

Challenges of Implementing CLT for Language Teaching in Bangladesh

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Elucidate the limitations/challenges of implementing CLT for Language teaching in Bangladesh.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was introduced in Bangladesh in the late 1990s. It aims to enhance learners' ability to use English effectively in real-life communication. This method focuses on developing communicative competence rather than memorization. It has been widely accepted in many parts of the world. However, the implementation of CLT in Bangladesh has faced significant challenges. Despite the government's efforts to integrate CLT into the national curriculum, several contextual factors have hindered its practical application.

Inadequate Teacher Training and Support: One of the major challenges in implementing CLT in Bangladesh is the lack of properly trained teachers. Many teachers were trained in traditional grammar-translation methods and struggled to shift to a communicative approach. They often lack both the theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary for CLT.

These include facilitating interactive activities, managing group work, and using real-life contexts for language practice. Furthermore, professional development opportunities are limited, and teachers receive minimal support in adapting to the communicative approach. As a result, the intended communicative activities often revert to traditional methods, undermining the goals of CLT.

Overcrowded Classrooms: Class sizes in Bangladesh are typically large, with classrooms often holding 50 to 100 students. In such settings, it becomes nearly impossible to implement CLT effectively. The high student-teacher ratio limits the opportunities for students to engage in meaningful communication activities. Additionally, teachers find monitoring and providing feedback on individual students' performance challenging. The physical space and lack of resources in these overcrowded environments further hinder the effective use of CLT strategies.

Resource Constraints and Lack of Materials: The successful implementation of CLT depends on the availability of teaching aids, authentic materials, and access to technology. In many Bangladeshi schools, especially in rural areas, resources are scarce. Textbooks are often

outdated and do not align with the curriculum's communicative goals.

There is a shortage of supplementary materials like audio-visual aids, real-life texts, and language labs. Without these resources, teachers find it hard to create meaningful language practice. This greatly reduces the effectiveness of CLT.

Misalignment with Examination Systems: The assessment system in Bangladesh remains traditional mainly focusing on grammar, translation, and memorization. Despite the introduction of CLT in the curriculum, exams continue to emphasize accuracy and the mechanical reproduction of language rather than communicative competence.

This misalignment between teaching methods and assessment criteria discourages both teachers and students from fully embracing CLT. Teachers are pressured by the need to prepare students for these exams. As a result, they often revert to the grammar-translation method, which contradicts the principles of CLT.

Cultural and Societal Barriers: The traditional teacher-centred approach is deeply rooted in the educational culture of Bangladesh. Here, the teacher is seen as the primary source of knowledge and students are passive recipients. CLT, which requires active student participation and a more collaborative learning environment, challenges this established norm.

Moreover, many students hesitate to participate in role-plays, group discussions, and other communicative activities. They fear making mistakes, are shy, or lack confidence in their English proficiency. Social norms that discourage open expression, especially in mixed-gender settings, further inhibit the interactive nature of CLT.

In fine, Implementing Communicative Language Teaching in Bangladesh faces several significant challenges. Despite its potential to improve language proficiency, these barriers must be addressed for CLT to be genuinely effective in the Bangladeshi context. Addressing these limitations requires a comprehensive strategy that includes revising assessment systems, improving teacher training, and ensuring adequate resources.