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ENGLISH MAJOR**

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**PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS' CHALLENGES IN
COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING APPROACH**

Research report before obtaining the bachelor's degree in National and Foreign Language
Pedagogy, English Major

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AUGUST 2023**

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I CERTIFY THAT:

This research report has been fully revised and has the requirements and merits to be submitted for evaluation by the assigned revision Committee and its presentation and defense.

Pujilí, August, 2023



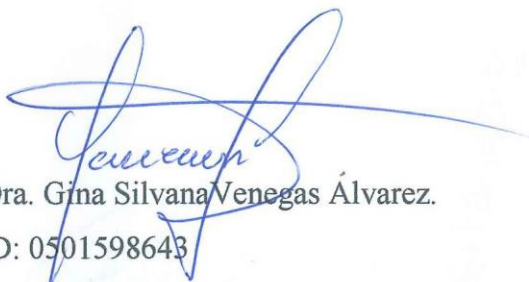
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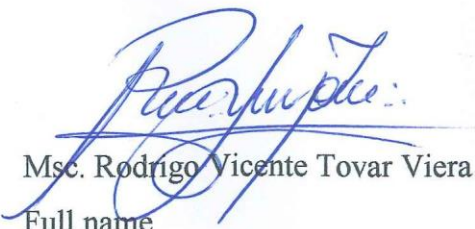


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GRATEFULNESS

We are deeply grateful to God for giving us health and life to complete this process satisfactorily. Also to the Technical University of Cotopaxi for opening the doors of their institution for our professional training, to our dear teachers for their patience and dedication in each of the classes taught, especially to our tutor Mag. Mercedes Abata for being a guide and great help in the development of our research project and to our family. Mercedes Abata for being a guide and a great help in the development of our research project and to our family for being our source of inspiration and perseverance to achieve our dreams.

Noemi & Daliana

DEDICATION

With great joy and satisfaction, I want to dedicate this project to the most important people in my life, my parents, who always supported me both in my academic and personal life and always gave me the courage to move forward. My mother Narciza who never left me alone and always believed in me and my father Ernesto who was my inspiration throughout this process. To my siblings and other family members who have always been with me in happy and difficult moments, thank you very much for helping me and believing in me to complete my professional career, I do this for you.

Noemí

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Daliana

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ABSTRACT

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methodology allows students to learn the language in real contexts and develop their communicative skills in the classroom. The main objective was to determine pre-service teachers' opinions about the challenges in Communicative Language Teaching implementation. A descriptive qualitative methodology was used. The participants were 18 students at the eighth level of the Technical University of Cotopaxi. They answered a structured interview of 32 questions and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data obtained. The results showed that in the category related to educational policies, the lack of coherence and the lack of relationship between didactic materials and MINEDUC interrupts an adequate implementation of the approach, in the category focused on (CLT) implementation, the large number of students per classroom, indiscipline, inadequate infrastructure and preferences for learning grammar instead of communicative skills have created barriers so that a successful implementation process cannot take place and in the category focused on prior knowledge about (CLT), it was shown that pre-service English teachers prefer to teach only grammatical structures rather than communicative competences in English classes due to the lack of knowledge and they do not use pair/ group work to develop communication skills. In conclusion, it can be stated that trainee English teachers faced several challenges in applying the methodology (CLT) because they did not have enough knowledge about the approach.

Keywords: Approach, Challenges, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Implementation.

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DE COTOPAXI
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TEMA: “RETOS DE LOS PROFESORES DE INGLÉS EN FORMACIÓN EN EL ENFOQUE COMUNICATIVO DE LA ENSEÑANZA DE IDIOMAS”

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RESUMEN

La metodología de la Enseñanza Comunicativa de Lenguas (ECL) permite a los alumnos aprender el idioma en contextos reales y desarrollar sus destrezas comunicativas en el aula. El objetivo principal era determinar las opiniones de los profesores en formación sobre los retos que plantea la puesta en práctica de la Enseñanza Comunicativa de Lenguas. Se utilizó una metodología cualitativa descriptiva. Los participantes fueron 18 estudiantes del octavo nivel de la Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi. Respondieron a una entrevista estructurada de 32 preguntas y se utilizó estadística descriptiva para analizar los datos obtenidos. Los resultados mostraron que en la categoría relacionada con las políticas educativas, la falta de coherencia y la falta de relación entre los materiales didácticos y el MINEDUC interrumpe una adecuada implementación del enfoque, en la categoría centrada en la implementación (CLT), el gran número de estudiantes por aula, la indisciplina, En la categoría enfocada a la implementación del enfoque (CLT), la gran cantidad de estudiantes por aula, la indisciplina, la infraestructura inadecuada y las preferencias por el aprendizaje de la gramática en lugar de las competencias comunicativas han creado barreras para que no se pueda llevar a cabo un proceso de implementación exitoso y en la categoría enfocada al conocimiento previo sobre (CLT), se demostró que los profesores de inglés en formación prefieren enseñar sólo estructuras gramaticales en lugar de competencias comunicativas en las clases de inglés debido a la falta de conocimiento y no utilizan el trabajo en pares/grupos para desarrollar habilidades comunicativas. En conclusión, se puede afirmar que los profesores de inglés en prácticas se enfrentaron a varios retos a la hora de aplicar la metodología (CLT) porque no tenían suficientes conocimientos sobre el enfoque.

Palabras clave: Aplicación, Enfoque, Enseñanza Comunicativa de Idiomas, Reto

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Theme: Pre-service English Teachers`challenges in Communicative Language Teaching approach.

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2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The process of teaching a second language can have several difficulties, even more so when a new methodology such as CLT is applied. Vonkova et. al. (2021) mentioned that over the years, the English language has become a fundamental tool for the development of communication around the world because English has been considered a lingua franca within various fields such as technology, business, tourism, education, and academia. The need for teaching English as a second foreign language (EFL) in institutions has been seen as a priority in the world. For that reason, new approaches to foreign language teaching have been implemented over the years to foster meaningful learning and teaching in the classroom, so the CLT approach is mentioned as an innovative element that could enhance the teaching process.

In concordance with Hafizah and Mohd (2019), they indicate that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is considered an approach with great potential in English Language Teaching because it focuses on developing students' communication skills in the target language. However, the implementation of a new approach within the context of teaching English as a foreign language faces several challenges such as: the inadequate preparation of English teachers, the lack of access to educational policy development, language testing, and the culture of learning and teaching according to their own context Walker (2014, cited by Alam, 2018). In the research conducted by Alam (2018) mentions that there are several challenges such as a lack of qualified teachers, large classrooms, shortage of modern materials and resources (p. 93). Additionally, the authors Zakaria & Shah (2019), Tauhiduzzaman (2020), and Abdullah (2018), in their studies found challenges that had similarities in aspects such as the large number of students in the classroom, the level of teacher knowledge in (CLT), the lack of teacher preparation to execute the implementation, the scarcity of technological materials and the challenges centered on the development of communicative competencies within the classroom.

Additionally, the researcher Carabantes (2014), found challenges among which stand out the requirements of MINEDUC and the insufficient time to cover the curriculum, the large number of students per classroom, teacher preparation, the constant use of the mother tongue (Spanish)

during the English class and the previous knowledge of teachers about the approach that can interfere significantly in the implementation of CLT. Calle et al., (2012 cited by Toro et al., 2018) indicated that that the strategies used by English teachers in Ecuador are governed by the use of traditional methods and not in the Communicative Teaching of Languages, and do not follow what is established by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Ecuador, since English language classes are focused specifically on the teacher and not the student, therefore most of the class uses the mother tongue (Spanish) and this interferes the teaching-learning process of English as a foreign language.

In the same way, the pre-service teachers who developed their pre-professional practices in different institutions in Cotopaxi province were able to verify that English language teaching is based on traditional methods and the implementation of a new approach may face several challenges such as the lack of resources in educational institutions, poor preparation in the application of the approach, large class sizes, use of mother tongue in English classes, limited resources, level of learners and shortage of technological tools. All these factors significantly influence the implementation of CLT in urban institutions and can lead to various problems during language teaching and learning. In this regard, the study is an excellent initiative to determine pre-service teachers' opinions about the challenges in Communicative Language Teaching implementation comparing the findings with existing theory. This research will contribute to future researchers to understand the challenges of pre-service teachers in implementing Communicative Language Teaching in urban areas and how to improve future applications of the approach to help significantly to the educational process.

For this purpose, the research question is the following:

What are the pre-service English teachers' opinions about the challenges they encountered in applying the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach in urban areas?

3. OBJECTIVES

General objective

To determine pre-service teachers' opinions about the challenges in Communicative Language Teaching implementation.

Specific objectives

1. To analyze the theoretical foundations of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in English as a foreign language and its challenges.
2. To explore the relationship of pre-service English teachers' opinions about the challenges in implementing CLT with existing theory.
3. To describe pre-service English teachers' challenges in implementing CLT.

4. ACTIVITIES AND TASK SYSTEM IN RELATION TO THE OBJECTIVES PROPOSED

Specific objective	Activities	Verification Means
1. To analyze the theoretical foundations of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in English as a foreign language and its challenges.	Search for bibliographic sources. Select important information. Write the draft of the theoretical framework.	-Theoretical framework
2. To explore the relationship of pre-service teachers' opinions about the challenges in implementing CLT with existing theory.	Search and modify the structured interview. Data collection. Analysis of interview. Compare the results with existing theory.	-Structured interview
3. To describe pre-service English teachers' challenges in implementing CLT.	Categorize and interpret the results. Describe and discuss the results.	-Analysis and discussion of results.

5. JUSTIFICATION

The use of CLT differs immensely from most traditional methodologies, as it seeks to develop linguistic knowledge in students, despite having a forty-year track record of acceptance and being considered a valid approach to language learning by teachers and experts, CLT continues to face a number of challenges in the implementation process, especially in the teaching of English as a foreign language. Savignon et al., (2003, as cited in Carabantes 2014). In this regard, the purpose of this research project is to determine pre-service teachers' opinions about the challenges in Communicative Language Teaching implementation. There is international research describing (CLT) didactic approaches and processes for teaching English as a foreign language in different countries. However, there is not enough information about the application of this method in Ecuador. Therefore, many questions still arise because teachers are not familiar with this method (Hien, (2021). For that reason, there is no theoretical basis that gathers the views and challenges of pre-professional English teachers.

In this sense, the present study can help significantly the fields of education and research by providing background on how various difficulties and challenges can arise during the implementation of a new method in different contexts and what aspects can be proposed to improve the application of the CLT method, all this in order to help pre-service English teachers who want to implement this methodology in their classrooms to face these challenges through mastery, adequate preparation and good management of Communicative Language Teaching, taking into account that a good implementation provide to the teaching-learning process, in turn, it can provide the necessary information to improve the process of professional training by teachers of the Technical University of Cotopaxi in both theoretical and practical areas addressing important categories such as educational policies, the implementation process and prior knowledge of this approach giving the necessary tools for the introduction of the (CLT) in any context knowing how to meet the challenges adequately for the benefit of education.

6. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL FOUNDATION

6.1 Background

Noori Abdullah (2018) conducted a quantitative research study to investigate and explore the challenges perceived by Afghan EFL teachers in the implementation of the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) taking into account the relationship between the use of the (CLT) approach by teachers, demographic aspects (profiles), and found challenges. The researcher selected a population of 35 English teachers at a public University. They completed a questionnaire divided into categories such as perceptions about the use of activities in the classroom, challenges related to teachers-students and the educational system, and views on the challenges of the (CLT) approach as such. The results showed that there was a positive perception of the use of (CLT)-related activities in the classroom, and it was noted that teachers faced significant challenges focused on communicative competencies that disrupted the effective application of Communicative Language Teaching. Finally, a considerable interrelationship was established about the challenges between teachers and students that are linked to teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the approach. This research can make an important contribution to the understanding of important correlations between various aspects of (CLT) implementation in Afghanistan classrooms.

Zhang (2014) conducted a qualitative case study research to gain an in-depth understanding of Chinese EFL pre-service teacher perceptions of CLT and its application in the Chinese context, and to uncover the important factors that play a significant role in shaping their perceptions. The researcher selected a population of 12 pre-service EFL teachers of the English Department in the Liaoning Normal University and used three stages to collect data: Data collection before, during and after. Also, the researcher divided the stages in three categories and use different instruments to recollect the data for each one: Writings (questionnaires/ reflections), talking (focus groups, interviews), and behavior (field notes; class observation). The results showed that EFL teachers-in-training considered CLT an ineffective teaching method for transferring language knowledge due to different reasons such as examination system, previous English learning experience, internalized Chinese learning culture. In addition, they suggested that a small number of communicative activities be applied to alleviate the repressed feelings of

traditional learners. In conclusion, China's policies in the area of English language and English language test reform need to be examined, as well as EFL teachers' perceptions of these reforms.

Alam (2016), conducted research to investigate the Challenges in (CLT) implementation in Secondary rural schools in Bangladesh, the researcher developed a qualitative study aimed at determining the aspects that interrupt the (CLT) implementation in secondary rural schools in Bangladesh, especially in the Chittagong district, gathering information from 8 English teachers of secondary level. For the data collection, the investigator used a survey and an interview to measure the problems in the Communicative Language Teaching application. In consequence, the results indicated the presence of several problems related to the lack of qualified teachers, the large number of students per classroom, and the lack of modern resources and materials for the correct execution of the approach. This research shows the implications that include the correct practice of Communicative Language Teaching in aspects such as language policies and why it cannot be successfully implemented in schools far from the city due to various reasons.

Additionally, Zakaria & Shah (2019), conducted a documental, descriptive, and inferential analysis to investigate the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in teaching the English language in primary schools, focusing on two important aspects such as challenges and problems faced by teachers during the approach implementation in primary schools from three states of Malaysia, gathering information of 90 teachers. To collect data the authors used a research framework and a questionnaire. Moreover, the data analysis was developed by using standard deviation to measure the following three specific problems: Challenges faced by the teachers, teachers' level of understanding, and level of (CLT) implementation at school.

The results showed that teachers have moderate challenges when applying (CLT). Among these challenges are the large number of students in the classroom, the embarrassment of students making mistakes, and the need to repeat grammatical assessments. In conclusion, it is necessary to identify the Malaysian ESL primary school teachers' understanding of (CLT), the level of

application, and the problems or challenges they face in the journey of developing successful and quality communicative learners.

Tauhiduzzaman (2020), the author investigated the challenges that create obstacles in the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in secondary schools in Bangladesh, mixed-method approach was used in the study aimed to identify and determine the challenges that emerge during the implementation of (CLT) in the southern region of Bangladesh, gathering information from fifteen English teachers in secondary schools. To collect the data the researcher used two instruments, a questionnaire and interviews, to analyze the condition of (CLT) in the research context. The findings showed that the main challenges in the application were the lack of preparation of teachers in the implementation of (CLT), insufficient didactic material, the low salary received by teachers, and the teachers' unwillingness to use the English language during the whole class, the inequity between the curriculum and the evaluations based only on grammar. In conclusion, teachers should apply the approach in the classroom, forgetting the traditional methods, and improving teacher training in implementing (CLT) to achieve adequate knowledge of it in educational practice. This study will be useful for future researchers, to upgrade their (CLT) practices in different contexts.

Therefore, Carabantes (2014), conducted a study focused on investigating and finding out the difficulties teachers have encountered in different educational centers (public and semi-private) at the moment of introducing Communicative Language Teaching in several contexts, in order to explore the origin and causes of the difficulties. Eighty-two Chilean English teachers were selected as a population belonging to the semi-private and public education sectors at the primary and secondary levels. To carry out the data collection, the researcher completed a questionnaire divided into three parts to collect the main opinion about the problems related to the application of the communicative approach, and four English teachers participated in a semi-structured interview. The main results of this study demonstrate that there exist several

problems divided into three broad categories those are: Challenges related to English Language Teaching Policy indicated that the Policies constitute a barrier to implementing the (CLT) approach successfully, challenges associated with classroom implementation of (CLT) showed that the difficulties are focused on aspects such as teachers' preparation in the (CLT) approach, materials, use of Spanish inside the classroom, and a large number of students constitutes an issue to use the language to interact in real contexts, and challenges associated with teachers' background knowledge of CLT showed the importance of being accurate and fluent in the use of the English language, emphasizing that mastery of linguistic structures is the basis of communication. In accordance with the authors, the implementation of the communicative approach could be successful if several changes are made in the educational system in line with reality.

Toro, V (2018), conducted an investigation to determine how the application of Communicative Language Teaching can improve the English language learning process. The context shows how teachers use strategies that develop students' oral skills. This sample made up of 6 English teachers and 105 elementary school students from the city of Loja, shows through the collection of data carried out with a mixed research approach and a questionnaire and class observation that the variety of strategies existing in the educational environment is important. The results obtained in the study showed that there are several strategies such as pair work, repetition, and modeling which have been very helpful for the students in the development of their communicative competencies, these strategies are frequently used in the classroom but they are not enough since they do not contribute to the active participation of the students. However, if not used frequently, good results and learning improvement will not be obtained.

6.2 Theoretical Framework

6.2.1 Pre-service English teachers training in Communicative Language Teaching.

Initial teacher education is a very important aspect of any teacher education curriculum because it prepares pre-service teachers to become qualified teachers in the future. (Ulla, 2016). For that reason, they must not only claim mastery of their subject matter, but also demonstrate

competence in methodology, classroom management, and assessment, for when a pre-service English teacher chooses to become a teacher in an EFL environment, the added competence of acquire near native fluency (Goff-Kfour, 2013).

In addition, Robert (1998, cited in Mufidah, 2019), mentions that the pre-service teacher must possess six kinds of knowledge to become a good English teacher in the future.

The mastery of all language skills is based on the following knowledge:

Content, which is closely related to the mastery of the English language and shows the teacher's ability to know how to methodically select the content to be taught.

Pedagogical which refers to all the methodologies, strategies for the correct management of the classroom.

Curricular which implies that the teacher must have a broad knowledge of the English language syllabus, documents, evaluation process and all materials related to teaching.

Contextual emphasizing the understanding of everything that surrounds the teaching process in order to create bonds or relationships in any environment.

Process knowledge mentions the importance of teacher development over time by understanding their profession and everything related to it.

6.2.2 Communicative Language Teaching Approach

The origins of the communicative approach are said to begin in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This approach is the result of the dissatisfaction of teachers and linguists with the methods used in the teaching of a foreign language, there are several standouts, such as grammar translation, audiolingual, traditional, etc. Thus, authors such as Chomsky, Hymes, Van Ek, and others contributed significantly to implementing this innovative approach worldwide (Azimova, 2019).

According to Azimova (2019) "Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is known as a group of principles focused on teaching a second language through the use of various types of

activities to enhance meaningful learning taking into account the teacher's and learners' roles in the classroom” (p. 472).

Thus, the communicative approach emphasizes the students' needs, using the second language as a starting point. Therefore, the communicative approach tries to make students acquire and improve language skills independently, taking into account the use of language before grammar since it aims to obtain adequate linguistic competence to communicate inside and outside the classroom (Ulfah et al., 2015). Indeed, Toro et. al. (2019) warns that “ This approach focuses on learning a second language through interaction, leaving aside the memorization of various aspects attached to the linguistic system of the English language” (p.110).

6.2.3 Principles of (CLT)

According to Richards (2001, cited by Rambe, 2017), the principles of (CLT) are derived from the way in how learners should learn the target language by following a process of meaningful communication through a grammar-based approach. For this reason, the author summarizes the principles of the approach as follows:

1. Make communication central to the actual process of learning a second language.
2. To provide opportunities for the learner to test the knowledge acquired.
3. Learn to be tolerant of learners' mistakes, as it means that the learner is building his or her communicative competence.
4. Promote the necessary opportunities for students to develop and achieve fluency and accuracy in the communicative process.
5. Integrate the various language skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing), taking into account that they go hand in hand in a real context.
6. To give students the opportunity to discover grammatical rules indirectly on their own (Richards, 2001, p. 159).

6.2.4 Features of CLT

The principal goal of the Communicative Language approach is to develop an effective communicative competence of English learners to use the language in real contexts (Shujaa,2021). In concordance with Brown (2001, as cited in Shujaa, 2021), established the following four fundamental characteristics to define the (CLT) approach:

a. Classroom goals are focused on components to achieve communicative competence and are not just limited to linguistic or grammatical competence.

b. The language techniques are thought and created to engage students in the use of the English language taking into account aspects such as pragmatics and function through meaningful activities to develop the language to achieve the communication process effectively. For that reason, the organizational forms of language are not the fundamental aspect but rather the ability of learners to accomplish communicative purposes.

c. Important aspects such as accuracy and fluency are considered principles below communicative skills or techniques. Consequently, fluency is established as an important element in keeping learners more deeply immersed in the use of the language.

d. Learners have the ability to use language receptively and productively in real contexts to foster the development of a communicative classroom (Brown, 2001, p. 267).

On the other hand, Nunan (1991, cited by Mohd et al., 2019), the five features of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) are:

1. The interaction using the target language creates an emphasis on the communicative process.

2. The use and introduction of authentic texts during the learning process.

3. Learners have the opportunity to focus on aspects that helps to the learning process, not only on the target language.

4. The enhancement of the learner's experiences to contribute in a significant way within the classroom.

5. Language activation must be developed inside and outside the class through the use of language activities.

6.2.5 Implementation of CLT in EFL classrooms

According to (Chang & Suparmi, 2020). Communicative language teaching or better known as (CLT) has become an innovative alternative based on changing traditional teaching, which focuses on learning using grammatical translation. However, the implementation of this new approach cannot be considered easy, due to the challenges and difficulties that teachers and students face with this teaching model that involves several aspects among the main ones the active participation of students and the use of strategies and didactic material that can make this process complicated depending on the context where this approach is intended to be implemented.

6.2.6 Communicative competence in CLT

According to Savignon (1972), communicative competence represents "the ability to use the target language in a real communicative context or situation, which gives rise to a dynamic exchange that takes as its starting point linguistic competence which must be linked to a total informative input, taking into account paralinguistic and linguistic aspects in one or several speakers or communicators" (p.8).

Indeed, "the term communicative competence is defined as the ability or capacity to encode or decode messages in order to communicate in any environment while understanding the language perfectly". Hymes cited by Abate and Bhavani (2012).

6.2.7 Communicative language teaching: implications for the communicative classroom

According to Richards & Rogers (1986, cited by Farid, 2015), the communicative practices

developed in the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach are characterized by the presence of several important principles that are developed in practice, i.e. the teacher will be in charge of creating activities focused on facilitating a real communicative process, in order to awaken the motivation of students to learn, taking into account as a fundamental factor the interaction between student-teacher and student-student. In addition, Gass & Mackey (2007, cited by Farid, 2015), mentioned that “interactions contribute to linguistic input. Consequently, the teacher will have to maintain from the beginning the task, to foster meaningful learning through the use of tasks using the target language”(p.50).

In agreement with Farid (2015), meaningfulness is considered a specific principle that the teacher should apply in the communicative classroom. If meaningful language is used, students will feel motivated to use the language. On the other hand, students may feel unmotivated and unconfident if linguistic patterns are taught without using language by focusing on meaning and problem-solving as providing information in the linguistic sense.

6.2.8 Managing a communicative classroom

Managing a communicative classroom requires many aspects to be taken into account. Isomiddin (2022) describes that competence:

- Know how to use the language for different functions and purposes.
- Know how to vary the use of language according to the environment and participants. (Formal and informal language).
- Know how to understand and produce different texts (reports, narratives, conversations, interviews)
- Knowing how to communicate even with limitations in one's knowledge of the language.

Also, Isomiddin (2022) says “Practitioners of (CLT) view materials as a way of influencing the quality of classroom interaction and language use”. In the same way, Hence, Rao (2019) explained that teachers should understand the difficulties and problems that English language learners have in order to implement strategies and methodologies within their teaching and thus develop and improve language skills within the classroom.

6.2.9 Teacher's Role

The role of the teacher is very important when applying (CLT) as a method. According to Eisenring et al., (2019) “Interaction becomes the main means for teacher and students to exchange their ideas, feelings, opinions, views, perceptions, etc” (p.46). Furthermore, “the teacher has the role of advisor, to solve and resolve students' questions, as well as to supervise the performance of each student to measure their progress in the classroom.” (Eisenring et al., 2019) (p.48). On the other hand, Alofi et al., (2022) “Teachers applying (CLT) in their language classrooms will not only use communicative activities but also some other exercises that help learners to perform communicative activities”

6.2.10 Student's role.

The student has a very important role in the classroom with (CLT) methodology. According to Ahmed (2022) “Learners in (CLT) classes are assumed to take part in class activities that are based on a cooperative approach instead of individual approach in learning” (p.259). Hence, In CLT classes the student is actively involved. The author Akhatovna (2023) mentioned that “It develops self-study skills and learner autonomy for life-long learning” (p.134) because "it can be deduced that the best way for students to learn is by doing to improve their communicative and linguistic skills" Akhatovna (2023).

Indeed, Teh (2021) “The five approaches include a focus on interactive communication, usage of authentic materials, the availability of chance for learners to work on, the inclusion of own experiences to aid in learning, and the linkage between classroom learning and real-world application” (p.66). On the other hand, Jamali et al., (2014 cited by Derakhshan & Torabi 2015) “(a) lack of administrative support, (b) lack of resources, (c) lack of sufficient English language knowledge, (d) wider curriculum, (e) large class size, (f) discrepancy between (CLT) syllabus and nationally administered exams, (g) teachers holding on to traditional methods, and (h) lack of authentic learning materials” (p.208).

6.2.11 CLT Activities

The activities in (CLT) are very important because fluency activities expose students to using

language in a natural way, engaging in continuous and comprehensible communication interaction despite their limited communicative competence (Rambe, 2017). For that reason, the author mentions there are three main activities those are:

Mechanical activities:

This refers to a controlled activity that allows learners to perform without necessarily understanding the language they are using.

Mechanical activities are:

Jigsaw activities:

This activity is done in groups, each group has certain information and is assigned the task of sharing that information with the other groups as a puzzle.

Task completion activities:

In this activity, students complete a task using their linguistic resources such as games, puzzles, or map reading.

Meaningful activities:

This makes students communicate by involving meaningful choices in a contextual set of communication therefore the teacher must create the context and task for students to explore language and express ideas.

Meaningful activities are:

Guided role play:

In this activity, students are assigned roles and they improvise and act out a scene or exchange based on information or clues given by the teacher.

Information Gap:

This activity mimics the practice of people asking others for information they lack, so that communication occurs when learners ask each other for information.

Communicative activities:

These activities make students use language freely from their own source, their own real-life situations, and experience. Hence, the teacher should use the knowledge and experience of his students as part of the learning activities.

Communicative activities are:

Opinion sharing:

In this activity, students can compare or share opinions, values, or beliefs.

Information gathering activities:

In this activity, students conduct interviews or surveys to gather information from others.

7. METHODOLOGY

Research approach

This study is a qualitative approach as it helped to collect and analyze data to understand the opinions regarding the challenges of pre-service English teachers in applying the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT).

"Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research" Bhandari (2023).

Research Method

The researchers applied descriptive research, as the main purpose of the data collected was to describe the opinions about the challenges faced by pre-service English teachers in implementing CLT in the classroom in three main categories, in order to establish a relationship between the opinions with existing theory. In this way, McCombes (2022) mentions that "Descriptive research aims to accurately and systematically describe either a population, situation or phenomenon and focuses on answering questions such as where, when and how, but not on why".

Research context

The population with which this project was carried out was 27 students of eighth level of Pedagogy in National and Foreign Languages-English career of the Technical University of Cotopaxi of class "A" and "B" where only 18 participants were chosen because they used CLT as a methodology in their pre-professional practices which were carried out in urban public institutions of Latacunga and Pujili. For that reason, a convenience sample was used in this

research. McCombes (2022) states that "A convenience sample simply includes the individuals who are most accessible to the researcher".

Data collection procedure

For this study, the researchers used a questionnaire taken from Carabantes (2014) investigation. The questionnaire was originally composed of 32 items and an additional 9 questions that evaluated aspects such as the level of education, previous knowledge, and the relationship of the respondents with the CLT. In order to carry out the research process, it was adapted and transformed into a structured interview, according to the research context, so it was composed of 32 questions related to implementing the (CLT) educational approach. The instrument was divided into three main categories, the first part collected the Challenges related to the English Language Teaching Policies, the second part focused on challenges in the implementation of (CLT), and the third part examined the challenges associated with pre-service English teacher's background knowledge of (CLT) approach.

The initial population was 27 participants. However, the study was applied only to 18 pre-service English teachers of classes "A" and "B" at UTC University, who carried out their pre-professional internships in the urban area because they were the majority of the population and the rural area was not taken into account.

In the following section, the results were presented qualitatively, in percentages after the application of the structured interview to the previously selected population, the answers are shown according to the Likert scale and the responses were Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly disagree were taken into account to evaluate the challenges faced by the participants in the process of teaching English as a foreign language.

Data analysis process

The researchers started by transferring all the interview responses into Excel and then converted them into percentages according to the number of responses. To do this they used descriptive

statistics which are defined as brief reports and coefficients that summarize a set of data, these can be a representation of a sample of a population or the entire population (Hayes, 2023).

The questions were previously categorized into three groups to make data analysis more feasible, these groups were: challenges associated with ELT policy, challenges associated with classroom implementation (CLT), and challenges associated with teachers' prior knowledge of (CLT). Even though the interview assessed the level of agreement or disagreement at four levels the results were unified to be presented in two levels of agreement and disagreement so that the challenges arose from the percentages in each table and were analyzed and discussed according to the theoretical bases of various authors.

To better analyze the results, the majority of the responses corresponding to 50% or more were chosen to determine them as challenges at the time of the application of (CLT).

8. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in urban areas by pre-service English teachers has represented some challenges in educational policies, implementation process, and previous knowledge of the (CLT) approach. The data collected for personal information related to gender, the level at they taught, and the area that the participants carried out their internships show that of the population that took the questionnaire 78% were female and 22% were male, and the responses indicated that 72% of the participants taught students at the primary level and 28% at the secondary level in different institutions in the urban area.

Challenges Associated with English Language Teaching Policy.

Table 1: First category: Challenges of Pre-service teachers in CLT implementation associated with English Language Teaching Policy.

N°	ITEM	AGREE	DISAGREE
1	The use of CLT allows me to satisfy the syllabus required by the MINEDUC.	14 77.78%	4 22.22%
2	There is congruence between the MINEDUC's curriculum and teaching materials (textbooks, audio, etc.)	8 44.44%	10 55.56%

3	The English language curriculum is easy to cover in the time given by the MINEDUC.	7 38.89%	11 61.11%
4	The MINEDUC provides enough opportunities for teacher development so I get more familiar with CLT and its application.	8 44.44%	10 55.56%
5	The materials (books, audio, etc.) provided by the MINEDUC facilitate the use of CLT.	4 22.22%	14 77.78%

Discussion

According to the statements found during the study, in the first category related to English Language Teaching Policy, four items could be considered as challenges. 55.56% of pre-service teachers believed there is no coherent relationship between the didactic materials and the curriculum proposed by MINEDUC, in turn, 61.11% of respondents perceived that the time given by the educational institutions is insufficient to complete the syllabus. According to the authors (Espinosa & Soto, 2015) stated that school materials such as books are elaborated by specialists in the field, however the curriculum as well as the proposed objectives can become technical and not appropriate for the context where they are intended to be applied also they considered that the educational policies applied to the English language can be a barrier to an appropriate implementation of (CLT) since there should be coherence between the curriculum and the materials provided by the educational authorities, in order to cover all the contents satisfactorily.

However, 55.56% believed that the MINEDUC does not provide enough opportunities for teacher development causing pre-service teachers to be unfamiliar with the use of CLT. For that reason, (Espinosa & Soto, 2015), believe that the curriculum should take into account the needs of students, teachers, the subject matter and society in general, should go hand in hand with the philosophy of education that teachers have and should be evaluated by experts in the field,

teachers, authorities, students and others in order to reach an acceptance that demonstrates that the curriculum is appropriate and its use will be effective.

Similarly, Carabantes (2014) stated that the time allocated by the authorities does not allow the curricular content to be covered in its entirety, and the materials provided by MINEDUC are not adequate as they do not facilitate the implementation of the (CLT), also Alam (2016) in their study a major challenge is the lack of resources and modern materials for the proper implementation of the approach may constitute a problem within the teaching process. Additionally, the researcher Tauhiduzzaman (2020), corroborated the results and found that the challenges that arise in the application of (CLT) were directed at aspects such as insufficient teaching materials and inequity in the curriculum.

Challenges related to the (CLT) implementation.

Table 2: Second category: Challenges of Pre-service teachers related to the CLT implementation.

N°	ITEM	AGREE	DISAGREE
6	Classroom discipline in my context makes the implementation of CLT more difficult.	14 77.78%	4 22.22%
7	Students use a lot of Spanish during communicative tasks.	13 72.22%	5 27.78%
8	I have sufficient ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) at hand to implement CLT.	12 66.67%	6 33.33%
9	The large number of students facilitates the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching during my class.	7 38.89%	11 61.11%
10	The school infrastructure (classroom size, labs, etc.) is appropriate to carry out CLT.	5 27.78%	13 72.22%

11	Students prefer to be taught grammar and vocabulary over communication skills.	10 55.56%	8 44.44%
12	There is little time to implement CLT.	12 66.67%	6 33.33%
13	I have plenty of time to prepare materials that are useful to implement CLT.	10 55.56%	8 44.44%
14	There are many opportunities for the students to communicate in English outside the classroom.	5 27.78%	13 72.22%
15	English was the central focus during the CLT implementation in class.	11 61.11%	7 38.89%
16	The activities carried out in class promoted the development of fluency and precision in the communicative process.	11 61.11%	7 38.89%
17	It was difficult to evaluate the students in the communicative activities.	15 83.33%	3 16.77%

Discussion

According to the level of agreement analyzed in the previous section, the English teachers in training think there are several challenges reflected in the large number of students in each classroom. As mentioned by the authors (Aviles, 2013, as cited in Naranjo et al., 2017), Ecuador's public education system delegates to teachers the responsibility of working with large groups of about forty students per class. Additionally, 77.78% of participants considered the management of discipline that due to the large classrooms makes the implementation difficult. In concordance with Perez (2015, as cited in Abarca, 2019), English teachers face daily problems during their classes, the most common of which is discipline management, and it is considered an important factor that can significantly influence the teaching-learning process.

In the same way, 72.22% believed that the infrastructure does not provide adequate facilities to carry out the implementation. Consequently, 72.22% of the population disagrees with the statement that consider there are many opportunities for students to communicate in English outside the classroom. Hence, Vladimirovna (2012), mentioned that the opportunities to use the English language were confined to the classroom, and they recognized that there were linguistic, sociocultural, psychological, and individuality factors that influence the use of the language outside the classroom. In addition, the results showed that 55.56% agreed with the students' preference for learning grammatical structures rather than communicative skills, The majority of participants (72.22%) think that students use Spanish a lot during communicative tasks. Indeed, (Tavarez & Almanzar, 2020), explained that the process of learning English has been perceived as a difficult challenge for Spanish speakers over the years, most of them compare aspects such as grammatical structures and the use of both languages, and this causes a barrier of interference in the learning of a second language that can cause unsatisfactory results and even failure in this process.

Similar results showed Zakaria & Shah (2019) and Carabantes (2014), who found challenges in several categories such as the number of students, classroom size, language use, preparation of classroom material, and assessment process. This undoubtedly demonstrates that the challenges arise in diverse contexts and are closely linked to the facilities that the pre-service English teacher has to execute a successful implementation, in such a way that it is evident that the common problem that respondents share is the large number of students that exist within each classroom, making the time allocated for the implementation insufficient, in turn, it is directly related to the discipline since being large groups are difficult to manage. In the same sense, the infrastructure, the size of the classroom, and the lack of laboratories hinder the learning process, reducing opportunities for the student to use the English language in real contexts. All these aspects delay the educational process and make it difficult to achieve an adequate application of the approach.

Challenges associated with pre-service teachers' background knowledge of (CLT).

Table 3: Third category: Challenges of Pre-service teachers in CLT implementation associated with background knowledge of (CLT).

	ITEM	AGREE	DISAGREE
18	My communicative skills enable me to carry out communicative activities with my students.	16 88.89%	2 11.11%
19	I need to correct my students' mistakes in English as soon as they happen.	17 94.44%	1 5.56%
20	Using students' interests and experiences enhances language learning.	15 83.33%	3 16.67%
21	I feel more comfortable teaching language structures rather than communication skills.	12 66.67%	6 33.33%
22	Teaching CLT means not teaching grammar.	11 61%.11	7 38.89%
23	Teaching CLT means teaching speaking only.	6 33.33%	12 66.67%
24	Teaching CLT means pair work, which includes role-plays.	15 83.33%	3 16.67%
25	CLT is effective for the rural or urban context.	16 88.89%	2 11.11%
26	Mastering the language structures precedes communication	14 77.78%	4 22.22%
27	CLT is an ambiguous approach to language teaching.	9 50%	9 50%
28	Being accurate is more important than being fluent in English.	10 55.56%	8 44.44%
29	There is plenty of pair/group work in my classes.	8 44.44%	10 55.56%

Discussion

In the third category, which refers to problems related to the prior knowledge of pre-service English teachers, three items were determined as challenges. 66.67% of the participants mentioned that they feel more comfortable teaching grammatical structures than communicative skills. Because teachers and novice teachers prefer direct teaching of grammar, where it is shown explicitly to students so that they produce the language in an appropriate way Önalán (2018).

Likewise, 83.3% of the pre-service English teachers agreed that teaching CLT means pair work, which includes role-plays. However, the results showed that 55.56% of them did not use this strategy in English classes. According to Idu et al., (2011), Poorly equipped laboratories and overcrowded classrooms are factors contributing to indiscipline in schools as well as peer group influence. Therefore, this may mean that pre-service English teachers did not use pair or group work because of the indiscipline in doing so even though it is one of the activities found within the (CLT) approach.

These results share similarities with the study of Carabantes (2014), in his research found a lack of interest in the application of pair/group work in English classes since although it is a very important element in the communicative approach, this strategy is not widely used in the classroom because teachers avoid it due to the indiscipline, long classes and lack of attention of their students. However, no similarity was found with the first result so it means that in the Cotopaxi context, pre-service English teachers prefer to teach grammatical structures rather than communication skills. These findings are very significant in the educational field because the results help to know the challenges that pre-service English teachers face and that they need more training on new teaching methodologies in foreign languages (CLT) to apply strategies that allow them to develop as good professionals in the teaching-learning process.

For that reason, the following argument answers the research question that was:

What are the pre-service English teachers' opinions about the challenges they encountered in applying the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach in urban areas?

It was found that the pre-service English teachers showed several challenges in three categories that were: First, challenges associated with English language teaching policy with reference to the lack of coherence between the teaching materials and the curriculum proposed by the ministry of education, making time limited for the implementation of the methodology. Also, it is believed that MINEDUC does not provide opportunities for the professional development of teachers, therefore they are not familiar with this approach. Second, challenges related to the (CLT) implementation, which described problems related to the lack of infrastructure resources, the large number of students that makes discipline management be more complicated. Furthermore, the tendency of the students towards the use of their mother tongue and the preference of learning grammar instead of communication skills was evidenced, creating few opportunities to use the language outside the classroom. In addition, it is believed that the time for implementation is short as well as that used for the preparation of materials and the evaluation of the proposed activities. Third, challenges associated with pre-service teachers' background knowledge of (CLT) which mentioned that pre-service English teachers prefer to teach more grammatical structures than communication skills. On the other hand, there is an inconsistency between the answers because the pre-service English teachers mentioned that the use of work in pairs/groups is to teach CLT but at the same time they said that they do not apply this strategy in English classes.

9. RESEARCH IMPACTS (TECHNICAL, SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, EDUCATIONAL, OR ECONOMIC)

This research project would have an educational impact due to the information on pre-service teachers' challenges in Communicative Language Teaching implementation and would significantly help teachers in training to improve their educational practice at the time of Communicative Language Teaching, improving the implementation of this methodology and all the aspects that surround it. Also, it can leave a precedent about how a new methodology can contribute to the process of teaching and learning English in urban contexts and could also be applied to rural areas previously knowing the challenges that were obtained in the urban area and finding the way to address them properly in order to achieve a successful implementation

of an innovative methodology for the benefit of teaching English as a second language in different educational institutions in the city and its surroundings. Likewise, we consider that this research could serve as a basis for the development of future projects in the educational field. In addition, we emphasize the importance of conducting research on the subject in the context of our province and country, and should emphasize research with pre-service teachers. Finally, this research encourages pre-service English teachers to explore (CLT) as an educational methodology in order to obtain a good teaching process of the English language, although sometimes it can be a little complicated due to the context in the educational institutions of our country, it is still a methodology for the communicative teaching of a foreign language.

10. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The implementation of the (CLT) methodology entails many factors that is why the main objective of this project was to determine pre-service teachers' opinions about the challenges in Communicative Language Teaching implementation. The results were based on three categories. Language Teaching Policy, implementation, and prior pre-service teachers' knowledge in (CLT).

- In the first category statements demonstrated and theory corroborated that the lack of connection between the didactic material and the curriculum proposed by MINEDUC has meant that there is not enough time to fully comply with the English curriculum, causing English teachers to lack opportunities within their professional training, preventing them from feeling familiar with the approach and its implementation, so according to several authors all these elements were determinant in the correct execution of the Communicative Language Teaching.
- In the second category, the researcher's theory refuted that in the country each classroom is made up of forty students, which complicates the management of the discipline and interferes in the normal development of the activities proposed by the (CLT), in addition, the elements belonging to the infrastructure that in most cases reflect the lack of inputs for an adequate teaching-learning process and the time allocated for the

implementation and preparation of the didactic material is short and in many cases insufficient also the tendency of students to use their mother tongue in all English classes since according to the authors mentioned in the analysis, the use of the mother tongue is a barrier to develop the English language learning process and this can truncate this process.

- Finally, in the third category, the main challenges arise from the preference of English teachers in training to teach grammatical structures instead of communicative skills, this means that knowledge about communicative activities such as pair-work, role plays, among others, is limited, as well as time. There is a misconception that teaching with the (CLT) methodology is based only on the speaking skill, since the use of this approach seeks to develop the four language skills, this way of thinking makes the (CLT) to be seen as something ambiguous or that can be interpreted in different ways without having a clear idea to achieve a correct execution in English classes. It is concluded that the research question was successfully answered by comparing and describing the results found with theories that corroborate with the findings.

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

For this reason, a previous evaluation should be made to determine the level of pre-service teachers' knowledge and understanding of the approach in order to be ready to implement in the institutions, focused on meeting the educational needs. It would be advisable, for future research, to do the research in rural areas in order to make a comparison that allows to know if the challenges found in the two contexts share similarities or not, all this to improve the training process of future pre-service teachers in both the theoretical and practical areas.

In spite of the importance of the results found in this research project, several limitations were encountered, the first one being the gathering of all the pre-service English teachers so that they could answer the survey since it was face-to-face. In addition, this survey was limited to the rural area because there were not many participants to carry it out; this would have been more enriching for the study, but we only worked with the pre-service English teachers who developed their work practices in urban public institutions. It would be essential to continue researching this topic in order to provide more information to future English teachers who wish to work with this approach.

Recommendations

- According to the research work carried out, it is recommended that the curriculum proposed by MINEDUC be used, making adaptations according to the needs and the material that (CLT) requires, taking into account the student's needs and time established by the authorities to be able to complete the English syllabus in its entirety.
- Pre-service English teachers must master all aspects related to the (CLT), having previous and constant training to become familiar with this new approach and to be able to carry out a successful implementation. It is suggested that the English teachers in training should be trained in strategies and correct classroom management before their pre-professional practices, in order to control indiscipline in English classes. Additionally, a call is made to MINEDUC, who is in charge of the whole educational process, to provide resources or materials that allow a correct teaching process of English as a foreign language, such as reducing the number of students in the classrooms in order to work in a personalized way and thus obtain significant learning.
- In the same way, it is advised to use communicative activities such as group and pair-work, role-plays, and conversations, among others that motivate the student to use the English language instead of the mother tongue in an inductive way to facilitate the evaluation process of these activities, all this in order to provide opportunities for students to use the language in real contexts. Finally, it is recommended to carry out this study in rural areas to broaden the knowledge regarding the challenges of (CLT) in the context of the province of Cotopaxi and thus help future teachers with theoretical foundations and thus improve the teaching process through an innovative methodology. It is recommended to apply a semi-structured interview to provide reasons for the challenges encountered in order to broaden the view on these challenges and to find ways to address them in the implementation process.

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12. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Structured interview

Pre-service English teacher's challenges in Communicative Language Teaching approach.

General objective

To determine pre-service teachers' opinions about the challenges in Communicative Language Teaching implementation.

1. What is your gender?

- a) Male
- b) Female

2. What type of school are you currently doing your pre-professional practices?

- a) Urban
- b) Rural

3. What level are you currently teaching at?

- a) Primary
- b) Secondary

1. Challenges associated with English Language Teaching Policy.

Please, circle the number that corresponds to your degree of agreement with the statements listed below.

(4) Strongly agree

(3) Agree

(2) Disagree

(1) Strongly disagree

1	The use of CLT allows me to satisfy the syllabus required by the MINEDUC.	4	3	2	1
2	There is congruence between the MINEDUC's curriculum and teaching materials (textbooks, audio, etc.)	4	3	2	1
3	The English language curriculum is easy to cover in the time given by the MINEDUC.	4	3	2	1
4	The MINEDUC provides enough opportunities for teacher development so I get more familiar with CLT and its application.	4	3	2	1
5	The materials (books, audio, etc.) provided by the MINEDUC facilitate the use of CLT.	4	3	2	1

2. Challenges related to the CLT implementation

6	Classroom discipline in my context makes the implementation of CLT more difficult.	4	3	2	1
7	Students use a lot of Spanish during communicative tasks.	4	3	2	1

8	I have sufficient ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) at hand to implement CLT.	4	3	2	1
9	The large number of students facilitates the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching during my class.	4	3	2	1
10	The school infrastructure (classroom size, labs, etc.) is appropriate to carry out CLT.	4	3	2	1
11	Students prefer to be taught grammar and vocabulary over communication skills.	4	3	2	1
12	There is little time to implement CLT.	4	3	2	1
13	I have plenty of time to prepare materials that are useful to implement CLT.	4	3	2	1
14	There are many opportunities for the students to communicate in English outside the classroom.	4	3	2	1
15	English was the central focus during the CLT implementation in class.	4	3	2	1
16	The activities carried out in class promoted the development of fluency and precision in the communicative process.	4	3	2	1
17	It was difficult to evaluate the students in the communicative activities.	4	3	2	1

3. Challenges associated with pre-service teachers' background knowledge of CLT.

18	My communicative skills enable me to carry out communicative activities with my students.	4	3	2	1
19	I need to correct my students' mistakes in English as soon as they happen.	4	3	2	1

20	Using students' interests and experiences enhances language learning.	4	3	2	1
21	I feel more comfortable teaching language structures rather than communication skills.	4	3	2	1
22	Teaching CLT means not teaching grammar.	4	3	2	1
23	Teaching CLT means teaching speaking only.	4	3	2	1
24	Teaching CLT means pair work, which includes role-plays.	4	3	2	1
25	CLT is effective for the rural or urban context	4	3	2	1
26	Mastering the language structures precedes communication.	4	3	2	1
27	CLT is an ambiguous approach to language teaching.	4	3	2	1
28	Being accurate is more important than being fluent in English.	4	3	2	1
29	There is plenty of pair/group work in my classes.	4	3	2	1

This questionnaire was taken and adapted from Carabantes, (2014).