

College Teachers' Evaluation of Communicative Language Teaching in Bangladesh

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Abstract: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is very much significant for learning and teaching practices where the students and teachers are involved to communicate in a second language. It represents a change of focus in language teaching from linguistic structure to learners' need for developing communication skills. Though a number of researches have been implemented on taking CLT in Bangladesh, no fruitful result is seen especially in college level education in Bangladesh where the teachers are the authentic factor and their attitudes play a crucial role in revealing their thinking about CLT and their implementation of CLT in the classrooms. So, the study aimed at investigating Bangladeshi college teachers' attitudes toward CLT and the reasons behind attitudes the teachers held toward CLT. For this, a number of data were collected through questionnaire survey where the populations were college teachers. The respondents were from the different colleges in four districts (Khulna, Satkhira, Bagerhat and Jessor) in Bangladesh. The results of this study indicated that the teachers held favorable attitudes toward principles of CLT and displayed characteristics of CLT in their beliefs. Also, the results demonstrated that Bangladeshi college teachers (English) believe CLT can make English teaching effective and meaningful.

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1. Introduction

Evaluation of language teaching methods is needed for knowing pros and cons of the methods and updating them in any language. Evaluation of language teaching method means to decide the value or quality of methods (Mondal, 2011, p.182). Kiely, et al (2005) remarked about language program evaluation that 'Evaluation' has been a persistent problem and it is the heart that connects and gives blood to all the other program elements and a primary focus on making judgments about language programs based on experimental designs and limited quantitative analyses. In the same way, Norris (2006) has emphasized on the evaluation program in college foreign language programs.

In recent decades, teachers of English have been encouraged to implement Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to help developing students' abilities to use English appropriately in context. CLT advocates teaching practices that develop communicative competence in authentic contexts (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). To improve students' abilities to use English in real contexts, CLT has been adopted in the settings of English as Foreign Language (EFL) colleges (Littlewood, 2007). It is clear that teachers' attitudes are important in their decision to implement CLT. The reason for the mismatch between CLT theory and practice may be teachers' attitudes (Karavas-Doukas, 1995). Since teachers' evaluation reveal teachers' thinking about teaching language, the investigation of teachers'

evaluation serves as a starting point to identify the possible contradictions between teachers' beliefs and CLT principles. The idea of the communicative approach may conflict with EFL teachers' existing thoughts about teachers' roles and teaching methods. However, Before 1971, the study of English was used in all level educational institutions in Bangladesh where a number of English language teaching methods are used like Translation method, Grammar-translation method, Direct method, Audio-lingual method, Humanistic Teaching Approaches, Principled Eclecticism, Task-based teaching and CLT (Mondal, 2012, p. 168). Among the above mentioned methods, CLT method, as a teaching method, is being used both in school and college level education now, it is important to investigate Bangladeshi college teachers' evaluation of CLT.

2. Background

In the late sixties, Kelly (1969) produced an overview of language teaching history which began in the period around 500 BC among western countries. His long historical perspective carries a message for anyone looking at the development of language teaching. But English language teaching was originated with the propagation of English nation. From the very beginning to till today a number of English language teaching methods like Translation method, Grammar-translation method, Direct method, Audio-lingual method, Humanistic Teaching Approaches, Principled Eclecticism, Task-

based teaching and CLT are used for learning and teaching in English language where CLT is the latest teaching method which spreads its sweetest smells in the field of teaching and learning, especially in the modern era. Communicative Language Teaching is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign languages that emphasizes communication, as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language (Mondal, 2012, p. 317). The origins of it are to be found in the changes of the British language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960s. Wilkins (1972) in his book titled "Notional Syllabus" played a significant role for the development of CLT and its greater application between the teachers and learners simultaneously. One of the most characteristic features of CLT is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language and describes spoken and written discourse. The goal of CLT is to develop communicative competence. It means what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community which adjacent with a number of functions as: instrumental, regulatory, inter-actional, personal, and heuristic, imaginative and representational.

3. Literature Review

According to Hymes (1972), competence should be viewed as "the overall underlying knowledge and ability for language which the speaker-listener possesses" (p. 13). That is, the concept of communicative competence involves knowledge of the language and the ability to use the knowledge in context. Communicative competence is a complex notion that involves linguistic as well as sociocultural sectors. From proposed definitions, it can be concluded that communicative competence consists of knowledge of linguistic rules, appropriate language usage in different situations, connection of utterances in a discourse, and strategies to cope with for the use of language.

Karava-Doukas (1996) suggests that the mismatch between the beliefs and practices may contribute to the neglect of examining teachers' attitudes before implementing any new approach. That is, only promoting the approach and trying to convince the teachers of the effectiveness of CLT does not successfully change the teachers' existing beliefs about language learning and teaching.

Razmjoo and Riazi (2006), Similarly, in their study would like to express that the teachers as a whole expressed positive attitudes toward the five principles of CLT. The teachers held strong views about CLT in the areas of grammar role and teacher role.

Karim's (2004) survey study examined university-level EFL teacher's attitudes toward CLT in Bangladesh. The findings showed that most teachers displayed positive attitudes toward the basic principles of CLT. He also interested to disclose, the teachers were aware of the features of CLT and their perceptions of CLT corresponded with their reported CLT practice.

Hawkey (2006), In Italy, applied both survey and face-to-face interviews to investigate whether teachers agreed with the advantages of the communicative approach in language teaching. The teachers stated positive views about CLT such as "CLT improving learner motivation and interest", and "CLT improving communicative skills" (p. 247). Through his research it is known that, teachers' interviews suggested that the teachers were motivated to use pair-work activities to meet the learners' communicative needs.

Liao (2003) investigated high school English teachers' attitudes toward CLT in China. The first-phase survey study reported most Chinese teachers are supportive of the implementation of CLT. The findings indicated that among 302 participants, 94% responded favorably toward CLT and were willing to practice it. In the second-phase interview study, four interviewees were selected from survey participants who displayed favorable attitudes toward CLT. The teachers expressed their agreement with CLT such as, "the teacher should take into account the students' need", and "the aim of the class is to enable students to communicate easily in real life situations" (p. 125).

Chang's (2000) survey study in Taiwan investigated 110 high school English teachers' attitudes toward CLT and their practice of CLT. The results showed that Taiwanese high school English teachers hold positive attitudes toward CLT. Moreover, the teachers who hold positive attitudes toward CLT tend to use more communicative activities in their classroom practice.

Li's (2004) study of Chinese teachers' opinions at a tertiary level indicated that the teachers thought that learners must be given feedback when they produce L2 to modify their production. Since the students already knew how to negotiate meaning in their first language, what they needed to learn were words in order to use them in L2.

The interview data in Carless's (2004) study revealed that some students used the simplest linguistic forms to complete the tasks.

Burnaby and Sun (1989) reported that Chinese college students learn the knowledge of English for future jobs in China, such as reading technical articles or translation of documents.

This view is confirmed by Tsai's (2007) study. Taiwanese teachers also thought that EFL students have no immediate need to communicate in English. On the other hand, they need grammar and reading skills in order to learn content knowledge.

Widdowson (1999) says that "learners do not very readily infer knowledge of the language system from their communicative activities." Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) values, among other things, learner-centeredness, which is, giving the learners more responsibility and involvement in the learning process. This is often achieved through discovery learning activities and through group work as opposed to the traditional teacher-fronted lesson. CLT also takes a relatively relaxed attitude towards accuracy in the belief that meaning takes precedence over form. Finally, CLT has inherited the humanist view that language is an expression of personal meaning, rather than an expression of a common culture. Such notions, it is argued, derive from very Western beliefs about education and language. Its critics argue that CLT is an inappropriate methodology in those cultural contexts where the teacher is regarded as a fount of wisdom, and where accuracy is valued more highly than fluency" (Thornbury, S., 2003).

The Communicative Approach has come under attack from teachers for being prejudiced in favor of native-speaker teachers by demanding a relatively uncontrolled range of language use on the part of the student, and thus expecting the teacher to be able to respond to any and every language problem which may come up. In promoting a methodology which is based around group and pair work, with teacher intervention kept to a minimum during, say, a role-play, the Communicative Approach may also offend against educational traditions which it aimed to supplant. The Communicative Approach has sometimes been seen as having eroded the explicit teaching of grammar with a consequent loss among students in accuracy in the pursuit of fluency" (Harmer J., 2003).

4. Statement of the Problem

The present research was designed to investigate the college teachers' evaluation of the CLT (Which is especially used at higher secondary / college level education) in Bangladesh.

5. Objectives

The objectives of the study were implemented through following specific questions:

- (i) How the CLT method is evaluated by the college teachers in English language teaching at the higher secondary

(College) level education in Bangladesh?

- (ii) What are the characteristics of the CLT method?
- (iii) How the CLT method can be improved or used in pragmatically?

6. Significance of the Study

This study has great importance for both the students and teachers alike. Especially the teachers of the schools, colleges and even in advance level (University) education would be able to know the perfect idea about CLT which play a vital role in the field of learning and teaching practices equally. As this study has collected a lot of information about the method, the effectiveness and appropriateness of the method will be made meaningful. Furthermore, the study will guide the English teachers in exploring proper methodologies for teaching through CLT. The significance of the study will also be for the planners and education managers in policy formulation or revision of teacher education programs at secondary, higher secondary and even in advance level education in the country. It will also help in-service teacher education institution to award or offer relevant in service i.e. training programs. In addition, the students, teachers and general people of the country will be able to use this method in the classroom and out of the classroom frequently. It will also help the people (who are not actually the students) who are interested in CLT for communicating with the foreigners.

7. CLT in Bangladesh

Though this method was started in England in the early 19th century but it was introduced for teaching English at secondary education in Bangladesh in 2001 and is being continued till today. In Bangladesh; a number of methods were initiated at the colonial period (In the then time Grammar-Translation method was the champion). As English enjoyed very prestigious position during colonial period, due attention was given in teaching this language in undivided India. It continued as a colonial leftover after 1947 till 1971. With the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, the policy makers of this country diminished the importance of English and they have changed this English Language Teaching Method (ELTM) correlation with their various domains of using both quantitative and qualitative measures, Parametric and non-parametric measures of ELTM which were used to test hypothesis without knowing the authentic and fundamental needs of the students and the proficiency of the teachers. As a result teaching of English in

Bangladesh experienced different dimension regarding its curriculum, syllabus, materials, methodology, testing and evaluation. It also experienced a mismatch between different components of the program. Different methods have been found to be used where CLT is the latest method of teaching language. This method is developed by the English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP). The purpose of using this method in Bangladesh was to update the English language teaching at the Secondary education in Bangladesh meaningfully. ELTIP started working since July 1997. The project is sponsored by the ministry of education. This project has been working to promote teaching learning of English in the Secondary level education in Bangladesh and introduced the communicative language teaching approach in the English curriculum of the country for the first time. Afterwards this method is used in higher secondary (college) level education in Bangladesh and changed a little with the passage of time. Therefore, it becomes necessary to examine the college teachers' evaluation of CLT in Bangladesh.

8. Characteristics of CLT

According to Rodgers (2001), there are four characteristics of the communicative view of language:

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

9. Methodology

The methodology of this research describes the location of the study followed by sampling procedures employed in the study, a profile of the informants, and method of data collection, instrumentation, data collection procedures and data analysis procedures.

Location and informants of the study: This research examined the evaluation of English language teaching method like CLT by the college teachers in Bangladesh through a number of colleges of south-western part of the country where Khulna, Satkhira, Bagerhat and Jessore districts were included. The informants were lecturers, assistant

professors, associate professors and professors. The research had both male and female informants.

Sampling and instrumentation procedures: The population of this research was college teachers. A total of 64 teachers were selected as the sample for this research. The respondents were from the different colleges in four districts. The sample was selected through a random sampling method. A total of 64 English teachers were selected as respondents to whom the questionnaire was administered to collect data for this research. The questionnaire was prepared through English language. This research is descriptive and non-experimental. The research was based on primary data. The data were collected via the survey approach through a self-administrated questionnaire. The questionnaire survey method was preferred because the researcher investigated informant's evaluation of English language teaching Method like CLT at secondary and higher secondary education in Bangladesh. This method was chosen because

(i) this method is suitable for empirical research; (ii) the data collected through this method is easily quantifiable; (iii) this method gives informants enough time to provide well thought out answers; (iv) this offers greater anonymity to the informants; and (v) this requires low cost and saves time. The questionnaire was prepared by researcher in connection the research demands. In preparing the questionnaire, caution was exercised to ensure the standard and quality of the questions. The researcher was concerned about the validity, reliability, clarity, practicality, administerability of the instruments. A pilot survey was conducted to study the feasibility of the instruments. The feed back from this pilot survey on the appropriateness of the questionnaire was then incorporated into the questionnaire and approved of administration.

Data collection and analysis procedures:

Quantitative method was used to collect the data. The data was collected through a survey in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher himself. The questionnaires were distributed to the English teachers of the colleges and requested them to return the completed questionnaires after answering. Upon completion of the correction of data, the data was edited, coded classified and tabulated for computation and analysis. The analysis was done using SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) software. This software was used to examine and investigate about teachers' choice of answer through which the percentage values were obtained.

10. Data Analysis

Data collected were tabulated, analyzed, interpreted and presented in Table: 1 below. Percentage was calculated by using statistical technique for analysis. The short terms which are used in the chart are described below:

- SA = Strongly Agreed
- A = Agreed
- UNC = Uncertain
- DA = Disagreed
- SDA = Strongly Disagreed

Table: 1

Questions	SA	A	U	D	S
1. Is CLT the most important criterion by which language Performance should be judged?*	9 14%	31 48.4%	7 10.9 %	12 18.8 %	5 7.8 %
2. Do you think group work activities are essential in providing opportunities for co-operative relationships to emerge and in promoting genuine interaction among students?	22 34.4 %	34 53.12 %	5 7.8 %	3 4.7 %	0 0.0 0%
3. Do you think that CLT should be taught only as a means to an end and not as an end in itself?	13 20.3 %	33 51.6%	8 12.5 %	7 10.9 %	3 4.7 %
4. Do you think when the learner comes to the language classroom with little or no knowledge of the language, he/she is in no position to suggest what the content of the lesson should be or what activities are useful for him/her?*	6 9.4 %	22 34.4%	8 12.5 %	17 26.6 %	11 17.18 %
5. Are you agree that CLT learners are to take responsibility for their own learning without learners are not used to expose themselves?	12 18.8 %	20 31.25 %	9 14%	15 23.4 3%	8 12.5 5%
6. Do you think that the students should become effective communicators in the foreign language; the teacher's feedback must be focused on the appropriateness and not the linguistic form of the students' response?	14 21.9 %	25 39.0%	11 17.1 8%	12 18.8 %	2 3.1 2%
7. Do think that the teacher as "authority" and "instructor" is no longer adequate to describe the teacher's role in the language classroom?	14 21.9 %	27 42.18 %	11 17.1 8%	9 14%	3 4.7 %
8. Do you think that the	13	35	12	3	1

learner- entered approach to language teaching encourages responsibility and self-discipline and allows each student to develop his/her full potential?	20.3 %	54.7%	18.8 %	4.7 %	1.5 6%
9. Do you think that group work allows students to explore problems for themselves and thus have some measure of control over their own learning?	9 14%	33 51.6%	8 12.5 %	12 18.8 %	2 3.1 2%
10. Do you think that the teachers should correct all the CLT errors of the students make and if errors are ignored, this will result in imperfect learning?	12 18.8 %	23 35.93 %	13 20.3 %	10 15.6 2%	7 10.93 %
11. Is it impossible in a large class of students to organize your teaching so as to suit the needs of all?	9 14%	22 34.4%	13 20.3 %	16 25%	4 6.2 5%
12. Are you agree that knowledge of the rules of a language does not guarantee ability to use the language?*	19 29.7 %	35 54.7%	3 4.7 %	6 9.4 %	1 1.5 6%
13. Do you think group work activities take too long to organize and waste a lot of valuable teaching time?*	8 12.5 %	23 35.93 %	7 10.9 3	21 32.8 1%	5 7.8 1
14. Do you think errors are the normal parts of learning, where correction is useful?	5 7.81 %	16 25%	13 20.3 %	24 37.5 %	6 9.4 %
15. Does the Communicative language teaching help the learners / students to communicate with each other or other people with whom he / she are not acquainted with?*	7 10.9 3%	19 29.68 %	22 34.4 %	14 21.9 %	2 3.1 2%

Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Responses toward the Role of CLT (N = 64)

11. Findings

Following findings were drawn on the basis of question analysis of the questionnaire:

1. In answer of the structured question "Is CLT the most important criterion by which language Performance should be judged?" majority of 48.4 % respondents agreed with the statement that CLT is the most important criterion by which language Performance should be judged.
2. In answer of the structured question "Do you think group work activities are essential in providing opportunities for co-operative relationships to emerge and in promoting genuine interaction among students?" majority of 53.12% respondents agreed

with the statement that their group work activities are essential in providing opportunities for co-operative relationships to emerge and in promoting genuine interaction among students.

3. In answer of the structured question “Do you think that CLT should be taught only as a means to an end and not as an end in itself?” majority of 51.6% respondents agreed with the statement that they think CLT should be taught only as a means to an end and not as an end in itself.

4. In answer of the structured question “Do you think when the learner comes to the language classroom with little or no knowledge of the language, he/she is in no position to suggest what the content of the lesson should be or what activities are useful for him/her?” majority of 34.4% respondents agreed with the statement and they think when the learner comes to the language classroom with little or no knowledge of the language, he/she is in no position to suggest what the content of the lesson should be or what activities are useful for him/her.

5. In answer of the structured question “Are you agree that CLT learners are to take responsibility for their own learning without learners are not used to expose themselves?” majority of 31.25% respondents agreed with the statement that CLT learners are to take responsibility for their own learning without learners are not used to expose themselves.

6. In answer of the structured question “Do you think that the students should become effective communicators in the foreign language; the teacher’s feedback must be focused on the appropriateness and not the linguistic form of the students’ response?” majority of 39.0% respondents agreed with the statement that the students should become effective communicators in the foreign language; the teacher’s feedback must be focused on the appropriateness and not the linguistic form of the students’ response.

7. In answer of the structured question “Do think that the teacher as “authority” and “instructor” is no longer adequate to describe the teacher’s role in the language classroom?” majority of 42.18% respondents agreed with the statement and think that the teacher as “authority” and “instructor” is no longer adequate to describe the teacher’s role in the language classroom.

8. In answer of the structured question “Do you think that the learner- entered approach to language teaching encourages responsibility and self-discipline and allows each student to develop his/her full potential?” majority of 54.7% respondents agreed with the statement and think that the learner- entered approach to language teaching encourages responsibility and self-discipline and allows each student to develop his/her full potential.

9. In answer of the structured question “Do you think that group work allows students to explore problems for themselves and thus have some measure of control over their own learning?” majority of 51.6% respondents agreed with the statement that group work allows students to explore problems for themselves and thus have some measure of control over their own learning.

10. In answer of the structured question “Do you think that the teachers should correct all the CLT errors of the students make and if errors are ignored, this will result in imperfect learning?” majority of 35.93% respondents agreed with the statement that the teachers should correct all the CLT errors of the students make and if errors are ignored, this will result in imperfect learning.

11. In answer of the structured question “Is it impossible in a large class of students to organize your teaching so as to suit the needs of all?” majority of 34.4 % respondents agreed with the statement that it is impossible in a large class of students to organize your teaching so as to suit the needs of all.

12. In answer of the structured question “Are you agree that knowledge of the rules of a language does not guarantee ability to use the language?” majority of 54.7 % respondents agreed with the statement that knowledge of the rules of a language does not guarantee ability to use the language.

13. In answer of the structured question “Do you think group work activities take too long to organize and waste a lot of valuable teaching time?” majority of 35.93 % respondents agreed with the statement that group work activities take too long to organize and waste a lot of valuable teaching time.

14. In answer of the structured question “Do you think errors are the normal parts of learning, where correction is useful?” majority of 37.5 % respondents disagreed with the statement and think that errors are the normal parts of learning, where correction is useful.

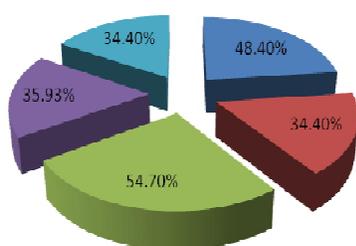
15. In answer of the structured question “Does the Communicative language teaching help the learners / students to communicate with each other or other people with whom he / she are not acquainted with?” majority of 34.4 % respondents ascertained with the statement that the Communicative language teaching help the learners / students to communicate with each other or other people with whom he / she are not acquainted with.

12. Results and Discussions

The result is drawn up through data analysis and findings of the research. When designing the evaluations of the college level teachers towards CLT method used in English language

teaching, the present research could address the focal evaluation questions, so it designed corresponding questions to obtain information about that theme desired. The questions the study implemented were highly structured and the students' answers and responses to the questions helped to continue the research effectively. When analyzing the data, it also obtained a clearer picture of the implementation status of the current research.

On the basis of the results and discussions (where fifteen questions are structured) a pie chart can be drawn in the following way through taking the highest percentages of star (*) marked questions.-



13. Conclusion

CLT represents the current trend of college English language education that aims to develop learners' communicative competence. Although teachers play a crucial role in preparing students to communicate effectively in various situations, few studies have focused on Bangladeshi college teachers' evaluation of CLT method. This study was motivated to investigate Bangladeshi college teachers' evaluation of CLT method and their thinking and experiences regarding CLT practice. The findings reveal that teachers hold a favorable attitude toward CLT and display characteristics of CLT in their beliefs. Based on the teachers' teaching experience, the findings demonstrate that CLT can make English teaching meaningful and interesting. The present study found that the teachers dislike using traditional grammar teaching that requires the students to memorize a number of grammatical rules. Instead, the teachers stated that CLT assists the students to comprehend linguistic forms and use these rules for communication. From the teachers' perspective, communicative activities are helpful for the students to practice rules in meaningful contexts. In addition, different language teaching methods like Translation method, Grammar-translation method,

Direct method, Audio-lingual method, Humanistic Teaching Approaches, Principled Eclecticism and Task-based teaching maintain one or two skills but CLT considers four skills - listening, speaking, reading, and writing as integrated skills equally, which should not be taught separately. CLT aims to develop students' communicative competence. To communicate effectively, the students are involved in different kinds of activities that require practicing various skills to understand their peers and make themselves understood by others.

Further, CLT creates a non-threatening language environment that lowers the learners' anxiety and make class input comprehensible. In the classroom where CLT is applied, the students can develop their language as well as social skills when they work together with their group members to achieve a common goal.

Finally, in CLT, both students and teachers play different roles than those in the traditional classrooms. Instead of waiting for the teacher to make decisions for them, students take the initiative and responsibility for their own learning. Instead of being spoon-fed by the teacher, the students can explore knowledge themselves and find their own answer.

This study recommends possible directions for future studies. First, the participants in the study are from different colleges in Bangladesh; thus, the results cannot be generalized to other educational contexts. Further studies may include teachers from colleges from other EFL contexts.

Additionally, teachers' evaluations about CLT are based on the teachers' self-report in the study. Future studies are recommended to examine teachers' CLT practice in more detail and to examine closely how teachers' evaluations towards CLT influence their practice of CLT.

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