



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***EFFECT OF INFORMATION GAP ACTIVITIES ON SPEAKING  
PERFORMANCE OF EXTROVERT AND INTROVERT EFL FEMALE  
STUDENTS IN RUMAH, SAUDI ARABIA***

**ALMZIAD AMAL ABDULLAH M**

**FPP 2021 8**



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By

**ALMZIAD, AMAL ABDULLAH M**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia in  
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**March 2021**

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## DEDICATION

To my source of love, my dear mother and father . . .

To my husband Naif. . .

To my baby Abdulrahman who passed away...

To my child Hamd . . .

To my great supervisor. . .

To my friends . . .

I humbly dedicate this



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**March 2021**

**Chairman : Prof. Arshad bin Abd Samad, PhD**  
**Faculty : Educational Studies**

Communicative activities have played a significant role in second language teaching and learning. However, using information gap effectively remains to be one of the key challenges of such activities to encourage a meaningful information exchange between learners. Moreover, personality type affects the way people respond to stimuli and their preference for learning. The study aims to investigate the effect of information gap activity (IGA) on the speaking performance of extrovert and introvert EFL female students in Rumah, Saudi Arabia. Specifically, this study investigates the effect of implementing communicative activities (information gaps) on extrovert and introvert learners, as well as the reactions and perceptions of students towards these activities. This research employed a mixed-methods design using an embedded experimental model with a quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group. Seventy-five students at a second intermediate school in Saudi Arabia were selected purposively for experimental and control groups. Eysenck Personality Questionnaire was used to identify extrovert and introvert students in both groups. Then, twenty information gap sessions were carried out and data were collected using three quantitative and qualitative instruments: English language speaking pre- and post-tests, classroom observations, and focus group discussions (FGD). The result of the effect of IGA on the experimental group was 3.07, while the effect of IGA on the control group was 1.23. In addition, the results of the independent samples t-test for the experimental group for fluency, grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, interaction, and content of speaking performance after treatment were significant with  $p$  values less than 0.05, which indicated that the students' speaking performance improved after implementing IGA in the classroom. Meanwhile, the results from ANOVA indicated that there was a statistical difference between the extroverted and introverted students in the experimental group with a significant value of  $p=0.00$ . These results reflected the findings from the classroom observations, which showed positive responses from the extrovert and introvert students towards IGA when engaging in pair and group work activities. Furthermore, the qualitative findings supported the quantitative results of the study as the data from the FGD also revealed

extrovert and introvert students' positive reactions towards the IGA implementation in the classroom. The students in the focus group specifically explained how they enjoyed the activities designed for pair work. They reported that these activities provided them opportunities to practice and develop their English. Hence, this research established the positive effect of communicative activities in learning a second language for extrovert and introvert students, particularly in terms of developing speaking skills. This research suggests that Saudi English educators should implement communicative activities and information gap activities. Finally, when new teaching methods or approaches suggested by this study are implemented in the classroom, educators should consider students' perceptions towards the method, as well as its effect on learning outcomes and personality as a part of the whole learning and teaching process.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

## **KESAN AKTIVITI JURANG MAKLUMAT TERHADAP PRESTASI LISAN DI KALANGAN PELAJAR PEREMPUAN EFL EKSTROVERT DAN INTROVERT DI RUMAH, SAUDI ARABIA**

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Aktiviti komunikatif telah memainkan peranan yang signifikan dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran bahasa kedua. Walau bagaimanapun, penggunaan jurang informasi atau jurang maklumat kekal sebagai salah satu kunci utama di dalam menggalakkan pertukaran maklumat yang bermakna antara pelajar. Tambahan pula, jenis personaliti memberi kesan rangsangan terhadap respon dan pemilihan mereka untuk belajar. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyiasat kesan aktiviti jurang maklumat (AJM) terhadap pencapaian lisan pelajar perempuan EFL yang ekstrovert dan introvert di Rumah, Arab Saudi. Secara khususnya, kajian ini mengkaji kesan implikasi pelaksanaan aktiviti komunikatif (jurang maklumat) terhadap pelajar ekstrovert dan introvert, serta reaksi dan persepsi pelajar terhadap aktiviti tersebut. Kajian ini menggunakan reka bentuk kaedah campuran dengan menggunakan penerapan model eksperimen iaitu kaedah kuasi eksperimen kumpulan kawalan tak setara. Seramai tujuh puluh lima pelajar di sekolah menengah rendah di Arab Saudi telah dipilih secara bertujuan bagi kumpulan eksperimen dan kumpulan kawalan. Pertama, soal selidik personaliti Eysenck digunakan untuk mengenal pasti pelajar ekstrovert dan introvert dari kedua-dua kumpulan tersebut. Seterusnya, dua puluh sesi jurang maklumat dijalankan dan data dikumpulkan menggunakan tiga instrumen kuantitatif dan kualitatif iaitu; Ujian lisan pra dan pasca bahasa Inggeris, pemerhatian bilik darjah dan perbincangan kumpulan berfokus (PKB). Di peringkat kuantitatif, ujian prestasi lisan digunakan untuk menjawab persoalan kajian pertama dan kedua bagi 75 pelajar tersebut. Selain itu, senarai semak pemerhatian digunakan untuk menjawab persoalan ketiga yang hanya melibatkan 37 pelajar dari kumpulan eksperimen. Pada bahagian kualitatif, PKB digunakan untuk menjawab persoalan keempat iaitu untuk mendapatkan maklumat mendalam bagi kajian ini. Dapatan kajian bagi kesan AJM kumpulan eksperimen adalah 3.07, manakala kesan IGA terhadap kumpulan kawalan adalah 1.23. Di samping itu, dapatan sampel ujian-t berpasangan kumpulan eksperimen bagi kefasihan, tatabahasa, sebutan, perbendaharaan kata, interaksi, dan isi pencapaian lisan setelah rawatan adalah signifikan ( $p = .003, .006, .003, .029, .004, .005$ ). Ini menunjukkan bahawa prestasi lisan pelajar bertambah baik

selepas pelaksanaan IGA di dalam bilik darjah pada tahap signifikan kurang dari 0.05. Sementara itu, dapatan ANOVA menunjukkan terdapat perbezaan statistik dalam skor min ujian pasca antara kumpulan pelajar ekstrovert dan pelajar introvert dengan nilai yang signifikan ( $p = .000$ ). Selain itu, dapatan kajian ini berpadanan dengan dapatan daripada pemerhatian bilik darjah yang menunjukkan respon yang positif daripada pelajar ekstrovert dan introvert terhadap AJM semasa terlibat dalam aktiviti kerja berpasangan dan berkumpul. Pemerhatian bilik darjah menggunakan senarai semak untuk menilai tindak balas pelajar terhadap AJM. Sementara itu, sesi FGD dilakukan untuk memahami reaksi pelajar ekstrovert dan introvert terhadap AJM. Dapatan kajian kualitatif menyokong dapatan kuantitatif. Dapatan dari PKB turut menunjukkan reaksi positif pelajar ekstrovert dan introvert terhadap pelaksanaan IGA di dalam bilik darjah. Mereka secara khususnya menyukai aktiviti yang dirancang bagi kerja berpasangan. Mereka menyatakan bahawa aktiviti ini memberi peluang untuk berlatih dan mengembangkan kemahiran bahasa Inggeris mereka. Oleh itu, kajian ini menunjukkan kesan positif aktiviti komunikatif terutamanya dalam kemahiran lisan dalam pembelajaran bahasa kedua dalam kalangan pelajar ekstrovert dan introvert. Kajian ini menyarankan agar guru bahasa Inggeris di Arab Saudi melaksanakan aktiviti komunikatif. Akhir sekali, diharapkan apabila kaedah atau pendekatan pengajaran baru yang dikemukakan oleh kajian ini diguna pakai dalam bilik darjah, pendidik harus mempertimbangkan persepsi pelajar terhadap kaedah tersebut, serta kesannya terhadap hasil pembelajaran dan personaliti pelajar sebagai sebahagian daripada keseluruhan proses pembelajaran dan pengajaran.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALM	Audio Lingual Method
CG	Control Group
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EG	Experimental Group
ESL	English as a Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
GTM	Grammar Translation Method
IGA	Information Gap Activities
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TL	Target Language

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of information gap activities on the speaking performance of extrovert and introvert EFL female students in Rumah, Saudi Arabia. Students' responses and perceptions towards communicative activities implemented in the classroom are also explored.

This chapter introduces the background of the study and the statement of the problem. The research objectives and research questions that lead the study are also stated along with the research hypotheses. Furthermore, the significance of the current study is discussed. Finally, the definitions of the main terms used are provided.

### 1.2 Background of the Study

Language is a tool for communication among people in the world. People use language to express ideas easily and exchange information, news, attitudes, and feelings towards each other. Furthermore, language serves human needs across various fields such as trade, marketing, tourism, public relations, and education among others. English happens to be the third most widely spoken language in the world after standard Chinese (Mandarin) and Spanish. The English language is recognized as an international language, which makes it an important language for communication across countries. In view of this, Graves (2008) noted the need to develop English speaking skills for effective international communication. The main aim of English language teaching and learning is to improve students' ability to use English for communication as well as a tool for learning other subjects. However, foreign learners of English often face difficulties in using authentic language and in communicating effectively.

According to Sartika (2016), students' ability to speak is the most important skill in foreign language learning as it is the foundation of communication. Nevertheless, this aspect of language production has been reported as the most challenging skill for learners (Shumin, 2002, as cited in Richards & Renandya, 2002). This can be attributed to the teachers' inability to apply appropriate methods of teaching and learning English. Prominent theories in teaching hold that English speaking skills can be developed by using various teaching methods that involve communicative activities, such as jigsaw puzzles, problem-solving, and games, which mainly depend on information gap activities. These activities, which are carried out through communication and role playing, help to create interaction as well as improve English speaking skills among students (Rahimi, 2016). Evidently, communicative activities motivate students and create good relationships among learners and between the teachers and the learners,

thereby encouraging a supportive environment for English language speaking skills. Therefore, there is a need for English teachers to focus on instilling communication skills in their students in consideration of their role in facilitating the learning of languages.

Second language teachers should motivate students and provide a conducive environment for them to practice, both inside and outside the classroom. According to Ratnasari (2017), communication skills can be built through activities such as pair work or group work, which are essentially based on interaction and information exchange. This highlights the importance of choosing appropriate activities in the classroom by language teachers. The communicative approach in language teaching prescribes activities which motivate and compel students to speak in English with their friends during class time (Rahayu, 2017). There are different kinds of communication activities encouraged through this approach. According to Mitchell (1988), role play, interview, group work, information gap, opinion sharing, and scavenger hunt activities are commonly used in communicative language teaching. Richards (2006) also pointed out that information gap and problem-solving activities (e.g., jigsaw puzzles) are functional communication activities. Gibbons (2015) asserted that conversation grids, questionnaires, games, information gaps, problem-solving, discussion, and role-play are the common types of communicative activities. That means learners in every activity must exchange information between them, negotiate meaning and interacting with each other.

In this study, the researcher will focus on information gap activities (IGA) due to their close association with communicative language teaching and the advantages of these activities in learning the language. For example, Wijayanti (2018) indicates that IGA gives students opportunities to practice the target language inside and outside the classroom. Similarly, Misianto (2017) stated that IGA creates a motivational atmosphere in the classroom.

Information gap activities are characterized by communicative output through which students share and request missing information from each other to complete the exercise or perform the task assigned to them. Information gap activities primarily refer to classroom interactions which necessitate the requesting and sharing of information that is unknown to one party (Novika & Fahri, 2014). For instance, if the exercise requires them to share known information, such as today's date, then it will not be considered as an information gap activity as both already know the day's date. According to Harmer (2007), an information gap activity involves a task wherein the interlocutors must provide missing information in a natural conversation. Thus, one of the aims of an information gap activity is to give and take meaningful information between pairs or members of a group in a discussion or conversation (Sari, 2008). When this interaction is done in the English language, it is expected to enhance the students' ability to speak English more fluently. The information gap activity also provides students with a reason to communicate and convey information to a partner who does not have the information.

Previous studies have highlighted some benefits of information gap activities. For example, Neu and Reaser (1997) pointed out that to complete the information gap task,

students are required to negotiate the meaning through the target language. As discussed earlier, negotiation allows students to arrive at more accurate expressions and understanding in language interaction. Misianto (2017) posited that information gap activities are beneficial in such a way that students must provide the missing information without memorising any text, which encourages the students and improves their speaking skills. Moreover, authentic language learning can thus be provided inside the classroom (Rahimi, 2016). Every student has a role to play in these activities and the tasks cannot be executed without communication through sharing of information, which boosts students' confidence (Farista et al., 2018). Additionally, students must work together in pairs or in groups to exchange information, which makes each student contribute in one way or another (Kayi, 2006). In general, in an IGA the participants are engaged in a real, verbal interaction using the target language and if done successfully, such activities go a long way in building confidence as the learners realise that they can use the English language meaningfully in a real-life situation, to share information with somebody or obtain missing information from somebody. It provides a precious example of how effective they can be in a communicative manner. On the other hand, Weir (1990) pointed out that the use of data gap inside the classroom has some disadvantages. When colleagues work in pairs or groups and one of the respondents regulates the process of conversation, this forces others to reduce their speaking time. In addition, the variations in the level of skills between the learners may influence the process of communication.

In Saudi Arabia, students in public schools find it difficult to communicate and share information in the English language as reported by Allahji (2015). Therefore, information gap activities through role play are considered as an important activity, which may improve students' English-speaking skills if used properly. According to Ismaili and Bajrami (2016), the concept of the information gap activity "is based on completing a task by completing missing information such as conveying a telephone message, expressing an opinion, etc." (p. 613) which may lead to an increase in students' motivation to learn the target language especially in the context of Saudi Arabia. Moreover, Ur (1996) noted that using an information gap activity may encourage learners in this school setting to actively engage in the learning process. Also, Ments (1999) pointed out that role play "acts as a shorthand way of identifying and labelling a set of appearances and behaviours on the assumption that these appearances and behaviours are characteristic of a particular person and predictable within a given situation" (p. 6). Therefore, various information gap activities can be applied or tested to improve the communication skills of Saudi learners.

Additionally, in information gap activities, students may be in pairs or in groups of two or more. They can be given different pieces of information about a topic to enable them to complete a task by sharing separate information. Information gap is a useful and interesting technique because it gives every student the opportunity to speak, and it reflects the way language is used as a means of communication in real life. Also, speaking with peers is less frightening than presenting in front of the whole class and being evaluated. According to Richards and Platt (1992), the absence of information gap activities renders an artificial and mechanical learning process in the classroom. Therefore, this current research endeavours to investigate the effect of information gap activities on students' English-speaking skills and to explore the relationship between extroversion and introversion with this skill. The selection of information gap activities

for this study could be appropriate for the targeted population and hopefully encourage them to practise the English language to improve their speaking skills.

It is important to state that success in foreign language learning, and especially in spoken language, is influenced by some personality factors that may predict the way in which learners behave in oral communication. Recent investigations have found that introversion and extroversion are very significant predictors of how learners perform in their speaking tests (Chen, Jiang, & Mu, 2015). Introvert learners are those students who are quiet, reserved, shy, distant, and fond of books rather than people, whereas extrovert learners are those who are sociable, outgoing, and generally have an inclination for parties, friends, excitement, and change, thereby getting more chances to engage themselves in oral communication than their introvert peers (Eysenck, 1965). Relevant evidence on the role of introversion and extroversion in successful language learning comes from applied linguistics research (Griffiths, 1991; Naiman et al., 1978) as well as from studies on oral English language learning (Chen, Jiang, & Mu, 2015). In relation to this, the present study aims to include introversion and extroversion as controlling variables among the participants of the study, and thus examine whether the differences in personality style would affect students' oral performance.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Saudi students should be able to speak English fluently due to the number of hours spent studying the English language at school. According to Al-Seghayer (2011), Saudi students study the English language for more than 850 hours at school from their fourth grade of elementary level until the last stage of high school, which covers a period of nine years. Starting from the fourth grade up to the last year of high school, these students study the language for 45 minutes daily, four times per week for intermediate and high school, and twice a week for elementary school. However, despite the number of hours allocated for teaching and learning the English language in Saudi schools, students in various levels of education, including those college graduates from English departments, find it difficult to fluently communicate in English (Hamouda, 2020; Alshammari, 2011; Liton & Ali, 2011; Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). Rababah (2002) pointed out that this problem can be attributed to the nature of the traditional teaching methods in Arab schools. Alseghayer (2014), and Abdulmughni (2019) pointed out that instructors in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are the centre of classroom lessons and give instructions to the students by engaging in one-way communication rather than interactive communication, which does not help introvert students to participate inside the classroom. Interactive communication takes place through IGA by exchange information between two participants and influences one another.

Furthermore, teachers often give instructions in their mother tongue (Arabic) to save time in teaching (Alshammari, 2011). They often require students to memorise new vocabulary and answer exercise questions without proper understanding of meaning, which is based on the traditional methods of teaching. There is no opportunity for students to talk and communicate in English neither with their teachers nor with their classmates (Jamjoom, 2009). In effect, this does not support students, especially

introvert individuals, to participate in class or interact with their other classmates. Aba-Hussain (2016) and Abdulkader (2016) pointed out that the methods used mostly in teaching English are the grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods. They added that only 9% of the classroom activities are for speaking practices. Additionally, Al-Mohanna (2010) and Alzaidi (2011) contend that Saudi English teachers do not use communicative language teaching techniques in their classroom due to the low proficiency levels of Saudi students. These arguments from past studies showed that attention has not been paid to interaction to encourage students to participate, which keeps introvert students away from the circle of interaction with students and teachers during English classes.

Another obstacle to the enhancement of speaking skills in English in Saudi Arabia is the lack of exposure to spoken English outside the classroom since English in Saudi Arabia and in most Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries is learned as a foreign language rather than a second language like it is in Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines where one can commonly hear English being spoken in many areas of daily life in the public sphere.

Generally, second language teachers face problems in motivating students to speak the target language (Raptou, 2002). This implies that there is a lack of implementing effective methods that may help second language teachers in Saudi Arabia and achieve the desirable objectives of teaching and learning outcomes. Accordingly, there is a need for implementing an effective method of teaching such as the communicative language teaching approach to improve English speaking skills among students in Saudi Arabia. Typically, there are two types of students in the classroom who can be classified as extrovert and introvert students. Therefore, the effective method of teaching that should be implemented by teachers to improve English speaking skills must pay more consideration to those types of students to ensure attaining the required outcomes.

Based on that, this current research focused on exploring the effectiveness of a specific method of teaching that may help to improve oral communication skills in English among extrovert and introvert EFL students. The information gap activities will be investigated as an effective method of teaching that may help develop English speaking skills of students. Previous studies indicated that information gap activity is one of the most effective methods for communicative language teaching that leads to the desirable outcomes for students (Ghofur & Fuqaha, 2015; Ismaili & Bajrami, 2016). Thus, the current research aims to explore the effectiveness of information gap activities based on communicative teaching, which is reputed to be able develop oral communication skills in English among EFL students. The information gap activity is one of the most effective techniques in communicative language teaching (Ghofur & Fuqaha, 2015; Ismaili & Bajrami, 2016). This method is selected by the researcher to develop and improve female intermediate school students' English proficiency level, their interest, and make them enjoy the learning process through application of information gap activities.

Information gap is a kind of structured output activity (Watamni & Gholami, 2012). This type of learning activity usually involves the teacher supplying words and sentences,

which the students use to ask each other about missing information. Such activities motivate students to speak with more confidence as they play or engage in pairs or groups. Oradee (2012, p. 533) explains:

New knowledge of communicative activities can motivate the learners and establish good relationships between the teacher and the students as well as among the students thereby encouraging a supportive environment for language learning.

The same author also added that

...communicative activities can motivate the learners and establish good relationships between the teacher and the students as well as among the students thereby encouraging a supportive environment for language learning (p.533).

Indeed, many scholars have investigated the way personality factors, particularly extroversion and introversion, affect language learners' skills. Some of these studies revealed some level of relationship between personality types and language skills. For example, Boroujeni et al. (2015) investigated the impact of extrovert and introvert types of personality on Iranian students of English as a foreign language, regarding their writing performance. Therefore, studying personality types is an important factor regarding developing English skills as highlighted by Boroujeni et al. (2015), Sharp (2008), and Dewaele and Furnham (2000). Thus, this study also focused also on personality types to examine how the personality is affected by IGA.

In addition to what previous studies highlighted, one of the main concerns facing second language researchers is the question of whether differences in instructional technique are related to students' personality types. Personality is one of the individual differences broadly established as generally linked to outcomes in learning, especially in second language acquisition (Hajimohammadi & Mukundan, 2011). Personality type presents a pattern which indicates how people see the world, how information is collected and interpreted, how decisions are made, and how individuals live out their lifestyle choices (Behnam & Bayazidi, 2013). Despite the huge potential in communicative type activities as reported earlier, student response to the use of such activities may be affected by their personality type. Several theories hold that personality type significantly influences the degree of success that individuals achieve in acquiring a second language (Karim et al, 2016; Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012). In the same way, there is a significant relationship between personality and language learning strategies (Obralic & Mulalic, 2017). In spite of the diversity of research in the education realm, relatively few studies have been conducted to investigate if information gap activities are more effective with regard to the different personality types of language learners in improving their speaking skills (Behnam & Bayazidi, 2013; Boroujeni et al., 2015).

Understanding students' personality types may likely facilitate the learning process, which helps in finding a successful learning style for each type and help English language

teachers choose the appropriate activities that will motivate students to interact based on their personality type to help students speak fluently. Various instruments such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Big Five Personality Test, and Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) can help identify personality types of students. The most proper scale to identify the type of personality that can be used in this current study is EPQ. Moreover, the communicative approach may need to identify students who are of certain personality types to succeed. In this respect, extroverted and introversion are thought to be relevant personality types to examine. Therefore, this research also investigated whether the information gap activities are more effective regarding the different personality types of language learners in developing English speaking skills.

To sum up, currently, there is still a lack of studies conducted in Saudi Arabia regarding information gap activities as an effective method in developing English speaking skills of students. Also, there is still scarcity of studies regarding how the information gap activities can impact on the extrovert and introvert students in Saudi Arabia. While these issues were already investigated and conducted internationally and in different countries, there is insufficient literature regarding this issue in public schools in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, this study endeavours to fill the gap in the literature, which is the lack of studies on the use of IGA to facilitate the learning of speaking skills among extrovert and introvert intermediate school students in Saudi Arabia. Based on the abovementioned problems, the researcher in this study investigated the effectiveness of using information gap activities to develop speaking skills for third intermediate, extrovert and introvert EFL female students at a public school in Rumah, Saudi Arabia.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

Considering the problems mentioned above, this study developed the following research objectives:

1. To examine the effect of information gap activities (IGA) on extrovert and introvert female EFL students' speaking performance.
2. To examine the effect of information gap activities on extrovert and introvert female EFL students' performance in the six speaking constructs in the experimental group.
3. To investigate extrovert and introvert female EFL students' response towards IGA.
4. To explore how extrovert and introvert female EFL students perceive IGA as a tool to improve their English language speaking performance.



## 1.5 Research Questions

In line with the above objectives, this research will be guided by the following four research questions:

1. What is the difference between experimental and control groups in terms of the effect of the information Gap activities (IGA) on extrovert and introvert female EFL students' speaking performance?
2. What are the differences in the six speaking performance constructs of extrovert and introvert female EFL students after treatment?
3. How do extrovert and introvert female EFL students respond to IGA as a tool to improve their English language speaking skills?
4. How do extrovert and introvert female EFL students perceive IGA as a tool to improve their English language speaking performance?

## 1.6 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated to guide the study, especially with respect to the first two research questions:

- H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in performance of speaking between extrovert and introvert EFL students in the experimental and control groups following treatment.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the fluency scores of the speaking task between extrovert and introvert EFL students in the experimental group.
- H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the grammar scores of the speaking task between extrovert and introvert EFL students in the experimental group.
- H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the pronunciation scores of the speaking task between extrovert and introvert EFL students in the experimental group.
- H<sub>05</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the vocabulary scores of the speaking task between extrovert and introvert EFL students in the experimental group.
- H<sub>06</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the interaction scores of the speaking task between extrovert and introvert EFL students in the experimental group.
- H<sub>07</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the content scores of the speaking task between extrovert and introvert EFL students in the experimental group.

## 1.7 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, the implications of this study in the field of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) tend to fill the gap in the literature which deals with English speaking skills by highlighting some important concepts and issues related to English teaching methods. The findings will provide referential contributions to the body of knowledge about how to enhance students' speaking skills using information-gap activities among female intermediate school students in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, the current study will extend and enrich some conceptual issues related to the way students' personalities might influence their learning from information gap activities. The findings of this study are expected to further clarify and strengthen explanations of interaction hypothesis through the application of the communicative language teaching approach with information gap activities.

This is an opportunity to develop knowledge that could help decision-makers in the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia as well as English language teachers to improve the theoretical and empirical literature on the role of information gap activities and personality types. Likewise, the practical significance of the current study may help Saudi English language teachers attain the goals of the methods used in the English textbooks which are based on Communicative Language Learning (CLT). The findings could support the growing commitment to improve the capabilities of English language teachers in the Saudi Arabian education system by understanding how IGAs can be an ideal alternative strategy in teaching students and enabling them to speak better in English. It also provides language teachers and learners an opportunity to begin thinking about novel approaches to teaching and learning a foreign language to persuade them to focus on this approach.

The results of this study provide information on how the extrovert and introvert domain can become a gateway through which teachers can manipulate their teaching processes. This study aims at providing insights into how the differences between extroverts and introverts may require English language teachers to tailor their teaching methodology to the individual differences that are possibly in existence among their students to enhance their progress in second language learning. As previously discussed, it seems obvious that extrovert learners who are less afraid of embarrassing themselves when speaking incorrectly, tend to perform better in oral tests, communicate more in their second language, and work better in class with higher levels of activity than their introvert peers. The differences in their traits seem to influence the way in which learners learn their second language. If the results of the present study reconfirm the evidence that the progress in speaking skill is influenced by differences in personality traits, particularly introversion and extroversion, then, this research may inform the Saudi English language teachers on how to control their learning environments and select options that are best suited for learning style preferences.

This study will contribute to policy making by highlighting policy implications for the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, curriculum designers, and researchers. The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia has suggested many teaching methods to teachers;

however, these suggestions have not improved the performance of Saudi students in intermediate schools. This study will hopefully persuade the Ministry to encourage English language teachers to implement activities using the communicative language teaching approach, which has not been applied in the kingdom's classrooms where traditional methods are still commonly used (Rababah, 2002). Moreover, the findings of this study may help English language curriculum designers incorporate these strategies in teaching speaking skills to intermediate school students by providing more exercises in English textbooks that need to be applied in pairs or in groups. Additionally, understanding the role of students' personalities in the English language acquisition process gives a greater chance of acquiring the language successfully and improving their speaking skills.

## **1.8 Definition of Terms**

The researcher includes some conceptual and operational definitions of key terms to clarify the concepts as they are used in this study.

### **1.8.1 Information Gap Activity (IGA)**

Richards (2006) defines an information gap task as an activity in language teaching where learners do not have the information essential to complete a task or to solve a problem. In this study, the information gap activity is considered as a key learning activity implemented in the communicative approach in language teaching. It is referred to as a task involving some missing information, which requires two or more learners to communicate with each other to fill in the missing information. In the context of this study, students are expected to use the English language to interact and to fill in the gaps in information with information from each other. The activities in this study that involve information gaps are guessing games, jigsaw tasks, problem-solving, and picture differences.

### **1.8.2 Speaking**

Speaking refers to an interactive process in generating meaning through building ideas from information received from a particular source (Burns & Joyce, 1997). In this study, speaking refers to the exchange of information, orally and fluently, between two or more people to convey a message using the target language and will be measured by pre- and post-test, designed according to rubrics of the speaking performance test (SPT).

### **1.8.3 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

According to Brown (2007), CLT is "an approach to language teaching methodology that emphasises authenticity, interaction, student-centred learning, task-based activities,

and communication for the real world, meaningful purposes” (p. 378). The importance of CLT in this study is that information gap activities, which are a focus of the study, are carried out using the CLT approach to achieve the goals of CLT.

#### **1.8.4 Extroversion**

Cain (2013) states that extroverts typically desire to be around other people; they recharge and find energy by engaging with others. According to Cain (2013), People with a preference for extroversion also tend to prefer action over reflection and enjoy working in groups. On the other hand, Hirsh et al. (2003) explains that when processing new information, individuals with a tendency towards extroversion prefer to speak, think, and then speak again. The researcher used the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) to measure students' extroversion inside the classroom.

#### **1.8.5 Introversion**

Introversion is a psychological construct that determines a person's preference to focus his or her attention and energy inwards on ideas and images (Keirsey & Bates, 1978). Cain (2013) says that people with a preference towards introversion are typically focused more internally than extroverts. Introverts often require alone time to process events and recharge. The same author further says that individuals with a tendency towards introversion prefer communicating in small groups and keep their thoughts to themselves. The researcher used the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) to investigate students' introversion inside the classroom.

### **1.9 Summary**

This chapter provided an overview of the background of the study by illustrating issues in learning the English language, particularly in terms of speaking skills. The statement of the problem and purpose of the study were introduced and explained to justify the need for the proposed research. The research questions and research hypotheses were formulated to further understand the effectiveness of using communicative activities in the classroom. The chapter also presented the significance of the study. The definitions of key terms used in the study were also provided. The next chapter discusses the review of literature related to the study topic.

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## LIST OF PUBLICATION

### Journal article

Almziad, A., Abd Samad, A., Razali, A. B., & Ismail, L. (2020). Using Information Gap Activities to Improve the Speaking Skills of Saudi Arabian Introverted and Extroverted Learners. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, 17(6), 357-368.

Almziad, A. (2020). The Reviewing of Benefits of Information Gap Activities in Teaching Second Language Situation. *International Journal of Management and Human Science (IJMHS)*, 4(4), 39-44.

### Seminar

GREduc 2016: Graduate Research in Education Seminar Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia. 15<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

ICERP International Conference on Research in Education and Training: Everly Hotel, Putrajaya. 26-27th July, 2017.

International Asean ELT Conference Hotel Equatorial, Melaka. 15-17<sup>th</sup> March, 2018.