

Problems Associated with the Use of Communicative Language Teaching in EFL Contexts and Possible Solutions

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Abstract

If the target of foreign language teaching is to use the language, communicative language teaching (CLT) seems to be an ideal teaching model. The goal of teaching with this method is to use the language as a medium of communication (Adi, 2012). The application of the communicative approach in teaching English as a foreign language, however, is associated with some problems that can cause the method turn out not to be so much successful and the learning outcome not to be efficient enough. This paper mainly intended to evaluate the problems that may lead to the failure of communicative language teaching in EFL contexts and some possible solutions for such problems. Awareness of these problems and the possible remedies can be helpful for both EFL teachers and learners, providing them with insightful ideas about how to manage their teaching and learning activities for the successful implementation of this method.

Keywords: communicative approach, foreign language teaching, EFL contexts, remedies, teaching model

In the field of second language acquisition, there are many theories about the most effective way for language learners to acquire new language forms. Recently more language teachers have noticed the failure of form focusing approach in developing learners' communicative ability in real-life situations and have shifted to adopt the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach. The CLT approach highlights learners' communicative competence (Hymes, 1972), which is defined as learners' ability to efficiently express what they mean in the target language and successfully achieve communications in real-life situations (Lightbown and Spada, 1999; Power, 2003). In order to do so, learners not only need to acquire the linguistic but pragmatic knowledge of the target language (Hedgcock, 2002).

It is suggested that competence, both linguistic and pragmatic, is the knowledge developed and acquired through exposure and use of the target language (Kasper, 1997). Based on Richards and Rodgers (2001:155) both American and British proponents now see it as the most comprehensive approach and a method that aims to (a) make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and (b) develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication.

Its comprehensiveness thus makes it different in scope and status from any of the other approaches or methods known so far (Kalanzadeh and Bakhtiarvand, 2011).

The rationale of the CLT approach is that the teacher should act as a facilitator to create a student centered classroom and engage learners in authentic-like and meaningful communications with the goal to increase comprehensible language input for learners and expect them to generate more output (Huang and Liu, 2000, cited in Norouzi Larsari, 2011). Teachers, therefore, need to design learning tasks with clear objectives and consider what learning tasks or materials are to benefit students' acquisition of both the target linguistic and pragmatic knowledge (Chapelle and Hegelheimer, 2004).

The application of communicative language teaching (CLT) to English as a foreign language (EFL) context has recently been debated extensively. Although the CLT approach attempts to involve learners in more authentic and interactive learning tasks that promote both comprehensible input and learners' language output, teachers still find it difficult and challenging to adopt the approach and maximize the learning; especially in EFL classrooms.

Numerous attempts have been made to introduce CLT to EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts, both on the EFL countries' own initiatives and through international aid projects; however, these attempts often turned out not to be as successful as when used in ESL contexts (Ellis, 1994, 1996; Shamin, 1996; Valdes & Jhones, 1991). In EFL classrooms, although teachers now have gradually adopted approaches that focus on meaning and language use, the learning outcome is still not efficient enough. For this reason, the authors attempted to provide a comprehensive list of difficulties and problems EFL learners and teachers may experience implementing this method in EFL classes.

Review of Literature

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a cover term for a number of approaches that developed in the 1970s in critical reaction to audio-lingual teaching methods and their unsatisfactory results. They all criticize the mechanistic nature of audio-lingual pattern drills which fail to prepare learners for a productive use of the target language in the many different communicative situations of everyday life. The common goal of communicative approaches is communicative competence (Power, 2003).

A number of reports in the literature deal with CLT innovations in EFL contexts. Many have proposed that most EFL teachers have found it challenging to use CLT. For instance, Burnaby and Sun (1989) reported that teachers in China found it difficult to deploy CLT. The constraints cited include the context of the wider curriculum, traditional teaching methods, class size and schedules, resources and equipment, the low status of teachers who teach communicative rather than analytical skills and English teachers deficiencies in oral English and sociolinguistic and strategic competence.

In the year 2003, Iranian pre-university English course underwent a reform. The principal goal was to propose a shift away from the long-established grammar-translation curriculum practice towards teaching for communicative competence. The stated goal was to make pre-university English language instruction more communicative. The major justification was that English should be used communicatively by the learners preparing themselves for university entrance and not just learned about.

Ghanbari and Ketabi (2011) conducted a research study, evaluating perceptions of Iranian pre-university teachers regarding the different components of this new curriculum, i.e. attitude, methodology, practice, etc. The findings of research study revealed that there are some stumbling blocks that seriously affect the aims of this curriculum innovation to be fulfilled in Iran as an EFL context. These blocks involved: The lack of feasibility, triability, and compatibility of the new method with existing values and practices, lack of enough

appropriate training and retraining courses, teachers' low confidence in the new approach, practical constraints, unsupportive school environment, and negative feedback from colleagues, school officials, students, state evaluation centers, etc.

Many other studies and researches have also shown that it is not that much easy for the teachers specially the EFL teachers to utilize CLT as an asset to reach the final goal of language teaching in their context with their students. Based on a study that assessed the attitudes of Hong Kong educators toward using CLT in the local context, Chau and Chung (1987) reported that teachers used CLT only sparingly because it required too much preparation time. A study conducted in Vietnam identified class size, grammar-based examination, and lack of exposure to authentic language as constraints on using CLT (Ellis; 1994).

Li's (1998) article on the cultural constraints in introducing the CLT in South Korea points to a number of Asian EFL countries where CLT has been used with limited success—China, Hong Kong, Japan, Vietnam, Pakistan, Singapore and the Philippines. A research by Gahin and Mayhill (2001) showed two roadblocks in the application of CLT in Egypt. First are extrinsic barriers covering economic factors which include low wages, lack of resources, and large classes without adequate facilities; pressure from parents, students, principals, and supervisors cause teachers to sacrifice an ideal CLT syllabus. Second are intrinsic barriers covering cultural factors which include passive-student traditions, negative-to-group-work attitudes, and influences of colleagues in other, teacher-dominated subjects. Deckert (2004) found that the failure of the application of CLT in the United Arab Emirates was caused by excessive teacher talk and teacher and student perceptions about effective English teaching. Observations showed that excessive teacher talk in explaining to and correcting students causes them to miss opportunities to actively participate using English in communication.

As this brief review reveals, CLT as the most known comprehensive approach in language teaching has proved difficult to be implemented on the part of teachers of English as a Foreign Language. Some of these problems that are considered to be more common in the majority of EFL contexts will be discussed in more detail in this article.

Problem Sources

EFL learners have low intrinsic motivation to communicate in foreign language

Since the emergence of CLT the only group of people having difficulty using it are not the teachers. Students are also to be taken into account in this case. An important question to ask is do EFL students need to speak English and communicate in this language. In a setting where English is a foreign language, students usually learn with low intrinsic motivation; English may be deemed irrelevant with students' needs because the language is not part of their everyday life. On the other hand, in a setting where English is a second language, students have high intrinsic motivation because the language is a part of everyday life. By living in a second language environment, students have a higher chance to use the language whether to communicate with others or for professional needs, as in searching for a job ([Adi, 2012](#)).

Without an English-speaking environment, motivation becomes more a product of curricular demands, pressure from exams, and academic and professional success, instead of demand for communication. As Widdowson (1998) perceived, the English language teaching that takes communicative competence as the invariable goal doesn't fit in the EFL contexts where learners' engagement in social interaction with native English speakers is minimal (Wei, 2011).

Stern (1992) argued that one of the most difficult problems in making classroom learning communicative is the absence of native speakers. Apparently, CLT are more successful in English as a Second Language (ESL) context because students have the motivation to work

on oral English because they need it in their lives. In contrast, in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, due to some physical limitations, such as the purpose of learning English, learning environments, teachers' English proficiency, and the availability of authentic English materials, CLT meets much more difficulties during its application.

Sano and Harmer (2001) for instance, point out that the Japanese students they studied generally did not feel pressing need to use English, therefore the goal of communicative competence seemed too distant for them. Unlike ESL learners who need to use the TL in everyday life for surviving in the target culture, EFL learners generally do not have adequate access to the TL outside of the classrooms and normally return to the real world speaking their mother tongue as soon as they leave the classroom (Campbell, 2004).

Without a clearly established need or goal, students without a specific personal interest in speaking English will lack motivation. While there are long-range needs for the students--from abstract ones such as the broadening of one's social perspective and more concrete ones such as English for business purposes--students are not likely to be conscious of these needs, especially with the more pressing need of passing entrance exams (Poza, n.d.), and when this need evaporates after entering university, so will the motivation to maintain the skill and to expand upon it.

CLT teaching method is not compatible with University Entrance Exam

The impact of a test on teaching and learning is commonly referred to as the washback effect. The structure of University Entrance Exam (UEE) plays a very significant role in determining the teaching methodology and materials used in EFL contexts. EFL teachers are under the pressure of UEE to change the way they teach in the classroom.

For instance, as stated by Ghanbari and Ketabi (2011) the structure of University Entrance Exam (UEE) in Iran that values grammatical learning above language knowledge and communication negatively affects the CLT English course. In fact, UEE has a determining role in the whole program. The most important thing in high school education is to help students pass the University Entrance Exam. So, the teachers are obliged to emphasize grammatical and reading skills, rather than communication. They teach most of the textbooks according to GTM; moreover, they pay more attention to those components of lessons like vocabulary and grammar, which are tested in UEE not other connected parts. UEE has also its influence on the students. Students study English just to pass the Exam. It really dictates learners what to seek for in the text-book and what to expect their teachers.

Entrance exams, via their power to determine the course of students' lives, have become the focal point of education in many EFL contexts. Since one's career is often determined by which university one attended, and since the university one attends is determined by these exams, students and their teachers mainly attend to the vagaries of the tests, focusing their energies on answering the questions as they are expected to be answered. Since the majority of these exams focus on assessing aspects other than communicative ability, they would negatively affect the CLT methodology, no matter how hard the teacher may try to apply CLT principles (Poza, n.d.).

CLT lacks clear cut assessment procedures

Assessment is considered as one of the major challenges of communicative language teaching. Norris and Ortega (2000) distinguished four types of measurement:

- Metalinguistic judgment (e.g., a grammaticality judgment test)
- Selected response (e.g., multiple choice)
- Constrained constructed response (e.g., gap-filling exercises)
- Free constructed response (e.g., a communicative task)

Free constructed responses are best elicited by means of tasks. Task-based performance can be assessed either by means of a direct assessment of task outcomes or by external ratings. The former is possible only with tasks that have a single correct outcome. An example would be a spot-the-difference task, where learners are asked to interact in order to find a specified number of differences in two similar pictures. In this task, assessment would consist of establishing whether the learners were able to identify the differences. External ratings involve assessing different qualities of a task performance such as accuracy, complexity, and fluency. Considerable expertise is required to ensure that the ratings are valid and reliable. However, a great number of EFL teachers do not have such a skill, so they prefer to adhere to the traditional methods with their standardized, objective tests that mainly measure learners' knowledge about language (Ellis, 2008).

One other major difficulty is the fact that most of our standard tests emphasize the objectivity nature of our scoring and evaluation procedures, something that does not seem to be very reasonable in CLT (Kalanzadeh and Bakhtiarvand, 2011). Evaluating oral skills would also require one-to-one interviews, calling for a great deal more time and manpower and increased difficulty in evaluation consistency. Performance anxiety might also increase relative to written exams, especially if foreign examiners are used.

CLT is not always compatible with EFL home culture and values

One of the implementation problems of CLT is that the approach is not always appropriate with the socio cultural context in which it is used. Culture is often considered as a barrier in creating a communicative form of English learning in EFL contexts. Rogers and Everett (1971) claim that an innovative method has a far better chance of being accepted if it can be seen to be compatible with existing values and practices (Lamie, 2004). In adopting CLT in foreign language learning, teachers and policy makers are likely to accept implicitly and subconsciously certain assumptions concerning their pedagogical roles and goals as cultural guides (Talebinezhad & Aliakbari, 2001). The hidden but inescapable assumption is that meaningful language use is culture bound and culture specific.

In the EFL setting, the home culture and the EFL classroom/textbook cultures are very often at odds, and the values and teaching methods presented in class are alien and therefore often unappreciated. The culture in many EFL contexts (collectivist societies) is one that has a long tradition of unconditional obedience to authority. The teacher is seen not as a facilitator but as a fount of knowledge, which is delivered without any concession to students and which students 'struggle to attain' (Holliday, 1994).

In such cultures, the centrality of the teacher is the culturally and socially sanctioned basis of teaching (Edge, 1996). The teacher is the authoritarian purveyor of knowledge, one to lead and to draw matters to a correct conclusion. An authoritarian, cold and unproductive classroom climate to a westerner may not be perceived that way by the participants of a collectivist society. There, hierarchy determines the nature of teacher–student interaction, which is facilitated by mutual respect. First names and physical proximity can make things uncomfortable and unfamiliar. The world outside and the classroom may be paradoxically at odds (Chowdhury, 2010). Biggs (1997) refers to 'the inside/outside rules' of class participation: 'Student talk is "outside" (inappropriate) when inside the classroom, but "inside" when outside the classroom'. This type of primarily didactic, product-oriented and teacher-centered (Liu, 1998; Zhenhui, 2000) tradition is incompatible with CLT methodology.

Liao (2004) adds that the Asian cultural context assumes the teacher as the central figure that must be honored and that students must passively listen to the teacher. This general Asian culture prevents genuine communication from happening in class, making it a hindrance in the application of CLT. The formal relationship between teacher and student

where the teacher is assumed to be a superior, omniscient figure while the students are a group of individuals who must obey and receive the teacher's explanations as they are clearly will not create a communicative learning environment. The high-considerateness nature of Asian communicative patterns where students are not encouraged to interrupt, must respond positively, and speak in a flat intonation, also make it less likely for communicative interactions to occur in language learning.

Learners of different cultures also have different learning styles. These learning styles can influence the successful implementation of communicative language teaching either positively or negatively. For instance, Zhenhui (2001) in *Matching Teaching Styles with Learning Styles in East Asian Contexts* states that in East Asia, most students see knowledge as something to be transmitted by the teacher rather than discovered by the learners.

Cultural constraints inhibit the communicative competence of these students and limit the choices they could make elsewhere. It appears from the above discussion that the problem lay not so much with the competence of students as with the overall cultural orientation to the academic atmosphere. The students want the teacher to be an information provider and if you are not one, it is sometimes taken as if you don't know much, and that's a part of our culture. It all comes down from the family image because even at home there is someone who is really the head of the family and it is this concept that has also come down to the classroom and the students see the teacher as their guardian, one who would truly guard them and give them all their answers to their questions and queries (Chowdhury, 2010).

There are not enough teacher training courses to promote awareness of teachers

Teachers have a constructive role in the development of better curricula. The precondition for this effective participation is to have dynamic teacher training courses which would help teachers learn the 'how' of change in progress. Awareness raising is an important issue in any process of change or innovation. Teacher training courses have an important role in creating situations to facilitate reflection and contemplation for the teachers as important agents of change (Lamie, 2004). Teachers in many EFL classes are typically not required to have any special TESOL certification or training in linguistics. In-service teacher training courses along with conferences, workshops and seminars can be quite effective in promoting the awareness of teachers. Through involving teachers in teaching practice activities, they could learn the realities directly from the context.

The literature of change theory abounds with the assumption that change is a painful process (Fullan, 1991; Pinar, 1999). The resentment and resistance that teachers feel towards external attempts to impose change (Goh, 1999) must be compounded when no discussion or collaboration takes place (Fullan, 1991; Hadley, 1999). Easen (1985, p.71) comments that imposed change itself will not be successful, unless the process of personal change is also considered. Even those teachers who are willing to change, however, must be given the support to do so, as Li (2001) suggests and Carless (1999, p.23) confirms: 'Without sufficient retraining, even teachers initially enthusiastic about an innovation can become frustrated by problems in implementation and eventually turn against the project'. Teachers, who have been professionals in the traditional methodology of Grammar-translation, may be suddenly faced with the communicative apparatus and be asked to implement it in their routine classroom activities. Such an abrupt transition dramatically affects their confidence and subsequently leads to the adoption of some conservative attitude in their teaching (Ghanbari and Ketabi, 2011).

One problem is that these in-service training courses are few in number in many EFL contexts or the teachers do not have enough opportunity to attend them. Moreover, the theory-transmitting nature of these courses in some EFL contexts prevents teachers to practically experience teaching in the new program: In-service training courses bombard the

teachers with theories mostly adopted from western status quo knowledge of the practice. They do not come down to the realities of the particular EFL context. Therefore, it demands the change initiators to mediate the methodologies derived from the western societies and philosophical paradigms according to the realities of the context they aim to create change.

Creating the right kind of interaction is a major challenge for teachers

The CLT approach attempts to involve learners in more authentic and interactive learning tasks that promote both comprehensible input and learners' language output. Students develop their language proficiency by having opportunities to produce comprehensible output. Classroom activities in which students work together in pairs or small groups to complete some task allow for more student-generated talk (Crandall, 1994; Echevarria, Vogt & Short 2004; Glaudini Rosen & Sasser, 1997; Grabe & Stoller, 1997). However, creating the right kind of interaction for acquisition constitutes a major challenge for teachers. From among the learners who participate in the interaction, only some of them engage in meaning negotiation. The others simply listen. Even when acquirers do talk, they do not often make the kind of adjustments the comprehensible output hypothesis claims are useful in acquiring new forms.

Pica (1988) concluded that instances of comprehensible output were "relatively infrequent" (p. 45). In her study of ten one-hour interactions between low level ESL acquirers and native speakers (teachers), only 87 potential instances of comprehensible output were found, that is, interactions in which the native speaker requested "confirmation, clarification, or repetition of the NNS utterance" (p. 93). These 87 interactions contained only 44 cases in which the non-native speaker modified his or her output (about four per hour), and of these 44, only 13 modifications involved grammatical form, about one per hour. Such situation could be even severe in the case of EFL context where the majority of interactions is limited to learner-learner interactions.

Output and especially comprehensible output is too scarce to make a real contribution to linguistic competence. A problem all output hypotheses have is that output is surprisingly rare (Krashen, 1994). In the case of comprehensible output, the problem is especially severe. Comprehensible output in response to requests for clarification is usually quite infrequent. Moreover, there is additional evidence that "pushing" students to speak is unpleasant for them. When asked what aspects of foreign language classes are the most anxiety-provoking, students put "talking" at the top of the list (Young, 1990). Laughrin-Sacco (1992) reported that for students in beginning French classes, "for nearly every student speaking was the highest anxiety-causing activity" (p. 314). Although all aspects of using and learning a foreign language can cause anxiety, listening and speaking are regularly cited as the most anxiety provoking of foreign language activities (Horwitz; Horwitz ; Cope, 1986 ; MacIntyre, Gardner, 1994).

CLT compared with other approaches places greater demands on the teacher

EFL teachers are usually reluctant to accept the communicative approach because of the heavy demands made on them. As stated by Medgyes (1986), CLT places greater demands on the teacher than certain other widely-used approaches. Because it is a student-centered approach and not a teacher-centered approach, the teacher has to accept extra responsibilities both before and during the class. Lessons tend to be less predictable; teachers have to be ready to listen to what learners say and not just how they say it, and to interact with them in as 'natural' a way as possible; they have to use a wider range of management skills than in the traditional teacher-dominated classroom.

In addition, non-native speakers of English probably need a higher level of language proficiency or rather, a different balance of proficiency skills - to be able to communicate

with ease, and to cope with discussing a broader range of facts about language use than they are accustomed to. Non-native teachers may be already immersed in the audio-lingual approach, a system which is set in such a consolidated state that it is very difficult to free themselves from the constraints, thus making the problem and the sense of burden all the more palpable.

Other problems and constraints

One of the outcomes of the CLT implementation that may not be welcomed by many EFL teachers is that student-centered classrooms may appear “chaotic.” However since the learning process, or the construction of meaning, requires interaction with others, it will inevitably result in some “noise.” A classroom during a communicative activity is far from quiet, however. The students do most of the speaking, and frequently the scene of a classroom during a communicative exercise is active, with students leaving their seats to complete a task (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). The activity, noise and physical dislocation can be unsettling and chaotic to a traditional teacher. As students work in groups and share materials, moving in and out of peer groups, the classroom can easily become a messy place when desks and benches are pushed together (Strelec, 2010). Many EFL learners are not used to such noisy, chaotic classes. Large size of classes in EFL contexts can make the situation worse.

One of the other problems most often recognized is the fact that the teachers of English courses themselves usually cannot speak English well. It goes without saying that this creates a great deal of difficulty if the objective of the class is to teach students how to speak the language (poza, n.d.). The level of student competence and the corresponding failure on their part to adjust to learner-centered teaching also appears to be a major problem. To accomplish this, instructors must limit their teacher-talk (the time the instructor spends talking in the classroom) and create more opportunities for students to produce spoken and written language during their lessons. As Echevarria et al. (2004) have noted: It can be particularly tempting for teachers to do most of the talking when students are not completely proficient in their use of English, but these students are precisely the ones who need opportunities to practice using English the most (p. 103).

The feedback process can also strongly affect the innovative method. In case of negative reactions to the classroom practices, the innovation process might come to an end. Positive evaluation of the changes, on the other hand, can encourage the continuation of the change process. The feedback can come from colleagues, school officials, students, state evaluation centers, etc.

Possible Solutions

CMC can be brought into language learning and teaching

Insufficient access to the target language both inside and outside of the classroom in EFL contexts certainly is an obstacle that negatively affects students’ communicative need and motivation. Nevertheless, with the advent of computer mediated communication technology, ways of communication and learning have been efficiently changed (Leh, 1999; Cheon, 2003). By bringing CMC into language learning and teaching, the interaction pattern can be changed. Proponents of CMC suggest that teachers can encourage a greater amount of interactions by using CMC tools both inside and outside the classroom (Blake, 2000; Blin, 1999; Leh, 1999, Warschauer, 1997). Learning is no longer restrained in time and space, through the internet, learners are offered opportunities to communicate and learn collaboratively with learners worldwide (Kern, 1996; Shield and Weininger, 2004). EFL learners do not need to passively listen to audio tapes alone after class; through the use of the internet and CMC tools they can easily participate in more interactions by posting and

replying messages on discussion boards, writing and replying emails to their keypads, or joining online chat rooms whenever suitable. Learning becomes a 24 hour process. This new way of learning that engages learners in authentic social interactions can greatly expose learners to the target language and enable them to practice what they have learned in the classroom (Blake, 2000; Campbell, 2004, Leh, 1999, Lightbown and Spada, 1999).

Researches on computer-assisted language learning (CALL) propose that the integration of CMC into EFL learning can provide learners with more authentic input and more opportunities to participate in the target socio-cultural contexts; both linguistic and pragmatic knowledge can be promoted. Moreover, motivation, learner autonomy, social equality, and identity can also be encouraged through the use of CMC inside and outside of the classroom. Further research of whether EFL learners' communicative competence can be fully developed with the help of CMC tools still needs to be done. However, for EFL learners who desperately need more authentic exposure and the opportunities to use the knowledge learned in the classroom, the use of computer mediated communication tools both inside and outside of the classrooms certainly can benefit the learning and develop learners' communicative competence to a certain extent.

More natural, real needs should be set for learners

Many EFL learners have the need to pass university entrance examinations, but this is a poor need to focus one's education on. It is artificial and temporary. So, it is better to help learners set more natural, real needs. As established earlier, many students will have to use English in their future careers. To make this fact more immediate and real to the students, perhaps the teaching materials should be changed to reflect these specific needs. Data could be gathered from real people who use English in their careers, and integrated into lesson plans in addition to travel, correspondence and other potential uses already recognized. Perhaps students themselves could be asked to consider what other possible uses they would have for language, and lessons could be shaped around their perceived needs (Poza, n.d.). Usually conducting a needs analysis is the common practice for setting goals to identify what students' needs, wants and expectations are.

Teachers should be given the opportunity to attend regular training

English EFL teachers presently employed should be given the opportunity to improve their skills. In order for these teachers to make progress, they must be given what they need to make it work. Schools will have to make serious commitments toward giving teachers the time and opportunity to attend training regularly, and, if possible, sabbaticals to study abroad. In-service teacher training courses along with conferences, and workshops can greatly help EFL teachers to deal with the innovation and change of methodology. The educational system should also provide the teachers with enough opportunity to attend these in-service training courses because the majority of teachers do not attend such courses due to the lack of enough time. Moreover, teachers with greater English speaking skills and TESOL qualifications should be given priority in new hirings.

Teaching methods appropriate to the local EFL context should be developed

The majority of EFL teachers are faced with the problems and contradictions when adopting CLT as it is a methodology mainly developed for western countries. Despite its initial claim to be appropriate an approach for EFL situation, CLT seems to be more suitable for ESL situations (Ellis, 1994, 1996; Shamin, 1996; Valdes & Jhones, 1991). To indicate this fact Edge (1996:18) points out that it seems necessary that rather than relying on expertise, methodology, and materials controlled and dispensed by Western ESL countries, EFL countries should strive to establish their own research contingents and encourage

method specialists and classroom teachers to develop language teaching methods that take into account the political, economic, social, and cultural factors' and most important of all, the EFL situations in their countries. They should also devise teaching methods, appropriate to their learners, their colleagues, and their societies (Kalanzadeh and Bakhtiarvand, 2011).

CLT should be adapted to the realities of the EFL context

EFL teachers who adopt CLT can justify their teaching to learners and the specific learning situation they are faced with. CLT cannot be seen as a panacea for the problems that have been. There isn't a fix framework of CLT. As learners and the learning contexts are dynamic, when CLT is applied to a certain context, the adaptation and innovation of it is necessary (Blake, 2000). Li (1998) emphasizes the flexibility that CLT offers-contrary to popular misconception, he suggests, CLT is not defined and practiced within cautious perimeters. He recommends that EFL countries should adapt rather than adopt westernized forms of CLT, meeting the immediate needs and recognizing the local constraints.

Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

The aim of the present paper was to evaluate the problems that could lead to the failure of communicative language teaching in EFL contexts and to provide some possible solutions for such problems. The main problems mentioned were related to the lack of compatibility of this method with university entrance exams, the existing cultural values in EFL contexts and EFL learners' need and motivation. Compared with other methods and approaches, CLT activities are more difficult to design and implement and place greater burden on EFL teachers. Not only the implementation, but also the assessment of this method seems to be difficult for EFL teachers who are usually used to clear-cut assessment procedures. Considering the perceived difficulties in utilizing CLT demands and what the EFL situation in many countries allows, it can be concluded that such problems need to be resolved if CLT is to be successfully implemented in EFL contexts. Awareness of such problems can provide EFL teachers and learners with insightful ideas about how to manage and, if required, to change their teaching and learning activities for the successful implementation of this method.

This study, like almost all studies done in the field of teaching English as a foreign language, is not free of limitations. There exist of course some other problems and possible remedies that have not been mentioned in this article. Basically, due to the eluding nature of CLT which is defined differently by different people one cannot claim to come to an absolute conclusion about the problems associated with using CLT in EFL contexts.

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