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Applying the Communicative Approach in Assessing EFL Young Learners

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Abstract

In the evaluative phase concerning the practicality of language acquisition, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methodology has emerged as the preeminent standard in educational paradigms. Nevertheless, the import of integrating CLT becomes particularly salient within the framework of language adoption as a medium of communication. The application of a communicative approach to the learning and evaluation of English, specifically for young English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, confronts distinct challenges. These challenges, if not effectively navigated, present a potential hazard to the realization of desired educational outcomes and have the capacity to hinder academic performance. Consequently, this undermines the efficacy of the approach vis-à-vis its envisioned impact. In light of this, the present study endeavors to scrutinize prospective challenges that may exert an adverse influence on communicative language assessment in the context of young EFL learners. Moreover, the study seeks to proffer viable solutions to mitigate these challenges based on empirical findings. The primary objective of this research is to engender awareness regarding the inherent difficulties associated with the implementation of the communicative approach. The research further furnishes actionable and efficacious measures conducive to both EFL education and the overall learning experience of young students. A pivotal aspect for the proficient application of the communicative approach as an assessment technique for young learners lies in the meticulous execution of assessment tasks.

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Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Computer Mediated Communication (CMC).

Introduction

Language, a crucial component of communication, serves to engage with the community comprehensively. Recent technological advancements and the imperative to adapt to their outcomes have heightened the importance of language. Merely being proficient in one's native language is insufficient, as proficiency in other languages is deemed crucial in various domains such as finance, employment, education, and policy. The global context further compounds this need, where proficiency in a foreign language, particularly English as a lingua franca, is often indispensable (Crystal, 2003; Harmer, 2015). In the context of English as a EFL, governmental entities accord a high priority to ELT within the educational framework. With the overarching objective of augmenting the EFL landscape, ongoing adjustments and evaluations in educational systems are integral. Simultaneously, educators and learners, occupying pivotal roles within the educational milieu, bear the responsibility of executing teaching, learning, and assessment procedures in alignment with the established educational curriculum. Consequently, the

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English language assumes heightened importance across various dimensions, emphasizing the imperative for individuals to surpass proficiency solely in their native language. Moreover, this underscores the pivotal role of ELT in the educational framework, marked by continuous adaptations aimed at enhancing English language proficiency within the EFL milieu. Both educators and students emerge as crucial agents in the execution of pedagogical, learning, and evaluative processes congruent with the prescribed educational plans.

This research endeavoured to elucidate the current state of EFL education by scrutinizing its pertinence to instructors' pedagogical practices related to testing and assessment. Within the EFL milieu, the educational system assumes responsibility for supervising both public and private educational institutions in adherence to the national curriculum. Despite the frequent alignment of government policies and programs with a communicative approach to education, there exists a recurrent incongruence with the assessment requisites embedded in the national educational structure. This incongruity may precipitate a pessimistic reaction, as educators find themselves constrained by temporal constraints and endeavouring to conclude the curriculum expeditiously to prepare students for examinations (Carless, 2003). As McKay (2009) references to a teacher's ability to create stimulating environments and motivate young learners for active language engagement notwithstanding, a singular critique possesses the potential to disrupt the entirety of such efforts. Even when educators are adept and employ efficacious communication strategies within the classroom, the adoption of inappropriate assessment methodologies can subvert the educational dynamics. In ELT, besides the pivotal influence of policies on evaluative protocols, another critical determinant lies in the interplay of EL learning and teaching practices. Learning and teaching practices, intertwined with assessment procedures, are integral facets of language education across diverse contexts. Consequently, the salience of assessment methods is heightened in relation to the efficacy of language instruction.

The study of North & Hughes (2003) explain that it is imperative to underscore that EL assessment should align with the curriculum in accordance with the learning objectives, the nature of tasks assigned to students, and the incorporation of instructional content. In this context, the congruence between assessment practices and the learning process is essential. Alderson, Clapham, & Wall (1995) argued that assessments impact are crucial aspects of classroom dynamics. Teachers need to discern the underlying factors and considerations driving these changes. Merely comprehending the policy is insufficient; understanding its implementation by the teacher is paramount. In such sense, Fullan (2015) underscoring the influential role of educators in instigating transformations within the educational trajectory, it is crucial to recognize that teachers bear the responsibility of translating these changes into the classroom environment. From this standpoint, it can be posited that the EL assessment strategies and modalities preferred by teachers serve as indicative manifestations of their ELT practices and their understanding of EL teaching and learning dynamics. The focal point of the present study lies in scrutinizing the assessment and evaluation practices employed by EFL teachers in public schools, leading to various conclusions regarding the ELT practices and comprehension of the targeted EFL teachers.

In education, program goals and subject content must align. Discrepancies between educational policies and implementation reveal inconsistencies among teachers and institutions in teaching and assessment approaches. Uniformity between institutions and teachers is challenging. Language teachers play a crucial role in adapting to evolving trends in ELT and aligning teaching and evaluation with EFL programs. Teachers' selection of ELT and evaluation strategies is influenced by recommended procedures in EFL programs. Teachers must align with ELT developments and employ suitable teaching and evaluation methods. Consistency in policies and practices is essential in both ELT and language assessment. In young learners' classrooms, fostering an active learning environment is crucial. Pupils should actively discover information, and activities should enhance communication skills through language use, incorporating enjoyable elements like walking, dancing, and monitoring progress.

Stated differently, an environment conducive to lively and active participation is imperative in a classroom comprising young language learners. This is due to the pronounced impact of the classroom atmosphere on students' learning outcomes. To achieve this objective, educators ought to harness students' capabilities in singing, acting, and playing, leveraging factual tools and communicative technology. In educational settings where the cultivation of interactive skills is a principal objective, assessment formats and strategies should align with the overarching goals of the curriculum, emphasizing inclusivity. As Tsagari & Vogt (2017) contends that instructional methodologies and assessments should be designed to involve students in the cognitive processes of analysis and synthesis, fostering an elevated perceptual skill set. Traditional pedagogical approaches may undermine students' communicative proficiency and overall educational effectiveness. Consequently, a holistic integration of speaking, listening, writing, and reading, coupled with the incorporation of alternative assessment instruments such as self-assessments, peer assessments, projects, portfolios, and role-playing, is advocated. These supplementary tools should be employed in conjunction with conventional methods to incentivize and enhance students' communicative abilities.

Truthfully, a critical predicament arises in the domain of English language teaching within the EFL context, particularly evident in primary school settings. While instructors display enthusiasm in adopting new strategies, activities, and objectives rooted in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) for imparting English skills to young learners—integrating reading, writing, listening, speaking, as well as grammar and

vocabulary—the formulation of assessments presents a formidable challenge. In the process of test preparation, educators may gravitate towards conventional assessments reliant on grammar, thereby deviating from the multifaceted testing required to meet course objectives. The incongruity between educational objectives and the execution of tests and assessments warrants further investigation. Another plausible factor contributing to inconsistent assessment practices among teachers is the limited duration allocated for English language courses in curricula. English teachers encounter challenges in effectively incorporating reading, writing, speaking, and listening components into term assessments. Irrespective of the underlying causes, the misalignment between assessment policies and practices manifests detrimental repercussions on students' language acquisition and yields unintended consequences. North & Hughes (2003) contends that assessments misaligned with CLT principles recommended for ELT curricula are inequitable and ethically questionable. In light of this assertion, the present study aims to scrutinize the consistency in testing and assessment practices among EFL teachers instructing young learners. The research subjects were drawn from EFL educators employed in public elementary schools. An integral objective of this investigation is to comprehend the testing and assessment methodologies implemented in primary school English as a foreign language classrooms. Additionally, the study seeks to ascertain the extent of congruence between the ELT curriculum for primary schools and the assessment practices adopted by EFL teachers. To address these objectives, the following research questions have been formulated:

RQ1: *What constitutes the predominant testing modality employed by English teachers in public primary schools?*

RQ2: *What is the frequency with which English as a Foreign Language teachers opt for traditional paper-and-pencil tests as opposed to alternative assessment methods?*

RQ3: *To what degree do the assessment practices of EFL teachers correspond with the specified course outcomes delineated in the curriculum designed for young learners in EFL programs?*

This study underscores the evaluation of English teachers in public schools, scrutinizing their proficiency in communication skills and interactive assessments mandated by the English language teaching curriculum. In the event of incongruities between teacher practices and the stipulations of the English language teaching curriculum, an in-depth examination of causative factors is warranted, accompanied by the proposition of suitable remedial measures. Such disparities may arise from English language teachers' unfamiliarity with the educational content emphasized in pivotal ministry examinations. Additional disparities may be attributed to constraints in the durations allotted for English lessons and challenges related to limited instructional materials. In light of these considerations, the research findings offer insights that can potentially inform modifications to the ELT curriculum or the Ministry's examination system.

Literature Review

Various assessment modalities exert a profound influence on the prevailing culture within schools and classrooms, delineating both the content and methodologies of learning. The assessment procedure, along with its outcomes, holds sway over the comprehension and learning encounters of both educators and students (Edwards, 2013). Conventional comprehension of assessment centres on its role in summarizing acquired knowledge. In the realm of education, this significance is particularly pronounced in the context of summative assessments, which are evaluative measures frequently administered at the conclusion of an educational program, thereby influencing the curriculum's focal points (Harlen, 2013). Nevertheless, in practice, assessment entails the systematic gathering and interpretation of evidence to make informed judgments regarding the educational outcomes of learners (Harlen, 2007).

The Need to Consider When Assessing Young Learners

A compelling discourse posits that in education, assessment should only be undertaken if it exerts an influence on the learning process (Black & Wiliam, 1998), underscoring the fundamental purpose of evaluation. Contemporary shifts in assessment paradigms (Bland, 2015b; Earle, 2019) highlight the significance of formative approaches, acknowledging assessments integrated into the classroom as tools that can facilitate learning by discerning subsequent steps for both individual learners and teachers. Simultaneously, educators are becoming progressively cognizant of the significance and repercussions of gauging comprehension and advancement as integral components of the learning trajectory. Contemporary acknowledgment asserts that continuous and comprehensive assessment serves not only as a potent catalyst for promoting learning but also contributes to cognitive development and societal awareness among children. This recognition has given rise to a systematic framework termed learning-centred assessment (LOA), a concept introduced by Carless (2007), who underscores the idea that various forms of assessment can facilitate and enhance the learning process. Teachers encounter a challenge in that educational assessment has traditionally been under the purview of "experts," governed by stringent ethical principles (AERA, 2014), prompting contemplation on whether teachers should actively engage in the assessment process. Hence, it becomes imperative that educators are provided with avenues for refining their assessment competencies (Wyatt-Smith & Klenowski, 2014) to aid in the development of an effective assessment framework. According to Bland (2015a), younger learners share certain practical and behavioural traits that distinguish them from

older counterparts, such as non-linear progress, lack of volitional learning, shorter attention spans, specific areas of concern, and a predominant concern about parental opinions. Notably, this age group of young students is particularly susceptible to the repercussions of deficiencies or inadequacies within the assessment process (Cooper & Collins, 2008). The formative development of individual and communal identity, alongside the cultivation of self-worth and resilience, is susceptible to distortion through judgments or adverse effects stemming from assessment methodologies (Ioannou-Georgiou, 2003).

Principles Need to Be Consider When Designing Assessments for Young Learners

Paramount in the conduct of evaluations is the imperative of equity. Whether crafting assessments of modest or informal nature, there exists an ethical obligation to ascertain the validity and reliability of the ensuing judgments.

Validity

This entails delineating the precise aspects under evaluation, such as the structure, before formulating the assessment, with the aim of precluding the introduction of challenges that might impede the learning outcomes for the learners (Black & Wiliam, 2012).

Reliability

It is imperative that educators can place reliance on assessment results as a valid gauge of learner accomplishment. Regarding younger students, classroom assessment typically adopts a holistic approach, and the continuous nature of formative assessment implies its occurrence over an extended period. Consequently, reliability in this context emanates from the consistency observed in the patterns of learners' progress or the lack thereof. In addition to these foundational assessment principles, specific principles are pertinent to young students to ensure that each assessment yields a positive experience. A pivotal element in this context is the aforementioned recognition that children necessitate involvement in formative assessment processes to actively participate in their learning endeavours (Crichton & McDaid, 2016).

According to the researcher's perspectives, assessment tasks tailored for young learners ought to consider the following characteristics:

Preparation

Recent scholarly investigations suggest that children, irrespective of their age, should actively engage as participants and proprietors of their learning experiences (Black & Wiliam, 2018).

Clear Instructions

In the execution of any task, children necessitate explicit scaffolding (Smith & Hackling, 2016). This frequently involves the provision of models and collaborative efforts with learners to ascertain their comprehension of the requisite tasks.

Feedback Focuses on a Single Aspect of Learning

The primary objective of formative assessments is to provide feedback conducive to learning. Such feedback facilitates the identification of deficiencies among learners by instructors. Nevertheless, in dealing with young learners, one must take into account the cognitive load imposed by the information conveyed, given the limitations of their working memory (Higgins et al., 2005).

Research Methodology

Research Design

Aligned with the research objectives, each study employs an appropriate research design. Given the primary focus of this study on investigating the application of the communicative approach in assessing EFL young learners, a "descriptive research methodology" has been adopted. Descriptive research seeks to depict the population, situation, or phenomenon comprehensively and systematically under consideration. In this study, the descriptive research design has been implemented to evaluate the testing modalities employed by English teachers in public primary schools. Additionally, the researcher intends to assess the preferences of English as a foreign language teacher regarding traditional testing methodologies such as paper-pencil tests and alternative assessment methods. Descriptive research is deemed pertinent for this study as it aims to concentrate on the assessment practices of EFL teachers in alignment with the course outcomes.

Research Subjects

The principal objective of our research is to ascertain the extent of alignment between the English language curricula designed for primary schools and the assessment practices implemented by English as a Foreign Language teachers.

Data Collection and Analysis

Given the utilization of a descriptive research design in the current study, data has been gathered by systematically reviewing various sources and organizing the information methodically (Lans & Van der Voordt, 2002). By scrutinizing various research articles and online sources, optimal assessment practices have been identified, encompassing conferences, observations, task-based assessments, feedback and repetition, and comprehensive tasks. Additionally, relevant content pertaining to feedback and repetition in assessments, positive feedback, checklists, project work, portfolio usage, learner-generated activities, and interactive assessments in the classroom has been examined and discussed. Moreover, this study delves into the obstacles and challenges encountered by English as a Foreign Language teachers. Consequently, the collected data has been systematically analysed to derive conclusions regarding the alignment of teaching practices with the communicative approach.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher has meticulously attended to the ethical considerations inherent in the research. In this context, access was restricted to information sources that allow for the study of content, ensuring compliance with privacy norms and avoiding any breach observed by the researcher in this respect.

Results and Discussion

As a starting point of discussion, we should mention that assessment for EFL young learners can take multiple forms.

Best Practice in Assessment

Conferences

Assessment queries should transcend binary yes/no formats and instead be crafted as probing inquiries, encouraging learners to delve into their thoughts and reasoning. This questioning methodology is commonly termed didactic (Earle, 2019), as it designates dedicated time for questioning integrated into the instructional plan. It is imperative to afford young learners a sufficient interval before requiring their responses, allowing them time for preparation and practice, given that this is integral to their societal and behavioural learning and development process (Clarke, 2014).

Observations

Educators commonly employ observations for micro-assessments during instruction; however, refining these assessments for objectivity is feasible. Strategic planning and consensus with the entire class can facilitate the creation of objective records. The design of an observation diagram permits the assignment and compilation of assessment variables over time. Observations may occur while learners are involved in tasks, whether individually or collaboratively.

Task-Based Assessment

Considering the robust connection between formative assessment and classroom activities, it appears judicious to utilize classroom tasks and materials in assessments subsequent to the completion of initial learning tasks. The repetition of material renders assessment tasks familiar, mitigating intimidation for students and enabling them to approach the tasks with confidence.

Comprehensive Task

A comprehensive assessment task is delineated in a manner that necessitates learners to employ specific non-verbal skills. A study conducted by Ainsworth & Scheiter (2021) underscores that these visual or action representations significantly enhance memory, particularly among very young learners. Retrieval, as indicated by the research, aids in resolving encoding issues and catering to the diversity in classrooms with varying learning interests and approaches. Learners may be prompted to articulate their thoughts or comprehension using problem-solving techniques, drawing illustrations, including diagrams, artefact's, or models, engaging in actions, role-playing, mapping concepts, or creating tables/lists. Such tasks mandate learners to utilize language for organizing information, establishing associations, and recalling relationships between words and concepts. This process facilitates retention, reflection, and application of these concepts in their personal lives.

Feedback and Assessment

It is imperative that children receive accurate and meaningful feedback on any assessments they undertake. Exploring diverse feedback modalities, such as whole-class or individual feedback, oral or written delivery, is beneficial. However, the timing of feedback is crucial, necessitating immediate delivery after the task, given the shifting attention of young learners. Response approaches may vary, and occasionally, providing "free" feedback to young learners, offering reassurance without strictly tying it to learning

outcomes, can be beneficial. Generally, this approach can involve "strategic" feedback, where the teacher identifies areas for improvement and equips learners with the tools required for enhancement.

Positive Feedback

It is unavoidable that preparation for any assessment takes place within the classroom setting. In the context of formative assessment, the optimal scenario is to design the assessment as an outcome of classroom activities, ensuring that tasks are familiar to the learners. Conversely, with summative tests, it is common for teachers to acquaint learners with the test tasks in class, a practice sometimes referred to as 'teaching to the test.' Ideally, assessment tasks should either mirror typical classroom practices or, if preparation is necessary, it should not be a mechanical activity focused solely on test strategy or questions. Instead, it should actively support learning and, whenever feasible, establish connections to the world beyond the classroom.

Checklists for Teachers

When formulating a classroom assessment, deliberate thought should be given to the following considerations: What is the proficiency level in language acquisition exhibited by the learners?

To what extent do the learners demonstrate confidence in utilizing this language?

What recent topics have been covered in the classroom?

Considering the learners' age, what is the appropriate length for the project?

How will the project be assessed, and what agreements will be established with the learners? Should the project be conducted individually, in pairs, or in groups?

In what ways can the results be utilized to bolster the learning process?

What preparatory measures and skills will be essential for the children to successfully execute this project?

Project Work

This phase offers learners the chance to delve into various facets of a subject, encompassing all four language skills. It also provides an avenue for generating multiple iterations, with young individuals finding value in this repetitive approach. This undertaking proves beneficial in heterogeneous classes, as children can mutually learn and contribute according to their respective skills, including non-language aptitudes. The assessment can centre on the calibre of collaboration or participation exhibited by the learners, alongside evaluating the ultimate outcomes in their language-related endeavours, as uniform scoring holds significance for their equitable evaluation.

Portfolio

A portfolio, whether in physical or digital format, serves as an archive of a learner's accumulated work. It enables the storage of various projects, providing a means to retain the most refined version and exhibit the developmental stages leading to the final iteration. This compilation may encompass both artistic and written components. It is crucial for children to comprehend the criteria for portfolio selection, and effective communication ensures their inclusion in this process. Portfolio assessment can emphasize the learner's diligence and time investment, the intricacy or smoothness of the final rendition, and the substantive content therein.

Learner-Generated Activities

These afford learners the agency to devise their assessments, ranging from selecting the vocabulary to be acquired in a week to determining the assessment methods for intricate tasks aligned with learning objectives. Learners may opt for competitive formats or engage in more intricate collaborative endeavours, particularly in the case of older learners. Upon reviewing the comprehensive body of work, learners can discern preferences, such as the choice of sports or activities, or the role models they wish to emulate. Crucially, this approach necessitates a connection between their cognitive processes and the articulation of their learning. Additionally, learners are required to establish assessment criteria in agreement with the teacher.

Interactive Classroom Assessment in the Synchronous Classrooms

Assessment can be executed through lectures; however, it is not advisable to assign tasks that may lose efficacy and commitment in the online environment, not due to potential cheating but rather due to the diminished power of online interaction. Direct questions, however, can prove effective in an online setting. Learners can also present their work offline, and this extends beyond traditional grammar and vocabulary books. It may involve showcasing collaborative outcomes, projects, or research, each focusing on a comprehensive facet of these endeavours. Similar to informal discussions, learners must comprehend and embrace the assessment criteria. When formulating or implementing assessments, teachers should consider the cognitive and behavioural development of young pupils, ensuring that assessments enhance rather than diminish self-esteem. Involving students in the assessment process ensures a positive and meaningful experience. While delivery methods may vary, especially in transitions between face-to-face and online learning, it is crucial to recognize that the assessment of young students should consistently prioritize learning. The subsequent information is pertinent within the context of EFL learners.

The Absence of The Internal Motive in The Case EFL Young Students to Use English in Learning and Communicating

Young EFL learners frequently exhibit a lack of internal motivation, posing challenges for EFL teachers in the effective implementation of CLT. This predicament is primarily attributed to the fact that young learners may not perceive a practical necessity to use English in their daily lives. Numerous studies have consistently highlighted that in EFL contexts, young learners often engage in language study without a compelling intrinsic motivation. The perceived insignificance of English in their daily routines may contribute to their diminished motivation. This lack of motivation is further exacerbated by the constraints imposed by program requirements and the pressure associated with examination performance, superseding the genuine pursuit of communicative proficiency. (Wei, 2011; Widdowson, 1998) posits that within ELT, the principal objective is the development of communication skills. This assertion holds true despite the prevalence of numerous impediments in EFL scenarios, where English is not intricately woven into students' daily lives, marked by distinct dates and locales, resulting in limited social interaction. The challenges are further compounded by the absence of regular engagement with English speakers, hindering the seamless implementation of communication techniques in EFL contexts. This arduous procedure is primarily attributed to the scarcity of authentic speakers within the learning environment (Mezrigui, 2011). This is identified as the primary impediment to establishing an interactive classroom. Additionally, when implementing the communicative approach, teachers encounter additional challenges in the context of EFL. These challenges stem from materialistic and logistical constraints, where the objectives of learning English, the learning environment, and the teachers' proficiency levels are suboptimal. Moreover, there is a dearth of accessible high-quality language resources. This is discerned from research conducted in Japan, Harmer (2015) indicated in the findings is that Japanese students lack motivation and enthusiasm to engage with English, primarily attributed to the perception that the pursuit of communication skills appears to be rapid and distant. A similar idea is proposed by Campbell (2004) that English as a Second Language (ESL) students naturally incorporate the target language into their daily activities, as it is imperative for their immersion in the respective cultures. Conversely, an EFL learner typically lacks opportunities to engage with the target language beyond the classroom, compelling them to revert to their native language in their interactions within the broader society. Consequently, lacking sustained necessity, an EFL learner lacks the motivation and intrinsic interest, particularly in oral communication in English.

The Communicative Language Teaching Curriculum Is Opposed to The Type of Entrance Exam

In the realm of EFL research in the Middle East, the configuration of the entrance examination for first-year students holds significance as a key variable in determining teaching methodologies and English subject materials. The design of the entrance exam emphasizes grammar over language acquisition and communicative interaction, exerting a detrimental influence on English instruction. Notably, the placement test procedure constitutes a crucial variable within the overall learning trajectory. Many students entering preparatory year programs encounter challenges in language learning, as the secondary school education system fosters a focus on excelling in academic placement exams. Consequently, teachers are incentivized to prioritize grammar and reading skills over communicative proficiency. Another impediment arises from students learning the foreign language solely to excel in examinations. Consequently, learners gravitate towards specific textbook content, anticipating that teachers will emphasize the available material. In numerous EFL teaching traditions, immigration assessment has assumed a central role, significantly impacting students' professional development. Many students and their teachers endorse the testing paradigm, channelling their energy into mastering answer formulation for anticipated questions. Regrettably, most of these tests serve as simplistic research tools that fail to cultivate communication skills, thereby adversely affecting the communicative language teaching process (Poza, n.d.).

Educational Compatibility of Communicative Language Teaching and English as Foreign Language

A significant impediment to the adoption of communicative language teaching lies in the incongruence between this pedagogical theory and the societal cultural context. Domestic cultures are often perceived as constraints hindering the enhancement of communication styles in English as a foreign language education. Approaches to teaching English are more likely to be embraced if they align with prevailing values and standards (Lamie, 2004). When applying Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to the process of foreign language acquisition, many educators and policymakers tend to consider certain expectations related to learning tasks and their objectives in alignment with domestic cultures. The underlying yet inherent assumption here is that words are intricately linked in a precise manner with cultural constraints and nuances. In the realm of EFL learning, the cultural context of the country and the overall cultural backdrop of the classrooms often exhibit disparities. Additionally, the instructional principles and methods employed in the classroom lack consistency, frequently resulting in unproductive outcomes. It is also evident in various EFL contexts that educators are not positioned as facilitators but rather as repositories of knowledge, tasked solely with providing the necessary information without elucidating the learners' requirements.

Holliday (1994) argues that these contradictions impose a significant burden on learners, leading them to struggle in acquiring foundational linguistic knowledge rather than achieving substantial learning outcomes. The same idea is expressed by Edge (1996), who posits that, within the constraints of cultural influences, the teacher-centric instructional approach aligns with and values the community and the broader cultural system. In the context of young learners in English as a foreign language, this traditionally upheld perspective of the teacher's authority as the primary source of information represents the sole endorsed form of learning and teaching. Such passive, teacher-centred, detrimental, and unproductive classroom environments may seem unconventional to those educated in Western culture, but they serve as the norm in cultural communities. In this cultural setting, the prevailing ideology shapes the nature of relationships between teachers and students, emphasizing respectfulness and attentiveness. According to Chowdhury (2001), cultures outside the classroom and cultures within the classroom can exist simultaneously. Biggs (1997) discusses "classroom and extracurricular standards" concerning the involvement of students within the classroom.

Biggs contends that in a traditional society, students are anticipated to use "external" languages and are deviating from appropriateness standards when within the school. This normative theory, inherently autocratic, emphasizes specific outcomes and teacher culture, in contrast to the communicative language teaching approach (Li, 1998; Zhenhui, 2001). Reid & Liao (2004), in Asian culture, teachers are perceived as the central authority in the class, requiring careful control and respect. The emphasis is placed on learners being obedient to the teacher without active participation. However, this teacher-centred approach inhibits genuine discussions in the classroom and obstructs the implementation of communicative language teaching in such contexts. In such situations, there exists a challenging and unproductive dynamic between teachers and students, where teachers are viewed as dominators with greater authority, and students, sitting quietly as spectators, are expected to adhere to the teachers' instructions. This rigid communication system, discouraging students from pausing and responding only when prompted, coupled with speaking in a subdued manner, makes it challenging to achieve progress in the learning process.

Another crucial consideration is that students possess diverse learning styles. Divergent opinions have been put forth regarding the effectiveness of implementing CLT or ensuring optimal learning conditions for students with varying learning styles. For instance, (Zhenhui, 2001), in his exploration of the concept of suitable teaching and learning styles within Asian cultures, it is emphasized that many students anticipate teachers to impart knowledge rather than facilitating knowledge acquisition from fellow learners. These cultural constraints limit the communication skills of young learners and diminish opportunities for knowledge acquisition. It is evident from this discourse that the cause of modest learning levels is not solely attributed to the academic aptitude of the learners but also to the cultural framework and educational environment. In numerous cultural contexts, students perceive teachers as knowledge sources, and deviations from prescribed criteria are interpreted as indicative of the teachers' insufficient knowledge on the subject. Chowdhury (2001) contends that it is the familial systems and entrenched traditions that uphold the notion of teachers being perceived as custodians and cornerstones of classrooms, tasked with rectifying the learning process and furnishing appropriate responses to students' queries and requests.

Deficiency of Qualification Programs That Sharpens Teachers' Skills

It is indisputable that the teacher holds a pivotal role in enhancing and evolving the educational system and school curriculum. A prerequisite for this impactful role is to provide teachers with rigorous, effective, and structured training programs to equip them for the dynamic environment of continuous development. In times of change, the awareness process becomes crucial. To empower teachers to effectively contribute to the processes of innovating and advancing education, it is imperative to furnish them with additional resources in their teaching and learning endeavours. Through such training initiatives, teachers are prepared for self-reflection and contemplation (Lamie, 2004). In several "English as a foreign language classroom", teachers are not mandated to possess a specific TEFL license or undergo formal training in the language department. To address this issue, participating in various certification programs and attending conferences, workshops, or seminars can be beneficial and impactful. Research indicates that teachers enhance their learning experiences when exposed to a diverse array of teaching methods coupled with practical application.

The concept of changing the approach is strongly supported by the notion that alteration is a dynamic process (Fullan, 2015). Teachers commonly exhibit reluctance and discomfort when faced with external challenges associated with changes. Addressing such behaviour requires proactive intervention by providing support and guidance (Hadley, 1999). Maintaining changes necessitates that teachers actively participating in the process consistently receive support; otherwise, their motivation may wane (Li, 2001). The same viewpoint is affirmed by Carless (1999), asserting that continuous professional development and appropriate training are crucial for teachers who are intrinsically motivated to embrace change and foster innovation. A consistent support system is imperative as teachers might face unexpected challenges during implementation, potentially leading to frustration and resistance to the new changes. Even a well-qualified teacher, experienced in ELT methods, may experience discontent when asked to adopt a new teaching approach. This abrupt shift can disrupt established practices and introduce conflicting personal beliefs and teaching culture (Ghanbari & Ketabi, 2011).

Another challenge lies in the proliferation of domestic proficiency development programs within the English as a foreign language context for young learners. Additionally, there is a lack of enthusiasm and motivation among teachers to participate in these courses, as they may not find them engaging. The majority of continuing education programs within EFL young learners' contexts are influenced by Western culture, aligning with its applied approach and objectives. Consequently, these programs are selectively chosen from Western-based courses and adapted to suit local needs that aim to promote the proposed changes.

EFL Teachers' Bridging Skills and Practical Interaction

In the realm of communicative language teaching, it is imperative to involve students in reliable, significant, and collaborative activities that foster sustained learner engagement and meaningful language outcomes. It is evident that students can enhance their proficiency by availing themselves of various practical opportunities that enable them to attain outcomes adhering to specific standards. Activities structured for pair or group discussions among students offer ample opportunities for student-centred discourse. This assertion is substantiated by scholars advocating for one-on-one communication to enable students to refine their communication skills (Crandall, 1994; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Grabe & Stoller, 1997). Nevertheless, furnishing the appropriate form of interaction and a comprehensive strategy for language acquisition can pose considerable challenges for the teacher. In such instances, only a limited number of students actively engage in discussions and express their interests, while the majority of students attentively listen without active participation. It is essential to highlight that even when interaction occurs, the status of meaningful participation may not be attained. This leads to dissatisfaction, and such interactions fail to yield significant outcomes. Pica (1988) contends that the attainment of a commendable, unified, and comprehensible rapport is infrequently realized at the anticipated degree. This particular stance, characterized by an absence of redundant outcomes and unambiguous results, is prevalent within English language contexts wherein the predominant mode of interaction is confined to dialogues between learners and educators, with a lack of supervisory or directive engagement towards the learners.

In the field of linguistics, one obtains outcomes that are both productive and meaningful. According to Pica (1988), realizing the conceptual framework of a social system poses a formidable challenge. For instructors of English as a foreign language, maintaining a consistent level of interaction proves to be a substantial contention in achieving targeted levels of comprehension outcomes. Moreover, compelling learners to engage in social interactions can exert a notable influence on their academic performances. This frequently leads to a deleterious mental state, prompting learners to actively avoid situations conducive to social learning. According to Young (1990), upon inquiry regarding the most challenging and anxiety-inducing competencies within the English as a foreign language instructional setting, a predominant response from students was directed towards the acquisition of "speaking skills." In Loughrin-Sacco (1992) investigations, "speaking" emerged as the most vexatious activity for a majority of learners. In the process of acquiring a foreign language, each skill may induce tension and apprehension; however, listening and speaking are frequently identified as pivotal, with speaking being consistently reported as a skill that elicits stress (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986).

The Application of The Communicative Method as A Challenge for The English as Foreign Language Teacher

The English as a foreign language instructor encounters numerous impediments in adopting a communicative approach, as this methodology necessitates adherence to specific criteria. Consequently, the instructor perpetually experiences heightened stress levels and manifests a keen enthusiasm for refining communication skills. As Medgyes (1986) posits that communicative language teaching stands out as a preferred methodology for English as a foreign language instructors in comparison to commonly employed alternatives. This preference may stem from the student-centred nature of communicative language teaching, intensifying the pressures and demands and consequently challenging many instructors to navigate beyond their comfort zones. The implementation of this approach necessitates additional preparatory efforts both before and after lessons, requiring instructors to enter each class equipped for a diverse range of interactive and unforeseeable events. Moreover, instructors must be adept at managing diverse commentaries and requests from students, fostering an environment where the teacher assumes a facilitating role and prioritizes active student participation. Notably, non-native language instructors often encounter challenges in attaining a high level of proficiency, necessitating continuous skill enhancement to meet prescribed standards. Additionally, non-native teachers may be steeped in the listening method during their training, a method characterized by a complex structure that poses challenges in deviating from its influence, thereby reinforcing and enhancing social learning dynamics.

Obstacles and Other Challenges

Numerous Englishers as an EFL educators have delineated a pedagogical approach characterized by "complexity" in the execution of the communicative language teaching method. This complexity arises from the challenge of managing an instructional setting wherein unrestricted practice is contingent upon student initiative. The dialogical nature inherent in the learning process necessitates explicating structural aspects

and interpreting content, thereby fostering a social milieu conducive to discourse and idea exchange. However, if not appropriately employed, such an approach may instigate disruptions. Through interactive methodologies, it has been observed that students' speaking time is augmented, engendering a more dynamic classroom ambiance wherein participants engage in collaborative activities, fostering continued utilization of acquired language skills. This scenario may present heightened challenges for educators adhering to conventional teaching methodologies, as the introduction of social activities may be perceived as disruptive, leading to disarray and positional shifts within the classroom. One idea is proposed by [Strelec \(2010\)](#), those holding the perspective that learners, when engaged in collaborative endeavours such as teamwork or paired activities, establish interpersonal connections with their peers, positing that such interactions may contribute to an atmosphere of discomfort and heightened noise levels within the classroom. This perspective is particularly challenging for instructors, including those in the EFL domain, who may grapple with the disruption caused by a boisterous and disorderly learning environment. Furthermore, this circumstance becomes even more demanding when the classroom accommodates a larger student cohort than initially anticipated.

Another crucial factor that warrants consideration is the occasional scenario wherein a non-native language instructor may lack a comprehensive understanding of the language they are tasked with teaching. This circumstance poses a substantial challenge, particularly when the objective is to cultivate linguistic fluency and proficiency among learners under the tutelage of such an instructor ([Poza, n.d.](#)). The instructor exhibits a limited grasp of the students' proficiency levels, resulting in an inability to effectively respond to various situations and establish a pedagogically centred and efficacious learning environment. A potential remedy for this challenge involves a reduction in the instructor's speaking duration, supplanted by the introduction of additional tasks aimed at enhancing students' oral and written proficiency. The instructor, feeling a diminished sense of control over the classroom dynamics, becomes more actively engaged in the teaching process, especially when learners exhibit deficiencies in English proficiency. Nevertheless, it is imperative to afford these learners opportunities to acquire English through the implementation of learner-centred tasks ([Echevarria et al., 2008](#)). Dispensing constructive and motivating feedback constitutes an instrumental strategy for the instructor, facilitating the assimilation of new language teaching methods. The provision of passive feedback tends to diminish learners' enthusiasm, concurrently diminishing their engagement in constructing work and participating in class interactions, thereby diminishing the efficacy of communicative teaching. Conversely, offering affirmative feedback for implemented changes serves to fortify the stability of the alteration process.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Recommendations

Introduction to Computer Mediated Communication (CMC)

Within English as a foreign language context, the limited opportunities for employing the target language within and beyond the classroom represent a significant impediment to language acquisition for learners. This constraint affects the communicative needs of the learner and diminishes motivational levels. Nonetheless, the incorporation of computer-based communication technologies has the potential to substantially modify students' communication and learning styles ([Cheon, 2003](#); [Leh, 1999](#)). Through the integration of CMC into the ELT process, the interactive dynamics of learners can be enriched, rendering the process more meaningful. The proponents of this theory ([Blake, 2000](#); [Blin, 1999](#); [Warschauer, 1998](#)). Contend that the integration of CMC in the EFL classroom can assist instructors in cultivating and establishing productive communication styles. The utilization of computer-mediated communication tools, both within and outside the classroom, has the potential to enhance language skills among learners with reduced expenditure of effort and time. The transformative impact of the Internet transcends conventional constraints of location and time, affording learners the opportunity to engage in knowledge acquisition and communication with peers irrespective of their geographical location and at any given time ([Kern, 1996](#); [Shield & Weininger, 1999](#)). The Internet & CMC systems serve to augment the learner's engagement beyond passive listening, providing opportunities for active participation in dialogues within a singular chat or across diverse conversational threads. The learner can readily initiate authentic communication by updating their status or responding to emails via mobile devices. In the contemporary technological landscape, learners find convenience in participating in online discussion forums and information exchange. Within the realm of computer-mediated communication, the conceptualization of learning has evolved into a continuous and perpetual learning process, a viewpoint substantiated by numerous researchers ([Blake, 2000](#); [Campbell, 2004](#); [Leh, 1999](#); [Lightbown et al., 1999](#)).

The contemporary era of learning, which facilitates and promotes learner engagement in social interaction, serves as a means to guide individuals towards proficient utilization of the targeted language, enabling practical application of acquired knowledge within recent classroom contexts. It is essential to acknowledge that while computer-mediated communication methods play a supportive role in language

processing, they do not constitute a primary source of learning. Learners require instructional guidance from teachers within the classroom setting to effectively navigate and apply computer-mediated communication techniques. This assertion finds validation through the substantial contributions of scholars in the field of computer-aided language learning, who advocate for the integration of computer-mediated communication in English as a foreign language instruction as a means of providing learners with authentic experiences and opportunities for language application in socially contextualized settings. Furthermore, computer-mediated communication contributes to enhancing motivation levels, fostering learner autonomy, and elevating levels of societal engagement. Considering these considerations, learners aspiring to acquire language proficiency through a logical and applicable approach are encouraged to incorporate computer-mediated communication as a supplementary tool both within and outside the classroom, thereby enhancing educational attainment and effectively refining communication skills.

An Assessment of The Learner's Needs for Accurate and Meaningful Learning

English as foreign language learners often harbour distinct objectives compared to their pedagogical pursuits, aspiring to enhance their language proficiency for the attainment of specific life goals. A prevalent motivation among language learners is the necessity to excel in college placement exams where proficiency in English is imperative for success. It is imperative to recognize and convey to students that such instrumental reasons are not inherently conducive to optimal language acquisition. Consequently, it falls upon policymakers and educators to recalibrate this mindset, providing learners with genuine and accurate language learning objectives, particularly because a substantial proportion will utilize English in their future professional endeavours. To realize this, it becomes crucial to adapt teaching materials and methodologies to align with the learners' needs, a process necessitating a thorough needs assessment. Gathering insights from experts in diverse fields regarding the advantages of employing the English language in professional domains can aid in formulating objectives for novice learners. Concurrently, learners themselves should be encouraged to seek supplementary avenues for reinforcing their language acquisition through engaging in additional motivational activities (Poza, n.d.). Frequently, the imperative undertaking of conducting a comprehensive needs assessment is crucial for delineating goals after discerning the learner's desires and expectations.

The teachers' training program is constant.

Ongoing professional development holds significant importance for both novice and proficient EFL educators. This avenue serves as a valuable opportunity for the continual refinement of teaching proficiency and skill enhancement. Participation in training courses facilitates the constant evolution of language programs, fostering an environment where educators can enhance their skills, exchange knowledge, and learn from one another. These courses may be conducted internally or, with mutual consent, may involve participation in intensive training sessions organized by external groups. Effective planning by educational teams is essential to ensure that teachers have access to regular seminars, and various training initiatives such as on-the-job teacher training programs and opportunities to engage in both local and global conferences contribute significantly to the professional development of EFL educators. These approaches empower teachers to adeptly manage the learning environment by fostering innovative thinking and employing diverse instructional methods. It is imperative for teaching teams to strategically schedule these training sessions, affording educators ample time and support to undergo training, ultimately enhancing their effectiveness in the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, in the recruitment of new faculty members, institutions should prioritize candidates with a robust training background, solid qualifications in teaching English as a foreign language, and proficient communication skills.

Designing and Applying Teaching Ways Adapted to National English as Foreign Language Contexts

The incorporation of the communicative approach in the assessment of young EFL students presents a significant challenge for instructors, particularly given its Western origin, a characteristic that stands in contrast to numerous local conditions and the prevailing EFL culture. Although initially conceptualized as a methodology exclusively applicable to English as a foreign language contexts, communicative language teaching is acknowledged as pertinent and applicable within English as a second language contexts (Ellis, 1994). Rather than unquestioningly adopting the communication system rules and relying on materials disseminated by the ESL market in the Western hemisphere, English as a EFL nations is urged to establish research committees. These committees should actively encourage collaboration among experts and educators to formulate language teaching methodologies aligned with their unique cultural perspectives. This strategic initiative aims to facilitate English language instruction tailored to the distinct political, economic, social, and cultural contexts of EFL nations. Additionally, it advocates for the development of effective teaching methods that cater to the specific needs of learners, are administratively manageable for educators, and garner societal acceptance in the long term (Kalanzadeh, Mirchenari, & Bakhtiarvand, 2013). Educators in EFL contexts originating from diverse cultures can, when adeptly trained, tailor their instructional approaches to local learners by incorporating CLT. It is crucial to underscore that CLT is not a panacea for methodological challenges inherent in language teaching within EFL contexts. Rather than being viewed as a problem-solving methodology, CLT is best understood as a framework that facilitates language instruction through interactive

methodologies, promoting heightened student engagement. As Posits that the various learning styles exhibited by learners, coupled with the diverse learning environments, necessitate an imperative consideration of adaptation and innovation when implementing CLT in such contexts. According to Li (1998), The application of CLT is not a monolithic practice confined to a singular paradigm, but rather one that is malleable and responsive to contextual nuances. It posits that countries employing EFL instruction should not merely accept CLT as an unmodified entity, but rather engage in an adaptive process that aligns with the cultural requisites of their nation. This approach is conducive to addressing the needs of learners by incorporating local insights and navigating within the parameters of regional constraints.

Research Implications

The current research carries manifold implications, serving as a valuable contribution to the extant body of knowledge on language assessment & EFL pedagogy. It stands to benefit language educators, teacher trainers, and curriculum designers by offering insights into the contemporary perspectives of teachers regarding foreign language testing practices within student classrooms. Additionally, this research presents a model for scholarly inspiration, motivating other researchers to delve into the current landscape of EFL learning and teaching on both national and international fronts. Over the long term, such research endeavours may prove instrumental in enhancing EFL instruction to better align with the needs of the burgeoning population of EFL students. Presently, there is a discernible inclination toward adopting CLT, a shift driven by educators' growing awareness of the limitations and inadequacies associated with form-centred approaches in fostering learners' communicative skills in authentic contexts.

Conclusion

The primary objective of this research is to conduct a comprehensive literature review and explore potential solutions to challenges that may impede the effective implementation of CLT in the context of EFL instruction. This article is dedicated to identifying and addressing key issues, namely the incongruity of CLT methods with university entrance exams, cultural barriers affecting young EFL learners, and the imperative need for research on the motivation of young EFL learners. It is evident that, unlike other language teaching methodologies, the creation and execution of CLT activities pose substantial challenges for EFL teachers, who face increased pressure in their implementation. Furthermore, evaluating the effectiveness of the CLT method proves to be particularly challenging for EFL teachers, given their reliance on simplistic evaluation methods. Given the complexity associated with the application of CLT, compounded by the prevalent cultural impediments to language learning in many EFL contexts, we argue for a necessity to modify the tenets of the communicative approach to align with the environment of young EFL learners. Employing awareness-raising strategies to comprehend and address these challenges can furnish EFL teachers and learners with insightful perspectives, facilitating effective management and adaptation of teaching and learning activities. In line with the comprehensive consideration of both proponents' perspectives and the cultural values intrinsic to EFL young learners' contexts, this study emphasizes the importance of accommodating cultural contexts, learning styles, and addressing the deficiency of effective teacher training programs in EFL settings. The findings underscore the imperative for ongoing support and training for teachers to successfully implement CLT and stress the significance of adapting CLT principles to the specific needs and cultural contexts of young EFL learners. Ultimately, this research advocates for a holistic and culturally sensitive approach to language teaching that extends beyond the theoretical framework of CLT to address diverse challenges encountered in EFL classrooms.

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