

Communicative Language Teaching in EFL Contexts: Teachers Attitude and Perception in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been widely explored and studied by many countries in the field of English language teaching. This study first presents an overview of English language teaching in Bangladesh, and then investigates the definition and principles of CLT which is followed by a brief history of CLT. In addition, a review of existing literature related to communicative competence, as well as how it functions in CLT is presented. A mixed method research design was used for this research. Participants for this study were thirty teachers of English teaching at primary and secondary levels. The main modes of data collection consisted of questionnaire and informal interviews. The results show that English for foreign language (EFL) teachers, whilst aware of the achievements, observe many difficulties in implementing CLT in their classrooms. These difficulties stem from four directions, namely, the teacher, the students, the educational system, and CLT itself. The results suggest that despite showing keen interest in change and being eager to identify with CLT, teachers are not optimistic about the complete adoption of CLT, and thus feel that only by overcoming the difficulties from these four sources and by establishing more favorable conditions for the implementation of CLT, they can truly benefit from CLT in their English classrooms.

Key words: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), English Language Teaching (ELT), Inherent Problems, CLT Implementations, English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Introduction

The language teaching methods are very important for the purpose of learning and teaching in every language. English is one of most widely spoken language on earth and used in many areas such as technology, science, business. The worldwide demand has created an enormous demand for quality language teaching and language teaching materials and resources. To make teaching more interesting and meaningful English teachers use different types of teaching methods. There are five types of teaching methods such as Grammar Translation Method (GLT), Direct Method (DM), Audio Lingual Method (ALM), Situational Language Teaching (SLT) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Among these CLT is one of most effective methods in achieving communicative competence and may be one of the most popular and widely used methods in Bangladesh.

To compensate for the limitations of the traditional language teaching methods, CLT has been introduced in EFL settings to improve students' abilities to use English in real contexts (Littlewood, 2007). CLT advocates teaching practices that develop communicative competence in authentic contexts (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). However, the theories and practices of CLT have

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faced various challenges in EFL contexts (Anderson, 1993; Ellis, 1996; Li, 1998; Liao, 2000; Takanashi, 2004). Thus, this study explores factors that promote or hinder teachers' implementation of CLT, with the recommendation that their views be considered in decisions regarding the integration of CLT into Bangladesh Education system.

So, the primary focus of CLT is to facilitate learners in creating meaning not in developing grammatical structures or acquiring native –like pronunciation. This means that success of learning a foreign language depends on how well learners have developed their communicative competences and how much they are able to apply this knowledge of language in real life situations.

Significance of the Study

CLT is a recognized theoretical model in English language teaching today. Many applied linguists regard it as one of the most effective approaches to ELT. In Bangladesh, the main focus of communicative language teaching method is to help the students to learn a language so that they can use it to communicate meaningfully in any real life situation. The methods assume that the learners of English language will be able to communicate socially on an everyday basis with native or expert English language speakers. The communicative approach makes teachers and students consider language in terms of the communicative functions it performs in real situations, as well as its structures (vocabulary and grammar).

Therefore, the present study has been undertaken with following objectives:

1. To identify the problems that are inherent in English teaching in Bangladesh;
2. To find out the contribution of communicative language teaching in Bangladesh;
3. To know the feasibility of communicative language teaching;
4. To know the difficulties and challenges that EFL teachers face in implementing CLT in their English classrooms.

Review of Literature

In 1970 CLT was first proposed in England. This methodology was regarded as revolutionary since it placed an essential emphasis on communication in language learning classrooms. The apparent popularity of CLT in the last thirty years or so, as well as the feasibility of implementing CLT in EFL contexts have accentuated the significance of the local needs and the conditions of the particular EFL contexts, and the benefits of the traditional methods of language teaching (Bax, 2003; Harvey, 1984; Incecay & Incecay, 2009). And also some others have taken a strong position for adopting CLT in Asian countries (Li, 1984; Liao, 2004; Maley, 1984).

There is substantial debate as to the appropriate ways of defining CLT, and no single model of CLT is collectively accepted as authoritative (McGroarty, 1984; Markee, 1997). According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), CLT starts with a theory of language as communication, and its goal is to develop learners' communicative competence.

CLT views language as system for the expression of meaning where the main function of language is to permit interaction and communication (Richard, 2001). William Littlewood (1981)

stated that CLT means to pay systematic attention to both functional and structural aspects of language merging this into a communicative view. There are two aspects of CLT: what to teach and how to teach. The 'what to teach' aspects of this approach gives more importance on language functions rather than grammar and vocabulary. The second aspect of 'how to teach' states that there should be "plentiful exposure to language in use and plenty of opportunities to use it" for the development of a student's knowledge and skills (Harmer,2001). CLT wants to involve students in real or realistic communication through different activities. In this case the accuracy of target language is less important than successful achievement of the communicative task (Harmer, 2001). In "approaches and methods in language teaching.

Richards and *Rodgers (2001) summarized the communicative view of language as:*

- Language is a system for the expression of meaning
- The primary function of language is to allow interaction and communication
- The structure of language reflect its functional and communicative uses
- The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning.

So the communicative approach views language as a system through which the meaning is expressed perfectly. Its main function is to permit interaction and communication; the primary elements of language are not only grammatical and structural features but also the functional and communicative meaning. According to Piepho (1981) the objectives of CLT are:

- An integrative and content level: language as a means of expressions.
- A linguistic and instrumental level: Language as a semiotic system and an object of learning.
- An effective level of interpersonal relationships and conduct: language as a means of expressing values and judgments about oneself and others.
- A level of individuals learning needs: remedial learning based on error analysis
- A general level of extra-linguistic goals: language learning within the school curriculum (Qtd in Richards, 2001)

Role of the Teachers in CLT

There are quite a few roles for teachers in CLT which are determined by the view of CLT. According to Breen and Candlin in article "The essentials of a communicative curriculum in language teaching" there are two main rules of a teacher in CLT class rooms The *first role* is to facilitate the communication process among all the students in the classroom, and between the students and the different type of activities and texts. *Secondly*, a teacher has to act as an independent participant within the learning teaching groups. The teacher is also expected to act as a resource, an organizer of resources, a motivator, a counselor, a guide and a researcher. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

The role of Learners in CLT

As the importance in communicative language teaching on the process of communication rather than mastery of language forms, there are different roles of learners in classroom. The main role

of learners is negotiating. They negotiate among themselves, the learning process and the objective learning. Learners should contribute as much as they gain, and thereby learn in an independent way. They interact within the groups and within the classroom.

Practices CLT in Various Countries

CLT is considered an approach rather than a method as its principles reflect a communicative view of language learning. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been incorporated in the English language syllabus in many countries. The teachers create a situation and set an activity in motion, but it is the learners themselves who are responsible for conducting the interaction to its conclusion. They are responsible managers of their own learning (Lerasen-Freeman, 1986). Learners also have important monitoring role which they may apply subjectively to their own language. The learner can provide feedback to others concerning his own interaction of the specific purpose of the curriculum. In a CLT class room situation, learners get opportunity to express their individuality as well as share their ideas and opinions. CLT believes that “learners first, learning second” (Richards, 2001). It means that the learners engagement is a priority.

In Germany, language teaching methodologists took the lead in developing classroom materials that encouraged learner choice (Candlin, 1978). This was the formulation of grammar exercises in relation to social aspects.

In this framework, along with the growing popularity of CLT in most EFL countries, there have been many studies conducted on the feasibility of CLT innovation and potential problems in its use in EFL contexts such as China, Greece, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, Vietnam and so on.

Ellis (1994) examined the suitability of the communicative approach in the Vietnamese context. He found that one of the main problems in using a communicative approach in Vietnam was that teachers were dependent on the inherent traditional teaching practices. In a similar study, Karavas-Doukas (1996) investigated teachers’ attitudes toward the use of communicative approach in Greece. It was reported that although the English curriculum in Greece was based on the premises of communicative language teaching, teachers showed a tendency to carry on the traditional teacher-oriented instruction style. The findings of this study suggested that teachers either did not understand or were unable to see the practical implications of the CLT principles.

In another significant study, Li (1998) looked into Korean teachers’ perceptions of the implementation of CLT. The results of Li’s study confirmed that the teachers encountered difficulties in using CLT practices in their classes. The difficulties reported by the Korean teachers were divided into the following four categories:

- *Difficulties caused by teachers:*
 - *Deficiency in spoken English,*
 - *Deficiency in strategic and sociolinguistic competence,*
 - *Lack of training in CLT,*
 - *Few opportunities for retraining in CLT,*
 - *Misconceptions about CLT,*
 - *Little time for and expertise in material development*

- *Difficulties caused by students:*
 - *Low English proficiency,*
 - *Little motivation for communicative competence,*
 - *Resistance to class participation*
- *Difficulties caused by the educational system:*
 - *Large classes,*
 - *Grammar-based examinations,*
 - *Insufficient funding,*
 - *Lack of support*
- *Difficulties caused by CLT itself:*
 - *CLT's inadequate account of EFL teaching,*
 - *Lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments. (Li, 1998, p. 687)*

According to Li (1998), teachers were reluctant to implement CLT in their language classrooms due to these problems listed above. He claimed that in order for teachers to be willing to make use of CLT in EFL contexts, many adjustments must be made.

Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations of this study. The first limitation is related to the sample size; second limitation pertains to the data collection procedure. The analysis of the data was limited since the students were neither questioned nor interviewed; actual classroom practices may be dissimilar to the principles they reported in the questionnaire and the interviews.

Methodology

Both primary and secondary sources of data have been used. In getting primary information, face to face interviews were taken with different primary and high schools teachers. This chapter presents an overview of the research methodology. It contains an account of the procedures used in the study, including research design, selection and description of the participants, setting, instruments used for data collection, data analysis and trustworthiness of the study.

Research Design

The present study aims to respond to the research questions of qualitative and quantitative nature, data collection and analysis techniques from both methodologies, thus mixed-method approach was chosen as the methodology of this research. Mixed-method approach enables the researchers to draw on all possibilities (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) and provide a broader perspective to the study as the qualitative data helps describe aspects that the quantitative data cannot address (Creswell, 2003). Using both forms of data allows researchers to simultaneously generalize results from a sample to a population and to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of interest. The mixed methodology helped to explain the EFL teachers' perceived difficulties in the implementation of CLT in Bangladesh with the help of the survey questionnaire, and with the help of the follow-up interviews the difficulties and challenges that were not covered by the questionnaire were revealed.

Participants

The participants for this study were 30 teachers of English teaching at primary and secondary levels. These participants were asked to complete the questionnaire, and five teachers were asked to participate in the succeeding interview. Out of these 30 participants, 18 (60%) of them were males, and the rest 12 (40%) were female. In case of age range the majority of the respondents (60%) were 30 to 35 years old whereas seven of them (23.3%) were 35-40 years old and rest five (16.67%) were above 40 years old. According to the teaching experience, it varies from 7 to 17 years at different schools. As far as the schools information is concerned twenty participants were working at private/Non government schools and 10 others were from government schools. All thirty schools were located at different areas of the Dhaka city corporation. Regarding the academic degrees earned by the participants, 18 of them hold a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree under national university along with B Ed. The other twelve teachers were holders of either Master of Arts (MA) or Master of Education (M.Ed.) degrees. These instruments permitted the participant teachers to identify in their own terms what aspects of their particular context they perceived to be constraining in implementing CLT, whether these be cultural, economic, political, or administrative.

Written Questionnaires

The written survey questionnaire used in this study was designed for teachers who are teaching in public and/or private schools in city area of Bangladesh. Questionnaires were given to the thirty participants to explore the difficulties and challenges that English teachers in Bangladesh have and might encounter in their attempts to implement CLT, as well as to investigate their understanding of the possibilities of overcoming these difficulties. The survey was composed of four main parts. *The first part of the questionnaire consisted* of questions that dealt with the participants' personal information. *The second part involved questions* that had to do with the participants' school information. *The third part of the survey questionnaire* included questions pertaining to English language teaching methodologies, particularly CLT. *The fourth and final part of the survey* explored the participants' opinions with regard to the perceived difficulties and challenges in adopting CLT in their classes.

Interviews

In addition to the questionnaire, interviews with the five research participants were conducted as another important mode of data collection for this study. Each interview lasted about thirty minutes and they involved a list of open-ended questions addressing the various issues related to CLT, and the use of it in EFL contexts, particularly in Bangladesh.

Data Analysis

The questionnaire data analysis included the analysis of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were analyzed with the help of the statistical analysis software program SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Frequency calculations (i.e. how many teachers selected each answer) were used to produce descriptive central tendency statistics that were used to present an overall picture of the teachers' perceptions of CLT, and the

difficulties and problems that they faced in their attempts to implement CLT in English classrooms. In analyzing the qualitative interview data, I used content analysis technique, which can be described as drawing up a list of coded categories and each segment of transcribed data into one of these categories. Content analysis enables researchers to shift through large volumes of data with relative ease in a systematic fashion. It also allows inferences to be made which then can be corroborated using other methods of data collection (Merriam, 2001). Furthermore, cross-comparisons were made among the two categories of the participants, namely, primary and secondary, with reference to their responses to the interview questions.

Findings of the Study

The ideas generated from both the questionnaire and the interviews are discussed under four major categories; namely, attitudes towards English and ELT profession, concerns over the problems inherent in English teaching in Bangladesh, desire for changes in English teaching in Bangladesh, understanding of CLT and its potential for English teaching in Bangladesh, and finally difficulties and challenges in implementing CLT in Bangladesh.

Attitudes towards English and ELT Profession

In the attitude towards English language and English teaching profession, all of the interview respondents expressed that they had a positive attitude towards English in general. They reported that they had keen interest in learning English when they were students, which thus led them to choose Foreign Languages as their specialization in high school. They believed that the knowledge of two languages, i.e. English, would be useful in securing a high-paying job.

Concerns over the Problems in English Teaching in Bangladesh

The following shortcomings of English teaching in Bangladesh by respondents are : large classes; teachers' heavy workload; heavily-loaded program to cover; mismatch between curriculum and assessment; and students' poor communicative abilities.

Table .1 Problems inherent in English teaching in Bangladesh Frequency

<i>Item</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Large classes	5	100
Heavy workload on Teachers'	5	100
Heavily-loaded program	4	80
Curriculum/Assessment mismatch	4	80
Students' poor communicative abilities	5	100
Students' low motivation	4	80

Large Classes

From the interview we came to know that high numbers of students in the classes was a major problem. According to the survey results, twenty two teachers reported that the average number of students in their English classrooms ranged from 31 - 40 students. Another five teachers recounted that they had around 41-50 students on average.

Teachers' Heavy Workload

The teachers' heavy workload was also demonstrated by the questionnaire results. 33% of the total participants reported that they had taken 5 different classes in each week, while 6% of the total participants was only taken two different class/week.(Fig:1)

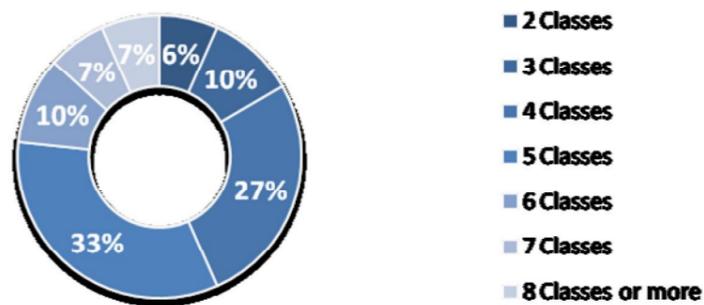


Fig.1 No. of Classes taught by survey participants

Heavy workload

The teachers (80%) were heavily-loaded with English teaching program. Teachers were concerned that they were supposed to cover too many language items, i.e. essentially grammar points, in a limited period of time.

Mismatch between Curriculum and Assessment

80% of the interview pointed out the disparity between what the curriculum dictates and what is actually assessed on the large-scale standardized tests given at the end of each academic year.

Students' Poor Communicative Abilities

The respondents expressed their concerns regarding the fact that most students have poor communicative abilities even after learning English for several years. The biggest problem in our schools relates to the strong bonds with traditional methods to teaching English.

Students' Low Motivation

80% interview respondents identified students' low motivation to learn or speak English as another characteristic problem of English teaching in Bangladesh.

A. CLT and its Potential for English Teaching in Bangladesh

Most frequently selected items by the survey participants as characteristics of CLT are : 93.33% teachers reported that CLT is student/learner-centered approach; 90% of the participants reported that CLT emphasizes communication in a second language (L2); CLT emphasizes fluency over

accuracy (86.66%); CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening skills (83.33%). The items selected most frequently as not characteristics of CLT are: 93.33% of the teachers thought CLT involve teaching speaking only; CLT involves no grammar teaching (83.33%); CLT involves only group work or pair work (60.0%). It is notable that the participants showed a clear variation in their response to the item that stated that *CLT requires teachers to have a high proficiency in English*. 50% of the respondents indicated that this statement was “True” while some 33.33% of them chose “Not true” as their response. A similar trend was seen for the item stating that *CLT requires higher knowledge of the target language culture*. Even though 40% of the participants expressed that this conception was “Not true”, 53.3% of them maintained that it was “True.” Table: 2 summarize the participants’ responses with regard to the general principles of CLT.

Finally, it may be concluded that, participants differed in the perceptions about the features of CLT. While 60% of the respondents chose “Don’t Know” as their response, 33.33% of them picked “Not true” as an answer. However, interview data also showed a logical understanding of CLT. The participants were convinced that CLT, as the most recent language teaching methodology, has a great deal to offer to English teaching in the Bangladesh.

Table 2. Survey participants perceptions about CLT

What is involved in CLT methodology in your view?	True	Not true	Don't know	Total responses
<i>CLT is student/learner-centered approach.</i>	28	02	00	30
<i>CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy.</i>	27	03	00	30
<i>CLT emphasizes communication in a second language (L2).</i>	25	05	00	30
<i>CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening skills.</i>	25	03	02	30
<i>CLT requires teachers to have a high proficiency in English.</i>	15	10	05	30
<i>CLT involves only group work or pair work.</i>	18	10	02	30
<i>CLT requires higher knowledge of the target language culture.</i>	16	12	02	30
<i>CLT involves no grammar teaching.</i>	03	25	04	30
<i>CLT involves teaching speaking only.</i>	02	28	00	30
<i>CLT is basically an ESL methodology, not EFL.</i>	02	10	18	30

The majority of them were positive about the possible contributions CLT could make for improving English teaching in Bangladesh. This was verified by the questionnaire data. When asked whether they have tried using CLT in their classes, 67% of the questionnaire participants responded with a positive answer while the remaining 33% of them said that they never used CLT in their classrooms (Table 3).

Table 3. Participants’ experience in using CLT

Have you ever tried using CLT in your classes?	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	20	67
No	10	33
Total	30	100

B. Implementing CLT in Bangladesh Related Difficulties and Challenges

From the survey we came to know that most of the participants have tried using CLT in their classrooms and agreed that it is essential to utilize CLT to improve the effectiveness of English teaching practices in Bangladesh.

Difficulties and Challenges related to the Teachers

From the survey we revealed the following five major constraints related to the teachers themselves. These reported difficulties are: teachers' deficiency in spoken English, lack of knowledge about the appropriate use of language in context; few opportunities for teachers to get training in CLT; little time for developing materials for communicative classes; and teachers' misconceptions about CLT.

Shortcomings in Spoken English

The questionnaire data showed that half of them reported their own deficiency in spoken English as a challenge while ten of them considered this as a major challenge constraining them in applying CLT in their classrooms. Only three respondents thought that this was not a challenge at all; (Figure 2).

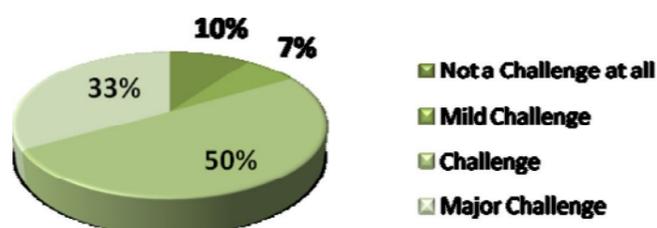


Fig 2. Teacher deficiency in spoken English

Shortage of knowledge about the appropriate use of Language

The teachers testified that their limited knowledge of the strategic, as well as sociolinguistic aspects of the language served as barriers to implementing CLT in their classes. Twenty-two (71%) of the respondents named this as a challenge while six (19%) believed that this was a major challenge. (Fig. 3)

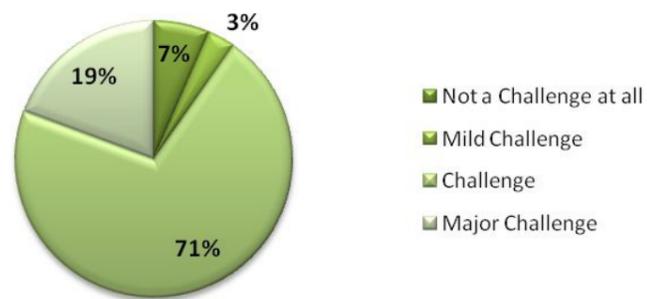


Fig 3. Teachers' lack of knowledge about the appropriate use of language

Shortage of Training in CLT

The participants differed in their responses to the question regarding the opportunities they had for training/retraining in CLT. 50% of the teachers considered this as a challenge; 34% of them thought it was a mild challenge while 13% labeled it as a major challenge. Only 3% assumed that getting training in CLT was not a challenge at all. (Fig. 4)

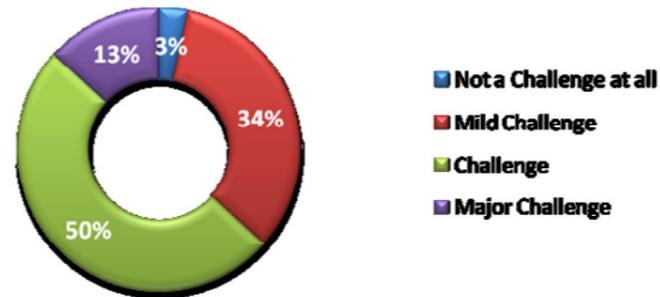


Fig. Lack of training in CLT

Lack of time for Developing Communicative Materials

According to the questionnaire data, twenty of the respondents considered their lack of time as a major challenge facing them in their efforts to develop communicative materials. Eight of them thought this was a challenge while one respondent mentioned that it would not be a challenge at all. (Fig.5).

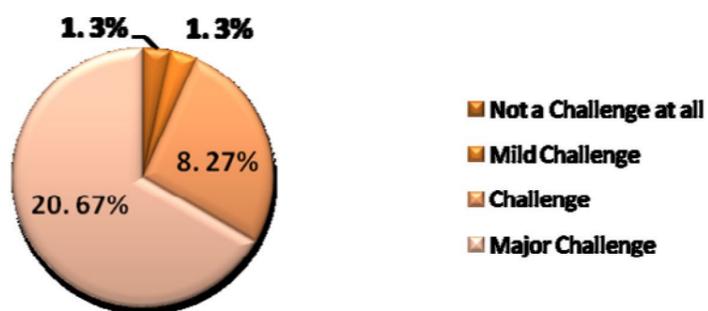


Fig 5. Lack of time for developing materials for communicative classes

The interview respondents felt that due to the time constraint they are unable to develop materials for communicative classes, which in turn became a limitation for them to use CLT. It was reported that presently, primary level course books are communicative in nature and secondary level course books are highly structural and the units are based on the various grammar points. Thus, they felt that they had to develop extra materials and design their own activities in order to use CLT in their classrooms.

Misconception about CLT

The majority of the teachers confirmed that misconceptions about CLT were not truly obstacles for them to make use of communicative activities in their classes. 46% of the respondents believed that misleading notions about CLT served only as a mild challenge. Further, 30% teachers indicated that they were not a challenge at all while 17% respondents noted that those misconceptions about CLT were serious barriers to implement CLT successfully in English classes (Fig. 6).

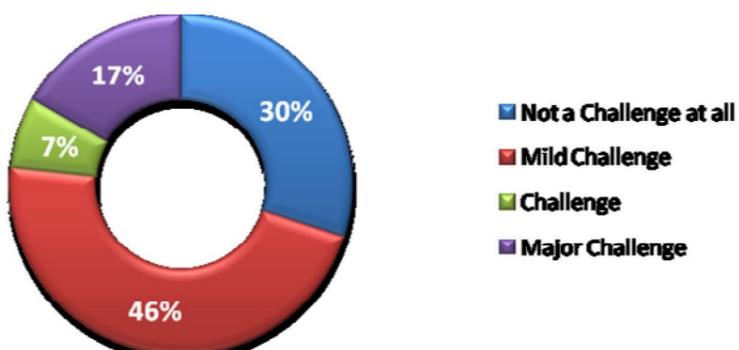


Fig. 6. Misconceptions about CLT

Student-related Difficulties and Challenges

The second major category of constraint was associated with the students. The survey data demonstrated that students' low English proficiency on the whole were one of the principal obstacles for the teachers to use CLT in English classrooms. 25 of the survey participants admitted that their learners' low English proficiency was a major challenge. The interview respondents also highlighted the issue. It was remarkable to see that a great majority of the survey respondents found students' passive style of learning as a serious obstacle that prevented them from implementing CLT in their English classes. Students' resistance to participating in communicative class activities was reported as another significant limitation to utilizing CLT in English classes in Bangladesh. From the survey twenty participants labeled this as a major challenge while some eight asserted that it was a challenge.

C. Educational System Related Difficulties and Challenges

The difficulties and challenges are related to the current Educational system in Bangladesh. Within this category, four key constraints were listed: lack of support, lack of authentic materials, large classes, and finally grammar-based examinations.

Shortage of support

According to the questionnaire data, lack of support was one of the biggest challenges that the Bangladesh EFL teachers had to deal with in their attempts to incorporate CLT into their teaching. More than half of the teachers of them deemed lack of support as a major challenge. At the same time, seven teachers regarded this as a challenge. Lack of support was thought to be a mild challenge by five respondents whereas the remaining three believed that it was not a challenge at all.

Lack of authentic materials

It was reported as another serious barrier for the teachers that prevented them from utilizing CLT in Bangladesh. The data revealed that 63% respondents found this as a major challenge. Likewise, 27% respondents thought that it was a challenge. It was surprising to see that only one respondent believed that lack of authentic materials was not a challenge at all (Fig. 7).

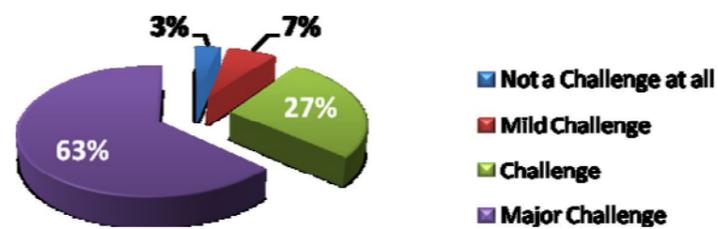


Fig 7. Lack of authentic materials

Large Classes

The questionnaire data revealed that the high number of students in classes was also a serious concern in the use of CLT in English classes. While 53% teachers considered this as a major challenge, some 34% checked it as a challenge. There were only 10% respondents who did not think that large classes acted as a barrier preventing them from implementing CLT in English classes (Fig. 8).

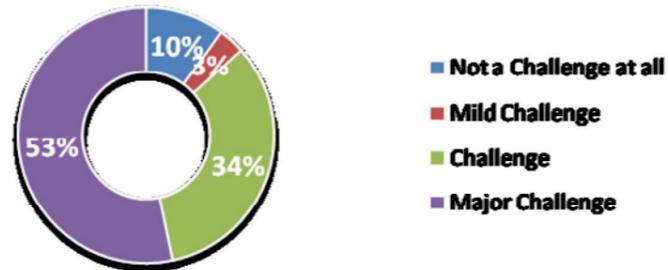


Fig. 8 Large classes

Grammar-based Examinations

It was revealed from the questionnaire data, 60% thought that grammar-based exam types were a major challenge for them while some 30% believed this was a challenge (Fig. 9). This concern was repeatedly pointed out by the interview respondents, too.

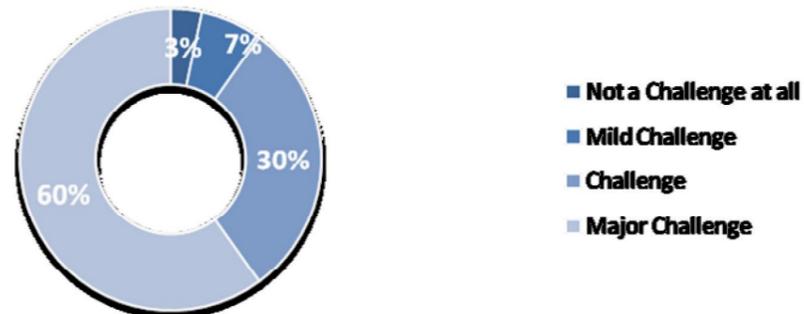


Fig. 9 Grammar-based examinations

CLT-related Difficulties and Challenges

The final category regarding the reported difficulties and challenges to use CLT in Bangladesh pertained to communicative language teaching itself. Two different problems were referred to by the respondents in this category: the lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments, and CLT's inadequate account of EFL teaching.

First, lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments was identified by the questionnaire respondents as one of the difficulties pertaining to CLT. However, the majority of the respondents – nineteen of them revealed that this was a rather manageable problem. Another seven of them noted that this was a challenge. It was noteworthy that only four respondents regarded this issue as a major challenge. The interview respondents showed variation in their responses to this matter. The teachers who were working at primary schools articulated that they were not really experiencing much difficulty with regard to effective tools to assess communicative language skills.

Second, the survey participants expressed that CLT failed to give an adequate account of EFL teaching. According to the great majority of the respondents – twenty five of them, CLT's inadequate account of distinctive features of EFL teaching contexts produced a significant challenge in terms of the implementation of CLT in Bangladesh. Another significant difference identified by the respondents was the difference in the learners' purposes of learning English. One respondent stated that students in Bangladesh predominantly learn English to pass certain exams. Therefore, what they really need is to improve reading and writing skills. On the contrary, ESL learners have a much greater need to develop their oral language skills.

Reflection on findings

This section deals with the responses of the questionnaire and interview respondents; a discussion of the consistency between the results is shown below:

Inconsistent Differences in the Teachers' Responses

The first difference was in their perspectives on students' motivation to learn spoken English in contrast to grammar. Teachers, who were teaching at both primary and secondary levels, felt that their students showed no interest in developing their oral language skills. It was only possible to concentrate on developing communicative skills of students at the early grades of primary and secondary education. Second difference is to do with the size of the class. The majority of the teachers working for public schools had more than thirty students in a class on average. On the contrary, most teachers who were working for private schools had fewer students in their classrooms. These schools generally attract upper-class families by offering small classes, and thus individual attention to each student is possible. This being so, it seems to be relatively easier to implement CLT in private schools. The third disparity is related to the lack of resources and funding. The majority of the teachers, both in public and private schools, felt that they had adequate facilities and equipments such as computer classrooms, multimedia projectors, audio-visual resources, and photocopiers available for use, which play an important role in terms of the effective integration of CLT into English teaching.

This study has shown that the participants generally share the concerns and difficulties in EFL teaching in Bangladesh, and particularly in their endeavors to use CLT in their English classrooms.

Research Questions Revisited

It is essential to re-examine these questions and discuss the findings of the study in order to suggest ideas for solutions to the reported problems in the implementation of CLT in Bangladesh.

Inherent Problems in English Teaching in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has made great achievements with regard to English teaching over the years. Still, many problems in English teaching have been found. The inherent problems of EFL teaching were reported as: large classes, teachers' heavy workload, heavily-loaded program, mismatch between the curriculum and assessment, students' poor communicative abilities, and students' low motivation. The issue of large classes is a major concern in Bangladesh. Although there has been a huge increase in the money allocated to formal education in Bangladesh, this is still insufficient, and thus most classes in public schools are over-crowded. The low number of English teachers makes this issue even more complicated.

Contribution of CLT in Bangladesh

The participants in the study shared the belief that teaching methodology is a significant factor to ensure satisfactory outcomes with regard to English teaching. Communicative language teaching, in their views, can address some of the problems in English education. The majority of the teachers believe that the purpose of language learning is being able to communicate in the target language and therefore communication should be given foremost importance in English teaching. It is affirmed that learners of English should be given more opportunities to use the language. Also, more emphasis should be laid upon the development of students' communicative competence. Moreover, the focus on grammar should be shifted towards a focus on meaning. Furthermore, the demand for competent English-speaking personnel in the country is increasing as the result of more economic, social, cultural, and diplomatic exchanges are being established with other developed countries. In this respect, it is obvious that CLT can contribute much in helping develop more proficient speakers of English.

Feasibility of CLT in Bangladesh

The study revealed that the respondents are by and large positive about incorporating CLT into English teaching in Bangladesh. However, given the current conditions, the majority of the respondents feel that it is difficult to make effective use of CLT in formal education. The main obstacle to the use of CLT appears to be the mostly grammar-based examination system. The respondents share the belief that for the most part, other problems in English teaching are either directly or indirectly connected to the issue of examination system. It is agreed that the successful integration of CLT into English teaching will only be possible if the examination system is amended in a way that will give the development of communicative skills the importance that it deserves. The difficulties and constraints that hindered the teachers' attempts to adopt CLT in Bangladesh were divided into four main categories: teacher-oriented difficulties, student-oriented difficulties, difficulties on the part of the educational system, and CLT-oriented difficulties.

Thus, a number of difficulties related to the educational system served as barriers against the adoption of CLT in English classrooms. Lack of support from administrators and colleagues, as well as insufficient funding from the ministry is regarded as a big challenge for teachers who would like to employ CLT in their classrooms. Pertaining to the lack of financial support is the

shortage of authentic language teaching and learning materials which is another depressing factor that inhibits the effective implementation of CLT effectively. Finally, the main cause – grammar-based examinations – draws English grammar to the attention of all the involved parties, namely students, teachers, parents, and school administrators. This fundamentally makes it impractical to employ CLT in Bangladesh.

Conclusion

It may be concluded that a number of constraints have made it difficult for CLT to be integrated into English teaching classrooms in Bangladesh; 80% of the respondent revealed that one of the main reasons is lack of time and energy to formulate communicative teaching materials and activities due to teacher heavy workload; 63% teachers' mentioned that the resources are not sufficient to meet the needs of such a huge program. Given that there are too many students who need to learn English but not enough number of teachers, students are placed, particularly in public schools, into large English classrooms. Accordingly, English instruction is mostly limited to traditional large-group instruction where grammar is given a high significance while oral skills such as listening and speaking are neglected. This being the case, students learning English for many years at school cannot communicate effectively and efficiently with English speakers. It was observed that 60% of the respondent revealed there is too much emphasis on grammar-based examinations, and thus English teaching practices are shaped according to the skills tested in these exams, which are mainly grammar, vocabulary knowledge, translation, and reading skills. Attention should be shifted towards other language skills such as listening, speaking, and writing. From this perspective, students' communicative abilities can be more effectively represented in the selection and placement instruments. Similarly, such a reform would result in positive changes in both teachers' and students' motivation towards teaching and learning English through CLT. In the process of effective integration of CLT into English teaching in Bangladesh, special attention should be paid in teacher training. Therefore, the most essential and useful way to implement CLT is to provide in-service teachers with opportunities to retrain themselves in CLT.

Suggestions and Recommendations

The respondent of this study highlighted their disadvantages of teaching English as a foreign language. Hence, more attention should be paid to research which primarily deals with the special features of English learning and teaching in EFL situations. However, based on the findings of the research the following recommendations are of real importance:

- Massive CLT training programme be provided for English teachers;
- Working load of English teacher should be minimized;
- The financial problem of the teachers should be eradicated;
- Teacher must be well prepared before conducting class;
- Sufficient teaching aids appropriate for CLT should be supplied;
- Exam system should be communicative;
- The environment must be favorable according to CLT;
- All instrumental support from the Government needs to be ensured;
- Motivations among the students should be created;
- Extra care for strengthening speaking and listening skills must be taken;
- Government should take long term policy for the implementation of CLT.

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