

The Implementation of Communicative Language Teaching Approach in Selected Secondary School: Nepalese Teachers' Perspective

Trilok Datt Tiwari

Far Western University, Central Campus, Mahendranagar, Nepal
tttrilok@gmail.com

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received : 2021-10-25

Revised : 2021-11-23

Accepted : 2021-11-23

KEYWORDS

Communicative language

Teaching perceptions

Challenges

EFL situations

Secondary-level English teachers



ABSTRACT

Throughout the history of second/foreign language teaching, several methods and approaches have been developed. Among them, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been a popularly practiced method in the modern context as there are a large number of teachers around the world who claim that they are using CLT. However, previous studies revealed that there is a discrepancy between their claim and their performance in real practice. Therefore, this research aims at exploring the perceptions of Secondary-level English teachers towards the CLT method along with the activities they use and the challenges they encounter. Using a qualitative descriptive inquiry, a close-ended questionnaire was sent via e-mail to the four purposively selected teachers teaching in public Secondary-schools in Kanchanpur, Nepal. In addition, an interview protocol was used with Four of the teachers. The findings of the study revealed that the teachers had positive perceptions towards the CLT method. However, the present study also highlighted that the teachers did not involve many communicative activities which are essentially needed for the successful implementation of the method. This study further exposed that the participants seem encountered several challenges while implementing the CLT method which is quite similar to the challenges faced by the teachers in the region. These results emphasized that the teachers should try to contextualize and maximize communicative activities amidst the challenges.

1. Introduction

The use of CLT in teaching English has always been a challenging task for the teachers especially in English as a foreign language situations. Several studies have shown that teachers face many hindrances while implementing it in their classes (Abahussain, 2016; Abate, 2014; Alalwi, 2021; Asmari, 2015; Chang & Goswami, 2011; Hattani, 2018; Hussein, 2018; Mason & Payant, 2018; Rahman & Pandian, 2018; Takal et al., 2021). One of the reasons for these challenges may be due to the fact that CLT was introduced for teaching English as a second language especially to deal with the needs of the immigrants in English speaking Countries, however, later it was used in non-native countries (Canale, 1980). A method developed in one context faces several problems in another context if it is not adapted to the new context (Holliday, 1994). Despite the problems associated with CLT, Hattani (2018) says that it has been presented as a new approach in order to meet the challenges of the millennial era. He further mentions, "Scholars, educators, and teachers acknowledge the adoption of the communicative language teaching in EFL/ESL curriculum in order to

develop learners' English language competence"(p. 88). However, citing the studies of Canagarajah, 2005; Kumaravadivelu, 2001; Nunan, 2003; Humphries & Burns, 2015, Rahman and Pandian (2018) mention, "[...]the effectiveness of CLT around the globe has been questioned by several scholars"(p. 46). From the above discussion, it can be said that there are several practical challenges to implement CLT curriculum, may it be the EFL or the ESL situation.

In the context of Nepal, the CLT method has been adopted in the curriculum since 1995 (Tin, 2014). Despite the length of time it has been followed, the real implementation of it seems to be weak. In a study conducted by Karki (2014) found that Secondary-level English teachers of Nepal have sound theoretical knowledge of curriculum, but only a few of them use that knowledge in their real practice of teaching. This may be a reason that curricular goals are not properly met on the completion of the course. Discussing the problem Adhikari (2010) mentions, "The students specializing in English spend more than fifteen years learning this language by the time they complete their B.Ed. However, many lack even survival English to interact in and out of the classroom"(p. 2). He further

mentions that silence culture is prioritized in the traditional educational culture in Nepal. Therefore, the administrators often complain that English classes are noisy and undisciplined during pair and group work. From this, it is clear that still they think silent class is the symbol of effective class and the teachers who maintain pin-drop silence is considered to be an effective teacher (Tiwari, 2021). The existing belief system like this seems to go against CLT principles which is advocated by the secondary-level school curriculum in Nepal. In this context, talking about the significance of teaching methods for the real implementation of the curricular goals, Bhandari (2020) mentions, "The use of appropriate methods and techniques of English language teaching is worthy for effective and efficient teaching and learning"(p. 10). But in his study, he found that still the teachers are using teacher-centered traditional methods of teaching English in the class.

These methods do not provide ample opportunities for the learners to practice communication skills. This is the reason the curricular goals have not been met. In the same way, the proper implementation of curriculum is an essential thing for its effectiveness. It is the teaching method that transforms the learning achievement set by the curriculum into reality. So, the teaching method should be practical and effective in order to materialize the curricular goals (Curriculum Development Centre, 2007). Further, it clearly mentions the significant role played by the teacher as a communicator, co-learner, facilitator, motivator and an agent to make learners inquisitive in learning. Likewise, it advocates for a child-centered approach to be adopted. Regarding teaching-learning activities, it emphasizes project work, case study, and observation. Emphasis is equally given to making teaching-learning activities research-oriented, interactive, and promotional by conducting explorative, interactive, and innovative activities in the class. In the same line, Ministry of Education (2016) through SSDP tries to promote child friendly, learner-centered, and interactive pedagogies. It also advocates for child-centered active learning methods to be followed in the classroom.

Recently, the government of Nepal has changed its secondary-level English curriculum (grade 11 & 12). The newly devised curriculum has integrated four language skills and it has recommended not to teach grammar separately rather to teach it within the context of texts. It can be said that the focus in the updated curriculum has shifted from discrete teaching of grammatical points to teaching them in appropriate contexts. The curriculum mentions some principles of language pedagogy that include: content and language integrated learning, real-world link, diversity as a resource, learning through information and communication technology, and learner engagement (Curriculum Development Centre, 2019). Likewise, Ministry of Education Science and Technology

(2020) through Education Sector Plan, 2021-2030 mentions in its strategy that child-centered teaching methodology would be adopted for the successful implementation of the newly devised Secondary level curriculum. It also mentions that participatory, interactive, explorative, and problem-solving teaching methodology would be used instead of traditional teaching methodology based on the textbooks. Most of the principles of pedagogy mentioned in the newly devised curriculum and Education Sector Plan 2021-2030 go along with the principles of Communicative language teaching approach.

Moreover, this recently changed English curriculum of grade 11 and 12 aim at developing several competencies and among them two include: Listen and respond in English with accuracy and fluency, communicate clearly and effectively in a range of situations using verbal and non-verbal communication strategies (Curriculum Development Centre, 2019, p. 35). It has clearly mentioned that learners learn when they get sufficient opportunity to use language in appropriate contexts.

This clearly shows that the current curriculum is based on the principles of CLT. It tries to create opportunity for the interaction to take place in the class. However, in reality it is seen that the instructional principles mentioned by the curriculum have not been properly executed by the teachers in the implementation level (Alalwi, 2021; Karki, 2014; Noori, 2018; Subedi, 4 February, 2019; Wei et al., 2018). Although several studies have been carried out in Nepal to explore the similar issue previously, however, since the implementation of the newly devised English curriculum of grade 11 and 12 in 2019, no research studies have been conducted to explore the classroom practices of the teachers.

Moreover, there is the dire need of exploring the activities of the teachers to see if they go along with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching approach which has been envisioned by the newly devised curriculum. In addition to this, there is an essential requirement of a study which could explore the challenges faced by the teachers while implementing it so that the theoretical principles of Communicative Language Teaching could be practically implemented in the context of Nepal. I believe, the present study could be useful for the teachers who are adopting CLT for teaching English in their classes. They could get insights into the problems and devise strategies to overcome those challenges while implementing CLT principles. Further, the study could be equally useful for the researchers and the policy makers who are interested in English Language teaching methods. In addition, the present study may be useful for the people who are responsible for the evaluation of newly introduced Secondary-Level English curriculum in Nepal.

Thus, the present study attempts to explore how the Secondary-level English teachers view Communicative language teaching method and how they implement it in their daily practice of teaching through their perception. To obtain adequate information about the issue in question, the following research questions were designed:

- 1) How do the Secondary-level English teachers perceive the Communicative language teaching method?
- 2) What kinds of communicative language teaching activities do they apply in the class?
- 3) What are the challenges they face while materializing the Communicative language teaching method?

By answering the research questions mentioned above, this study may vividly present the myths and realities of CLT implementation in Secondary-level English classrooms in Nepal from the perspectives of teachers who have been involved in the profession for a long time.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Communicative Language Teaching

Learning process. Communicative language teaching has been widely practiced method of teaching second/foreign language in the modern context (Teh, 2021). It came into existence due to shortcomings of previously practiced language teaching methods such as Grammar-translation and Audiolingualism. Explaining the history of it, Richards (2006) mentions that it was in Britain in 1960s Communicative language teaching came into existence due to the drawbacks of earlier structural methods. He further mentions that it was first proposed in 1970s and since then it has become very influential language teaching approach around the world. According to Larsen-Freeman (2000), the development of communicative competence is the goal of language teaching.

Based on Courtney (2020), there are four criteria to design, implement and evaluate communicative activities in the language class which include: fun activities, meaningful activities, interactive activities and routine activities. According to him, fun activities help mitigate stress and motivate learning. Meaningful activities help enhance fluency in language and focus on sharing rather than grammar points. Interactive activities help develop accuracy by focusing on completing the shared tasks. Likewise, routine activities help deepen memory by repeating the task or using it in a modified way. In the same way, Sreehari (2012) mentions some of the activities that are used in communicative classrooms which include: Role plays, interviews, discussions, information gap activities, language games, language

learning simulations, problem solving tasks, quizzes, and surveys.

According to him, these activities help develop language skills and functions in an authentic context. The communicative activities that are performed in the class are thought to play an important role to develop communicative proficiency on the learners. Looking at the present situation, Teh (2021) talks about the paradigm shift in CLT due to the global pandemic of COVID-19. He mentions that due to present situation of pandemic, running physical classes are not possible. So, throughout the world classes are run online, may they be synchronous or asynchronous. He argues that the CLT method can still be used online, though there are some challenges due to technology. He further opines that online CLT approaches such as computer-mediated- learning are of asynchronous nature where collaborative learning is possible and even the shy students can actively take part in learning. He further mentions the importance of synchronous learning using software like Zoom and Discord which can be used for the implementation of CLT approach. Using these soft wares we can mimic the real-life situations where the students can interact using multimedia tools like video and audio.

2.2 The Role of Teachers and Students in CLT

The role of a teacher is that of a facilitator in learning the language who provides opportunities to the learners to practice the language. According to Sreehari (2012), "The role of a teacher in a communicative classroom is to facilitate language learning in meaningful ways"(p. 89). Similarly, Teh (2021) asserts that the teacher plays the role of a facilitator and the students work collaboratively in a group. Likewise, Hattani (2018) mentions that the role of a teacher in CLT is less dominant. He further mentions that the role of a teacher in CLT changes from just a transmitter of knowledge to a mentor and a co-communicator. He also mentions that CLT emphasizes learner-centered methodology, so the learners play an active and a key role in the

2.3 Theory of Learning

Learning theory in Communicative language teaching focuses on learning to communicate in the target language rather than memorizing a set of grammatical rules and patterns. Therefore, different kinds of games are used in CLT classes to motivate the learners to use the language. In a study conducted by Dewi et al. (2017) in order to find out the impact of communicative games on students' speaking skills showed that communicative games have positive impact on developing speaking skills on the students. Further the study revealed that the students enjoy, get motivated and enhance confidence through games as communicative activity in the class.

Therefore, the focus of CLT is on the use of language for real communication. Describing theory of learning in CLT, Richards and Rodgers (2014) talk about three principles that include: communication principle, task principle and meaningfulness principles. The communication principle says that the activities that involve real communication promote learning. The task principle advocates for the use of the activities in which language is used in carrying out the meaningful task. It believes that when language is used in performing meaningful task help promote learning. In the same way, the meaningfulness principle says that language that is meaningful to the learners supports learning.

3. Method

The present study is designed as a descriptive qualitative inquiry. It attempts to explore how Secondary-level English teachers in EFL classrooms of public schools in Nepal implement Communicative language teaching method from their perspectives.

In order to conduct the study, four public schools were selected involving: two schools from urban area and the remaining two from rural area of Kanchanpur district, Nepal. The schools were purposively chosen from different locations of urban and rural areas so as to make the study more representative and comprehensive. The participants of the study were four teachers consisting of a teacher from each school.

The participants were selected purposefully to get adequate information about the research questions posed. Further, the selection was based on the personal judgment of the researcher keeping in mind the purpose of the study. In addition to these, familiarity of the researcher with the participants was another reason for the selection so that he could easily gain access to the sites and information. Table 1 depicts the background information of the research participants.

Table 1. Participants' background information

| No. | Participants | Gender | Teaching experience | Training on CLT | Implementation of CLT | Length of implementation |
|-----|--------------|--------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | T1 | M | 10 years | yes | yes | 5 year |
| 2. | T2 | M | 7 years | yes | yes | 3 year |
| 3. | T3 | F | 3 years | yes | yes | 2 year |
| 4. | T4 | F | 9 years | yes | yes | 3 year |

It shows that all the teachers' teaching experience ranges from 1 to 10 years. In addition, all of them have got training on CLT and they have applied it in their classes. The length of their CLT practice ranges from 3 to 5 years.

3.1 Instruments and Data Collection Procedures

For the collection of data, two instruments were used: a close-ended questionnaire and an interview protocol. The questionnaire was based on the theme of Communicative language teaching principles. It was aimed to address the first and the second research questions: 1. How do the Secondary-level English teachers perceive the Communicative language teaching method? 2. What kinds of communicative language teaching activities do they apply? The questionnaire contained ten statements related to the teachers' activities in their communicative language teaching classrooms. The ten statements contained in the questionnaire included: I use group discussion in the class, I use individual or group presentation, I use debates, I use games, I use simulations, I use interviews, I use the following direction, I use role plays, I use quizzes, and I use picture descriptions. Each statement in the questionnaire consisted of four responses that included: Always, often, seldom, and

never. It was distributed via emails to the selected participants in order to find out the Secondary-level English teachers' beliefs towards communicative language teaching method. Before sending the emails, the researcher made phone calls to the participants for their consent and interest in the study. The objectives of the study was openly shared among them so that

they could be more interested in it. The researcher also assured them of privacy and secrecy of the responses obtained from them.

After the participants filled and returned the questionnaire via mail, the participants were requested for a short interview. Before the interview, the researcher got their permission to audio-record their voice using a cell phone. After getting their consent, an interview protocol was designed which consisted of two semi-structured questions that aimed to address the third research question: What are the challenges they face while materializing the Communicative language teaching method? The first question was intended to obtain information about the challenges that they encounter while implementing the Communicative language teaching method in their classes, and the second question was aimed to obtain information about their suggestion for the successful implementation of it.

3.2 Data Analysis Procedure

For the analysis procedure of obtained data in the study, the framework developed by Miles et al. (2014) was used. Their framework for data analysis includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

First of all, for the condensation of questionnaire data, each response obtained from the participants was properly tabulated depending on the number of each response. Then the tabulated results were converted into percentages. Based on the display result, a conclusion was drawn. Likewise, for the analysis of interview data, the audio recording was transcribed in the English language. Next, the transcription was read several times to understand and focus on the main information. Then, the final data were displayed in the form of excerpts. Finally,

interpretation and conclusion was drawn to answer the research questions posed.

4. Findings

This section explains the result of the study. It consists of three sub-sections that elaborate the findings to address the research questions.

RQ 1: How do the Secondary-level English teachers perceive the Communicative language teaching method?

In this study perception refers to the way English teachers perceive Communicative language teaching method that they apply in their respective classes. Table 2 provides their perception regarding its implementation in their classes. It showed that most of the participants had a positive perception towards the implementation of the Communicative language teaching method.

Table 2. General Information about teachers' perception of CLT

| No. | Item | T1 | T2 | T3 | T4 |
|-----|---|-----|-----|--------|-----|
| 1. | Understanding the basic principles of CLT | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 2. | Training in CLT implementation | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |
| 3. | The practice of CLT in the class | Yes | Yes | May be | Yes |
| 4. | State of agreement on the importance of CLT | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

The result showed that all the teachers had basic understanding about the principles of CLT. Out of four, three teachers had obtained training in CLT implementation. One of the teachers expressed uncertainty regarding the practice of CLT in the class, however, she showed her agreement on the importance of using CLT in the class. This means she was not fully confident that her practice goes along with CLT principles.

RQ 2: What kinds of communicative language teaching activities do they apply in the class?

The teachers were found using several communicative activities in the class that include: Group discussion, role plays, individual or group presentation, picture description and games. Chart 1 depicts the overall communicative activities that the teachers used in their classes.

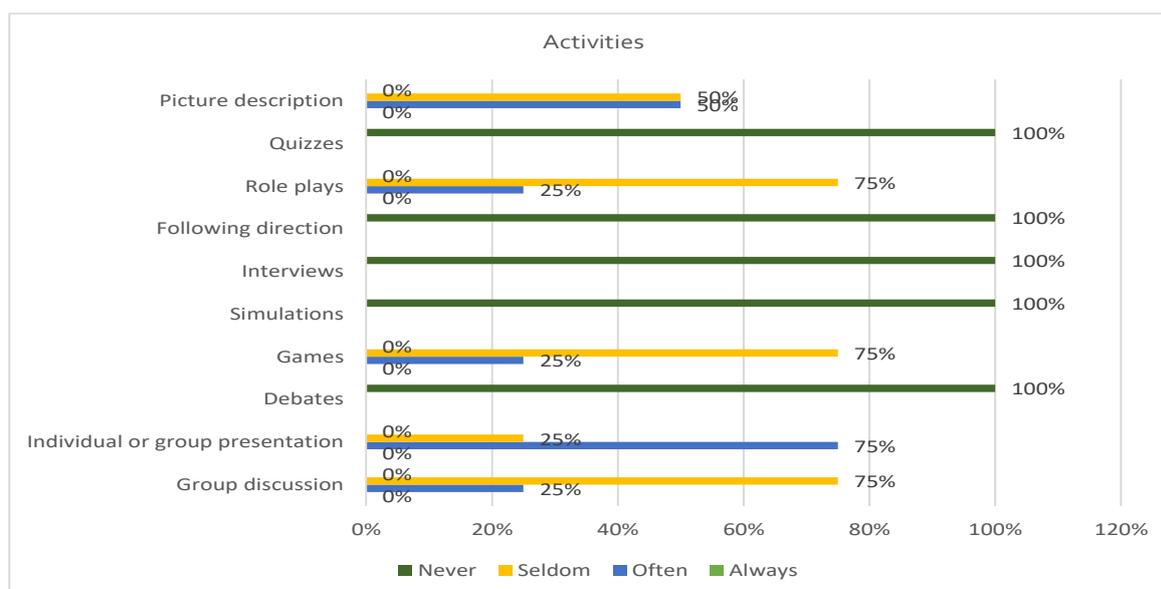


Figure 1. Communicative activities in the class

Individual or group presentation became the most preferred activity in the class to materialize the CLT principles. Based on the result, 75% often used this activity in the class as part of doing communicative

tasks while only 25% seldom used it. Likewise, group discussion, role-plays and games were other activities in the class in which 25% often used these activities while 75% seldom initiated them in their classes. The last activity was picture description in which half of the teachers (50%) often used it in the class while the remaining half seldom used it. Likewise, quizzes, following direction activity, interviews, simulations, and debates were never used by the participants.

RQ 3: What are the challenges they face while materializing the Communicative language teaching method?

Initially, all the participants were ready to take part in the follow-up interview after they returned the questionnaire via mail. However, one of the participants showed little diffidence when the researcher was ready for the interview. Therefore, the researcher included only three participants for the interview. All these three participants used the communicative language teaching method in their daily practice of teaching English to Secondary-level students. The teachers described that their own learning experience as a student in school influenced their present teaching as a teacher. They revealed that they had been taught using the Grammar Translation Method in their school. Therefore, they became fully accustomed to this method of teaching language. Shifting from a fully accustomed system to a new system was a challenging task for them. One of the participants stated

In my school time our teacher used GT method of teaching language. I still remember the way he taught us English using this method. Now I realize that the way he taught was not as effective as the communicative language teaching method that I use today for the development of communicative competence in the learners. However, shifting my mentality from the GT method to CLT is challenging as I have been the product of it. (Interview vignette of T2)

Another difficulty experienced by the teachers while using CLT was the silent culture in the Nepalese society which encouraged the students to remain silent in the class. Out of three, two participants argued that silence culture in the classroom was deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of the students. They further argued that this culture hindered the students from having classroom interaction and discussion which ultimately creates problems on the parts of teachers to implement CLT in the class. T4 asserted

Remaining silent in the class is considered to be the symbol of discipline in Nepalese school classes. From the beginning, they are taught to be silent and docile. As a result of this, they do not tend to argue and question the teacher rather they love to be silent, may it be language, math or science class. (Interview vignette of T4)

Likewise the assessment system of English in Secondary-level was taken as a challenging factor for materializing CLT in the class. All the three participants in the study revealed that the exam system primarily focused on the writing rather than on speaking which discouraged the students to get involved in communicative activities in the class. This also encouraged the teachers to minimize classroom activities and just focus on completing the course from the exam point of view. One of the participants stated

Our exam system of English which focuses on writing is one of the responsible factors for the ineffective implementation of CLT in the class. (Interview vignette of T1)

It shows that the exam system affects and shapes the teachers' practices of teaching and students' expectations of learning English.

Similarly, lack of facilities such as access to the internet and library was another problem faced by the teachers. They argued that CLT required a lot of authentic materials which they lacked. When asked about their experience of collecting and preparing materials for classroom use, one of the teachers revealed that sometimes he did not even get English textbook in time. He asserted

Getting the textbook in time is a great matter for us. We do not have a cassette to listen to the script given in the book. Nor have we internet and laptops to download and show authentic video materials to the students. In this context, how can I fully materialize the CLT curriculum? (Interview vignette of T4)

Besides these, the participants in interview shared some of the problems they face in the implementation of CLT in the class which include: large class size, lack of curriculum dissemination, lack of teacher education, and lack of students' willingness to communicate. These problems shared by the participants seem to be common problems faced by all the language teachers who want to adopt CLT in the class.

5. Discussion

The study attempted to explore the perceptions of the Secondary-level English teachers towards CLT, their activities to implement it in their classes, and the challenges they encountered in daily practice. Analysis of the data obtained from questionnaire and

interview is elaborated by comparing the findings of the present study with the previous literatures and theories in order to reach to the conclusion.

In terms of teachers' perception towards CLT, it was found that most of the teachers had positive views regarding the use of CLT in the class. All the teachers had a basic understanding of the Communicative language teaching method. Out of four participants, three had already got training on CLT, but one of the teachers had not got any training on it. Despite the lack of training, the teacher demonstrated her agreement on the importance of using CLT in the class. However, when asked about her practice of the CLT method in the class, she was found to be uncertain. That means she was not sure whether she was properly implementing it or not. This clearly shows that she had a positive view of the CLT method, but she was not fully confident about it due to the lack of proper training. The findings is in line with Sunar (2018) who conducted a study in Nepal entitled "Use of Communicative Language Teaching in EFL Classroom: Teachers' perceptions and Practices" to explore the perceptions and practices of teachers' on the use of communicative language teaching. The findings of the study showed that the teachers had positive perceptions towards the use of the communicative language teaching approach in their classes.

Likewise, the findings of the present study conform to the results obtained by Hussein (2018) who conducted mixed-method research entitled "A Mixed Methods Study of Teachers Perceptions of Communicative Language Teaching in Iranian High Schools" to explore Iranian high school English teachers' perceptions of CLT and the factors that hindered them from applying CLT in the class. The findings of the study showed that the teachers had positive attitudes towards CLT in general and the teachers had favorable attitudes towards group/pair work in particular. Likewise, the present study bears many similarities with the study carried out by Koirala (2013) in Nepal who investigated the attitudes of secondary level English language teachers' towards Communicative approach to language teaching using survey research design. The findings of the study showed that the teachers had positive attitudes towards CLT. Similarly, the present study bears similarity with the study of Hattani (2018) in Moroccan context and Takal et al. (2021) in Afghan context in which the teachers showed positive attitude towards CLT. From the studies mentioned above, it can be said that currently the Communicative Language teaching has become popular language teaching approach around the world (Song, 2019). Most of the teachers show positive perceptions and attitudes towards it, may it be the case of Nepal, Morocco, or Iran. This popularity and widespread nature of CLT indicates the process of globalization which is helping English and English language

teaching methods to spread quickly around the globe. In this connection, it is relevant to cite Appadurai (2006) who has talked about five types of forces and flows of globalization which he calls "Scapes". The five scapes in the words of Appadurai include Ethnoscapes or flows of people, Technoscapes or flows of technology, Financescapes or flows of money, Media's capes or flows of information, and Icescapes or flows of ideas. English education and English language teaching thus seem to be an Ideoscape, that is, a global flow of ideas about language teaching and learning. This means due to the forces of globalization CLT is spreading not only in ESL situations but also in EFL situations.

Thus, it can be said that CLT has become popular in Nepal due to the forces of globalization in the words of Appadurai. Furthermore, it seems that the majority of the teachers blindly accept it without questioning and analyzing the feasibility of CLT principles in their context. It seems as if they are adopting it because they often hear others adopting it. This is all happening due to the globalization of language teaching ideas that are quickly spreading around the world. There is a paradigm shift in the field of ELT in Nepal due to the forces of global trends (Jora, 2019). However, directly transferring the western-originated approach to other non-European countries face several challenges. Therefore, specific contextual factors should be considered before CLT is adopted in new EFL contexts (Holliday, 1994; Song, 2019).

Regarding communicative tasks in the class, the teachers were found using numerous activities that included: Group discussion, role plays, individual or group presentation, picture description, and games. However, the participants in the study never used simulations, debates, quizzes, and the activity of the following direction. Among the activities they used, individual or group presentation was found to be the most preferred activity by the teachers in the class. Surprisingly, the findings revealed that 75% of teachers seldom used group discussion, role-plays, and games while only 25% often used them in their classes. It shows that the preference of CLT implementation activities in the classroom does not much involve the use of interactive activities and child-centered teaching methodology.

The results also show that the teachers do not much prefer communicative games in the class which can motivate the students to use language in real situations. According to Dewi et al. (2017), the games are very fruitful in CLT classes because they can stimulate students' interaction in the classroom. They further assert that the games combined with a communicative approach can help create a good environment for learning, motivate them to take part in activities and finally improve their communicative competence.

However, the present study showed that only a few communicative activities are applied by the participants in their real practice of teaching. The findings of the study bears similarity to the results obtained by Adhikari (2010) who found that interactional techniques such as dramatic activities and role plays were completely absent in the classes he observed. Perhaps these two studies bear similarities in the findings due to the same socio-economic situation of the country. The findings of the present study also bears some similarities with the study conducted by Hussein (2018) in Libyan context in which the results showed that there was mismatch between the teachers' practices and the theoretical principles of the CLT curriculum. In addition, the findings showed that the teachers were found using traditional methods of teaching in their classes and there was minimal use of group and pair work with very little participation of the students. The findings of the present study also bears similarities with the Toro et al. (2018) study which revealed that the communicative activities that were frequently used by the teachers were not enough to promote active participation of the students in the class. However, the present study is in contradiction with the strategy of Education Sector Plan, 2021-2030 which mentions that participatory, interactive, explorative and problem-solving teaching methodology would be used instead of traditional teaching methodology based on textbook. Likewise, it advocates for child-centered teaching methodology for the successful implementation of the newly devised Secondary-level curriculum (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2020).

However, the preferred choice of communicative activities in the study rightly indicates that still, the teachers are using the traditional method of teaching English. It is because the choice of activity in the class is directly related to the teaching method adopted by the teachers. For example, it is seen in the present study that only 25% of the teachers often used group discussion which is an important activity for the implementation of CLT principles. Likewise, the teachers in the study are not seen much interested in organizing communicative activities such as games in the language class. The students do not learn a language just by sitting in the class, listening to what the teachers say, and memorizing the pre-packaged items. They should be actively involved in different activities for effective learning to take place (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Gholami et al., 2014). It shows that the teachers in the study simply seem to claim that they are using CLT, however, in reality, there is a discrepancy between what they claim and what they do.

Another concern of the present study was to explore the challenges the teachers faced while using CLT method in their classes. The results of the study showed that there are several challenges they

encounter while materializing the CLT principles in their real practice which include: the influence of GT method in their school time, preference of silence culture in Nepalese classes, and writing focused exam system. Besides these, the participants revealed several other problems such as: large class size, lack of curriculum dissemination, lack of teacher education, and students' willingness to communicate. Almost all the problems shared by the participants preventing them from implementing CLT principles are similar to the previous studies carried out by Alalwi (2021) in Saudi Arabian context, Hussein (2018) in Libyan context, Sunar (2018) in Nepalese context, Chang and Goswami (2011) in Taiwanese context, Rahman and Pandian (2018) in Bangladeshi context, Asmari (2015) in Saudi Arabian context, Panhwar et al. (2017) in Pakistani context, Kwon (2017) in Thai context, Hattani (2018) in Moroccan context, Wei et al. (2018) in Asian context, Song (2019) in Chinese context, Nayeem et al. (2020) in Bangladeshi context, Sreehari (2012); (in Indian context, Takal et al. (2021) in Afghan context and Chamlagain (2004) in Nepalese context.

The majority of the cited studies represent the Asian region except for some countries. It indicates that almost all the teachers in Asian countries face similar kinds of problems while implementing the CLT method. Probably, the findings of these countries bear many things in common due to the similar socio-economic condition and almost similar socio-cultural situations that they share. The findings of the present study imply that the policy makers should not directly import the western teaching approaches without considering the contextual constraints (Humphries & Burns, 2015 as cited in Rahman & Pandian, 2018, p. 46). For example, CLT was primarily developed for ESL situations particularly for immigrant learners, not for EFL situations (Canale, 1980). If we use it in our context, we are almost bound to face challenges (Holliday, 1994) as shown in the present study. Likewise, Kumaravadivelu's concept on post-method pedagogy also talks about the same problem as discussed above. His three pedagogic parameters are quite relevant to cite here which include:

The parameter of particularity, the parameter of practicality, and the parameter of possibility. The first parameter states that a language pedagogy should be context-sensitive. The second parameter focuses on the importance of local-specific practice. The last parameter is related to power and dominance which is used to create and maintain social inequality. This implies that the teachers should create theories by conducting action research or testing or evaluating the usefulness of professional theories (Chen, 2014; Kumaravadivelu, 2003, 2006). This means that if CLT like approach is accepted blindly without evaluating the local socio-political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural situation, then there are problems at the implementation level.

Thus, the present study indicates that the teachers are almost sure to face several challenges while implementing CLT principles in their classrooms. The problems faced by the teachers may be different from one situation to the next. Therefore, it seems to be a wise idea to examine the context before the adoption of CLT and accordingly devise context-specific coping strategies.

6. Conclusion

The present study looks at the perceptions of Secondary-level English teachers towards the Communicative language teaching method and the activities they use for the implementation of it. It also attempted to find out the challenges they face while materializing CLT principles in classroom practice. Based on the results obtained from the data set, three conclusions can be drawn. First, the study revealed positive perceptions of teachers towards the Communicative language teaching method. They perceived it to be a useful method for teaching the English language to the learners, though they are not fully confident in using it in their classes. This is so because the process of globalization has made CLT a widespread entity to be used and discussed among the language teachers around the globe. Second, the findings of the study showed that the teachers used several activities to implement the CLT method in the class. However, the activities they used in the class were not much involved interactive activities which are essential for the implementation of the communicative language teaching method. Third, the study revealed that the participants encountered several challenges while implementing the CLT method which is similar to the challenges faced by the teachers in other Asian countries such as Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, India, and Taiwan.

The study suggests that there should be more interactive types of activities in the class for the real implementation of the Communicative language teaching method even though there are several practical and contextual challenges while implementing it. The study has several limitations that should be noted before generalizing it to any other situations. The findings of the study are limited to four English teachers teaching in public secondary schools of Kanchanpur district of Nepal which lags in terms of development. The researcher only used a close-ended questionnaire and an interview protocol for the collection of data. There could have been different results if the researcher had also used classroom observation to triangulate the data. However, the present study could be useful for the teachers who are adopting CLT for teaching English in schools. They can get insights into the problems while implementing CLT principles. Similarly, the study could be equally useful for the researchers who are interested in English language teaching methods. For future research in this area, the researcher

suggests a replication study involving several participants from various parts of the country which might be worth conducting for more trustworthy results.

7. Acknowledgment

I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback to improve this article. I have no conflict of interest.

References

- Abahussain, M. O. (2016). *Implementing communicative language teaching method in Saudi Arabia: challenges faced by formative year teachers in state schools*. [Doctoral thesis, University of Stirling]. STORRE: Stirling Online Research Repository. [https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/handle/1893/24166#](https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/handle/1893/24166#.YaG7zKJBzIU). YaG7zKJBzIU
- Abate, E. B. (2014). Prospects and challenges of Communicative Approach in EFL context. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(25), 128-136.
- Adhikari, B. R. (2010). Teaching speaking in the Nepalese context: Problems and ways of overcoming them. *Journal of NELTA*, 15(1-2), 1-9. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3126/nelta.v15i1-2.4602>
- Alalwi, F. S. (2021). EFL teachers-related challenges when using communicative language teaching. *Applied Linguistics Research Journal*, 5(5), 1-5. <https://doi.org/10.14744/alrj.2021.08379>
- Appadurai, A. (2006). Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy. In M. G. Durham & D. M. Kellner (Eds.), *Media and cultural studies: Key works* (pp. 584-603). Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Asmari, A. A. A. (2015). Communicative language teaching in EFL university context: Challenges for teachers. *Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 6(5), 976-984. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0605.09>
- Bhandari, B. L. (2020). Methods and techniques used by English teacher educators in Nepal. *Journal La Edusci*, 1(4), 9-15. <https://doi.org/10.37899/journallaedusci.v1i4.211>
- Canale, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 1-47.
- Chamlagain, B. (2004). *Problems in applying communicative approach in secondary level*

- [Unpublished M. Ed Thesis]. Tribhuvan University Kathmandu.
- Chang, M., & Goswami, J. S. (2011). Factors affecting the implementation of Communicative language teaching in Taiwanese college English classes. *English Language Teaching*, 4(2), 3-12. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v4n2p3>
- Chen, M. (2014). Postmethod pedagogy and its influence on EFL teaching strategies. *English Language Teaching*, 7(5), 17-24. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v7n5p17>
- Chickering, A. W., & Gamson, Z. F. (1987). Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. *AAHE Bulletin*, 39(3), 3-7. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED282491.pdf>
- Courtney, D. (2020). Activities to activate and maintain a communicative classroom. *English Teaching Forum*, 58(1), 10-21
- Curriculum Development Centre. (2007). *National curriculum framework for school education in Nepal*. Bhaktapur
- Curriculum Development Centre. (2019). *National Curriculum Framework*. Bhaktapur,
- Dewi, R. S., Kultsum, U., & Armadi, A. (2017). Using communicative games in improving students' speaking skills. *English Language Teaching*, 10(1), 63-71. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n1p63>
- Gholami, V., Moghaddam, M. M., & Attaran, A. (2014). Towards an interactive EFL class: Using active learning strategies. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(19), 190-194.
- Hattani, H. A. (2018). Communicative Language Teaching in the Moroccan EFL classroom. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 3(2), 87-98. <https://dx.doi.org/10.21462/jeltl.v3i2.108>
- Holliday, A. (1994). The house of TESEP and the communicative approach: the special needs of state English language education. *ELT Journal*, 48(1), 3-11.
- Hussein, S. (2018). *Factors affecting the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching in Libyan secondary schools* (Publication Number UMI No.11017840) [Doctoral dissertation, Sheffield Hallam University]. Dissertations and Theses. https://shura.shu.ac.uk/23409/1/Hussein_2018_PhD_FactorsAffectingThe.pdf
- Jora, M. B. (2019). ELT in Nepal: Exploring the paradigm shift. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 9(1), 784-788. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.9.01.2019.p8597>
- Karki, M. (2014). Classroom implementation practices of the Secondary Level English curriculum: A case of Nepal. *Journal of NELTA*, 19(1-2), 88-98.
- Koirala, D. (2013). *Attitudes of teachers towards communicative approach* [Unpublished M. Ed. thesis, Kirtipur, Tribhuvan University].
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003). *Beyond methods: Macrostrategies for language teaching*. Yale University Press.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006). *Understanding language teaching: From method to postmethod*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associate.
- Kwon, Y. (2017). A study of Thai teachers' perceptions toward the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching of English. *HRD Journal*, 8(1), 114-125.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Mason, A., & Payant, C. (2018). Experienced teachers' beliefs and practices toward communicative approaches in teaching English as a foreign language in rural Ukraine. *Tesol Journal*, 10(1), 1-15 <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.377>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Ministry of Education. (2016). *School sector development plan 2016/17-2022/23*. Kathmandu, <https://moe.gov.np/article/1386/school-sector-development-plan-201617-202223-english.html>
- Ministry of Education Science and Technology. (2020). *Nepal Education Sector Plan 2021-2030*. Kathmandu, <https://moe.gov.np/article/1450/education-sector-plan-20212030.html>
- Nayeen, C. M. J., Islam, K. M. A., Chowdhury, F. N., & Zayed, N. M. (2020). Testing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) through English For Today (EFT) in Bangladesh: Challenges faced by tertiary students initially. *American International Journal of Education and Linguistics Research*, 3(2), 19-27. <http://dx.doi.org/10.46545/aijeler.v3i2.196>
- Noori, A. (2018). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) In Efl Context: Exploring Afghan Efl lecturers' perceived challenges in implementing CLT. *International Journal of Research*, 5(16), 1049-1063.

- Panhwar, A. H., Baloch, S., & Khan, S. (2017). Making Communicative Language Teaching work in Pakistan. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 7(3), 226-234. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v7n3p226>
- Rahman, M. M., & Pandian, A. (2018). A critical investigation of English language teaching in Bangladesh: Unfulfilled expectations after two decades of Communicative Language Teaching. *English Today*, 34(3), 43-49. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S026607841700061X>
- Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Song, B. e. (2019). The research on effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching in China. *Asian Culture and History*, 11(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ach.v11n1p1>
- Sreehari, P. (2012). Communicative Language Teaching: Possibilities and problems. *English Language Teaching*, 5(2), 87-93. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n12p87>
- Subedi, G. (4 February, 2019). Implementation of national curriculum. *Kathmandu Today*. <https://www.kathmandutoday.com/2019/02/365109.html>
- Sunar, R. (2018). *Use of Communicative language teaching in EFL classroom: Teachers' perceptions and practices* [Unpublished M.Ed. thesis], Tribuvan University
- Takal, G. M., Ibrahim, N. M., & Jamal, M. (2021). Communicative Language Teaching in public universities in Afghanistan: Perceptions and challenges. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 11(11), 1434-1444. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1111.11>
- Teh, W. (2021). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the context of online learning: A literature review. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, 1(2), 65-71.
- Tin, T. B. (2014). A look into the local pedagogy of an English language classroom in Nepal. *Language Teaching Research*, 18(3), 397-417. <https://doi.org/0.1177/1362168813510387>
- Tiwari, T. D. (2021). Classroom Interaction in Communicative Language Teaching of Public Secondary Schools in Nepal. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 5(2), 373-386. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v5i2.766>
- Toro, V., Camacho-Minuche, G., Pinza-Tapia, E., & Paredes, F. (2018). The use of the Communicative Language Teaching Approach to improve students' oral skills. *English EFL context in Asia. Asian Culture and History*, 10(2), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ach.v10n2p1>
- Wei, L., Lin, H.-H., & Litton, F. (2018). *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Language Teaching*, 12(1), 110-118. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v12n1p110>