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## **Communicative Language Teaching Approach at Higher Secondary Level in Bangladesh – Teachers' Perceptions and Classroom Practice**

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Md. Khaled Bin Chowdhury

## Abstract

Communicative Language Teaching is highly advocated by many applied linguists and English language teachers as an effective language teaching approach. But, the implementation of CLT in English as Foreign Language (EFL) contexts has encountered and has been encountering a huge number of difficulties. These difficulties vary widely from country to country. The difficulties are rooted in the economic, socio-cultural and education system in the EFL countries. Teachers who are in the implementation process of this teaching approach do also uphold perceptions, beliefs and expectations about CLT, some of which are either right or wrong. These perceptions and beliefs have direct impact on their teaching practice in the classroom. The goal of this research is to investigate the higher secondary level teachers' perceptions and expectations about CLT in the higher secondary education in Bangladesh. Another outstanding goal of this study is to identify the discrepancies between the teachers' perceptions of CLT and the real classroom practices at the said level. However, the finding of this study can be applicable to secondary level ELT education as well. The participants in this study are 5 higher secondary level EFL teachers. The instruments used to elicit data for this study are written questionnaire and semi-structured interview. It was found that teachers have correctly identified the principles of CLT and the communicative activities. They however, uphold some misconceptions about the principles of CLT. Huge mismatch was also identified between the perceptions and real classroom practices which happen owing to the practical reasons. It was also found that teachers' right perceptions of CLT do not help them in their classroom practices. On the other hand, the misconceptions have a debilitating impact on them. So, this study recommends a happy marriage between the innovative ideas of this Western teaching approach and socio-cultural realities in the EFL countries.

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## Chapter-1

### 1. Introduction

Communicative Language Teaching approach, a language teaching methodology which came into prominence in the 1970s, was not followed in Bangladesh for a long time. In Bangladesh communicative language teaching was introduced in 2001 from class vi, that is, from high school level up to class xii or higher secondary level. CLT as a teaching approach is yet to get all -out support from the ELT teachers here. There is mixed feeling among the majority of Bangladeshi teachers about CLT. Until recently the majority of the secondary and higher secondary English textbooks were mainly a collection of prose and poetry with a supplementary grammar book in which grammar items were presented structurally with almost no interactive exercise which the majority of teachers felt comfortable to work with. However, with the adoption of CLT the course books had changed.

In Bangladesh The National Textbook Board got course books written by experts trained in CLT methodology in the UK .These course books are now being followed compulsorily from class vi onward. The average age of the learner is 11 to 12 years. These books have communicative activities like problem solving, describing pictures, role play, conversation to be done in pairs and groups. The Textbook Board in its ELT policy (preface, English for Today classes 11-12) comments that a range of tasks and activities are designed to enable students to practise the different skills sometimes individually and sometimes in pairs or groups. Course books of different classes (vi to xii) outline CLT as the motto of the course and keeps communicative activities in them almost in every unit either in the form of pair work or group works. But, the fact is that ELT teachers bypass these activities and attribute this avoidance to various social, cultural and logistic constraints. The common perception and excuse for avoidance of pair work and group work are that they are impossible to execute in a large class because they may contribute to classroom disorder. However, there might be more reasons for teachers' not doing these communicative activities.

Another perception is that it is against the conventional cultural notion of ideal teaching. In this connection, it can be said that in many countries CLT is thought to be a Western ELT Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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methodology which is not compatible with the local culture. So, there is challenge against the superiority of CLT in many EFL countries. The assumption about the superiority of CLT have been challenged by many authors who argue that CLT, in reality, has caused difficulties, problems, frustrations, dissatisfaction, tensions and confusion for many language teachers and learners around the world.(Gupta2004; Hu,2005;Le 2001; Rao, 2002; McKay, 2003).They also argue that in a big monolingual class it is useless to put students in interactional activities because teachers cannot monitor whether they are using L1 instead of the target language. The lack of teacher training in communicative activities or the CLT may also be a strong reason.

As an ELT teacher in tertiary level for many years, it appeared to me that large class size might be one of the factors for teachers' avoiding international activities and just giving form- focused teacher centered ELT class. But, is this the major reason for teachers' avoiding interactive communicative activities? So, it will be investigated if there are other more strong factors and if there is relation between teachers' perceptions about CLT and their avoiding the communicative interactional activities. There will also be an attempt to see how far the teachers' classroom practices vary from their perception about CLT.

This dissertation investigates five participating higher secondary English teachers' beliefs, perceptions about the Communicative Language Teaching approach and the real classroom practices of these teachers. It is seen that teachers' beliefs and classroom practices always do not actually correspond. Moreover, it is seen from previous research (Burnaby & Sun1989; Ellis, 1994; Fox, 1993; Gamal & Debra, 2001; Li, 1998; Mustafa, 2001; Penner, 1995; Tompson, 1996) that teachers have widely differing perceptions of the features of CLT for curriculum and instruction. It is also observed that though the principles and theories of CLT are almost universal all over the world, beliefs and attitudes about the theory are not consistent. So, I deem it important to survey the experiences, attitudes and expectations of teachers. And consequently this research would identify probable causes of problems and the current limitations of the ELT education in the higher secondary level of Bangladesh.

It has been observed that in spite of many years' efforts to acquire the communicative competence in English and learning of English in schools and colleges, Bangladeshi students are not competent enough to do the communication in English. Majority of the secondary and higher secondary English teachers in Bangladesh receive graduate and post-graduate education in English. In spite of that, English teaching standards in Bangladesh could not make any successful and effective contribution to the learning and use of English in Bangladesh. Improved curriculum design that incorporates new and effective approaches to language instructions is fundamental to developing the quality of English language learning and teaching. CLT, the language teaching approach that has got worldwide recognition and use as an ELT method was introduced in Bangladesh to cope with the world English learning scenario. But, there was resistance from teachers against its implementation and it is believed that this new method could not do its work properly. So, I attempt to explore the beliefs of the participating teachers about the principles of CLT and their real classroom practices that might inform the concerned people about the do-ables in this regard.

## Chapter-2

### 2. Literature Review

Communicative Language Teaching is a powerful theoretical model in ELT and is recognized by many applied linguists and teachers as a useful approach to language teaching. Communicative Language Teaching approach that has its origin in the early 1970's in Britain, spread throughout the world within a short span of time. Many research has been conducted to investigate if the Communicative Language Teaching approach, a Western innovation can be applied to and followed as a language teaching method in English as a Foreign Language context. (Burnaby and Sun, 1989; Ellis, 1996; Li, 1998; Xiaojun, 1984).

Most of the above-mentioned research focuses on the problems that teachers come across while applying Communicative Language Teaching approach in the Outer Circle and Expanding Circle countries. Most of the problems identified are spotted in the education system, teachers' misconceptions about CLT, infra structural facilities of the institutions, socio-cultural factors, the traditional examination system, and large class size.

In this chapter, I will try to define the Communicative Language Teaching approach and its characteristics. An attempt will also be made to identify what communicative activities in the CLT mean. I will also explain why CLT, a product of the ESL countries, cannot be successfully applied in EFL countries like Bangladesh.

#### 2.1. Definition of Communicative Language Teaching approach

A huge number of books and papers have been written to define the characteristics of CLT. (Cannale, 1983; Cook 1991; Littlewood 1981; O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Richards & Rodgers 2001; Rivers, 1987). The main concept of the CLT is expressed by the desire for developing the communicative competence among learners. The development of communicative competence is vital to real L2 learning.

Littlewood (1981) highlights the importance of interaction in acquiring communicative competence. He says that CLT pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural

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aspects of language, and hence combines these to a more fully communicative view(p.1).CLT advocates to go beyond the teaching of grammatical rules of the target language and recommends that learners will develop communicative competence by using the target language in a meaningful way. Interaction is the means to use the language in a meaningful way.

Larsen –Freeman (2001)consider interaction as the prerequisite to language learning .To her language is for communication and in a communicative class everything is done with a communicative intent. (p.132). Students learn a language through communicative activities. Larsen –Freeman also observes that language games, such as, card game, scrambled sentences, problem solving tasks, such as, picture strip story, and role play activities that match the principles of communicative approach are integrated in a CLT classroom.

Richards and Rodgers (2001)illustrate that ‘the emphasis in communicative language teaching on the process of communication rather than mastery of language forms, leads to different role for learners from those found in more traditional second language classrooms’(p.166). Learners are thought to be active participants in the language classroom. So, Brown (2001) ascribes the following role to the learner:-

Students in a communicative class ultimately have to use language, productively and receptively in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom. Classroom tasks must therefore equip students with the skills necessary for communication in those contexts. Students are therefore encouraged to construct meaning through genuine linguistic interaction with other.(p.43).

Communicative Language Teaching approach has assigned many roles to learners. Breen and Candlin comment the learner’s roles in Communicative Language Teaching in the following terms.”The role of learner as negotiator - between the self, the learning process, and the object of learning-emerges from and interacts with the role of joint negotiator within the group and within the classroom procedure and activities which the group undertakes. The

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implication for the learner is that he should contribute as much as he gains, and thereby learns in an independent way.”(cited in Richards and Rodgers,.2001:166).

CLT highlights the learner-centred teaching. According to Savignon(1991),”communicative language teaching has become a term for methods and curricula that embrace both the goals and the processes of classroom leaning, for teaching practice that views competence in terms of social interaction”(p.263).So, CLT provides the learners with the opportunities to experience language through communicative activities. Communicative activities help to acquire communicative competence.

While teaching in the CLT, teachers have to consider the various roles that CLT has ascribed to teachers. According to Breen and Candlin (1980),”the teacher has two main roles: the first role is to facilitate the communication process between all participants and various activities and texts. The second role is to act as an important participant within the leaning –teaching group”(p.99). Brown (2001) offered six characteristics as description of CLT. Among them the following one is about teachers:

The role of the teacher is that of facilitator and guide, not an all-knowing provider of knowledge. Through pair work and group work CLT promotes the collaborative and cooperative learning. CLT calls for equal relationship between teachers and students. Instead of the authoritative role of teacher, CLT treats teacher as co-communicators, a needs analyst, an organiser of resources, a facilitator of procedures and activities, a negotiator, and a learner. Activities in the CLT are often carried out by students in small groups(Larsen-Freman1986).CLT also favours interaction among small numbers of students in order to maximize the time each student has in order to learn to negotiate meaning. Teachers use learning activities to engage their students in meaningful and authentic language use rather than in the merely mechanical practice of Language patterns. Accordingly, CLT syllabus is designed in keeping the communicative intent in view.

Instead of grading and sequencing language syllabus on the basis of structures from easy to complex, the CLT syllabus is determined by the consideration of themes, function meaning and /or tasks. There is a strong emphasis on the exposure to the target language through large Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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quantities of input to and output from learners and this can maximize opportunities for negotiation and interaction between teachers and students and among students themselves. And such negotiation and interaction are believed to be vital process in the acquisition of a target language.

To sum up, CLT encapsulates -

- (1) The development of communicative competence.
- (2) The development of communicative skills through interaction between students-students and teachers-students.
- (3) Learners' participation and the minimum of teacher control and teacher talk for effective language learning.

## **2.2. Pedagogic Model of CLT**

The pedagogic idea of communicative language teaching derives much from the idea of communicative competence. CLT aims to facilitate the development of this communicative competence. A language is learned best when the learners are engaged in real communication. The CLT proposes that students should talk to one another and share one another's thought and feelings and also advocates a non-threatening collaborative and group atmosphere. CLT advocates a kind of social climate where the relationship between teachers and students change gradually from one of dependence to one of independence. That is why, Communicative Language Teaching emphasizes:

1. Use of peer teaching and small group activities.
2. Notion-functional activities within a prevailing structural framework.

CLT uses peer-mediated instruction and role playing activities. Teachers try to find new and better ways of getting students to help each other. Students' involvement and self-direction are of paramount importance in the CLT. In the classroom students are provided with opportunities to use language. Classroom activities facilitate the creative use of language by students. As communication is the main purpose of language, the proponents of CLT believe that fluency precedes accuracy in the CLT.

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Communicative interaction among students themselves or between teacher and students are very important for language learning. The key idea of the CLT is to provide the learners with rich exposure to natural language in the classroom. A rich and natural language classroom ensures an active environment for the students. Littlejohn (1985) says:

We now realize that a healthy classroom is one in which learners are active and here teacher talk is reduced to a minimum. A considerable amount of time is spent devising talk that requires learners to work in groups to role play, to fill in charts and to give their personal opinions and generally to engage in more oral work. Learners are to pretend realistic context for language use, and they are asked to interact in that pretended context.

In communicative language teaching 'feedback 'on learners' performance is provided in such a way that learners can sub-consciously test hypothesis about the target language. CLT ignores error especially at the initial stages of teaching and learning so that the fluency of the learners is not hampered. In this way CLT offers opportunities for communication and requires the teacher to give up control of the teaching /learning process to the students because in CLT error correction is considered a hindrance to language learning.

To sum up, CLT calls for pedagogy in which there is non-threatening learning environment without teachers' interference; teachers are facilitators, not merely the providers of knowledge; collaborative learning in the form of pair work and group work; learners are active participants and error correction is obstructive, not supportive to learning.

### **2.3. Communicative Technique in the Classroom**

The archetypal communicative technique is an information gap exercise. The point of the activity is that the students have to improvise the dialogue themselves to solve their communicative task. They have to use their own resources to achieve a communicative goal with other people, thus bringing communication directly into the classroom. The second standard communicative technique is guided role play. The students improvise conversation around an issue without the same contrived information gap. The aim is practising how to assume particular roles in situations. The third technique is tasks; students carry out tasks in

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the classroom with a definite outcome. Any task that entails any kind of interaction in pairs or groups may be communicative provided that students are working together to achieve that task and find out solutions.

#### **2.4. English as a Foreign Language in Bangladesh**

It is essential to discuss the position of English in Bangladesh if we want to examine the appropriateness of the CLT in Bangladesh. Before that we need to see the difference between the EFL and ESL contexts for the teaching of English. The next section of this literature review gives a description of both ESL and EFL environments. Although both EFL and ESL refer to the teaching of English to non-native speakers, ESL takes place within an English – speaking environment. This scenario indicates students learning English in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand etc. where English is the primary language of interaction, communication, education, business. Ellis(1996,p.215) distinguishes ESL and EFL contexts and states that ESL is integrative, in that it is designed to help individual function in the community ,EFL is part of the school curriculum, and therefore subject to contextual factors such as support from principal and the local community, government policy etc. It is also dependent on the teacher’s language proficiency, teaching resources, the availability of suitable materials....For ESL students language leaning is part and parcel of survival and growth.(Ellis 1996).Another characteristic of ESL situation is that students in the ESL classes do not share the same L1 thus helping to the greatest urge for learning and practicing the target language. This culturally heterogeneous classrooms leads to higher motivation and faster adaptation of learning strategies.(Ellis,1996).In such a situation a teacher is simply the facilitator of learning. On the other hand, EFL contexts do not have English –speaking environment.EFL teachers are the only source of the target language. In an EFL environment learning is teacher-centred. Examples of EFL learning countries are Bangladesh, Japan, China, Saudi Arabia. Here English is not the only medium of instruction. Bilingual education system prevails there. Students have the exposure to the target language only during the class hours in a limited way. The main purpose of learning English is to pass the examination. Students mostly resort to the mother tongue for interaction. The motivation for learning English also varies greatly from person to person.

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The environment in which learners learn English is very important to assess the students' motivation for and success in learning. Another important factor is the cultural appropriateness of a language teaching method in a given society. In most parts of the world, English learning and teaching is done in a traditional way where there is the minimum of learner participation and interaction in the classroom. On the other hand, CLT requires student participation for proper learning of English.

These differences in EFL and ESL contexts should be considered while implementing CLT in EFL situation. Most scholars are of the view that second language acquisition research and second language teaching is not transferrable to foreign language contexts. A good number of research has been done about the non-adoptability of CLT, a product of ESL country in EFL contexts. (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Fox, 1993; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999).

## **2.5. Communicative Language Teaching Worldwide**

Some studies have emphasized the local necessity and the particular English teaching conditions in the EFL countries and the importance and success of traditional language teaching methods (Bhargava, 1986; Sampson, 1984, 1990) and some have strongly advocated the adoption of CLT in EFL countries (Li, 1984; Prabhu, 1987). But, the majority of studies have recognised the difficulties EFL countries face in adopting CLT. Ellis investigated the appropriateness of CLT in Vietnam. The problems that were discovered in Vietnam are related to the teachers' maintenance of deep-rooted tradition. The problem, according to Ellis was due to two traditional practices, the cultural reluctance of the Vietnamese to challenge written words, and the focus on grammar and translation in the examination system. It was also revealed that the Vietnamese teachers believed that they did not have necessary knowledge of target language culture and CLT is culturally incompatible with the Vietnamese culture and education system. In that study Ellis concluded that "although there is a strong demand for communicative competence in Vietnam, it is not matched by adequate teacher training, communicative language materials and suitable learning environments" (p.69) It was suggested that "the way of making communicative approach culturally acceptable to the Vietnamese is in keeping with their own cultural values embedded and reflected in the language they use" (p.71). Ellis (1994) had doubt about the Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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universal relevance of communicative approach in Far- Eastern countries. He argued that the Western idea that ‘communicative competence shares the same priority in every society(p.216) may not be true and so asserted that communicative approach needs to be culturally attuned and accepted’ to make it suitable for Asian situation(p.213).Hence he suggests a kind of “mediating ‘’ between the Western and Eastern teachers and integration of the two teaching methods to make language teaching successful in EFL countries.

Another study was conducted by Li with 18 South Korean secondary English school EFL teachers studying at a Canadian university to identify their perceived difficulties in adopting CLT. All participants answered a written questionnaire and 10 were also interviewed. In Li’s study the difficulties as reported by the South Korean students were created by four factors: 1.the teacher.2the students.3.the education system itself and 4.the L1 itself.(Li,1998,686-695)). The four categories were later subdivided into other subcategories:

1. Difficulties caused by Teachers:

a) Deficiency in spoken English. b) Deficiency in strategic and sociolinguistic competence. c)Lack of training in CLT d)Misconception about CLT e) Little time for and expertise in material development.

2. Difficulties caused by students:

a)Low English proficiency b) Little motivation for communicative competence. c) Resistance to class participation .

3. Difficulties caused by the education system:

a) Large classes b)Grammar-based examination. c) Insufficient funding d)Lack of logistic support.

4. Difficulties caused by CLT Itself:

a) CLT’s inadequate account of EFL teaching b) Lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments.

So, the Korean study as shown by Li pin pointed the following problems: educational values and attitude, reading, oral skills, grammar, students’ attitudes, teacher’ attitudes, pre-service teacher education which posed problems for adopting CLT in South Korea.

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Gorsuch(2000) investigated Japanese teacher's approval of communicative activities. Eight hundred and eighty four Japanese senior high school EFL teachers participated in the study and they answered an extensive questionnaire through a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was the main source of data for the study, which involved a series of questions on teaching activities. Based on the data of the study, Gorsuch concluded that teachers were largely influenced by the requirements of the university entrance examination. As the university entrance examination was crucially important in students' lives, both the institution and the students put pressure on teachers to allow them to study materials needed for the examination. Gorsuch also found that majority of teachers preferred a more traditional way of teaching and were opposed to the new teaching method of the CLT. Another factor was the use of target language. Teachers did not use the target language in the classroom which they believe was not wise to use in high school without the explicit direction from the teachers.

Studies were conducted in China about the suitability of CLT there. Burnaby and Sun(1989) report that teachers in China found it difficult to use CLT. The constraints cited include the context of the wider curriculum, traditional teaching method, class sizes and schedules, resources and equipment, the low status of teachers who teach communicative rather than analytical skills and strategic competence. Anderson's (1993,p. 19) study of CLT in China report the following problems as barriers to the implementation of CLT. They are lack of properly trained teachers, lack of appropriate texts, and materials, students' not being accustomed to CLT. Penner (1995) investigated the Chinese language classroom and said that Chinese classroom culture "restricts pedagogical change advocated by foreign agents"(p.1) She showed how it is difficult to change the classical traditional approach of language teaching and implement modern approach in China. She felt that as there were "discrepancies in educational theory, roles, expectation, methods, material use and structural concern", a new Chinese way needs to be found out (p.12).Penner also mentioned about the teachers' beliefs in their lack of English knowledge. Liao (2000) pointed out three difficulties in the way of successful application of CLT in China: They are 1)No familiarity with the new method.2) The negative influence of educational tradition on teachers and 3) Lack of target language culture knowledge.

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According to Liao, language and culture are closely related in CLT and the knowledge of culture helps positively in acquiring and using language for real communication. But the fact, Liao comments, is that most Chinese teachers not only lack English proficiency but also cultural knowledge. So, Liao suggests that teachers acquire high level of target culture knowledge to make CLT application successful in China. This view is, of course, similar to teachers' belief in Ellis' article where the Vietnamese teachers also believed that they did not have necessary knowledge of target language culture and this lack of knowledge led to their misconception about CLT in Vietnam.

Mustafa (2001) undertook a study to investigate the issues regarding the English instruction reform initiative of the Indonesian Ministry of Education. From the investigation he identified the real situation of communicative approach to teaching English in Indonesia. He found out that communicative approach in Indonesia could not make students competent in the use of English for real life purposes. What he identified as the real barriers to the learning of English by the Indonesian students are related with EFL situation. Certain situations in Indonesia are not conducive to the use of English in everyday life. He identified the following factors as problems for the application of CLT in Indonesia. Firstly, teachers have lack of confidence in using the language before their class, that is, lack of English language proficiency; the second factor is the time constraint that limits students' social interaction in the classroom; the third problem is the large classroom. The next one is the focus of examination (form focused nationally administered test). The next factor is the absence of good, authentic learning materials. Teachers' emphasis on teaching grammar and syntax is also a formidable problem. Another important factor is the lack of use of English outside the language classroom. As a result, communication- based instructional materials had lost their pedagogical value in Indonesia and that impedes the adoption of CLT in Indonesia.

Kirkpatrick (1984, cited in Li, 680-681) studied the implementation of CLT in Singapore. He found that the grammar-based English language syllabus makes the English teaching situation complex and the local use of CLT challenging. Gonzalez (1985, cited in Karim, Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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2004) studied CLT in Philippine's rural areas and found English instruction there as irrelevant to the population's need, as people there seldom used English. Shamin(1996) identifies learners' resistance, among other problems, as a barrier to her attempt to introduce innovative CLT methodology in Pakistani English classroom. The studies done outside Asia about CLT find varying problems in its implementation. Valdes and Jhones(1991 cited in Li,681)) report difficulties such as ' teachers' lack of proficiency in English, their traditional attitudes towards language teaching , the lack of authentic materials in a non-English speaking environment, the need to redesign the evaluation system, and the need to adapt textbook to meet the needs of communicative classes'. Efforts to offer a communicative approach to the teaching of English in KwaZulu ,South Africa ,met with pervasive resistance on the part of teachers and students to adopt the more egalitarian, de-centralised ways of interacting associated with CLT(Chick, cited in Li ,681).

To sum up, the above –mentioned studies done across the world mention some economic, socio-cultural, logistic problems in the way to implementation of CLT in EFL countries. The further problems as mentioned in these studies are rooted in the traditional education system, cultural values, such as, teacher-student relation.

## **2.6. Studies conducted regarding CLT in Bangladesh**

Some important studies on the application of CLT In Bangladesh has been conducted.(Chowdhury&Ha,2008),(Karim,2004),(Hasan,2004),(Farooqui,2006)(Shahidullah, 2007).There are mixed opinions about the application and suitability of CLT in Bangladeshi EFL context. Karim conducted a survey among 36 post secondary ELT teachers in six private university of Bangladesh to investigate into their beliefs, perception and expectations about CLT. Karim's studies manifest many positive opinions by the participating teachers. The findings as described by the researcher suggest the fact that the participating teachers did not support some of the common misconceptions about the CLT. There is a misconception prevailing among the Bangladeshi teachers that CLT requires a good proficiency of the teachers. But, Karim found that the majority of teachers opined that lack of teachers' proficiency is not a problem. The respondents identified students' lack of proficiency as a problem.(82). The studies reported that 50% of teachers believed the misconception that CLT

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requires a lot of time from teachers for preparation of lesson. The other barriers identified by the respondents are large class size, inadequate resources in the classroom, immovable furniture in the classrooms, traditional teacher—centred grammar teaching method, traditional grammar-based examination, lack of support from the administration, lack of teachers' training, lack of oral fluency of the teachers, teachers' lack of time to prepare communicative materials, lack of authentic materials and audio visual materials .

Chowdhury & Ha (2008) conducted a study with six Bangladeshi university teachers. The study was done on the basis of qualitative research through unstructured interviews with the participants. The respondents identified some misconception about the CLT as powerful barriers to the adoption of CLT in Bangladesh. One respondent said that teachers do not encourage learners to participate in communicative activities. Another respondent identified traditional teacher- student relationship as a formidable hindrance to the adoption of CLT. In Bangladesh a teacher has a father image which gives the teacher an unquestionable and authoritarian role in classroom. A respondent suggested that mediating between CLT and traditional grammar translation method will be a wholesome choice for Bangladeshi ELT situation.

The studies done about the CLT in Bangladesh identified the following problems. They are large class size, teachers' lack of fluency, lack of teachers' training in CLT, traditional grammar based examination and teacher-student relationship.

## **2.7. English Language Teaching In Bangladesh**

Though there are efforts by the government of Bangladesh to improve ELT scenario at the Secondary and Higher Secondary levels, there are serious failures and limitations in that enterprise. At present it is seen that the prevalent instruction in English in Bangladesh is inadequate for global communication. Though students are passing out from schools and colleges, they are not competent enough to carry on communicative activities because of lack of communicative skills in English. But, the communicative competence is the key to success for participation in any affairs inside and outside the country.

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In Bangladesh English is formally introduced to students from the age of six that is, grade-1 at primary level in public sector schools. There is a class for English ranging from 30 minutes to 50 minutes per class six days a week. That is, one paper of English is taught as compulsory subject from level -1 to level- 7. From level 8 to 12 there are two English papers in each level. This system has been going on since 1972, the next year Bangladesh became independent. CLT was introduced in 2001. Before the introduction of CLT, English was taught in the traditional way, that is, the Grammar-Translation Method.

Many learners take instruction in English from private language institutes. Students doing courses in private language institutes are more proficient in English than those learning English only from regular educational institutions. (The British Council, Dhaka Website Education in Bangladesh, 2002).

No pre-service training is required for teachers to teach at the primary level. High School Certificate holders are eligible to teach at primary level. A graduate degree is the minimum requirement to teach at Secondary level and post graduation is essential to teach at the higher secondary level.

To sum up, even after many years' of learning, students are not competent in English. Majority of Bangladeshi English teachers are not properly trained in teaching language teaching, let alone CLT.

## **2.8. Communicative Language Teaching Approach in Bangladesh**

As a result of globalisation and the increasing demand of competent users of English, English as a language has got added value among the people. Consequently, ELT as a profession has also got increased attention. To improve the quality of ELT CLT had been introduced to cater to the worldwide fashion and teachers have been being encouraged to follow this approach. To facilitate the implementation of CLT in Bangladesh, batches of senior English teachers were sent overseas-almost exclusively to the English-speaking West-for further training. But, the fact is that at all levels of education the grammar translation method is still followed in Bangladesh. There is conflict between the policy –level expectation and actual practice (Chowdhury 2008, p. 306). Grammar explanation, vocabulary memorization and translation of de-contextualized sentences were in practice in ELT pedagogy. The higher Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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secondary English textbook/course book had mainly prose and poetry with a supplementary grammar book for paper – 2 in which grammar items were presented structurally with no interactive exercises. The only activities included writing paragraphs, essays, personal letters and job applications.(Chowhury.2008,p.306).In examination only the writing and reading skills were assessed and speaking and listening skills were not tested. However, these latter skills are not still tested in the prevailing CLT pedagogy. So, it is seen that the Grammar – Translation method could not make the learners communicatively competent.

As the English courses being taught in schools and colleges could not meet the need of the learner to improve their skills, reform in ELT was introduced in the late 1990s. The government with the cooperation of foreign organisations sought to introduce major changes in English language education in the secondary and higher secondary level. In 2000, the English Language Teaching Improvement Project(ELTIP) which was funded by the Bangladesh Government and by the United kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) introduced communicative textbook up to the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) level. Chowdhury & Farooqui discuss how the ELTIP, jointly run by the British Council, Dhaka and the National Curriculum and Textbook Board attempted to improve the quality of ELT in secondary and higher secondary education across the country. This new curriculum was a complete departure from the previous teaching method. This method was student-centred and aimed at helping students acquire ‘communicative competence’ through interaction and practice of skills in the classroom. Textbooks for the first time were written by Bangladeshi teachers and those were culturally compatible and familiar.(Chowdhury307).To provide well-structured training program, ELTIP gave training to secondary teachers through 27 centres across the country. ELTIP trained teachers so that they could make the best use of the newly written communicative textbooks with a view to developing the four language skills of the learners. DFID funded two phases of the ELTIP –(1997-2001), and after DFID left in 2002, ELTIP had been funded by NCTB and seven Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education . The total number of teachers trained are almost 3,50,000, but, in a huge unitary education system this resulted in insufficient impact. ELTIP had two objectives:(1)to produce CLT-based English textbooks for grades 9-10 at the secondary level and grades 11-12 at the higher secondary cycle, and Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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(2)to train school teachers and empower them to teach communicative English(Paul,2004;Hamid 2005;NCTB,2001,2003;Rahman,2007,cited in Hamid and Baldauf,2008). So, to continue the development of ELT training in Bangladesh, DFID started another project called ‘English in Action’ from May, 2008 which will continue up to May, 2017. The assignment is a nine-year program that will equip up to 30 million Bangladeshi with English language skills to allow them to participate more effectively in economic activities. Hamid & Baldauf(2008) say, “Introducing English at the earliest grade possible (since1991,Yasmin,2005) and going communicative’ (since1997,Hamid,2005) were two recent English language teaching policy initiatives to develop Bangladeshi human capital”. They add that the communicative approach was a corrective intervention because even after many years of schooling ‘our students are very weak in English and as a result, they can not apply English in their practical life successfully’(NCTB,2003,P.3). CLT was expected to revitalize these ‘weak’ learners’ ability to learn English by ‘improving the standard of teaching and learning English at different levels of formal education’(ibid). According to two –page government evaluation report(DSHE,2004), as of 31 October,2004,11,737 secondary school teachers have been provided with a 13-day CLT training within the first two phases of ELTIP. But, the Higher Secondary teachers did not get that 13 -days’ training. They were given only 1 day’s training which majority of teachers believed did not bring any considerable changes in their teaching practice. Again, many teachers even did not join the 1-day training program. What they have is some theoretical knowledge of CLT. In spite of these changes and efforts to improve the condition, classroom teaching seems to adhere to the old ‘chalk and talk drill method’ (Pandian, 2004, as cited in Little wood, 2007,p. 246).

To say in brief, CLT was introduced in Bangladesh to cater to the increasing demand of communicatively competent users of English. But, the fact is that ELT is still in its traditional fashion, Grammar-Translation method. Teachers have the theoretical knowledge of the principles of CLT, but lacks practical experience. Teachers are not adequately trained in CLT, but course books in the CLT were floated. So, it is seen that CLT was introduced without adequate preparation.

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## Chapter - 3

### Context

CLT is in effect in all classes from six to twelve in secondary and higher secondary levels. The level 11-12 chosen for my research is higher secondary which comprises class eleven and twelve.

### 3.1. The Teacher

The teachers who are participants in this research are five in number. They have been teaching the course for the last five to sixteen years. They have post graduate degree (M.A.) in English Literature. Some of them had a few modules in English Language Teaching. They have the theoretical knowledge of CLT. They have been using the textbook written in CLT for the last 10-11 years.

### 3.2. The Course book

Though Higher Secondary ELT education spreads over two years of the HSC program, i.e. class xi and xii, NCTB prescribed book 'English For Today' which is followed compulsorily in class xi. In class xii there is no particular course book, but the NCTB has prescribed some books and the syllabus contents are grammar and composition. The Chairman of NCTB in the preface to the book English For Today says that, the book is based on the principle that had guided the writing of the English For Today books from class 6 onwards- the principle of learning a language by actually practicing it. The practice which is carried out through the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing, usually in an interactive mode, underlies the communicative approach to language learning.

As the focus is on the communicative functions of language, the main aim of the textbook is to provide ample opportunities for students to use English for a variety of purposes in interesting situations. The book is divided into units. Each unit, based on a theme, has several lessons that contain reading texts and a range of tasks and activities designed to enable students to practice the different skills, sometimes in pairs or groups. This communicative approach to learning English is familiar to the students of classes 11 & 12 who have already used the English For Today textbooks from class 6.

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It is very often seen that though the course book contains communicative activities for interactional activities in the classroom, the classes are rather non-communicative or teacher-centered where the traditional ‘teacher initiation-learner response-teacher follow up’ interaction patterns happen. They do not ultimately lead to communicative environment in the classroom. In Bangladesh ELT teachers still follow the grammar explanation, lecture-based, memorization -oriented ELT pedagogy. The same is true about the ELT classes in the higher Secondary level.

### **3.3. Communicative Activities in the Course book**

The course book is replete with plenty of communicative activities. In each lesson there are three to four communicative activities, such as pair work, group work, problem solving and communicative games. For the convenience of classroom management which is, however, a practical reason because in Bangladeshi ELT classes, there are sometimes as many as two hundred students in a class, there is more pair work than group work. It is seen from this section that course book is written following the communicative Language Teaching approach .There are communicative activities in very lesson of this course book.

## Chapter-4

### 4. Research Questions

Communicative Language Teaching is a widely practised language teaching approach. But, there is mixed feeling and reaction to it among people in various socio-educational contexts. In view of the requirements that CLT places on learners as well as teachers, there is much to be asked about the ability to adapt this approach to EFL settings. Teachers have widely different perceptions of the features of CLT for curriculum and instruction. The issues which facilitate or hinder the implementation of that methodology are different from one national context to another. The attitudes and experience of teachers about CLT are not consistent as well. So, it is important to know about the perceptions and feelings of the Bangladeshi higher secondary teachers to investigate why CLT is not warmly accepted by them and if those perceptions have direct bearings on the classroom practices. That is, are the classroom practices in conformity with those beliefs and perceptions?

On the basis of the literature review, the following research questions have been formed to investigate the matter:-

Research questions or propositions are:-

1. What are the perceptions of the participating higher secondary English language teachers about the principles of Communicative Language Teaching Approach?
2. What are the perceptions of the participating Higher Secondary ELT teachers about the communicative activities in the classes?
3. What are the problems with using CLT in Bangladeshi higher secondary ELT classes?
4. How do they describe the role of teachers in language classroom in Bangladesh ?
5. How do they describe the role of learners in language classroom in Bangladesh?
6. What are the difficulties in using this textbook?
7. How frequently do they use the communicative activities of the textbook in the class?
8. In what technique do they teach grammar?

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9. What are the mismatches between the perceptions of these teachers about CLT and the real classroom practices in the higher secondary English classes?

## Chapter-5

### 5. Methodology

This study aims to investigate the participating teachers' beliefs and perceptions about CLT and their real classroom practices. It also aims to see why these discrepancies happen. This section focuses on the approach and procedure that have been used to investigate the topic of this study.

The research relied mostly on teachers' self-reported feelings, personal beliefs and experiences about the use of CLT in Bangladeshi ELT classroom. A descriptive and interpretative analysis of the data was done. The collected data are qualitative. Qualitative research is based on a variety of sources. Commenting on the benefits of qualitative research, Marshall and Rossman(1999,p.60) say one of the reasons for selecting it is to stress the unique strengths of the genre for research that is exploratory or descriptive. Moreover, qualitative research draws mostly on multiple sources and on people's views and opinions of specific experiences. The sources used by this researcher are questionnaires for teachers, face-to-face semi-structured interview with five higher secondary school ELT teachers done mainly for the clarification of some questions. The teachers selected are from government colleges. They were selected on the basis of my familiarity with them. However, they have varying level of experience ranging from 5 to 16 years. Four of them are from government colleges in city and one is from a college in rural area. All the teachers have M.A degree in English Literature with one or two modules in ELT methodology. Though they do not have any degree in ELT, they have a little orientation to CLT in the form of a short one – day training in CLT.

The course book the teachers use is 'English For Today' for classes xi-xii. This course book is not only locally produced, but also has materials that are locally relevant and culturally familiar. The book has interactional activities like pair and group discussion, problem-solving, role-play. The age level of the students is between 17 and 18. They had already learned English following the course books in CLT method for the last five years.

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I chose questionnaires for the reason that they save time and contain detailed desired information and exclude all unnecessary information (Brown and Rodgers, 2002). The questionnaires include both open-ended questions and questions with fixed alternatives. The advantage of closed questions is that they usually make the questionnaire easier and quicker to fill in. They also make the quicker and more reliable scoring of the responses.(Wallace1998,p.135).And the corresponding advantage of open questions is that they are comparatively easy to design and yield a huge number of unexpected but interesting data. The questions are classified according to (1) demographic, such as, age, year of experience, their training in CLT (2)attitudinal, such as, opinion ,belief about CLT, opinion about the importance of CLT in Bangladeshi higher secondary ELT classes, importance of communicative activities in language classes and (3)pedagogic, such as, their knowledge about CLT, advantage and disadvantage of CLT as a method, their idea about the importance of the speaking as a skill, and if they ever tried communicative activities in the class and if not why not, rating their use of communicative activities in the class. Teachers were asked to rate their opinions on questions like what they thought caused difficulties or might be the cause or causes of difficulties in adopting CLT in Bangladesh on a scale from 1 to 3, with (1) indicating ‘no problem’,(2) ‘manageable problem’ and (3) indicating ‘major difficulty’. Questions for this purpose include opinions such as, 1.large class size.2.teachers’lack of sufficient spoken English competence.3.studets’low level of English proficiency.4.Lack of training in CLT. 5. Examination system.6.The difference between ESL and EFL teaching contexts.

As there were many answers which were not answered in detail and there were some ambiguity about the interpretation of some answers, semi-structured interviews were conducted with these teachers after the questionnaires were handed back and tabulation was started by this researcher. A great advantage of semi-structured interview is that it reflects the interviewee’s real feelings. And I chose semi-structured interview because this type of interview leads the researchers to specific destination through a good level of control and allowed me as the interviewer sufficient freedom to digress and probe far beyond the answers to the prepared and standardized questions(Berg,1989,p.17).Wallace(1998,p.130) says about advantages of interview in general. He says, ”The great advantage of interview is

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its flexibility .If the respondent has problem with the questions, they can be explained. If the respondent says something intriguing, follow - up questions can be asked”. While formulating the interview questions, I made sure that the questions were clear, precise and motivating.(Denzin,1989).The interviews lasted 30 minutes to 40 minutes each. I recorded the interview on audio recorder. The participant teachers have been named Teacher-A, Teacher-B, Teacher-C, Teacher-D and Teacher-E. I also had a plan to observe three classes of three different sizes. The largest one might consist of seventy five to eighty students. The medium one will be of 45 to 50 students and the small one with approximately thirty students. But, I could not do it because there was no class which had fewer than 100 students. It was also not possible for me to arrange three classes of three different sizes. Moreover, I gave up the thought of observing larger classes after I had observed a private tutorial class with 26 students. This class was 1- hour long and for the recording of classroom interaction I used the model interaction pattern as a format suggested by Ruth Wajnryb(1992,107).

## Chapter-6

### 6. Findings

I analysed the findings in the simplest, easiest way. I explained the responses in the open questions and tabulated the questions with fixed alternative in tables. Later on, I compared both types of responses.

#### 6.1. Questionnaire

The main instrument used to elicit data for the study was a written questionnaire (appendix A) which was distributed to seven higher secondary English teachers of three government colleges. However, from among the seven distributed questionnaires, I selected five completed questionnaires. I found adequate information in those five and I could arrange face- to- face interview with four teachers for the clarification of some points.

The questionnaires included 23 questions with both open-ended questions and questions with fixed alternatives. The first six questions elicited the demographics of the participants: age, educational qualification, experience, level of teaching and training. The demographic information was sought because they help to clarify the variables of the analysis to be determined if such factors have any effect on attitude, beliefs and practices.

#### Results of question no.1

The teachers are between 32 to 42. It is seen from the data that senior teachers are more unwilling to accept CLT. Teacher-D who is junior most have positive attitude to CLT.

Table No. 1(Age Table)

Teachers' ID.	A	B	C	D	E
Age	41	38	42	32	39

#### Results of question no.2

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All the participant teachers have M.A. in English Literature. None of them have B.A or M.A in ELT. All of them had one module named Linguistics in M.A which comprise sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and applied linguistics. The module carries 100 marks. The syllabus of this paper contains theories of these three areas.

### Results of question no.3

The responses to question 3 reveal the fact that among the five teachers, four are averse to doing communicative activities in the class .They never use the teachers’ guide in preparing their lessons. Their teaching experiences range between 5 and 16 years. On the other hand, teacher-D with 6 years of experience engages almost all of his students in pair work .She teaches grammar by contextualising in stories. She also always uses the Teachers’ Guide.

Table No. 2(Experience Table)

Teachers’ ID	A	B	C	D	E
Years of experience	16	5	12	6	8

### Results of question no.4 &.5

All have been teaching at the higher secondary level and teaching the academic English only which comprise the compulsory English of two courses with one hundred marks each. The first paper which is taught in level 11 is based on the textbook ‘English for Today’ which is written in the Communicative approach. The second paper that is taught in level 12 consists of grammar and composition. The syllabus of this second paper was changed in the year 2009.

### Results of question no.6

#### Training

It is quite interesting that none of them had gone though any training in ELT, let alone CLT. All of them had 4 months training in the National Academy for Education and Management

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which is compulsory for all the newly-recruited teachers for government colleges irrespective of subjects. It is interesting to note that this training is more for administrative than academic purpose. The training prepares the teachers for becoming competent administrators.

Results of question no.7

Question No. 7 includes 12 items, descriptive of CLT. They were intended to elicit teachers' perceptions about general attributes of communicative language teaching approach. The teachers responded by ticking those options which they considered features of CLT. The twelve items were selected to represent the common features of CLT. The 12<sup>th</sup> item was 'other' to let the respondents comment on any of the 11 selections or put other observations.

It is seen that 100% of teachers perceive the following features as to be of the CLT. They are 'CLT emphasises fluency over accuracy'; 'CLT puts too much pressure on teachers'; 'CLT requires a lot of time to prepare class activities'; 'CLT is an ESL, not EFL methodology'; 'CLT emphasis communication in L2'. 80% of teachers ascribe to the conceptions 'CLT is a student-centred approach'; 'CLT requires the teachers high proficiency in English'; 'CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening'.

Table No. 3 (Features of CLT as perceived by teachers)

Serial no.	Features	No. of responses
1	CLT is student centred approach	4
2	CLT means verbal interaction	4
3	CLT emphasises fluency over accuracy	5
4	CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening	4
5	CLT requires the teachers to	4

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	have high proficiency in English	
6	CLT means only pair work and group work	3
7	CLT requires higher knowledge of target culture	2
8	CLT means not teaching grammar	1
9	CLT put too much pressure on teachers	5
10	CLT requires a lot of time to prepare class activities	5
11	CLT is basically an English as Second Language ,not English as Foreign Language methodology.	5
12	CLT emphasizes communication in L2	5

#### Results of question no.8

Question no.8 was designed to elicit teachers' perceptions about communicative activities. 11 items both communicative and traditional language teaching activities were listed and teachers were asked to select the activities they thought were communicative in nature. It is seen that majority of teachers identify the communicative activities correctly. They are speaking in pairs, group discussion, describing a picture, having a debate or role play, story telling in front of the class. Explaining textbooks, looking up words in the dictionary, grammar exercise are correctly mentioned as non-communicative.

Table No.4 (Teachers' identification of communicative activities)

	Which of the following do you think are the	No. of responses
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	communicative activities?	
1	Describing a picture to a partner	4
2	Having a debate or role play	4
3	Group discussion	4
4	Reading Dialogues	1
5	Speaking in pairs	5
6	Dictation Task	1
7	Story-telling in front of the class	4
8	Grammar exercise	1
9	Looking up words in the dictionary	0
10	Fill in the gaps	1
11	Explaining Textbook	0

#### Results of question no. 9

Question no.9 was meant to find whether teachers faced difficulties in adopting CLT in Bangladesh. For each item teachers were asked to rate their opinions on a scale from 1 to 3 with 1 indicating 'no problem' 2 'manageable problem' and 3 indicating 'major difficulty'. The scale was used by me for precise data. 5-point Likert scale was very perplexing and digressive to me personally though it is widely accepted and used to collect the attitudinal data. The options were all selected from related research literature and they are those which higher secondary English teachers consider to be the major barriers in implementing CLT in Bangladesh. Here 80% of teachers rate the following problems as great difficulties 'students' unwillingness to participate in communicative activities, large class size, lack of training in CLT and enough logistic support from administration.

Table No.5 (Teachers' perceived difficulties in adopting CLT in Bangladesh)

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No.	The following are some of the difficulties that EFL/ ESL have in adopting CLT. Do you come across these difficulties or do you think they might be difficulties for you in adopting CLT in Bangladesh?	1( no problem)	2(manageable problem)	3( great difficulty)	Total response
A	Teacher does not have sufficient spoken skill		3	2	5
B	Teacher does not have enough target culture knowledge		3	2	5
C	Teacher does not have sufficient time to prepare communicative materials		2	3	5
D	Students do not want to engage in communicative activities		1	4	5
E	Examinations are traditionally grammar based	2	2	1	5
F	Large class size		1	4	5
G	The differences between EFL/ESL teaching contexts		3	2	5
H	Lack of training in CLT		1	4	5
I	Not enough logistic support from administration		1	4	5
J	Teachers do not know what CLT means		4	1	5
K	Unsuitability of Western educational system in EFL context		2	3	5
L	Other				

#### Results of question no.10

Question no. 10 was intended to elicit the participating teachers' own opinion which they considered as barriers to the application of CLT in Bangladeshi higher secondary ELT classes. This question is similar to question no. 9 which is, however, a fixed question. In response to this question all the teachers replied by writing down points. Their answers are not descriptive. Here 100% of teachers mention the following problems. Large class size and

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lack of raining in CLT.80% point out the following problems, such as, students' unwillingness to learn English, shortage of logistic support, ESL/EFL difference, teachers' and students' unwillingness to speak English. The following table illustrates their perceptions:-

Table No.6 (Barrier to the implementation of CLT )

What are the problems with using CLT in Bangladeshi higher secondary ELT classes?	No.of responses
Large class size	5
Students' unwillingness to learn English	4
Lack of teachers' fluency	3
Lack of students' fluency	2
Shortage of logistic support	4
Teachers' lack of training	5
ESL/EFL differences	4
Lack of communicative material	2
Exam-oriented students	3
Teachers' and students' unwillingness to speak in English	4
Bilingual education system	3
Lack of teachers' preparation for the class	2
Teachers do not encourage students to participate	2
Impediments created by L1	3
Very lackluster teacher-student relationship	2
Very poor schema	1

Results of question no.11

Question no. 11 was meant to elicit the participating teachers' opinions about the importance of communicative activities in learning English.

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This open –ended question elicited almost unanimous responses from the participants. Among the five participants, one has some reservations about the usefulness of the communicative activities in learning English.

This teacher is B who says that the communicative activities are effective in learning English when students reside in English speaking environment. If a student living in an English – speaking country tries to utilize it, he will be much benefitted. He also adds that any grammar exercise through explanation and practice may contribute to learning English.

Teacher-A highlights the usefulness of communicative activities. He says that communicative activities are instrumental in learning English because without participation, there will be a comatose and inertia in the classroom.

Teacher-C says that communicative activities are the inevitable part of any language learning. They help to develop communicative skills. Teacher- D says that verbal communication is very much necessary to develop the fluency in English .Communicative activities help learners to use English in real life like situations. Teacher-E says that communicative activities help learners evade the complexities of learning grammar. That is, through the participation in the communicative activities learning of grammar becomes easy and fun.

Results of question no. 12

Question no. 12 was intended to find out the teachers’ view about the real situation of the students’ participation in the communicative activities in the higher secondary ELT classes. Teachers put their opinions in descriptive way.

In response to this the majority of participants opine that students’ participation in communicative activities is very poor, insignificant and frustrating. Teacher-A, Teacher-C and Teacher-D say that students’ participation is very disappointing. Teacher- A says that students’ participation in the communicative activities in Bangladeshi ELT classes is very insignificant and disappointing because they are either disinterested or indifferent and their only goal is to achieve certificate through rote-learning method. Moreover, examination procedures are dead against motivating students to learn English. Teacher-C

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attributes this poor participation to the large class size. Teacher-E is not happy with the students' participation in communicative activities. The lack of interest in participating in activities is attributed to their shyness and nervousness for their mistakes. He also makes comments about the students' weakness in other skills, such as, reading and writing. He says that students read without grasping the meaning. Students' writing is also full of mistakes. Teacher-D says that students enjoy the communicative activities much if they can be engaged properly and effectively by teachers. He adds that but due to the lack of facilities, students' participation cannot be fruitful.

Teacher-B says that students cannot be engaged in these communicative activities because class size is huge with 200-300 students and teachers have too limited time to finish these activities in 40- 45 minutes of class time.

Question no. 13 to 23 are all about the teachers' pedagogical issues. They are intended to identify the practices the teachers do in their own teaching and also to find out if the practices correspond with their belief and assumptions.

Results of question no. 13

Question no.13 was meant to know teachers' opinions about how they find the role of learners in their classroom. All the respondents unanimously opine that in the language classroom in Bangladesh, the learners are passive, not active. They are just the silent spectators and receptors of knowledge. They do not actively participate in classroom activities.

Teacher-A says that the role of learners is very insignificant and inconspicuous. They keep themselves aloof from active participation. They feel scared, detached, and concerned in language classroom.

Teacher –B says that students do not respond and they do not want to participate in any pair work and group work.

Teacher-C says that students do not feel willing to speak in English. Students must practise speaking in pairs. But, the teacher says the fact is that students do not do these things in Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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Bangladeshi higher secondary ELT classes. Teacher-D says that in language classroom in Bangladesh, the role of learner is not quite satisfactory. Learners do not respond to the teacher. The learners are not active and interested in participation. Teacher-E says that learners are not vocal enough when they are in the classroom. They think that they should not talk much in the classroom. They remain introvert due to their poverty and lack of linguistic and mental support from teachers.

Results of question no.14

Question no. 14 asks teachers to pinpoint the teachers' typical role in the Bangladeshi ELT classes. Almost all the participants describe the Bangladeshi teachers in a frustrating way. They seem to portray the teachers in a negative way. Teacher-A gives the most revealing description. He says that most of the teachers in language classroom are not well trained and do not feel spontaneity and enthusiasm. They come to class just to deliver their rough-shod lecture as a traditional responsibility. Teachers themselves are very weak in English because they feel comfort in delivering their lecture in native language. Their lack-lustre attitude to their profession is the most intractable barrier to teach and inspire students.

Teacher-B says that teachers do not focus and adapt in using CLT. The way they behave in the classroom does not lead to communicative language learning. That is, teachers teach the rule of language, but not the use of language.

Teacher-C says that in Bangladeshi language classroom teachers provide all the knowledge and explanation of the rules. Teachers think that it is their responsibility to explain all the rules. The respondent also says that teachers do not speak in English and do not help students in collaborative and autonomous learning. They like to give lecture only.

Teacher-D says that in language classroom in Bangladesh, teachers generally use their lecture method. But, a teacher should be a facilitator and negotiator between students and text.

What teacher- E says is also important and insightful. He says that teachers put emphasis on grammar translation method as they were taught in the same technique. He adds that Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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teachers do not let students participate in communicative activities apprehending that s/he cannot manage the class and finish the lesson in the stipulated time. He also adds that teachers do not enjoy their duties or teaching the language. He attributes this to the financial insolvency which leads to the dissatisfaction in job. So, what happens in the Bangladeshi ELT classes is that the classroom environment is very dull and lifeless. Whatever CLT the teachers follow, it is done superficially or perfunctorily.

Results of question no. 15

Question no. 15 to 23 are meant to identify the participating teachers' teaching practice that help the researchers to find out the real teaching practice of the majority of English language teachers of Bangladesh.

Question no. 15 asks the teachers how often they interfere when students are doing any communicative activities.

Among the five participants one replies that he does not interfere when students are doing any communicative activities. Another teacher says that as there is no practice of communicative activities in his class, he does not need to interfere or there is any need for it at all. Other three teachers say that they interfere.

From among the three who say they interfere, one puts very much reasoned argument in favor of interference. Teacher-B says that often during the CLT classes learners tend to veer away from the intended lesson. That is why, teachers need to interfere to keep the students on track. Teacher-D says that he sometimes interferes to help students carry on conversation with little verbal support because otherwise they might get stuck in the middle of conversation or speaking. She is for letting students practice speaking because he believes practice makes a man perfect. She adds that if she often interferes, students might get nervous. Teacher-E sees interference as a positive thing. He says that interference is beneficial and helpful. When students do not find appropriate words, interference with linguistic support enhances their confidence and spontaneity.

Results of question no. 16

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Question no. 16 asks the teacher if they correct students when they make mistakes while speaking and whether students should be instantly corrected.

All the participants but one are for correcting mistakes instantly. They do not like belated correction. Teacher-A says that students should be instantly corrected because they are immersed in the sea of mistakes. Teacher-B however has a soft voice about correction. He says that correction of mistakes is necessary for the development of the students. Instant correction can be applied where students are cooperative and friendly, or correction can be done in general as a whole class feedback without highlighting an individual. Teacher- C is for instant correction without any tolerance. She thinks that if students are not corrected instantly, they would learn incorrect English. Teacher-D is for the gradual correction. She says that she tries to correct them gradually and never believes that total eradication of mistakes in the course of learning is ever possible. Teacher-E says that he never corrects instantly because he thinks that it might work as a kind of hindrance to their fluency. It will in the long run damage their confidence. Majority (80%) teachers consider correction as a pre-requisite to learning language. But, literature about CLT suggests that error be ignored especially at the initial stage of learning because it might hinder the fluency of learners and lead to teacher-controlled classes.

Results of question no.17

Question no. 17 is intended to know from the participating teachers how much importance they put on different types of activities while teaching. Seven items are mentioned and teachers are asked to rate these activities from 7 to 1, with 7 the highest in terms of importance teachers give on each item. It is seen that 80%of teachers give the highest importance to explaining grammar rules, listening practice and 60% to reading, explaining textbooks and translation into L2, the traditional teaching practice. On the other hand, communicative activity, such as, speaking and games are awarded the minimum of importance by teachers(60% at 3).

Table No.8 ( Classroom activities organized by teachers).

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	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Explaining grammar rules	4		1				
Listening	4				1		
Speaking	2		2		1		
Reading	3	1	1				
Writing	2	1	1		1		
Explaining textbooks	3	1	1				
Translation into L1	3		2				
Games					3	2	

Result of question no.18

Question no. 18 lists 4 types of communicative activities that are found in the textbook ‘English for Today’ being used in the higher secondary level. They are problem solving, debate, pair work and group work. Students are asked to tick those that they use in their class. Only 40% of teachers engage their students in problem solving and pair work and only 20% in debate and group work each.

Table No.9(Communicative activities done by teachers)

Do you engage students in any communicative activities?	
Problem solving	2
Debate	1
Pair work	2
Group work	1

Results of question no.19

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Question no. 19 wants to know from the participating teachers how often they arrange students to do these communicative activities.

How often do you arrange students to do these communicative activities?

Always -..... 1

Sometimes- ..... 0

Rarely ..... 0

Never----- 4

Majority of respondents say that they never arrange students for any communicative activities. One teacher says that she always arranges students to do these activities.

Results of the question no. 20

Question no. 20 asks teachers to say about the approximate number of students they teach in each class. The figures they mention will help the researcher to find out whether variation in the number of students has any impact on their classroom practice. To see for myself whether the small number of students, for example 25, makes any difference, I observed a specially arranged private tutorial class of 26 students. However, 4 teachers say that they usually have 200 students at the lowest in their classes. One teacher has 125 students.

Results of question no. 21

Question no.21 is intended to find out how many of the students are engaged in pair work and group work. Teachers are told to write the approximate number in percentage. It is seen that only 20% teachers say that 100% of her students are engaged in pair work and group work.

Table No.10( Percentage of students' participation in communicative activities)

How many of your students are engaged in communicative activities?	Percentage
Teacher-A	None

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Teacher-B	None
Teacher-C	None
Teacher-D	Almost 100%
Teacher-E	None

Results of question no. 22

Question no. 22 asks the teachers if they follow the Teachers' Guide in preparing their lessons.

Always.....1

Sometimes..... 0

Never..... 4

Results of question no. 23

Question no. 23 is also related with the pedagogic practice of the teachers which asks them in what technique they teach grammar in their class.

In response to the question, 'how do you teach grammar in your class?'<sup>4</sup> teachers say that they teach grammar by explaining the rules. Teacher A, teacher-B, teacher-C, and teacher-E say that they teach grammar by explaining rules first. Then they write example sentences on the board. Teacher- D says that she teaches grammar by explaining rules and making stories. In response to my query what she means by stories, she replies that she makes contexts where she uses the sentences.

## 6.2. Interview

The semi-structured interview was used as an ancillary tool to the questionnaire. I used it for the clarification of some responses and elaboration of some points. Interview was arranged with Teacher-B, Teacher-C, Teacher-D and Teacher-E. So, there were not that much data for analysis.

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Teacher B says that teachers do not want to engage students in communicative activities because they think it would cut a huge amount of time off the class. Teachers think that they cannot teach important thing within 40-45 minutes if they engage students in communicative activities. In clarifying the technique of teaching grammar, he says that he first explains the rules. Then he writes example sentences and practices the exercises within the rules.

Teacher-C who says that students do not want to participate in communicative activities replies during the interview that students are nervous, shy of speaking in the class. He also says that teachers also do not encourage students to participate in speaking and communicative activities. To clarify how he teaches grammar, he mentions the same technique. He explains the rules first, then writes the structure and example sentences. Then he makes the students practice the exercises within the rules.

Teacher-D was asked how he thinks teachers can encourage students to participate in communicative activities in the class, he says that teachers can do it through creating fun-making, enjoyable games. Teachers can also float interesting topics for debates for students to speak on. In response to the question, 'why are not students responsive to the teacher, he says that students are introvert for losing face. They think they will be ashamed if they make mistakes.

In response to the question, 'how communicative activities help students in expressing them?', she says that when learners always use English to interact and communicate with others, they will become fluent and will not hesitate in course of time.

Teacher-E who says that teachers' financial conditions are not conducive to teachers' communicative classroom practice, says that teachers' insolvency is deleterious not only in CLT or ELT, but also for the teaching profession as a whole. A de-motivated teacher cannot be enthusiastically active and lively in the classroom.

She also says that teachers' interference creates students' dependence on teachers. If teachers always come up with linguistic support, learners' linguistic development will be retarded. He

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clarifies his position by saying that if teachers give props and prompts when students grope for words, they will be very helpful. When asked to clarify how it helps students in learning English without correcting, she explains that she does not correct instantly. It should not be confused with interference which obstructs the language learning. She prefers to correct later on but likes to give instant language prompts.

### **6.3. Data Analysis**

Written questionnaires were used to collect data for this study. Several stages were followed in analyzing the data. First of all, fixed questions were tabulated to record the responses for each participant for each item. The tables were then carefully investigated to identify common patterns. For this purpose questions related with attitudinal perspectives were compared with those related with pedagogical aspects, that is, the real teaching practice of the teachers.

#### **Lack of Correspondence or Mismatch between Beliefs and Practices**

In question no. 8, 20% of teachers identified grammar exercise as communicative activities. On the other hand, 80% of participating teachers rated explaining grammar rules or grammar exercises at 7 as the most important classroom activity, and 20% rated it at 5 in question no. 17.

In the question no. 8, majority of teachers identified many activities as communicative correctly. They are described below in percentage-

Describing a picture-80%

Speaking in pairs- 100%

Having a debate or role play- 80%

Group Discussion -80%

Story telling in front of the class-60%

If we compare and contrast the teachers' classroom practices in question no. 17, we see that majority of teachers do traditional language teaching practice. The percentage is given below:-

80% give explaining grammar rules rating 7

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20% give it rating 5

Explaining textbooks- 60% give it rating 7

20% give it rating 6

20% give it rating 5

Translation into L1-60% give it rating 7 and 40% give it rating 5.

So, a huge mismatch is seen between teachers' perception of the principles of CLT and the real classroom practices. It is not surprising to the teachers because they know that what they are doing is not communicative activities, that is, their classes are not communicative.

In question no. 7, 80% of teachers perceive CLT as student-centred approach. 80% believe CLT means verbal interaction between teacher-student and student-student. 60% subscribe to the conception that CLT means only pair work and group work. All these features or principles call for student-centred collaborative learning. But, on the contrary, in question no. 17, we see that majority of teachers still adhere to the traditional teacher-centred language teaching practice. For example, 80% teachers rate explaining the grammar rules at 7 and only 20% rate it at 5 point scale. Similarly, 60% of teachers give explaining textbook rating 7, 20% rating 6 and 20% rating 5. This glaring mismatch is important.

If we analyse question no. 9, we see that, 100% teachers regard large class as a great difficulty and rate it at 3. It means that all teachers believe that large class is the greatest difficulty in adopting CLT in Bangladesh. This is due to the fact that teachers find it impossible to engage students in communicative activities. So, to evade this problem of managing a large class of 200 students, for example, teachers resort to traditional teaching technique of explaining rules, explaining textbooks and translation into L1 as the finding in table 8 shows. Listening to teachers' lecture is similarly preferred by 80% of the respondents and they rate listening activity at 7.

In response to the question no. 14, participants come up with heterogeneous thoughts and perceptions. But, the majority of teachers say that teachers take class with lack-lustre mentality. They lack enthusiasm and interest in classes because of dissatisfaction with their

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profession and other socio-economic problems. This is applicable to all around the world. When teachers are not satisfied with their pay, they become de-motivated about their profession. Moreover, 60% of the teachers still teach English in the traditional Grammar-Translation method. 60% of the respondents say that language teachers teach in the bilingual way. They use L1 in explaining rules in the classroom.

To see the mismatch between teachers' perception and classroom practices, we can analyse question no. 18, 19 and 21. In response to the question no. 18, "Do you engage students in any communicative activities as required to do in the textbook? Tick those that you do," only 20% teachers say that they engage their students in problem-solving, pair work and group work. The remaining 80% says that they do not do any communicative activities. But, the fact is that these communicative activities, such as pair work, group work are there in every lesson of the course book.

If we analyse question no. 19, 'How often do you arrange students to do these communicative activities?' we see that only 20% says 'always', 80% says 'never'. This mismatch between beliefs and practice is glaring and staggering. If we analyse question no. 21, we see that only teacher-D says that she engages 100% of his students in pair and group work. Other teachers say they never arrange students for any communicative activities.

Teacher -D who says that he engages all his students in pair work and group work, rates explaining grammar rules at 7 and explaining textbook at 7. But, on the other hand, she rates speaking at 5. So, there is a kind of non-correspondence between these two responses. How can a teacher engage 100% of his/her students in pair/group work by rating the 'speaking activity' at 5 and 'explaining grammar rules' at 7 in her classroom practice.

If we analyse question no. 22, we see that 100% of teachers confirm that they read the teachers' guide but they never use it in preparing their lessons. And, in response to the question no. 23, "How do you teach grammar in your class?" the technique they mention is basically the traditional one, that is, grammar-translation method. The technique they mention is that, they explain rules of grammar and then write example sentences. But, the Teachers' Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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Guide for the course book explains the technique of teaching grammar which is in conformity with Communicative Language Teaching approach. TG explains, 'As with vocabulary, it is important for students to understand function(what the structure is used for),as well as form(the appearance)-i.e. what the structure actually does, rather than simply the words and sounds which make it ..... Therefore, function takes precedence over form. Teaching grammatical rules will not help much- a clear understanding of concept is important. In presenting grammatical structure, therefore, the teachers' task is to make sure that SS understand its concept or the function in language use as well as the actual words that make up its formation.(P.7).

### **Congenial Correspondence**

A congenial correspondence is noticed between the item no. 11 of question no. 7(table-3) and item no. k. of question no. 9(table-5). In question no. 7, 100% participants argue that CLT is basically an English as Second Language, not English as a Foreign language method (table 3). Similarly, 100% of the respondents subscribe to the conception that CLT, a Western education system is unsuitable in an EFL context(table5). Though there is varying degree of acuteness of the problem, everybody considers it unsuitable in an EFL context. Nobody believes that it is not a problem.

60% subscribes to the shortage of logistic support. 80% considers the students' unwillingness to participate as the barrier to the implementation of the communicative activities.

There is a congenial correspondence of these responses with the responses in question no. 13. 100% of the respondents agree to the view that in the language classroom in Bangladesh, the learners are passive, non-participating.

### **6.4. Analysis of Response Patterns**

The purpose of this part is to look for the consistencies and inconsistencies in teachers' responses with regards to the two main issues:-

1. Perception about communicative activities and overall communicative Language Teaching approach.
2. Classroom practices.

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The analysis of the qualitative data demonstrates that the activities identified by majority of the participant teachers in this study are some of the most widely and commonly advocated CLT activities in the general literature and that the CLT characteristics they identify are some right and some wrong.

For example-

Right perception- CLT is a student-centred approach (80%).

Right- CLT means verbal interaction-(80%)

Right- CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy (100%)

Right- CLT emphasizes communication in L2.(100%).

Wrong-CLT requires a lot of time to prepare class activities (100%)

Wrong- CLT is basically ESL, not EFL methodology-(100%)

Wrong- CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening-(80%)

Wrong-CLT means only group work and pair work(60%)

Wrong – CLT means not teaching grammar(20%)

Wrong –CLT puts too much pressure on teachers(20%)

From the analysis of the above table, it is evident that the majority of teachers have both the right and wrong perceptions about the principles of CLT. So, it is to be seen whether these misconceptions have impact on their teaching practices. It is seen that right conceptions do not contribute to good communicative class room. On the other hand, misconceptions have a direct negative impact on classroom practices.

### **Correspondence Between Teachers' Perceptions of Communicative Activities and CLT approach:**

It is seen that teachers' responses in Question no. 8 (table3) about communicative activities correspond well with their responses in Question no. 7 about the characteristics of CLT approach. Teachers identify describing pictures, having a debate or role play, group discussion, speaking in pairs, story-telling in front of the class as communicative activities, which correspond well with their consistent identification of CLT characteristics. In Question no. 7(a) CLT is student-centred approach (b)CLT means verbal interaction between teacher-student and student-student.(c) CLT emphasises fluency over accuracy(

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table3). The identified communicative activities are student-centred and they emphasise speaking and listening skills. The CLT activities as identified by the teachers represent their beliefs about CLT and they are reflective of their understanding of CLT approach. This is, however, a partial picture. The two characteristics (1) 'CLT requires a lot of time to prepare class activities-(2) CLT is basically an English as Second Language, not English as a Foreign Language methodology'(table3) are still persisting as unresolved debates. The perception that CLT relies heavily on listening and speaking skills is half true in the sense that CLT advocates the practice of all the 4 skills of language ,listening, speaking, reading and writing.

### **Teachers' Classroom Practice**

It is found that majority of teachers do not engage students in communicative activities as required in the course book. That is, there is a huge mismatch between the teachers' perceptions of CLT and the real classroom practice.

Another staggering mismatch between teachers' perception and real practices is seen when question no. 21 is compared with question no. 22. The analysis of question no. 21 reveals the following percentage :-

Teacher-D-100%

Teacher- C- 00%

Teacher- B- 00%

Teacher—B- 00%

Teacher—E- 00%

But, the responses to question no. 22, if analysed in percentage yield the following results:-

Always- 20%

Sometimes-00%

Never- 80%

But, the course book contains a huge number of pair work and group work. It is true that the course book gives priority to pair work because of the bolted down desks in Bangladeshi Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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educational institutions which is however, a reality. There are instructions on how to engage students in pair work and group work in the Teachers' Guide. The introduction chapter of the TG also highlights the importance of pair work. It says, 'While SS are doing pair work, the teacher should go round, listening (monitoring) and giving help if SS need it. The teacher can make note of mistakes s/he hears and deals with them at a later stage if s/h feels that they are sufficiently important'.(Teachers' Guide, p. 8) .

The inconsistencies in teachers' perceptions about CLT activities and their classroom practices become more evident if we compare their perceptions with the results in question no. 17, "while teaching, what do you give more emphasis on? Give rating from 7 to 1 with 7 the highest." If the responses are analysed, it is seen that the majority of teachers have the highest amount of emphasis on the traditional activities. Table 8 shows the following statistics -

Explaining grammar rules is rated at 7 by 80%. This is due to the fact that our examination system is oriented to the testing of grammar.

Listening is rated at 7 (80%). And here listening means students' listening to the teachers' lecture, not to any recordings. It is a fact that in the Higher Secondary ELT classes, there is no provision for listening practice and the course book does not contain any listening practice activity.

60% rate reading at scale 7 because in the examination reading comprehension activity is given importance.

60% rate explaining textbook at 7. It is due to the fact that teachers want to evade communicative activities in their teaching because it requires a lot of time to prepare them.

60% rate translation into L1 at 7 because bilingualism is a common practice in Bangladeshi Bangla-medium education system, irrespective of rural or urban location of colleges.

60% of respondents rate games at 4 and 40% at 3. This is very common and expected of teachers because games requires innovative skills of the teachers and this is very rare in Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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the Bangladeshi English language teachers. But, an unexpected feature is that only 40% of the respondents rate speaking and writing activities at 7. This is unnatural because almost 60% of the items in the final examination of the Higher Secondary Examination are about writing. On the other hand, speaking which is not assessed in the final examination is rated by 40% at 7 and by another 40% of respondents at 5 as teaching activity.

If question no.16 is analysed, it is seen that 80% of teachers say that they correct the students instantly if students make mistakes. It is incongruous with their perception of CLT because we see that 100% of teachers conform to the belief that 'CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy'.

### **Correspondence Between Teachers' Perceptions of CLT Approach and their Perceived Difficulties in adopting CLT in Bangladesh**

In question no. 7 the feature 'CLT requires the teacher to have high proficiency in English' (80%) is congruous with the difficulty reported by teachers in 9 'Teachers do not have sufficient spoken skills. 60% rate it as a manageable problem and 40% rate as a great difficulty. In Question no. 7 'CLT is basically an ESL, not EFL methodology' is believed by (100%). In k of 9 40% rate the problem 'Unsuitability of Western education system in EFL context' at scale 2 'manageable problem' and 60% at scale 3 'a great difficulty'(40%+60%).

Another correspondence is found when the misconception 'CLT puts too much pressure on teachers'(100%) is compared with the difficulties reported by teachers in Question no. 9(c) 'Teachers do not have sufficient time to prepare communicative materials'-manageable problem(40%) great difficulty (60%). The next correspondence is noticed between the perception 'CLT is a student-centred approach(80%) and the perceived difficulty large class size 100%-a great difficulty. However, mismatch is found between the perception 'CLT requires a higher knowledge of target language culture'- 40% and the perceived difficulty 'teacher does not have target culture knowledge' -'manageable problem' -60%, great difficulty-40%.

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When the responses in question no.9, which is a closed question are compared with those in question no.10, an open question, near correspondence between teachers' perceived difficulties in implementing CLT and the potential barriers to the implementation of communicative activities is seen.

(9) Large class size-a great difficulty(100%)

(10) Large class size(100%)

The participant teachers say that they cannot monitor a large class of 200 students and that is why, it is not possible for them to engage students in communicative activities.

(9) Lack of training in CLT –manageable problem-(40%)+great difficulty(60%)

(10) Lack of training-(100%)

This is in keeping with the real picture of teacher training in Bangladeshi ELT education. None of the participant teachers have adequate training in CLT .

(9) Lack of enough logistic support from administration-a great difficulty (80%)

(10) Shortage of logistic support (80%)

The participant teachers mention about the bolted down desks, lack of photocopying facilities audio-visual facilities in the classroom. Most of the classrooms in Bangladesh are under-equipped.

(9) Students do not want to engage in communicative activities-manageable problem (40%)+great difficulty(60%)

(10) Students' unwillingness to participate-(80%)

If this response is compared with response in question no.13, it is seen that all the respondents say that students' role is very passive. They are very shy and do not want to speak in the class.

## Chapter-7

### 7. Discussion

The present study reveals that the participant Bangladeshi teachers correctly identify the principles of CLT and have the right understanding of CLT. They uphold the misconception as well. But, the wrong understanding or misconception has a direct impact on their class room practices. The right conception does not help them in any way in implementing the CLT. Right conceptions, such as, 'CLT is a student-centred approach'(80%), CLT means verbal interaction (80%) 'CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy' (100%), CLT emphasizes communication in L2(100%) are not conducive to the teachers' communicative classroom practices in this study. On the other hand, these misconceptions 'CLT requires the teacher to have high proficiency in English'(80%), 'CLT means only group work and pair work'(60%), 'CLT requires a lot of time to prepare classroom activities'(100%) and 'CLT is basically an ESL not EFL methodology'(100%), have direct impact on the participant teachers' classroom practices. Again, it is true that only 20% each ascribe to the misconception 'CLT means not teaching grammar' and 'CLT puts too much pressure on teachers'. From the analysis of the responses in this question, it is evident that the participant teachers have both the right and wrong conceptions about CLT though quite interestingly, these participant teachers identified the communicative activities correctly. The majority of teachers also identified the problems in implementing CLT in Bangladeshi higher secondary ELT classes and those identified problems are very much similar to the problems identified in the studies done in the EFL countries, such as, China, Japan, Egypt, Indonesia and Vietnam.

It is found that teachers uphold many of the common misconceptions about CLT which are reported in research literature as the major impediments to implementation and practice of CLT in EFL contexts. It is true that teachers' belief and knowledge cause misinterpretation of CLT. The study findings of Li(1998), Penner (1995), Ellis(1994), and Lewis and McCook(2002) show that although different educational values and practices are the main reasons for difficulties in implementing CLT in the respective countries, Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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misconceptions and misinterpretations of CLT among teachers are also playing role as barriers.(Karim 2004,pp.27-28). Richardson says that teachers' beliefs influence teaching practice more directly than their knowledge and to understand how teachers think of teaching and learning one should focus on teachers' beliefs and practices.(cited in Sato and Kleinnasser1999,p. 496).

One of the misconceptions 'CLT relies heavily on speaking' (80%)(table3) is similar to the Japanese teachers' belief found by Sato and Kleinasasser(1999).They found that the teachers persisted in the traditional practices in their classes. They added that the Japanese teachers believed the misconceptions that 'CLT relied heavily on speaking and listening skills', 'CLT involved little grammar teaching and used time-consuming activities'.

Another misconception held by 100%'CLT is an ESL, not EFL methodology' (100%)(table3) is resonant of the misconception held by the Vietnamese teachers. This study was done by Ellis(1994) where she found that Vietnamese English teachers believed that CLT is basically an ESL methodology, and it did not culturally fit for Vietnam. Similar findings can be found in Burnaby and Sun's(1989) study done to investigate the Chinese teachers' conception about CLT. The study showed that the Chinese tertiary teachers believed that the CLT approach was mainly applicable in China only for those students who planned to go to an English speaking country, but not good for other students.(Karim,30).

Another misconception 'CLT requires a lot of time to prepare class activities(100%) is similar to the Chinese teachers' misconception found in Burnaby and Sun's study. The Chinese teachers believed that as CLT curriculum contains lessons and activities based on students' interests and needs, it is time –consuming and the activities seemed like game rather than serious learning to them. Similar misconception is noticed among 60% of the participant teachers in the view' CLT means only pair work and group work through which communicative activities like problem -solving, role-play, group discussion are done (Karim,30).This view is similar to the teachers' views expressed in Gamal and Debra's study(2001) done in Egypt. The Egyptian teachers believe that teachers in Egypt are considered as knowledge- holders and they might consider that if they play games with students or role play in class, they might not be seen as doing their job. In Egypt Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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experienced teachers expressed their unwillingness towards communicative attitudes and practices. According to Gamal and Debra, the reason might be that experienced teachers were more opposed to change and found it difficult to try any new theory in their teaching.(Karim 31-32). Similar trend was noticed in the more experienced teachers' attitude and classroom practices in this study. It is found that teacher-A (16 years experience) and teacher-C (12 years experience ) are not interested in even trying the communicative activities.

Another misconception that 'CLT requires the teacher high proficiency' (80%) is similar to the findings in Gamal and Debra's study (2001) .Gamal and Debra identified EFL teachers' lack of English proficiency and limited knowledge of CLT pedagogy as constraints.

There are, however, some redeeming facts about these findings in my study. One example is that only 60% of teachers believe the misconception that 'CLT requires higher knowledge of target language culture.' It may be due to the fact that as Bangladesh was a British colony until 1947, the educated people have some knowledge and idea about the British culture historically. So Karim(2004) says, 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.(Karim,80).

Though only 20% of teachers believe the misconception that 'CLT means not teaching grammar', 80% of the teachers rate 'explaining grammar rules' at 7 and 20% at 5. It is true that CLT does not restrict teachers from teaching grammar, but the way teachers teach grammar which is said to be done by the majority of teachers in response to the question how they teach grammar, is reflective of their knowledge about traditional way of teaching grammar. This can be explained as the Bangladeshi English teachers' traditionally-held belief that accuracy cannot be sacrificed at any cost. It is seen that 60% of teachers rate 'Translation into L1' at 7 and 40% at 5. But, 100% of the teachers uphold the conception that 'CLT emphasises communication in L2. This emphasis on the translation as a teaching technique by the participant teachers can be ascribed to the conception that CLT requires the teachers or students to have high proficiency in English(80%).

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Again, the participant teachers do not give due importance to games as a teaching activity. 60% of teachers rate games at 3 and 40% at 2. It has correspondence with the misconception 'CLT requires a lot of time to prepare class activities'. It may be the fact that as teachers uphold this misconception, they avoid games, pair work and group work. Moreover, it can be attributed to 100% of participant teachers' identification of large class size as the potential barrier to the implementation of the communicative activities in the classes. It is really difficult to engage students in communicative activities in large classes of 200 -300 students. And it is also assumed that if so many students are engaged in games, discussion in pair and group, it will be impossible for teachers to manage the class. Moreover, students might speak in L1.

Another activity 'explaining textbook' is rated at 7 by 60%, at 6 by 20% and at 5 by another 20%. This technique saves a lot of time of the teachers from preparing communicative activities. So, teachers use this technique owing to the misconception that 'CLT requires a lot of time to prepare classroom activities'. Moreover, as the Bangladeshi teachers are not trained in CLT, they do not know how to create language games out of the text.

Another correspondence is noticed between teachers' misconception and classroom practice in the area that 40% rate speaking at 7, 40% at 5 and 20% at 3. This may be due to the misconception 'CLT relies heavily on speaking' (80%) and 'CLT requires the teacher high proficiency'(80%). Again, 60% of teachers rate reading at 7, 20% at 6 and 20% at 5. This is a traditional teaching practice among the Bangladeshi EFL teachers. They believe that if students read out loudly in front of the whole class from the text book, it will help improve their pronunciation. Correct pronunciation is regarded as an embellishment by the majority of Bangladeshi English teachers whatever the level. Writing is rated at 7 by 40%, at 6 by 20% at 5 by 20% and at 3 by 20%. This is unexpected because only writing is assessed in the final examination, not listening or speaking. It can be explained in this way that in Bangladeshi ELT classes teachers do not teach the process of writing, rather

they advise students to memorise some selected compositions( paragraphs, essays, letters and applications) for examinations as a traditional practice.

Again, teachers' identification of the problems as barriers to the implementation of CLT is resonant of majority of teachers' identification of problem in EFL countries. For example, 80% in my study considers 'large class size' 'a great difficulty', and 20% a 'manageable problem' in the way of adoption of CLT in Bangladesh which was reported by teachers in research of Li(1998);Mustafa(2001);Burnaby and Sun(1989);and Gamal and Debra(2001) as one of the constraints for successful implementation of CLT.

80% of teachers in this study rate 'not enough logistic support from administration' as a great difficulty' and 20% as 'manageable problem'. This is consistent with Li's (1998), Burnaby and Sun's (1989) studies. Li's study showed that Korean teachers found the lack of support from administration as frustrating and discouraging. Karim's study shows that 55.56% of his participant teachers identified 'lack of support from administration' as a major difficulty.(Karim,54).

80% of respondents rate teachers' lack of training as a 'great difficulty' and 20% as a 'manageable problem' in this study. Karim's study found 58.33% of his participants' identification of lack of training a major problem. Similar results were also found in Li's (1998),Burnaby and Sun's(1999) and Gamal and Debra's (2001) studies where EFL teachers identified it as a great constraint in the implementation of CLT in Bangladesh. It is found in this study that none of the teachers have any training in CLT. Similarly, it is found that 80% of respondents consider students' unwillingness to engage in communicative activities as a great difficulty and 20% a manageable problem. That is why, it is seen that only 40% of teachers engage students in problem solving, 40% in pair work, 20% in debate and 20% in group work. In this connection, teachers' unwillingness to use TG is attributable to their classroom practices. So, in my study, 80% never uses the TG, and only 20% always.

To sum up, the participant teachers correctly identify the communicative activities of CLT and understand what CLT means. Similarly, they uphold many misconceptions. These misconceptions are similar to those held by many teachers in EFL countries, such as, China, Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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Vietnam, South Korea. The barriers to the implementation of CLT are also same as those found in other Asian ESL and EFL contexts. Because of these misconceptions and barriers teachers cannot implement CLT in class rooms.

## Chapter-8

### 8. Limitations of the study

1. All the population of this study were from government institutions. Teachers from non-government institutions were not covered. The study could have been more representative if they were covered.
2. Four participants were from urban locations. Only one teacher was from rural area. It could have been better if at least 2 teachers were from rural area. There was no attempt to study whether demographic factors, such as, gender, location, type of the institutions make any difference in the classroom practice.
3. The study was done from the teachers' perspective. That is, the pedagogical perspective of CLT was studied. Students' perceptions and expectations were not represented. If students' views were considered, the study could have been more holistic.
4. The study did not suggest whether teachers believed that any other method than CLT could be effective as an ELT approach for the higher secondary level. Moreover, this study did not consider the perceptions of the teachers of the secondary level .

## Chapter-9

### 9. Conclusion

It is clear from this study that participant teachers bear both the right understanding and misconceptions about the principles and characteristics of CLT. However, they have correctly identified the communicative activities and the potential barriers to the implementation of CLT in Bangladeshi higher secondary ELT classes. Their identification and description of the state of the present ELT classrooms at the higher secondary level are also objective and representative of the whole scenario. Moreover, the conceptions are similar to those held by teacher in most of the EFL countries.

It was also found in my study that though all the participants have theoretical knowledge about CLT and the impediments in the way of the implementations of CLT in Bangladeshi higher secondary ELT classes, their classes are not communicative. To simplify, their classroom practices do not correspond well with their perceptions and beliefs about CLT. They evade the communicative activities of CLT and attribute this avoidance to various factors and barriers as mentioned in the study. However, it is interesting to see that though their right perception do not contribute positively to their implementation of communicative activities in the class, the misconceptions have negative impact on their classroom practice. Teachers evade the communicative classroom practices, such as, pair work, group work, role play owing to the misconceptions about CLT and they are still persisting in the traditional teacher-fronted language teaching techniques, such as, explaining grammar rules, explaining textbooks in the class. They also correctly identify the barriers to the implementation of CLT.

The barriers that these participant teachers mention in this study are similar to the difficulties mentioned by teachers in the studies done in EFL countries, such as, China, Vietnam, Egypt, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The barriers as mentioned by teachers and identified in this study are large class size, the lack of training or retraining in CLT, lack of logistic support, students' unwillingness to participate in communicative activities, exam-oriented students, teachers' lack of time to prepare communicative materials and teachers' lack of fluency. Students' too much care for grammar is also a formidable factor for teachers' Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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giving emphasis on teaching grammar rules and doing grammar exercise. These barriers as well as the misconceptions about CLT discourage the Bangladeshi teachers from engaging students in communicative activities. So, it is seen that teachers still follow the traditional language teaching techniques.

Many teachers in the EFL countries find the CLT activities non-compatible with the education system in non-Western contexts. Shahidullah(2007,p.30) remarks, the classroom procedures-pair work, group work, role play, simulation, drama technique being very active in classroom activities are largely Western in nature and significantly different from teaching and learning experiences and preferences of teachers and learners in non-Western contexts, which in most cases are characterized by learning from lectures and rote learning which are not advocated by CLT as language learning techniques.

It is true that ELTIP program has retrained a huge number of secondary and higher secondary English teachers in the CLT approach and CLT textbooks replaced old, non-CLT textbooks. But, the scenario has not changed much. Still, teachers follow the traditional Grammar Translation Method. Hamid & Baldauf ((2004,p.17)remark, ‘‘Beyond these changes, however, English teaching and learning continued in the same classrooms, surrounded by the same external socio-economic and political realities, with the same teachers and the same generally inadequate facilities.’’Unless these problems are removed, significant improvement in English language teaching is really difficult. That is why, Hamid &Baldauf (2004,17) also comment that the introduction of CLT brought changes in Bangladeshi ELT in theory but there is little evidence of significant changes in teaching practice at the higher secondary level across the whole country. The objective for introducing CLT to develop communicative competence is not fulfilled. So, there is a call for alternative approach to language teaching for the development of communicative competence.

Communicative competence can be developed through other syllabuses as well. So, Howatt (1984,p.287)says, ‘‘Communicative performance can be promoted on the basis of a

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traditional language syllabus, provided that the linguistic material is suitably selected, presented and exercised.”

If CLT is uncritically adopted in the EFL, it is not supposed to bring positive results in language teaching and learning. So, Daoud (1996)& Philipson (1992) suggest that rather than relying on expertise, methodology, and materials controlled and dispensed by the 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. So, Richards(1992 & Ashworth 1984) comment that instead of ‘follow the methods’ techniques, it should try to ‘develop a methodology’ that is culture and context sensitive, in other words, bottom-up, not top-down. Rather than method, technique is more important for effective language teaching and learning because there is no ‘one-to –one relationship between method and techniques’ (Paulston). And any classroom where there is less teacher talk and more students’ task can be communicative(Paulston 1992, p.106).

## Chapter10

### 10. Reflection

Doing research for the first time is both stressful and perplexing. The pains of hard work is bitter but, the fruit is sweet. The research that I have undertaken has opened up many unexplored avenues before me. Doing this research was challenging for me because for some very unavoidable reasons, I had to spend the whole semester for dissertation in my home country .So, I was very worried about my performance and progress because I did not have direct supervision of my supervisor. So, sometimes I became very confused and frustrated. But, the prompt online responses from my supervisor made my work easy.

Initially, I had a plan to do my research on classroom interaction in Bangladeshi higher secondary ELT classes. Though CLT is the language teaching approach in Higher Secondary ELT classes, teachers usually bypass the interactional activities on excuse that it is the large class size for which they cannot engage students in communicative activities. So, my objective was to see if there is connection between large class size and teachers' avoiding interactive activities in the class. I wanted to investigate what the perceptions of higher secondary English teachers are about the interactional activities. Accordingly, in the original research proposal done in Semester-B, I had the plan to observe three classes of three different sizes to look for myself whether the excuse is either plausible or baseless. Of the three classes the largest one might consist of 75-80, the medium one of 45-50 and the smallest one 30 students. Each class was to be observed for 2 days .But, the interview with 4 teachers revealed the fact that even the smallest class did not have any communicative activities. So, I changed the original plan of the research proposal and gave up the idea of observing classes. Accordingly, in place of observation, I changed my questionnaire a little bit and included among other things, the question, 'how many students they have in their classes. This question helped me to collect data that I would have got through classroom observation. However, I observed a specially arranged private tutorial class of 26 students.

I changed the topic and direction of my research and decided that I would investigate the higher secondary teachers' perception about CLT and their real classroom practices and if there is any mismatch between these two.

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This study revealed the findings that though the participant higher secondary English language teachers have misconceptions about CLT, they can identify the communicative activities. They also uphold many right perceptions about the characteristics of CLT. However, their classes are not communicative. They still follow the traditional Grammar-Translation method. The participant teachers also identified the barriers to the implementation of CLT in Bangladeshi higher secondary ELT classes. The barriers identified by these teachers in this study echo similar problems mentioned in other studies done in EFL countries including Bangladesh. What is found from this study is that teachers can correctly identify the communicative activities and their perceptions about CLT are in most cases right though they have many misconceptions too. Whereas in other studies there is not any mention of mismatch between perceptions and classroom practices, there are staggering mismatches between these two in this study.

The barriers that I personally encountered in accomplishing this study do also need to be mentioned. I needed a seminal book that deals with the ELT scenario of Bangladesh since 1947, the year the British left the Indian sub-continent. I explored every source to get hold of this book in my city. I contacted the seminar library of the Department of English of the university from where I did my first Masters degree. However, I could manage an article of this book from the Internet.

Another great obstacle was in getting the interview. I wanted to make the 4 teachers sit together for the interview. But, after much efforts and patient waiting for a long time, I was able to make two of them sit together. The other two were interviewed separately.

The greatest personal problem was with the time management. I am not a disciplined reader. Sometimes, I did not attend my project work for days together. On the other hand, Sometimes, while engrossed in this work, I forgot all other work.

I felt relaxed when I got mails from my classmates at the UH enquiring about the progress of my dissertation. I was also happy to realise that I was going to be able to meet the deadline for submission, which, however, was possible for the sincere and prompt responses from my supervisor.

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CLT is student -centered approach.

CLT means verbal interaction between teacher –student and student –student.

CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy.

CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening.

CLT requires the teacher to have high proficiency in English.

CLT means only group work and pair work.

CLT requires higher knowledge of target language culture.

CLT means not teaching grammar.

CLT puts too much pressure on teachers.

CLT requires a lot of time to prepare class activities.

CLT is basically an English as Second Language, not English as Foreign Language methodology.

CLT emphasizes communication in L2.

Other

8. Which of the following do you think are communicative activities? (please tick) fill in the blanks.

Having a debate or role play

Group discussion

Reading dialogues

Speaking in pairs

Dictation task

Story telling in front of the class

Grammar exercise

Describing a picture to a partner

Fill in the blanks

Explaining textbook

9. The following are some of the difficulties that EFL/ ESL have in adopting CLT . Do you come across these difficulties or do you think they might be difficulties for you in adopting CLT I n Bangladesh?

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Try a scale(circle on )the following issues : 1.no problem.....2.manageable problem.....3 .great difficulty

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| a)Teacher does not have sufficient spoken skill                             | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| b)Teacher does not have enough target culture knowledge                     | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| c) Teacher does not have sufficient time to prepare communicative materials | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| d) Students do not want to engage in communicative activities               | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| e) Examinations are traditionally grammar based                             | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| f) Large class size   | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| g) The differences between EFL/ESL teaching contexts                        | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| h)Lack of training in CLT   | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| i) Not enough logistic support from administration                          | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| j) Teachers do not know what CLT means                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| k) Unsuitability of Western educational system in EFL context.              | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| l) Other  |   |   |   |

Write your views about the following questions .Please try to give as much detailed answers as possible.

10. What are the problems with using CLT in Bangladeshi higher secondary ELT classes? Describe.

11. How important do you think are the communicative activities in learning English in general?

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12. What do you think about the students' participation in the communicative activities in Bangladeshi ELT classes?

### Section Three -Pedagogical

13. Describe the role of learners in language classroom in Bangladesh.

14. How would you describe the role of teachers in language classroom in Bangladesh?

15. Do you often interfere when students are doing any communicative activities? If yes, why?

16. Do you often correct students if they make mistakes? Explain if students should be instantly corrected or not.

17. While teaching, what do you give more emphasis on? Give a rating from 7 to 1 with 7 the highest.

Explaining grammar rules	
Listening	
Speaking	
Reading	
Writing	
Games	
Explaining textbooks	
Translation into L1	

18. Do you engage students in any communicative activities as required to do in the textbook? What are those? Tick the ones you use.

Problem solving

Debate

Pair work

Group work

19. How often do you arrange students to do these communicative activities? Tick the one you do

Always                      sometimes                      rarely                      never

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20. How many students are there usually in your class?
21. How many of your students are involved in pair work and group work?
22. Do you follow the teachers' guide in preparing your lesson?
23. What technique do you use to teach grammar in your class?

=====

### **Appendix-B**

You are invited to participate in a study entitled

‘Communicative Language Teaching Approach at Higher Secondary Level in Bangladesh:  
Teachers’ Perceptions and Classroom Practice’

Dear Sir/Madam

I have undertaken a study on the topic mentioned above as part of the fulfillment of Masters program in ‘Practice of English Language Teaching’ under the Department of Humanities at the University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom. This research complies with the ethical standard for research with human subject.

The goal of this research is to investigate English as a Foreign Language teachers’ perceptions regarding Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in higher secondary education in Bangladesh. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the higher secondary ELT teachers’ perceptions about CLT and their real classroom practices. They are required to follow CLT syllabus and teaching method. Do they follow it and if they do not, what stops them from following CLT?

Research of this type is important because there is research evidence from a number of countries where the implementation of CLT has encountered a huge number of problems. The implementation of this innovative approach also depends on the teachers’ beliefs and understanding of CLT. So, it is crucially important to know about the beliefs of the teachers and the barriers to the implementation of CLT in Bangladesh. The finding of this study might well inform the concerned people about the real picture of ELT education and suggest solution to the problem.

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You are being asked to participate in this study as practising Bangladeshi EFL teachers for a long time. If you voluntarily participate in this study, your participation will include completion of a questionnaire and participation in interview. There is no known or anticipated risks to you for participating in this research.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may also withdraw from the research any time. However, your anonymity will be protected.

If you have any further queries regarding this study, please contact

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