

Insights on Teacher's Perception of Communicative Language Teaching

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Abstract: *The significant objective of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method is to facilitate students to be confident communicators in real - world situation and it is executed through continuous practices and interactions in classroom. Implementation of CLT develops kinship between teachers, students and their peers. Especially, teachers play a prime role in enhancing the students' communication skills in CLT classrooms. Teachers create and conduct language learning activities that outrun the traditional activities like memorization of sentences and grammatical patterns. Considering the same fact, this paper deals with the opinions and suggestions collected among 24 English teachers from India, Chennai. Quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire to understand the perception of the teachers in incorporating CLT. Suggestions to overcome the challenges faced by the teachers in implementing CLT are also included.*

Keywords: communication, perception, teacher, student, language, learning, challenges, activities, advantages, suggestions.

1. Introduction

Communication plays a major function in transmitting ideas, manifesting thoughts and feelings. Though mother tongue is used to communicate the thoughts and ideas, the employment scenarios expect their employees to communicate in English. The students struggle to communicate their thought and feelings in English in job environment and also in their real - life situations. In order to improve their communicative competence, communicative language teaching is adopted as an effective method. Communicative language teaching sustains the knowledge of receiving, accepting and transforming the thoughts and emotions in the society. Sabrina, A. (2020) states that "Communicative language teaching is a transformation of viewing a language" and Phuong, LTT, & Vang, LTN (2019) quote the definition of Hymes on communicative language teaching as "a knowledge of the rules for understanding and producing both the referential and social meaning of language. The principles of communicative language teaching (CLT) carry the intent and emphasize the importance of communication. According to Fattah, A., & Saidalvi, A. (2019), the principles of CLT are "learners learn a language through using it for communication, the goal of classroom activities should be authentic and meaningful, though accuracy is important but fluency is also a very important dimension in language learning, communication does not only include oral communication but it is the integration of different language skills, and learning is a process of creative construction that involves trial and error". Activities create a serene surrounding in the classroom to develop the communication, activate prior knowledge, involve the learners to participate actively. So CLT is implemented through activities like debate, role play, just a minute, on - spot dialogue, turncoat, picture analysis etc. AsObenza, B., & Mendoza, R. (2021) state "Some of the preliminary activities included were a debate, on - spot dialogue, devil's advocate, picture analysis, and video presentation. These activities were used by teachers to set

the communicative atmosphere of the class, activate prior knowledge, and prepare the learners for the lessons." Since, the role of the teachers plays a vital role in implementing CLT, the perspective of teachers on CLT and the suggestions that can be incorporated for implementing CLT are reviewed.

2. Review of Literature

Due to the global advancement and technological progression, it is mandatory for the teachers to modify the way of teaching. In order to bring in this modification, the facilitator can adopt communicative language teaching which will enable the learners to communicate in their real - life situations. Various researchers have conducted surveys among the teachers to examine the perception of the teachers on using CLT. The perception of the teachers affirms that the educationists and academicians should bring in change in the curriculum and frame the syllabus for implementing CLT. Proper training for teachers is also recommended. The results also prove that CLT is a positive approach to enhance Communication skills.

Fattah, A., & Saidalvi, A. (2019) reveal that, the Iraqi teachers are aware of the benefits of implementing CLT in the classroom. Incorporation of CLT helps the stakeholders like curriculum designers, teacher trainers and supervisors to frame the syllabus according to the current educational needs. Karimi, M., & Biria, R. (2017) investigated the instructional efficiency of communicative language teaching in Iranian high schools by assessing the attitudes of high school instructors and students about CLT and its essential fundamentals. Both high school instructors and students have a positive opinion regarding CLT in general, according to the findings of the study. Banagbanag, R. A. (2020) discussed and revealed that the respondents have a positive attitude towards CLT and also they are rated as "most competent" in their language skills, "more competent" in their "teaching skills, classroom management, and

evaluation skills” by the students. Sotlikova, R., & Sugirin, S. (2016) assayed to find out the difficulties and challenges faced by the EFL teachers’ about CLT in the Indonesian context. Through questionnaire, semi - structured interviews and documentation from 13 lectures of English teachers in Engineering faculty of YSU were examined. The results of the survey revealed that though the teachers have many obstacles and challenges, they have positive attitude towards CLT. The facilitators play a major role in implementing the new method to teach the learners and so, the understanding of the new method among the teachers is very important to improve the students’ communicative competence.

Teachers have an optimistic view in implementing CLT as Derakhshan, A., & Torabi, M. (2015) reviewed EFL teachers’ attitudes towards Communicative Language Teaching and reported the discrepancy between teachers’ beliefs towards CLT and their practice in the class. The result indicates that though they have difficulties in implementing CLT in their classes, majority of the teacher’s showed a positive attitude towards implementing CLT in their teaching. Though there are multitudinous merits in implementing CLT for developing socio - linguistic competence, linguistic competence, and communicative competence etc., few teachers opine that it is difficult to implement CLT in the classroom. CLT is originally introduced by native speakers and firstly used by native teachers and so it is a disadvantage when widely used for teaching for non - native learners. The conflicts between the effectiveness and real context cause the failure in implementing CLT. Secondly, although teachers know the importance and effectiveness of CLT, they are not very confident to apply this method. There are lot of reasons that causes difficulties in implementing CLT such as lack of appropriate knowledge and understanding of CLT among teachers’ etc.

Aleixo, M. B. (2003) reveals that there are two main problems in the application of CLT method in Brazil. “One relates to the various constraints that exist in each of the different settings in which teaching occurs. Another relates to teachers’ awareness of CLT principles, and the lack of training in how to appropriately implement such principles in the classroom.” However, teachers without clear knowledge and experience in CLT cannot exploit the advantages of CLT method. In addition, there is some opposition against CLT. It is claimed that CLT aims at fluency more than accuracy, but importance should be given to accuracy for learning a language. Maryslessor, A. O., Barasa, P. L., & Omulando, C. (2014) also observed that, though the English teachers have a positive attitude they “did not implement CLT principles in real practice and the only principle rarely fulfilled by them was group/pair work tasks and activities”. Most of the materials in educational institutions are not suitable for designing CLT activities. Moreover, getting the approval of the authorities and change in curriculum and design according to CLT principles are also time consuming.

Though CLT is regarded as a constructive theory for learning process, the perception of teachers on CLT differs. The outcome of various surveys reflect the teacher’s opinion

on their role, requirement of training for implementation of CLT and the modifications needed in the curriculum etc.

3. Research Objective

- 1) To examine the role and perception of teachers in implementing CLT.
- 2) To determine the use of CLT in Classroom.
- 3) To expound the activities that are used for implementing CLT.
- 4) To assess the challenges faced by teachers in incorporating CLT.
- 5) To give suggestions to overcome the difficulties faced by teacher’s in CLT classroom.

4. Research Methodology

The questionnaire was circulated among 24 English teachers from various engineering colleges in Chennai, India. 5 - point likert scale of agreement and scale of frequency were used to know the opinion of teachers in using CLT and usage of CLT in classroom respectively. The activities for implementing CLT and the challenges faced in CLT classroom were given as multiple choice questions and the advantages of CLT as check box grid choice. The responses were analysed through quantitative method.

5. Teachers Role

Teachers acknowledge that, in order to bring in changes in the teaching learning process and in the implementation of new methods and approaches, the role of the teacher in understanding the concepts and usage of various strategies play a significant role. Researchers have described the roles and responsibilities of the teachers in implementing CLT.

Richards, J. C. (2005) draws up an inventory ten core assumptions of current communicative language Teaching and mentions that, “The role of the teacher in the language classroom is that of a facilitator, who creates a classroom climate conducive to language learning and provides opportunities for students to use and practice the language and to reflect on language use and language learning”. Maryslessor, A. O., Barasa, P. L., & Omulando, C. (2014) state that the teacher has the role of structuring the classroom in such a way that it motivates the students and they also should have the responsibility of demonstrating, directing, explaining, prompting, resolving disagreement, monitoring work silently, supervising, controlling, providing language items, creating context for language use, grouping learners, evaluating, participating as co - communicator, advising, introducing, giving speaking tasks, questioning, dictating, listening and correcting. Le Thi Tieu Phuong and Le Thi Ngan Vang (2019) affirm that teachers should be facilitators, need analysts, counselors and group process managers. And also, the teacher should identify the learning gaps to give comments or practice, to point out the alternatives and extensions and enable the students to correct themselves through discussions. Teachers motivate the learners to perform and practice. The facilitators should bridge the gap and enhance the learning process with their valuable feedbacks.

6. Result Analysis

6.1. Opinion of Teachers

The purpose of analysis of the data collected from the sample of 24 teachers is to collect the opinion of the teachers regarding effectiveness of implementing CLT in classroom. Among 24 teachers, 16 (67%) strongly agree and 8 (33%) agree that CLT is as an effective method.

Table 1: Opinion on the effectiveness of CLT method

	No. of teachers	Percentage
Strongly Agree	16	67
Agree	8	33

6.2 Usage of CLT in classroom

The teacher's were asked about the frequency of using CLT method in the classroom. Among 24 teachers 8 (33%) adopt CLT method always, 13 (54%) very often, 3 (13%) of teachers sometimes and no one responded for rarely and never.

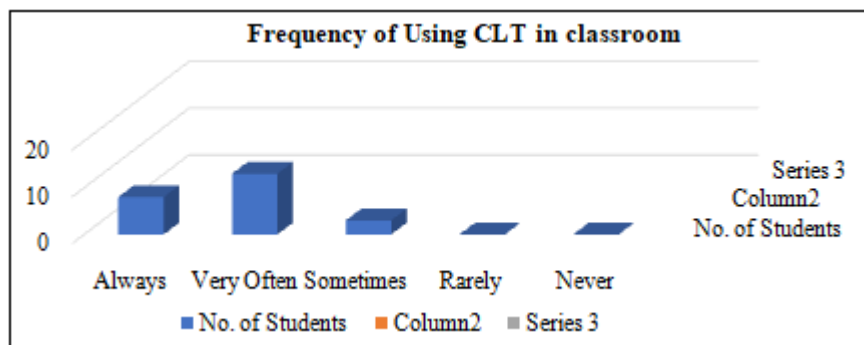


Table 2: Frequency of Using CLT method

6.3 Activities that can be used in implementing CLT

Activities play an important role in teaching learning process. To increase the interest of the students, teachers have the responsibility to choose a planned, determined, conscious and suitable tool for teaching. And classroom activity is one among the suitable tool for teaching. Role play, Information transfer, group discussion, oral presentation etc. are the few activities chosen as options for teaching CLT in the classroom scenario. 41.6% (10 teachers) opted role play as the best activity for teaching CLT followed by group discussion as the next option by 37.5% (9 teachers) and information transfer with 12.5% (3 teachers). The least opted activity was oral presentation by 8.3% (2 teachers) as it is been mentioned in table 3.

6.3.1 Challenges faced in implementing CLT.

Even though, the teachers handle the classes with different activities during the teaching - learning process, they are not able to succeed in the process of learning since they face few difficulties in incorporating new techniques in the classroom scenario. Lack of student's interest, size of the classroom and teachers' interest are the few challenges that the teachers' are facing during the teaching process. During the data collection the 50% (12 teachers) of the teachers said size of the classroom is the biggest challenge during the teaching process. And 37.5% (9 teachers) said it is lack of students interest and 12.5 % (3 teachers) accepts it is teachers' understanding as shown in Table.4.

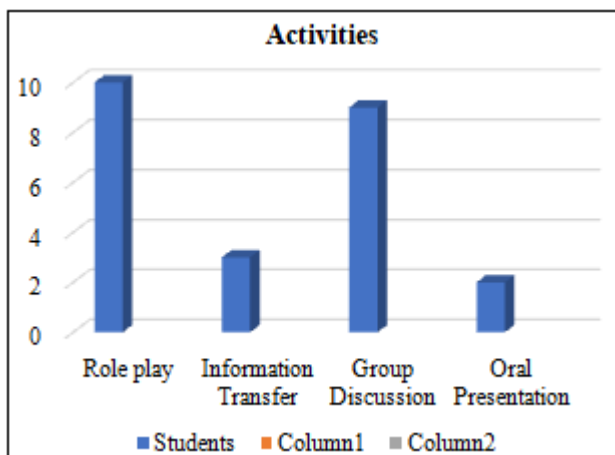


Table 3: Activities to implement CLT

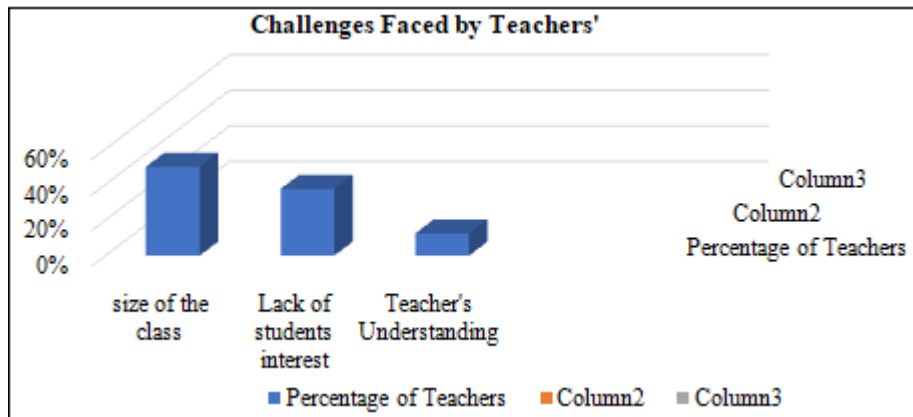


Table 4: Challenges faced by Teachers

6.3.2 Advantages of CLT Method

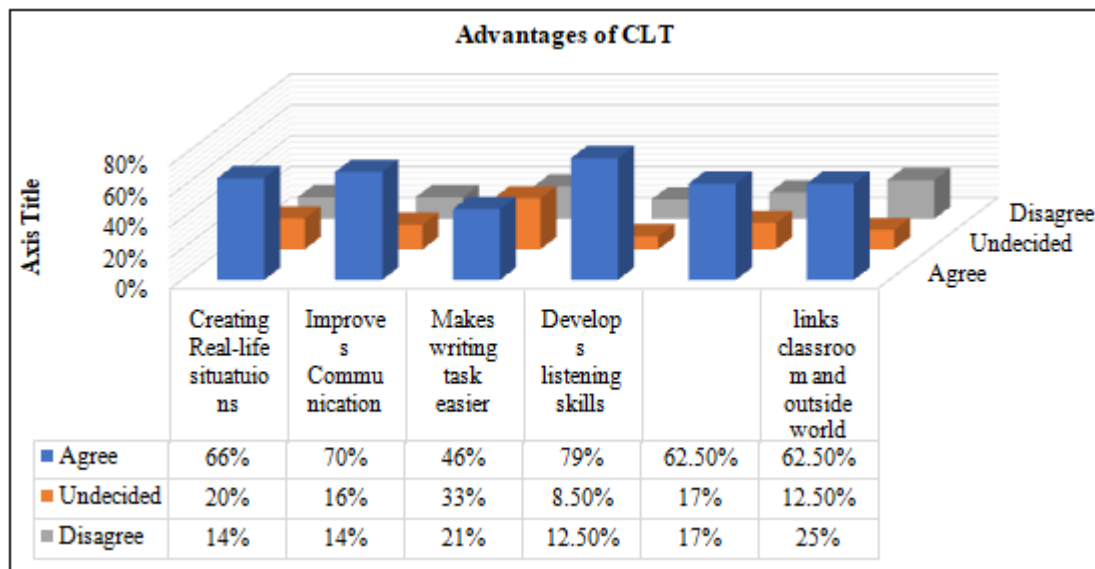


Table 5: Advantages of Communicative Language Teaching

In the teaching - learning process, CLT method provides many advantages. Few advantages were given in the questionnaire as options. Developing listening skills was considered as the major advantage by teachers, since 79% agreed, 8.5% undecided and 12.5% disagreed. Teachers consider improving communication skills as the next advantage; 17 (70%) agree, 4 (16%) undecided and 3 (14%) disagree. Creating real - life situation and enhancing learners personal experience are considered as the third advantages of CLT; 16 (66%) agree for both; 5 (20%) undecided and 3 (14%) and 4 (17%) disagree respectively. The next advantage was CLT helps in linking the classroom and the outside world with 15 (62.5%) agree, 3 (12.5%) undecided and 6 (25%) disagree. Makes writing task easier has received the least importance with 11 (46%) agree, 8 (33%) undecided and 5 (21%) disagree.

7. Suggestions

The outcome of the surveys reflects that the teachers acknowledge CLT as a preferred method of teaching to improve communication skills of the learners. And it also reveals that there are some constraints in implementing CLT in the classrooms. Teachers lack understanding of CLT and so proper training to implement CLT is required. Moreover,

necessary modifications should be made in CLT features while implementing CLT in the classroom scenario. Various suggestions are provided in order to improve the effectiveness of implementation of CLT in class rooms: Designing the curriculum, changes in the text book, training teachers in framing the activity, implementing different activities for students, reforming the assessment with the appropriate tool etc. and modifications in CLT are the few modifications that are to be carried out in the process of implementing CLT.

7.1. Change in curriculum and Textbook

Curriculum should be framed according to the principles and goals of CLT. Appropriate teaching materials and textbooks should be prescribed according to the curriculum. Textbooks should include innovative instructional techniques both in structure and content in order to improve the communicative competence of the students. The motive is to address the growing concern about improving the quality of language teaching to meet the demands and challenges of the current educational system. Menon, S. U., & Alamelu, C (2009) "A change is required in designing the curriculum, which should be oriented more towards equipping the student to manage and excel at the work place".

7.2. Implementation of different types of activities

Teachers have the responsibility of implementing various activities which can transform the standard classrooms to CLT classroom. Teachers who are familiar with CLT can utilize the resources to develop communication activities in the classroom such as problem - solving, mock interviews, role - plays, debates, and information gap exchanges. As a consequence, learners might satisfy the requirement for social and global communication.

7.3. Fluency and Accuracy

It is believed that as Ankitaben. A. Desai (2015) admits that appropriate use of language in situations is emphasized rather than accuracy in CLT practices. Accuracy comes at the later stage. It is considered that when the learners learn to use the language appropriately accuracy comes spontaneously. Importance should be given to both fluency and accuracy equally in CLT classes, since they are interdependent.

7.4. Teacher Training

If a new method is introduced for language teaching, some training is needed in order to make the teachers understand the features for adopting the method in classroom practices. Training the facilitator in the implementation of the principles of a new approach will make teaching - learning process more effective and so proper training in CLT is required. It helps the facilitator to incorporate CLT in classroom effectively. Mustapha, S. M., & Yahaya, R. A. (2013) conducted a study to look into teachers' pedagogical approaches in implementing CLT in classroom practices in Malaysian community colleges. The research concludes that the implementation of CLT depends on the teachers' understanding of CLT as well as the strategies and approaches they use in the classroom. The boom in technology can also be properly utilized to train teachers. Hien, L. T. (2021) also proclaims that, through setting up offline and online training programmes, greater attention can be paid to modernising instructors' teaching methods.

7.5. Reforming Assessment

Assessment has a major role in teaching - learning process. Due weightage should be given to assessing writing as well as speaking. In CLT according to Muhammad Tofazzel Hossain & Nazia Hasan (2020) "written exam questions should be prepared creatively keeping in mind that mere memorization may not help students in answering the questions. Regarding speaking skills, teachers should assess students in unrehearsed situations so that students' natural ability of using the language is assessed. Thus, teachers may help students develop a reasonable level of written and oral proficiency. Additionally, teachers should ensure a communicative environment in the classroom and devise effective assessment policies and procedures to develop students' communicative competence." Sangar Lateef Omer (2020) asserts that, "majority of the teachers have an iconoclastic view with assessment. This trend emerges from all the components of the Communicative Language Teaching English in the classrooms model that was utilized

in the study: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart. This realization suggests that Communicative Language Teaching English in the classrooms can still be a success but modification of that model is suggested." Changes in assessment will help the teachers to evaluate students accurately and give feedback accordingly.

7.6. Modifications Needed in CLT

Modifications are required in the existing CLT approach itself; focus should be more on real - life circumstance. It has been acknowledged by abbas (2011) CLT approach gives 'insufficient attention to the context' and so importance should be given to "social, cultural and physical conditions of the recipient countries". As stated by Serwan Husein Taha Sherwani & Mehmet Kilic (2017) the modifications are needed in educational factors, teacher factors, student factors, and CLT factors that determine the failure and success of the implementation of CLT.

8. Conclusion

Communicative language teaching is the most plausible method in the realm of language teaching. Teachers play a major role in implementing the method and so data was collected from teachers. The present study concludes that most of the teachers agree CLT is an effective method for teaching. Role play is the best activity chosen to teach CLT method and for making the students to do role play activity the size of the classroom is considered as the biggest challenge faced by the teachers. Developing listening skills and speaking skills are considered as the major advantage in incorporating CLT. Change in curriculum and textbook, Implementation of different types of activities, teacher training, reforming assessment, modifications in CLT are suggested to improve CLT method.

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