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## INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)

Article DOI:10.21474/IJAR01/20141  
DOI URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/20141>



### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT) METHOD IN TERTIARY EDUCATION OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES OF BANGLADESH: CHALLENGES, INNOVATION AND PERSPECTIVES

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#### Manuscript Info

##### Manuscript History

Received: 28 October 2024

Final Accepted: 30 November 2024

Published: December 2024

##### Key words:-

Communicative, Language Teaching (CLT), Tertiary Education, English Language

#### Abstract

This study investigates the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as a remedial measure for the development of English language proficiency. It identifies the relationship between CLT with English performance and major challenges faced by the students. This study is mixed approach research containing quantitative tool, a questionnaire and qualitative tool, Focused Group Discussions (FGD) respectively. Findings suggest that 64% of the population agree that the use of authentic language increases English language performance and the students agreed with point that the medium of instruction of the tertiary language education should be English for enhancing the communication skill. Students are concerned with present learning methodology and it has less pair work and group work for the communicative skills. It is recommended there should be authentic materials for the students to learn English language so that they can feel motivated for learning a foreign language. In the classroom, students should get enough opportunities for the oral practice. Classroom materials must be modified through revision so that the four skills can be focused equally. For the purpose of adopting CLT, selected universities should be equipped with the appropriate infrastructure and materials, such as audio-visual classrooms, language labs, constant electricity supplies, calm and quiet classrooms, and other items.

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#### Introduction:-

Communicative Language Teaching denotes the communication or interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of language learning (Barman, Sultana & Basu, 2020). It focuses authentic language use where students get the opportunity of real communication. It develops "Communicative Competence" of the students. Teacher here organizes situation that are likely to be faced in real life situation. Through the practice, students learn English practically. There is a need of more productive way to teach English in recent days. Therefore, CLT got popularity in the foreign language learning and teaching.

The communicative language teaching (CLT) method was seen and practiced in England in 1970. It was counted as innovative because the focus was on using language as a tool of communication within the classroom environment (Alakrash, 2021). Many western countries followed CLT in English learning. Because of revolutionary nature of CLT, it has become one of the most influential methods in foreign language teaching (Alakrash & Razak, 2020).

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### **Literature Review:-**

CLT is best measured as an approach rather than a method (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). It is defined with a center theme towards a large number of activities that are followed in language classroom while teaching English. Many definitions are found in literature, but the core of CLT defines learners as communicators who are gifted with the ability to learn language naturally (Rahmatuzzman, 2018).

Both functional and structural aspects of language must be integrated to achieve communicative goals (Littlewood, 1981). The learners will learn the language to develop their communicative abilities. Activities will be provided to learn the language by the teachers.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) provide four characteristics of the communicative language teaching. They are:

- 1) Language is considered as a system of expression of meaning
- 2) The basic function of language allows to be interaction and communication
- 3) The structure of language mirrors fundamental and communicative use
- 4) Functional and Notional aspect of language are focused

CLT focuses on learner centered classroom where students get ample opportunities to practice English. They will be provided ample activities to learn the language practically. Students behave here more autonomously rather than passive listeners.

Language teaching has undergone many changes in the last 50 years. According to Richards (2006), The CLT has got three phases. The first phase comprises traditional approaches that is upto 1960. And the phase two started with classic communicative language teaching which is from 1970 to 1990. The phase three started in 1990s and is continuing up to 1990 to the present.

Hymes (1979) emphasizes on the use of social situations for developing English language proficiency. Communication of the language should get the top priority. It should focus on the functional use of the language. The structural option of the language should get less priority than the meaningful interaction of the language. Classroom activities should not be only teacher centered; it should be focused on the learner centered approach. The work like group discussions, pair discussions and presentations on different topic should get priority.

Piepho (1981) focuses on two types of communicative approach, one is integrative and content that will focus on the content for some specific purposes whereas extra linguistic goals are for the mental development for the purpose of goal and attainment.

The need of the learners should be analysed and accordingly the need will be fulfilled through the accustomed linguistic input which will help the learners to achieve language skills.

Syllabus should be designed in such a way that can fulfil the necessities of the learners and they will be practical. Curriculum should have broader goal to achieve the language skill expertism for future growth.

### **Research Questions**

The following is the research question determined for this study:

- 1) What is the relationship between Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and English language Performance?
- 2) What are the Challenges to implement Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) at tertiary education of Public Universities?
- 3) How Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) can help to improve English Performance?
- 4) How does Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) differ with traditional way of teaching English?
- 5) What do students view Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as their way of learning English?

### **Method:-**

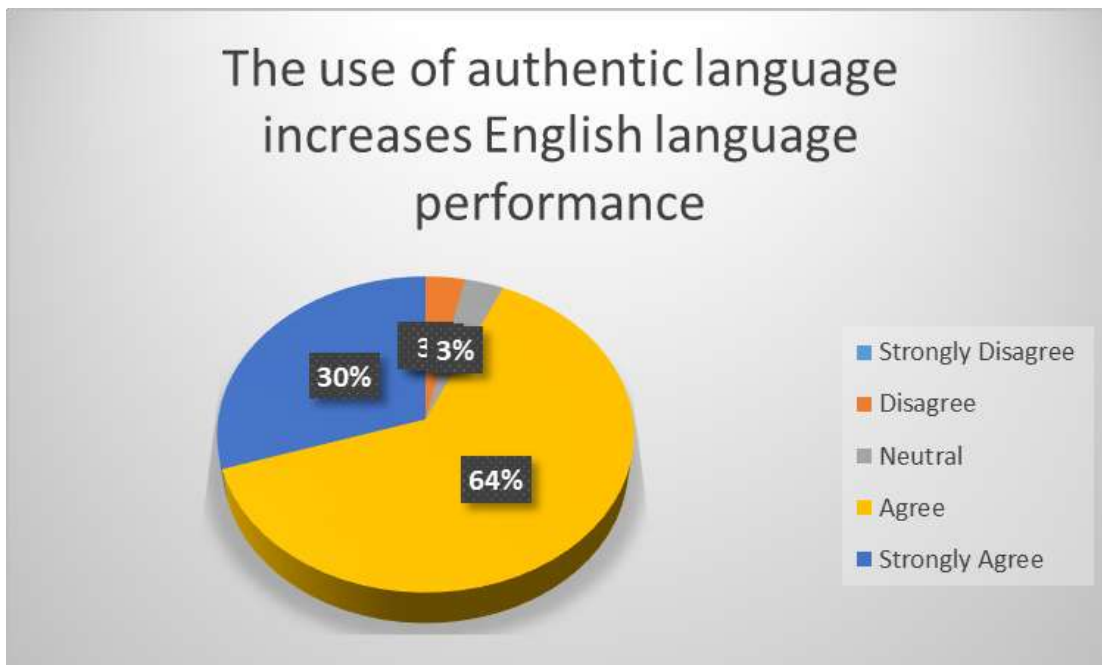
This study is mixed approach research. This is because of the nature of the research.

Quantitative tools have been used in this research. There is a questionnaire built for the students of tertiary level. Qualitative tools are to be used for answering the research questions. In the case of qualitative, Focused Group Discussion (FGD) will be carried out among students of tertiary students.

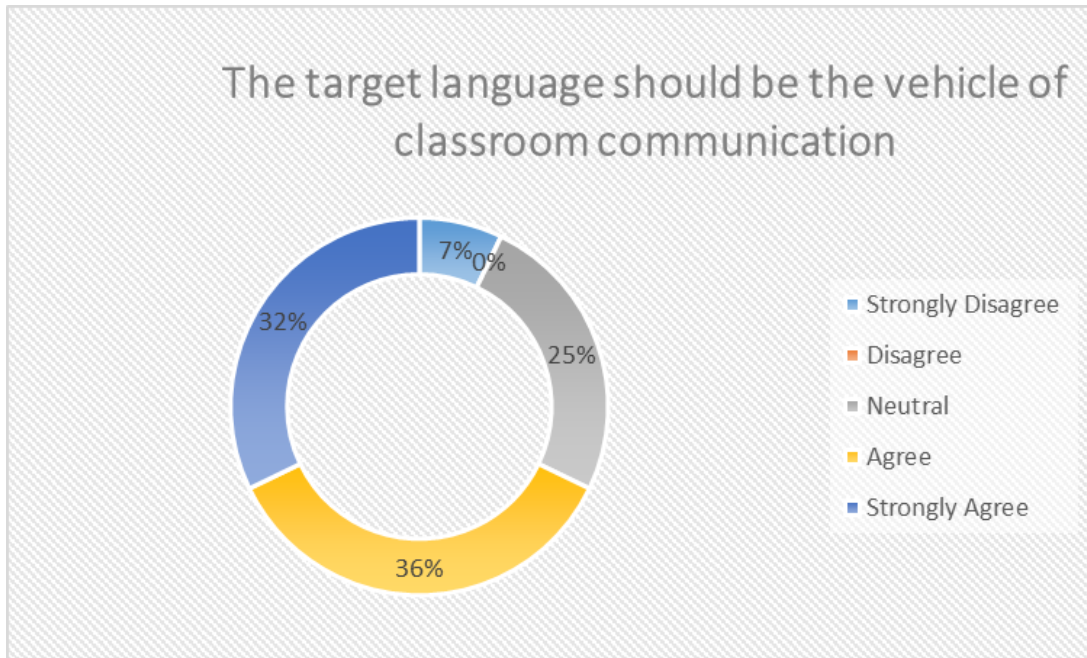
The Focused Group Discussion (FGD) is conducted by some participants, male and female, from tertiary level of the students. As this study aims to find the answer to research questions of quantitative and qualitative nature, we adopted an approach to collect and interpret the data. The design of the study was qualitative to gain a deeper understanding of the context and the participants.

### Findings

The 64% of the population agree that the use of authentic language increases English language performance. The use of authentic language has been discussed in CLT and it particularly focuses on the development of communicative competence of the students. Few students likely 3% have disagreed with the issue. Around 30% students have strongly agreed with the issue that communicative language teaching method have strong relationship with English language performance. The proper implementation of the CLT can improve the learner's choice of the development of performance.

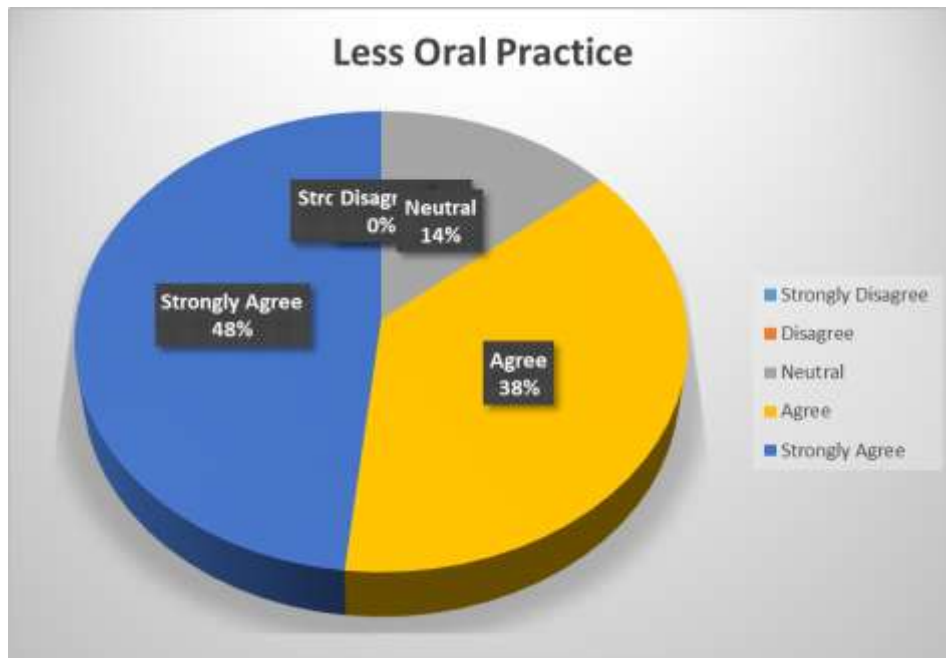


In order to adopt CLT, it is essential to consider the role of the instruments in the classroom setting. There aren't many teaching aids or other tools available for teachers to use in the universities. The uses of the target language are a preconditioned tool for the development of the language proficiency. But it is observed the reality, in many English classes there are mixture of both native language and target language. So, in order to solve the problem, the target language can be used for the development of proficiency. Around 32% of the students agreed with the issue that the target language should be the medium of instruction. 36% of the students agreed with point that the medium of instruction of the tertiary education should be English.



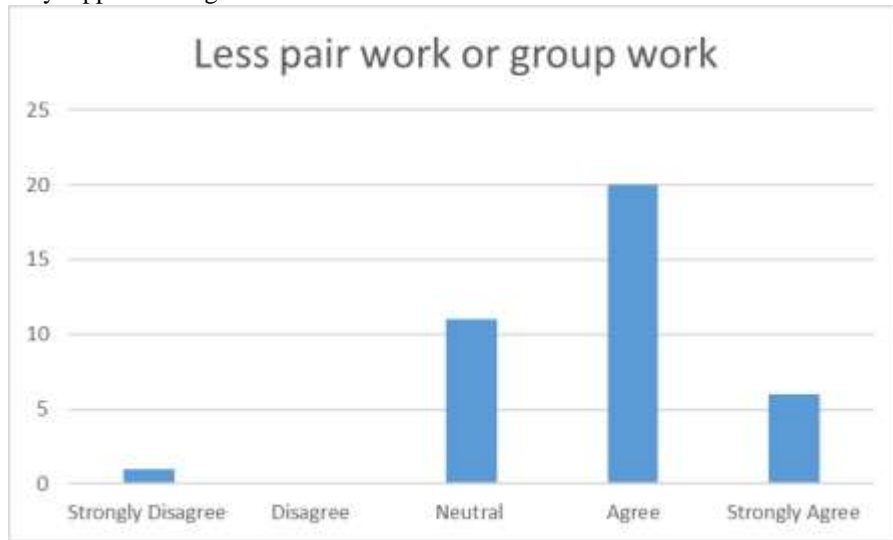
The problem is that, we have limited number of trained teachers who can facilitate the learning in CLT method. The traditional approach of the teacher rigidly controls everything in the class and students to speak in the class is considered impolite and indecency.

The traditional tendency in the classroom is that the teacher is everything in class. In class, students are not permitted to speak more. If they do it regularly, it can be seen as impolite behaviour from the students. These have been research finding where we can see that students participate in less oral practice. This hampers the speaking skill development and affect the cognitive skill of the learners.

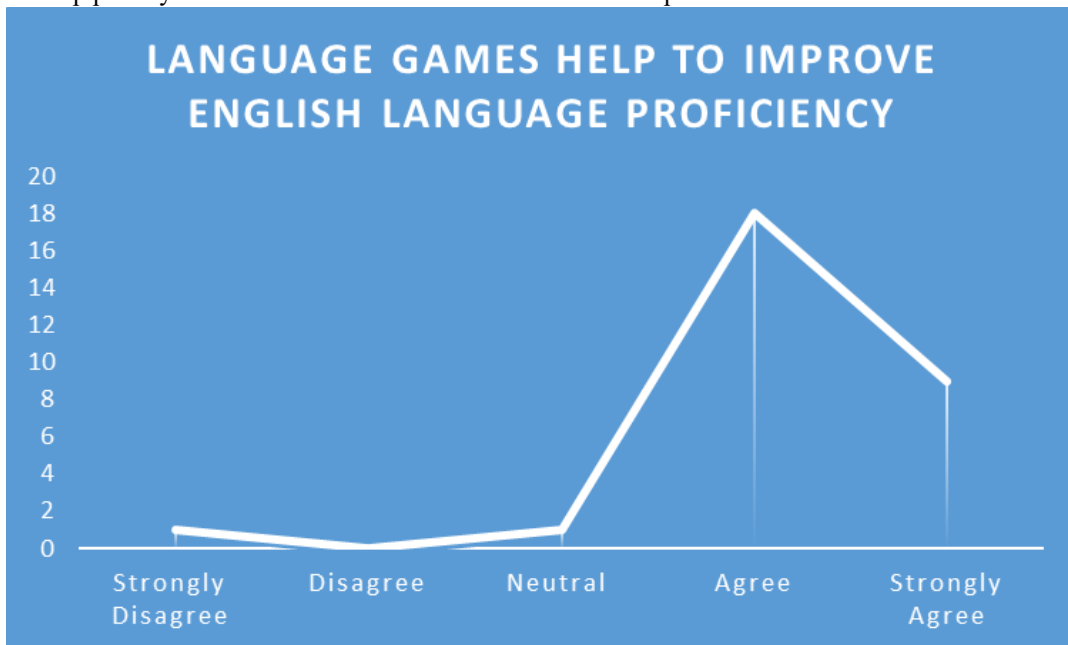


Students are not diverted with the learning methodology and it has less pair work and group work for the communicative skills. The issue has been supported by maximum number of the participants. When students do not

interact with each other communicatively they build the notion of the absence of the language, that they are learning. It does not create any rapport among the students.



In the CLT, students get the opportunity to practice, different language games for the improvement language skill. Traditionally language classes are devoid of any language games. The creation of easy and comfortable zone for the students is a top priority of the students. This contributes to the development of the students’ skill and enhancement.



One group opines

“It will be very helpful for us professional learning, so it is very effective way of learning”

Another group

“Basically, English is an international language, so for the benefit of getting recognized, CLT can be included in our methodology which will be beneficial”

**Challenges**

- ▶ “As we have less tradition of using this method, it will be challenging to implement it, it’s a new method”
- ▶ “From the very beginning of the education life like schooling and college we can start, then it will be easy at universities”

- ▶ “Interaction of teacher and students are sometimes challenging in our country which is very much needed in CLT”
- ▶ “Error Correction is important for writing, but we think it can be minimized in oral practice”

### Recommendations:-

- ▶ There should be authentic materials for the students to learn English language so that they can feel motivated for learning a foreign language
- ▶ In the classroom, teachers and students should be encouraged to use the English language more for achieving better performance
- ▶ In the classroom, students should get enough opportunities for the oral practice
- ▶ The classroom material must be modified through revision so that the four skills can be focused equally. In order to integrate the concepts of CLT the training is must for the teachers and students.
- ▶ For the purpose of adopting CLT, universities should be equipped with the appropriate infrastructure and materials, such as audio-visual classrooms, tape recorders, cassette players, language labs, constant electricity supplies, calm and quiet classrooms, and other items.
- ▶ There should be enough opportunities for pair work and group work
- ▶ Interactive activities like language game can be included for learning purpose
- ▶ Classroom learning should reflect the outside of the world learning

### Conclusion:-

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method is a revolutionary concept to improve and enhance the quality of English language teaching. It will shape the way of learner centered teaching to the students. CLT solves different practical problems of English as foreign language learning. The research also sheds some insights on the teaching methodologies and learning insights of tertiary education at the public universities. It paves some of the ways of improving language skills, student dynamics for the improvement and dimensions of language teaching and learning.

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### Acknowledgement:

This research acknowledges the contribution of UGC research grant 2022-23 by the Pabna University of Science and Technology (PUST).