The Challenges of Implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in High School: EFL Teacher's Perspective

Sahabi Alif Suhartami; Muhammad Amin

Mataram University, Indonesia

Abstract

Communicative language teaching (CLT) has become a new alternative responding to the traditional approach which is well known as grammar translation based. The aims of this study were to display EFL teachers' understanding of CLT and their challenges in implementing CLT in the classroom for high school students. The types of research used in this study is qualitative research was carried out by using a set of instruments, i.e. online questionnaire with 15 participants (male and female) from several senior high schools and several backgrounds. Some of them come from public schools and some others come from private schools. The location of the schools is also varied. Some are located in rural area and some are in urban area. The participants were chosen randomly from different senior high schools in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. from the results of data analysis that has been done, it is found that teachers actually have good understanding towards CLT but they face some obstacles when it comes to the implementation. The obstacles come from two aspects: a) teacher's side and b) students' side. The challenges faced by teachers are teachers limited knowledge about the appropriate use of CLT, teachers' limited access to the target language culture, inadequate time to develop materials for communicative classes, teachers' heavy workload and lack of time for material preparation. These obstacles are even more challenging by the obstacles coming from students' side. The teachers' revelation shows that students are having low confidence in English, not willing to participate in the classroom activities, lacking of motivation in learning, not willing to follow teachers' instruction and having low proficiency in English. After analyzing the obstacles, it is expected that teachers, students and the stakeholders can collaborate to find solution on this.

Keywords: *CLT; EFL Teacher; Senior High School in Lombok; Nusa Tenggara*

Introduction

This research was conducted to find out EFL teacher's perspective on the challenges of implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to high school students in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. Communicative language teaching (CLT) has become a new alternative responding to the traditional approach which is well known as grammar translation based. However, CLT implementation has never been easy. Both teachers and students mostly find challenges in regards to the teaching model, teaching material, students' participation and many others. Some studies have been conducted to analyze

these challenges. Research done by Rahmawati (2019) revealed that teachers have several issues like the students' low motivations, the teachers' role, the class size, the teachers' income, and the availability of English materials.

Regardless those described challenges above, According to Richards CLT is viewed as a "very grounded principles in the notion of communicative competence as the goal of second language teaching". Richards and Littlewood also added that communicative competence can be understood as goals of language teaching. It is also seen as a way of learning language and choices of tasks that could facilitate learning well. CLT has been broadly implemented as a response to the old approach like audiolingual and grammar-based approach that focuses more on the mastery of grammatical rules. In addition, Nunan agrees that learning language is more than just the act of memorizing grammatical rules and vocabularies. However, it is believed as a process of creating meaning from what is provided by the language. To make the learning meaningful, the best approach that could be applied is the communicative language teaching approach. In CLT, learning is no longer seen merely as a process of habit formation. Besides, learners and their cognitive process are not seen as a complex learning process (Nunan, 2004). Nunan also argues that rather than just being seen as a set of phonological, lexical and grammatical items to be remembered, language can be taught of as a communication tool. Therefore, the goal of the language learning, later on, is not merely knowing the grammatical rules but also knowing what to do with the grammatical rules (Afnesha Noveriana Chang, 2020)

Richards & Rodgers claim, "There is no single text either authority on it, or any single model that is universally accepted as authoritative". Hence, CLT has been defined by many scholars in various contexts. Brown argues that CLT is not considered simply a teaching method but entrenched into understanding of two potential theoretical assumptions: communicative competence, and language meaning and functions. Like CLT, many experts define the term 'communicative competence' in many ways. To know a language means to know how produce grammatically correct sentences to understand, speak, read, write, and also to know how to use these sentences appropriately for meaningful communication. To achieve communicative abilities, it is also important to obtain both communicative and linguistics competence. According to Canale and Swain communicative competence means gaining ability in three important communicative issues: grammatical, sociological and strategic for meaningful communication (Hassan, 2019)

Richards (2001) said that CLT is a communicative approach which aims is to develop learners' communicative competence. Communicative competence, in this case, is considered to be the primary conception of CLT. Nowadays, many scholars on ELT have been working seriously until they finally find CLT which accommodates society demand regarding English speaking competent. This method is regarded as the response to the traditional method that focused on the mastering the language rules only. CLT advocates teaching practices that develop communicative competence in authentic contexts (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). However, it is notable that the theories and practices of CLT have faced various challenges in EFL contexts (Anderson, 1993; Ellis, 1996). English teachers in Indonesia has encountered many problems that hinder them from implanting CLT in their teaching context. According to Li (1998), there are four categories that influence the implementation of CLT. They are teachers, students, the educational system, and the CLT itself. Meanwhile, in this research, the research limits the focus of the study into two categories only: students and teachers. Few studies have been conducted to analyze the student and teacher aspect in CLT in senior high school context. For this reason, it is worthwhile to conduct study on the implementation of CLT in senior high schools. This study contributes to see what actions might be taken to improve the implementation of CLT in Indonesian EFL instructional context in the future. Data collection was carried out through online questionnaires and online interviews in accordance with the theory mentioned by Nunan (1999) said that close-ended questions enable the participants to accurately reflect what they want to convey while the open-ended ones let them to explain their answers in a more detailed way.

Method

The types of research used in this study is qualitative research was carried out by using a set of instruments, i.e. online questionnaire with 15 participants (male and female) from several senior high schools and several backgrounds. Some of them come from public schools and some others come from private schools. The location of the schools is also varied. Some are located in rural area and some are in urban area. The participants were chosen randomly from different senior high schools in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. The online questionnaire consists of some questions investigating about the teachers' demographic as well as teachers' difficulties in implementing CLT in their classrooms. The questions required close-ended answers (in scales) and open-ended answers in short paragraph. Nunan (1999) said that close-ended questions enable the participants to accurately reflect what they want to convey while the open-ended ones let them to explain their answers in a more detailed way. Having the questionnaire administered to the participants, online interview was arranged in order to confirm information gained from the questionnaire.

Result and Discussion

The findings of this research shows some understanding about CLT and problems coming from the teachers and students' side that display the challenges of implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in High school students. The result of questionnaire shows that from 15 participants and online interview with some EFL teachers.

A. EFL Teacher's Perspective Towards CLT

In addition to distributing questionnaires, online interviews are also one of the ways of collecting data that was carried out in this study. The questions asked about how EFL teachers understood CLT. When asked to describe CLT in their own words, teachers presented several explanations about their understanding of CLT. The teacher named Manaf stated that "CLT is an approach that is very relevant when we teach communicative matters such as conversations, presentations and discribing something. Speaking is the key to training students' self-confidence." Another teacher named Letisia also said that "CLT is a teaching method used to improve the quality of speaking or communication of students or students in English. These answers were expressed by the teachers who illustrated that they have proper knowledge of what CLT is. These findings are similar to Afnesha Noveriana Chang and Suparmi's (2020) study shows that most teachers realize that CLT is good approach that will be used in the teaching and learning process.

B. Challenges in Implementing CLT for High School Students in Lombok

Based on the results of filling out a questionnaire by 15 EFL teachers who had distributed, it was found that there were several things that became a challenge for teachers in implementing CLT in the classroom for high school students, both from the teacher side and students side, from the teacher side including the first, teachers have limited knowledge about the appropriate use of the method. This is where they know about the characteristics of CLT in brief, but they face difficulties to implement it. The teachers find out some difficulties when it comes to putting the theory into practice in the classroom. Both teachers have limited access to the target language culture. third, Inadequate time to develop materials for communicative classes. Fourth, Teachers' heavy workload and lack of time for material preparation. besides that there are also teacher challenges from the student side including Students are having low confidence in English and Students' lack of willingness to participate in class activities.

In the following we present a table showing the results of filling out the questionnaire by choosing 2 options, namely agreeing and disagreeing, where if you choose to agree then it means that the

challenge is felt by the teacher and if you choose not to agree it means the teacher does not feel the challenge and this is the table that shows results related to the perspective of EFL teachers regarding the challenges faced when implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the classroom for high school students.

No	Questions	Agree	Disagree
	Teachers' Side		
1	Teachers limited knowledge about the appropriate use of CLT	73.3 %	26.7 %
2	Teachers' limited access to the target language's culture	66.7 %	33.3 %
3	Inadequate time to develop materials for communicative classes	93.3 %	6.7%
4	Teachers' heavy workload and lack of time for material preparation	80%	20%
	Students' Side		
1	Students are having low confidence in English	86.7%	13.3 %
2	Students' lack of willingness to participate in class activities	80%	20%

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Based on the data that has been collected, the findings of this study are divided into 2 main points of discussion, the first discusses how EFL teachers' understanding about CLT and the second discusses what challenges they face in implementing CLT in the classroom for high school students. Both of these findings have been mentioned in the findings section however, in this session the researcher will describe in more detail the challenges that EFL teachers experience in implementing CLT in the classroom.
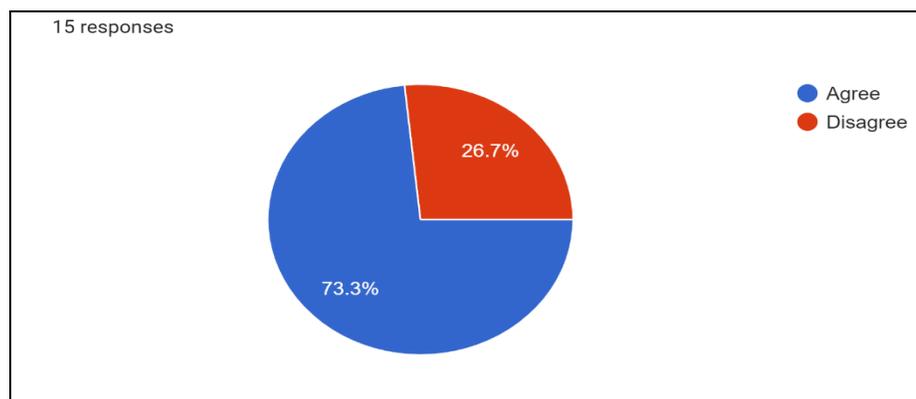

Figure. 1 Teachers limited knowledge about the appropriate use of CLT

The first figure shows that the first challenge faced by teachers in the classroom when implementing CLT is Teachers limited knowledge about the appropriate use of CLT, out of 15 teachers who have filled out the questionnaire, 73.3% of teachers choose to agree and 26.7% choose not to agree, so that means some Most teachers face these challenges in the classroom.
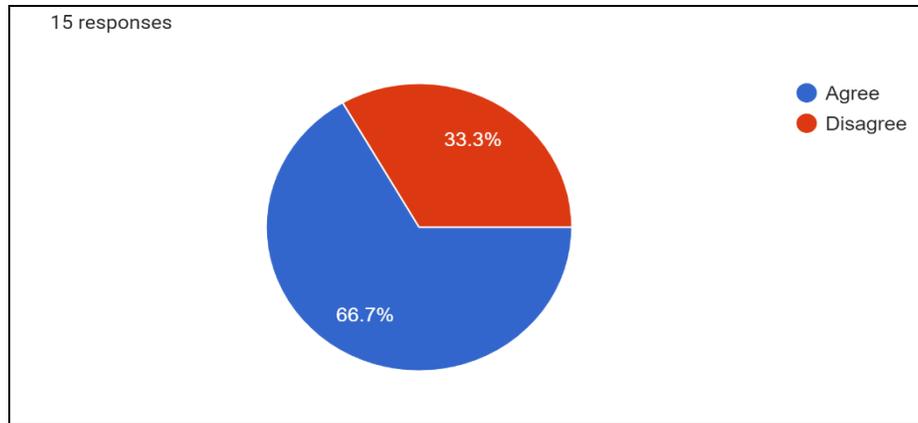
Figure. 2 Teachers' limited access to the target language's culture

The second figure shows that the second challenge faced by teachers in the classroom when implementing CLT is Teachers' limited access to the target language's culture, out of 15 teachers who have filled out the questionnaire, 66.7% of teachers choose to agree and 33.3% choose not to agree, so that means some Most teachers face these challenges in the classroom
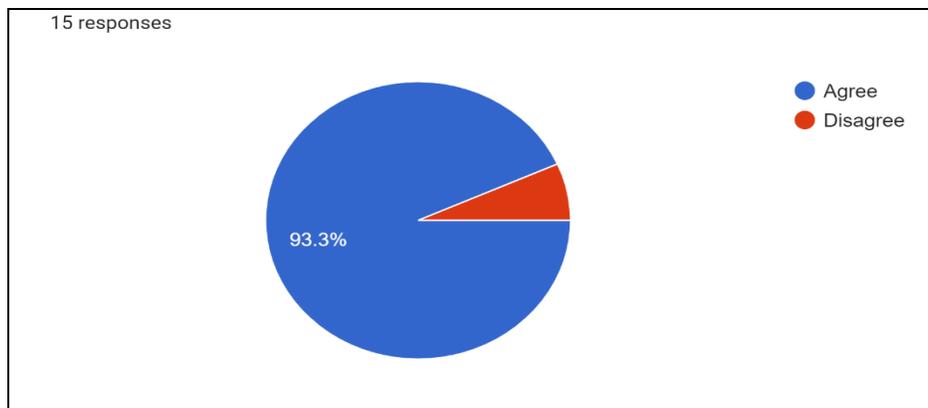
Figure. 3 Inadequate time to develop materials for communicative classes

The third figure shows that the third challenge faced by teachers in the classroom when implementing CLT is Inadequate time to develop materials for communicative classes, out of 15 teachers who have filled out the questionnaire, 93.3% of teachers choose to agree and 6.7% choose not to agree, so that means some Most teachers face these challenges in the classroom.
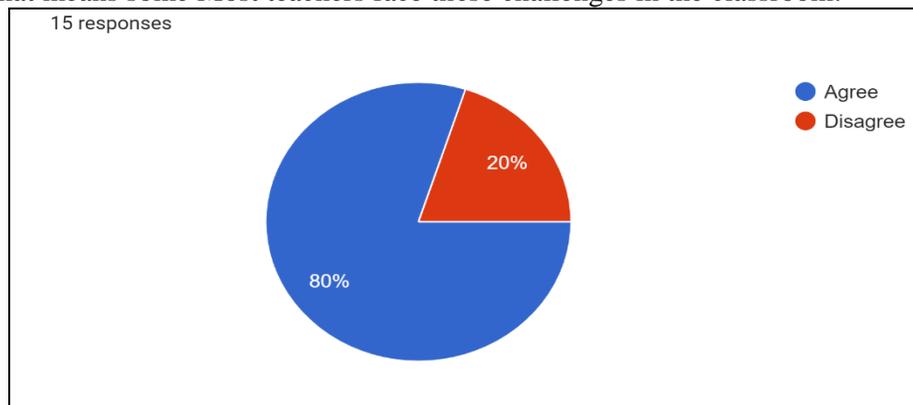

Figure. 4 Teachers' heavy workload and lack of time for material preparation

The fourth figure shows that the fourth challenge faced by teachers in the classroom when implementing CLT is Teachers' heavy workload and lack of time for material preparation, out of 15 teachers who have filled out the questionnaire, 80% of teachers choose to agree and 20% choose not to agree, so that means some Most teachers face these challenges in the classroom
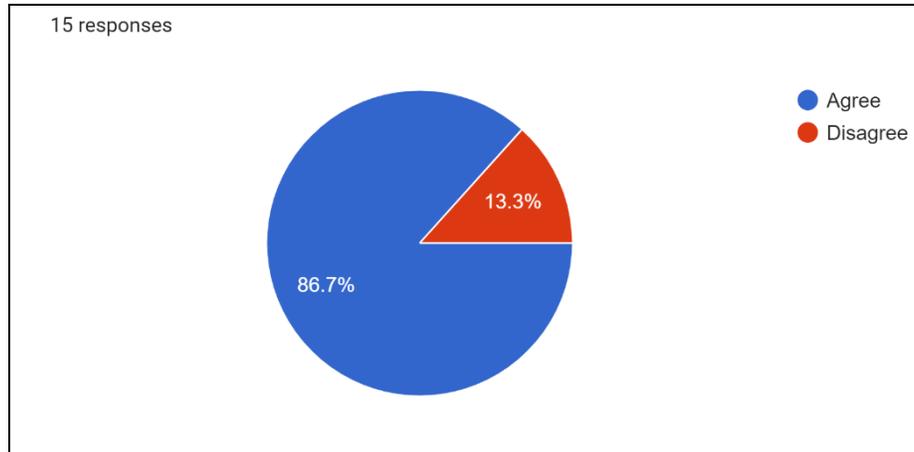

Figure. 5 Students are having low confidence in English

The fifth figure shows that the fifth challenge faced by teachers in the classroom when implementing CLT from the students' side is Students are having low confidence in English, out of 15 teachers who have filled out the questionnaire, 86.7% of teachers choose to agree and 13.3% choose not to agree, so that means some Most teachers face these challenges in the classroom
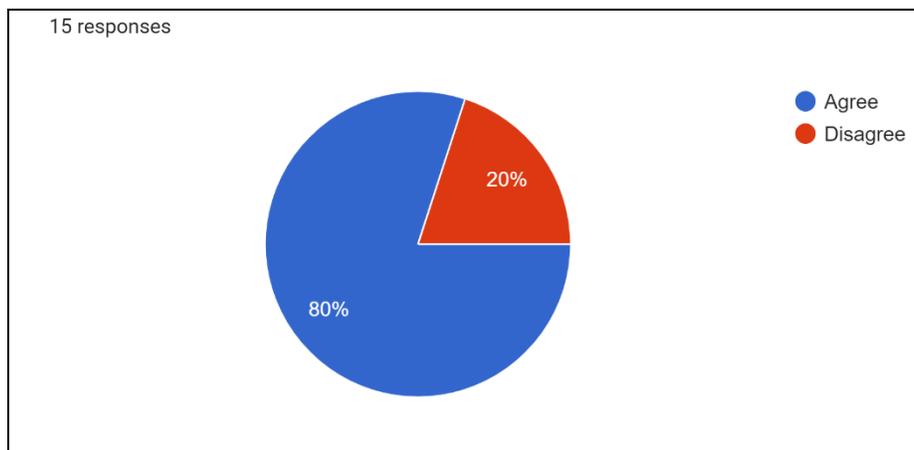

Figure. 6 Students' lack of willingness to participate in class activities

The sixth figure shows that the sixth challenge faced by teachers in the classroom when implementing CLT from the students' side is Students are having low confidence in English, out of 15 teachers who have filled out the questionnaire, 80% of teachers choose to agree and 20% choose not to agree, so that means some Most teachers face these challenges in the classroom.

Conclusion

This study focused on some of the challenges faced by English teachers in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. The problems include teachers' understanding of CLT and their challenges in implementing CLT in the classroom for high school students. from the results of data analysis that has been done, it is found that teachers actually have good understanding towards CLT but they face some obstacles when it comes to the implementation. The obstacles come from two aspects: a) teacher's side and b) students' side. The challenges faced by teachers are teachers limited knowledge about the appropriate use of CLT, teachers' limited access to the target language culture, inadequate time to develop materials for communicative classes, teachers' heavy workload and lack of time for material preparation. These obstacles are even more challenging by the obstacles coming from students' side. The teachers' revelation shows that students are having low confidence in English, not willing to participate in the classroom activities, lacking of motivation in learning, not willing to follow teachers' instruction and having low proficiency in English. After analyzing the obstacles, it is expected that teachers, students and the stakeholders can collaborate to find solution on this.

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