Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Bangladesh:

Effectiveness and Enhancements

An investigation into the perceptions of students, teachers and parents to enhance the

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach to better meet the needs of English

language learners at secondary level (10-16 ys) in Bangladesh schools.

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A thesis submitted to the College of Education, University of Canterbury,

Christchurch, New Zealand in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of

Master of Education

EDEM 691

University of Canterbury

2011

To My Parents

Rawshan Ara Ahmed

Mahtab Uddin Ahmed

Acknowledgements

A special mention is made to my little sister Sawan and her husband Rubel for their heartiest interest in this work and practical support to overcome challenges in New Zealand.

Finally, a very special thanks to my loving wife, Nasima who has kept me warm all the time and energized me in numerous ways over the years of my study.

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Abstract

This investigation reports on a study that explores the views of students, teachers

parents about the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in learn

English as a second language in Bangladesh. This study focuses on the improvem

of English language outcomes in Bangladesh. Though compulsory for fifteen year

schooling, public examination results indicate that students perform poorly in Engl

This research is conducted at the secondary schools in Bangladesh where Englis

compulsory because of its global nature as the second or foreign langua

Mainstream students learning English using the Communicative Language Teach

(CLT) approach are facing many challenges.

The study employs a mixed methods approach which includes qualitative intervie

semi-structured focus group interviews and observations; and quantitative

involved achievement tests to find gaps between oral and written attainment, in o

to determine the effectiveness of CLT developing language skills to communicat

and outside the classrooms. ESL learners in Bangladesh have been using CLT

nearly two decades, but the attainments are not satisfactory particularly in

language (listening and speaking) compared to written language (reading and writi

Four schools (two high and two low achievements) were selected from two divisi

cities according to the public examination results. Five students, all English sub

teachers and five parents from each school were invited randomly to participate.

Findings indicated a confirmation of the gap between oral and written langua[ge] achievements and highlighted that CLT is not working effectively to devel[op] communicative competence to the learners. The participants identified several fact[ors] causing this. Among these were large class sizes (number of students), an extens[ive] curriculum, insufficient class time (duration), an inappropriate examination syste[m,] excessive teacher workload, lack of parent awareness of CLT, and negat[ive] relationships between home and school. All of these factors impact on [the] effectiveness of CLT in Bangladesh.

All participants agreed that CLT as an approach is better than other approaches used [in] Bangladesh to develop English language learning, but the varied interpretation a[nd] implementation (practice) makes it less effective. Therefore, they suggested so[me] issues for local and national level policy makers that could enhance the CLT pract[ice] in Bangladesh.

Definitions of Key Words and Phrases used in the Research (Acronyms)

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
ESL	English as Second Language
EFL	English as Foreign Language
EAL	English as an Additional Language
GT	Grammar Translation Method
Higher Secondary Education	Class eleven and twelve (age16 to 18) in school and college
Higher Education	Above secondary education to PhD. in college and university
Mainstream Education	Regular education for all students followed by national education curriculum.
MoE	Ministry of Education, Bangladesh
MOE	Ministry of Education, New Zealand
Primary Education	Class one to five (age 5 to 9/10) in school
Public Examinations	At the end of primary, secondary and higher education student sits for examinations which are controlled by the education boards all over Bangladesh. After passing this examination student can enrol for the next step.
Secondary Education	Class six to ten (age 10 to 15/16) in school
Second Language	English is taught as a second language in mainstream education for all students in Bangladesh.
SES	Socio-Economic Status
TQI-SEP	Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project. This project is working especially for the improvement of secondary education in Bangladesh.

El que habla dos lenguas vale por dos.
(The person who speaks two languages is worth two)
- Spanish quote

Chapter One

Introduction

Education plays a most vital role in helping to provide opportunities for individuals to reach their full potential, and school is at the centre of this process. A number of aspects impact on an individual student's attainment, on progress in particular classes, and engagement with learning. Some of these issues are of a personal nature, while some mirror social, cultural and economical causes that may create behavioural problems, as well as affecting students' learning both in and outside of the school (Macfarlane, 2007). In this learning process, language has a unique responsibility. Language is the most significant means for communication and concept building within the family, school and community. For many citizens living in this fast growing multicultural world, an individual is considered to be disadvantaged if they are monolingual. Every country has to face the challenges of acknowledging multilingual and multicultural influences, particularly within education because of the external and internal goals of learning different languages (Cook, 2007). Teachers and learners need to consider the possible outcomes of teaching and learning a second language (L2) in any literacy programme. The above Spanish quote about learning more than one language reminds us of this fact.

Literacy in particular, bears a "power status" and it is considered to be necessary for boosting economic, social and political openings for the individual and language assumes the key role in literacy learning (Datta, 2007, p.13). People use different languages in different contexts such as family, learning institutions and community. In a multilingual situation, different languages may be used but one language usually

takes a dominant position in education. English is now considered to be the global medium for communication and business, and has become the most dominant language in the world. Most people want to learn English, but when they come from diverse backgrounds and speak other languages, it is often challenging to learn. There are enormous challenges to both learners and teachers in mainstream classrooms because of the irregularities and different phonological and orthographical representations. The English language borrowed words and expressions from other languages over many years, with many phonological irregularities, and this makes it more challenging for learners to learn English as Second Language (ESL). Mainstream students learning English as a second language face many challenges but there are enabling practices and supports that can make this learning more successful (Anderson, 2008; Lu & Berg, 2008; May, 2002; Safford & Costley, 2008; Sirota & Bailey, 2009). Although arguing within the context of reading pedagogy for English speaking students, Chapman and Tunmer (2002) remind us that failure to learn at an early stage sometimes ignites unsuitable behaviours within the school setting, which can cause diversion to inappropriate activities.

This investigation took place in a range of secondary schools in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world; more than 160 million people live in 0.145 million square kilometres. It is also reported to be one of the poorest countries, with a Gross National Income of less than $400 USD per head per annum in 2005, and an overall illiteracy rate of 58.7% compared to 24.6% in all developing countries (World Bank, 2003 cited in Imam, 2005). These figures present huge challenges simply to continue providing universal education, especially in rural areas where the dropout rate from schooling is very high. However, this scenario is changing fast due to initiatives taken by the government in the recent decade and Bangladesh is now developing very rapidly.

Developing countries continue to struggle against poverty, financial crisis, internal strife, dissent and movements for autonomy, natural disaster and cultural hegemony on the part of former colonial countries (Said, 2003; Willinsky, 1998). Like other developing countries, Bangladesh is also struggling to cope with these challenges. Literacy is playing a most important part in helping to overcome these conditions. Many current issues of social and educational interest transcend the national border.

As stated earlier, it is important for economic growth and the wellbeing of all citizens not to be monolingual, particularly in rapidly developing countries, where the home language is unique to that country. In education, schools and teachers are facing challenges to provide effective instruction to ensure that students participate effectively as global citizens (Andreotti & de Souza, 2008; Macfarlane, 2007).

The education system in Bangladesh has four stages of schooling. It incorporates primary, secondary, higher secondary and higher education. Secondary education includes year six to ten (age 9-16) of the ten-year cycle of formal schooling, so this is an important part of a student's education. In Bangladesh, a large number of students drop out at this stage to begin their working lives. If education is not given priority at this phase, it can be detrimental to students' later lives and on a larger scale can affect the wellbeing and development of society (Imam, 2005).

Bangladesh is a monolingual country. But, the education policy of Bangladesh and the curriculum show that English is compulsory as the second or most important foreign language because of its global nature (MoE, 2010). Thus English is taught as an essential subject for more than fourteen years of a student's educational life. Nearly two decades ago, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach was introduced as a method to teach and learn English in Bangladesh. This is widely regarded as one of the best approaches for second or foreign language learning (TQI-SEP, 2006). However, surprisingly, the public examination results indicate that students perform poorly in English as a subject (MoE, 2010). The rate of failure in English is very high compared to other subjects.

Research in education has increasingly embraced the voice of students as a means to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning (Rudduck, Chaplain, & Wallace, 1996). In the formal education system, students, teachers and parents form a triangular pattern (Macfarlane, 2007), and are each important to support the ongoing teaching and learning process. Lloyd-Smith & Tarr (2000) believe that student's views and beliefs in educational research are significant in decisions where learning is occurring. A differing view held by some consider children may be seen as inferiors or as possessions and therefore parents acting 'in locus parentis' roles could believe that they know what is best for them and so children's voices are not to be heard. Students

are not passive recipients, nor are teachers' mere transmitters of knowledge anymore, however, at the same time parents are also integral in the learners' learning pathway (Macfarlane, 2007). So it seems absolutely appropriate to consider input from each group to get maximum potential outcomes.

This investigation focuses on enhancing the features of CLT to better meet the needs of English language learners as second or foreign language at secondary level (9-16 ys) in Bangladesh. Though the differences between second and foreign language learning mainly depend on learning purposes (TQI-SEP, 2006; Howard & Millar, 2009), in this study English is taken as the second language to mirror the objectives of the Ministry of Education (MoE) Bangladesh. The insights that students, teachers and parents provide may be useful to enhance the CLT program. The researcher in this study has been working as a teacher educator in Bangladesh for more than ten years. This experience and the state of English education in Bangladesh convinced the researcher that a focus in this area may help students and teachers to understand possible causes of poor results for those practicing CLT, and therefore hopefully enhance outcomes. For that reason, this study tends to spotlight the perspectives of the mainstream second language learners (students) with teachers and parents in secondary education in Bangladesh.

Chapter Two

Literature review: Relevant Research and Theory

Introduction

The aim of this study is to investigate ESL students' and teachers' experiences using the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach in mainstream classrooms, with the objective of making CLT more effective for Bangladeshi classrooms. In order to meet the aims of the study, a clear understanding of various issues related to second language learning is required. These issues include the challenges and supports, the CLT approach itself and its recent developments, the impact of large classes in Bangladesh and the differences between oral and written language. Current research in the United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (USA), Australia, New Zealand, Latin American countries like Costa Rica, Uruguay, Brazil and particularly Asian countries like Japan, China, South Korea, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia and obviously Bangladesh will be reviewed. As Bangladesh is an Asian country, the literature surrounding the needs of students, teachers and parents in second language learning in that region are considered to be particularly relevant. The researcher's own knowledge and observations indicate that in Bangladesh, learning English as second language is not always effective and students are not achieving as well as they could, therefore relevant research from a range of contexts was deemed to be pertinent to this study.

Theories on Second Language Learning

There are several theories of second language acquisition or learning including the Input-Interaction-Output (IIO) model, the Affective Filter and Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis and Acculturation Theory (Hite & Evans, 2006). The Input-Interaction-Output (IIO) model highlights the socio-linguistic, psycho-linguistic and other linguistic aspects of language acquisition (Gass, 1988). In comparison, a comprehensible input of the target language in non-threatening emotional environments is important in the Affective Filter and Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis (Krashen, 1981). In Acculturation Theory, the learner's social and psychological

participation with the target language group is emphasised (Schumann, 1986). All these theories contribute to the development and current debate around second language learning. However, an overall view that incorporates the most credible components of each perspective is still to emerge.

The Relationship Between Oral and Written Language

As described earlier, language is a tool for communication and learning a language means learning four basic language skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing to use this tool effectively (TQI-SEP, 2006). Usually, these are referred to oral (listening-speaking) and written (reading-writing) language. Oral language incorporates listening and speaking and written language includes reading and writing skills as they are related to each other. People normally learn to speak before they learn to write; however written language is often considered more significant than oral language (Emmit, Komesaroff & Pollock, 2006). Oral and written are two different systems of language though clearly there are connections between them. Based on the similar syntax and morphology, both oral and written languages also have differences. The key differences are in some syntactic structures, and in the intended purpose and use of the communication (Emmit, Komesaroff & Pollock, 2006). Written language includes the added dimension of interpreting symbols and signs. Most people learn oral language initially but written language as secondary source of communication (TQI-SEP, 2006). Though both strands of language differ, according to the purpose, they are both used for communication.

English as Second Language (ESL) Learners

Learning a second language, especially in a monolingual context is very difficult, but growing numbers of ESL students worldwide suggests that research in this area is an important focus. Though much of the research and literature on ESL learners is focussed in classrooms in English speaking countries where the medium of instruction is English, the findings are often relevant to other non-English speaking contexts also. The findings in the non-English speaking contexts consistently report that teaching and learning the English language in a foreign context is very complex and challenging (Anderson, 2008; Lu & Berg, 2008; May, 2002; Safford & Costley, 2008; Sirota & Bailey, 2009). Traditional literacy practices that only emphasise functional

skills are now not sufficient to meet the learning needs of students from different backgrounds, particularly with new definitions of literacy in the 21st century. Not only must teachers be aware that their students are bilingual or bicultural, but they also need to acknowledge different languages and cultures within the approaches they use, whether the program is bilingual, ESL, mainstream, or a foreign language (Brisk & Harrington, 2007). The most crucial challenges for both learners and teachers often include apprehension about using the language – particularly in spoken communication, lack of vocabulary knowledge, learners' backgrounds, different learning preferences according to gender, culture and geographic setting, and non cooperation of learners (Anderson, 2008; Lu & Berg, 2008; May, 2002; Safford & Costley, 2008).

Challenges Common to the Learning of English in Different Educational Contexts

The challenges ESL learners and teachers face are very complex. Though the challenges may at first appear insurmountable, they usually occur at certain points. For example, vocabulary knowledge and growth is a large and persistent challenge that impacts on both learners and teachers equally.

Carlo, August, Mclaughlin, Snow, Dressler, Lippman, Lively, & White (2004) affirm that vocabulary is one key determinant of poor reading comprehension to ESL learners. They also assert,

> 'Knowing a word' involves learning many things of a word- its literal meaning, its various connotations, the sorts of syntactic constructions into which it enters, the morphological options it offers, and a rich array of semantic associates, including synonyms, hyponyms, and words with closely related yet contrasting meanings as well
> as its capacity for polysemy (p. 192).

So, vocabulary growth is vital for ESL learners, for successful mastery of the language.

Secondly, there is a reluctance to use the language inside and outside of the classroom. Research shows that the ESL learners often use silence as a strategy to overcome the fear of learning the targeted language (Safford & Costley, 2008). They are often fearful about making a mistake. Through language we frequently make sense of our

experiences in the world; and it is arguably one of our primary and most influential acts of identity (LePage & Tabouret-Keller, 1985). The challenge of using the language in both spoken and written forms can affect motivation and engagement in learning in different ways in classrooms.

Thirdly, backgrounds and socio-linguistic factors of ESL learners are often barriers to learning. Without having specific knowledge about learners' background and socio-linguistic aspects, both teachers and learners can be disadvantaged. Anderson, (2008) in the US argues that students' background (family, culture, community) extends far beyond just an instrument for communication. It is particularly necessary when considering the needs of students from different backgrounds, as it represents everything about that learner. Similarly in the UK, Slattery (2004) when considering Asians learning English, writes:

> Community languages teachers were aware of the needs of children born and raised alongside English children and of their part in helping these British-born Asians to better understand aspects of their heritage as well as enabling them to realise their potential as fully-fledged, rather than partial bilinguals, and of the positive benefits arising from this diversity (cited in Anderson, 2008, p.83).

The research of Hite and Evans (2006) supports the contention that encouraging learners to use their native / home language is essential in learning and concept building, even when the teachers do not know that language. So, it is important to know the social and cultural backgrounds of learners for effective learning to occur.

Fourthly, different approaches to learning are often characteristic of Language Two (L2) learners as they frequently use different learning inspirations and systems to learn the targeted language. This can be caused by personal culture and gender influences (Lu & Berg, 2008). For example, research has shown that "while many Hispanic ESL/EFL learners in the US, chose compensatory strategies and social strategies, many Japanese learners chose cognitive strategies and memory strategies, and they tend to work alone" (Bedell & Oxford 1996; Oxford, 1996a cited in Lu & Berg, 2008, p. 18). In addition, it is frequently argued that male and female learners are different in their approaches to learning a language (Clark & Trafford, 1995; Ludwig, 1983). So, there are many influences affecting motivation and purpose for learning such as age,

anxiety, aptitude, culturally determined gender roles, sex-related personality differences and self esteem (Ehrman, 1996, p. 168).

Fifthly, there is the issue of non cooperation that can characterise some L2 learners. L2 learners may be unwilling to cooperate with teachers due to teachers' pre-notions about the students, such as a content knowledge gap between minority and non-minority children (Sirota & Bailey, 2009). Teachers may consider students from different backgrounds, other than the target language, will not be able to achieve the expected results in a mainstream educational setting. Therefore, their attitudes towards L2 learners become negative and they pay less attention to them, which can result in non cooperation from students. As Sirota and Bailey (2009) continue to argue, research in this area in the USA showed that "both white and black teachers perceive white students more positively than they do to minority students, including those who speak English as their second language" (p. 2). It is also noted that children's academic outcomes are strongly influenced by teachers' perceptions (Brown, 2006). So, it is a real challenge for teachers' to encourage students, especially L2 learners, to be co-operative and engaged in the classroom in order to make learning fruitful. Although this is less relevant to the Bangladeshi context as the students are not the minority, teachers' perceptions of those students from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds may impact on the expectations from progress in second language learning.

Pedagogical Considerations

Firstly, vocabulary enrichment for L2 learners is important. As discussed earlier, vocabulary plays a most significant role in learning and using any language, especially L2 learners. Carlo et al. (2004) confirm that when teaching vocabulary, teachers must be aware of the questions such as 'which words', 'how to introduce the words', 'how often target words should be encountered', 'what aspects of word knowledge to focus on' and 'what instructional techniques should be used to infer word meanings' (p. 192). These writers continued that specific instructional components involving a socio-constructivist approach, for example small group activities, crossword puzzles, specific text assignments and various kinds of information about words can be helpful for vocabulary enrichment.

Secondly, there is the need for teachers to pay attention to students' existing experiences inside and outside the classroom to reduce the fear in communication. EAL (English as an additional language) students are very often underestimated by teachers and other students, as their English level is below that of others, although they are well experienced and educated in their own language and culture. As a result, this brings 'silence' and a slow or often negative outcome to the learners' performances. Paying attention to students' existing experiences in and outside the classroom and the need to stand back and try and place teachers in the student's position is important. Teachers need to imagine what the classroom looks like and sounds like from students' point of view in order to select appropriate methodology for teaching (Safford & Costley, 2008). This includes a careful consideration of the different linguistic and cultural starting points for different learners, so that "creativity and difference are seen as normal and as productive" (Kress, 2003, p. 120) "rather than barriers to academic success" (Safford & Costley, 2008, p. 149).

Thirdly, the awareness of different choices of different learning strategies based on students' gender and cultural diversity is essential. ESL teachers have to recognise the diverse strategies exercised by the learners' gender and cultural or geographical background which could provide different approaches to enhance students' learning in English language (Lu & Berg, 2008). Studies show that culture and gender influence the learning strategies used by the learners (Ehrman, 1996; Ludwig, 1983). Therefore, the literature suggests that teachers must be familiar with the different strategies used by the different student. Furthermore, schools should adjust curriculum to fit the needs of both male and female students as well as students from different geographical backgrounds and support them to use different learning strategies when learning English.

A fourth consideration is the place of an integrated pedagogy of language teaching for multicultural classrooms. Communicative, content-based approaches are taken to be the most effective in classrooms for second language teaching and learning (Lynch, 2003). As a result of evaluating some of the disadvantages of this approach, a different view emerged that is referred to as the "post-communicative approach" (Pachler, 2000). This comprises the incorporation of linguistic and cultural comparisons across

the curriculum. Cross-curricular activities can reinforce not only what has been learnt, but also how it has been learnt. Byram (1997) has argued in his own model of 'intercultural communicative competence', that linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and intercultural competence are needed to make language teaching successful. Not only has the role of grammar changed in communication but also the exclusive use of the target language in the classroom is no longer regarded as essential. Learning direct grammatical rules and the sole use of the target language in the classroom could slow down the use of the learning language for effective communication (Anderson, 2008). Accordingly, classroom pedagogy should incorporate strategies that enable students to engage with more cognitively challenging tasks, which must go beyond the prescribed curriculum (Nisbet, 1993; Anderson, 2008). Stephen May (2002) references this point in the following quote:

> We cannot talk about building a 'knowledge economy' unless we are concerned to adopt and pursue those educational approaches best suited to accomplishing this for all students – not only for the first language learners but for second language learners as well (p. 21).

Fifthly, there is the importance of establishing a learner-sensitive teacher education course. Teachers' pre-service / existing pre-notions about the students that a content knowledge gap exists between low SES (socio-economic status) and high SES children affect the outcome of the lesson (Brown, 2006; Weinstein, Marshall, Sharp and Botkin, 1987). As a result, non-cooperation between teachers and students can occur. To reduce this gap, teacher education courses may need to focus on fostering sensitivity and increasing awareness of issues related to multiplicity (Sirota & Bailey, 2009). Teacher education programmes could also incorporate clinical components and practical work with the multilingual classrooms. This may assist teachers to apply theory to practice and become more confident in working with diverse learners. Thus teachers could have the opportunity to explore and test their own observation and use the evidence to improve their dealings with diverse classrooms.

Moreover, Anderson (2008) argues that the students of other languages often get 'stigmatised' by the approaches used in the mainstream classrooms, and although the curriculum may advocate more flexible approaches, the classroom tasks often fail to take account of the perspectives and needs of bilingual learners. He also adds that there are some general attitudes about bilingual students noted by researchers such as

Byram (1997), Tosi (1988), Brumfit (1999), Cummins (2001), Slattery (2004) and Lynch (2003) particularly, that communicative content-based approaches are the most effective in classrooms for teaching and learning a second language. An approach that focuses more on teaching skills than content, thereby incorporating the needs of the learners will ensure that learning is the central focus. It is also argued that links between home and community, and the interrelationship of cultures within diverse societies can make a valuable contribution in learning the target language (Anderson, 2008; Macfarlane, 2007).

It seems from this review, that communicative, content-based approaches may be the most useful in classrooms for second language teaching and learning. However, Franken & Haslett (1999) disagree with the view that mainstream pedagogy using interactive or collaborative tasks in the classroom could enhance the thinking, reading and writing abilities of second language learners. They argue that this technique may not be effective enough to improve the ability of the second language students. They also prove that when students work alone, the result is significantly better than collaborative writing tasks. So not all agree that mainstream pedagogy is appropriate to meet ESL learners' needs.

Overall, however, this review suggests that effective approaches including the use of culturally responsive pedagogy and a communicative approach, minimising teachers pre-conceptions about multilingual learners, paying attention to students' existing experiences, being aware of different learning strategies based on students' gender and cultural diversity, along with the provision of professional development could be the most helpful to ESL teachers and learners (Anderson, 2008; Carlo et al., 2004; Fletcher & Parkhill, 2007; Lu & Berg, 2008; Safford & Costley, 2008).

Large Classes

It is well known that the size of a class – that is the number of students in a classroom – has a significant impact on the outcome of teaching and learning. Unfortunately, most classes in the developing countries are large. There are frequently 100 students in a class. This is an enormous challenge to the teachers' ability to teach effectively. Typically, a large classroom setting allows students to be anonymous (Machemer &

Crawford, 2007) where they can easily be passive outsiders and retain their anonymity. There are well-researched disadvantages of large classes including discipline, learning, attendance and the general isolation of students (Greer & Heaney, 2004; Herreid, 2006; McConnell, Steer & Owens, 2003). These factors occur as a result of the need to use traditional lecture methods in a large class. Two significant weaknesses are found in the traditional lecture based approach. First, student passivity may not be effective for learning. Second, it is very difficult to make lectures meet the learning need of students due to the complexity and quick exchange of information (Machemer & Crawford, 2007).

However, in this fast growing world it seems that large classes are an economic reality in many developing countries as they are cost-effective; and it is still considered a useful means to promote the learning goals of enhancing interaction and social collaboration within these contexts (Johnson & Johnson, 1994; Caprariis et al., 2001). Machemer & Crawford (2007) argue that it is essential for teachers to shift from a teacher-centred paradigm to a student-centred one. Therefore teachers are no longer viewed as authoritarian knowledge givers but instead develop knowledge within a social context. This implies that teachers have to examine not only how they teach but also what they teach. Research confirms that active learning and cooperative learning are the most effective in large classes (Johnson & Johnson, 1994; Fink, 2003; Jungst et al., 2003). Active learning is 'learning by doing' and cooperative learning is 'doing with others'. Cooperative learning is one form of active learning. Research continues to illustrate that active learning does not dispel the need for lectures, but creates opportunities for students to reveal, assess, explore, produce and correspond on the information offered (Fink, 2003). Though contradictory results on the effectiveness of both active and cooperative learning exists, it is also well documented that "lectures in large classes include using Think/Pair/Share, Just-In-Time Teaching, Peer Instruction, Concept Tests, computer based instruction, recitation sections, case study teaching" and more to make students active in the classroom for effective learning (Herreid, 2006, p. 44).

Alternative Views

There are alternative views that contradict the argument that learning could be hindered in a foreign context where English is not the mainstream language and students are from different backgrounds. It was widely believed that the mother tongue is a hindrance in learning a second language. But May (2002) argues for the acknowledgement of the first language and focuses on the need for a multilingual learning atmosphere. Supporting this, Anderson (2008) articulates that a student's community language can play an important role in building confidence to learn second language. So it is very important to respect and incorporate the first language when teaching ESL learners (Savignon, 2003). It is also seen that teachers' preconceptions about learners strongly influence the outcomes (Sirota & Bailey, 2009). For example, in many contexts the expectation is that white children are more advanced learners than black children, or that socially disadvantaged children have lower learning outcomes than their counterparts (Goyette & Xie, 1999), or if you do not have English as first language, you are less likely to succeed in school (Safford & Costley, 2008).

Though there are enormous challenges in second language teaching and learning with some alternative views, "mainstreaming language minority students from bilingual and ESL programs is an educational reality" (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002, p. 18). Therefore, more research for students learning English as a second language (ESL) on the strategies that make learning effective appear to be needed.

A Brief History of ELT (English language teaching) Approaches

A historical overview indicates that in the 19th century the Grammar-Translation (GT) Method was the first approach used to teach second or foreign languages in different international contexts. This focussed on learning grammatical rules, memorisation of texts and translation amid L1 and L2 learners. It was the most formal way of teaching a second language and is often called the 'traditional method' (Rivers, 1968). Another approach known as, the Direct Method appeared in the early 20th century and this highlighted the natural way of learning a new language as similar to learning the mother tongue and therefore deemphasised the translation and grammatical rules for learning a second language. In many instances, this resulted in the language learning becoming disorganised and uncontrolled or lacking in direction. Then, the Structural

Approach became popular in order to make language learning more organised (TQI-SEP, 2006). This gave preference to the learning of structures of both written and spoken language. After this the Audio-lingual Method was developed using the basis of 'behaviouristic' theory popularised by Skinner and focussed on memorisation and controlled language drills e.g. repetition (Harmer, 2001). At the end of the last century, when Chomsky challenged the Audio-lingual Method that emphasised the mechanics of language learning as unsuccessful, the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) evolved, incorporating the best features of all the approaches described above (Savignon, 2001).

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach

CLT is one of the more recent developments for teaching and learning second languages in the mainstream classroom where English is not the mother tongue (TQI-SEP, 2006). CLT is based on the theoretical concept of communicative competence, which focuses only not on the accuracy, but also on fluency in communication (Savignon, 2003; TQI-SEP, 2006). Following the linguistic theory of Chomsky (Savignon, 2001), CLT focuses on 'communicative competence' which incorporates the grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic use of the language in different contexts (Hasan & Akhand, 2009). To understand this concept, it is important to examine language and language learning. Language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols that a community uses to communicate with each other (SEDP, 1999). The main purpose of a language is to make successful communication with others. If language learning fails to reach this goal then there is little point in learning that language. The figure below provides an example of what happens if language fails to communicate.

Figure 1: Communication Gap
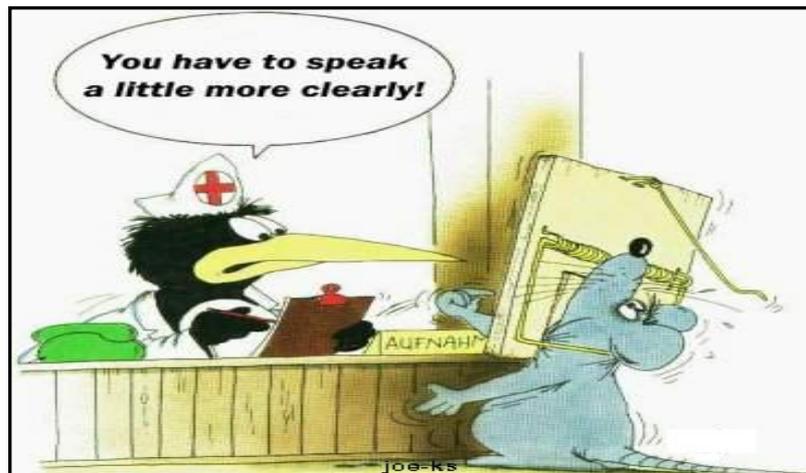
(http://languageinstinct.blogspot.com/2006_09_01_archive.html)

When learning any language, it is essential to remember that the goal is to communicate effectively with that language, particularly in the oral form.

There are four basic language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing (TQI-SEP, 2006). Listening and speaking are primary skills; whereas reading and writing are secondary ones. On the other hand, listening and reading are recognised as receiving skills while speaking and writing are producing skills (Savignon, 1991). This is viewed in the figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Language Skills (SEDP, 1999)
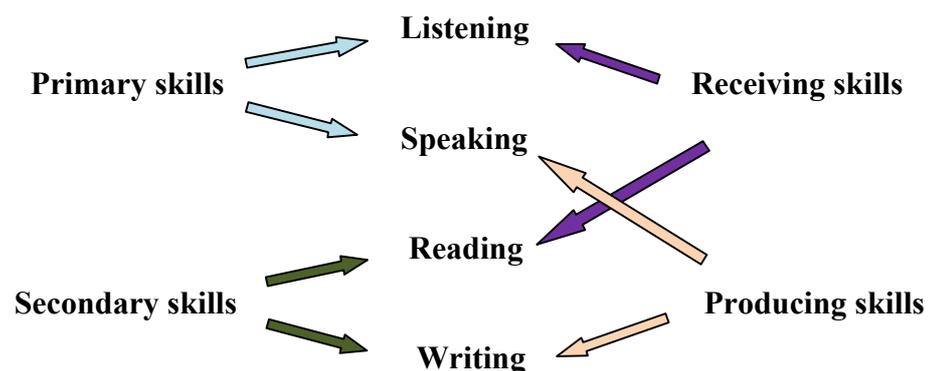
Learning any language, involves this process. Like a chain reaction, one depends upon another. Without the development of the primary skills, those classified as secondary are more difficult to learn and have little purpose. This is supported by Emmit, Komesaroff & Pollock (2006) in their discussion on language acquisition. The content

of CLT sequences activities according to this principle and emphasises the learners' communicative competence (SEDP, 1999).

Learning any language does not merely involve linguistic knowledge such as grammar, vocabulary or the language structure (TQI-SEP, 2006) but also the ability to apply that language effectively for communication. Language is learnt as a tool to communicate rather than an ornament to look at (SEDP, 1999). For example, only owning, or having knowledge about a bicycle does not fulfil its utility, if one does not know how to ride it. Similarly, linguistic knowledge on its own, does not ensure successful communication unless it is used for a particular purpose. In this way, learning any language is unlike learning other content-based subjects. Consequently, CLT emphasises the learners' communicative competence with a focus on linguistic form, social context, interpretation and the function of the language in diverse situations (Savignon, 2003). Language use is therefore more important than mere knowledge of the language.

CLT is highly accepted and widely used in the non-English speaking countries as an approach to develop English as a second language (Mangubhai, Marland, Dashwood & Son, 2007; Sakura, 2001; Savignon, 2003; Thompson, 1996). Asian countries, Latin American countries and others where English is not the mother tongue, use CLT to teach and learn English as a second language (Hiep, 2007; Howard & Millar, 2009; Nishimura, 2000; Sakura, 2001; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Savignon, 2003; Zhang, 1997). Furthermore, English-speaking countries such as the UK, USA and the European Union also use this approach to teach ESL learners from diverse backgrounds (Anderson, 2008; Sirota & Bailey, 2009; Carlo et al., 2004; Hite & Evans, 2006; Safford & Costley, 2008; Savignon, 2003).

CLT focuses on the phenomenological perspective of 'learning by doing' and the notion that language learning not only depends on learning the grammatical rules but also the ability to use the language in real life situations for communication (Hymes, 1972). The key characteristics of CLT include an emphasis on the meaning of the language, incorporation of four basic language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing), teaching grammar in context, enhancing learning by doing, and focusing on

many language practice activities such as dialogue, role play, interviews, games, pair and group work (TQI-SEP, 2006; Hiep, 2007).

For any activity, CLT follows some prescribed but flexible stages such as, pre, main and post activity (TQI-SEP, 2006). Before starting the activity, the teacher sets the scene with a lesson-related short discussion, including the introduction of difficult words, providing guiding questions and clear instructions. During the main part of the lesson teachers are expected to monitor students' performance, according to the objectives of the learning and assist with difficulties. At the end of the task s/he must elicit answers, correct confusions and provide feedback to the whole class.

CLT also does not consider reading aloud as an effective technique to develop learners' reading skill (TQI-SEP, 2006). The theory that underpins the reading component of CLT assumes that to understand the text, therefore silent reading is more appropriate than oral reading to increase comprehension skills. Reading aloud is useful at the earliest stages of learning when the learners' attention is centred on pronunciation rather than understanding the meaning. Therefore, CLT tends to focus on silent reading activities in the classroom to develop reading skills.

Savignon (2003) argues that in spite of the learning in CLT being contextualised, sometimes it is undermined in practice by focusing excessively on the achievements in learners' communicative competence. She states that in most cases this is not due to CLT itself as an approach, but it is the implementation and evaluation procedures that make it seem unsuccessful. To overcome these challenges, Japan has a reformed curriculum, Hong Kong and Costa Rica changed public examination systems and curriculum, Taiwan shifted into a bilingual environment with all road signs in English as well as Chinese and the European Union shifted its focus on learner autonomy in language education (Hiep, 2007; Howard & Millar, 2009; Nishimura, 2000; Sakura, 2001; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Savignon, 2003; Zhang, 1997). So it can be said that although CLT is used widely in learning English as a second language, some modifications may be needed to accommodate the background of the learners in different contexts and to make it more learner centred.

CLT and Bangladesh

In Bangladesh the CLT approach has been used to teach and learn English as a second language for nearly two decades, but personal experience as a teacher educator, and public examination results, have indicated that the outcome for students is not consistently positive (MoE, 2010). Hasan & Akhand (2009) articulate that a lack of classroom instructions and insufficient resources may result in CLT being a non-effective approach in the Bangladeshi context. However, there is continued debate that a blend of content-based approaches and CLT could minimise the challenges of teaching English in Bangladesh. In the same vein Nesa (2004) argues that very limited teaching / learning materials and implementation strategies create hindrances in the implementation of CLT in Bangladesh. She suggests that enhancing self-directed study, including more instructional materials, and furthering teacher training in CLT as well as supervision of CLT sessions could improve the achievement of students' English learning in Bangladesh. Though the Ministry of Education of Bangladesh already took action to enhance continuous teacher training and provide more resources for ESL classrooms, the outcome is not yet satisfactory. This is reflected in the public examination results (TQI-SEP, 2006; MoE, 2010).

To sum up, large classes are a reality in Bangladesh. Accordingly this investigation is designed to identify how socio-cultural views of learning can influence teaching when the CLT programme is implemented within this context.

Conclusion

Through the review of the literature, several themes of importance to the current study have emerged. The review has recognized the importance of using the CLT approach in teaching and learning English as second language in Bangladesh. Alongside this, it appears essential to change teachers' pre-notion attitudes about students that sharply hinder learning outcomes.

Moreover, the literature review supports the need to examine the views of students, teachers and parents and their experiences in second language learning and CLT.

An investigation to determine ways that CLT language programme could be enhanced and better meet the needs of students to communicate more effectively in English is therefore important. Following the literature review, design and methodological issues for this study were selected. Research design elements were considered and choices made based on the research questions and the findings of the literature review. The rationale for these choices is discussed in the next chapter.

Research Questions

Key Question:

How can Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) be enhanced to better meet the needs of English language learners at secondary level (9-16 yrs) in Bangladesh?

Sub Questions:

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of CLT in Bangladesh perspective?
2. What are students', teachers' and parents' perspectives on second language learning in   secondary education?
3. Do the ESL learners perceive that the lack of achievement in English affects their learning outcomes in other classes?
4. Is there a gap between achievements in oral language compared to written language for ESL learners using the CLT programme?

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

"Theory without research is mere speculation; research without theory is merely data collection" (Davidson & Tolich, 1999, p. 17). Research can lead to the development or refinement of new theories, which in turn can instigate further research – it is a continuous process. Research starts with a question or hypothesis and ends with findings. Therefore, there is usually no end to a debate or issue and there is no end to research. There are different ways of interpreting an issue and its wider implications. This chapter outlines the methodology employed for the study and the rationale behind each decision made in the research design. Therefore this chapter is divided into sections, which describe theoretical orientation of this study with an overview of different approaches used including mixed methods, qualitative methods and quantitative methods and their advantages and disadvantages. It also discusses the research focus, research design, and issues relating to data collection, analysis techniques, the settings (sample selection), ethical considerations, trustworthiness and rigour including validity and reliability of the data.

Theoretical Orientation

The purpose of this study was to uncover and describe, the challenges that ESL students in Bangladesh context face, and the supports that make the learning effective in the mainstream classroom, from both students' and teachers' perspectives. Taking the pragmatic (Martens, 2010; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) view that incorporates both social constructionism and a positivist paradigm, and based on the ethnographic and phenomenological perspective (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002; Best & Kahn, 1998; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Burr, 1995; Crotty, 1998; Mutch, 2005), this study was designed to explain and interpret the experiences of ESL students and teachers in the mainstream classroom in order to obtain better outcomes. A researcher, who favours a phenomenological approach, seeks to realise the importance of actions and relations to everyday community in particular situations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Thus an

experience has varied meanings for different people. Agreeing with this, Larrabee (1990) states, "Phenomenology is a reflective enterprise, and in its reflection it is critical" (cited in Crotty, 1998, p. 82).

On the other hand, pragmatic researchers believe that different paradigms can be used to deal with research problems; and argue that pragmatism provides the best philosophical foundation for mixed methods research (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Greene & Caracelli, 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Researchers predominantly study the topic based on their personal value systems incorporating variables that they feel are most pertinent for the topic (Martens, 2010; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). This investigation aimed to identify perspectives of ESL students and teachers in the mainstream classroom, and to investigate ways to make the CLT approach more applicable in the Bangladeshi classroom. Accordingly, pragmatic, parallel and mixed methods research design (Martens, 2010; Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2002), where both qualitative and quantitative data are collected and analysed to get the final result, would appear to be the most appropriate methodology to investigate CLT, while both phenomenological and pragmatic perspectives would be the best theoretical framework to support the study. The following sections discuss the rationale for using a mixed method approach and the rationale for the inclusion of both qualitative and quantitative data.

Overview of Different Research Methods

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methodology is one of the most significant and applied approaches to investigate educational issues. A social phenomenon from the human participants' point of view is the focal point of the qualitative research (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002). Educational researchers tend to find answers in naturalistic ways; and this is facilitated through a qualitative research approach. As Mutch (2005) states the purpose of this approach is to "… to gather "rich" description and illuminate the phenomenon of interest in ways that educators could relate to" (p. 20). Agreeing with this Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh (2002) add that the collected data from natural settings are used to create theory rather than experimenting with it. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) describe qualitative research as:

> [a] situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive material practices that makes the world visible. These practices turn the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that the qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (p.3).

Phenomenology is at the core of qualitative research, which observes social reality as unique. While it is not possible to describe all of the characteristics of qualitative research, Bogdan & Biklen (2007) identify "naturalistic, descriptive data, concern with process, inductive, and meaning" (pp. 5-7) as the most important characteristics. Qualitative methods originated from anthropology and social sciences (Mutch, 2005).

It can be said that qualitative studies are those in which the data is not explained in regular numeric or quantitative words but rather live data is described to construct theory than only to analyze it. For example, McEachron & Bhatti (2005) in their article, *Language Support for Immigrant Children: A Study of State Schools in the UK and US,* describe the supports that second language learners get in the mainstream classroom in the UK and US. In this qualitative study they investigate three UK and three US high schools and are interested in exploring the advantages of cultural differences in the classroom, which help students to learn English successfully. They selected six elementary schools, based on the criteria of socio-economic levels, geographic location, size, multilingual populations, and ethnic minority populations amidst a predominantly English-speaking population. They interviewed principals and head teachers, teacher assistants, SENCOs (Special Educational Needs Coordinators; one is assigned to each school), staff with special responsibility for language teaching, other ancillary staff, and, wherever possible, parent helpers. Findings illustrate that both these countries provide services with limited and sometimes diminishing resources though they have cultural and legislative differences and similarities for the improvement of mainstream second language learners.

And again, in the article *Mainstream Classroom Teachers and ESL Students*, Clair (1995) talks about the mainstream class teachers' perspectives regarding ESL students. This qualitative study tries to explore the needs of mainstream class teachers when dealing with ESL learners. To investigate this, she undertakes case studies of three

mainstream class teachers. She uses interview transcripts, notes from classroom observations, and her journals to collect data for one year. The finding shows that teachers' early beliefs such as inadequate teacher preparation, nonexistent or inappropriate professional development and lack of materials, abstain them from supporting ESL learners in the mainstream.

The above two articles are selected only to provide an example of qualitative study although there are many thousands of others. Both of these studies show the features of qualitative research clearly. The authors consider that qualitative, naturalistic, oral, interactive approach to research is more appropriate to study the social features of educational discourse and its products. These qualitative studies look at how the uses of instructional strategies in ESL classes are crucial for students' language and literacy development in a naturalistic setting. The results of these two studies show that qualitative methodology is an ideal way to investigate these educational issues. Moreover, themes and data collection tools used in these two studies are similar to those used this research and exemplify the strengths of a qualitative research.

Strengths

There are numerous strengths that make the qualitative approach an effective tool to study educational issues. In-depth and in-detail study of issues is the main focus of qualitative research, revealing qualities of life in real situations without being hindered by predetermined interventions (Jenesick, 2003; Patton, 2002). It is subjective and acknowledges the value-laden nature of inquiry where researchers exist as instruments. Supporting these views Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh (2002) adjoin, "qualitative researchers seek to understand a phenomenon by focusing on the total or holistic picture rather than breaking it down into variables or numeric analysis of data" (p. 25). It is most applicable where naturalistic emotional and behavioral causes and effects need to be investigated; and where a quantitative method is insufficient to find the answers to the questions in these educational settings. Qualitative research moves forward applying inductive logic and uses thematic or text study techniques to analyse data before coming to a conclusion (Mutch, 2005). This approach gathers qualitative data using dynamic and flexible systems, which are both context sensitive and emphatic (Best & Kahn, 1998).

In Hunter (2006) these strengths of qualitative research are clearly visible. The author considers that a qualitative, naturalistic, oral, interactive approach to research is more appropriate to study the social features of mathematical discourse and its products. The article by Hite and Evans (2006) also exemplifies the strengths of qualitative research. This qualitative study looks at how the first grade teachers use instructional strategies in their classes. First grade is crucial for children's language and literacy development, and using a qualitative survey methodology in a naturalistic setting was essential. Results of these two studies show that using of qualitative method is an appropriate way to research these subjects.

Limitations

Though the strengths of qualitative research are enormous, there are small typical drawbacks. If the researcher is not cautious enough, he or she may affect the responses by unintentionally influencing or leading a respondent (Burton & Bartlett, 2009). It is known that in qualitative research nothing can be certain, and anything could happen (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). It usually involves single or small cases to study, so it is very hard to generalise the findings.

Quantitative Methods

Another approach to research where numbers are analysed and described is generally referred to as quantitative research. Mutch (2005) describes characteristics of quantitative research as, "[q]uantitative research aims to numerically describe a phenomenon of interest, explore relationships among variables and manipulate variables in order to measure the effects" (p. 40). This first generation research method originated from the scientific tradition and uses the paradigm of positivism and behaviourism where the researcher's approach is detached and objective (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002; Burns, 2000). In addition, quantitative studies use predesigned deductive research methods to collect data from many examples or large samples using a deductive theory of hypothesis and standardised tools. The data is statistically analysed on order to de-contextualise and generalise the results (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002; Best & Kahn, 1998; Mutch, 2005).

Strengths

The quantitative research approach is built on principles of accuracy and direct management. As Burns (2000) says, "[c]ontrol is achieved through the sampling and design; precision through quantitative and reliable measurement" (p. 9). It is considered objective, so there is little room for human bias. It is most useful where the effect of a single variable needs to be examined in a complex natural world (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002; Best & Kahn, 1998). Using a deductive approach, the quantitative data permits statistical analysis in order to form a theory. As it is controlled, and any researcher can usually reproduce the study anytime, anywhere.

In the article by Franken & Haslett (1999) the strengths of this approach are evident. To measure the effects of interaction on writing argumentative texts of second language students, the authors used a quantitative intervention study. The class teacher and the first researcher took the learning sessions with a pre-test and a main study to answer the research questions. There is a clear account of data collection and analysis on the pre and main test. Data is then compared and tested using ANOVA (analysis of variance) before coming to conclusions.

An article by Shields & Bennett (2006) also illustrates these strengths. This study uses three interconnected surveys to find the effect of "old net" skills in a "new net" environment. Using a deductive approach, data were collected from 487 respondents and grouped into four themes to find the "confidence" and "competence" of using the Internet in tertiary education. Then records are statistically analysed before conclusions are drawn.

Limitations

Quantitative research is not generally a suitable method to study events in the non-physical natural behavioural settings, which are beyond control (Best & Kahn, 1998). Validity and reliability depend on careful research design and the researchers' experiences. Agreeing with this, Burns (2000) writes, "It often produces banal and trivial findings of little consequence due to the restriction on and the controlling of variables" (p. 10). It is difficult to control all the variables and this type of method cannot be totally objective, as it remains dependent on researchers' choices, investigations and interpretations.

Mixed Methods

Mixed methods research design tends to comprise both qualitative and quantitative traits in the planning, data collection and analysis (Bergman, 2008; Creswell, 2003; Martens, 2010; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Tashakkori & Creswell (2007) favour a mixed method approach defining it as, "research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or programme of inquiry" (p. 4). Today, it is one of the fastest growing areas of research methodology (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010). One of the primary reasons for this may be the search for a common understanding through the triangulation of data from various methods, or as a means to get alternative points of view using different positions (Bergman, 2008; Martens, 2010; Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Different philosophical assumptions e.g. pragmatism, mixing paradigms and transformation are integral to a mixed method approach (Martens, 2010). Among them Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009) suggest pragmatism as one philosophical route for mixed method researchers to follow. They describe the pragmatic researcher:

> Pragmatists decide what they want to study based on what is important within their personal value systems. They then study the topic in a way that is congruent with their value system, including units of analysis and variables that they feel are most likely to yield interesting responses.....(p. 90).

These researchers tend to follow "what works" to find out which method is best suited to answer research questions (Martens, 2010, p. 296). This approach can be contrasted with the transformative paradigm, which focuses on the value of group views as a motivating force for all research. However, it is considered that any mixed methods study can be carried out with a transformative or supportive intention (Martens, 2010). So in regard to examining philosophical assumptions, it can be said that a mixed methods approach can imply a better understanding of multifaceted social issues.

Strengths

As a mixed methods research design comprises both qualitative and quantitative features, it can respond to research questions in a single study or those parts of a larger study which are designed to include corresponding information associated with several research questions using different methodological approaches (Martens, 2010). As previously discussed, mixed methods approaches are widely used to gain common understanding through the triangulation of data. Such data can give surprising clarity to the results. The complexities of many studies instigate the necessity of using a mixed methods approach (Newman, Ridenour, Newman & DeMarco, 2003 cited in Martens, 2010). It allows a multiple approach to meet the needs of the study. Supporting this Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen (2010) argue that in order to understand paradoxes and contradictions a mixed methods approach could be the best tool used by researchers to add both depth and breadth to the analysis.

Limitations

Mixed methods have an intuitive appeal and therefore the researcher is required to be an expert on both approaches to research. It needs to be well designed and incorporate different specialisation for different components of the study, particularly if the study is a larger one with complex issues (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010; Martens, 2010; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). More time and funding are often required to do mixed methods research in comparison to single methods research.

Research Design: Methods and Procedures

The focus of this research was on the perspectives of mainstream ESL learners and the effectiveness of the CLT programme in secondary education in Bangladesh. It is widely accepted in Bangladesh that the mainstream students learning English as a second language face many challenges. The research questions that aimed to explain these challenges were investigated through a mixed methods research design and followed qualitative and quantitative pathways by using interviews, focus group interviews, observations and numerical data from achievement tests (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002; Best & Kahn, 1998; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Burton & Bartlett, 2009; Mutch, 2005).

Interviews

An intended conversation mostly between two people to get information is called an interview (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Mutch, 2005). Through this method, the interviewer can pick up non-verbal clues that would not be detectable from a questionnaire. When discussing qualitative interviews, Burton & Bartlett (2009) state, "An interviewer can collect detailed qualitative data expressed in a respondent's own words" (p. 95).

A number of significant decisions have to be made in the planning of interviews including how the interview will take place, the role of the interviewer, the procedure of recording and the final analysis of the data. Every researcher has to keep in mind Patton's (1990) suggestion when interviewing:

> the purpose of the interview is to find out what is in or on someone else's mind. The purpose of open-ended interviewing is not to put things in someone's mind, but to access the perspective of the person being interviewed (cited in Best & Kahn, 1998, p. 254).

When carrying out interviews, the interviewer has to be very cautious about being biased and misled. The interviewee may perceive the interviewer's perspective, thus providing information based on what interviewer wants to hear or know. Interviews must be carefully planned or they may take too much time (Burton & Bartlett, 2009). Successful interviewing needs skill, and the uniqueness of every interview makes it difficult to collate data if the setting is varied (Burton & Bartlett, 2009; Mutch, 2006).

Interviews can be quite formal with set questions and asked in a patterned way, or be very informal and open-ended. Interview questions usually probe the past or current information as well as predictions for the future. The most ideal data collecting procedure in interviews is to tape record the interview if the respondent is willing, otherwise the interviewer must keep notes continuously and expand on them instantly after ending the interview while the information is still fresh (Best & Kahn, 1998).

Interviewing can be used to support other methods (Mutch, 2006). It is a research method that can be implemented in different situations and with a range of respondents. Through this method the interviewer can easily pick up non-verbal clues that would not be detectable from a questionnaire. In discussing qualitative interviews,

Burton & Bartlett (2009) state, "[a] interviewer can collect detailed qualitative data expressed in a respondent's own words" (p. 95). Supporting this view Kvale (1996) suggests,

> The qualitative research interview is a construction site of knowledge. An interview is literally an inter view, an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest (cited in Mutch, 2006, p. 127).

It is clear that interviews can be a valuable data-gathering procedure in educational research.

Focus Group Interviews

In focus group interviews individuals are invited to participate in a forum, where their opinions are sought and discussed. There are a number of advantages that focus group interviews may provide in comparison to other types of research tools in education. Vaughn, Schumm & Singagub (1996) suggest that focus group interviews can contribute resourceful and in-depth data to the study. The discussions among individuals could open new ideas that may seem unrealistic. In addition, the greater anonymity of group members allows individuals to disclose information more freely (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007).

Observation

Observation, as the name suggests, is based on watching what people do in real situations. This is a key element of ethnographic research (Sissons, 2003). In agreement, Best & Kahn (1998) argue that observation may be the best way to get certain data where human subjects are in action.

Qualitative researchers plan, modify and remould as they proceed (Janesick, 1994 cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Thus Lincoln & Guba (1985) advise that "...the design of a naturalistic study ... cannot be given in advance; it must emerge, develop and unfold ... (cited in Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2007, p. 267). Therefore a qualitative research approach appears to be appropriate for investigating the research questions of this study, as qualitative research is particularly suitable for studies where little empirical research exists (Patton, 2002), as is the case with the CLT investigation.

Quantitative Data

Alternatively, quantitative data collecting approaches are helpful tools for educational research as they gather data for generally experimental and descriptive studies in education. Achievement tests in particular are the data collecting devices that are used to find a specific influence of a specific intervention on human behaviour of one or two or more persons at a particular time or different times (Best & Kahn, 1998). Achievement tests mostly relate to describe the present conditions and then measure future behaviour on the basis of pre-test performance. They are used in placing, advancing or retaining students in a particular grade level, as well as evaluating the influences of curriculum, study courses, teachers, teaching methods, and other aspects considered important in educational practice (Best & Kahn, 1998). In ideal conditions standardised achievement tests quantify the best performance of human behaviour. As such these tests are appropriate to find the strengths and failures of a specific issue of human behaviour through comparing two or more persons or groups.

ESL learners in Bangladesh schools have been using CLT for a significant time; however, achievement is limited, particularly in oral language (listening and speaking) skills compared to reading and writing skills (Nesa, 2004). So, by comparing numerical data from both oral and written achievement tests, it was intended to find the limitations and effectiveness of CLT in developing language skills to communicate in and outside of mainstream classrooms in both oral and written modes of language.

Accordingly, it is feasible to state that a mixed methods research approach, which combines a qualitative research design by using interviews, focus group interviews and observations along with numerical data from achievement tests from a quantitative approach, could bring more explicit answers to the research questions.

The Context and Participants

The study took place in four secondary high schools from two divisional cities (Northern and Southern) of Bangladesh. They were selected on the basis of English subject achievement results in the public examinations. Public examination results were collected for the last five years from the education boards to select the schools. From each city one high and one mid-achievement school was selected using random sampling (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006) on both high and mid-achievement categories. Subsequently, one boys' school, two girls' school and a co-education school formed the sample. Then I used purposive sampling to select five student participants from a pool of male and female volunteers from class nine and ten (age 12 – 14) in each school; as these two levels are reflective of the public examination results. Among the English teachers and the parents of each school, at least two were selected randomly from each group. At this stage I was cautious about the causal relationships between teacher, student and parents, and their influence on student success in school.

Firstly, an overview is provided of the northern division city schools. Green School (pseudonym) is a large school with 20 teachers from a range of disciplines, an assistant head teacher and a head teacher. Among them there are six English teachers. It is a high achievement school in the northern region. It has two, four-storied brick built academic and office buildings with one separate three-storied hostel for students. It has a lovely garden and is well landscaped with flowers in between the buildings. The classrooms are well organised and have sufficient desks for the students to sit in a Bangladeshi context. More than 1000 students who are well dressed and mostly well disciplined attend the school. Students are strictly selected by admission tests and generally come from the higher socio economic level of society. They are generally very capable students and well cared for by the parents. The teachers are trained, especially the English teachers in using CLT. It is also considered that the teachers' attitudes towards all students are the same. This is a high achievement school according to public exam results focusing learners' on success in later life. It is also noteworthy that the head teacher guides this school with a strong professional leadership.

The Blue School (pseudonym) compared to the Green School is a little smaller in size with 12 teachers; an assistant head teacher and a head teacher. Among them three of these are English teachers. It has a two-storied building with sufficient classrooms. More than 450 students attend, who are well-dressed and disciplined but come from mostly the poorer parts of society (lower socio-economic backgrounds). Some students come to school without having breakfast in the morning and most of the parents are illiterate and struggle to take care of their children. Most teachers are trained and they try their best to help the students attain high grades in public exams. The attitudes to students are not the same amongst the teachers, so only capable students are nourished carefully to achieve high results in public exams. Though it is not a very high achieving school in terms of grades, the students are aware of the importance of education and teachers try to be inclusive in their practice.

Secondly, we will look at the southern divisional two city schools. The Red School (pseudonym) is a very big school with nearly 1900 students, 36 teachers, two assistant head teachers and a head teacher. It is a two-shift school with 18 teachers and an assistant head teacher each. The school is situated in the city centre with a 'U' shaped three-storied building. It has a lovely garden and a small field in between the 'U' shaped building. Most of the teachers are trained, and some of them trained abroad. It is a school of high achieving students who are selected through admission tests. Most of the learning facilities in a Bangladeshi context are offered here. Parents are also aware of their children's outcomes. Students are well dressed and disciplined and look forward to future success. Though it is a high achieving school and teachers try to teach according to the syllabus, their attitude is focussed on higher test results. This is also evident in the teaching of English, however the teachers do attempt to follow some parts of the CLT programme. As it is a large school, the head teacher is always busy with administrative duties rather than academic concerns, which are largely looked after by the assistant head teachers.

The Purple school (pseudonym) is a mid-level school according to the public exam results and situated in the semi urban rural area near the city. It has an 'L' shaped building made of tin and wood and a very big playing ground in front of the classroom. Some big trees surround the area to ensure fresh air and instil a calmness

that seems to ensure the environment an ideal place for learning. Nearly 550 students study here and they are neatly dressed and disciplined. The school has 16 teachers, an assistant head teacher and a head teacher. Most of the teachers are trained and among them two are English teachers. The English teachers are trying to apply the CLT programme in the classroom. Here, also the teachers' attitudes are focussed on the exam results but they are seeking more effective ways to teach the students. Most of the parents' consider that the school will do everything for the education of their children and that it is the teachers' responsibility to educate them accordingly. The head teacher and the assistant head teacher are well organised and have action plans to improve outcomes in the future. They are caring and endeavour to make contact with the parents to make them aware of their students' outcomes.

The researcher used pseudonyms for the identification of the schools in this study, as real identification is not appropriate for ethical reasons. From an overall point of view, the learning environment seems inclusive and mutual respect between adults and children existed in the infrastructure throughout all of the schools. However, the emphasis is on obtaining high marks in the exams, and both teachers' and parents' activities are more likely to follow a commercial model rather than professional one that is cognisant with the students' learning. Both teachers and parents like to blame each other for students' poor results and do not want to accept any responsibility for this. While most of the students want to learn, their aspirations are gradually derailed by teachers and parents as they move towards the public exam system, and the desire to learn changes to a desire only to pass the examinations. The exam system is responsible for creating this attitude. It should be noted that an attitudinal change of teachers and parents and in the examination system itself are essential to make real progress in this regard.

The questions that this study sought to investigate do not evaluate or compare schools but seek to understand the perspectives of teachers-students-parents of CLT and its use in the classrooms in Bangladesh.

Data Collection: Interviews, Observations and Achievement Tests

Interviews

In seeking to understand the perspectives of ESL learners using CLT, I used open-ended, in-depth, one-to-one interviewing with twenty students from four selected schools. Following Seidman's model (1991 cited in Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2007) each student participant was interviewed twice for nearly twenty minutes each. As Seidman (1991) points out, "[i]f the researcher's goal...is to understand the meaning people involved in education make of their experience, then interviewing people provides a necessary, if not always sufficient, avenue of enquiry" (cited in Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2007, p. 271). I also kept in mind Patton's (1990) suggestion when interviewing,

> The purpose of the interview is to find out what is in or on someone else's mind. The purpose of open-ended interviewing is not to put things in someone's mind, but to access the perspective of the person being interviewed (cited in Best & Kahn, 1998, p. 254).

In order to offer a context for understanding the participant's view, the first interview focused on the person's school life history and predominantly on experiences in ESL classrooms with past teachers. The second interview was set to uncover the present experiences for the focus of the study. In this interview I asked participants to provide details about the impact of current teachers and their learning experiences. I also asked them to make connections between the teachers, themselves and their parents, and the supports they needed on the way to achieve higher levels in schools and beyond (see appendix 10 & 11 for interview questions).

Focus Group Interviews

In each school, I group interviewed teachers and parents. In the focus group interviews with teachers and parents, I acted as facilitator to encourage discussion from multiple perspectives so that I could get different views about the topic. At this point, I reminded myself about the caution from Bogdan & Biklen (2007), who stated:

> [y]ou must control your reaction by reminding yourself that the purpose of the research is to learn peoples perspective, not to instruct your subject..., ….you are not there to change views, but to learn what the subjects' views are and why they are that way (p. 101).

Burton & Bartlett, (2009) specify that if the interviewer is not cautious, he or she may affect the responses by unintentionally influencing or leading a respondent and that the interview may take a lot of time if it is not prepared well. In order to assess the appropriateness of the interview questions, I conducted trial interviews with two students who were not part of the participants. In addition, I asked a colleague who was a teacher-educator in ESL to assess the suitability of the focus-group interviews in relation to the research questions.

Observations

I observed one English teacher's class from each school on two occasions. The purpose of the observation was to ensure that the observer became familiar with the reality as it was happening, without predetermining any outcomes. I expected that the observation would provide some significant information on how English is taught in the mainstream classroom, how students and teachers support each other and its effect on their life inside and outside of the school. The observations would give insight into the research question – what are the strengths and weaknesses of CLT in Bangladesh perspective?

My position in the class was as an overt participant observer (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). I was careful to follow robust observation techniques (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002; Best & Kahn, 1998; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Tolich & Davidson, 1999) to establish rapport with students before observing, and also abstained from any types of activity that could hinder the flow of the session. Prior to working with research participants I trialled the observation schedule with a class that was not part of the research. This allowed me to make any necessary modifications to the checklist in Appendix 13. During the observation, I wrote field notes and recorded them shortly after, including reflections. Each interview and observation session was recorded using a digital audio recorder.

Achievement Tests

I administered reading and writing tests to assess the participants' achievement in these skills. Selected Reading and Writing tasks from the Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) (New Zealand Council for Education Research, 2008 & 1991) and National Education Monitoring Project in New Zealand (NEMP) (Crooks, Flockton and White, 2007) were adapted respectively for this purpose. The reason for selecting these measures was that there were no suitable assessment tools for English language knowledge available in Bangladesh. Then I also used the oral tests from NEMP (Crooks, Smith and Flockton, 2009) to determine oral communication competency. It was a thirty-minute reading and writing test and a fifteen minute oral test. These results only provided some indication of difference. Proof could not be established as the tests were developed in another education context where English is the mainstream language. However the achievement tests provided the opportunity to get first hand assurance of the answer to the research question – is there a gap between achievements in oral language compared to written language for ESL learners using the CLT programme?

Data Analysis

Data analysis is an ongoing process in qualitative research with Bogdan & Biklen (2007) typifying it as "analysis in the field mode" (p. 160). Although this analysis starts in the field, it may continue until the end of the research. So following the suggestions of experts in the field (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002; Best & Kahn, 1998; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2007; Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006) such as developing analytical questions, planning for data collecting, writing observer comments and memos, trying out the themes and using audio-visual devices, I started collecting and analysing data at the initial stage of the study.

After finishing the data collection, formal data analysis started. Qualitative interpretation of this research report aimed to illuminate the meanings associated with the set of interviews and observations. I began coding the data from interview transcripts, focus group points, field notes, and observation documents using coding

categories (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Patton, 2002). Although not all of the interviews were transcribed fully because of time constraints (for example, focus group interviews were over an hour), the main parts were transcribed according to the needs of the study. One of the Bangladeshi students in New Zealand verified the transcriptions as most of the interviews were conducted in *Bangla* (The national language of Bangladesh). Signifying new patterns of data, I sought new categories as well. For developing a list of coding categories, I used coding for tables and mind maps with different coloured pens to find the difference and total number of categories.

To establish the coding, I explored the raw data for regularities, prototypes and similar patterns of subjects, words, phrases, behaviours and points. I also marked them with different coloured pens and numbers, so that at a glance I could locate and calculate more efficiently. After that, I selected out the data that was helpful for my study. At this stage, the segments of coding data were discussed with a colleague who also works as a teacher-educator, to identify key themes and patterns. I identified common themes as recommended by Patton (2002) and Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook (2007) who suggest that that using multiple analysts offers an opening to access the reliability of the coding, at least in relation to using pattern coding for key themes and issues (Miles & Huberman, 1994 cited in Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2007; Tolich & Davidson, 1999). After this I checked the entire procedure of responses from students, teachers and parents by cross-examining each other's comments to ascertain the actual view.

As this was an exploratory study, I sought to complete an in-depth analysis to access the full meaning. Every interview and observation was treated as an individual case, and if any contradictory data arose, I returned to the original source and made a cross-case analysis to clarify this. The observation data was used both to portray the participants' activities vividly and to provide a description of classroom practice.

Both achievement tests were marked following a marking grid (see Appendix 14 & 15) and results were compared to discover whether CLT was more effective in the development of written language skills for ESL learners than in oral language. This was very important because the primary objective of CLT is in the development of proficiency in oral communication.

Ethical Issues

Researchers have to follow certain principles when conducting research particularly when the subject is human being. Mutch (2005) states, "[r]esearch needs to be purposeful and systematic" (p.14). One of the most important issues researchers have to consider is the ethical / moral issue of the study. All researchers are confronted by the ethical questions as the borderlines in societal change and they are necessarily drawn into debates on the 'rights' and 'wrongs' of prospective actions.

The term 'ethics' is usually related to disciplines such as philosophy and theology within which principles and abstract rules have been argued and developed in relation to particular moral positions (Mauthner, Birch, Jessop & Miller, 2002). It is said that ethics is concerned with the morality of human interactions. Ethics may be used as a synonym for morals but actually it is not. Currently it is understood that morals underpin ethics while ethics are applied most often to the code of conducts (Mutch, 2005) published by different professional organisations. Increasing technology in modern society has made ethical debates a part of our everyday life and it is impossible to do research that ignore ethical issues.

Organisations have similar fundamental ethical issues that include informed and voluntary consent, anonymity and confidentiality, limitation of deception, minimization of risk, and the obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi in the New Zealand context (Cram, 2001, Cullen, 2005; ERHEC, 2009; O'Neill, 2008). Alongside the key ethical principles these organisations align with the research code of conduct of 'do no harm', 'voluntary participation', 'informed consent', 'avoid deceit', and 'confidentiality and anonymity' (Tolich & Davidson, 1999, p. 70; Cullen, Hedges & Bone, 2005; Snook, 2003).

All ethical issues related to educational research in the New Zealand context could be put into the area of informed and voluntary consent, anonymity and confidentiality, limitation of deception, minimization of risk, and the obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi (Alton-Lee, 2001; Cram, 2001; Cullen, 2005; ERHEC, 2009; O'Neill, 2008; Tolich, 2001; Tolich & Davidson, 1999). It is clearly understandable that the ethical

considerations are necessary in order to protect the participants and also the researchers from any sort of inhuman act or situation in educational research where trust, power relations, coercion, validity, risk, justice, cultural positions and repercussions for non-participation seem apparent in classrooms and schools. These can occur between teachers, students, colleagues and administrators (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Mauthner, Birch, Jessop & Miller, 2002; Tolich & Davidson, 1999; Zeni, 2001).

Researchers have to handle the ethical issues carefully and uphold the principles such as 'do no harm', 'voluntary participation', 'informed consent', 'avoid deceit', and 'confidentiality and anonymity'. Agreeing with Tolich & Davidson (1999) it is important to state that how ethical issues will be addressed and followed depends upon the researcher. Good research follows ethics as a process rather than a problem to be resolved. Ethical concerns are not to be met once and put aside. From designing to final reporting, researchers have to remember ethical issues at every step throughout the study. Thus it can be said that the consideration of ethical issues is a fundamental component of educational research.

To accommodate the ethical issues in this study, I provided the participants with the information letters (see appendix 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and consent forms (see appendix 6, 7, 8, 9) clearly identifying the objectives, methods to collect data, devices that would be used and the time needed for collecting data. I have also informed them that the purpose of the research is to investigate the importance and the effects of second language teaching and learning in the secondary schools using the CLT approach. This could assist mainstream classrooms to incorporate English more often in other curriculum subjects and to provide more practice in speaking and listening.

Participants were told clearly that the participation in this study was totally voluntary and at any time they may withdraw from the project without penalty. There would be no compulsion to continue with the study if s/he likes to stop. Again the identity and data obtained from the participants would be anonymous and confidential.

In Bangladesh, school teachers are under the direct professional authority of teacher educators. To reduce the risk from the effect of professional influence (power) as a teacher educator in Bangladesh, I informed teachers early in this study that my role would not influence their participation in any way. My stance was of "empathetic neutrality" (Patton, 1990 cited in Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2007, p. 282) and followed the ethical principles such as 'do no harm', 'voluntary participation', 'informed consent', 'avoid deceit', and 'confidentiality and anonymity' (Tolich & Davidson, 1999, p. 70). This would minimise the threats such as "exploitation" (Seidman, 1991 cited in Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2007, p. 275) related to interviews and observations. It was also acknowledged that this study was located in Bangladesh and therefore did not involve any Maori participants, so ethical issues related to the obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi should not be a cause of concern.

Trustworthiness and Rigour (Validity and Reliability)

As this study followed mixed methods research design, both qualitative and quantitative data collecting tools were used to check on the quality of the data to ensure it was valid and reliable. I have made a number of choices to enhance trustworthiness and to maximise rigour and to minimise common threats to credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability/ objectivity (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002; Best & Kahn, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Without trustworthiness, a research study could be a waste of time, only filling pages with vague speculations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I selected the schools and participants randomly on the basis of public examination results as stated in the sampling process and in the research design, to reduce the risk to credibility arising from personal bias, and ensuring no participant knew me. I made interviews semi-structured and established a rapport with the participants before obtaining data (Harrison, MacGibbon & Morton, 2001). I formulated a checklist of items to be observed for observation sessions to obtain consistent data (Best & Kahn, 1998; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). An audio recording device was used in both interviews and observations to make the data more authentic and more comprehensive (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The reading and writing tasks from the National Education Monitoring Project in New Zealand (NEMP) (Crooks, Flockton, White, 2007), the Progressive Achievement Tests

(PAT) (New Zealand Council for Education Research, 2008 & 1991) and the oral tests from NEMP (Crooks, Smith and Flockton, 2009) were carefully selected and adapted for achievement tests. The reason for selecting these measures was due to there being no suitable assessment tools available in Bangladesh that could be reliable and valid for measuring English language skills. Furthermore the triangulation approach of the data from different sources was used to make it more valid and reliable (Creswell & Clark, 2007). However overall, the experiences as a teacher educator for more than ten years guided me to obtain data that was trustworthy for empirical results.

Summary

This study implemented a research method from a mixed methods paradigm. In-depth semi structured interviews with twenty students from class nine and ten and four focus group interviews with English teachers and parents were conducted. These were held in four randomly selected secondary schools from two divisional cities (northern and southern) in Bangladesh. The students were initially chosen from a group of boys and girls based on achievement rates in school exams but further assessment by the researcher confirmed their preference. Then oral and written achievement tests were engaged with these students to look for the effectiveness of the CLT approach initially in communication. Four English classes were also observed to gain an actual picture of the use of CLT in classrooms.

Before entering schools, all ethical issues were cleared as suggested by the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC) of the University of Canterbury. The data collecting tools were also selected and adopted carefully in order to make data credible and authentic. Once the data collecting stage of the investigation was completed, the information was analysed and examined thoughtfully.

According to Coffey & Atkinson (1996) moving from coding to elucidation is critical and entails a number of distinct levels. As the researcher, I needed to deal with retrieving data from the raw data and present it in such a way that it could be easily understood. Data that was relevant to a particular theme was sorted and information was placed together so that I could review these themes accurately. Not only that, I

also discarded the themes not related to the study. The data and themes were then mixed together to make sure of the meaning and the exact placement of that data. These data is presented in the following chapter.

Chapter Four

Research Results

Introduction

In this chapter I present the data gathered from the semi-structured one-to-one interviews, focus group interviews, achievement tests and the classroom observations. These data were analysed with reference to the research questions that formed the purpose of the study. The results in this chapter will provide a context for the discussion I take up in the subsequent chapter.

To construct this chapter I focussed on the interviews, field notes, achievement tests statistics and observational checklists. I am not attempting to describe here an exact replica of teachers' and students' daily programmes. Rather I want to give a feel for what the English teachers juggle and how they teach in big classes. I also examine how students learn English and the attitudes of parents towards this. In every case my focus is on the use of the CLT approach.

It is important to understand the teacher, student and parent views of the CLT approach and how to make this more effective in the Bangladeshi context. To understand the reality of classrooms and the CLT approach, it is also important to understand the triangular role of teachers, students and parents. The participant quotes used in this chapter were mostly translated from *Bangla* by the researcher and later verified by another Bangladeshi postgraduate student. The quotes are presented as excerpts because some discrete parts were edited out in order to keep the focus on the main points. This chapter is a description of the findings and will provide a framework for the discussion about those findings in the next chapter.

Quantitative Data (Achievement Tests)

The comparison of data from the oral language (listening and speaking) skills compared to written (reading and writing) skills yielded findings which supported the assumption that students were doing better in developing written rather than oral skills. Selected reading and writing tasks from National Education Monitoring Project in New Zealand (NEMP) (Crooks, Flockton, White, 2007) and the Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) (New Zealand Council for Education Research, 2008 & 1991) were adapted for this purpose. As described in the methodology section, these were selected because there were no suitable assessment tools in Bangladesh. Although the above tests were designed for New Zealand school populations, with English as the mainstream language, this data was gathered merely to support the contention commonly shared by professionals throughout Bangladesh, that oral language competencies (speaking in particular) lag behind that of written language. These therefore provide only a snapshot and cannot be generalised to all learners of English in Bangladeshi schools.

The data in the tables is presented in the form of percentages of correct responses to provide a common measure across the different tests.

Table 1: Reading Comprehension Using PAT Tasks

Total number of students = 20 (5×4)	Percentage of correct responses (n =15)
Green School (high -SES)	79.9 %
Blue School (low -SES)	25.33 %
Red School (high -SES)	77.28 %
Purple School (low / mid -SES)	38.66 %
Overall mean score	**55.29 %**

Table 1 reflects the reading comprehension tests results where 20 students from 4 schools were tested with the PAT (2008 & 1991) questions. Students of Green School and Red School responded to 79.9% and 77.28% of the questions correctly. Both these schools were categorised in high socio-economic status (SES) schools. Students of Blue School and Purple School responded 25.33% and 38.66% correctly which were low / mid SES schools. The overall mean score was 55.29%, which meant that more

than half of the participants could understand or comprehend through reading English at the equivalent level of year 8 students in New Zealand.

Table 2: Writing Samples Using NEMP Tasks

Total number of students = 20	Percentage of correct responses (n =13)
Green School (high -SES)	72.80 %
Blue School (low -SES)	39.99 %
Red School (high -SES)	73.32 %
Purple School (low / mid SES)	34.75 %
Overall mean score	**55.21 %**

Table 2 provided the results of the writing samples using NEMP (2007) tasks. Two tasks (Bedtime and My Favourite Place) were used to find students' writing competencies. In the 'Bedtime' task students were asked to answer in a 'for and against' way, and in 'My Favourite Place' they had to write freely about the topic. For evaluating, a 'marking grid' from NEMP was followed (see Appendix 14). The data from writing tasks showed that the students of both high SES schools had answered 72.80 % and 73.32 % correctly whereas the students from both low SES schools correctly answered 39.99 % and 34.75 % consecutively. The overall percentage was 55.21%. This provided evidence that more than half of the participants could write to express their views. It should be noted that students faced some problems in understanding the 'Bedtime' task. Students commented that this kind of argumentative or discursive task was rarely practised within the Bangladeshi culture and context.

Table 3: Oral Task

Total number of students = 20	Percentage of correct responses (n =30)
Green School (high -SES)	42.66 %
Blue School (low -SES)	18.66 %
Red School (high -SES)	45.33 %
Purple School (low / mid -SES)	17.99 %
Overall mean score	**31.66 %**

In Table 3 the oral task (NEMP, 2009) results are shown. Students were asked to complete three different activities in this task, which achieved the total mark 30. A marking grid (see Appendix 15) was followed for this purpose. The oral task data explained that the correct response level was 42.66% and 45.33% from the participants of Green and Red school, while the participants from the Blue and Purple school responded 18.66% and 17.99% respectively. The overall mean score was 31.33%. This indicated that for oral communication the participants responded at a rate of 31.33% in the time allowed. It also showed that some of the participants received no marks or had little oral communication, scoring below 19%. It could be worth noting that students were confronted with so many difficulties understanding the meaning of the questions that they therefore hesitated to answer orally. They commented that they were afraid of making a mistake when speaking.
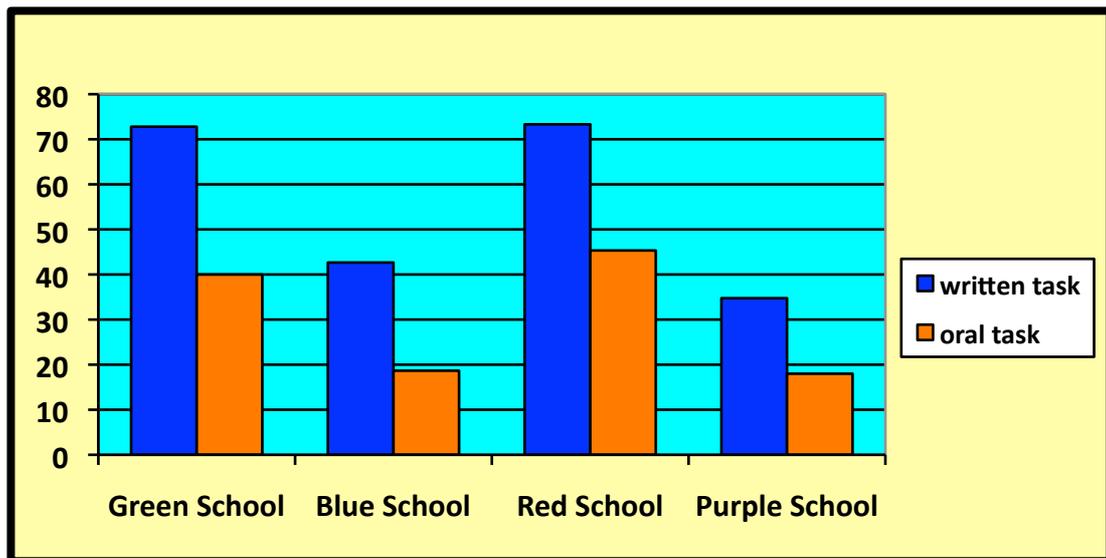
Figure 3: Differences in Scores on Oral Tasks Compared to Written Tasks

This (Figure 3) clearly indicated that the level of written achievement was nearly double that of oral achievement in each school. It also indicated that participants did well in written tasks, but scored low in oral communication. The quantitative data from different achievement tests were supposed to provide enough evidence to support the assumption that in Bangladesh students were doing better in achieving written (reading and writing) skills compared to oral (listening and speaking) skills. Only

reading, writing and speaking tests were performed. A listening test was intentionally omitted because the students were not familiar with these types of tests in Bangladeshi classrooms and therefore had very little scope to practice listening tasks. Furthermore speaking tests also involve a listening component. The overall mean scores from reading, writing and speaking tasks clearly supported the assumption. These scores are unable to be generalised across all Bangladeshi students due to the sample size and validity of the data but are included as some evidence to support the proposition that students in Bangladesh were not performing as well in developing oral competencies in comparison to written skills.

Interviews

This section discusses themes identified from the one-to-one interviews conducted with the 20 student participants from class nine (age 12-14). These provide an insight of students' perspectives about learning English and its importance for success in life. The themes presented in this section will be supported by participants' quotes and will later be linked to the related research in the discussion section. The interviews centred around:

- Learning in the English classroom and its application to everyday life
- The effectiveness of CLT approach
- Teachers' and parents' role to reinforce learning

The students' accounts of English language learning revealed a great deal about their understanding of the learning. Although their descriptions were wide ranging, they covered a broad range of topics, which disclosed the complexity of learning the English language. They provided some evidence of how they learn English at school and at home.

The students talked about a range of topics during their interviews, and their narratives exposed important points that were repeatedly discussed or emphasised. A small number of dominant topics were identified to make this analysis process manageable. I eliminated some topics immediately either because I did not have adequate data, they were not part of the research question, or the methodology was not appropriate to

analyse them in depth, for example, gender issues in the classroom; single skill development (listening); family literacy levels and interactions.

Though a number of topics were deleted as insufficient for further examination, the following topics repeatedly surfaced:

- Textbook (English for Today)
- Class time (duration)
- Resources (teaching aids)
- Learning vocabulary
- Objectives of learning English
- English classroom
- Learning grammar
- Large classes
- English class management
- Participatory learning
- Use of dictionary
- Examination (passing)
- Learning English
- Traditional class
- Group work, Pair work, Individual work
- Effect of CLT approach
- Teacher and parent relationship and responsibility

These topics were then grouped under the following key headings (themes):

- English to enhance opportunities in life
- Enablers and barriers of teaching English in Bangladesh (English classrooms)
- CLT approach and its implementation to practice in the Bangladeshi context
- Home and school relationships (teachers and parents) with students

These themes were selected individually, however there was a sense in which all were tightly connected. An underlying emphasis was on achieving better life outcomes through the empowerment that the knowledge and use of the English language provides. At the same time home and school relationships also influenced the learning

of English. So, all the themes were associated with the learning of better English in a Bangladesh context.

1. English to Enhance Opportunities in Life

This section focuses on the importance of learning English language in Bangladesh. As an introduction, the students were asked to describe the objectives of learning English, though they have *Bangla* language as their mother tongue. All the students were able to find the importance of learning second languages, particularly English as the current global language and its lifelong effect on everyday opportunities.

Students from Green School described the importance of learning English in the following way:

> [w]e have to learn English ... our second language....international language, where ever you go, it is needed.....for higher study, no Bangla...only English......for communication with the other countries.

> [n]o one can live alone, to be global......knowledge, communication everywhere..... needed.

> Blue School students also illustrated the objectives of learning English:
> [i]t's an international language.....going abroad....pass exams...good life.

> We need it....international language......good job.....higher education....internet.

Moreover Purple and Red School students expressed this in similar voice:

> [E]nglish is an international language....learning English is very important, so I try to enjoy and be attentive to learn English....better life....good job...

> [E]nglish international language.... we can learn many things....literature...going abroad.... any problem....I can solve, if I know English.

Learning a second language is very important. As English is an international language, it is more appropriate than other languages to learn English as a second language in Bangladesh in order to pass school exams, go on to further study, learn about world literature, increase employment opportunities (either in Bangladesh or overseas), communicate with foreigners, use internet and email, travel to other countries, for pleasure and so on. If students learn English and can appropriately use it outside the classroom, it can provide many more choices in their future lives.

2. Barriers of Teaching English in Bangladesh (English Classrooms)

Whilst most participants had a positive attitude towards the value of learning English notwithstanding it being a compulsory subject, there were several challenges apparent that were barriers to effective teaching and learning of a second language. In this section an exploration of the reality of English classrooms including opportunities, class time (duration), resources, fear, enjoyment, language skills and the pedagogy in a typical Bangladeshi context are described.

Class Time (duration) and Timetabling of English Classes

All students talked about the English class time (duration) and its positioning in the timetable in a negative way. Though the actual time is 45 minutes for each session, they mentioned that the duration of an English class is not sufficient to practice the language. They urged that the time be extended.

Most students described the class time in the following way:

> [b]ecause, class does not held in time... time too short.... population (big class).

> [w]e have half an hour for English...teacher tries to discuss the lesson then asks questions and answers.....

> [t]eacher comes....roll call 10 minutes, in first paper... not enough....

> [i]t could be better to extend time.... more activity.....to do.

There are two English classes each day. One is before and one is after a break or 'tiffin' ('tiffin' is commonly used in Bangladesh to describe the lunch break). They opined that the class after tiffin is boring and not effective. They enjoyed the first 'paper' (a term used to indicate two divisions for a particular subject) classes before tiffin because these were mostly activity based. A typical response was:

> [y]es...but if it is before tiffin... then so tired.... sometimes not after tiffin....

> [n]othing interesting...and the English session is in the boring time ...e.g. after tiffin or last period then it is too boring... grammar, there is nothing new... like home...as we do own at home...

There were classes for first and second paper topics. First paper classes dealt with short everyday stories while the second paper class discussed direct grammatical rules.

Every day one session was scheduled for each paper. Most students did not like direct grammar topics.

English Learning Opportunities

As Bangladesh is a monolingual country, most of the English learning opportunities occur in the English classroom and with the English teacher. There is very little scope to learn English outside the classroom. The students illustrated this in the following statements:

> Inside school, teachers usually do not use English much...no such scope to use English, English class is the only place we can use. Besides these no other place to use English...Sometimes grammar practice and reading English story books.

> [i]n school...English class. Outside the school...English books and try to use English when speaking with others.... but if we try to use English, others could tease us....

> [e]xactly we should learn the basic issues when learning in and outside the school....English classroom, teachers....sometimes speaking with teachers and among students. There is no such scope to learn English outside the classroom ...sometimes with family members, English newspapers, English programmes....I do not use internet.

The English class and the English teacher were the most accessible and the most useful for the students to practice English. Although some students identified community and English media learning opportunities, the most important resource was the English teacher and English classes in formal schooling.

Apprehension and Enjoyment in the English Class

As previously discussed, English sessions that were not participatory based were deemed boring and provided less opportunity according to the respondents. The English classes mostly followed traditional approaches. It was evident that most of the students were apprehensive about learning English and expressed anxiety when attending compulsory English classes. Consequently, they did not enjoy the sessions. They explained this in the following statements:

> [t]here is nothing new...it is like home...as we do own at home... ....nothing interesting...and the English session is in the boring time ... Sometimes English class is boring.... no attention...though teacher try to give important points, but not possible to capture due to lack of attention....very little activity.

[n]o not always....boring.....same.....English is an international language....learning English is very important, so I try to enjoy and be attentive to learn English....not always.

[I]'m afraid of ....weak in English....little activity (group/ pair work).

[i]t's like traditional...teacher is coming, give some lectures, translations... sometimes teachers only comes and give lectures... I don't like.

But in contrast, students reported that when teachers planned an activity based programme they enjoyed the sessions.

[i]t's a very interesting class and the way teachers present it...activity....I like it.

[y]es...I enjoy it. Because, we can share our learning's through this. We can also Understand and do our own works without less help from teachers which is different from memorisation learning. We can have real experience about using English.

[y]es...both....but activities part (group work) mostly.

[y]es I like it....at the end of the chapter we do group and pair work but not every day. Yes...games like asking question and answer, debating etc. We do....we like.

[n]o different style of teaching....I like first paper (text) class most...first paper teacher is better because she does activity (group works) and give lectures also ...mixed of both. I like...when teacher do the group activity. Because, at this time everybody can share their knowledge about English...topic.

Students disliked the traditional lecture style teaching methods used in English sessions, however, when the teachers tried to apply participatory approaches they enjoyed the learning.

Resources (Teaching Aids)

The only classroom resources that were used in most of the classrooms were textbooks, blackboard, chalk and dusters. Teachers were frequently unprepared for the sessions and most of the time there were no textbooks for students or teacher guides for teachers. Participation resulting from textbook activities was rarely undertaken, despite these resources being available at no cost to teachers and students. Teachers seemed reluctant to use resources. It was also noticeable that most of the students did not like or enjoy textbook content. They stated that textbook stories should be rewritten and include more interesting and global issues. They explained:

[n]ot always ...problem mainly...sometimes teachers are not well prepared, most of the time no text book in the session, sometimes teacher be late to come... so much noise ...we can't hear teachers' voice.

[n]ot so...yes it can be done...through making text book stories more interesting with new points (issues) among the stories then it could help learning more interesting with more English.

[s]ometimes...I try to solve with teachers. Sometimes I do not like textbook stories and the system...where only pictures or tables but no passages to read...teachers do not supply sufficient information to make us understand these lessons...it could be better if the stories are changed a bit.

The students believed that the teachers were not interested in accessing and using resources – even textbooks in English sessions, as they were mostly unprepared. They said that textbook content must be rewritten with more motivating topics.

English Teaching and Learning Approaches

As described above, the responses indicated that most of the English classes were taught through traditional methods. The teacher entered the class and started talking, and only grammar and translation were applied in the teaching of English. The students described why these classes seemed traditional:

[t]here is ....reading test plus ...we read out the book...sometimes teacher questions asks...yea...sometimes she gave tasks to us ...writing tests and reading tests...

[y]es...only straight grammar (voice change, narration). no...only texts (reading) in English, other issues in 'Bangla'.

[m]ost of the times grammar items (voice change, passage narration) and own practice writing (paragraph, letter) outside syllabus (unseen topics). These are good, but sometimes create problem e.g. tense problem.

[t]eacher comes....roll call 10 minutes, in first paper... loud reading by teachers...ask word meanings, questions and answers...if there is any problem with our readings i.e. pronunciations and spelling. And in second paper...direct grammar rules and then ask questions about it.

However, most students preferred it when teachers tried to apply a participatory approach in the classroom. For example:

[d]iscussion with teacher and students, meaning of words, listening ...activities according to the lesson....not always.

[g]reetings, read loud, asks describe picture, ask and answer questions in English. Group and pair work...yes...sometimes...but more than other subjects, after the introduction of SBA (school based assessments) in schools recently.

[w]e have half an hour for English...teacher tries to discuss the lesson then asks questions and answers. Teacher always uses English in the classroom.

> [l]istening test (activity)...some outside discussions (set the scene) and narrow it down to the main topic...reading test...group works...question answer, individual task ....teacher facilitates.

Most of the time, the English sessions consisted of the teacher and/or students reading aloud, as well as translation and grammar rules, which students did not like. However, when teachers used language skill-based activities with group work, pair work and games, the students felt they learnt effectively and enjoyed the sessions.

Focussed Language Skills

To use any language effectively for communication there are four strands to language learning including listening, speaking, reading and writing . However, students in these interviews explained that they felt confident using written (reading and writing) language skills. Most of them said that oral (listening and speaking) language was the hardest part to learn and they were afraid of using it. They explained:

> [w]riting is easy.....speaking....not difficult but average...can express my feelings but not correctly.... listening ...sometimes can't understand... yes...I think about...but, looking into dictionary or books...I do not do. Only think and think then I get the word....lack of practice.

> [m]ainly listening is hard....but easy is reading..... ...when we read, everywhere it's the same but different people pronounce differently, so not easy understand.... we have to practice this.

> Comparatively reading is easier.... it's easy because, I can go back to the word again if I don't know instantly or get meaning from the next line or paragraph....speaking....not easy....because I'm bit slower, I have to look for the word....instantly it doesn't come.

> [a]ll the way speaking is there.....but...reading is easier.

As previously discussed, most of the English sessions were conducted following traditional grammar translation methods and accordingly students were experiencing difficulties developing all four language skills. They were developing mostly written skills and fewer oral skills as a result of insufficient opportunity and a lack of oral practice.

Language Learning Problems and Seeking Solutions

Learning a second language is not always without difficulties. Learners face many challenges learning a second language in Bangladesh. In these interviews the students

talked about a range of different issues. Below are some of the key problems that they identified:

> [m]y vocabulary is very limited....problem... speaking....not really...I tried but now stopped...only occasionally read English books.... yes...I think about...but, looking into dictionary or books....

> [e]very time its grammar and the problems I cannot share...then free writing and all the way speaking is there.... there is no such real scope to solve these problems. But I do read grammar books and talk to teachers to solve grammar problems. Teachers help a lot. And for writing...take note from different paragraphs and then compile to write new.

> [s]ometimes I forget grammar rules...vocabulary... ...consult with teachers and look into the books...and try to use more English when speaking.... we have to practice this.

> [w]ord (vocabulary), sometimes pronunciations, grammar.......consult with teachers and look into the books...and try to use more English when speaking.

All students identified vocabulary, grammar and lack of practice as the most difficult areas. They also expressed that English teachers and classes were the first and sometimes only resource to assist them.

Some Positive Aspects (Enablers) of English Classrooms

Although the discussion so far has identified many challenges, some positive aspects that offset these, are expressed below:

> [I] want to learn English...not only pass the exam...

> [l]earning is main, because who only go for passing can't do better in future but who learns can get good marks and do better in future.

> [n]o..they (family members) just suggest me to use both... speak both (Bangla and English).

> [h]e asks questions, facilitates, and tries to make understand the learners....he tries to teach through understanding.

Students said that they wanted to learn the language to use in real life not just in order to pass the examination. Some teachers and family members were available to help students make English learning effective. However, the reality is that in Bangladesh English is a compulsory subject. Everybody has to learn English as a second language and this reflects the vision of the government to develop global citizens in Bangladesh.

3. CLT Approach and Its Implementation to Practice in the Bangladesh Context

The CLT approach is mostly used to develop communicative competencies for second or foreign language learners. This section explores the responses of students regarding the CLT implementation in English sessions. Students stated:

> It is a good system, but for Bangladesh now it is not suitable....it is not applicable in class times.... a teacher has to take seven classes and she has to finish it in time every day, which is not possible. It takes time to concentrate on English sessions as it is different. So we do not get enough time to communicate (practice) in the classroom. Moreover the system provokes only to pass the examinations.

> [y]es...it's needed...but... not all the teachers are following this approach. The teacher who follows this approach I enjoy his class...very effective.

> I like group works...when we get opportunities to do some activities. But ...yes...some understand, some not....noise...some work, some don't.
> Yes...it is good...yes...most of time teachers use English in the class but in the time of vocabulary and meaning Bangla is used.... this system is good...no problem.

> [y]es and it helps us to share our learnings...we can understand easily our positions....we can learn English clearly...we are learning not only memorising....we are reading and we are trying to find the answers...which helps us to recollect and use the language with confidence...its good.

Most students expressed that they liked the CLT activities and it was effective, however, one student had a different opinion:

> [n]o ...not so effective, because ....it is not applied in the way it should be...no I don't like CLT because, e.g. teacher comes and says to readout... but some problems still there...something is in the text but students don't like that...teacher has to continue... ...some information and only fill in the blanks but no details... so it is not always possible to learn more information. May be in the teachers guide (TG) but we can't get it and only hearing once it is not possible to get the whole information, if teacher doesn't provide. yes... but we need sometimes that information....no...teachers' never do that. Sometimes TG in the teachers locker, forget to bring...lame excuses. No... they are not prepared always... how many classes a teacher can take!!!! ...Suppose an English teacher has to take Bangla or religious class... so his concentration divides though he has particular English classes.

Overall, the students' statements indicated that they liked sessions taken through the CLT approach and were positive about its effectiveness, but the way, CLT was applied sometimes made them confused about its real purpose.

Inappropriate Application of the CLT Approach

Though some of the more dynamic teachers were trying to apply the CLT approach in the English sessions, the application procedures differed from class to class. This is evidenced by the following quotes:

> [t]eacher comes....roll call 10 minutes, in first paper... loud reading by teachers...ask word meanings, questions and answers...if there is any problem with our readings i.e. pronunciations and spelling. Yes ...we do silent reading but at the end of the syllabus. In grammar first rules explained with definitions and then ask questions and examples....yes...most of time teachers use English in the class but in the time of vocabulary and meaning Bangla is used.

> Yes ...teachers give loud reading and then ask you to read loudly... teachers try to discuss the lesson then asks questions and answers. Teacher...sometime uses English in the classroom.

> [g]reetings, read loud, asks describe picture, ask and answer questions in English. Group and pair work...yes...sometimes...but more than other subjects, after the introduction of SBA (school based assessments) in schools recently.

Teachers were trying to implement CLT appropriately but according to these students in most cases the teachers read aloud when trying to develop reading skills. However, this does not necessarily develop individual reading skills, and silent reading should be included for this purpose (TQI-SEP, 2006). It was also evident that direct grammar was taught with rules explained at the beginning. But, in the CLT approach grammar should be introduced through context and rules explained at the end. Vocabulary and spelling according to the CLT approach should also be taught in a meaningful context following a suggested but flexible sequence (TQI-SEP, 2006). But in reality, teachers tried to use a translation method by giving synonymous Bangla words, instead of using meaningful context.

Surprisingly, the students reported that some of the teachers were trying to use English for the whole lesson, doing some participatory activities and being active while facilitating. This was illustrated by:

> [l]istening test (activity)...some outside discussions (set the scene) and narrow it down to the main topic...reading test...group works...question answer, individual task. Teacher facilitates.... discussion with teacher and students, meaning of words...activities according to the lesson.

> [t]eacher starts speaking entering the class...friends are also cooperative....teacher asks us to read the text silently to understand...group discussions about the issue and what could be done next...writing and describe the issue....that's why we understand the

lesson easily. Yes...I enjoy it. Because, we can share our learnings through this. We can also understand and do our own works without less help from teachers which is different from memorisation learning. We can have real experience about using English.

Yes...she asks to describe the picture...as it is related with the main theme...write about the picture...she tries to follow the book with other materials that we can understand the topic easily.

When teachers were trying to follow the sequences of the CLT approach, the outcomes were positive according to the students, though only a small number of teachers tried to follow the actual CLT procedure applicable to the learning. Students enjoyed these sessions.

4. More Effective CLT in Bangladesh Context

The students discussed some areas that could make CLT more effective in Bangladesh. They stated:

I like group works...when we get opportunities to do some activities...but...we have fixed benches...so do not have permanent groups. If the class is arranged in groups then it's easy to do...if all the classes have same sitting arrangements then it's suitable for doing activities...though all the teachers try to do activities in the classroom but not all the classes have group arrangements.

I don't have any problem...I enjoy every session....but in the time of group work I face some problems e.g. when weak and strong are in the same group then usually only strong does the whole activity and the weak only try to gossip... non cooperative....CLT...yes it can be done...through making text book stories more interesting with new points (issues) among the stories then it could help learning more interesting with more English.

[b]y creating interest....yes...it could be better...e.g. in bangla or science new and interesting topics are taught so students try to get attention to those subjects, but in English very little interesting things but only grammar rules or answers to memorise. From the childhood same grammar issues (noun, verb, tense, narration, etc) are discussed every year....they lost interest.

Students liked participatory activities but they explained that sometimes these activities created problems due to fixed seating arrangements, less interesting textbook stories and a lack of facilitation from teachers.

5. Home and School (teacher and parent) Relationship with Students

Relationships with Teachers

Students were asked about the teachers they liked most. Most of them answered with the same comment. They liked teachers who were friendly and helped them to understand and solve the problems they faced. They explained:

> [y]ea... he has something different.....he helps students a lot with their problems...anyway he will solve the problem... his teaching of grammatical rules was good, e.g. he taught those from the root of rules...makes all clear.

> Most of the teachers teach the main issue but she thinks that we know the main issue or we will learn ...so she starts with the different issues related with the main issue, which creates attraction.

> [h]e asks questions, facilitates, and tries to make understand the learners....he tries to teach through understanding....he tries to make us understand the lesson clearly e.g. ...very simple grammar rules and how we can remember them....yes...he make the class interesting and enjoyable...friendly, he makes us understand the topic very easily and simply.

> I like her because, she introduce grammatical rules in a way that most of the students can understand easily...we enjoy her class...activity, English speaking and then when we stuck she takes the issue to the board and try to make us understand....very friendly. Yes...she asks to describe the picture...as it is related with the main theme...write about the picture...she tries to follow the book with other materials that we can understand the topic easily.

Students mostly preferred those teachers who were interactive and tried to understand their difficulties in the class. They enjoyed the sessions of these teachers' and stated that they learnt a lot from them.

Relationship with Parents

Though the first line of help came from teachers in learning English, students believed that parents and other family members played a significant role in this process because the maximum part of a day was spent at home. They stated:

> There is no such scope to learn English outside the classroom...sometimes with family members, parents, friends....cousins, English TV programmes....and try to use English when speaking with others. Parents do not allow watching English movies on satellite TV.

> o...yea..there is opportunity....English teachers...outside...parents and mostly my brother.... friends,...sometimes I do with my maternal uncle... When I'm at home ... I

> use less English or don't try to do it.... sometimes I do it....no...they just suggest me to use both... speak both (*Bangla* and English).

Students learnt English mostly from family members and friends outside the classroom. But not all the families created a learning-friendly or encouraging envoronment in which to learn English. It was also seen from the achievement tests results that the level of English was higher for those students whose family members supported them the most compared to those who rarely used English at home or who had illiterate parents. Detailed achievement test results will be discussed subsequently in the discussion chapter.

To summarise this (theme) part, the student responses indicated that learning English as second language in Bangladesh created more opportunities in life. They also talked about the challenges and strengths of English classes in terms of duration and the position of the class in the daily school timetable. Their preference was to extend the duration of the class and to change the position to before the break. Because Bangladesh is a monolingual country there are fewer opportunities to practice English outside the class. Accordingly, English classes and teachers were generally the only resources students had in their learning and practice of English.

Most of the students were fearful of compulsory English classes and did not enjoy the sessions. Teachers used traditional methods to teach English, using mostly reading out loud, translations and direct grammar. Mostly teachers were not prepared for the session and no extra teaching aids were used except traditional chalk, dusters and textbooks. But students liked sessions taken through activity based participatory approaches.

In English sessions mostly written skills (reading and writing) were focussed on ignoring oral skills (listening and   the traditional teaching methods and the examination system, teachers and students did not practice those oral skills as there were no examinations for those skills. Students mentioned that vocabulary, grammar and a lack of practice were the most frequent problems they faced, and teachers and English classes were the nearest help they got.

It is clear from the students' statements, that the CLT provided a good approach to learning a second language. However, they stated that the CLT approach was not used in the way it should be in Bangladeshi classrooms. Although some teachers try to implement CLT appropriately, others were ineffective because they did not try to follow the prescribed but flexible sequences. To make CLT more compatible to Bangladesh, the students suggested that class time (duration) should be increased, textbooks should be rewritten with more interesting stories and there should be a greater emphasis on oral skills (listening and speaking). They also suggested that the examination system should include oral skills and that more facilitation from teachers was needed. Family members and friends also could play a more positive role in reinforcing English learning outside the classroom.

Class Observation

English classes were observed in order to substantiate student and teacher responses and to provide further data on the implementation of CLT in Bangladeshi classrooms. English teachers were invited to demonstrate their normal practice in each of the four schools. Six teachers presented their sessions. An observation checklist (appendix 13) was followed to investigate whether teachers were taking sessions following the CLT approach. According to the TQI-SEP (2011), most of the secondary school English teachers had received training in the CLT approach. The observation schedule was adapted from the New Zealand Ministry of Education handbook on Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5 to 8 (Ministry of Education, NZ (MOE) 2006). The observational criteria are derived from the deliberate acts of teaching identified through research as effective interactions in literacy practice (MOE, 2006).

Table 4: Class Observation (Teacher)

	Observational Criterion	Green School	Blue School		Red School	Purple School	
		Class A	Class A	Class B	Class A	Class A	Class B
T	Set the scene	No	Little	Yes	Little	Little	Yes
	Modelling	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
E	Prompting	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
A	Questioning	Yes (Direct)	Yes (Direct)	Yes (Direct)	Yes (Direct)	Yes (Direct)	Yes
C	Explaining	Yes	No (Bangla)	Yes	No (little)	Yes	Yes
H	Giving feedback	No	No	No	No	No	Little
E	Teaching aids (OHP, Visual aids etc.)	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
R	Teaching methods (CLT)	Not Systematic	Not Systematic	Not Systematic	Not Systematic	Not Systematic	Yes
S	Management / Control G = gp, C = class, R = roving	G. C. R.	G. C. R	G. C. R.	G. C. R.	G. C. R.	G. C. R.
	Others	• Use of English • Authoritarian • Little facilitation	• Both Bangla and English • Authoritarian Loud Reading • Vocabulary without meaning	• Use of English • Loud Reading • Authoritarian • Little facilitation • Couldn't finish lesson	• Use of English • No Textbook • Little facilitation • Different stages of activity not followed	• Use of English • Authoritarian • Not active	• Active • Facilitation • Friendly

From this data, it can be concluded that questioning and explaining by the teacher dominated teaching methods and that in four out of six classrooms the content was delivered in a very authoritarian / formal manner. Facilitation of learning with the students occurred in only one class and teachers were not fully prepared for the session which appeared to result in little learning for students. Although the CLT approach was present, there was a reluctance to use teaching aids and teachers failed to follow the systematic stages of any activity (pre, main and post task). On a positive note, some teachers were using English and endeavoured to make the lesson active with varying success.

Table 5: Class Observation of Student Activity in the English Sessions

STUDENTS	Observational Criterion	Green School Class A	Blue School Class A	Class B	Red School Class A	Purple School Class A	Class B
	Answer inferential	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Answer literal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Question inferential	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Question literal	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
	Statement	No	No	Literal	No	Literal	Yes
	Engagement in activity	Yes	Little	Little	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Intuitiveness	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Others	• Fear	• Fear	• No learning	• Not attractive	• Not attractive	• Active discussion • Attractive

Table 5 displays students' activities performed during the English sessions at different schools. Students were able to answer literal questions and sometimes asked them. They appeared keen to complete activities and learn, however, they appeared to get little opportunity for that and feared teachers who were authoritative. Teachers failed to make the sessions attractive and interactive. It was also noticeable that when one teacher was active, prepared, used teaching aids to make the lesson attractive, and facilitated appropriately, the students were engaged and enjoyed learning from that session.

In summary, it was observed that teachers were trying to apply the CLT approach in the English sessions and used English all the time. Students appeared intuitive most of the time, and wanted active participation in the sessions. But the teachers' failure to follow the sequential stages of any activity and lack of preparation made these sessions largely ineffective. Students expressed that they particuarly enjoyed interactive sessions.

Focussed Group Interviews (teachers and parents)

In this section the findings from the focussed group interviews among English teachers and parents will be discussed. The rationale for combining parents and teachers in the four focus group interviews was to maintain a balance of responses. This avoided explanations for the lower achievement in all areas of English; particularly oral communication being exclusively attributed to either of these two groups. Parents and family members play a major and critical role in student learning and what parents believe and articulate can make a difference in the development of their children (Baker, 2003). Research also indicates that teachers and schools forming a healthy relationship can improve students' learning (Biddulph, Biddulph & Biddulph, 2003). In focussed group interviews, English teachers and parents were invited to discuss students learning English as a second language. They talked about many issues such as:

- English classroom (size)

- Resources

- Objectives of learning English

- Students achievements

- Examination system

- Learning or passing the exam

- Challenges and supports in English classes

- CLT and its effectiveness

- Teachers and parents relationships

These issues were then grouped under different themes:
- Importance of learning English in Bangladeshi context

- Implementing CLT approach and its challenges in Bangladesh

- Supports to make CLT more compatible to Bangladesh

Though these themes were selected individually, all focussed on the better outcomes of students learning English.

1. Importance of Learning English in Bangladesh Context

Bangladesh is a monolingual country though both teachers and parents placed a great emphasis on learning English as a second language. Parents explained:

> English is an international language and our second language...higher studies, going abroad, everywhere English is needed. If children do not know English from very early age, they will stay behind...they should use it like Bangla...to keep pace with rest of the world. Now the world is becoming smaller...we cannot live alone, to fulfil our needs we have to move. If we need to make real 'Digital Bangladesh' (Government's motto) we should learn English.

They continued:

> [f]or good job, better life in home and abroad English is very much needed. Bangla is our mother tongue, but as global citizen now it is not enough to learn single language...we need to learn international language...English, besides Bangla. We should learn English from the very beginning, then there will be no such problem for communication, unless there could be dangers when going abroad for work or pleasure...so we need to learn English.

Similarly teachers also highlighted on the importance of learning English:

> [p]articipating globally, to use IT sectors successfully...modern society is totally based on IT, we cannot develop ignoring it...so English is must to develop... it is an international language, to keep pace with the world we need English. In order to communicate with the people, exchange our culture...if we want transfer our unskilled manpower into skilled persons we have to learn English...it is a media of modern communication, modern business technology...it is also a component of our development.

One of them placed an emphasis on learning English in this way:

> [i]t's an international language...better job for any sector in Bangladesh ...not only Bangladesh but all over the world....foreign education, to be smart English is needed both for the teachers and students and other people also, I think....in this modern era we cannot communicate with the other world without knowing English. If a student learn English s/he can get better opportunities in life....business world is also dependent on English. So we cannot deny English. In a word, we can say that we cannot go on a single moment without English.

Supporting the above comment another teacher added:

> [a]s English is easier to learn comparing others languages, it becomes international language. It is not so difficult to learn...we should not afraid of English. As English is a language and has become the international language, and in this world every student...man is a member of the globe, not only in his country. So being a member of the globe he must communicate with the globe and this is the only medium i.e. English of communication. So he has no way or no alternatives of English. And in his personal life, if he wants to do something...work...talk or play game...anything, the dominating language is English...we have no way except English. So for our existence also we have to learn English.

Both teachers and parents made similar points about the importance of learning English in Bangladesh. For communicating with the world, creating better opportunities in life or even for everyday existence, English provides empowerment.

2. Implementing CLT Approach and It's Challenges in Bangladesh

The CLT approach was introduced nearly two decades ago in Bangladesh, but according to the respondent, it seemed ineffective in developing students' oral communicative competencies. Both parents and teachers expressed that although students achieved some English language competencies through this approach, it was still well below their expectations. Parents' beliefs were reflected in the following statements:

> Yes....in my view, students are doing well in English, comparing my elder and younger child, younger knows better English than elder. But, not to the expected level...English medium students doing better than Bangla medium in English. They have fear about English and from the beginning they are weak....exactly they are psychologically weak. Their basic...base is not so strong. More English books should be introduced and more practice is needed.

And furthermore:

> [s]tudents are doing well in English now, but they need to do much better...not to the expected height...like...able to make day to day communication easily. Maybe, they are learning 40% English but lacking 60%...we should try to make at least 90% English learning successful. Syllabus must be rewritten keeping in mind the rural students and their situations. They now can realise the importance of English...so they are doing better. With the CLT approach at least students are trying to think about the topic, get better idea...to be creative...it is good.

Overall, these two parents and others expressed their concerns about the level of English attained and perceived weaknesses in the current implementations of CLT. Although the improvement was slow, students at least realised (according to their responses) the importance of learning English and becoming more creative in using English.

The teachers also echoed similar sentiments expressed by the parents, particularly in relationship to the progress made by students in neighbouring countries such as Sri Lanka and India:

[y]es, students are doing well in results, but comparing with our neighbouring countries such as India and Srilanka, we cannot say that our students are developed or developing as well as in those two countries.

One of the teachers reflected on the reality of English language usage by commenting about English language competencies used by Bangladeshi International cricket players. He said:

[b]ut I think that they cannot communicate with others in English freely and also correctly...as an example, some of our cricket players when face media interviews, cannot speak correctly or speak English at all...for them we have to use translator. So this is the situation of English in Bangladesh...but we hope that this situation must be improved and we are working on that.

Another teacher identified the importance of examination results to students:

Students are developing gradually...the students of our country are doing well in reading and writing and doing better in term exams, public examinations. But, most of the students cannot feel that it is necessary for better future...they only think it is necessary to pass the exam.

However, he continued saying that the CLT approach has the potential to modify this attitude through the use of a more interactive approach where English is used to communicate:

But now the scenario is changing...of course teaching technique is changed...CLT approach...now spoken (oral) skill is focussed...in the past it was based on written skill following grammar translation method. I think it is the main reason for their gradual improvement.

Both parents and teachers agreed that students were doing better in English but still not to the desired level. Examination results showed that they were developing some written skills but oral communicative competency was lacking. In general, competency was made more difficult for students by a genuine apprehension about learning English and an exclusive focus on passing the examinations.

Specific Barriers to Successful Implementation of the CLT

Teachers and parents pointed out some issues that could be called 'the hindrances' or 'challenges' in implementing CLT in the Bangladeshi context. All the teachers mentioned class size (number of students) as an issue. One commented:

[I] think, the textbook is good enough to practice the four language skills...but sometimes we face problems implementing CLT because the class size is huge...large class (number of students) e.g. 63 students we have and its quite impossible for us to handle all the students...

Another teacher expressed that shyness among students, and parents' ignorance about the practice of English creates barriers to using it:

> [s]ometimes they feel shy to speak English, they are not interested in speaking English. Lack of awareness of guardians (parents) about the practice of English...lack of English practice environments is also important, if the guardian is interested then it'll be fruitful in the classroom.

Highlighting the importance of a suitable home practice environment, one of the parents commented:

> Not all but most of the parents want their students to pass the examination only, ignoring real learning...but students spend most of the time at home so we need to create English practice environment at home to develop students' English.

It was also evident from the teachers' comments that time shortage and high class work load made it difficult to practice effective English speaking and listening in the class. They remarked:

> [t]here are also time shortage and class work load....memorisation is not good to develop language skills...we need more practice. They...don't get environment to practice...in the 45 minutes session we do not use English always, and also so many classes we have to take...so they (teachers) are not interested to use...

Supporting this, one teacher added the following comment focusing on both the teachers' and the parents' need to use English with students:

> [t]here is no such English learning friendly environment in and outside the class. As we (teachers and parents) do not use English, our students do not use it ...we (teachers and parents) need to use English with students.

All the teachers believed that the assessment (examination) system did not encourage students to practice the four skills. They mentioned:

> The communicative system is totally based on four language skills but our assessment criteria is on only written (reading and writing) skills...there is no test on listening and speaking (oral) skills...we need to make a big change in examination systems.

Another teacher illustrated the lack of engagement of students in the following quote:

> If we try to identify problems of implementing CLT, I think most learners are not interested to learn English as English should be learnt...they want teachers to provide lessons that they can memorise and that should feature in the examination.

Similarly, the lack of cooperation and consultation between subject teachers was highlighted by one teacher:

> [t]here is lack of cooperation between subject teachers...we can share each other's experiences and learn easily. Both teachers and students have the fear of English...though we are all English teachers in black and white but real English teachers who will always think and try to develop students' English are still lacking.

But most of the teachers and parents considered that the size of the English syllabus made engagement and cooperation very difficult.

> Syllabus is also a problem, a vast syllabus...so students and teachers try to complete the syllabus only to pass the examination... no real learning is there. Though teachers want to provide real flavours of English but they can't do that.

Teachers also talked about the physical classroom environment that was usually not suitable for activity based teaching and learning (group and pair work). This limited teacher access to students resulting in unacceptable noise levels. Though CLT was more practical than theoretical, the seating was inappropriate to practice in a large classroom (more than 80 students). Authorities always expected them to manage this but in reality it was not possible to make large classes fully interactive.

In addition, teachers stressed that numerous class tests and vacations interrupted real learning for students. Although most of the teachers' expressed a desire to make teaching purposeful or interesting, their workloads prevented this. For example, most teachers run coaching centres in their homes before and after school in addition to their five hours of class teaching in their schools. There is also pressure from frequent examinations and assessments. Consequently, both students and teachers focused only on passing the examinations.

Parents and teachers discussed the challenges of implementing CLT in Bangladesh. They noted large classes, a lack of English practice environments and resources, a shortage of time, vast syllabus, lack of awareness by parents and teachers about the importance of practicing English, the examination system, an attitude of aiming only to pass, a lack of proper motivation for students to use English, time shortage and class load as the primary challenges that influence the effectiveness of CLT in Bangladesh.

3. Supports Needed to Make CLT More Compatible to Bangladesh

Teachers and parents not only discussed the challenges of implementing CLT, but they also suggested some points to reduce those barriers to more effective CLT in Bangladesh. Parents emphasised the need for more practice in the English class, because they did not feel confident to use English with children at home. They contended that an emphasis on more oral English classes with English books could improve the learning environment. They said:

> [w]e have to increase more communication with students like English debates, story telling...etc...all parents are not much fluent in English, so if school could arrange in a week for one hour to speak only English in that time, then its better...teachers should take more English classes and use more English books...

Although parents placed more emphasis on school's responsibilities, they acknowledged that it would be very helpful if parents could create English learning environments at home. They believed that when parents felt apprehensive about using English with children this automatically and negatively influenced student achievements. As Alton Lee (2003) argues, the involvement of parents and caregivers in their children's education is important to improve outcomes. Parents stated:

> [b]ut a good learning environment where parents use English with children though very little and with English programmes could improve students both oral and written English...it's like learning through entertainment...more involvement of parents in practicing English.

One of the teachers supporting this 'learning through entertainment' concept added:

> It could also happen in the classroom ...teachers can make the session more interesting and enjoyable with more effective learning. Teachers should start to use English always in the class and inspire students to use English outside the class...and everywhere.

So there was arreement that teacher and parent cooperation could bring about better outcomes for the students. On the other hand, most of the teachers reported negatively on the English curriculum and assessment system, stating that the current examination system and learning four language skills contradicted each other:

> [e]xaminations are focussed on only written competencies but syllabus tends to develop four language skills, which is not possible.

However, teachers showed a determination to teach all four skills and to convince the authorities to make suggested changes to the examination system. They believed that

through a modified system a congenial atmosphere of using English could be created not only in the class but also in the home.

> [t]o fulfil this purpose the exam system should be rectified...at least 20 marks should be included as practical, just for viva voce...in the secondary English text books oral tests are absent that should be included. We have to enlarge our exam system according to students' needs or social needs.

One teacher illustrated what could happen if they taught extra classes without changing the system.

> Our teachers can easily take extra English practice classes but students could think that it is not in the course content and they could be inattentive...they could try to avoid it...problem may arise, sound...and depression may arise also.

However, both teachers and parents believed that a creative approach was welcomed by the students as other subjects had already started using this and they urged policy makers to take tangible steps to ensure this occurs. For example:

> We have to judge the reality always...our authority will take decisions to fulfil our desire and students, parents and teachers will be cooperative to learn or to teach or to research English in accordance to their social activities. We have to make English our second language.

At this point one of the parents warned students would be the first to suffer if any immediate change caused negative outcomes for them. They recommended that any change to the teaching system or syllabus should be gradually implemented to ensure students could adjust accordingly.

To cope with the large classes and make these more comfortable, teachers suggested that increased class time (duration) and teacher assistants could be helpful. At this point when they were asked how to do this with the same teaching staff, they suggested that it was preferable to have only four to five classes a day with 90 minutes for each class and with the option of two teachers per class with one teacher assuming the role of assistant. In this way teachers could play the role of assistant and class duration could be increased. Teachers also hoped that multimedia or audio-visual resources could be used to support this process in order to make more practice oriented classes and to promote student engagement.

Parents as Teacher Assistants

At the end of focus group interviews, the researcher proposed an initiative to manage large classes and as well as to raise parent awareness of English. All the teachers and most of the parents mentioned that large class and parents' ignorance about learning English were the major hindrances for the implementation of CLT. The researcher suggested that teachers invite parents in the English class as teacher assistants, as this could help teachers to manage large classes easily while simultaneously and possibly improving parents' English. At the very beginning teachers argued but responded positively. They concluded:

> Yes... we (teachers) would like to invite and we (parents) would love to join English sessions. It is a new concept, we never thought like that earlier. It seems a balancing triangular formula to build up relationships between teachers and parents. But it should be systematic and some experiments are needed before applying all over.

A schedule for parent assistance, along with motivated parents could bring positive outcomes for students' English learning. They also considered that this may help to build healthy relationships between teachers, parents and students. It was agreed that parents could learn the basics of CLT teaching-learning easily with group and pair work as well as English textbooks . However, teachers were concerned that this arrangement could fail if parents entered the session with an attitude of supervision as opposed to responding to individual needs. To encourage attitudinal change in order for this initiative to be more successful, they proposed suitable motivational workshops by the school authority for parents, teachers and students.

To recapitulate, the responses to focus group interviews with teachers and parents indicated that students were doing better in English examinations than previously but not in oral communication. They agreed on the importance of learning English in Bangladesh, whether it be for creating better opportunities in life, corresponding with the world, or even to maintain and improve the Bangladeshi position as members of a global community. They also held similar views on the challenges of implementing CLT and made positive suggestions about the supports needed to make CLT more compatible to the Bangladeshi context.

Both teachers and parents agreed that although students were doing better than in previous times, their communication was not at the expected level. They argued that the problems undermining the effectiveness of CLT in Bangladesh included: large classes, a shortage of English practice and resources, insufficient class time, a vast syllabus, a lack of awareness by parents and teachers about the importance of English practice , a mismatch between the examination system and the syllabus, an attitude towards English of only passing, a lack of proper motivation for students to use English and excessive teaching loads for teachers. To overcome these challenges they recommended that both teachers and parents could work together to motivate students by creating a suitable practice environment at home and school. This would be easier to achieve if the examination system was changed to reflect the goals of the curriculum. They were also concerned that any change should be designed in a way which gave students sufficient time to adjust.

Regarding the challenges of large classes, they recommended a schedule of four subjects a day, increased class time and two teachers in each class. This would enhance the practice environment through decreasing the class loads for the teachers and thereby make CLT more effective. They also hoped that using multimedia in teaching would bring positive outcomes through making large classes more practice oriented. Parents agreed to assist teachers in English classes to improve cooperation and help teachers to manage large classes more easily. They also agreed that a positive attitudinal change from all groups including (teachers, parents and students) needed to occur.

Chapter Five

Discussion

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the results of the study were reported under different themes in relation to the research questions. The areas identified will be discussed with reference to other relevant research in this chapter. They include learning English as empowerment for life, implementation of CLT in Bangladeshi classrooms, and home-school relationships with the students. Ultimately it is hoped that the findings will help to enhance the delivery of the CLT approach in the Bangladeshi context.

Because of the nature of the study, the research results must be interpreted with caution. The sample size was small. Only four schools were selected and their selection was not random. The size and the group should not be underestimated, however, as these participants shared valuable insights for this study. Moreover, the examination of the reality of English teaching in both high and low SES schools provided the researcher with more rich and varied data as the range gave a clearer overview of how well CLT is working to develop communicative English across a range of contexts.

The achievement tests taken with the student participants were not developed for Bangladeshi students. These English-medium tests were selected as there were no suitable tests available in Bangladesh for the evaluation of English language skills and they were selected to get a broader view on the hypothesis that English oral skills lagged behind written skills. The purpose was to provide an in-depth examination of the topic. These results were not obtained in order to be generalised across all schools and students in Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh Education Policy (2010) identified the need for English to become the second language in Bangladesh. The CLT approach, which predated this, was

launched nearly twenty years ago. As an outcome, the English achievement rates in public examinations were high, but students appeared to be far behind in oral communication skills. Accordingly this study explored the barriers and enablers that could make the CLT approach more effective in the Bangladeshi context.

The limitations of this study will also be considered and the findings interpreted in relation to the implications. It is worth noting that this is limited to a Bangladeshi context and therefore some implications are unique for that context. However, Jarman (2008) argues that 'Communication Friendly Spaces' (CFS) could support student learning regardless of the context. CFS refers to the choice of learning environment, pedagogy, and selection of resources as viewed from student perspectives. Therefore student initiatives and preferences were important. Teachers' and parents' views were also considered to be integral to the enhancement of CLT in Bangladeshi classrooms.

Learning English as an Empowerment for Life

Bangladesh is a developing country in the third world. Though it is monolingual, English is taught as a compulsory subject. After the cold war, a uni-polar global concept surfaced where everyone is looking towards the developed western world. Subsequently English emerged as almost the only international language. So like other developing countries and as a "low proficiency" (Graddol, 2006, p. 110) English country, Bangladesh also changed its attitude about learning English. The findings from this area confirmed the belief that learning English language could provide better opportunities in life. All the participants in this study expressed similar views on this topic. For example, a comment expressed by one of the student participants clearly illustrated that he viewed the necessity of learning English for his future success in life:

> We need it....international language......good job.....higher education....internet....to be global......knowledge, communication everywhere…

This view is supported by Nesa (2004) who states, "English – the *lingua franca* of business, commerce, science, arts, literature of the whole world" (p. 8). The teachers and parents also put the highest emphasis on learning English in order to obtain better life opportunities. Therefore learning English as a second language in Bangladesh is

not only viewed as about passing school examinations, but also seen as a pathway to higher study, greater employment opportunities (either in Bangladesh or overseas), and knowledge about global issues. English can provide a wider range of life choices, particularly if it can be used successfully outside the classroom.

Implementation of CLT in Bangladesh Classrooms

The communicative language teaching (CLT) approach has been considered one of the best approaches to teach and learn foreign or second language for the last decades of 20th century and its influence continues in this century also. By no means is this unique to Bangladesh, but other countries such as Korea, Japan, China, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia and the Latin American countries like Costa Rica, Uruguay and Brazil use it to develop second language learning (Hiep, 2007; Howard & Millar, 2009; Nishimura, 2000; Sakura, 2001; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Savignon, 2003; Zhang, 1997).

Although there are different views about the status of English language such as colonial and imperial influences from the past, where the English language monopolised all others (Said, 2003; Willinsky, 1998), it has become known as almost the only international language at the present time. The overpowering influence of English has made the policy makers and others of Bangladesh introduce English as a second language similar to other developing countries. As a result, the CLT approach has been introduced and applied to teaching and learning English as a second language in the mainstream classrooms in Bangladesh.

The goal of this approach is to teach and learn English for successful communication with the rest of the world. But as the original hypothesis for this study and the achievement test results (Figure One) demonstrated, students are achieving better in written skills (reading and writing) than oral skills (listening and speaking). This suggests that students fail to achieve successful communication in all four language-skills. It is believed that learning any language includes four basic language skills for effective communication (TQI-SEP, 2006). It can be concluded that the CLT approach is not working effectively to develop students' communicative competence; and there

is certainly a gap between achievements in oral language compared to written language for ESL learners using the CLT programme in Bangladesh. Savignon (2003) argues that this does not mean CLT is ineffective as an approach to develop learners' communicative competence, but rather that the problem lies in its interpretation or practice. Agreeing with her this researcher explores the possible causes behind this failure. Savignon suggests that the inappropriate application of CLT could create this false impression and states that change is needed according to the target language context. Both students and teachers have identified many of the variables that may impact on the successful implementation of the CLT approach in Bangladesh. Many of these barriers are identified in the results section. Student participants reported that they favoured activity-based sessions because there are very few opportunities to practice English outside the classroom. They believe that English teachers and English classrooms are the key local contexts for learning English.

Unlike the traditional grammar-translation method, CLT is an activity-based teaching / learning approach to make learning more interesting and enjoyable. It also helps to reduce the apprehension about learning communicative competence in the target language. Although currently some teachers are trying to apply CLT, in Bangladesh most of the sessions are still taken following traditional methods. According to the students, teachers are generally reluctant to use textbooks and teaching aids and do not adequately prepare for the lessons. The topics covered in the textbooks that involve activities, fail to attract both students and teachers. Teachers tend to focus on more the able students in the class and ignore others. This aligns with Sirota and Bailey's (2009) argument, that teachers' preconceptions about learners strongly influence learning outcomes.

The findings from this area confirmed that the large class size (number of students) was one of the major barriers in implementing CLT effectively and caused other related problems mentioned earlier. Teachers argued that it was very difficult to manage student interactions in a class where there were more than 80 students. In addition it was very easy for some students not to participate in class activities and remain disengaged. From the class observation, it was also viewed that some students did not want to participate and caused disruption in the class. The findings of Herreid

(2006) similarly suggest that the disadvantages of large classes include lack of discipline, learning, attendance and the general isolation of students. Although teachers were trying to apply CLT in the sessions to make learning interactive, it was not possible to make it engaging and therefore effective for all students.

As the students stated, teachers did not facilitate the learning appropriately and there was a lack of opportunity to learn and to use English in everyday life. They also added that the duration of the lesson and the place of the session in the timetable caused negative effects on learning. In a different context (USA), Machemer & Crawford (2007) reported that students' passivity and teachers' lack of meeting students' needs results in ineffective learning. The Bangladeshi teachers agreed that class duration and positioning in the timetable slowed down the learning; and added that excessive class load (more than six different sessions a day) and large number of students in a class, ultimately made it impossible to provide quality learning opportunities for the students. Teachers also contended that the unsuitable physical classroom environment made this more difficult. Furthermore, teachers of English teach in other curriculum areas (subjects), thereby diminishing the focus on their effectiveness in English. Responsibility for a number of curriculum areas is commonplace for teachers in Bangladesh. The limited teacher access to students due to fixed seating arrangements affected the delivery of the lesson also.

Existing research, while not conclusive shows that active and cooperative learning are the most successful strategies for learning in large classrooms (Machemer & Crawford, 2007). In a large class in Bangladesh where class time (duration) is too short, teachers and students lack motivation to engage in active teaching and learning; where there are unsuitable seating arrangements, little facilitation, less attractive textbook topics, a shortage of teaching resources and teachers are generally authoritative, the activity-based teaching is limited.

Although large classes are a problem, this is a major socio-economic reality in many developing countries such as Bangladesh. As mentioned previously the participants of the study recommended a range of strategies that could improve the situation. They articulated that an increase in class time (duration) to 90 minutes, only four to five

classes a day, and teacher assistants could be helpful. Two teachers in a session, with one teacher assuming the role of teacher assistant, could improve facilitation to make the session more interactive and effective with the same teaching staff. Some attractive textbook topics and multimedia or audio-visual resources could also support this process to make practice more engaging in large classes. It is the responsibility of the class teachers to plan and prepare more varied and communicative friendly activities within the confines and realities of their classroom context (Hiep, 2007) in order to achieve better learning outcomes.

The wide ranging syllabus and examination system were identified by all the participants as a significant barrier for successful practice of the CLT. They thought the syllabus was too demanding to complete in time, and as a result they concentrated on finishing all the topics and overlooking the real learning, that is communicative competence. They also identified a gap between the syllabus and the examination system. The objectives of syllabus were to focus on learning four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) but the examination system only focussed on two language skills (reading and writing). Therefore students, teachers and even parents did not perceive value in practicing the other two language skill areas (listening and speaking) in the English classroom. However, participants did believe that without practicing and learning to apply all four language skills at a time, it is impossible to become a successful communicator in the target language (TQI-SEP, 2006).

A communicative syllabus potentially consists of five components (Savignon, 2003) including language arts, language for purpose, personal English language use, theatre arts and use beyond the classroom. Language should be learnt as an art to use in different contexts such as theatre and in real life outside the classroom. A changed examination system reflecting the objectives of the syllabus could make a difference in this situation, as for example, when Japan and Botswana undertook curriculum reform and Hong Kong and Costa Rica changed examination systems (Savignon, 2003). Such reform may also help to motivate teachers, students and parents to change their attitude towards English language use outside the classroom. Other Asian countries like China, Taiwan, Singapore, Taipei and countries of the European Union changed

their attitude towards the five communicative components of syllabus to create more multilingual environments (Savignon, 2003; Nkosana, 2008).

The interview results showed that although direct grammar and vocabulary with only 'Bangla' synonyms was taught or emphasised in the classroom, students identified these two aspects as the main challenges in learning English. Vocabulary and grammar are the most common difficulties to language learners. Carlo et al. (2004) assert that vocabulary is one key determinant of poor reading comprehension to ESL learners. There is a misconception among teachers' that CLT means not teaching grammar (Thompson, 1996). But in reality CLT teaches grammar in context more accurately than direct grammar teaching methods. Although there has been a debate over the last fifty years concerning direct grammar and grammarless learning and its effect on the learners of second language (Celce-Murcia, 1991), only basic rather than in-depth grammatical knowledge is needed for most students. The teaching-learning focus moved away from teacher 'covering' grammar to students 'discovering' grammar (Thompson, 1996, p. 11). However, it was found that in the Bangladeshi English language sessions, in-depth grammar was taught to all students, which may be the primary cause of apprehension in English language learning. A further contributing factor was that vocabulary was taught through *Bangla* translation and synonyms, and not through following the meaning and use of the targeted word. A short syllabus, teaching only basic grammatical rules and vocabulary that focuses on everyday use, could significantly help to reduce students' apprehension about learning English (Carlo et al. 2004; TQI-SEP, 2006).

The most encouraging feature is that teachers are trying to implement CLT in the English sessions in Bangladesh, yet they do not follow the systematic but flexible CLT guidelines. Teachers' failure to follow the sequential stages of any activity (pre, main and post) make these sessions ineffective. They assume that doing any pair or group work is called CLT. But CLT does not mean only participating in an activity in a session (Thompson, 1996). Activities are introduced to provide more opportunity for practice and to create variety with the objectives focused on the conceptualisation of the task (Hirvela, 1996). It was also found that teachers did read aloud as a reading activity, whereas CLT has never supported reading aloud as effective (TQI-SEP,

2006). In the observation results, it was clear that one teacher was effective when following the stages of CLT in a session and that students enjoyed this session.

A lack of follow-up training for teachers and teacher educators is largely the cause of the inappropriate and contradictory use of CLT in Bangladesh. In my view, more follow up training with intensive monitoring is needed for the class teachers. A regular meeting among subject teacher educators discussing new initiatives could also be very helpful in addressing this problem.

Home-School Relationship with the Students

A positive association between home and school could prove to be an effective support to students' learning outcomes. Both parents and teachers play a critical role in the literacy development of their learners (Baker, 2003). Home instils the values (positive or negative) and school shapes those according to the society (Caygill & Chamberlain, 2004). It is a triangular process. Student success depends on both the home and school environment, but the failure of one affects the other considerably in regard to students' learning. Parents reported that when they showed their apprehension about using English with children, it automatically and negatively influenced students' achievements. So the home and school relationship has a significant influence on students' literacy progression (Baker, 2003; Caygill & Chamberlain, 2004).

Figure 4: Positive Learning Environment
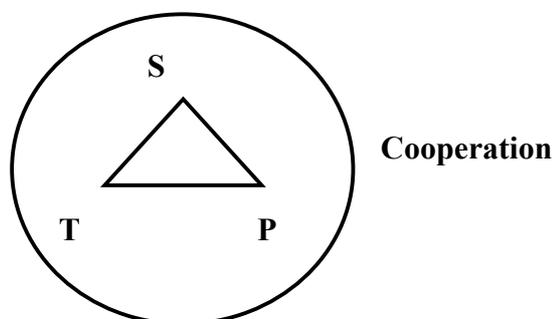
In Figure 4 students, teachers and parents are presented in a triangular shape. They are interconnected and cooperative. Disengagement of one could disrupt the targeted

learning outcomes. If student and parent, or teacher and student have an effective relationship, but the teacher and / or parent do not communicate, then successful learning is more difficult to achieve. Similarly, if parent and teacher are communicating well but the student does not want to learn, then this will also present problems to the learning process. However, when the student, teacher and parent work together then it is easier to achieve the learning goal.

The achievement test results indicate a large difference between low and high SES students' achievements. In low SES schools parents are largely uneducated and not so concerned about their children's higher learning. The home environment is also less responsive to students' basic needs. OECD-PISA (2000) results from many different international contexts showed that one of the largest differences between low and high SES students is related to the educational resources available in the home. Students mentioned that there was little scope to practise English outside the classroom but sometimes family members and friends help to overcome problems. Similarly both teachers and parents put emphasis on their need to use English with students. They also agreed that the family has an important role to play to create English learning environments outside the classroom.

It is clear that attitudes towards passing the examinations are one of the key barriers to positive home and school relationships and also to the successful implementation of CLT in Bangladesh. The emphasis on examination results causes disruption to regular class activities and results in low achievement for some students. As Zhang (1997) reports, the pressure-laden public examinations and attitudes towards passing, similarly disrupts CLT practice and English language learning in China even though, parents and teachers agree that effective learning is necessary for students to achieve better examination results. In addition, the interviews suggested that most parents and teachers in Bangladesh held a negative attitude towards watching English media programmes which can improve students' knowledge and use of English (Kothari & Takeda, 2000).

A positive attitudinal change that guides students' learning could be achieved through the modified examination system and improved motivation from the school. Teachers

have to play a significant role to motivate both students and parents, although some teachers need to be motivated also. Most teachers want students to learn and try to teach accordingly. Parents also explained that a closer relationship with the school could be very helpful in creating more learning-friendly environments for students at home. As the Ministry of Education (MOE), New Zealand (2005a) school strategy document reported, parents in New Zealand also wanted greater involvement in their children's education and positive support from the school. As an experienced teacher educator supporting this view, I want to add that a close relationship between teacher and parent can boost students' achievements because both teacher and parents share the ultimate goal of student success in future life.

It is clear that schools have a greater responsibility to create better pathways for communication and vision for parents.

Figure 5: Learning Environment

Learning Friendly Environment
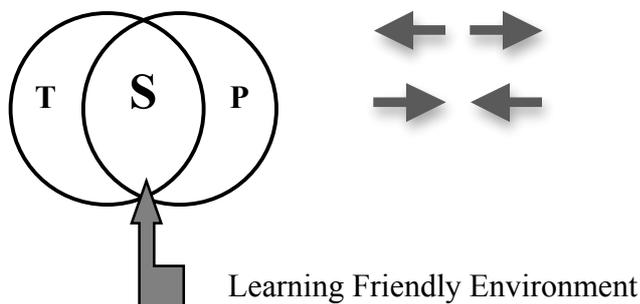
Figure 5 illustrates this point where a better cooperation between teachers and parents helps to create an improved learning environment for students. As the cooperation decreases, less opportunity may remain for the students to succeed in life and vice versa. So, an improved relationship between home and school could significantly promote student achievement.

To increase parents' involvement with the school, I propose that teachers invite parents into the English class as teacher assistants. This could help teachers to manage large classes while simultaneously improving parents' knowledge about English sessions also. Both teachers and parents agreed that a schedule of positively motivated

parents could effectively assist in building an English friendly learning space for students.

The participants of this study reported some realistic barriers to a successful implementation of the CLT approach in Bangladeshi context. However, they agreed that with improved cooperation between students, teachers and parents, a better learning environment could be created to achieve learning goals. They also put forward some means to overcome those challenges. More implications of these findings are discussed in the final chapter.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

Bangladesh is a developing country with *Bangla* as the first language, and English as a second language to keep pace with the global world. No country can be isolated in a fast growing multicultural world with ever changing communication technologies; and it is no longer desirable for the advancement in life to be monolingual, particularly in developing countries. As English is widely used all over the world, Bangladesh is now responding to this challenge accordingly. While many factors are responsible for students' underachievement in learning English, evidence abounds to confirm that with the cooperation of students, teachers, parents and educators; it is possible to lift achievement levels (Fletcher & Parkhill, 2007; Franken & Haslett, 1999; Hite & Evans, 2006; Safford & Costley, 2008; Sirota & Bailey, 2009).

In this study, the students' perspectives and the effects of the CLT programme for second language learning in the mainstream classrooms are explored in secondary schools in Bangladesh. The investigation endeavoured to uncover the challenges students face and the supports they have or would like to have to make ESL learning effective in school life and beyond. Using a mixed methods research design, the researcher wanted to report what students, teachers and parents perceived to be important as well as the reality of CLT practice in Bangladesh. It is hoped that the data from the interviews, achievement tests and observations present a triangulation of data to ensure the findings have greater validity. The findings indicate that students are quite capable of expressing their thoughts on this topic, and that both teachers and parents provide valuable insights into ways to make CLT more effective. The study reveals a complexity of factors that influence the effectiveness of the CLT approach in Bangladesh.

Highlighted as main themes in this study are the importance of learning English for better life outcomes, the challenges regarding the implementation of CLT in Bangladeshi classrooms, and the home-school relationship with the students. The themes were identified as important issues in the successful implementation of CLT in Bangladeshi classrooms. The participants raised some significant challenges and although some may seem trivial, they acknowledge key concerns that could improve the teaching and learning of English.

All the participants agreed that learning the English language was crucial as it is generally accepted as the global language since the last century. They believed that learning the English language would bring better opportunities in life. Consequently, English is taught as a compulsory subject, but participants viewed passing the examination as the main objective. However, they also concurred that now is the time to shift the focus to more effective learning not simply in order to pass the exam but also for better outcomes in life.

Implications for Effective CLT in Bangladesh

From the discussion of results it can be seen that the implications involve a twofold approach. One can be called local (students, teachers and parents) and the other is at the national level (policy makers). The implications listed below are proposed to make the CLT approach more effective in Bangladesh, and therefore improve the practice of teaching English as a second language.

Changes at a local level:

- Create more opportunities to practise English (English language corner / club)
- Motivate students to practise English in and outside the classroom
- Sessions should be taken following the CLT approach systematically
- Timetable the English class before the lunch break
- English subject teachers should use English consistently
- English subject teachers should only be assigned to English teaching
- Supply more quality English learning resources
- Create a heightened awareness for parents regarding CLT practice
- Parent-assistants could be involved in some instances

- Improve home and school relationship (attitudinal change)

Better communication and cooperation from school management and a changed mind-set for teachers and parents, could help to create a more engaging English learning environment for students without significant financial expenditure.

For policy makers (administrators):

- The size of the English curriculum could be reduced to allow a greater focus on effective practice of all four language skills
- The examination system should be changed to better reflect the content of the CLT approach
- English textbooks should be rewritten according to the needs and interests of students
- Session (class) time (duration) should be increased to 90 minutes (per session)
- Four to five sessions (only) a day should be introduced in the school timetable
- Two teachers must be in a session (one performing as a teacher assistant)
- Media programmes could be introduced with English subtitles
- Any change to the programme should allow sufficient time for students to adjust and be motivated
- Extensive monitoring is needed by the specialist teacher educators (in this case English) to the school subject teachers to better ensure the successful implementation of CLT in the school sessions
- Periodical meetings among subject teacher educators to discuss new research on the CLT approach

The policy makers and administrators must incorporate a clearer and more visionary philosophy for schools. Students' needs and achievements should be viewed through a more in-depth focus than merely statistics (Greene, 2000) or financial issues. As education officials have the authority to instigate new initiatives in Bangladeshi schools through the distribution of a 'circular'; even a minor 'office order' from the authority is enough to bring about significant changes in the students' English learning environments as well as achievements.

Although the study shows that there are many barriers to applying CLT in a Bangladeshi context, the participants of this study consider that the suggestions they made could make an impact on the practice of the CLT approach and therefore improve the use of English as a second language in Bangladesh. As a teacher educator and researcher, I believe that the objectives of the English sessions should include the familiarisation of students' with different ways of learning and encourage intellectual development – including that of critical thinking; encourage students to be positive receivers of knowledge, be rational and examine their own roles and challenges in a fast growing world (Michigan State University, 2006 cited in Machemer & Crawford, 2007). I also consider that a trustworthy relationship between students, teachers and parents that welcomes a 'relational pedagogy' (Kim, 2010, p. 16) is very much needed to generate a more effective learning environment for all groups (students, teachers and parents).

A further investigation in a wider context may clarify the findings and add more insights into the effective CLT practice in Bangladesh.

To conclude, I do want to reinforce the voice of Dewey (1956) when he used the 'Copernican revolution' as an analogy that students should be the 'sun' centring upon which 'educational appliances' must revolve. Teaching a lesson is not an aimless pursuit. As educators, all should remember that our primary goal is the student and their overall development; so all initiatives should reflect the needs of the learners. It is equally my hope that the students and teachers who doubted their ability to make a difference in ESL learning may reconsider their views and be instrumental in introducing some changes after reflecting on this research.

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Appendix 1: Information Letter (Head Teacher)

UC
UNIVERSITY OF
CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

Tel: +64 033413092
Cell: +88 01711151183
Email: mmr56@uclive.ac.nz

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Date.............................
Bangladesh

Dear.............................

Project title: How can the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) be enhanced to better meet the needs of English language learners at secondary level (9-16 ys) in Bangladesh?

I am a lecturer at a Teacher Training College in Bangladesh and currently doing MEd at the College of Education, University of Canterbury, New Zealand. This letter is an invitation to participate in a research study I am conducting as part of my thesis, to find out the importance and the effects of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) programme for second language teaching and learning in the secondary schools. It is also aimed to enhance CLT that could meet the needs of English language learners to communicate effectively. I would like to invite your school to collect required data for this research project.

If you agree to take part, an interview with five class 9-10 students and English teachers, and one English class observation will be conducted during the three months to collect data. It will focus on the challenges faced by the second language students and the supports that teachers can provide to minimize those. Interviews would last about half an hour and would be arranged at a time convenient to your schedule. A regular English class will be observed without hindering the routine. To ensure the accuracy of the input, I would ask your permission to audio record the interviews.

Please note that participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you do participate, you have the right to decline to answer any questions; and you may decide to withdraw from the study at any time prior to publication. If you do not want to continue, you do not have to give a reason and no pressure will be put on you to try and change your mind.

All the information you give us will be confidential and used for the purposes of this study only. Confidentiality of all data gathered for this study and the anonymity of participants and their schools in all publications of the findings will be ensured.

Particular care will be made to ensure that all data is to be securely stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act of the University of Canterbury for five years following the study. All participants will receive a report on the findings of this study.

Please contact me if you have any other queries or concerns about the project or would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding by phone no: +8801711151183 or by email: mmr56@uclive.ac.nz . If you have a complaint about the study, you may contact either Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP, Dhaka, Bangladesh (Phone: 9562228, email: nazrul@tqi-sep.org) or the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

I would appreciate it if you would return the consent form to me in the envelope provided by November, 2010.

Thank you in advance for your interest, assistance and contribution with this research.

Yours sincerely

(M. M. Haroon-Ar-Rasheed)
Lecturer, Teacher Training College, Bangladesh
Post-Graduate student
College of Education
University of Canterbury

This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee

Complaints may be addressed to:
The Chair
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee
University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 2: Information Letter (Teacher Participants)

UC
UNIVERSITY OF
CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

Tel: +64 033413092
Cell: +88 01711151183
Email: mmr56@uclive.ac.nz

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Date..............................
Bangladesh

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If you agree to take part, one interview and one class observation will be conducted with you during the three months to collect data. It will focus on the challenges faced by the second language students and the supports that teachers can provide to minimize those. Interviews would last about half an hour and would be arranged at a time convenient to your schedule. A regular English class will be observed without hindering the routine. To ensure the accuracy of your input, I would ask your permission to audio record the interview.

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College of Education
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Complaints may be addressed to:
The Chair
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee
University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 3: Information Letter (Parent Participants)

Tel: +64 033413092
Cell: +88 01711151183
Email: mmr56@uclive.ac.nz

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Date.............................
Bangladesh

Dear.............................

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The Chair
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee
University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch
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Appendix 4: Information Letter (Parents)

Tel: +64 033413092
Cell: +88 01711151183
Email: mmr56@uclive.ac.nz

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Date..............................
Bangladesh

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Project title: How can the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) be enhanced to better meet the needs of English language learners at secondary level (9-16 ys) in Bangladesh?

I am a lecturer at a Teacher Training College in Bangladesh and currently doing MEd at the College of Education, University of Canterbury, New Zealand. This letter is an invitation to participate your child in a research study I am conducting as part of my thesis, to find out the importance and the effects of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) programme for second language teaching and learning in the secondary schools. It is also aimed to enhance CLT that could meet the needs of English language learners to communicate effectively.

If you agree to let your child take part, two interviews, two achievement tests and one English class observation will be carried out during the three months to collect data. It will focus on the challenges faced by the second language students and the supports that teachers can provide to minimize those. Interviews would last about 15 minutes and would be arranged at a time convenient to your child's schedule. To ensure the accurate input, I would ask your permission to audio record the interview. The 30 minutes written and oral achievement tests will be used as part of the research project only and that they are not of their normal course work.

Please note that participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you do participate, you have the right to decline to answer any questions; and you may decide to withdraw from the study at any time prior to publication. If you do not want to continue, you do not have to give a reason and no pressure will be put on you to try and change your mind.

All the information you give us will be confidential and used for the purposes of this study only. Confidentiality of all data gathered for this study and the anonymity of participants and their schools in all publications of the findings will be ensured.

Particular care will be made to ensure that all data is to be securely stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act of the University of Canterbury for five years following the study and then destroyed. All participants will receive a report on the findings of this study.

Please contact me if you have any other queries or concerns about the project or would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding by phone no: +8801711151183 or by email: mmr56@uclive.ac.nz . If you have a complaint about the study, you may contact either Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP, Dhaka, Bangladesh (Phone: 9562228, email: nazrul@tqi-sep.org) or the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

I would appreciate it if you would return the consent form to me in the envelope provided by November, 2010.

Thank you in advance for your interest, assistance and contribution with this research.

Yours sincerely

(M. M. Haroon-Ar-Rasheed)
Lecturer, Teacher Training College, Bangladesh
Post-Graduate student
College of Education
University of Canterbury

This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee

Complaints may be addressed to:
The Chair
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee
University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 5: Information Letter (Student Participants)

UC
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

Information for Student Participants

Project title: How can the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) be enhanced to better meet the needs of English language learners at secondary level (9-16 ys) in Bangladesh?

My name is M.M. Haroon-Ar-Rasheed and I am currently a postgraduate student studying at the University of Canterbury. I hope to conduct research with a small group of students.

I am looking for Year 12-14 students who are willing to:
- Participate in a English session which will be observed and this will be followed by two interviews about 20 minutes each to find out:
  1. How to improve English language outcomes in Bangladesh?
  2. How to transfer knowledge gained from CLT into practical use of English?
  3. What can make English language learning more effective?

You will be asked about the CLT approach in learning English during the interview and this will be recorded on an audio recorder. The lesson observation will be during the regular English session.

You will also be asked to sit a 30 minute written and 15 minute oral test to find the effect of the CLT approach on both of these language skills. The achievement tests will be used as part of the research project only and that they are not part of the normal course work.

When I write up the results of my research, your name will not be in the paper I write. I will take particular care to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. I will also take care to ensure your anonymity in publications of the findings.

If you agree to take part, you can withdraw at any time from the project without penalty by writing to your classroom teacher using your own name or by getting your parent or guardian to write for you.

Particular care will be made to ensure that all data is to be securely stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act of the University of Canterbury for five years following the study and then destroyed.

If you have any questions, you can ask your parent to contact me using the number on the information sheet, or you can ask me about it at any time at school. Because it is

important that no one is forced to take part in research when they do not want to, no student can take part in this research unless both they and their parent have consented to take part.

Please contact me if you have any other queries or concerns about the project or would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding. I can be reached by phone on: +88 01711151183 or by email: mmr56@uclive.ac.nz

Thank you.

(M.M. Haroon-Ar-Rasheed)
Postgraduate Student
University of Canterbury
New Zealand

This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee

Complaints may be addressed to:
The Chair
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee
University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 6: Consent form (Head Teacher / Teachers)

Tel: +64 033413092
Email: mmr56@canterbury.ac.nz

Project title: How can the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) be enhanced to better meet the needs of English language learners at secondary level (9-16 ys) in Bangladesh?

<u>Declaration of Consent to Participate</u>

I have read and understood the information presented in the information letter about this research project conducted by Rasheed of the College of Education, University of Canterbury.

I am informed that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time prior to publication of the findings without penalty by advising the researcher.

I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher. The extracts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications coming from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous; and any published or reported results will not identify me or my institution without prior consent.

I am aware that allowing interview and class observation to be audio recorded is optional to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I understand that all data from this study will be stored securely at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study.

I understand that if I require further information I can contact the researcher, Mr. Rasheed. If I have any complaints, I can contact either Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP, Dhaka, Bangladesh (Phone: 9562228, email: nazrul@tqi-sep.org) or the Chair of the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study and have provided my email details below for this purpose.

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Mail address for report on study:
....Email...........................
(Note: email confirmation will be sent on receipt of your response)

*Please **return this completed consent form** in the envelope provided **by the end of November, 2010.***

Thank you for your contribution to this study.

*This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.*

Complaints may be addressed to:
The Chair
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee
University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 7: Consent form (Parent Participants)

UC
UNIVERSITY OF
CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

Tel: +64 033413092
Email: mmr56@canterbury.ac.nz

Project title: How can the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) be enhanced to better meet the needs of English language learners at secondary level (9-16 ys) in Bangladesh?

<u>Declaration of Consent to Participate</u>

I have read and understood the information presented in the information letter about this research project conducted by Rasheed of the College of Education, University of Canterbury.

I am informed that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time prior to publication of the findings without penalty by advising the researcher.

I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher. The extracts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications coming from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous; and any published or reported results will not identify me or the institution without prior consent.

I am aware that allowing my interview to be audio recorded is optional to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I understand that all data from this data will be stored securely at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study.

I understand that if I require further information I can contact the researcher, Mr. Rasheed. If I have any complaints, I can contact either Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP, Dhaka, Bangladesh (Phone: 9562228, email: nazrul@tqi-sep.org) or the Chair of the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study and have provided my email details below for this purpose.

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Mail   address   for   report   on   study:
....Email.................................

(Note: email confirmation will be sent on receipt of your response)

*Please **return this completed consent form** in the envelope provided **by the end of November, 2010.***

Thank you for your contribution to this study.

This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

Complaints may be addressed to:
The Chair
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee
University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 8: Consent form (Parents)

Tel: +64 033413092
Email: mmr56@canterbury.ac.nz

Project title: How can the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) be enhanced to better meet the needs of English language learners at secondary level (9-16 ys) in Bangladesh?

Declaration of Consent to Participate

I have read and understood the information presented in the information letter about this research project conducted by Rasheed of the College of Education, University of Canterbury.

I am informed that the participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time prior to publication of the findings without penalty by advising the researcher. I am also informed that this research will not bring any harm to the child.

I understand that any information or opinions provided will be kept confidential to the researcher. The extracts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications coming from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous; and any published or reported results will not identify me, my child or the institution without prior consent.

I am aware that allowing the interview to be audio recorded is optional to ensure an accurate recording of the responses.

I am also aware that the achievement tests will only be used as part of the research project and that they are not part of their normal course work.

I understand that all data from this data will be stored securely at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study.

I understand that if I require further information I can contact the researcher, Mr. Rasheed. If I have any complaints, I can contact either Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP, Dhaka, Bangladesh (Phone: 9562228, email: nazrul@tqi-sep.org) or the Chair of the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study and have provided my email details below for this purpose.

By signing below, I agree that my child to participate in this research project.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Mail address for report on study: ....Email....................................
(Note: email confirmation will be sent on receipt of your response)

Please **return this completed consent form** in the envelope provided **by the end of November, 2010.**

Thank you for your contribution to this study.

This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

Complaints may be addressed to:
The Chair
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee
University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 9: Consent form (Student Participants)

Tel: +64 033413092
Email: mmr56@canterbury.ac.nz

Project title: How can the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) be enhanced to better meet the needs of English language learners at secondary level (9-16 ys) in Bangladesh?

<u>Declaration of Consent to Participate</u>

I have read and understood the information presented in the information letter about this research project conducted by Rasheed of the College of Education, University of Canterbury.

I am informed that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time prior to publication of the findings without penalty by advising the researcher.

I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher. The extracts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications coming from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous; and any published or reported results will not identify me or my institution without prior consent.

I am aware that allowing my interview to be audio recorded is optional to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also aware that the achievement tests will only be used as part of the research project and that they are not part of their normal course work.

I understand that all data from this data will be stored securely at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study.

I understand that if I require further information I can contact the researcher, Mr. Rasheed. If I have any complaints, I can contact either Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP, Dhaka, Bangladesh (Phone: 9562228, email: nazrul@tqi-sep.org) or the Chair of the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study and have provided my email details below for this purpose.

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Mail   address   for   report   on   study:
....Email................................
 (Note: email confirmation will be sent on receipt of your response)

Please **return this completed consent form** in the envelope provided **by the end of November, 2010.**

Thank you for your contribution to this study.

This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

Complaints may be addressed to:
The Chair
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee
University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 10: First Interview Questions (Student Participants)

1. What opportunities do you have to learning English in and out of school?
2. Who is the most influential in learning English?
3. Describe what happens in your English class?
4. Do you enjoy your English classes?
5. If yes or no, why?

Appendix 11: Second Interview Questions (Student Participants)

1. Which parts of your English class do you like most? Why?
2. What are the challenges you face learning English?
3. How do you try to overcome those challenges?
4. Describe a teacher who is effective in teaching English? What does he do?
5. What is most difficult? Reading and writing in English or listening and speaking in English? Why?
6. Why is English important for your education?
7. Does CLT support you in your learning effectively? Why? Why not?

Appendix 12: Focus Group Interview Questions (English Teachers and Parents)

1. Why is learning English important in today's world?
2. Do you think students doing well in English? If yes or no, why?
3. What are the challenges for implementing CLT programme in classrooms?
4. How can we support them to learn better English?

Appendix 13: Classroom Observation Checklist

Name of School:

Class: No. of Students: Date:

T	Set the scene	
	Modelling	
E	Prompting	
	Questioning	
A	Explaining	
C	Giving feedback	
H	Teaching aids	
E	Teaching methods	
R	Management / Control G = gp, C = class, R = roving	
	Others	

S	Answer inferential	
T	Answer literal	
U	Question inferential	
D	Question literal	
E	Statement	
N	Engagement in activity	
T	Intuitiveness	
S	Others	

Appendix 14: Marking Grid for Writing Tasks

Bedtime (For and Against)

Total score: 6 (maximum of 3 per view – i.e. for and against)

3 marks for the case argued very well

2 marks well

1 mark moderately well

0 mark poorly

Favourite Place   Total score: 7

Extent of details?

Extensive 3 marks

Substantial 2 marks

moderate 1 mark

very limited 0 mark

How well organised?

very well 2 marks

moderately well 1 mark

any other response 0 mark

Extent to which student explained why?

substantial justification 2 marks

a little justification 1 mark

not at all 0 mark

Appendix 15: Marking Grid for Oral Tasks

Total 30

Activity One:	Marks
Question 1	1
Question 2	1
Question 3	5
Question 4	1
Total Marks	**8**

Activity Two:	Marks
Question 1	1
Question 2	5
Question 3	4
Total Marks	**10**

Activity Three:	Marks
Question 1	1
Question 2	5
Question 3	3
Question 4	1
Question 5	1
Question 6	1
Total Marks	**12**