

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): Learners' Perspectives

Khoa. Y. T Phan, Hong. P. T Nguyen

Department of English Language and Culture, Foreign Languages, Can Tho University, Vietnam

Abstract: Nowadays, foreign language skills are very important for working in multicultural and multi-language environments. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is considered as an effective method to learn a language. In Vietnam, CLT is not strange, but how frequently it is used in EFL classroom is still a question. A survey on students' opinions about frequency of using Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) activities in their General English (GE) classes was conducted at Can Tho University in semester 2, academic year 2015 - 2016. The study aims to find out how frequently lecturers use CLT activities in their classrooms. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected via a questionnaire for students who participated in General English course in previous semesters, and were analyzed on SPSS version 20. The study found that (1) CLT was sometimes used in GE classes, and (2) General English teachers sometimes (not often) use English in class. However, more than 90% of the participants reported that they improved their English after the General English courses. The learner's expectation about a favorite way to learn English was also collected. The study gives some pedagogical implications and suggestions.

Keywords: Communicative Competence, Communicative Language Teaching, frequency of usage, General English, learners' perspectives.

I. Introduction

In the modern life, globalization promotes international cooperation in many fields such as economy, culture, education. International language communication becomes more essential. Therefore, foreign language teaching and learning approaches are of more importance than ever before. For the past twenty years or so, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a popular method used in EFL classrooms in many countries. With a vision for the future, Vietnam Government [1] approved the Project entitled "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, Period 2008-2020" to improve foreign language skills of Vietnamese students. The target is that college and university students can use English for further study, research, and work after graduation. Non-English major students are expected to achieve Level 3 English (an equivalent to Level B1 in the Common European Framework of Reference – CEFR [2]), so that they can communicate in English confidently and efficiently in spoken as well as written situations. To this end, the project has advocated the use of CLT and many teachers have tried CLT activities in classrooms. However, the results have not been very clear. Vietnamese university graduates are still complained about due to their poor English skills. Non-English major students are likely to have a lot of problems with English (e.g. lack of vocabulary, poor pronunciation, and misuse of English due to mother tongue interference) and cannot communicate in English. While there can be a lot of factors for these problems, the teaching methods could play a big role. Therefore, with the scope of this study, we would like to see how CLT is actually happening in classroom, in the learner's opinion. How much English is used in classroom by the teacher? What communicative activities are used? How frequent are they used in classroom?

This study is hoped to remind teachers and administrators to hear from learners about what they think about their CLT teaching. Based on the students' responses, teachers and curriculum designers will be able to adjust the teaching style, the activities, and the suitable amount of class time to cover all of learning contents. The research is to find to what extent CLT is being used in EFL classrooms. To be specific, the objectives of this research are as follows: to find out (1) how often the CLT is really used in General English classes at Can Tho University, (2) how frequently teachers use English and Vietnamese in General English classes, and (3) what are students' expectations on an effective EFL classroom.

II. Literature review

2.1 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

CLT is known as a language teaching approach which aims to enhance learners' communicative competence. It was first proposed in Great Britain in the 1970s. The advent of CLT was supported by teachers and linguists because it overcomes limitations of previous language teaching methods. Nevertheless, the definitions of CLT were given in different ways by many writers. According to Howatt [3] (1984), there are two versions of communicative approach. The "strong" version involves in using language to learn it, while the "weak" version offers to learners the chances to use English in their meaningful context. Berlin [4] (2005)

claimed that communicative language teaching is a cornerstone to develop many forms of teaching methods; it covers four English skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. In the book *Communicative Language Teaching Today*, Richards [5] (2006) stated that "Communicative Language Teaching can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom" (p. 2).

The goal of CLT

The major goal of CLT is to improve learners' communicative competence. From Hymes' point of view [6] (1972), communicative competence is "knowing when and how to say what to whom". In other words, communicative competence is "knowledge of not only if something is formally possible in a language, but also whether it is feasible, appropriate, or done in a particular speech community" (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). Richards & Schmidt [7] (2010) also stated that communicative competence includes four aspects of language knowledge: grammatical competence (having knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and semantics); sociolinguistic competence (knowing how to use language appropriate for the settings and the participants); discourse competence (being able to produce and understand various kinds of texts and speeches); strategy competence (knowing how to communicate to overcome the limitations of different interlocutors) (p. 99). Learners' communicative competence will be extended gradually through practice and experience all aspects of language knowledge. In learning process, the four components must be improved in parallel, not in separated.

How learners learn a language?

The seven suggestions formulated by Richards (2006) should be noted. They are (1) Practicing and interacting with language users, (2) Collaborative creation of meaning, (3) Creating a meaningful and purposeful context, (4) Discussing a phenomenon or a topic in life with the interlocutor, (5) Listening to feedbacks and correcting the mistakes, (6) Saying things in different ways, (7) Reforming the input information into a new form output. These learning practices are useful for learners who want to improve their communicative competence.

Kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning

i) Accuracy and Fluency Activities

There are two perspectives of teaching that aim to improve learners' language fluency use. One focuses on fluency and another focuses on accuracy in learning. Nilsson [8] (2012) reported that there are an overall increase in accuracy, fluency, self-confidence in both accuracy-based task and fluency-based task; however, only fluency-based task improve learners' motivation.

ii) Mechanical, Meaningful, and Communicative Practice

Mechanical Practice is a controlled practice activity that helps students learn language through repetition drills or substitution drills.

Meaningful Practice is a conditional activity that students can learn in a meaningful context with the reasonable choices of usage language items.

Communicative Practice Activity is based on a real communicative context with discussing and giving opinions about open-ended topics. By practice, learners can be flexible and confident to face with unpredictable language circumstance.

iii) Information Gap Activities

In real communication, people often interact with others to know the new information. They must use their own language knowledge to get the purpose of communication. It requires more and more authentic communication in classroom - information gap activities.

Jigsaw activities are founded on information gap principle with group work and mixing members in each group together. Every member in groups is got a part of available information; then they try to communicate with other members to order their piece in the whole information correctly.

iv) Many other activity types have been used in CLT

Task-completion activities: fun activities such as puzzles, games, map-reading by using one's language resources to complete a task.

Information-gathering activities: activities aim to collect information by using target language such as student-conducted surveys, interviews, and searches.

Opinion-sharing activities: students share their own opinion or belief, compare values.

Information-transfer activities: activities that students have to represent the given information in a different form.

Reasoning-gap activities: students are required to think about the given information, interfere and find out the rules of reasons and results.

Besides that, there are many facilitate activities in a CLT classroom. Richards (2006) proves that pair and group work brings to learners some advantages such as learning from hearing their partner or members in group, using language naturally and frequently more than interact in front of the whole class and their teachers, increasing their motivation and fluency (p. 20). Ladousse [9] (1987) explained one of reasons to use role play is that role

play helps students to minimize self-inferior, role play is fun and role play can develop fluency in language. Manalullaili [10] (2015) noted in her paper *Applying Communicative Language Teaching in Teaching English for Foreign language Learners*, "role play might motivate students who are shy or silence in learning process" (p. 3). According to Liu & Ding [11] (2009), "role-play is an effective technique to animate the teaching and learning atmosphere, arouse the interests of learners, and make the language acquisition impressive" (p. 140).

The roles of teachers and learners in the classroom

The roles of teachers and learners in CLT classroom have been moving from teacher-centered teaching to learner-centered teaching. In particular, the teacher is a facilitator to support students' learning, a counselor to give useful advice, a manager to control classroom activities and a collaborator to interact with their students. Teachers not only give instruction but also give more chances for learners to develop their own roles optimally. Learners are participants who have to cooperate with teachers and others in classroom, interact with others in pair or group work.

2.2 Previous studies

A study by Doan & Utsumi [12] (2008) described the practice of CLT from five universities in Vietnam using mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative). A survey was conducted on teachers and students to achieve quantitative data. The researcher used teacher and student focus groups, individual interviews and classroom observations to collect the qualitative data. Teachers reported that traditional practices were still used in classrooms across the five universities and Communicative Language Teaching starts a shift in teaching practices. Most of teachers used combination practices which were gradually arranged from teacher-centered practices to student-centered practices. Otherwise, students reported that mostly traditional practices were used in their classrooms and they did not think that there was a shift in communicative language teaching. Both teachers and students reported about challenges on teaching and learning a language. The researchers also suggested to teachers, learners and administrators the solutions on teaching practices, university curriculum, policy, etc.

In line with Doan & Utsumi (2008), Kieu [13] (2010) investigated the traditional use of mother tongue in English classes at three universities in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam. The participants included 12 Vietnamese teachers of English who responded the questionnaire on teacher respondents' attitudes toward the use of Vietnamese in ELT in Vietnam; four teachers among them participated in a semi-structure interview for the detailed explanations for the answers on the questionnaire. Findings of studies were that (1) all of participants agreed that Vietnamese was an important part of language teaching, and should be used in explaining grammatical points, new words, and checking for understanding, (2) Vietnamese should not be overused. The study by Nguyen [14] (2012) examined the collaborative learning in Vietnamese Universities using in-depth interviews and focus groups, observations and video recording the classrooms, and questionnaire. All subjects under the study were 35 teachers and 450 students (both English-major students and non- English major students) in environment of university. The findings of study showed that (1) majority of participants worked in pair/group in English classroom, over a half of classes had pair/group work, (2) many students worked in pair/group outside classroom, (3) many teachers organized pair/group work after class time for their students, (4) many students liked working in pair/group, and perceived these activities are useful, (5) most of participants supported students to work in pair/group in English learning. In an overall view, teachers and students intended to be willing and interest in pair or group work in teaching and learning English.

Mai & Iwashita [15] (2012) compared the responses between 37 teachers and 88 university pre-intermediate to intermediate learners of English. Both teachers and students under the study had favorable attitudes toward CLT; however, teachers were less positive than students in pair/group works. Researchers suggested that before choosing teaching method, teachers should hear from their learners. A recent study by Nguyen [16] (2015) stated that there were many factors affecting English teaching and learning: facilities and equipment, curriculum, leadership, teaching, and students' attitudes and motivation. Besides that, there were some difficulties in deeply using CLT as well as its principles. Participants were 330 students and 12 Vietnamese teachers of English and 2 managers. Nguyen collected the research data by using mixed methods such as the questionnaire with the students, the interview with teachers and managers, and classroom observation. The study showed that: Learners and teachers were satisfied with the facilities and equipment in the school. All of participants had positive attitudes towards the syllabus despite of some limitations. Teachers said that they applied CLT in classroom, but it was not real in what they do. Teachers also said that time allocated for English was not enough to focus on teaching communication whereas managers thought that it was enough for teachers; Students felt bored in long class time. All student and teachers under study agreed that the use of English in instructive process improved students' English abilities. Lack of foreign teachers did not provide students' opportunities to familiarize with different accents and ways of English speaking. Students' awareness of self-studying was still not high.

III. Methodology

3.1 Context and participants of study

The study was conducted at Can Tho University (CTU) in semester 2, academic year 2015 - 2016. The data were collected at CTU dormitory. In the context of Can Tho University, teaching and learning English are concerned. Students are expected to improve communication skills and get level B1 before graduation. In the context of credit point system and policy of Can Tho University, before starting the first semester, new students have to take an entered English exam (80 multiple choices question) to classify into the suitable GE class. Participants were 217 non-English major students who belong to 58 majors of 15 academic units at Can Tho University, and they participated in at least one GE course (GE 1, GE 2 and GE 3) in previous semesters. The ages of participants were from 18 to 25 (55.8% females and 44.2% males), distributing from course 37 to course 41. Participants were mainly 21 years old (44.2 %) and 20 years old (26.7 %). A majority of participants came from School of Education (29%). Over 75% of the participants have learned English 7 years before they entered the university. Nearly 40% of participants did not know about CLT in teaching and learning languages. Over 30% of participants did not like CLT method in language classrooms. Almost students under study (97.2%) reported that they have an awareness of the importance of foreign languages for their major and future career. Over 27% of students under study do not have any plan to improve their English skill for level B1. Since 2008, the Government approved the 2020 Project, but its spread was not extensive. In fact, about 73% of participants do not know about the Project.

3.2 Research questions

1. To what extent do teachers use communicative language teaching in General English courses at Can Tho University?
2. What are the CTU non-English major learners' expectations of a successful language classroom?

3.3 Research design

This was a cross-sectional study. The research was conducted to collect both quantitative and qualitative data by using a questionnaire. The quantitative data was collected through 30 questions about frequency of using CLT in GE classroom, questions about students' assessments on frequency of teachers' English using in their GE class, 5 yes/no questions about students' perceptions on CLT, 2020 Project, and the importance of learning language. Besides that, there were students' self-assessments on four English skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) based on 10 point scale. At the end of the questionnaire, three open-ended questions allowed students answering based on their own point of view about their expectation on an effective EFL classroom. The frequency of usage scale (Fig 1) was used as a convention to collate with the numbers obtained.

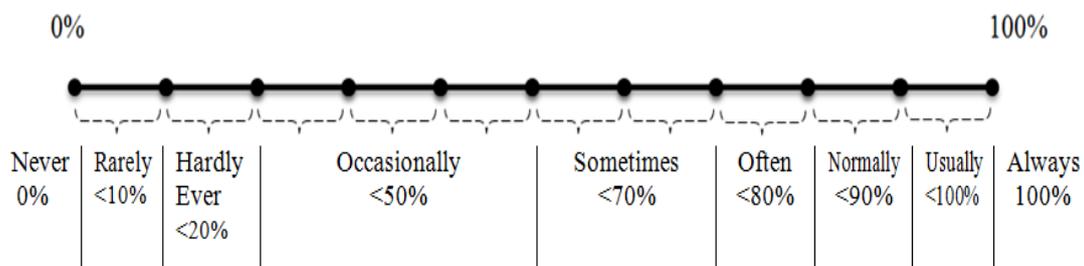


Fig 1. Frequency of usage scale

The questionnaire was designed based on theory in the book "Communicative Language Teaching Today", written by Richards (2006), and the research questions were stated.

3.4 Data analysis

Among 241 paper copies of questionnaire that students gave back, 24 papers were excluded due to incomplete data. The questionnaire was reliable with Cronbach's α for all variables = .93. Item 24 was excluded, because its Corrected Item-Total Correlation values were lower than .3. The Cronbach's α is .787 for the roles of teacher, .718 for types of CLT practice, .741 for pair/group work, .837 for role play, .700 for textbook, and .864 for other activities in GE classes. Data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics. The response frequency, mean, and standard deviation were described in order to evaluate the frequency of using CLT in GE classes. In addition, the frequency of using English and Vietnamese in GE classes of teachers, the progress students through their self-assessment before and after completing the GE courses were counted. The students' expectations on an effective EFL class were listed.

IV. Results

4.1 The extent teachers use communicative language teaching in General English courses at Can Tho University

Table 1. Frequency of using CLT principles in General English classrooms at Can Tho University (%)

| | Item | Frequency (%) | Standard Deviation | Average (%) |
|-------------------------|---|---------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Roles of teachers | My GE teachers have facilitated to communicate with English language in classroom. | 68.72 | 23.42 | 74.14 |
| | My GE teachers have practiced first as a sample for students to follow them. | 73.18 | 22.75 | |
| | My GE teachers have given the advices, made suggestions, corrected students' mistakes and given instructions. | 79.09 | 22.30 | |
| | My GE teachers have taught the grammatical contents (grammar, phonetics, vocabulary). | 83.96 | 19.78 | |
| | My GE teachers have required their students to practice sentences in a dialogue using correct phonetics and grammar. | 65.77 | 27.17 | |
| CLT practices | My GE teachers have asked students to do mechanical exercises with vocabulary, grammar points, and phonetics (for examples: read and write vocabulary, verb tense exercises, etc.). | 68.71 | 26.83 | 60.45 |
| | My GE teachers have given many types of exercises which allow students choose the answers from available information (for examples: fill in the blank with suitable words/phrases). | 71.57 | 24.83 | |
| | My GE teachers have required their students communicate with real communicative situations. | 54.84 | 30.85 | |
| | My GE teachers have required an open-ended discussion (unlimited topics). | 46.70 | 33.28 | |
| Pair/Group Work | My GE teachers have divided the class members into pair/group work. | 81.84 | 21.64 | 64.96 |
| | My GE teachers have exchanged the group members. | 36.73 | 34.58 | |
| | I can learn English from listening to my partner/group members. | 62.97 | 28.75 | |
| | I can use English to discuss when I work in pair/group more easily than I practice in front of the class with teachers. | 67.53 | 25.02 | |
| | My learning motivation increases when using pair/group work in class. | 69.76 | 24.97 | |
| | My fluency in using English increases when pair/group works are frequently used in class. | 70.92 | 24.15 | |
| Role play | My GE teachers have given opportunities for students to practice role play. | 45.80 | 32.90 | 48.16 |
| | In role play activities, students have had a discussion time to prepare before acting in front of class. | 50.53 | 35.88 | |
| Materials and Textbooks | My GE teachers use other materials out of textbooks. | 43.92 | 32.99 | 57.30 |
| | Learning materials include many group activities. | 53.92 | 31.51 | |
| | Textbooks offer cultural information about communicative English. | 67.83 | 27.26 | |
| | Textbooks are interesting and motivating for learners. | 63.54 | 26.90 | |
| Other Activities | Students express information in their own vocabulary and grammar in class. | 45.99 | 33.74 | 43.51 |
| | There are many fun activities such as puzzles, games, map-reading by using English. | 42.60 | 34.73 | |
| | There are small surveys or interviews among students in class. | 49.17 | 34.65 | |
| | There are some discussions to compare values, opinions, or beliefs in class (for an example: compare and contrast between being on a diet and doing physical exercises to lose weight, which is better). | 39.50 | 32.61 | |
| | In class, there are activities that students have to represent the information in a different form (for an example: the given information is in table type, students have to reform it in a presentation type). | 36.60 | 32.39 | |
| | There are many reasoning-gap activities in class (for an example: based on the teachers' schedule, we can infer to the students' timetable). | 31.71 | 32.77 | |
| | Students handle situations from available information and clues. | 57.12 | 32.52 | |
| | My GE teachers ask students to share their opinions at the end of the class. | 45.37 | 34.81 | |
| Average (%) | | 57.79 | 29.17 | |

In general, the frequency of using CLT principles in GE classroom via 29 items in table 2 is at level "sometimes" (57.79%, Std. Deviation = 29.17). In particular, the roles of teachers and pair/group work were assessed positively at 74.14% (Std. Deviation = 23.09) and 64.96% (Std. Deviation = 26.52) respectively; while frequency of using other activities and role play were assessed at the level "occasionally" (lower than 50%).

CLT practices (60.45%) and materials, textbooks (57.3%) were sometime used in GE classroom. Nevertheless, all standard deviations of these are quite high, and the maximum and minimum are very different. There is an uneven in applying CLT.

How frequently do teachers use English in General English classrooms?

In overall view, GE teachers use English in listening, speaking, reading, writing activities more frequently than Vietnamese (57.04% - 42.96%). In listening activities, the mean percentage of frequency of English usage is 58.18%. In speaking and reading activities, the frequencies of English usage are about twice as much as the frequencies of Vietnamese usage. In writing activities, the frequency of English usage is a little bit more than the frequency of Vietnamese usage (51.43% and 48.57% respectively). However, when instructing other activities, GE teachers use Vietnamese a little bit more frequently than English with 53.26%.

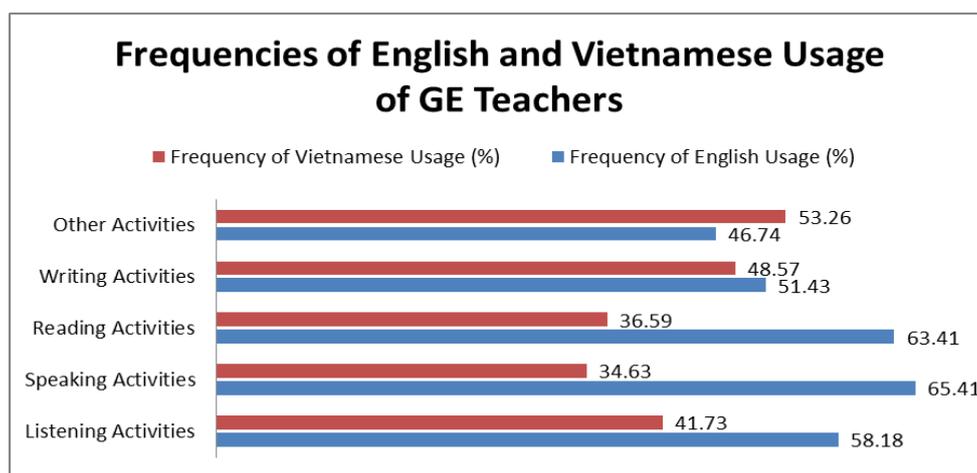


Fig 2. The Frequencies of English and Vietnamese Usage of GE teachers

4.2 CTU non-English major learners' expectations of a successful language classroom?

The results of three open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire will be shown one by one. While the response rates of entire sections of the questionnaire are 100%, the response rates of these three questions are lower. Among 217 participants, there are 186 answers for question 1 (85.71%), 151 answers question 2 (69.59%), and 179 answers for question 3 (82.49%). The answers were agreed by many students would be listed.

Question 1: Which things do you **LIKE** about teachers' teaching method in the General English classes you have learnt?

There are 122 responses related to teachers that make them feel interested in the GE classes they have learnt. Thirty seven students (19.89%) said that they like an enthusiastic teacher. A teacher who can create a comfortable, friendly, happy and humorous atmosphere is also liked by 19.89% of students among 186 participants in this question. Eighteen students (9.68%) reported that they prefer to teachers' method which is easy to understand, their teachers usually use English in classroom and are willing to give feedbacks and advices for students, correct the mistakes, instruct and answer students' questions anytime. Seventy one students (38.17%) express their interests in pair or group work, 11.29% students like communicative activities. Twelve students (6.45%) said that they like many games in their past GE classrooms. Watching English videos and listening to English music are also the attractive activities for some of students. Besides that, there are some activities that are agreed by a few students such as drilling tasks, role play, repeating vocabulary.

There are two opposite opinions about the materials. One student likes sticking the textbooks throughout the course, while another student likes using other materials besides textbooks. It makes a little confusion; however, this is just a personal view.

Question 2: Which things do you **DISLIKE** about teachers' teaching method in the General English classes you have learnt?

In this question, 151 students express their dissatisfaction on the teachers, the activities, the learning contents as well as other factors in GE class they have learnt.

There are 78 students who complaint about their teachers. There are 22 students (14.57% of students responded to question 2) who complaint that their teachers teach very fast, so they can not follow to the lessons. Over 9% of responses showed that students do not like a teacher with an inflexible teaching style. Some students said that their teachers usually speak English in class. This causes difficulties for students who are weak on listening skills. Otherwise, some students said that their teachers use Vietnamese more frequently, so they expect to their teachers speak English more often.

There are 31 students who reported about activities in GE classroom they dislike. In specific, 18 participants said that practicing activities for communication skills are very few. Some participants also told that their GE classes do not have many pair/group work, practical and creative activities, and games. That mean students need to have more these kinds of activities in their classroom. However, some students do not like writing and listening activities. Others think that there are too much exercises, and games in their classroom. The learning contents are reported by 36 students. There are 24 participants (15.89%) who said that they do not like sticking to the textbooks too much. Moreover, they do not like the non-practical contents as well as a non-focusing on grammar and vocabulary content. Nine students reported about other factors that they do not like in their GE classes. Some students reported that they study fast, but forget fast. They feel bored when they come to the class, while some feel that the class time is not enough to go through all of necessary knowledge. A few students said that examination and testing put the pressure on them.

Question 3: How is a teaching and learning a foreign language method that you prefer? (Clues: What are roles of teachers? What are roles of students? What activities do you like in class?).

This question received the responses from 179 students.

What are roles of teachers?

Sixty one participants (34.08%) expected teachers to be willing to communicate, instruct, and correct students' mistakes, give suggestions, and supporting them with the enthusiasm. 11.17% of students who responded this question like a teacher who is happy, friendly, comfortable and opening with students. Students also expected teachers to use English more often in class. Besides that, they want to hear the learning experience as well as learning method from their teachers.

What are roles of students?

Forty eight participants stated that students should be active, positive in learning process and be willing to volunteer in most of classroom activities. Some participants appreciated the self-study ability of learners and cooperation in classroom.

What activities do students like in class?

Discussing, presenting, working in pair or group were supported by 49 participants (27.37%), followed by communication activities with 40 agreements (22.35%). Many students supported entertaining activities in class such as telling story, playing games, crosswords. Some students cared about interaction between teachers and learners.

The answers which were supported by many students can be listed as follow:

Table 2. Students' expectation on an EFL classroom

| Roles of teachers | Roles of students | Activities in class |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An enthusiastic facilitator, counselor, and monitor. - Being happy and comfortable, opening with students -Using English more often in class - Sharing experience/Instructing learning method | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active, positive in learning and volunteering - Cooperating and learning seriously - Self-studying - Practicing communication - Hard-studying | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working in pair/group - Many communication activities - Telling story, playing games, and having many entertaining activities - Interaction between teacher and learners |

4.3 Students' self-assessment

Over 90% of participants reported that they made progress in their English skills after completing General English courses. As can be seen in Table 3, the gain scores of four English skills showed that there is a positive improvement after taking the GE courses. The highest gain score goes to Speaking skill (2.02 gain points) and the lowest gain score is for Reading skill (1.74 gain points).

Table 3. Students' scores before and after taking part in the GE courses

| | Before | After | Gain score |
|-----------|--------|-------|------------|
| Listening | 3.77 | 5.69 | 1.92 |
| Speaking | 4.10 | 6.12 | 2.02 |
| Reading | 5.32 | 7.07 | 1.74 |
| Writing | 4.11 | 5.96 | 1.85 |

V. Discussion And Conclusion

In summary, the study is conducted on the implementation of CLT at Can Tho University via a questionnaire on frequency of using CLT in GE classrooms. Questionnaire is delivered to students who have learnt at least one GE course. The quantitative and qualitative data were collected from 217 participants. Findings of study are as follow: (1) Teachers sometimes use CLT activities in class, (2) teachers use both English and Vietnamese in their GE classes (50%-50%), (3) students make progress, but not much, after GE courses in terms of language skills, (4) students expect their teachers to be more enthusiastic and friendly, use English more often in classroom, and be willing to share learning method; many participants agree that students

should be more active, cooperating and hard study; they also suggest to increase more pair/group works, communication activities and entertaining activities. Firstly, in the actual situation, CLT is not often used. Therefore, the effects of this teaching method are not maximized. Manalullaili (2015) also stated that "applying CLT in English language teaching is not easy" (p. 6). She indicated the problems are many non-proficient teachers in teaching English, lack of facilities (p. 7). In my opinion, there were many factors impact on CLT applying. Some can be listed: the levels of students are different, this causes difficulty to apply CLT activities in a class; teachers do not have enough time to teach all contents in the curriculum, so they omit the CLT activities to make sure all of learning contents are scanned; some students who are familiar with traditional teaching method do not adapt to a new method.

Secondly, using 90-100% English in EFL classroom in Vietnam is very difficult because students do not understand all of teachers' talks. Therefore, Vietnamese should be used in a logical way. Kieu (2010) stated that "Vietnamese (L1) is not overused and its use is adapted to the context of each class, it (L1) could be seen as an efficient tool in the ELT classroom" (P. 125). She also suggested that Vietnamese should only use in explaining new words, especially terminologies and abstract words. In my study, some participants also reported that they want to hear more English from teachers, but they need teachers to translate into Vietnamese for some difficult parts. Moreover, I suggest that teachers should decide how and when they should use English and mother tongue to best facilitate teaching and learning English. For an example, they can use the target language depend on the level of the course. This requires teachers must be well trained the pedagogical skills. Thirdly, students made progress, but not much, after GE courses in terms of language skills. This means GE courses seemly do not work effectively. Besides applying teaching method, teachers should listen to students' voice. In reality, students have their expectations on an effective EFL classroom. Students always hope their teachers to be more enthusiastic and friendly. In a study of Wood [17] (1998), she stated that "teacher enthusiasm produces significant effects on student motivation, student attention, and student memory encoding" (p. 130). Teachers should be prepared to play many roles in classroom. Sometimes, they are facilitators, counselors to give instructions, advices. Sometimes, they can be participants, collaborators to join in classroom's activities with their students. In fact, students really want to hear their teachers speak English more often in classroom. Some students suggested that teachers should be willing to share their own experience in learning English. Many participants agree that students should be more active, cooperating and hard study; they also suggest more pair/group works, communication activities and entertaining activities.

Regarding to applying both traditional method and CLT, I think it is suitable for new students who are familiar with grammar-translation method. These students need a preparation to approach a new method. Moreover, teachers should tell their students about teaching method before starting the course. An introduction about the learning and teaching method at first class time helps students know what they should do in class to achieved goals of learning English, so they will cooperate with teachers and other students easily. The government should not only spread the 2020 project to students, teachers but also promote investing in facilities to serve teaching and learning English at vocational schools, colleges, universities effectively. Education administrators could control the amount of class time which is appropriate with frequency of using CLT in classroom.

VI. Limitations And Suggestions For Furtherresearch

One limitation of the current study is that using only one instrument (a questionnaire) to collect the data. In addition, this study is a cross-sectional study which did not report years of applying CLT. The number of participants is limited, and unbalanced between male and female. I suggest in further study, researcher should use mix method with both teachers and students and balance the number of participants.

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Appendix

Questionnaire on frequency of using CLT in General English Classes at Can Tho University

PART I: Student's background information

Please fill in the following background information:

NON-COMPULSORY information:

- 1. Full name: _____
- 2. Student's code: _____

COMPULSORY information:

- 1. Age: _____
 - 2. Gender: _____
 - 3. Major: _____
 - 4. Academic Course: _____
 - 5. At which grade did you start to learn English? _____
 - 6. Which General English courses have you learned? (Please tick (✓) the appropriate box).
- General English 1 General English 2 General English 3

PART II: Student's assessments on frequency of using CLT in General English Classes

Section A: Please evaluate the frequency of using following activities in your General English (GE) classes, based on the scale from 0% (never use) to 100% (always use).

| Statement | Assessment (%) |
|---|----------------|
| 1. My GE teachers have facilitated to communicate with English language in classroom. | |
| 2. My GE teachers have practiced first as a sample for students to follow them. | |
| 3. My GE teachers have given the advices, made suggestions, corrected students' mistakes and given instructions. | |
| 4. My GE teachers have taught the grammatical contents (grammar, phonetics, vocabulary). | |
| 5. GE teachers have divided the class members into pair/group work. | |
| 6. GE teachers have given opportunities for students to practice role play. | |
| 7. In role play activities, students have had a discussion time to prepare before acting in front of class. | |
| 8. My GE teachers have required their students to practice sentences in a dialogue using correct phonetics and grammar. | |
| 9. My GE teachers have asked students to do mechanical exercises with vocabulary, grammar points, and phonetics (for examples: read and write vocabulary, verb tense exercises, etc.). | |
| 10. My GE teachers have given many types of exercises which allow students choose the answers from available information (for examples: fill in the blank with suitable words/phrases). | |
| 11. My GE teachers have required their students communicate with real communicative situations. | |
| 12. My GE teachers have required an open-ended discussion (unlimited topics). | |
| 13. My GE teachers use other materials out of textbooks. | |
| 14. Students express information in their own vocabulary and grammar in class. | |
| 15. My GE teachers have exchanged the group members. | |
| 16. There are many fun activities such as puzzles, games, map-reading by using English. | |
| 17. There are small surveys or interviews among students in class. | |
| 18. There are some discussions to compare values, opinions, or beliefs in class (for an example: compare and contrast between being on a diet and doing physical exercises to lose weight, which is better). | |
| 19. In class, there are activities that students have to represent the information in a different form (for an example: the given information is in table type, students have to reform it in a presentation type). | |
| 20. There are many reasoning-gap activities in class (for an example: based on the teachers' schedule, we can infer to the students' timetable). | |
| 21. Students handle situations from available information and clues. | |
| 22. My GE teachers ask students to share their opinions at the end of the class. | |
| 23. Learning materials include many group activities. | |
| 24. My GE teachers follow the textbooks when teaching in class. | |

| | |
|---|--|
| 25. Textbooks offer cultural information about communicative English. | |
| 26. Textbooks are interesting and motivating for learners. | |
| 27. I can learn English from listening to my partner/group members. | |
| 28. I can use English to discuss when I work in pair/group more easily than I practice in front of the class with teachers. | |
| 29. My learning motivation increases when using pair/group work in class. | |
| 30. My fluency in using English increases when pair/group works are frequently used in class. | |

Section B: Please evaluate the frequency of using English of your GE teachers in class (% English usage + % Vietnamese usage = 100%).

| | English (%) | Vietnamese (%) |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1/ When teaching listening | | |
| 2/ When teaching speaking | | |
| 3/ When teaching reading | | |
| 4/ When teaching writing | | |
| 5/ When instructing other activities | | |

Section C: Please circle the answer “Yes” or “No” for each of following questions.

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1/ Do you know about Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in teaching and learning languages? | Yes | No |
| 2/ Do you have an awareness of the importance of foreign languages for your major and your future career? | Yes | No |
| 3/ Have you been setting up a plan to practice English for the target level B1 before graduation? | Yes | No |
| 4/ Do you like CLT method in teaching and learning languages? | Yes | No |
| 5/ Do you know about the Project “Teaching and learning foreign languages in national education system, period 2008 – 2020”? | Yes | No |

Section D: After completing the 03 GE courses, do your English skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) have any improvement? _____

Please give your self-assessments on your English skills with 10 points scale (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) before and after participating in GE courses.

| Skill | Before taking part in GE courses | After taking part in GE courses |
|-----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Listening | /10 _____ | /10 _____ |
| Speaking | /10 _____ | /10 _____ |
| Reading | /10 _____ | /10 _____ |
| Writing | /10 _____ | /10 _____ |

Which things do you **LIKE** about teachers’ teaching method in the General English classes you have learnt?

Which things do you **DISLIKE** about teachers’ teaching method in the General English classes you have learnt??

How is a teaching and learning foreign language method that you prefer? (Clues: What are roles of teachers? What are roles of students? What activities do you like in class?).

Sincerely thank you for your time to complete this questionnaire!