

EFL Teachers' Perceptions on the Usefulness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

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Abstract: The aim of the study is to examine EFL teachers' perceptions on the significance of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. It has been a challenge for EFL teachers to choose a suitable method of language teaching to meet the learning objectives and outcomes of the English courses taught in schools and colleges across the globe. CLT method has shown the way to follow some strategies and techniques to achieve primary aims of English Language Teaching (ELT). English Language Teaching is practiced in EFL context with the application of applying the variety of methods i.e. Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, Structural Method, Audiolingual Method, and Communicative Language Teaching approach, etc.

Keywords: Communicative Approach, EFL, ELT, Methods, Techniques, Strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was introduced in 1970s. The demand of teaching and learning English has created immense opportunities for people around the world. A huge number of people want to improve their communication skills to survive in the global market. CLT has served the demand of learning and teaching of English for many decades as a major source of influence on language teaching practice across the world. In addition, language teaching has seen many changes in past fifty years. Up to late 1960s, traditional approaches were followed for the language instruction. The classic communicative language teaching was followed from 1970s to 1990s and the current communicative language teaching is in practice since late 1990s till today. [1]

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Communicative approach can be defined in a variety of ways. They are as follows; "The communicative approach, is an approach to language teaching that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of study" [2] "The communicative approach is based on the idea that learning language successfully comes through having to communicate real meaning. When learners are involved in real communication, their natural strategies for language acquisition will be used, and this will allow them to learn to use the language." [3] "The Communicative approach also emphasizes the ability to communicate the message in terms of its meaning, instead of concentrating exclusively on grammatical perfection or phonetics. Therefore, the understanding of the second language is evaluated in terms of how much the learners have developed their communicative abilities and competencies." [4]

Communicative Language Teaching is a set of principles about teaching including recommendations about method and syllabus where the focus is on meaningful communication not structure, use not usage. In this approach, students are given tasks to accomplish using language instead of studying the language. *The syllabus is based primarily on;*

- Functional development,
- Not structural development.
- In essence, a functional syllabus replaces a structural syllabus.

- There is also less emphasis on error correction as fluency and communication become more important than accuracy.
- Authentic and meaningful language input becomes more important as well.
- The class becomes more student-centered as students accomplish their tasks with other students, while the teacher plays more of an observer role.

The features and principles of CLT:

- Focus on meaning.
- Communicative competence is the desired goal.
- Learner-centered.
- Fluency is the primary goal.
- Students are expected to interact with other people, either in oral practice, through pair and group work, or in their writings.
- Dialogues, if used, center on communicative functions.
- Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in what is being communicated by the language.
- Task-based.

Principles:

- The communicative principle: Activities that involve real communication promote learning.
- The task principle: Activities in which language is used to carry out meaningful tasks promote learning.
- The meaningfulness principle: Language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process.

Advantages and disadvantages of communicative language teaching:

There are some advantages of CLT;

- **The interaction between students and teachers:** Communicative teaching is becoming increasingly clear feature is the change in the way as the internship; students develop the subject, initiative and become increasingly important. Teacher-student relationship is an interactive, harmonious relationship, rather than the traditional education, the kind of master-servant relationship.
- **To inform the basic knowledge and ability to skillfully combine the development:** Traditional classroom teaching of English in the main body of the expense of home study, only emphasized the teachers on the knowledge of the systematic and integrity, which is a teacher-centered, knowledge-centered from the medieval "scholastic" teaching methods inherited One consequence of the neglect of student ability. The communicative teaching emphasizes the learner's cognitive ability and operational capabilities, which allow the students themselves to think about and express their views, thus trained in real life the ability to use language to communicate.
- **Greatly improved the student's interest:** Communicative teaching students to participate in, sometimes accompanied by scenes or simulated scenarios, so that students more close to life, the students became the main character, naturally they were interested in the English language, to learn English as a pleasure.

Disadvantages of CLT:

There some disadvantages of CLT;

- It is felt that there is not enough emphasis on the correction of *pronunciation* and *grammar error*. It is because too much focus on meaning at the expense of form.
- CLT approach focuses on fluency but not accuracy in grammar and pronunciation.
- The CLT approach is great for intermediate student and advanced students, but for Beginners some controlled practice is needed.
- The monitoring ability of the teacher must be very good
- Grammar Teaching Practices make application of this approach difficult.[5]

The Roles of Teachers and Learners in the Classroom:

The type of classroom activities proposed in CLT also implied new roles in the classroom for teachers and learners. Learners now had to participate in classroom activities that were based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning. Students had to become comfortable with listening to their peers in group work or pair work tasks, rather than relying on the teacher for a model. They were expected to take on a greater degree of responsibility for their own learning. And teachers now had to assume the role of facilitator and monitor. Rather than being a model for correct speech and writing and one with the primary responsibility of making students produce plenty of error-free sentences, the teacher had to develop a different view of learners' errors and of her/his own role in facilitating language learning. (Richards, 2006)

3. METHODOLOGY

A survey was conducted to investigate and analyse the relevance of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in EFL context. Total 43 EFL teachers participated in the online survey and shared their perceptions on the significance and implementation of CLT in English language classroom. The research greatly depends on the data collected from the teachers employed in different schools and colleges of Abu Dhabi, UAE. Observation, interaction with EFL teachers, and internet have also been source of collecting information for appropriateness and authenticity of the study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

It has been found in the study that 88% teachers use CLT in the classroom and only 12% teachers follow other approaches or methods to teach English language as shown in Fig.1

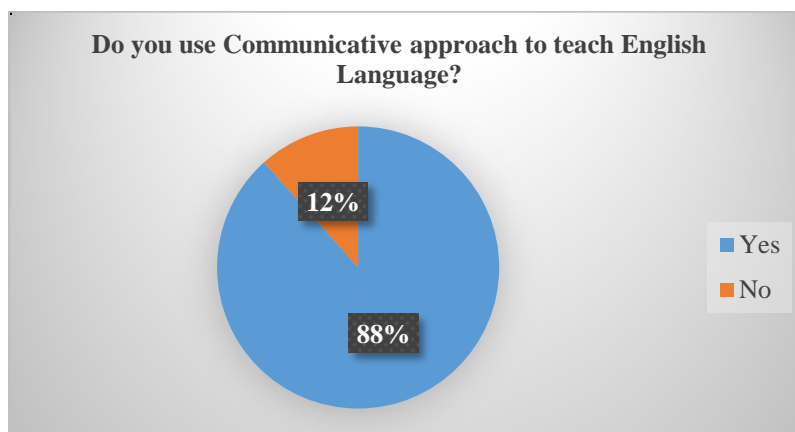


Fig. 1

84% teachers think that they are adequately prepared for teaching English by CLT approach and only 16% teachers disagree and say that they are not prepared to teach English by CLT approach as shown in the Fig. 2

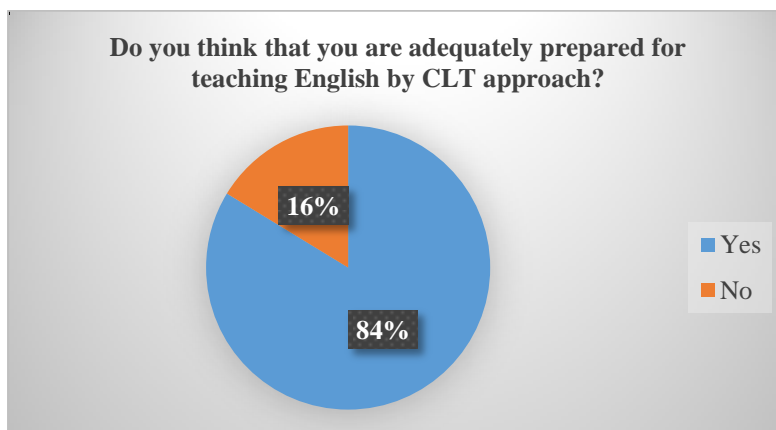


Fig. 2

70% teachers agree that they conduct activities in English language classrooms by CLT approach and 30% teachers do not conduct any activity for teaching English as shown in Fig. 3

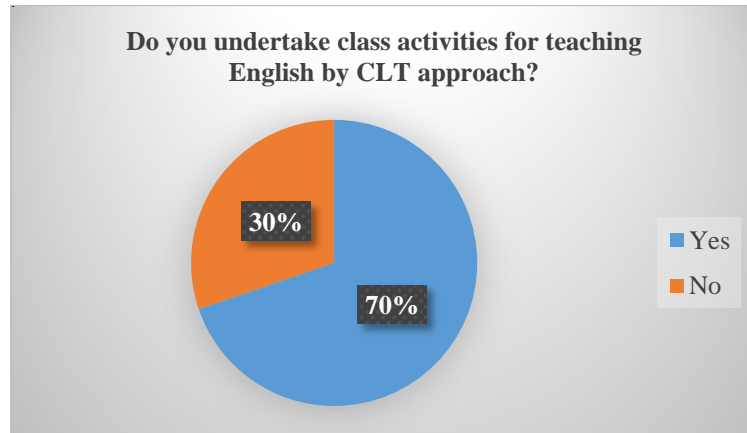


Fig. 3

93% teachers agreed that they get good response from the students for conducting class activities and only 7% teachers disagree with the notion as shown in Fig. 4

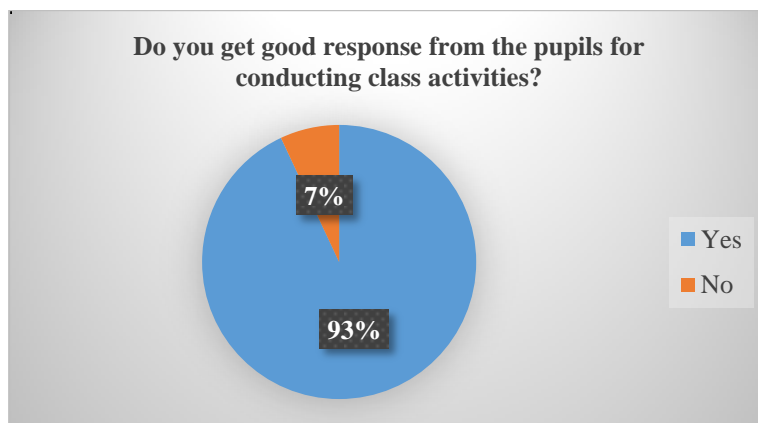


Fig. 4

79% teachers think that communicative approach is useful for developing integrated skills (LSRW) of English language. Only 21% teachers think that the approach does not help in developing language skills as shown in Fig. 5



Fig. 5

58% teachers get pre-service training to use Communicative Approach but 42% teachers did not get any initial training for application of CLT as shown in Fig. 6



Fig. 6

Teachers have also given their response for the suitability of textbooks; 81% teachers think that the textbooks are properly designed to fulfil the objectives of CLT whereas 19% teachers do not agree with the statement that textbooks fulfil the objectives of CLT as shown in Fig. 7

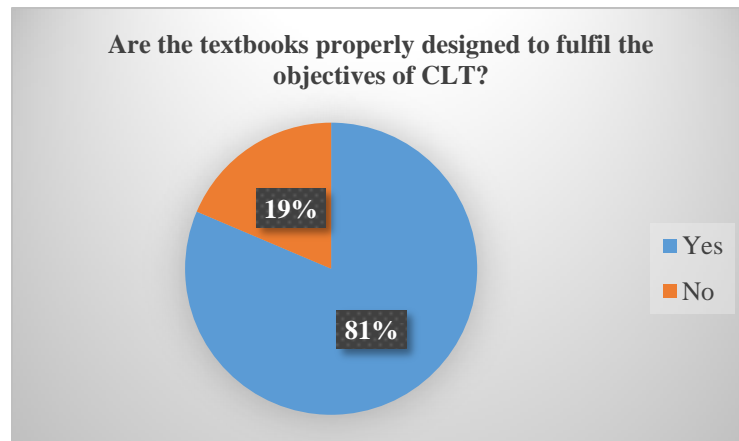


Fig. 7

72% English teachers think that the schools have sufficient instructional materials to use for CLT whereas 28% teachers realised the scarcity of instructional materials to use for CLT as shown in Fig. 8

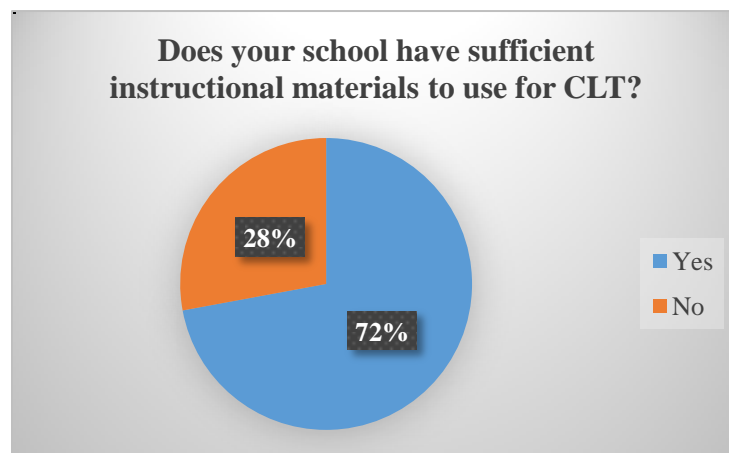


Fig. 8

86% teachers agree that Communicative approach is more time consuming than the traditional methods of language teaching whereas 14% teachers realised that it is not time consuming as shown in Fig. 9

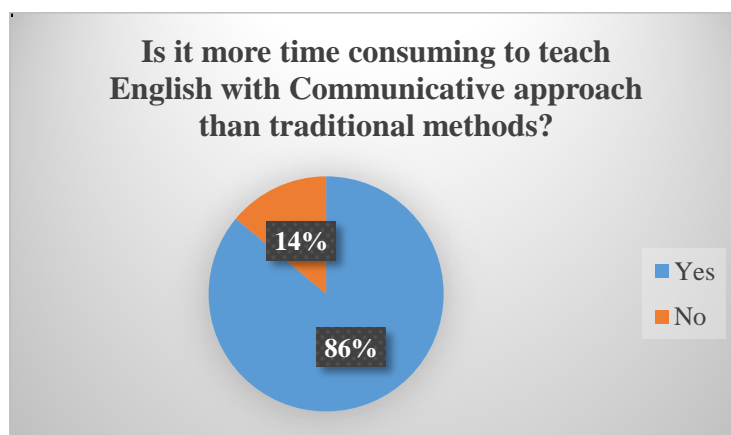


Fig. 9

As shown in Fig. 10 that 93% teachers like teach English with Communicative Approach. Only 7% teachers do not like to apply CLT in their language classroom.

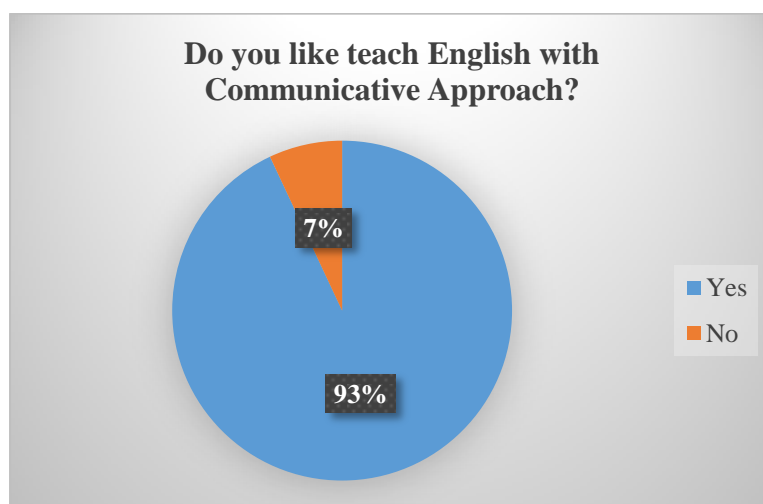


Fig. 10

5. CONCLUSION

It has been found in the study that most of the English language teachers agree that CLT is highly useful approach for teaching English language. It has also been observed that most of the teachers like CLT approach for teaching English language. They endorsed use of Communicative approach over traditional methods. The English teachers find CLT approach more convenient as they find sufficient instructional materials to use for teaching and conducting activities. The teachers also get good response from the students as Communicative approach is learner-centered. The only recommendation is to be made in this study is about pre-service training; most of the teachers do not get sufficient training for the use of CLT and they lack in implementation of this learning centered approach.

REFERENCES

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- [5] <http://citraenglish.blogspot.ae/2013/07/teories-of-communicative-language.html> accessed on 09.05.2016

APPENDIX - A

Teachers' Questionnaire		Total Respondents=43	
S. No.	Questions	Yes	No
1	Do you use Communicative approach to teach English Language?	38	5
2	Do you think that you are adequately prepared for teaching English by CLT approach?	36	7
3	Do you undertake class activities for teaching English by CLT approach?	30	13
4	Do you get good response from the pupils for conducting class activities?	40	3
5	Do you think Communicative Approach is useful for developing LSRW?	34	9
6	Did you get pre-service training to use Communicative Approach?	25	18
7	Are the textbooks properly designed to fulfil the objectives of CLT?	35	8
8	Does your school have sufficient instructional materials to use for CLT?	31	12
9	Is it more time consuming to teach English with Communicative approach than traditional methods?	37	6
10	Do you like teach English with Communicative Approach?	40	3