

Assessing the challenges a language teacher faces in Adopting Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Method: A Study at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University

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ABSTRACT

This mixed-method study aims to reveal what sort of challenges teachers are facing regarding adopting communicate language teaching. In addition, the study discovers why it is still complex and challenging to adopt Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). For this study, data was collected from the faculty members of social sciences of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University. Twelve respondents responded through a questionnaire, and five were interviewed. The finding indicates that there is a discrepancy between teacher's classroom practice and their attitudes towards CLT. The main challenges in adopting communicative language teaching were large class size, traditional methods used in the classroom, and time availability. All these difficulties and challenges are related to students, the educational system, and the method itself.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching, challenges, teacher role, attitude.

INTRODUCTION

CLT (communicative language teaching) has had a tremendous impact on language teaching all over the world. According to Butler (2005), "CLT has become the target in many Asian countries." However, for some English teachers new to Asia, their perceptions of CLT in the classroom are drastically different from what happens. The communicative approach to language teaching begins with a thematic approach. Language instruction aims to help students improve their communicative abilities. CLT aims to offer learners unlimited access to language's social, cultural, and pragmatic aspects. The objective of CLT is to achieve communicative competence. Grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence are the three fields of language learning that make up communicative competence. It can be strengthened by learning how to use

fillers, deviate from the stage, paraphrase, and circumlocute. Grammatical competence involves recognizing lexical objects and morphological, syntax, sentence-grammar, semantics, and phonological rules.

However, according to Canale and Swain (2014), grammatical competence is a fundamental problem for any communicative approach that seeks to teach learners how to accurately evaluate and convey the literal meaning of sentences. Learners gain confidence, develop their creative thinking skills, and increase their linguistic creativity through communication exercises that concentrate on these three skills. Other language teaching methods have been criticized by linguists, especially those that focused on assisting students in creating grammatically correct sentences. It is because shape accuracy

was stressed instead, resulting in the development of another unsuccessful system. The translation approach failed to encourage meaning, which is essential for improving speaking fluency and effectiveness and is a prerequisite for successful communication skills. Many methods have been established in the long-running quest for the perfect method in ELT (English Language Teaching). CLT has found a place in the English teaching curriculum, education policy decisions, course books, and teacher education initiatives worldwide, among these approaches focusing on the current state of ELT and the rising movement toward CLT.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary purpose of this research was to know the answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the challenges teachers faced in implementing CLT in their English classrooms?
2. What attitudes do teachers hold towards Communicative Language Teaching Method?

According to Mansoor (2004), the English language plays an indispensable role in Pakistan as a foreign language, research, science and technology, commerce, communication, and officers. The English language has developed into a vital and ever-increasing necessity for socioeconomic advancement. The English language is a mandatory subject beginning in first grade. However, students, especially from rural areas, struggle to communicate in English. They say they are deficient in all four language skills. The fundamental explanation for this teaching-learning situation in Pakistan is that the methods used to teach the English language communicatively are not up to standard. English is a second language in Pakistan; Ahmad et al. (2011) point out that the English language syllabi in Pakistan do not fulfill the primary syllabus objectives. Teachers lack sufficient instructions

and are unfamiliar with new and upgraded teaching standards. To teach English as a second or foreign language, most teachers use ancient teaching techniques and textbooks. According to Warsi (2004), the examination used to assess English language proficiency is entirely flawed and lacks modern, efficient evaluation and assessment methods.

There is strong evidence of the usage of the communicative language teaching approach in language teaching and learning. To Richards (2006), this method compels learners to learn the target language for communicative purposes. But some linguists are of the view that a large percentage of language teachers and instructors in Pakistani institutes do not use communicative language teaching methods (Shamim, 2011; Raja, 2012; Bughio, 2013). On the other hand, they recreate the outdated lecture-style instruction that they received as students. According to Jimakorn et al. (2006), teachers lecture to prevent the control problems caused by using communicative methods in such large classes, aside from the fact that lecture-style teaching does not create a communicative environment in the classroom. Teachers agree that using it would at the very least help monitor classroom management problems since a large number of students causes more noise and makes it challenging to divide students into teams, which wastes a lot of time and can create a lot of confusion. Through interactive communication, language teaching aims to allow teachers in large classes to manage students through student-student and student-teacher engagement in the language learning process (CLT).

Language teaching through communication methods helps develop ESL and EFL students' speaking skills and improve their communicative competence or efficiency. CLT methods should be introduced and used at all levels for teaching English, but most students still struggle to

communicate in the second language. The key issue with this problem is that because CLT does not apply in our teaching and learning systems, many institutes and teachers still use the grammar-translation method (GTM) in language teaching. What factors are causing problems with CLT implementation, and how do teachers feel about teaching and using communicative language teaching?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adi (2012) believes the ideal class size for CLT is not more than 25 understudies. In Indonesia, it is common for understudies to be in a class with 40-50 other students. Unlike Western culture—where educators work as facilitators—Indonesian culture, as a component of Asian culture, is a barrier to achieving an open type of English learning (Sholihah, 2012). Culture has a heading on the association among teachers' and understudies' views on learning and correspondence plans. The teacher is known as transcendent and an all-knowing figure in dissipating information and data. The understudies must not dare to discuss or argue with their instructors; similarly, this culture is indisputable in most schools in China (M. Chang, 2011).

Powell (2015) notes that little classes may not be better than colossal classes and vice-versa. Moreover, she gives the focal points and burdens of teaching in both large and small classes. Little classes have three principal inclinations. In the first place, there is a closer association among instructors and understudies. Second, both low and successful people can benefit in a small class. Understudies who are endeavoring to follow practices will undoubtedly get extra help with a more small class setting. Third, big classes are not a plague in instructing and learning English. More understudies mean more opinions can be shared in class. Different assumptions and points of view

from more understudies give more luxurious information that may use creatively. Moreover, Zhang (2014) saw favorable circumstances in preparing big classes to provide more opportunities to understudy correspondence.

M. Chang (2011) explains the feasibility of organizing, approaching, and sharpening CLT. The factors that influence CLT use in Taiwan identified with educators and understudies, enlighten structure and sensibility of CLT inside the community setting. Teachers should be genuinely getting ready to get the ideas of the CLT system, yet in addition to viably complete them in study halls. Teachers should not discard the CLT strategy and get back to traditional systems because of their challenges in the early phases. For outline, understudies might be idle or reserved to check out exercise works out. They may not be ready for the selective use of English in the classroom instead of their primary language. The CLT system cannot achieve the necessary outcomes if understudies don't have to take an interest or lock in accumulated work. Teachers should give a specific amount of time to understudies to modify the new learning climate. Nevertheless, the CLT procedure would be inconvenient in a situation where the focal point of the guidance system is on assessments and understudies' evaluations. Assessments had the opportunity to be changed per CLT methodology segments, for example, talking competency. The instructive projects should be following the CLT procedure activities and works out.

DEFINITION OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

Ying (2010) believes that CLT is a way of handling second language learning, emphasizing that communication is a way of learning. According to Ying (2010), it may also be called "the method of communication in foreign language teaching" or simply as a "method of

communication,” in contrast. Larsen Freeman (2000) trusts that CLT extensively alludes to hypothetical relational abilities, focusing on language learning by understanding the connection between language and communication.

ISSUES IN ADOPTING CLT IN EFL CONTEXTS

The writings on CLT center around a broad scope of issues, for example, the English level of instructors and understudies, plan of homeroom exercises, offices, interpersonal interaction exercises, listening exercises, the job of educators and understudies, and subsidizing the educating materials. As indicated by the writing, a portion of the critical subjects that impact the execution of CLT in EFL study halls in advanced English education homerooms are as under: educators’ low degree of English, instructors’ absence of expert turn of events, understudies inadequate understanding of English, poor learning conduct of understudies, class size, test-based learning and a solid accentuation on language structure and absence of social collaboration. These issues need serious examination in the accompanying areas.

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OF STUDENTS

Numerous scientists and English educators have led a broad exploration of the learning techniques of Asian students. The majority of these investigations show that the learning methodologies of Asian students include many of the following characteristics: reading-focused language learning, careful, frequent, and complex observation of grammatical sentence structure, focus on concentration, and more communication skills. Acquisition uses memory and root memory as basic acquisition techniques. Correct writing and oral errors are essential. As to contemplates, Rao (2002) additionally found that the vast majority of the understudies he considered are more disposed to ordinary language educating

styles. These styles are instructor-focused, book-focused techniques, and repetition retention. Understudies’ English systems essentially incorporate the accompanying attributes: center around perusing, composing, punctuation, word-level interpretation, and jargon memory. A particular case in the writing is a new report directed by Littlewood (2000, p. 33), in which he found that “the generalization of Asian understudies’ audience do they mirror their real conduct in class? The job you need to do is to “Help these cases.” Jin et al. (2005) found that most understudies occupied with English examinations have, in any event, a moderate degree of English; however, they can’t convey viably in English.

Moreover, understudies are not happy with their relational abilities. An examination focused on the perspectives, mentalities, and assumptions for CLT educators in Bangladesh found that when understudies get advanced education in Laos, their English capability is low, which for the most part makes it hard for instructors to lead oral communication and other correspondence exercises in the classroom. In this context, it can be said with surety that understudies’ low English capability upsets or thwarts educators’ outcomes. These understudies appear to lean toward the educator instead of open instructing strategies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a mixed-method approach for data collection and analysis. According to John Creswell, mixed methods research is a research technique in which the researcher gathers and analyses data effectively. The term “mix method” alludes to a new procedure of exploration that progresses the efficient coordination, or “mixing,” of quantitative and qualitative data within a solitary examination or continued program of inquiry. The mix approach aids in data analysis in all respects. It can employ multiple methods. It

can neutralize and cancel some of the disadvantages of specific methods. Also, every approach's strengths can match each other. Mix methods configuration procedures from qualitative and quantitative techniques to respond to investigate questions. The fundamental reason for this methodology is that such coordination allows complete and synergistic use of data than doing isolate quantitative or qualitative information collection and analysis. The researchers have conducted interviews and got survey questionnaires filled from those 17 teachers who have practiced CLT from humanities and social sciences faculties that include Sindhi, Education, English, and Business departments. Each individual has been interviewed separately for 30 minutes. Interviews were conducted in 3 days. On the first day, data was collected from the Department of English, the second day from the department of education, the 3rd day from the department of Sindhi, and the 4th-day the department of business.

DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLING

For the present study, 17 respondents were selected randomly. All participants are language teachers from the humanities and social sciences faculty of Shahid Benazir Bhutto University (SBBU), who teach the English language at SBBU. They teach the English language to all batches. The researchers have visited four departments of the faculties of humanities and social sciences, and the teachers were requested to fill the survey questionnaire. Based on teachers' experience, five participants were selected for the interview, and 12 participants were selected for the survey questionnaire. They have been teaching English as a compulsory subject for many years at the SBBU.

Ten questions based on a three-point Likert scale were used. Five open-ended interview questions were designed for five language teachers. The

first part of the close-ended questionnaire is dealing with the challenges faced by students in exercising CLT. The second part consists of five questions which were about difficulties and challenges related to the educational system. 3rd part is CLT-related challenges comprised of three questions, and the last fourth part is related views of participants about CLT methodology consisting of ten questions.

FINDINGS

The findings reflect multiple challenges in implementing CLT in English. It is due to several reasons, including students, teachers, and educational system difficulties and problems. First, students have low-level English proficiency; due to passive learning style, students don't give importance to learning activities. Second, students lack the confidence to communicate in the English Language. The majority of students feel anxiety and hesitation while performing in front of the class. Third, students feel more comfortable with other local languages instead of developing their communication skills in English. Fourth, teachers are non-native; hence their competence in the English language is also compromised.

Due to the unavailability of the English-speaking environment, students do not communicate in the English language. Additionally, their accent is faulty. To add insult to injury, to teach the English language, teachers follow the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) that caps the thinking capacity of students in the English language. Applying CLT is also not possible because of the large size of the classes.

CONCLUSION

The research clarifies the challenges faced by teachers and learners while adopting communicative language teaching in their classrooms. Those challenges include the non-serious and non-professional attitude of students, teachers, and administration towards CLT.

Moreover, other challenges are the large classes, students' passive learning style, and lack of interest in participating in role-play, group discussion, and pair work. In addition, lack of self-motivation, hesitation, anxiety are the challenges that are difficult to handle. In addition, many teachers do not have knowledge and idea about new techniques and methods of teaching; they have limited themselves to old and traditional methods like the grammar-translation method (GTM).

The teachers should be given training every six months to adopting new methods and techniques in their teaching language process. The participants were very much optimistic about the communicative teaching method (CLT). They were clear about CLT but faced many difficulties and challenges while implementing this method in our cultural context. However, these challenges can be overcome by removing the major problem like grammar-based teaching and large classes. Through this, it can be possible to implement the communicative teaching (CLT) method effectively in our teaching process. Furthermore, the administration should organize seminars and workshops to help the teachers implement new and modern education like communicative teaching methods (CLT) in their classrooms.

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