Learner to Learner Interaction in CLT Classroom: Effectiveness and Challenges Related to Implementation in the English Language Class at Secondary Level of Education in the Context of Bangladesh

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Authors’ contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author TT designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors MMZ and MNS managed the analyses of the study. Author MNS managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

ABSTRACT

To explore what extent of learning English through learner to learner interaction is effective at secondary level of education in the context of Bangladesh and what are the challenges that learners face to interact, this study was conducted. What are the issues that are necessary to implement interaction among learners are also important concern of this study. Data was collected from school students. Research instrument was questionnaire. The statements of the questionnaire are very relevant that helps to get findings or result that shows the actual condition of the students regarding interaction in English. Some important reasons of not interacting in the classroom are inhibition, fear, shyness, interruption and overlapping of ideas. After analyzing the finding from

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survey, researcher has given some recommendations to overcome the challenges that make hindrance to implement interaction in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) classroom. According to researcher teacher-student relationship means a lot to continue a conversation in the classroom. As the secondary level students are not that much adult, they will make mistake, is very natural. So it is teacher’s duty to give them motivation and make realize that they have to be very confident while speaking something.

Keywords: English; Bangladesh; questionnaire; survey; CLT classroom; motivation.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Overview

English is one of the major languages in the world. The exporting of English began in the seventeenth century. Since then, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it continues to spread all over the world because of the wide-spread colonization, and massive immigration of the native speakers. Today, it has become the most widely spoken language in the world. In Bangladesh, as colonial legacy, people are almost forced to use English for a practical purpose–administrative, professional or educational. Although it is a foreign language, English is, indeed, used here as an official language in different government and non-government offices. From the colonial time, in this region, Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was adopted to teach English. Recently, CLT has been introduced in Bangladesh. In CLT, Interaction is an important basis of learning. Classroom Interaction then, is necessary and useful as an educational strategy to enhance learning. For learners who are studying English in a non-English speaking setting, it is very important to experience real communicative situations in which they will learn how to express their own views and opinions, and to develop their oral fluency and accuracy which are very essential for the success of FL communication. If learner to learner interaction in secondary level in CLT class room is implemented properly, it will be very effective to learn English language fast in the context of Bangladesh.

1.2 Interaction and Types of Interaction

Interaction is considered important word for the ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers. “In the era of communicative language teaching, interaction is, in fact, the heart of communication; it is what communication is all about”. Some decades of research show that the learner can learn best way through interaction. CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) emphasis on interaction as people use language to negotiate meaning in various situations. Wagner [1] defines interaction as “reciprocal events that require at least two objects and two actions. Interaction occurs when these objects and events naturally influence one another” Therefore, interactions do not occur only from one side, there must be a mutual influence through giving and receiving messages in order to achieve communication. Thurmond [2] defines interaction as:

“The learners” engagement with the course content, other learners, the instructor and the technological medium used in the course. True interactions with other learners, the instructor and technology results in a reciprocal exchange of information. The exchange of information intended to enhance knowledge development in the learning environment.”

From this quote there are four types of interaction: learner-course content interaction, learner-learner interaction, learner-teacher interaction and learner-technology interaction.

1.3 Learner-learner Interaction

Many theories of learning maintain that knowledge is actively constructed and skills improved through interactions between learners as it is shown in the diagram in Fig. 1 done by Scrivener [3]. According to Johnson [4] supports that if learner-learner interaction is well structured and managed, then it can be an important factor of cognitive development, educational achievement of students and emerging social competencies. It can also develop the learners’ capacities through collaborative works. So, learners will establish social relationship through this kind of interaction, where the sense of learning community is promoted and isolation is reduced in the classroom.
According to Naegle Paula [5] adds also that “talking students with their peers about the content of the course is a powerful way for them to reinforce what they have learned.” The teachers, then must encourage such type of interaction between learners because it is the fastest and the best way, it makes learners active rather than passive participants.

1.4 Teacher-learner Interaction

This type of interaction as Coulthard [6] mentions has received a great deal from teachers in a wide range of disciplines. It happens between the teacher and one learner or many other learners, that is to say a teacher takes a part in such interaction. He negotiates with his students the content of the course, asks questions, uses students ideas, lectures, gives directions, criticizes or justifies student talk responses. On the other hand, the students will benefit by drawing on the experience of their teachers on how well to interact in the manner that is most effective. Scrivener [3] made the following diagram to show clearly how the interaction happens between the teacher and the students.
During teacher-learner interaction, the students seek to demonstrate their speaking and listening skills in front of their teachers that is why latter should consider his way of interacting which is very crucial in learning and teaching. According to Scrivener [3] teachers should focus on three things when they talk with their students. Firstly, they must pay attention to the kind of the language the students are able to understand, i.e. teachers should provide an output that is comprehensible for the level of all the students. Secondly, the teachers must think about what they will say to their students, hence the teacher speech is as a resource for learners. Finally, teachers also have to identify the ways in which they will speak such as the voice, tone and intonation.

### 1.5 Interaction as a Type of CLT Frameworks

With the importance of English on today’s world, teachers look for a significant method to meet the demand of learners to use this language for communication. The communicative approach or (CLT) is considered as the best approach for such purpose. It is mainly related to the idea that “Language learning will take care of itself” [7]. A deep understanding of CLT theory and its implication for classroom practice is very important for both learners and teachers, since it aims at helping learners to use the target language for communication. According to Lindsay and Knight [8] say that CLT appeared by the end of 1960s and continued to evolve. Today, it is not considered as a method but as an approach for teaching based on the idea that language learning means learning how to use the language to achieve a better communication outside the classroom Hsien-Chuan Lin [9]. CLT developed because of the limitations of the previous methods, it mainly focuses on the ability to communicate and interact which was absent in the other methods Joan Gorham [10]. Larkin [11] and Spiro [12] also makes the important point that learners are always in need to be exposed to language and be given opportunities to use this language in order to develop their knowledge and skills (2001). So, among the characteristics of CLT approach is that it was created around the individual learner, taking his needs and objectives as starting points in teaching and learning a second language (Tognini [13], Shaw [14], Muramatsu [15]).

### 2. Methodology

#### 2.1 Research Hypotheses

Students of secondary level are unable to interact in English successfully because of their fear to speak in English. They consider it a difficult subject. They feel inhibition to talk. Overlapping, interruption also make them demotivated. Capacity of students in a same class is different that is why there is a gap between themselves to interact successfully. The research is based on the hypothesis that teachers assistance and positive feedback can implement learner to learner interaction in CLT classroom. Teacher have to find out the actual reason of learners negativity then proper solution can be found out.

#### 2.2 Purpose of the Investigation

In Bangladesh, students think that English is the most difficult subject. This presupposition also spread in the guardians mind. So, fear of English becomes double from the childhood. Many students are capable of learning English, but they fail because of fear. In secondary level, the fear is more dominant than of the graduates. Some students understand English but are not optimistic to speak to make any interaction in the class. But learner to learner interaction is an effective way of learning English very easily and quickly. Some people say that CLT is a failure method in Bangladesh and its performance is poorer than that of GTM. Whatever the allegation is, a research-based study can reveal the actual cause of failure and find out the solutions. Purpose of this study is to find out what are the problems learners face during interaction and why they feel demotivated to interact. To implement learner to learner interaction in a CLT classroom in secondary level and to make interaction an effective way of learning English what are the steps should be taken that is the main focus of this study.

#### 2.3 Participants and Data Collection

The data for this research were collected through a survey carried out among 40 students of Mohammadpur Preparatory School and College in Dhaka Bangladesh. Total 20 students are from class 9 and the rest 20 are from class 10. All are from Bangla medium. In this study, Preparatory school was chosen only because it was convenient for the researcher to conduct the research there. It seems to the researcher because it is near and a well reputed school.
3. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS OF THE STUDY

All the instruments prepared for collecting data are completely in harmony with the objectives of this study. The results are discussed and analyzed in detail here. The results of students’ questionnaire survey are presented here. As for the students’ questionnaire survey, analysis is done according to the questions.

3.1 Results of Students’ Questionnaire Survey

There were 15 questions in the students. The data that was gained from question No.1 shows that learners do not want to interact. It was presented in the following chart:

The result of this statement clearly presents that, 52.5% students in the secondary level are not interested to talk in the classroom. One of the most common reasons of the student is that they think it is hard. They cannot overcome the fear of learning English by speaking in the class. 20% learner think that interaction is necessary. But the number is very low. The question No. 4 is another factor which shows what is responsible for the negativity regarding communication in the English class. Overlapping and interruption are the reasons of feeling demotivated. 30% students agree and 32.5% student strongly agree and expect that teacher should select the topic of discussion. That actually means learners want to get rid of overlapping and interruption. The result is like this-

The question No. 7 from the student survey is also another point of their reluctance in interaction. 30% learner s agree and 45% strongly agree that different level of capacity are responsible for not having interest in any type of conversation. Some students can understand topics very easily. Some students take time. This difference affects interaction. This question was asked to the student and the answer is like this–

![Fig. 3](image-url)

**Fig. 3. Interaction among learners helps to learn English language learning**

![Fig. 4](image-url)

**Fig. 4. Teacher should select topic of interaction otherwise they may overlap and interruption**
As for question no.8, students’ responses shows that inhibition is responsible for their uneven participation in interaction. 75% strongly students agree that. When learners are asked to talk about something what comes first in their mind is that what other learners are thinking about him. If he says something wrong people will laugh at him. This types of feeling reduces learners' confidence level which is very necessary to speak in a class. Removing this type of thought is mandatory for effective interaction.

The question No. 12 states that same activities in the classroom make student bored. 55% students agree with this statement. Students want varieties of task. Changes in tasks can make them motivated to continue interaction. They can make themselves better in English.

The question No. 14 talks about the grammatical and conversational error. Learner will make error this is very natural. Statement 14 is very positive because learner want to correct their errors. Teacher should provide feedback on regular basis to correct the errors.

4. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

In this research, researcher has studied and observed several factors related to the effectiveness and implementation of learner to learner interaction. Through interaction language learning becomes very easier, because language is a skill. Proficiency on skills depends on practice. Classroom interaction is the most suitable medium for practicing language. Learner gets chance to share what they have learnt. Sharing knowledge helps to gain proficiency and lessens errors. Though interactive class is very effective, from the survey we find that learner to learner interaction is not implemented properly in secondary level in the context of Bangladesh. It is not true for every schools. Some schools are at the peak regarding interaction. But the majority of school are lagging behind.
Fig. 7. Activities in the class room should be changed alternatively so that student do not get bored

Fig. 8. While interacting focus should be made both on grammatical and conversational error so that learner can learn English language correctly

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the survey, we find that learners are facing many problems while interacting. Many issues have come forward. Their areas of problems should be solved as early as possible, otherwise they have to suffer a lot in the long run when they will go for higher education.

To do better in a foreign language students have to work hard. They have to come forward. They have to interact without fear on a regular basis. At first, they will feel shy. They will think about their errors. If they continue talking for few days they personally will feel that they have overcome their problems a lot. Students have to feel that they have to learn English. They have to forget the famous line ‘nothing to say’. They have to identify their personal problems. Most students will not engage in an interaction by themselves unless the teachers start first. Obviously, the role of the teacher is very crucial in motivating and creating interest in the topics. The basis of the communicative approach is this capacity of the teacher to adapt himself, to change roles.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, Participants’ written consent has been collected and preserved by the authors.
COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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