



**Troubleshooting Prospective Problems Associated with the Implementation of  
Communicative Language Teaching in the EFL Context**

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**Troubleshooting Prospective Problems Associated with the Implementation of  
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**ABSTRACT**

In this era of practical language learning, the communicative language teaching (CLT) appears to be the perfect teaching model. The significance of using the CLT increases remarkably in the context of using the language as a medium for communication. The implementation of the communicative approach in teaching English as a foreign language is, however, pervaded with a number of prospective problems that are potential hazards in achieving favorable results. These anticipated issues may affect the learning outcome and make it not as efficient as expected. The current study aims at examining the potential problems that may have a negative impact on communicative language teaching in EFL contexts and the author intends to present the possible solutions for such problems. One of the aims of this study is to promote the consciousness concerning the prospective problems of implementing CLT and present practical solutions to facilitate it for both EFL teachers and learners. In order to efficiently use CLT as one of the most productive teaching methods in EFL, it is essential to provide informed ideas on the successful management of teaching and learning activities.

**Keywords:**

CLT (Communicative Language Teaching), EFL (English as a Foreign Language)



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In the current era of the increasing importance of second language acquisition, based on multiple experiences, numerous new language learning models have been proposed, which consider and discuss the most effective ways for language learners to acquire the forms and structure of a new language. Recently, a major shift has been made towards adopting the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach as many language teachers have come to realize the inadequacy and failure of form-focusing approaches in developing learners' communicative proficiency in real-life situations. According to Hymes (1972), the CLT approach highlights learners' communicative competence. "Communicative competence" is defined as learners' ability to efficiently use the second language to express what they mean and successfully communicate in real-life situations (Lightbown and Spada, 1999; Power, 2003). For this purpose, learners need to acquire both the linguistic and the pragmatic knowledge of the target language in the process of second language learning. (Hedgcock, 2002).

Kasper (1997) believes that possessing both linguistic and pragmatic competence means being able to develop the knowledge and acquire the language through exposure and use of the target language. Richards and Rodgers (2001,155), renowned American and British proponents of the communicative language teaching approach, consider it the most comprehensive approach and the most successful method. They consider this approach very effective in achieving the twofold aim of setting the communicative competence as the goal of language teaching and helping to develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that lead to the interactive use of language and communication.

In fact, the extensiveness and the profound effectiveness of this approach confirm its broader scope and status than any the other approach and method introduced in the field of language learning (Kalanzadeh and Bakhtiarvand, 2011).

The mainstay of the CLT approach is that the teacher should work as a facilitator and try to create a student-centered classroom. Teachers should engage learners in authentic communication and maintain the goal of enhancing comprehensible language input for the language learners and expect them to generate a better outcome. (Huang and Liu, 2000, cited in Norouzi Larsari, 2011). As for the CLT approach, teachers should be encouraged to design learning tasks with clear objectives based on the learners' needs



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analysis and considering the line of benefits for students' acquisition of both the target linguistic and pragmatic knowledge (Chapelle and Hegelheimer, 2004).

Recently, there has been an extensive debate on the application of communicative language teaching (CLT) to English as a Foreign Language (EFL), which goes on to confirm the fact that CLT tries to make the classroom setting learner-centered by making use of effective and authentic interactive learning tasks. It is generally agreed that the application of such tasks enhances both the comprehensible input and the learners' language output. Teachers, however, still find it hard and challenging to implement. They find the approach intriguing but they are still reluctant to adopt the approach and maximize the learning process, especially in the EFL context.

In recent years, there has been a lot of effort to successfully apply CLT to EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts, though, these attempts have often turned out not to be as fruitful compared to its application in ESL contexts (Ellis, 1994, 1996; Shamin, 1996; Valdes & Jhones, 1991). Noteworthy is the fact that in EFL classrooms, although teachers have now progressively implemented approaches which are more focused on meaning and language use, the learning outcomes still do not meet the expectations. The same factor provided a basis for examining the prospective problems and issues reported by the EFL teachers while implementing CLT in EFL context.

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

A detailed literature review of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) reveals that CLT is actually a term referring to a blended use of various approaches. The concept of using a blend of approaches was developed in the middle of 1970s when the use of audio-lingual teaching methods was being increasingly criticized for their disappointing results and insufficient outcome. Most of the critics regarded the audio-lingual teaching method as having a faulty mechanistic nature. This old-fashioned drilling method was unable to prepare the learners for a productive and interactive use of the target language in various everyday situations while the main aim of the communicative approach is to achieve communicative competence (Power, 2003). A lot of research has been done in this field and many theoretical reports have been prepared that discuss the gradual development and application of CLT in EFL contexts. The literature review reveals that the majority of EFL teachers consider it a challenging and demanding method.



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In a study carried out in China, it was observed that teachers found it difficult to implement CLT in their EFL classes (Burnaby and Sun, 1989). Major limitations and problems that were observed were related to the curriculum being very extensive and finding it difficult to relate to CLT, both students and teachers were comfortable with the traditional teaching methods, the number of students per class was high, and the teaching schedules were not consistent with the CLT approach. Availability of resources and equipment was another challenge besides having less efficient teachers who were trained to teach analytical skills rather than communicative techniques. Teachers' incompetence in their spoken English and sociolinguistic and strategic competence were among other issues that caused a major hindrance while applying the CLT to the EFL context.

Another study was conducted by Ghanbari and Ketabi (2011) on pre-university teachers in the Middle East (Iran) regarding the different components of this new curriculum and evaluating the teachers' perceptions, i.e. attitude, methodology, practice, etc. The findings of this study confirmed that certain issues seriously affected the innovative aims of the new curriculum in the EFL context. The most highlighted and significant issues included: less viability, incompatibility of the newly introduced approach with the existing rigid practices, lack of training causing lower confidence among the teachers in implementing the latest approach, negative feedback and criticism from fellow workers, etc.

This fact has been established by further studies in this field which generally confirm that it is greatly challenging for EFL teachers to incorporate CLT in order to achieve the final goal of language teaching. In another study by Chau and Chun (1987), it was observed and concluded that the attitude of educators in Hong Kong towards applying CLT was not that positive and welcoming. It was reported that teachers rarely used CLT because it required long(er) preparation hours and a thorough study in the related field. A similar study in Vietnam reported the class size, a grammar-based testing system, and lack of exposure to the communicative arena as major hindrances in using CLT (Ellis, 1994).

The majority of studies carried out in Asian countries like China, Hong Kong, Japan, Vietnam, Pakistan, Singapore, and the Philippines have reported similar constraints. In these regions, CLT has been used with limited success due to local reasons and



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restrictions as well. A study by Gahin and Mayhill (2001) cited two major barriers in the application of CLT in Egypt. Economic factors constitute the extrinsic barriers, which include low salaries for EFL teachers, lack of available resources in the EFL context, and an unreasonably big number of students per class without suitable facilities.

Intrinsic barriers refer to cultural factors such as passive-student societies and cultures, low motivation for group activities, and less peer support including favoritism and a teacher-centered approach. It was reported by Deckert (2004) that the implementation of CLT in the United Arab Emirates was adversely affected by excessive teacher talking time (TTT) and teacher and students' old-fashioned perceptions about effective English teaching. It is quite evident from frequent observations that unnecessarily prolonged teacher talking time wasted in redundant explanation and error correction hinders students' learning process by giving them less chance to actively participate by using English in an interactive fashion.

This brief overview reflects the fact that the CLT approach is probably the most successful and accepted comprehensive approach to language teaching, however, it is difficult to implement in the EFL context. This study aims to discuss problems considered more universal and frequently occurring in EFL contexts.

### **3. PROSPECTIVE PROBLEMS**

#### **3.1.Lack of intrinsic motivation among EFL learners to learn and communicate in the foreign language**

EFL students have always suffered from a lack of intrinsic motivation since the beginning of the implementation of CLT. This is a clear indication that perhaps EFL teachers confront difficulties in implementing CLT primarily due to their students' low motivation. One reason for this lack of motivation is that EFL students do not actually need to speak English and communicate in this language in their everyday life activities. It has been frequently observed in many studies that in a setting where English is a foreign language, students usually learn with very low intrinsic motivation; English may indeed be considered irrelevant by students because it is not practically used in their everyday life. In contrast, in ESL settings, where English is a second language, students tend to have higher intrinsic motivation because the language is required to be used in their everyday life. In order to be able to survive in a setting where English is a second language, students have no other choice but to learn English as a second language



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because they need to communicate either with others or for their professional needs, e.g. job search or at their workplace. (Adi, 2012).

Motivation will be low without getting exposed to an English-speaking environment mainly due to curricular demands, stress from passing the exams, and academic and professional competition, rather than a demand for communication. Widdowson (1998) and Wei (2011) believe that in teaching the English language, communicative competence is the ultimate goal, though, in practice, there are problems in EFL contexts where English is not learners' everyday life language and they have minimal social interaction with native English speakers in their common life.

Another important issue was brought up by Stern (1992) who deemed the implementation of CLT in an EFL context a difficult process due to the absence of native speakers. This is viewed as a major problem in making classroom learning communicative. Moreover, in the application of CLT, educators encounter many more obstacles in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, due to physical and logistical constraints such as the aim of learning English, the learning setting, teachers' English proficiency level, and the availability of authentic English resources.

In a study in Japan, Sano and Harmer (2001) observed that Japanese students usually were not persistent and inclined to use English because the goal of communicative aptitude seemed too pressing and irrelevant to them. A similar opinion was suggested by Campbell (2004) that ESL learners use the TL (the target language) by default as they have to use it in everyday life to be able to survive in the target culture. On the contrary, EFL learners generally do not have sufficient access to the TL outside of the classroom and they have no option but to use their mother tongue when they return to the real world.

Therefore, in the absence of a strong need, EFL learners will lack motivation and a specific personal interest in speaking English.

### **3.2. CLT teaching methodology in conflict with the structure of placement tests**

In the context of EFL teaching in the Middle East, the structure of the placement test attributes foundation year students a substantial role in determining the teaching methodology and materials used in EFL contexts. The structure of the placement test puts more emphasis on grammatical learning than language knowledge and communication, causing negative effects on the CLT English course. In fact, the



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structure of the placement test has a significant role in the entire teaching program. Most of the students entering the foundation year program face problems in actual language learning because the system of language learning in high school education only encourages the students to pass the university entrance exam. The same system somehow encourages the teachers to focus more on grammatical and reading skills rather than the actual communication skills. Another problem is that students study English just in order to pass the exam. A mindset has long developed among learners to exclusively look for specific learning items in the textbook and expect their teachers to only target the material at hand.

In most EFL teaching cultures, entrance exams, which have a strong impact on determining the course of students' professional career, have become the focal point of education. Most of the students and their teachers are mainly, and exclusively, interested in the notion of the test, focusing all their energies on the style and techniques of answering the questions as they are expected to be answered. Majority of these exams are mere assessment tools that fail to develop an art of communicative ability and have a negative effect on the CLT methodology (Poza, n.d.).

### **3.3. Cultural incompatibility of the CLT with EFL**

One of the major impediments in implementing the CLT is the incompatibility of this approach with the socio-cultural context. The local culture is often considered a barrier to developing a communicative form of English learning with the EFL background. An advanced language teaching method has more chances of being accepted if it is compatible with the prevailing standards and norms (Lamie, 2004). In implementing CLT in the process of foreign language learning, most of the teachers and policymakers seem more inclined to consider certain expectations related to their pedagogical roles and goals as a guide for the local culture (Talebinezhad & Aliakbari, 2001). The secret but inevitable hypothesis here is that the expressive and accurate use of language is always intertwined with cultural boundaries and specific tones of the culture.

In EFL learning, the local cultural and the general cultural trend of the EFL classroom/textbook are often in contrast with one another, and, at the same time, the teaching standards and teaching techniques used in classes are not compatible with each other, which often leads to unrewarding and unfavorable results. It has also been observed in various EFL contexts that the teacher is not promoted as a facilitator but as



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a source of knowledge whose job is to just channel the required information without determining the learners' needs. According to Holliday (1994), this leads to putting an immense amount of pressure on students and under such circumstances the students only struggle to attain the basic language information instead of actual learning taking place.

The same opinion was put forward by Edge (1996) who believes that under such cultural restraints, a teacher-centered teaching approach is actually supported and appreciated by the society and the overall cultural framework. In EFL contexts, this culturally supported concept of teacher authority as the only source of knowledge is the only approved style of teaching and learning. Such a rigid, teacher-centered, unfriendly, and unproductive classroom environment is definitely seen as a strange phenomenon by the average language learner from the western culture, but it is a norm in a traditional society. In such cultures, a hierarchical concept regulates the nature of teacher-student collaboration, which is supported by mutual respect and care. As Chowdhury (2010) stated, the culture outside the classroom and the culture inside the classroom may be absurdly in harmony. Biggs (1997) mentions "the inside/outside classroom rules" of students' participation in the class. According to him, in traditional societies, students' talking is supposed to be done "outside" and is considered inappropriate when inside the classroom. This type of approach, which is authoritarian in nature, just focuses on the specific outcome and the teacher-centered tradition is in discord with the CLT methodology (Liu, 1998; Zhenhui, 2000).

According to Liao (2004), in Asian cultures, the teacher is considered the magnetic field of the classroom who should be in full control and revered. It is considered an imperative for students to listen to the teacher submissively without any participation. In reality, however, this teacher-centered approach hinders actual communication taking place in the classroom and prevents the application of CLT in such contexts. In this type of formal setting, there is a rigid and less productive relationship between the teacher and the student where the teacher is only considered a superior and the most powerful figure whereas students sit silently as observers who must follow and accept the teacher's speech. Such a rigid and one-way communicative procedure where students are not allowed to interrupt, should only respond when asked, and should speak in a flat



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and low tone makes it further difficult for communicative connections to develop in the language learning process.

Another important issue is that different learners have different learning styles. Contradictory results have been reported of these learning styles, either as the successful implementation of communicative language learning or a full buffer state for learners without any learning taking place. For example, Zhenhui (2001), in his description of the concept of matching Teaching Styles with Learning Styles in Asian cultural contexts, states that the majority of students expect that knowledge should be transmitted by the teacher rather than acquired by the learners by their own effort. These cultural restrictions hinder the communicative competence of students and reduce the chances of acquired learning taking place.

It is evident from the above discussion that the cause of lesser learning is not exclusively related to the competence of students, but to the cultural alignment and the academic setting as well. In some cultures, students consider the teacher as the ultimate source of information and if they do not prove their role in accordance with the set parameters, it is considered that the teacher does not have sufficient knowledge about the subject. According to Chowdhury (2010), it is also the family systems in such cultures that reinforce the concept of considering the teacher as the ultimate guardian and linchpin of the classroom who would anchor the learning process and give all correct answers to students' questions and queries.

### **3.4.Lack of adequate training courses and professional development for the teachers**

It is an undeniable fact that teachers play a crucial role in the progress and development of the educational system and curriculum. The prerequisite for this productive role is to provide vigorous effective and organized training courses for teachers in order to equip them for the progressive mode of development. During the course of change, the process of awareness raising is a vital issue. In enabling and empowering teachers to play their important role in the process of change and innovation of the educational development, it is integral to provide them with better facilities in their teacher training courses. With the help of such training courses, teachers get groomed for self-reflection and contemplation (Lamie, 2004). Teachers in many EFL classes are not required to obtain any specific TESOL certification or training in the field of linguistics. To



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overcome this, the introduction of in-service teacher training courses along with exposure to conferences, workshops, and seminars can be a practical and viable measure. It has been observed that teachers learn on the spot with a better practical approach when exposed to multiple and diverse teaching practices.

The concept of change theory is well supported by the hypothesis that change is an excruciating process (Fullan, 1991; Pinar, 1999). Teachers' dislike and inconvenience with the extrinsic challenges to induce change is completely normal (Goh, 1999). This kind of attitude must be dealt with without any negative feedbacks by providing collaboration and guidance (Fullan, 1991; Hadley, 1999). A similar idea was put forward by Easen (1985, p.71) who believes that freshly induced change in the system cannot be brought about without introducing the concept of self-change on individual level. Li (2001) suggests that, in order to have a permanent and sustainable change, those teachers who are part of the process should be provided with consistent support, otherwise they start losing their interest. The same point was further confirmed by Carless (1999, p.23) who believes that appropriate and ongoing professional development and training is indispensable to teachers who are initially eager to change and support the new innovative ideas. The need for a system of continuous support is crucial because these teachers might get exasperated by unexpected problems and obstacles in the process of implementation and eventually start hating the new change and, by the same token, the system. Teachers who are skilled at, and comfortably accustomed to, the conventional method of language teaching, when required to follow a new communicative method of teaching, might get irritated. In addition, such a sudden shift disturbs their current style and leads to the implementation of odd traditional assertiveness in their teaching pattern (Ghanbari and Ketabi, 2011).

Another issue is having a very limited number of in-house professional development courses in the EFL context and also the lack of interest and motivation in teachers, as they are not willing to attend such events. Most of the ongoing in-house training programs offered are actually derived from those EFL backgrounds that are mainly rooted in western cultures and follow their own practical approaches and goals. These programs are not designed particularly according to the ground realities of specific EFL backgrounds. Therefore, such programs should be handpicked and procured from the



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programs based on the western culture and then used in accordance with the local needs that promote the suggested change.

### **3.5. Effective interactive and bridging skills for EFL teachers**

In CLT, it is imperative to involve learners in more reliable, realistic, and collaborative tasks that promote both coherent involvement by the learners and practical language output. It is a given that learners are able to enhance their language skills through receiving more practice opportunities that help them acquire an output that meets certain standards. The designed activities or tasks for students' pair or group discussion provide sufficient chance for student-centered and student-orientated discussions. This fact has been confirmed by many researchers who support pair and group discussions for students in order to enhance their interactive skills (Crandall, 1994; Echevarria, Vogt & Short 2004; Glaudini Rosen & Sasser, 1997; Grabe & Stoller, 1997). However, generating the accurate interaction pattern with the perfect strategy for language acquisition is probably the most challenging task before teachers. In such situations, only a limited number of learners actually participate in discussions and show interest whereas the majority of students just act as passive listeners without any participation. It is also a noteworthy fact that even when the interested participants actually interact, their participation level does not meet the required standards. This causes dissatisfaction and the interaction pattern does not bear any significant results.

Pica (1988) believes that the actual coherent and understandable interaction output rarely meets the required level. This type of state with no logical productivity and comprehensible output is more frequent in an EFL context where the majority of interactions are confined to learner-learner interactions and learners are not supervised or guided by the teacher.

In linguistics, achieving productive and comprehensible output is difficult. As Krashen (1994) stated, meeting the hypothetical standards of an interactive pattern could be a quite rare phenomenon. It is a big challenge for EFL teachers to maintain the level of interaction pattern to achieve the required comprehensible output level. Furthermore, forcing a learner to participate in an interactive discussion can have a severe impact on their performance. Sometimes this leads to fatal psychological states and the learner starts avoiding interactive learning situations. As reported by Young (1990), when students were questioned about the most difficult and stress-inducing skill in an EFL



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classroom, the majority reported the “speaking skill”. In Laughrin-Sacco’s study (1992), ‘speaking’ was singled out as the top anxiety-causing task almost for all students (p. 314). In the process of foreign language learning, almost all skills can induce stress and anxiety, but it is listening and speaking which are commonly reported as major anxiety-inducing skills. (Horwitz; Horwitz; Cope, 1986; MacIntyre, Gardner, 1994).

### **3.6. The practice of CLT approach as a challenging factor for the EFL teachers**

EFL teachers face more difficulties when implementing the communicative approach because this approach is more demanding and requires meeting certain standards. This factor brings EFL teachers under pressure and they show reluctance towards practicing the communicative approach. As suggested by Medgyes (1986), CLT is a more demanding approach for EFL teachers as compared to other frequently used approaches. The reason for this might be that CLT is a student-centered approach in nature, thus causing more stress and demanding more and making most teachers feel easy staying in their comfort zone while practicing the conventional teacher-centered approaches. The application of CLT approach requires teachers to dedicate more time for preparation before and after their lesson. Teachers have to go to their classes fully prepared as the lessons with such approach are more interactive and less predictable. Teachers should also be prepared to confront all types of comments and questions from learners. In such classes, teachers are expected to be ready to listen to the learners as much as they want to talk and they should forget about their tone of speech. In the CLT approach, teachers should have full control over classroom management skills so that a more student-centered class, rather than a teacher-dominated one, is achieved.

Moreover, non-native speakers of English definitely struggle more to acquire a higher proficiency level of the language. Their proficiency skills should be promoted according to the required standards. Another challenge is that non-native teachers are usually schooled in the audio-lingual approach, a method with such an amalgamated methodology that it makes it difficult for teachers to set themselves free from its limitations, consequently making interactive learning more difficult and more challenging.



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### **3.7. Additional constraints and challenges**

Many EFL teachers have pointed out the “muddled” nature of the classes while implementing the CLT approach as they find themselves hardly able to handle the student-centered free practice environment. As a matter of fact, since a learning process with a more interactive approach demands the explanation of the structure and the meaning of lexical items and necessitates patterns of interaction for the discussions and the sharing of ideas, it can certainly induce “chaos” if not managed properly. It has been observed that with the interactive approach, student talking time is maximized and normally the classroom scenario is more active while doing such activities, with students shuffled and moving around in order to complete a task (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). This type of setting may be unsettling for any teacher who believes in a conventional style of teaching because the interactive activity would cause noise and physical movement in class. The same point is suggested by Strelec (2010) who believes that students, while working in groups and pairs, share materials and move in and out of peer interactions that could easily result in having a messed up and noisy classroom. Most EFL teachers and learners find it challenging as noisy and messy classrooms are disturbing for them. In addition, the situation becomes more demanding when the number of students in a class is more than expected.

Another important factor that should not be neglected is that in some cases non-native English Language teachers are themselves not fully fluent in the language. It is quite evident that this creates a bigger problem when such teachers are teaching language with a learning outcome of having students speak fluently and comprehensively (Poza, n.d.). Such teachers fail to set the level of students’ competence and eventually they fail to respond to the situation accordingly and set a successful learner-centered teaching scenario. In order to overcome it, teachers must reduce their teacher talking time and, instead, introduce more activities for learners’ comprehensive spoken and written language output. Teachers, as a rule, feel more comfortable taking the control of the class and getting into more of a lecture method and mode, especially when students are not fully proficient in their use of the English language, however, such students should actually be given more opportunities to practice the language by giving them student-centered activities (Echevarria et al. 2004).



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Giving positive and constructive feedback is also an effective policy for such teachers so that they can get support for having adopted an innovative method for language teaching. By getting negative remarks, their motivation level descends, and so does the level of constructive and interactive activities in the classroom. This eventually drops the standard of interactive teaching., On the other hand, giving positive feedback for any induced change would boost the persistence of the change process.

### **4. SOLUTIONS TO EXPECTED CHALLENGES**

#### **4.1. Introduction of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC)**

In the EFL context, having limited opportunities to use the target language inside and outside the classroom settings is the biggest problem in language learning for learners. It negatively affects learners' communicative needs and reduces their motivation level. However, learners' learning standards and communication patterns can be changed successfully by introducing the computer-mediated communication technology (Leh, 1999; Cheon, 2003). By introducing CMC to the language teaching methodology, learners' interaction pattern can be improved and made more productive. According to the supporters of this notion, (Blake, 2000; Blin, 1999; Leh, 1999; Warschauer, 1997), introducing CMC into EFL classrooms can help teachers promote and implement better and more productive interaction patterns. By using CMC tools both inside and outside the classroom, learners' language learning skills can be enhanced with less effort and in less time. The Internet has transformed the concept of learning without limitations of space and time as learners are provided with opportunities to communicate and learn in collaborative settings with the other learners anywhere anytime (Kern, 1996; Shield and Weininger, 2004). Learners are fully supported by the Internet and CMC techniques as they are no longer restricted to intricate passive listening practices anymore. CMC techniques help them to participate actively in more interactions in various chat and discussion groups. They can easily communicate in real life situations by posting statuses and writing and replying to emails from their phones. It is very practical for the learners of today's digital era to easily join online chatrooms and exchange ideas. These days, with CMC, the concept of learning has evolved to a non-stop learning process without time constraints. This idea is supported by many researchers (Blake, 2000; Campbell, 2004, Leh, 1999, Lightbown and Spada, 1999). The new era of learning, which helps and promotes learners in authentic social interactions, can significantly



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involve them in the direct use of the target language and enable them to practice what they recently learned as an in-class task.

It should also be taken into consideration that CMC techniques can support the actual language process but cannot act as the main source of learning. Learners definitely need in-class guidance by the teachers who should help the learners and instruct them to use CMC techniques. This idea has been supported by many researchers who have contributed a lot to computer-assisted language learning (CALL). They fully support the integration of CMC into EFL learning and consider it a kind of support to provide learners with reliable input and more chance to use the target language in socio-cultural contexts, in which both language learning and the practical use is equally promoted. Furthermore, there are other aspects that are supported by CMC: learners' motivation level can be enhanced, learner autonomy can be supported, and social and individual participation can be increased. Also, learners who are interested in learning the language using a more realistic, authentic, and practical approach should definitely be encouraged to use CMC as a support tool inside and outside the classroom. This would definitely help them to boost their learning level and develop their communicative competence significantly.

### **4.2.Learners' needs analysis for realistic and practical learning**

EFL learners usually have different purposes from their learning activities. They learn English to enhance their language skills and reach their specific life goals. For the majority of learners, language learning is needed only to pass the university entrance tests where passing English is mandatory. It is important to understand, and make it equally understood to the learners, that this is not a good and legitimate reason for learning a language. It is incumbent upon the policymakers and educators to change this mindset and offer learners more realistic and authentic goals for language learning, as most of them still need to use English in their future careers. To make this happen and provide learners with better and more realistic goals, there is a need to modify teaching materials and teaching patterns based on their specific needs. Research should be done following needs analysis. Data collection from professionals in various fields on the advantages of using English language in their careers can help set goals for the novice learners. At the same time, learners themselves should be instructed to look for more reasons to support their language learning with more intrinsic motivation (Poza,



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n.d.). As a common practice, implementing realistic needs analysis is a basic requirement for goal setting after identifying learners' needs and real life expectations.

### **4.3.Ongoing teacher-training process**

Ongoing training is essential for both novice and experienced EFL teachers. These training opportunities provide a platform for the professional development and the improvement of skills for teachers. Professional training for teachers contributes to the continuous progress and development of the language program and offers them a chance to improve their skills, share ideas, and learn from each other. These trainings can be in-house or, if supported by related organizations, can come from authentic training bodies. Organizations need to take serious measures and do concrete planning in order to provide development opportunities by attending training sessions on a regular basis. All different types of training programs, including in-service teacher training courses and opportunities to attend international or national conferences and workshops, can significantly contribute to the training of EFL teachers. These measures help teachers deal with teaching scenarios with a more innovative mindset and using multiple methods. Educational organizations should plan these training sessions to enable teachers to have sufficient time and support to be trained and ultimately play a positive and constructive role in the learning process. Furthermore, in the recruitment of new staff, organizations should prioritize teachers with a better training profile, valid TESOL qualifications, and strong spoken skills.

### **4.4.Planning and implementation of teaching methods compatible with the local EFL context**

Adopting CLT has become a big challenge for EFL teachers due mainly to its western origins, which contradicts with many local EFL contexts and cultural settings. Regardless of its main perception as an approach exclusively for EFL situations, CLT is believed to be more appropriate for ESL situations (Ellis; 1994, 1996; Shamin, 1996; Valdes & Jhones, 1991). Edge (1996:18) suggested that instead of blindly following the CLT teaching methodology and adopting materials that are generated, controlled, and circulated by Western ESL markets, EFL countries should try to have their own research commissions and encourage methodology specialists and classroom teachers to develop their own culturally suitable language teaching methods. This strategy would help them to teach English language by using the methodology that is consistent with



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their own political, economic, social, and cultural factors. They should also develop appropriate teaching methods that respond to learner needs, are easy to manage by the teachers, and are socially acceptable in their prospective societies (Kalanzadeh and Bakhtiarvand, 2011).

EFL teachers from such cultural backgrounds, when they adopt CLT and if they are trained well, can adjust their teaching methodology with local learners according to the specific learning situation. It should also be taken into account that CLT should not be regarded as a cure-all to methodology related problems in teaching language in the EFL context. CLT is not a problem fixing framework but more of an approach that helps to facilitate language teaching by using interactive methods and more student involvement. As suggested by Blake (2000), due to learners' varying learning styles, and multiple learning contexts when CLT is applied in such situations, the idea of its adaptation and innovation is inevitable. According to Li, the application of CLT is not distinct and practiced within vigilant perimeters (1998). He suggests the EFL countries should adapt to this methodology, rather than adopt it without modifications, according to their local cultural needs, helping to meet learner needs after identifying the local constraints.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

The author's main goal in the present study was to overview the literature and discuss the solutions to the problems that could cause a major failure in communicative language teaching in EFL contexts. This paper focused on finding possible solutions for such problems. The following key problems were identified: lack of compatibility of the CLT approach with university entrance exams and tests, cultural constraints in EFL contexts, and needs analysis for EFL learners and their motivation. It was found that, in contrast to other language teaching methods and approaches, it is more challenging to design and implement CLT activities as this puts extra pressure on EFL teachers. In addition to its challenging implementation process, assessment for the CLT approach appears to be more difficult for EFL teachers, as they are generally accustomed to using straightforward assessment procedures. Since the difficulties in employing CLT seems to demand a lot of effort and challenging EFL cultural contexts in many countries hinder the process of language learning, it is concluded that such problems need to be resolved if CLT is to be effectively executed in EFL contexts with modifications. An awareness strategy to familiarize oneself with these problems and find solutions can



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provide EFL teachers and learners with a productive perception and many ideas. These ideas would help learners and teachers to manage these challenges and, if necessary, adapt their teaching and learning activities to the effective execution of this method.

Like almost all studies done in the field of language teaching with EFL contexts, the present study was also carried out while taking into account both the ideas of the proponents of the method and the cultural values of various EFL contexts. In other contexts, implementing CLT would have some other problems and possible solutions that, for reasons of space, were not discussed here deliberately.

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