

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS, ATTITUDES, AND EXPECTATIONS ABOUT COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT) IN POST SECONDARY EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

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1. INTRODUCTION

This research investigated the expectations and beliefs of 36 English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers in Bangladesh regarding beliefs, attitudes and language instruction practices. Such research is fundamental to implementing alternative approaches to curriculum and instruction of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Bangladesh because, in order for an implementation strategy to be effective, it is first necessary to identify those issues, which will facilitate or possibly inhibit change.

The broad framework of communicative language teaching (CLT) is the most common basis within which to investigate language teaching practices. It is a framework which is widely referred to in policy statements and curricular goals. However, as previous research (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Ellis, 1994; Fox, 1993; Gamal & Debra, 2001; Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Li, 1998; Mustafa, 2001; Penner, 1995; Rollman, 1994; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Thompson, 1996) has shown, teachers have widely differing perceptions of the features of CLT for curriculum and instruction. It has also been shown that the issues which facilitate or inhibit change are quite distinct from one national context to another (Aleixo, 2003). While the principles and theories of CLT may be well documented, beliefs and attitudes about the theory are not consistent. Therefore, it was vital to survey the experiences, attitudes and expectations of teachers. The research would identify probable causes and situations for the current deficiencies in English education in Bangladesh and reveal ways to implement communicative language education successfully.

This research investigated English as a Second Language teachers' perception and expectations regarding Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in post secondary education in Bangladesh. The main goal of the research was to identify factors which will facilitate or inhibit the implementation of communicative teaching of English at the post secondary level in Bangladesh.

The basic research questions for the study are:

1. What are the perceptions of the participating post secondary EFL teachers about the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)?
2. What do these teachers believe are the practices that explain communicative activities?
3. Which activities do these teachers use in their classrooms?
4. What do teachers think are the main barriers in implementing CLT method in Bangladesh?
5. What do they think are the areas of successes and difficulties in current English teaching in Bangladesh?
6. What do they identify as training needs for the successful implementation of CLT in Bangladesh?

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

As the study relies mostly on teachers' self reported feelings, personal perspectives, and experiences about the use of CLT in Bangladeshi classrooms, a survey research design was chosen and a descriptive and interpretive analysis of the results was done. Qualitative research has been well established in most academic fields of study. According to Aleixo (2003), it has a unique approach to research that draws mostly on multiple sources and on people's views and opinions of specific experiences. In this study, multiple sources are data from 36 teachers, survey instrument that asks for opinions and judgments as well as open-ended responses, related research, and personal experience. It was important to use a qualitative research approach because of the dependence on individual perceptions of a particular language teaching situation. Furthermore, according to Marshall and Rossman

(1999), one of the significant reasons for selecting qualitative research is “to stress the unique strengths of the genre for research that is exploratory or descriptive” (p. 60).

2.1 Participants and Setting

The participants in this study are university-level EFL teachers most of whom are highly experienced. A total of 36 ESL teachers participated in the study. All the participants are between 24 and 58 years of age. Each works at one of three private English medium universities located in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Invitation letters to participate in the study were distributed to the teachers through the English Department Chairs of three private universities and teacher participation in the study was voluntary.

2.2 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection for this study consists of written survey questionnaires distributed between August, 2003 and November, 2003. According to Wiersma (1995), as cited by Scott (2001), survey research "measures opinions and is probably the single most widely used research type in educational research" (p. 169). Four universities in Bangladesh were contacted by E-mail for authorization to collect data and three responded positively. The fourth university did not respond to the request for participation in the study. Once the authorization was received, a total of 50 questionnaires were mailed by post in the first week of August, 2003 to the three universities (25 questionnaires to IUB, 10 to NSU and 15 to BRAC University, taking into consideration the number of English teachers at those institutions). Each package contained a cover letter requesting the English Department Chairs of the three universities to distribute the questionnaires to the English teachers. An invitation letter to participate in the study was attached to each questionnaire. To make sure of maximum return of the questionnaires, follow-ups were conducted by E-mails to each participant institution almost every week between August and September, 2003.

Out of 50, a total of 36 questionnaires were returned (20 from IUB, 10 from BRAC and 6 from NSU); that represents a response rate of 72%. Out of 36 returned questionnaires, 55.56% represent IUB, 27.78% represent BRAC, and 16.67% represent NSU. The researcher started receiving the questionnaires by the end of October, 2003 and received the last questionnaire in the last week of November, 2003. Out of 36 responses, 2 were returned to me by fax and the rest of the responses were received by postal mail. Further E-mails and phone calls were made to the Department Chairs of the participating universities to determine whether there was any possibility of getting more responses, but no more questionnaires were received.

After a careful reading of all the 36 questionnaires, no invalid responses for the data analysis were found and all the 36 questionnaires were, therefore, analyzed for the results. As the teachers were not asked to provide their names when returning the questionnaire, there was no identification of individual participants. Institutions and teachers' responses to items were coded and the data were entered into an Excel database of a laptop computer (PC with Windows XP).

2.3 Questionnaire

The main instrument used to elicit data for the study was a written questionnaire (see Appendix) administered to ESL teachers in Bangladesh. According to LeCompte and Gotez (1982), as cited by Scott (2001), "scientific traditions, such as the survey method, focus on a small number of questions that are constructed before data collection and cover a wide range of elements" (p. 14). This survey research used the technique of the questionnaire for data collection because according to Wiersma (1995), as cited by Scott (2001), compared to interviews with the teachers, the questionnaire is more relaxing and it examines the teachers' approaches to teaching more accurately. Also, as it was not possible for the researcher to go to Bangladesh to interview English teachers himself, the questionnaire helped to avoid any error or bias in the data that could result from using another interviewer or a number of interviewers.

The questionnaire included 11 questions, including both open-ended questions and questions with fixed alternatives (See Appendix). In order to check the comprehensiveness, clarity, and representativeness of the interview questionnaire, a pilot study/ trialing was conducted. The questionnaires were distributed to 20 Chinese, Korean, and Persian ESL teachers at the University of Victoria. They were asked to complete the questionnaire and

10 participants returned the questionnaires. Teachers' responses were spontaneous and demonstrated no misunderstandings of any item of the questionnaire. Therefore, based on the findings of the pilot study, no changes were made in the sequential order or wording of items of the questionnaire.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

Data for this study were collected using the written questionnaires. The analysis of data proceeded in several stages. First, all the questionnaires were tabulated to record the responses of each participant for each item. The tabulations were then read and re-read carefully to identify patterns and commonalities. Tables were made to summarize the frequency of responses to each question. Following the tabulation of individual question items, further analyses were conducted with sets of questions, which were grouped together because they relate to a common issue or theme. For example, items from questions that intended to find teachers' perceptions about CLT techniques and CLT methods (Question 5 and 6) were compared with the items in question 8 that asked about teachers' classroom practices. Such a comparison provides information about the correspondence between teachers' attitudes and beliefs and their practices. The comparison of findings about perceptions and practices was then further compared to responses to questions about teachers' perceived difficulties in adopting CLT in Bangladesh as well as their suggestions regarding the need for training in different areas of the development of English language teaching. The frequencies, commonalities and patterns discovered in the data were used to answer the research questions.

4. MAJOR FINDINGS

The present study reveals that participant Bangladeshi EFL teachers have very good understanding of the communicative activities and the general principles of communicative language teaching (CLT); they practice the major communicative activities in their classes.

It was also found that the teachers did not support some of the common misconceptions about CLT, which are reported in research literature as one of the major impediments to implementation and practice of CLT in an EFL context (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Fox, 1993; Gamal & Debra, 2001; Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Rollman, 1994; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Thompson, 1996). EFL teachers in this study identified the following concepts of CLT negatively: "CLT means only group work and pair work" (Fox, 1993; Gamal & Debra, 2001; Li, 1998; and Penner, 1995), "CLT means not teaching grammar" (Li, 1998; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Thompson, 1996), "CLT means teaching speaking only" (Li, 1998; Thompson, 1996), and "CLT means discourse competence only" (Fox, 1993).

It is also found that there are positive relationships between teachers' perceptions about CLT and their classroom practices as EFL teachers in this study practice some of the major communicative activities in their classes. Some of the most frequently used activities by the teachers in this study are: calling on students to orally respond to any issues/topic, group discussion, listening to audio tapes and answering questions, pair work, and simulations/role play. Although there are some discrepancies between teachers' perceptions and practices in this study, these are not remarkable as they are not causing obstacles in the way of communicative practices or discouraging teachers from practicing CLT; and these discrepancies are not caused by teachers' misconceptions of CLT or their limited knowledge of CLT pedagogy, and are rather possibly due to some practical reasons like lack of resources, traditional exams, under equipped and large classes, or lack of support from administration.

4.1 Comparison of the Findings with Related Literature

The findings of this study are significantly different from previous related research, where it was found that EFL teachers mainly persisted in using traditional practices in classes (Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999), showed unwillingness to use communicative activities (Gamal & Debra, 2001), favored more traditional teaching (Gorsuch, 2000), and found it difficult to change the classical traditional approach of language teaching and implement the modern approach (Penner, 1995).

Unlike the teachers reported in these previous studies, Bangladeshi EFL teachers in this study reported practicing major communicative activities in their classes. Although it is reported that teachers use traditional activities like dictionary use and grammar explanations, these activities are not a hindrance to communicative language teaching practices. Bangladeshi EFL teachers in this study reported using grammar explanation due to their awareness that communicative language teaching does not restrict teachers from teaching grammar, as 31 teachers in

this study reported it as “not true” that CLT means not teaching grammar. They possibly explain grammar only to facilitate students’ meaningful uses of English, not to hinder the communicative flow of the class. Thus teachers in this study do not hold the misconception that ‘CLT means not teaching grammar’ which was identified by Li (1998), Sato and Kleinsasser (1999) and Thompson (1996).

Bangladeshi EFL teachers’ perceptions about CLT also contrast with Li’s (1998) findings that “a typical misconception of teachers was that by concentrating in appropriateness and fluency, CLT does not teach form at all and thus totally neglects accuracy” (p. 689).

Findings from the present study also do not conform to Lewis and McCook’s (2000) and Karavas-Doukas’s (1996) studies, which revealed that Vietnamese and Greek EFL teachers were following both traditional and communicative methods in their practices mainly due to misconceptions about CLT. Bangladeshi EFL teachers’ use of grammar explanation along with the major communicative activities is very significant for the implementation and success of CLT overall in Bangladeshi post secondary level, as findings from previous studies were that EFL teachers in most cases follow or try to hold on to only traditional grammar practices, whereas Bangladeshi EFL teachers practice major communicative activities and use grammar explanations and accuracy as part of the communicative function or to facilitate communicative competence. It has been established that the traditional grammar teaching method is not an effective way to develop learners’ communicative competence (Krashen, 1985, 1992; Nunan, 1989). Many researchers believe that if grammar is taught in a communicative way, mastering grammatical knowledge is important to learners’ overall development toward target language use (Ellis, 1994, 1995; Fotos, 1994; Garrett, 1986; Lightbown, 1991; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Littlewood, 1981; Lee & VanPatten, 1995; Rivers, 1981; Riggensbach & Lazarson, 1991; Sachter, 1991; Savignon, 1991; Smith, 1981; Widdowson, 1996). Li (1998) also asserted that there is plenty of research literature that advocates inclusion of grammar instruction in second language teaching. He added, “While trying to introduce CLT, teachers should not feel guilty about teaching grammar” (p. 697). Bangladeshi EFL teachers seem to be aware of the need of grammar for achieving communicative competence and they may be teaching grammar to students to facilitate and achieve communicative competence, which is advocated by researchers for the success of CLT.

Another important finding of this study is the teachers’ perceived need for the knowledge of target language culture. Ellis’s (1994) study found that Vietnamese teachers believed that they did not have necessary knowledge of target language culture to successfully practice CLT. Ellis asserted that this belief led to Vietnamese teachers’ misconception about CLT that it does not culturally fit for Vietnam and that CLT is basically an ESL methodology, not suited for EFL contexts. Liao (2000) pointed out that a lack of target language culture was one of the major difficulties in the way of successful implementation of CLT in China. Burnaby and Sun’s (1989) study also showed that Chinese teachers believed that the communicative approach was mainly applicable in China for those students who planned to go to an English speaking country.

But in this study, Bangladeshi EFL teachers did not identify additional knowledge of the target language for the success of CLT in Bangladesh. These teachers may believe that the status and practices of English in Bangladesh are not like other foreign language countries due to the fact that it was a colony of Britain. As a result of Bangladesh’s long association with English, it is not as ‘foreign’ as in other countries that lack a long historical relationship with English. These teachers may also believe that their cultural knowledge of English is sufficient for using English in Bangladeshi context.. Furthermore, while expressing their opinions about the difficulties in adopting CLT in Bangladesh, the teachers said that the difference between ESL and EFL would not create any major difficulty in the way of successful implementation and practices of CLT.

Another significant finding of this study, in contrast with previous studies (Mustafa 2001; Li, 1998, and Penner, 1995), is that Bangladeshi EFL teachers do not believe that teachers’ lack of high proficiency in English is a major difficulty for practicing and implementing CLT in Bangladesh. Mustafa (2001) pointed out teachers’ lack of English language proficiency as a factor that inhibits the adoption of CLT in Indonesia. Li (1998) found that teachers in his study believed that CLT required them to be fluent in English and they generally felt that they had high proficiency in English grammar, reading, and writing, but they had inadequate abilities in English speaking and listening to conduct communicative classes. Penner (1995) also observed that Chinese teachers in his study believed their English knowledge was limited. But the majority of the teachers in this study identified that although CLT requires teachers to have high proficiency in English, they believe their English knowledge is sufficient for the Bangladeshi context. Bangladeshi teachers’ practice of major CLT activities support the idea that either they have

sufficient English proficiency or they think that Bangladeshi teachers' English proficiency is not a major difficulty in practicing and adopting CLT in Bangladesh. But the majority of the teachers in the present study identified 'students' low-level of English proficiency' as a major difficulty in practicing and adopting CLT in Bangladesh. This is similar to Li's (1998) findings where teachers reported that due to students' low English proficiency they encountered difficulties in trying the CLT approach in their classes. From my own experience I have found that when students are enrolled at the post secondary and university levels in Bangladesh, their low-level of English proficiency usually makes it difficult for the teachers to do oral interaction and other communicative activities in the classroom. Therefore, successful and effective practices of functional and social communicative activities in the classroom are hampered or delayed. But the findings from this study demonstrated that participating teachers' overall communicative practices are not hampered or discouraged due to the lack of students' English proficiency, which is indicative that students' low level English proficiency may not have a negative impact on the success of CLT; rather CLT can help to improve students' English proficiency.

But the findings regarding Bangladeshi teachers' perceptions that CLT is time consuming support Li (1998), Sato and Kleinsasser (1999), and Thompson's (1996) findings. The majority of the teachers in this study supported the idea that CLT requires a lot of time to prepare class activities, which was also evident in Li's (1998) study where teachers reported lack of time for developing communicative materials had prevented them from using CLT. Sato and Kleinsasser (1999) also found that one of the reasons behind Japanese as a second language teachers' persistence in traditional practices in their class was their belief that CLT used time consuming activities. Thompson (1996) set out this belief of teachers as one of the misconceptions of CLT, which inhibits successful practice and implementation of CLT. But it is noteworthy that although Bangladeshi EFL teachers believe that CLT is time consuming and teachers have little time to prepare communicative activities, and this poses a difficulty for successful implementation of CLT in Bangladesh, unlike Korean EFL teachers in Li's (1998) study, Bangladeshi teachers do not appear to be discouraged from practicing communicative activities in their classes. It is evident from the findings that teachers practice and are willing to practice communicative activities and they do not think that preparing communicative activities is too much pressure for them.

Teachers reported difficulties in practicing and adopting CLT in this study. The majority of the teachers in this study identified 'Large class size' as a difficulty in practicing CLT or as a possible barrier to the adoption of CLT in Bangladesh which was also reported by teachers in researches of Li (1998), Mustafa (2001), Burnaby and Sun (1989), and Gamal and Debra (2001) as one of the difficulties in successful implementation of CLT. Bangladeshi teachers also reported that EFL classes are not well-equipped or convenient, which is true as Bangladesh may lack resources as an underdeveloped nation. Classrooms may also be inconvenient due to the large number of students and immovable desks and chairs which hinders the maximum student participation and successful implementation of communicative activities like role-play, group-work and games. Therefore, the majority of the teachers in this study identified large class size as a major difficulty in adopting CLT in their classes or overall in Bangladesh, but they must not find it totally impossible to use communicative activities as the findings also demonstrate that they use some of the major communicative activities in their class. This finding does not fully coincide with Li's (1998) observation in the case of Korea: "The teachers found it very difficult, if not entirely impossible, to use CLT with so many students in one class because they believed that oral English and close monitoring of class activities were essential in CLT" (p. 691).

Traditional grammar-based examination was reported as a barrier to implementing CLT in the current study and it was also identified by Li (1998), Mustafa (2001) and Gorsuch (2000). Lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments of communicative competence was reported by Li (1998) as another major difficulty in implementing CLT in Korean, Indonesian and Japanese contexts. These factors are also identified by the majority of the Bangladeshi EFL teachers as a difficulty or possible difficulty in practicing and adopting CLT in Bangladesh. The Bangladeshi EFL teachers' opinions about the traditional grammar-based exams as a difficulty and their priority of being trained to assess students are logical as they may have expertise to assess grammar from years of experience but they may not know how to assess communicative abilities of students.

Bangladeshi EFL teachers also identified 'Lack of support from administration' as one of the difficulties in practicing and adopting CLT. This is consistent with Li's (1998) and Burnaby and Sun's (1989) findings in their studies. Li's (1998) study showed that Korean teachers found the lack of support from administration frustrating and as Li stated that "Teachers generally found this lack of professional, administrative, and collegial support discouraging" (p. 693). Chinese teachers in Burnaby and Sun's (1989) study reported their dissatisfactions regarding

their status of professional development. Their dissatisfaction with administration is evident as they thought, “their own level of academic knowledge was not being enhanced in the way it would have been” (p. 230). Participant Bangladeshi EFL teachers’ report about lack of support from administration may be similar to that of the Korean and Chinese contexts or it may be a general fear among the teachers that if administration does not support teachers, CLT implementation will not be successful in Bangladesh.

Lack of training in CLT was also reported by Bangladeshi teachers as a major difficulty in adopting CLT, which is similar to the findings of Li (1998), Burnaby and Sun (1989), and Gamal and Debra (2001) where EFL teachers identified it as a barrier to successful implementation of CLT. But although EFL teachers thought it a major difficulty in adopting CLT in Bangladesh, it may not be true that participant teachers are in serious need of training in CLT or their lack of training in CLT is posing problem in practicing communicative language teaching. This research found that Bangladeshi EFL teachers have a basic repertoire of CLT techniques and they use the familiar CLT techniques in their classes. These teachers indicate a need for more training in developing and implementing CLT techniques. Bangladeshi EFL teachers overall need training in understanding and developing CLT techniques.

Another major difficulty in implementing and practicing CLT is teachers’ lack of English language proficiency or lack of confidence in using English, which was reported by Liao (2000), Li (1998), Mustafa (2001), and Penner (1995) in their studies. But the majority of the EFL teachers (55.56%) in the present study did not think that teachers’ lack of English proficiency was a major difficulty for them. On the other hand the majority of them (72.22%) have expressed their opinions that oral fluency is a priority for teacher training in Bangladesh. This is indicative that oral fluency may not be a problem for the participant teachers of the three English medium universities, but lack of oral fluency can be a major problem for other EFL teachers overall in Bangladesh.

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study demonstrate that participant Bangladeshi teachers’ perceptions and practices of CLT and their perceived difficulties in using and adopting CLT in Bangladesh is not similar to those of teachers in other EFL countries. Most significantly, these teachers have positive attitudes towards CLT, showed correspondence between their theoretical knowledge and their practices of CLT, and did not hold many misconceptions about CLT. Most of the studies that investigated EFL teachers’ perceptions and attitudes regarding CLT practices and implementation (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Ellis, 1994; Gamal & Debra, 2001; Lewis & McCook, 2002; Li, 1998; Liao, 2000; Mustafa, 2001; Penner, 1995; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Sun & Cheng, 2000) concluded that the difference between ESL and EFL contexts or the unsuitability of Western ESL methodology in an EFL context was identified by teachers as one of the main reasons for CLT implementation being difficult or not being successful in EFL countries. But this is not the case for Bangladesh. Therefore, despite the differences between EFL and ESL contexts, there is a positive environment for the successful implementation of CLT in Bangladesh. Thus, the three participant universities can be considered as model institutions for CLT development and implementation in Bangladesh.

As mentioned earlier in this section, while research found that while other EFL countries faced difficulties due to the unsuitability of ESL methodology in their EFL contexts, the Bangladeshi EFL teachers in this study are practicing CLT and they are showing their efforts to implement CLT. They may not be imitating a Western methodology, but rather, considering their own educational condition and communicative needs. This idea is supported by the findings of this study as the majority of participant teachers expressed their opinions that they do not lack the cultural knowledge of English speaking countries. Possibly they do not see any difference between the uses of English in Bangladesh and in English speaking countries. So it could be assumed that they are applying their knowledge of Bangladeshi culture for the purposes of CLT. The success of CLT in the three universities of this study shows that CLT can be successful in the EFL context of Bangladesh, given that CLT needs to be implemented and practiced considering the Bangladeshi context and its communicative needs, which will be a “locally appropriate version of CLT” (Tomlinson, 1990).

Based on the findings that CLT implementation was not successful in many EFL countries, researchers suggested integration between EFL and ESL contexts and also prioritized consideration of EFL countries’ own educational condition to make the new methodology or approach well-rounded and practical for their own contexts (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Ellis, 1996; Li, 1998; Sun & Cheng, 2000). Burnaby and Sun (1989) asserted that to make the communicative approach successful, Western and EFL countries should carefully consider the comparability of conditions in the two settings. According to Ellis (1996), to make the communicative approach suitable for an Asian

situation “it needs to be both culturally attuned and culturally accepted” (p.213). He suggests that “mediating” can serve as a useful tool in the adoption process of CLT, and that integration between Western and Eastern teaching is needed to make language teaching successful in EFL countries. According to Sun and Cheng (2000), there needs to be a compromise between CLT methodology and conditions and the provisions of the context in which it is to be implemented. Sun and Cheng believe that the adoption of CLT in the EFL context is basically a curriculum development, which is to integrate the context into a communicative language teaching curriculum. They add that, in EFL teaching, the effect of the context on a program is more notable than it is in an ESL context and knowing more about the context helps to better adapt the new methodology into the program. Sun and Cheng (2000) also recommended that, “adaptation of teaching methodology will be more successful if the theory of learning and teaching where CLT methodology is derived from is reviewed and studied with the characteristics of the program context in mind” (p. 25). Li (1998) also suggested that the adoption of CLT in EFL countries like South Korea should be “gradual and grounded in the countries’ own EFL situation” (p. 677) and EFL countries “should adapt rather than adopt CLT in their English teaching” (p. 696). The ministry of education, education policy makers, and post secondary institutions in Bangladesh need to consider these suggestions/ issues for the successful implementation of a Bangladeshi version of CLT.

5.1 Implementing CLT in Bangladesh

The positive attitude towards CLT methodology and practices that is found in these three participating universities may not be evident overall in Bangladesh, and the findings from this study cannot be generalized. The EFL teachers in this study may be the representatives of the best in Bangladesh and other EFL teachers overall in Bangladesh may have misconceptions about the CLT method, which is indicated by half of the participants in this study as a possible difficulty in adopting CLT in Bangladesh, and teachers also may lack expertise in its practices. But, for the successful CLT implementation in Bangladesh these three participating universities can play a vital role in CLT training in other post secondary institutions. Other institutions can hire EFL teachers from one of the universities of this study to get expertise, which may not be a large-scale national development program; interested post-secondary institutions can prepare an internal development model in collaboration with these universities. Some EFL teachers in Bangladesh may be reluctant to try CLT, as it is not familiar, it requires changes of the traditional on their part or because they have misconceptions of CLT. So, teachers need assistance and encouragement in trying out new ideas, activities, and materials. Teachers should have the opportunity to retrain and refresh themselves in CLT and more importantly “teachers should receive help in revising, refining, or changing their educational theories” (Li, 1998; p. 697). Bangladeshi teachers need continuing support with CLT and this can be achieved by appointing highly qualified teaching consultants and conducting in-service teacher education programs (Li, 1998). Proper training can teach them how to use CLT in their classrooms and they can be motivated to overcome the difficulties.

EFL teachers from the universities in this study can take the initiative for in-service teacher training and development programs. They can go to local post-secondary institutions to arrange seminars and training programs on CLT for EFL teachers. A TEFL certificate program can be developed for the institutions that are found to be struggling or facing difficulties in adopting CLT and an experienced and qualified teacher from these three participating universities of this study can run this certificate program. Proper modeling can make the teachers realize that it is possible to introduce communicative teaching strategies and methods in their local contexts. As mentioned earlier, the three private universities of this study can be good models where CLT is being practiced and implemented, and thus other local EFL teachers will be able to see that it is possible to use and practice the recommended strategies/methods of CLT in their classes.

Apart from teacher training, attention should be given to the following areas for the overall success of CLT in Bangladesh:

Vocabulary and grammar teaching: As Bangladeshi teachers are aware of the importance of grammar as part of communicative teaching, and as apparently they teach some grammar or use grammar explanations for communicative functions, they may need to be more informed as to how to teach grammar communicatively and they also need to work on finding methods of communicative grammar instruction appropriate to their teaching context. While integrating grammar instruction and communicative language use, teachers can also use alternative methods such as the grammar-consciousness-raising tasks suggested by several researchers (Ellis, 1995; Fotos, 1994; Rutherford, 1987; Smith, 1981). This viewpoint emphasizes the importance of communicative grammar,

which is designed to relate grammatical structures to contexts in which they may occur naturally. In traditional grammar teaching, grammar usually is an end of the lessons; therefore, grammatical knowledge itself is emphasized and little effort was made to relate grammar to the context of real communicative use. On the other hand, in communicative teaching, teachers are recommended to teach students to understand grammar as a means rather than end in itself (Choi, 1999). Communicative language teaching in fact does not reject grammar teaching and in communicative approach, the issue of grammar teaching lies on how to teach grammar, not on whether to include grammar in the syllabus. Regarding vocabulary teaching, rather than memorization of vocabulary from an isolated list or from dictionary, communicative and modern methods of vocabulary teaching need to be applied in Bangladesh where students will be trained to properly guess vocabulary from context and learn incidentally while reading. Additional vocabulary classes and attention to vocabulary learning in every EFL classes might also help in improving vocabulary knowledge of students.

Materials and resources: Like other EFL countries, lack of authentic materials and audio-visual materials are also common in Bangladesh. Materials and resources are likely to be limited in a country like Bangladesh which is not wealthy and may be participant teachers in this study have also focused on the needs of English teaching materials that are appropriate and effective for Bangladeshi English language context. But as mentioned earlier, it was not clear from this study what kind of teaching materials they referred to in particular, whether conversation, reading, writing, or audio-visual. Also, Bangladeshi teachers' idea about authentic materials is also not clear. Authentic materials and learner centered-activities are recommended in communicative language teaching and an idea about authentic materials is found from Omaggio (1993) while prioritizing the use of authentic materials he stated that "ample opportunities to learn language in context and apply their knowledge to coping with real-life situation" (p. 79). Success of CLT may require the development of some teaching materials considering the Bangladeshi context, as just imitating or following Western texts or topics may not be authentic in Bangladeshi context. Extra funding is also needed to obtain books, materials, and audio-visual equipment for communicative activities and when the funding is not available, using CLT may become hard (Li, 1998). More research needs to be done in Bangladesh to find out the actual problems in EFL classrooms, what kind of material development teachers referred to and are needed in the Bangladeshi context and necessary steps that should be taken to the make the classrooms convenient and equipped for communicative language teaching.

Assessment/evaluation: As communication or oral interaction is one of the important components of CLT, teachers may face difficulty in giving and assessing oral tests to a large number of students, which was found by Li (1998) that South Korean teachers "found it difficult to balance content and language when scoring oral exams" (p. 695) and overall they "found it disconcerting that there were no prescribed ready-made assessment tools for communicative competence" (p. 695). Also in the cases of reading and writing assessment, the lack of standard grading categories and criteria will pose a major difficulty in successful communicative assessment. Furthermore, communicative language learning and teaching cannot be successful if the exams do not reflect what was practiced and taught in the classes as part of the communicative syllabus. Gorsuch (2000) concluded that, if the exam is concentrated on only grammar knowledge, a communicative competence development does not meet the needs of students. Based on the findings in a Vietnamese CLT situation, Ellis (1994) also asserted that, the design and content of texts and examinations will need to be consistent with communicative goals for communicative language teaching to become a reality. Therefore, designing communicative assessment standards and criteria for Bangladeshi EFL students needs to be considered seriously and it is a major issue for further implementation of CLT in Bangladesh.

There is no question that in the present world English is the most important language to communicate and to compete in the global market, for the nation to advance in education, science and technology, to build better infrastructure, and to strive to bring the nation out of the 'developing nation' status, Bangladesh needs to be competent in English. To replace the traditional out-of-date, teacher centred grammar-teaching method it is vital to find the underlying problems with the present post-secondary English curriculum and to take the necessary steps to improve and modernize the English language teaching methodology. The text-centered and grammar-centered practices need to be replaced by the student-centered, fluency-focused, and problem solving activities required by CLT. Referring to Frymier (1987) and Fullan (1993), Li (1998) asserted that teachers are central to long-lasting changes in any effort to improve education and also "Teachers and administrators must be aware of the shift in societal needs and make conscious and persistent effort to introduce more CLT into English teaching" (p. 696). In fact, government, educators, administrators, researchers, teachers, and students all have to take part in the development process of communicative language teaching in Bangladesh. As Savignon (1991) also suggested, teamwork among linguists, methodologists and classroom teachers is needed for the success of CLT, because that

will offer the “best hope for the elaboration and diffusion of language teaching methods and materials that work, that encourages and support learners in the development of their communicative competence” (p. 274).

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APPENDIX- QUESTIONNAIRE

Accurate report of teachers' beliefs, attitudes and expectations is very important in order to design and develop curriculum. Therefore, please report only what you actually practice, not what you think is correct or would like to practice.

1. Age _____
 2. Sex _____
 3. How many years have you been a teacher of English at post secondary level? _____
 4. What types of courses have you taught in past 3 years?
- Spoken English Remedial English Reading Writing EFL major
 English for Specific Purposes (ESP) English literature
 Other English courses (*please specify*)

5. Which of the following do you think are communicative techniques? (*Please check*)

- Fill in the blanks
 Looking up words in the dictionary

Teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and expectations about CLT in Bangladesh

- Writing an essay in English
- Having a debate or role-play
- Group discussion on a controversial topic
- Reading dialogues
- Going on the Internet and joining a chat group
- Practice speaking in pairs
- Dictation task
- Story telling in front of the class
- Grammar exercises
- Describing a picture to a partner

6. What is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method in your view? (Please check one)

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| CLT is student/learner-centered approach | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> Not true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| CLT means strategic and socio-linguistic competence | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> Not true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| CLT means discourse competence only | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> Not true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> Not true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| CLT emphasizes communication in second language (L2) | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> Not true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening skills | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> Not true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| CLT requires the teachers to have high proficiency in English | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> Not true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| CLT means only group work or pair work | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> Not true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| CLT requires higher knowledge of target language culture | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> Not true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| CLT means not teaching grammar | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> Not true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| CLT means teaching speaking only | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> Not true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| CLT puts too much pressure on teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> Not true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| CLT requires a lot of time to prepare class activities | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> Not true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| CLT is basically an ESL methodology, not EFL | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> Not true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| Other | | | |

7. The following are some difficulties that other EFL/ESL teachers had in adopting CLT. Did you come across these difficulties or do you think they might be difficulties for you in adopting CLT in Bangladesh?

Try a scale (circle one), how much of an issue is:

1- no problem --- 3- manageable problem --- 5- major difficulty

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Teachers' lack of sufficient spoken English competence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) Teachers' lack of target culture (English) knowledge | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c) Teachers' little time to prepare communicative materials | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d) Students' low-level English proficiency | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e) Students resist communicative class activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f) Not enough authentic teaching materials to use | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g) Traditional grammar-based examinations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h) Large class size | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| i) The differences between EFL and ESL teaching contexts | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| j) Lack of training in CLT | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| k) Lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments of communicative competence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| l) Lack of support from administration | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| m) Teachers' misinterpretation of CLT | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| n) Unsuitability of Western educational assumption in Asia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| o) Other | | | | | |

8. Please indicate which of the following classroom procedures you currently use as part of your English language teaching: (Please circle a scale)

1- use it regularly ---- 3-use it sometimes ---- 5 - never tried

a) Grammar explanation	1	2	3	4	5
b) Group discussion	1	2	3	4	5
c) Pair work	1	2	3	4	5
d) Translation	1	2	3	4	5
e) Dictionary vocabulary exercises	1	2	3	4	5
f) Simulations / role play	1	2	3	4	5
g) Reading and reporting from websites	1	2	3	4	5
h) Reading and reporting from newspaper	1	2	3	4	5
i) Reading aloud	1	2	3	4	5
j) Pronunciation drills	1	2	3	4	5
k) Games	1	2	3	4	5
l) Listening to audio tape and answering questions	1	2	3	4	5
m) Call on students to orally respond to any issue/topic	1	2	3	4	5
n) Reading and reciting dialogue	1	2	3	4	5
o) Other					

9. Please indicate your opinion about the following areas of ELT in Bangladesh? *(Please circle a scale)*

	currently 1- not successful -----			currently 5- most successful	
Reading speed	1	2	3	4	5
Cultural understanding of English countries	1	2	3	4	5
Read English text book/news paper	1	2	3	4	5
Oral fluency	1	2	3	4	5
Exam success	1	2	3	4	5
Preparation of ELT teachers	1	2	3	4	5
Reading comprehension	1	2	3	4	5
Speak with native English speakers	1	2	3	4	5
Vocabulary knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
TOEFL preparation	1	2	3	4	5
Effective teaching material	1	2	3	4	5
Convenient and equipped classroom	1	2	3	4	5
Other <i>(please specify)</i>					

10. What do you think would be the priority for teacher training in Bangladesh for the development of English Language Teaching (ELT)? Please try a scale *(Circle one)*:

1- not important --- 3- important ----- 5- extremely important

Need for more training of teachers in:

-fluency in English	1	2	3	4	5
-practice reading and writing in English	1	2	3	4	5
-CLT techniques	1	2	3	4	5
-cultural knowledge of English countries	1	2	3	4	5
-grammatical explanation of English	1	2	3	4	5
-use of video in the classroom	1	2	3	4	5
-knowledge of language acquisition	1	2	3	4	5
-assessing students	1	2	3	4	5
-preparing English language material	1	2	3	4	5
-using the internet to teach English	1	2	3	4	5
Other areas of training needed:					

11) Do you have any suggestions about the implementation and practice of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method in Bangladesh? Please comment.