

Constraints Faced by Teachers in Conducting CLT Based Activities at Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Level in Rural Areas of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present research is to find out constraints English language teachers face in conducting CLT based activities at Secondary School Certificate (SSC) level in the rural areas of Pakistan and how much these constraints affect English language learning. The population for the present research consists of 20 teachers (male and female) of govt. and private schools of Tehsil Fort Abbas, District Bahawal Nagar. The data have been collected from the teachers through a semi-structured interview and a close-ended questionnaire. A semi structured interview of 05 teachers is conducted to take idea about their concept of CLT, its implementation and difficulties in conducting the CLT based activities. A close ended questionnaire consisting of 10 questions is designed on a 4-point Likert scale to have an idea about the constraints in applying CLT in the classrooms and have been given to 20 teachers who are teaching at SSC level. The data collected have been analyzed qualitatively as descriptive analysis and quantitatively in the forms of graphs, tables, frequencies and percentages by using MS Office software. The findings show that the teachers face constraints in applying CLT like impact of mother tongue of the students, large size of class, shortage of time, poor supportive home environment, lack of interest and motivation, lack of oral examination. It is suggested that the teachers should work honestly and professionally to enhance the communicative competence of the students and the govt. should provide the basic facilities so that CLT can be carried out in a finer manner in the ESL classes.

Keywords: CLT, GTM, oral communicative activities, constraints, SSC level, rural areas, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Grammar Translation Method (GTM) remained dominated for many decades but in 1950s and 60s it was replaced by Audio Lingual Method (ALM) for better oral proficiency which was achieved very little through GTM. Drill practice and repetition by native speaking teachers was dominated but a point of criticism was that this method failed to achieve learners to become good competent speakers. So, a set of alternative approaches and methods as Total Physical Response (TPR), The Natural Approach, The Silent Way and Suggestopedia were implemented but during 1970s and 80s Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was kept evolving and becoming defined. CLT is based upon theory that primary purpose of language use is communication as Hymes (1972) has described its foremost purpose that is to develop communicative competency in a learner.

It is generally accepted that CLT appeared in 1970s but it was followed in Pakistan in text book under education policy of 2006 up to secondary level. It is proclaimed in English language book that its aim is to promote oral proficiency and activities given at the end of each unit have focus to develop oral communication. These activities are designed to develop communication skill and these are in form of role play, discussion, dialogue, conversation and

in form of preparing presentation in class. But it is observed that these activities are not conducted efficiently in classes. It is observed that many 20-25 years experienced teachers have no perception and believe of CLT, and have given excuses for not conducting these activities as use of mother tongue in English language class, large class size and student's oral deficiency so, teachers do not make much effort and simply ignore them. The newly recruited teachers have a little concept in CLT, its principles, teaching strategies and they concentrate to apply these principles in the classroom but but these activities are not attaining success because there are many constraints which act as hurdles in conducting these CLT based activities.

This paper has presented the constraints which teachers have to face in conducting CLT based activities at Secondary School Certificate (SSC) level in rural areas of Pakistan. Newly recruited Punjab teachers have pre-service training, are eager to learn and apply pedagogical techniques to improve teaching methodologies (Lynd, 2007). And our prescribed English text books also have Oral Communication activities based on CLT. But question here is about what are the factors teachers have to face in conducting CLT based activities at SSC level in rural areas of Pakistan. And instead of paying concentration on oral communication and focus on oral communication activities why students do not show understanding during evaluation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In mid-1960s, the British linguists began to criticize theoretical assumptions underlying Situational language teaching (SLT) which considers language teaching only by following meaningful situation based activities. SLT focuses on study of language itself and utterance carried meanings in themselves and focus on meanings and intentions of speakers and writers (Howatt, 1984). An American linguist Noam Chomsky (1957) criticized SLT because it ignores the fundamental characteristics of language that is creativity and uniqueness of individual sentence. The British linguists criticized that it also ignores functional and communicative potential of language.

So it needed to focus on CLT that is based on developing communicative skills of learners instead of only mastery of structure and construction of language. CLT expanded on 1970s and considered it an approach which concerns with language goal that is to develop communicative competency of learner and to set the strategies for teaching language skills. It is more than structural and integration of grammatical and functional teaching. CLT is to pay attention on both aspects of language that are functional and structural (Littlewood, 1981).

Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983, cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001) has described salient features of CLT that in CLT meanings are considered important and pronunciation is required, purpose of language learning is learning effective communication, primary goal is to develop communicative competence and mother tongue and translation can use if required to proceed learning process. Fluency is considered important rather than accuracy and acceptable language is goal created often through trial and error. It is usually offered as 'learning by doing' and 'the experience approach' (Hilgard and Bower, 1966).

CLT was developed by works of British applied linguist such as Halliday (1970) and Widdowson (1972) and by Canale and Swain (1980). CLT has suggested learner role to contribute as much as he gain and there by learner in independent way (Rodgers 2001) and highlighted the teacher role as facilitator, a negotiator and learner. Activities in CLT are carried in small groups Larssen and Freman(2001).

In short CLT's mainly focus is (a) to develop communicative competence (b) to develop communicative skills through interaction between student-student and student-teacher (c) to motivate learner to participate in communication and minimum effective talking of teacher.

CLT world wide

Many ELT scholars (Munby,1978; Widdowson,1978; Littlewood,1981; Johnson,1982; Brumfit,1984; Yalden,1987; Nunan,1989; Berns,1990; Lee&VanPatten,1995; as cited in Richards & Rogers, 2001) have regarded CLT an idealist approach. The following researches has presented that ELT countries faced many difficulties in implementing CLT in their education system.

In Vietnam Ellis (1994) has recognized difficulties with deeply rooted traditional teachers who didn't have any knowledge about target culture which was incompatible with the Vietnamese culture and education system.

Gorsuch (2000) investigated that in Japan teachers are demanded by students to prepare them for university entrance examination. Another difficulty is traditional way of teaching and not using target language in classrooms.

Burnaby and Sun (1989) have presented the difficulties in China including the untrained teachers, traditional way of teaching, unavailability of necessary materials, large class size and wider range of curriculum etc.

Mustafa (2001) has mentioned difficulties in Indonesia as teacher's lack of English language proficiency, time limits for student's social interaction in the classrooms, large classrooms, examination form, absence of good authentic learning material and lack of speaking English outside the language classrooms.

Kirk Patrick (1984) mentioned difficulties in Singapore in form of grammar-based English language syllabus (cited in Li, 1998).

Gonzale (1985) found difficulties in Philippine that it is irrelevant to needs of Philippines who do not use it (cited in Karim, 2004).

Khalid (2011) has presented difficulties in Bangladesh as time limit, unwillingness of students, large class size, lack teacher training and no support from administration.

Li (1998) identified difficulties of South Korean in form of four factors as the teachers (deficiency of teacher's spoken English and misconception of CLT), the learner (lack in speaking skill, hesitation and less motivation to speak), the education system (large size of class, unavailability of effective materials and no exams for oral proficiency) by CLT itself (lack in proper and authentic assessment instruments).

Pakistani Context

Shamin (1996) has presented the barriers for innovation of CLT in Pakistan that is learner's resistance and Hamid (2007) has found in PSBS by analyzing course contents, teaching methodology, innovation and relating students need.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Mixed methodology has been used for finding out results. Questionnaires were selected for tool of data collection as Warrey & Bloomer (2006) has mentioned its importance for conveying a lot of people in many different locations. Questionnaires consisted of close ended questions that make it easier and quicker to fill in. Questionnaire A was designed to conduct a semi structure interview in order to analyze teacher's perception of general principle about CLT based activities, their inclination, and technique to imply CLT in English language classes and what should be done in order to improve condition. Questionnaire B was designed to discuss how much constraints affect conducting CLT based activities at SSC level in rural areas of Pakistan.

20 teachers were selected as research population from 10 elementary and secondary (boys & girls) schools of Tehsil Fort Abbas, district Bahawal Nagar. For interview 5 teachers were selected and interviews were taken separately because it was not becoming feasible to gather them at one spot. For interview their bio data was also given. This paper was in context of those teachers who had a little knowledge about CLT and have intention to conduct these oral communication activities given in the SSC level English language text book.

Research Context

Teachers have good academic qualification and they are facilitated with pre service and in-service training to make them efficient and effective source of education. The recommended Books in Punjab are based on CLT and in these books oral communication activities are given at the end of each unit. These activities include oral presentation, role play, discussion, conversation and dialogues, which are conducted in pair work or group work.

Though teachers are efficient, trained and eager to apply teaching strategies and to conduct these activities but problem is that there are many constraints that act as hurdle in conducting these activities and successful results cannot be achieved. These constraints are created from the student's side in view of participant teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Current study was conducted to answer the following questions:

1. What perception do the participating teachers have about principles of CLT and CLT based activities?
2. What types of CLT based activities do the Text books contain?
3. What are the constraints teachers have to face and how much these effect in conducting CLT based activities at secondary level in rural areas of Pakistan?

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

20 teachers have been selected from Government schools (boys & girls) and private schools of Tehsil Fort Abbas, district Bahawal Nagar. Participant teachers were qualified at least M.A and also have professional degree B.Ed or M.Ed. These teachers also have a little knowledge about CLT. In professional education and pre-service and in service training they were trained how to conduct oral communication activities. Our 15 to 20 years' experience teachers have misconception of CLT, lack of oral proficiency and they only concentrate on success in examination. They only focus on vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing. The participant teachers have fresh knowledge and well trained and also have 6 to 8 years' experience. Data received from bio data questionnaire through the following diagram.

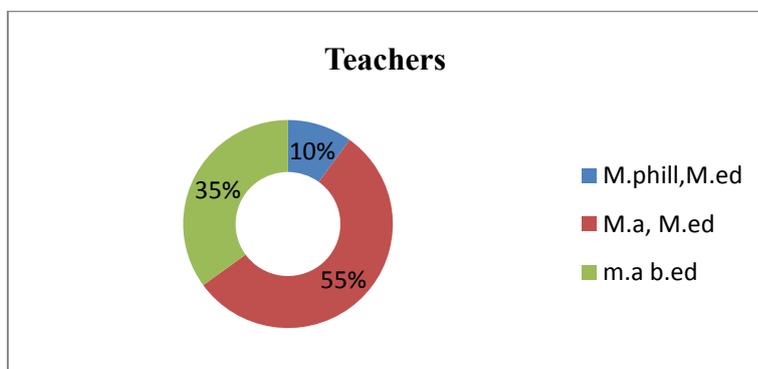


Figure 1: Qualification of the teachers

CLT is implemented in our education system under the National Text Book and Learning Material Policy 2007. Our SSC level English language Text Book has focus on all four skills of language learning as Sahu (2004) has asserted that a book which covers all four language skills would be helpful in student’s involvement in learning. Our Text Books contains CLT based oral communicative activities as oral presentation, role play, dialogues, conversation and discussion on topic etc.

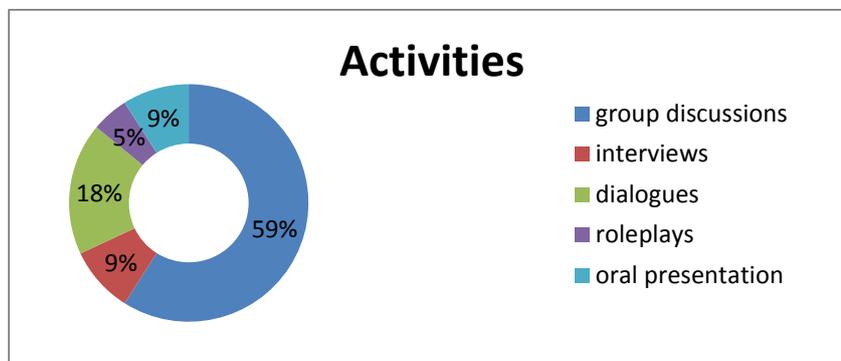


Figure 2: Types of activities in CLT

The Open-ended Questionnaire

Teachers were questioned about their concepts about CLT, purpose or scope of CLT based activities, their focused strategies to conduct these activities and suggestion to improve it. Qualification of selected teachers for interview is M. Phil (A, B). M.A, M.Ed (C, D, E). All the teachers have more than 6 years’ experience.

Teacher A: CLT means verbal interaction of learner with teacher and with other students and purpose of these activities is to promote learner’s oral proficiency. He motivates students continuously during class and asks them to response in English even in low structured sentences. He tries to make student confident in speaking English. CLT is learner centered but in our classes teachers have to interfere continuously in order to encourage them to speak. He also uses L1 in class if needed to continue the lecture. Teacher should try to motivate learners to speak in English though in simple sentence.

Teacher B: CLT means to communicate in English and oral communication activities focus on learners speaking. She deliver lecture in English and encourage learners to speak or involve in discussion in English during lessons. In our class it is teacher centered because teachers have to complete lesson in time. She uses L1 for learners understanding. Students should be encouraged to involve in discussion in English learning class.

Teacher C: CLT is about to develop communication ability and activities are to develop learner’s speaking in English. He tries to motivate students to speak in English and answer or discuss in English during English language class. In their class rooms learners do not take part in conversation and activities so, teachers have to speak more than learners to complete work in time. He uses L1 if learners do not have clear concept or in order to continue task. Teacher should motivate learners to speak in English even if a few sentences daily.

Teacher D: CLT means to communicate in English and activities are designed to develop this ability. She continuously asks students different questions to develop their speaking. In our class it is still teacher centered because students do not speak progressively. She uses L1 to continue the lecture. Teacher should speak in English and ask students to reply in English.

Teacher E: CLT means to communicate in English and activities are to develop learners English speaking. She involves her students in speaking English. It is teacher centered in our

class because teachers have to speak continuously because students feel shy and hesitate in speaking English. She uses L1 because students have not effective English listening capability and become passive listeners. Teacher should involve class in English discussion and ask simple questions to develop speaking.

Analysis of Effects of Constrains

Questionnaires were delivered to teachers and in the light of their experience data were collected and analyzed as explained below.

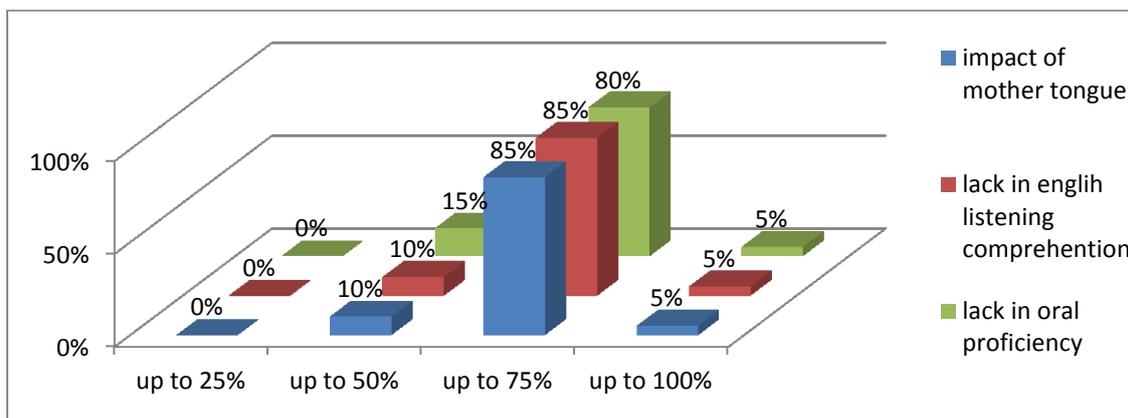


Figure 3: Role of mother tongue, lack in listening comprehension , and oral proficiency

85% response by teachers was that students found it convenient to speak their mother tongue rather than speaking in English and its effects on conducting communication activity up to 70%. If lecture is delivered in Punjabi they response quickly it means problem is not with their understanding but with listening comprehension in English. During lecture in English they do not seems attentive, act passively and lack in quick thinking. 90% teachers have remarked that lack in listening comprehension has affected oral communication activity up to 75%. Morley (1991) has asserted that listening has a critical role in communication and in second language acquisition. Lack in effective listening comprehension would affect their making concepts clear about topic, speaking, reading and writing. 80% opinion is that in oral communication activities oral proficiency is affected because students in rural areas cannot speak in English and if they are motivated to speak they utter a few low structured sentences. They feel and hesitate to speak in English as Swain has suggested that they should speak in English. Nunan (1991) has asserted that student should be motivated to speak because success in any target language is carried out through conversation and communication capability.

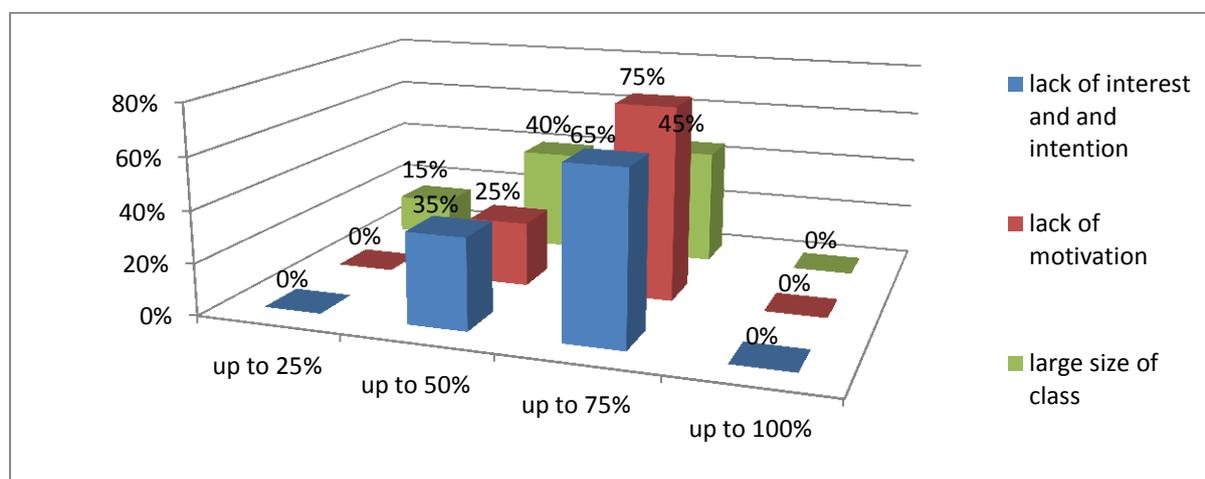


Figure 4: Role of interest and intention, motivation, class size as constrains

Another fact is student’s lack of interest. Student’s interest, intention, self determination, curiosity and feeling of competition act as driver to converse and communicate in English. 65% response has shown that student’s interest has up to 75% affect in oral communication because they consider no advantage economically with it related to their peasant culture. Motivation has up to 75% effect in response of 75% teachers. David has considered it a desire that serves to energize behavior and direct it toward a goal and Homer in his book English Language Teaching called motivation a driver in order to achieve something. A constraint which has effect on conducting oral communicative activity is class size. Teachers found it difficult to manage the strategies accordingly provided instruction because students tough having many years experience are counted as at initial stage. For those students in a limited time having a large class the efficiency of oral communicative activities is affected as60% of teachers has mentioned this effect up to 50%.

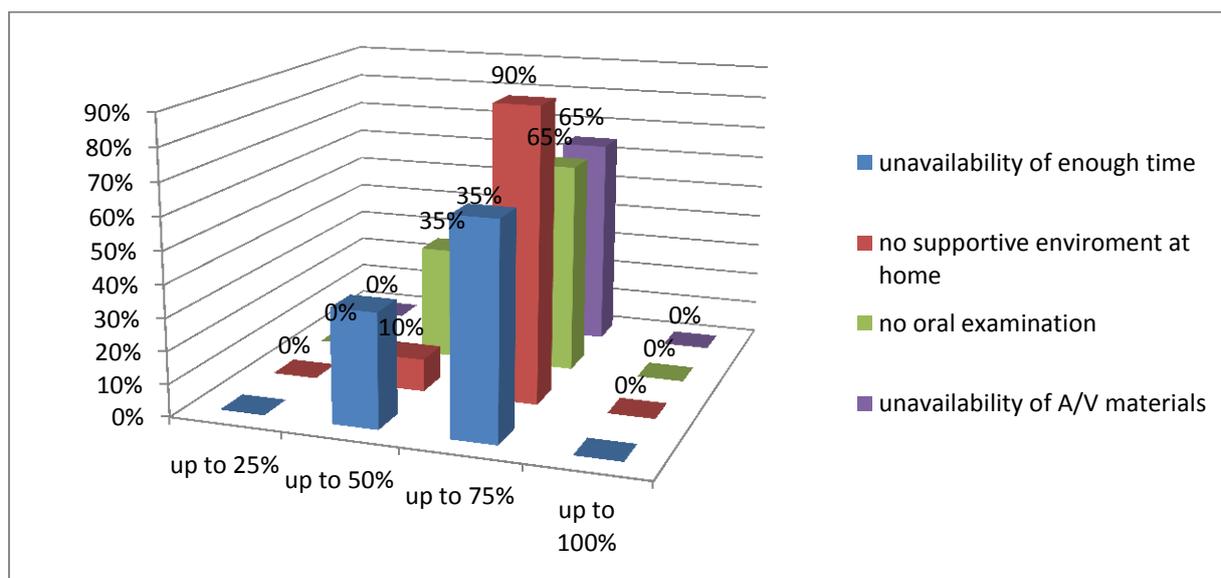


Figure 5: Role of constrains like time, home environment, no oral exam, A/V aids

Teachers have to face time limitation in those classes because teachers have to complete their task in provided time and students have only this time to have social interaction with class so, in those areas this affect up to 75% in view of 65% teachers. Teachers are the only source who facilitate students at required level because they are not provided educational environment for practice and pertain at their home and society out of class. So, this effects on efficiency of oral communication up to 75% in view of 90% of teachers. Students do not get English speaking environment and educational background enough to speak in English out of class and depend only on English language teachers. Examination pattern is also considered in these constraints because our exams do not have any focus on oral pattern. So, our students neglect oral practice and pay attention on other contents that get them high marks in examination. Students do not take pain to become efficient speaker because they do not have any threat of being evaluated in exams. So in 65% of teacher’s response it is up to 75%. Unavailability of material is also a constraint because audio and video materials act as additional and affective in put in speaking. These provide modal for practice and repetition. These audio materials help them to focus on pronunciation, stress, intonation, accent, accuracy and fluency. And video materials are affected in the sense that they provide facial expressions, gestures and pastures. This effect up to 75% in response of 65% of teachers because of financial reasons students are not provided with other electronic devices as computer and internet facility etc.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

These oral communicative activities are not efficiently conducted in classrooms of rural areas of Pakistan and based on the data analysis it is observed that these constraints have affected up to 75%. Interference of mother tongue, lack in effective listening skill and oral proficiency are hurdles in involving discussion and speaking during these activities. Learners have less interest in speaking English and low motivation as concerning to peasant culture they have intention to follow their parent's occupation and they do not consider speaking English beneficial for them. Teachers have mentioned that because of large class size it is not easy to focus or to motivate each student to speak English. Teachers do not have sufficient time available in class for learners to communicate and interact with other students and also they have no appropriate environment to motivate them in speaking English. Teachers have described another problem that as there are no oral exams so, our students do not focus on oral proficiency and pay attention on other grammar portion to get good marks. Also unavailability of audio video material they cannot have real environment of speaking and at home they are not provided with computer and internet facility due to economic reasons.

Teachers need to be honest with their professions and should take pain by themselves to conduct these activities. As the purpose of these activities is to enable learners to communicate so the teachers should keep them busy in use of authentic and meaningful language instead of about language itself. In fact these constraints cannot be cut down but considering the distinctive features of communicative language teaching presented by Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) we can make an effort to conduct these activities though at initial level. Students should be motivated to speak though low structured sentences because language is created through trial and error so fluency should be considered rather than accuracy. Instead of ignoring these activities teacher may take help by native language and translation. Effective use of audio video material can create interest in learners to speak or communicate.

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TEACHERS

Bio data of Teachers

Name: _____ Gender: M / F Experience of teaching: _____

Qualification: _____ Professional qualification: _____

Have you ever participated in any training in ELT especially CLT? Yes / no

Questionnaire for interview

Q1: What is purpose of CLT based activities given in the Text Books?

Q2: What teaching strategies do you use for the development of oral communication activities?

Q3: Is it learner centered or teacher centered in your class?

Q4: Do you use L1 in your English language class and why?

Q5: What would be helpful to get success in oral communication activities?

Questionnaire for Teachers

Please tick the following using your experience to mention to what extent these constraints affect in conducting the oral communication activities.

<i>Sr. no.</i>	<i>Constraints</i>	<i>Up to 25%</i>	<i>Up to 50%</i>	<i>Up to 75%</i>	<i>Up to 100%</i>
1	Impact of mother tongue (Punjabi) on English learning				
2	Lack of listening comprehension in English				
3	Lack of students oral proficiency				
4	Lack of interest and intention in communicating in English				
5	Lack of motivation in communicating in English				
6	Large size of class				
7	Unavailability of enough time for oral communication activity and social interaction in English with other students				
8	No effective environment is available at home for English communication				
9	No examinations are conducted for oral communicative activities				
10	Unavailability of Audio Video material at school and due to economic condition no resources are provided at home (internet etc.)				