers and the students were developed based on the activities that were found out during the observations in 10 groups. Afterwards students and teachers were asked to fill out similar questionnaires intended to reveal their own preferences in learning and teaching English based on their experience.

Then students' and teachers' answers were compared to see whether there was a difference between their preferences for the types of the activities (Appendix 2; Table 2 and Appendix 3, Table 3).

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Analysis of Qualitative Data

Classroom observations

Observation is one of the techniques used for collecting qualitative data in classroom research. The aim of the classroom observations was to find out what kind of activities the students were doing and how they performed them. Almost all the activities involved in the survey were found in all 10 groups during the observations. An observation chart was developed by the researcher for classroom observations. It involved 6 items. The items involved in the observation chart were the following:

- Description of the observation groups

- Communicative activity types used in the classroom

- Preparation time for students to get ready

- Presentation time

- Participation mode of preparation (group work, pair work, individual)

- Participation mode of presentation (pair work, group work, individual)

- Students' level of engagement (high, moderate, low).

On the whole the duration of the EEC (Experimental English Courses) courses is 10 weeks. Each class lasts from 60-90 minutes depending on the level of proficiency.

The observations were carried out every other week, starting from week 7 (week 7, week 8, and week 9). Ten groups were observed, 6 of which were observed twice and 4 groups were observed once because of some obstacles.

Description of the 10 observation groups

<u>group 1</u>

Number of students- 13

Proficiency level- pre- intermediate

Students' age range- 11- 14

Duration of class- 60 min.

<u>group 2</u>

Number of students- 14

Proficiency level- pre- intermediate

Students' age range- 11-15

Duration of class- 60 min.

<u>group 3</u>

Number of students- 15

Proficiency level- pre- intermediate

Students' age range- 11- 16

Duration of class- 60 min.

<u>group 4</u>

Number of students- 12

Proficiency level- pre- intermediate

Students' age range- 11-16

Duration of class- 60 min.

<u>group 5</u>

Number of students- 13

Proficiency level- intermediate

Students' age range- 12-16

Duration of class- 120 min.

<u>group 6</u>

Number of students- 8

Proficiency level- intermediate

Students' age range- 12- 16

Duration of class- 120 min.

<u>group 7</u>

Number of students- 11

Proficiency level- intermediate

Students' age range- 12-15

Duration of class- 110 min.

<u>group 8</u>

Number of students- 16

Proficiency level- Upper-intermediate

Students' age range- 12- 16

Duration of class- 120 min.

group 9	**group 10**
Number of students- 10	Number of students- 10
Proficiency level- Intermediate	Proficiency level- Intermediate
Students' age range- 12-15	Students' age range- 12-15
Duration of class- 120 min.	Duration of class- 60 min.

The groups will be identified by the given numbers in data analysis (group 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.). The outcomes of the 16 classroom observations are presented below.

Communicative activity types used in the classroom

Role plays, discussions, debates, interviews, presentations, word guessing from the description, matching exercises, note taking and problem solving were the main types of communicative activities found out during the 16 classroom observations. Teachers did their best to involve different kinds of communicative activities. I observed that all the lessons went by in a very active and enthusiastic atmosphere due to the types of the activities conducted during the lessons.

Preparation time for students to get ready

Depending on the activity type preparation time varied from 2 to 20 minutes in all 10 groups. There were many activities that didn't require preparation time. For interviewing each other students were given mainly 10 minutes to get ready. They were also provided with 10 minutes for preparing role-plays. Sometimes teachers added 2-3 minutes in the case of necessity. They needed 10 minutes for starting a discussion. For presentations teachers gave them 15 minutes to be prepared. Teachers were able to carry out 4-6 communicative activities during one lesson depending on the group and duration

of the class. In some groups I found out that the students spent more time on getting prepared, especially for presentations and interviews, than they were given.

Presentation time

Presentation time fluctuated from 5 to 25 minutes depending of what kind of activity they were doing and whether they were doing pair, group or individual work. Discussion was one of the activities that was found in all 10 groups. Discussions mainly lasted 5- 20 minutes, depending on the topic and the way it was carried out (whole class discussion, pair discussion, group discussion). Role plays were presented within 10 to 15 minutes. Presentations lasted 10- 25 minutes depending on the presentation mode.

Participation mode of preparation (group work, pair work, individual)

I observed that students got prepared for the activities in all three participation mode. For activities which were based on the listening production, such as doing true/false, matching, etc. after listening students got prepared individually. For reading, writing and speaking activities like discussions, role plays, presentations, descriptions etc, they mostly got ready in pairs and groups.

Participation mode of presentation (pair work, group work, individual)

Individual mode of participation predominated when presenting the activities. Almost all the activities in 10 groups were presented individually. Only some presentations, role-plays and discussions were presented in groups. Pair work presentation took place when students were doing some writing and speaking activities, like true/false, interviews and speaking about personal experiences.

Students' level of engagement and attitude towards the activities

In all ten groups I found out that students were highly engaged and enthusiastic when doing group and pair works. While working collaboratively they felt more relaxed and expressed their thoughts freely. In 8 groups (1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10), I observed that

students were highly engaged in role plays, discussions, presentations and interviews. They got very active when they were expected to share their own experience and opinions. Thus students enjoyed real life situations. They enjoyed being given a chance to use their imagination and give their own conditions. The level of engagement was moderate in cases of grammar activities, reading and listening follow up activities in groups 5, 8, 9, 10. Students didn't seem to be on task when they were expected just to write or read something individually. There were only two cases of low level of engagement in groups 6 and 9. In group 6, students were doing group discussions. They chose a card and each of the groups had different topics. There were 3 groups (3 students in each group) and they should discuss in their groups the topic they had selected. Then after group discussion they had to present to what conclusion they had come. In one of the groups I noticed that the students weren't engaged in the task, they were mainly writing. However their teacher approached them and told that they were expected to have an active discussion. She prompted them by giving additional information on their topic and by giving supportive questions. The other case when students weren't so engaged in the task was in group 9. They were presenting the information they had found at home concerning the employees in different countries. Students weren't enthusiastic about the presentations. They didn't seem very engaged and they were just doing as it was their homework. They weren't well- prepared, active and they couldn't present properly. When one student was presenting, others weren't listening. It would be better if each student presented in front of the whole class in order to attract the others' attention. I noted that the reason was that most of the students weren't very interested in the topic. However their teacher tried to control them and keep their concentration on the task.

Teacher's role to engage students into the activities

Firstly I would like to mention that all four teachers were very passionate and motivated during the lessons. I noted that all 4 teachers were persistently guiding, encouraging and supporting the students to do various kinds of activities. For example if the students had difficulties in getting involved in the discussion, teachers gave additional information, helpful questions, reasonable comments, that assisted them to take part in the discussion. Besides they brought some facts, examples from their own experience which created warm atmosphere and made the discussion very effective and complete. Each student was expected to participate and express his/her opinion. I examined some cases when student were reluctant to talk and teachers tried to engage them by saying they were all interested in his/ her opinion, asking useful question, etc. Teachers were demonstrating an individual approach to each student and they never had negative or subjective attitude towards the students. The lessons were student- centered and the teachers rarely interrupted them and made error corrections. While students were doing role plays, presentations and interviews, debates teachers only disturbed and corrected mistakes that could bring to misunderstanding.

Survey

Total number of students and teachers participating in the survey

Students	104
Teachers	4

The questionnaire designed for the students and teachers was analyzed qualitatively. The answers to all the questions were collected and afterwards analyzed by the researcher. The questionnaire for the students and teachers included 13 activities and three types of participation modes in the activities. The activities, applied in those

classrooms, were included in the survey with the help of the observations. The researcher then developed the pilot questionnaire. Since the students were at pre-intermediate and higher level, the questionnaire was administered in English. The questionnaire was divided into two parts**:** the closed-ended question section and the open-ended question section**.** In order to obtain parallel data, the questionnaire for the teachers was also based on the same list of activities but the questions were different in the sense that it asked the teachers to state their preferences from the teaching perspective.

Survey for the students

    a. **The closed-ended question section**

This part asked how much students enjoy each listed activity by asking them to choose the appropriate column of a 6- part Likert scale as follows:

How much do you enjoy each activity? Please tick the appropriate column.

Enjoy very much, Enjoy, No opinion, Don't enjoy, Don't enjoy very much, No experience (Appendix 2; table 2).

Almost all the activities that have been selected were found out in 10 groups. Only some of the activities (debates, interviews, role plays) weren't performed in several groups because of the level of proficiency. So the 'no experience' section was included but the choices were expected to be rare.

The students' number of choices out of 104 and correspondingly their percentages for each communicative activity included in the survey (13 activities and 3 participation modes) were analyzed and provided in the tables below.

1. **Writing short passages in groups**

	Enjoy very much	Enjoy	No opinion	Don't enjoy	Don't enjoy very much	No experience
Number of students	8	54	24	10	6	2
Percentages	7.7 %	52%	23 %	9.6 %	5.8 %	1.9 %

2. **Writing short passages in pairs**

	Enjoy very much	Enjoy	No opinion	Don't enjoy	Don't enjoy very much	No experience
Number of students	23	46	19	9	4	3
Percentages	22.1 %	44.2 1%	18.3 %	8.6 %	3.8%	2.9%

3. **Participating in whole class discussions**

	Enjoy very much	Enjoy	No opinion	Don't enjoy	Don't enjoy very much	No experience
Number of students	52	36	7	5	3	1
Percentages	50 %	35 %	6.7 %	4.8 %	2.9 %	0.96 %

4. Discussions in pairs

	Enjoy very much	Enjoy	No opinion	Don't enjoy	Don't enjoy very much	No experience
Number of students	25	59	8	7	5	0
Percentages	24 %	56.7 %	7.7 %	6.7 %	4.8 %	0 %

5. Discussions in groups

	Enjoy very much	Enjoy	No opinion	Don't enjoy	Don't enjoy very much	No experience
Number of students	46	42	7	4	4	1
Percentages	44.2 %	40. 4%	6. 7 %	3.9 %	3.9 %	0.9 %

6. Individual presentation

	Enjoy very much	Enjoy	No opinion	Don't enjoy	Don't enjoy very much	No experience
Number of students	31	31	14	20	5	3
Percentages	30 %	30 %	13.5 %	19.2 %	4.8 %	3 %

7. Group presentations

	Enjoy very much	Enjoy	No opinion	Don't enjoy	Don't enjoy very much	No experience
Number of students	39	44	9	7	2	3
Percentages	37.5 %	42.3 %	8.7 %	6.7 %	1. 9 %	3 %

8. Participating in role plays

	Enjoy very much	Enjoy	No opinion	Don't enjoy	Don't enjoy very much	No experience
Number of students	37	31	14	9	3	10
Percentages	35. 6 %	30 %	13.5 %	8.7 %	3 %	9.6 %

9. Participating in debates

	Enjoy very much	Enjoy	No opinion	Don't enjoy	Don't enjoy very much	No experience
Number of students	45	34	16	5	3	1
Percentages	43 %	33 %	15.3 %	5 %	3%	0.9 %

10. Interviewing each other

	Enjoy very much	Enjoy	No opinion	Don't enjoy	Don't enjoy very much	No experience
Number of students	39	45	10	5	3	2
Percentages	37.5 %	43%	9.6 %	5 %	3 %	1.9 %

11. Guessing the word from the description (vocabulary check)

	Enjoy very much	Enjoy	No opinion	Don't enjoy	Don't enjoy very much	No experience
Number of students	35	42	13	9	3	2
Percentages	34 %	40 %	12.5 %	9 %	3%	1.9 %

12. Note taking (listening and writing)

	Enjoy very much	Enjoy	No opinion	Don't enjoy	Don't enjoy very much	No experience
Number of students	24	48	16	10	6	0
Percentages	23 %	46 %	15.4 %	9.6 %	5.8%	0 %

13. Matching exercises

	Enjoy very much	Enjoy	No opinion	Don't enjoy	Don't enjoy very much	No experience
Number of students	24	54	15	6	4	1
Percentages	23 %	52 %	14 %	5.8 %	3.8%	0.9 %

Participation mode

14. Pair work

	Enjoy very much	Enjoy	No opinion	Don't enjoy	Don't enjoy very much	No experience
Number of students	28	62	5	5	4	0
Percentages	27 %	60 %	4.8 %	4.8 %	3.8 %	0 %

15. Group work

	Enjoy very much	Enjoy	No opinion	Don't enjoy	Don't enjoy very much	No experience
Number of students	37	50	6	6	4	1
Percentages	35 %	48 %	5.8 %	5.8 %	3.8 %	0.9 %

16. Individual work

	Enjoy very much	Enjoy	No opinion	Don't enjoy	Don't enjoy very much	No experience
Number of students	20	48	14	14	8	0
Percentages	19 %	46 %	13.5 %	13.5 %	7.7 %	0 %

Thus it can be suggested from the results that the majority of the students have selected "enjoy" and "enjoy very much" for the given activities. They enjoy very much whole class discussions, discussions in groups, individual presentations, role plays and debates. Activities that they have chosen as "enjoyable" are writing short passages in groups/ pairs, discussions in pairs, group presentations, interviews, note taking, guessing the word from the description and matching exercises. The next high percentage is given to the choice "no opinion" for all the activities except individual presentations where the percentage for "don't enjoy" is more. A small number of students have selected don't enjoy for all the activities and its percentage exceeds the percentage given for "don't enjoy very much". Very few students have "no experience" for some activities (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15). The highest percentage for 3 participation modes is for the option "enjoy". Then the next high number is given to "enjoy very much" for all 3 modes. Afterwards comes the percentage for "no opinion" which number is the same compared with the number given for "don't enjoy". Few students have selected "don't enjoy" and "don't enjoy very much" for 3 participation modes. The number of students'

choices is the same   for both "no opinion" and "don't enjoy" options for 3 participation modes. Only one student has mentioned the option "no experience" for group work.

b. Open-ended section

The open-ended question section tried to reveal students' reasons for preferences. Students should select an activity or activities they *enjoy most* and activity or activities they *don't enjoy* most from the list of the questionnaire and provide the reasons for their selections.

Most of the students mentioned that they *enjoy most* whole-class discussions, discussions in groups, individual/group presentations, debates, interviews and guessing the word from the description from the provided list. They explained their preference by saying that they just enjoy learning English with the help of these activities. They are interesting and funny for them. Those who have mentioned discussions in groups, whole class discussion, group presentations, interviewing each other illustrated that they like to communicate and share their ideas with the others (activities 3, 5, 7, 10). Moreover they like to speak more than to write. Furthermore those who are for discussions in groups, group presentations, interviewing each other, said they prefer to work in groups more than individually. Students who enjoy individual presentations stated that it gives them a chance to choose the topic they want and besides it is easier for them to work alone. The majority of students (78 %) chose writing short passages in groups/pairs, discussion in pairs, role plays, note taking, matching exercises and pair/group work as the ones they enjoy most. For taking part in role plays students gave reasons that they enjoyed to take different kind of roles and to try themselves as actors. Besides they don't get bored while doing activities mentioned above. The greater part of students prefer group and pair works (82 %) as it is more compelling, engaging and they feel relaxed while working in

groups and pairs. Few students (18 %) stated individual work as most enjoyable participation mode pointing out that they rely only on themselves and they don't like working in pairs and groups.

The majority of students (89 %) mentioned individual works and individual presentations as the ones they don't enjoy most. They find working alone dull and stressful. They mentioned that they don't feel anxious and they can express their thoughts more freely when they work in groups and pairs. I would like to mention that many of the students didn't complete this part, as they enjoyed all the activities that were in the list. Few students (14 %) didn't enjoy writing short passages in groups, participating in group discussions, group presentations, interviewing each other, note taking, doing matching exercises and taking part in group works. They didn't like group works, presentations, writing short passages in groups as they thought that they weren't effective. Students weren't listening to each other while working in groups and they weren't so concentrated on the task. Others just mentioned that they didn't enjoy working in groups. The other activities mentioned were just boring and not encouraging for them.

Survey for the teachers

    a. **Closed-ended question section**

This part asked how effective teachers find each listed activity for engaging students. The number of teachers' choices and correspondingly their percentages were analyzed and provided in the table below. They were expected to select the proper column of a 6- part Likert scale in this way: *How effective do you find these activities for engaging students? Please mark the proper column.*

Very effective, Effective, No opinion, Not very effective, Not effective, No experience (Appendix 3; Table 3)

The number of teachers' choices for each activity and correspondingly their percentages were analyzed and provided in the table below.

Total number of the teachers 4						
Number of the activities	Very effective	Effective	No opinion	Not very effective	Not effective	No experience
1.		3 75%	1 25%			
2.		3 75%	1 25 %			
3.	2 50 %	2 50 %				
4.	2 50 %	2 50 %				
5.	2 50 %	2 50 %				
6.		4 100 %				
7.		4 100 %				
8.	1 25 %	2 50 %		1 25 %		

9.	**3** 75 %	**1** 25 %				
10.	**1** 25 %	**3** 75 %				
11.	**1** 25 %	**3** 75 %				
12.		**2** 50 %	**2** 50 %			
13.	**1** 25 %	**3** 75 %				
14.	**2** 50 %	**2** 50 %				
15.	**3** 75 %	**1** 25 %				
16.		**2** 50 %		**2** 50 %		

So it can be proposed from the analysis that most of the teachers find all the activities "effective" and "very effective". Three (75 %) out of 4 teachers find writing short passages in groups and in pairs (1, 2) effective. One teacher (25 %) selects the option "no opinion" for those activities. Two teachers (50 %) take participating in whole class discussions, discussions in pairs and discussions in groups " very effective" and the other two teachers find them " effective " (3,4,5). Individual presentations and group presentations (6, 7) are selected as "effective" by all 4 teachers. One of the teachers (25

%) chooses role plays (8) as "very effective". Then two teachers give the answer "effective" for the role plays. There is also one selection for "not very effective" option. Three teachers (75 %) consider debates to be "very effective" and one teacher (25 %) supposes that it is "effective". For interviews, guessing the word from the description and matching activities the results are the following: three (75 %) teachers assume they are "effective" and one teacher considers them to be "very effective". For note taking activity, teachers' answers are equally distributed between "effective" and "no opinion" (50 %). Two teachers find pair work (14) "very effective" and the other two teachers take them as "effective" for engaging students. Group work (15) is seen as very "effective" by 3 teachers (75 %) and as "effective" by one teacher. Individual work is considered to be not "very effective" by two teachers and the others (50 %) think it is "effective".

b. Open-ended question section

For this section teachers were expected to select an activity or activities they *find most effective* and activity or activities they *find least effective* from the list of the questionnaire and give the reasons for their choices.

The majority of teachers find debates most effective, since they think this is a good task for students as it gives them an opportunity to express their opinions and support them. Moreover it helps them to improve their fluency and produce a lot of language without focusing on the mistakes. Some teachers also consider group work, matching activities, group and individual presentations as most effective for engaging students. Students feel confident to express themselves when they work in groups. Group presentations help them to make friends and work cooperatively. Pair/group discussions are also taken as most effective by some teachers, as teenagers like to have discussions on

various topics and they do them with great pleasure. One of the teachers answered that all listed activities are interesting and interactive.

One of the teachers mentioned role plays as least effective as she considers them not very effective. She stated that students are reluctant to act them out and they feel ashamed. One teacher mentioned that all the activities can be effective if they are planned appropriately. Some teachers find writing short passages in groups and pairs least effective. They reasoned that students want to speak and communicate more than to write that's why they don't like writing. So it seems to be less effective. They also mentioned individual work as least effective because students are more relaxed, enthusiastic and motivated when they work in groups and pairs.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This qualitative data investigated and compared EEC students' preferences with their teachers' preferences for 16 communicative activities. Furthermore it studied the students' attitudes towards the communicative activities and their teachers' role to engage students into those activities.

The participants of the study were 104 EEC students from 10 groups and their 4 teachers.

The study involved 2 questionnaires and observations: questionnaire for the students and teachers; 16 observations.

Based on the results (classroom observations) all 4 teachers used communicative activities during their classes. They practiced students' writing, speaking, listening and reading skills by doing different communicative activities. I observed that all 4 teachers were patiently guiding, encouraging and sustaining the students to do various kinds of activities. Teachers provided additional information, helpful questions, sensible comments, that supported student to take part in the discussion if it was a challenge for them to join it. Role plays, discussions, debates, interviews, presentations, word guessing from the description, matching exercises, note taking and problem solving were the main types of communicative activities noted during the 16 classroom observations. The majority of students demonstrated high level of engagement into the communicative activities. They were highly engaged in role plays, discussions, presentations, and interviews. They were very lively and excited while expressing their opinion and sharing their own experience. The results exposed that level of engagement was moderate in cases of grammar activities, reading and listening follow up activities in groups. They

seemed to be bored when they had just to write or read something individually. In several groups low level of engagement was found out because of the topic and the way of presentation. In some groups students spent more time on getting ready for the activities than they were expected to.

Based on the results of the questionnaire students mostly had positive attitude towards the communicative activities. They considered them interesting, enjoyable, engaging and relaxing. Students enjoyed very much participating in whole class discussions, discussions in groups, role plays, group presentations, interviews, guessing the word from the description and debates. They explained that they like to communicate with the others and they like to speak more than to write. The results of the questionnaire revealed that students mostly had a preference for group work and pair work instead of individual work. Students reported that they feel more confident and comfortable when they do pair/group work. They feel relaxed to engage in the interaction with their friends, which is one of the advantages of communicative activities. The majority of students mentioned individual works and individual presentations as the ones they don't enjoy most. However, there were a few students who preferred to work individually.

According to the results of the questionnaire the majority of teachers found debates, group/ individual presentations and group/pair discussions very effective for engaging students. Some teachers also considered interviews, guessing the word from the description to be effective. The majority of teachers found writing short passages in groups and pairs least effective. They explained that students want to speak and communicate more than to write. This is the reason why they don't like writing. So it seems to be less effective. They also mentioned individual work as least effective because students are more relaxed, enthusiastic and motivated when they work in groups and pairs. So they considered group/pair work as very effective.

In this study, both teachers and students highly valued communicative activities. When we compare students' and teachers' preferences for communicative activities we see that there are more similarities than differences between their views. The majority of teachers and students preferred group/pair discussions, debates, interviews and guessing the word from the description. Both teachers and students assumed group/ pair work as more relaxing, engaging and motivating than individual work. Besides their views coincided on having more speaking than writing activities since they like to communicate with the other students and they desire more to speak than to write.

There was a little difference between the teachers' and the students' preferences for communicative activities. The differences between teachers' and learners' preferences were for the following activities: writing short passages in groups/ pairs and individual presentations. Based on the results of the open-ended question section of survey most of the teachers considered writing short passages in groups/ pairs as least effective for engaging students. However students enjoyed writing in groups and pairs. Then some teachers found individual presentations as very effective, while many students mentioned that they didn't enjoy individual presentations.

5.1. Pedagogical Implications

Based on the analysis of the classroom observations and the teachers' and students' questionnaire responses, the researcher has the following recommendations that can support EEC teachers while conducting communicative activities:

- Take into consideration the students' preferences and needs
- Give students a chance to express their opinion concerning participation mode of the activities (the majority of the students prefer group/pair work, but there is a considerable number of students who choose to work individually)

- Be confident that students are interested in the topic of presentation

  ✓ Identify presentation topics that are relevant and compelling for students

- Pay attention to the way students are presenting

  ✓ Let them present in front of the class for keeping the concentration of the whole class on the task

- Don't forget to remind students about a time limit while getting prepared for the activities

- Give the students challenging and engaging activities

  ✓ Don't give an activity that doesn't fit the students' level of proficiency

- Create an encouraging and stress-free atmosphere

  ✓ Avoid giving open negative feedback to students

- Do more group/pair discussions and presentations

- Create more engaging tasks for students

- Do more pair/ group works than individual works

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Appendix 1

Table 1: Observation guidelines

Class _____

 Number of students_____

Proficiency level_____

Students' age range _____

Duration of class_____

Observation chart						
Observation Group						
	Activity type	Preparation time for students to get ready	Presentation time	Participation mode of preparation (group work, pair work)	Participation mode of presentation (pair work, group work)	Level of engagement (high, moderate, low)
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						

Appendix 2

Table 2: Survey for the students

1. How much do you enjoy each activity? Please mark the proper column.

	Enjoy very much	Enjoy	No opinion	Don't enjoy	Don't enjoy very much	No experience
1. Writing short passages in groups						
2. Writing short passages in pairs						
3. Participating in whole- class discussions						
4. discussions in pairs						
5. discussions in groups						
6. Individual presentations						
7. Group presentations						
8. Participating in role plays						
9. Participating in debates						
10. Interviewing each other						
11. Guessing the word from the description (vocabulary check)						
12. Note taking (listening and writing)						
13. Matching exercises						

Participation mode						
14. Pair work						
15. Group work						
16. Individual work						

2. From the list above, please choose an activity or activities that you **enjoy most** and an activity or activities you **don't enjoy most**, write down the numbers of those activities and give the reasons for your choice.

a. Activities I enjoy   **Reasons**

most

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

a. Activities I don't   **Reasons**

enjoy most

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Table 3: Survey for the teachers

1. How effective do you find these activities for engaging students?
   Please mark the proper column.

	Very effective	Effective	No opinion	Not very effective	Not effective	No experience
1. Writing short passages in groups						
2. Writing short passages in pairs						
3. Participating in whole class discussions						
4. Discussions in pairs						
5. Discussions in groups						
6. Individual presentations						
7. Group presentations						
8. Role plays						
9. Debates						
10. Interviewing each other						
11. Guessing the word from the description						
12. Note -taking (listening and writing)						

13. Matching exercises						42
-Participation mode						
14. Pair work						
15. Group work						
16. Individual work						

1. From the list above, please choose an activity or activities you find **most effective** and activities you find **least effective** to use, write down the numbers of those activities and provide the reasons for your choice.

a. **Activities I find**   **Reasons**
    most effective

    _____   _____

    _____   _____

    _____   _____

    _____   _____

    _____   _____

    _____   _____

    _____   _____

    _____   _____

b. **Activities I find**   **Reasons**

least effective

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____