The Non-effectiveness of the Communicative Language Teaching
Approach (CLT) in the Teaching and Learning of English as a Second
Language (ESL) in Selected Black High Schools in Lower Umfolozi
District in KwaZulu-Natal.

By

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DEDICATION

TO

MY MOTHER
Mrs Minah Tomkulu MaDlamini Motsoeneng

(She has been the source of my inspiration and a pillar against which I always leaned, particularly during hard-times)

Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

December 2003

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W.S. Motsoeneng

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ABSTRACT

In South Africa, the competent use of English confers
significant social advantages, and competent speakers
of this language have greater opportunities for self-
advancement (Mgqwashu, 1999: 4).

The above assertion by Mgqwashu (1999) is still very much true. Although
the new political dispensation in South Africa has given "equal" status to
eleven languages, practically English still enjoys special rights it used to
enjoy in the old order, prior to 1994.

To cite but a few examples, English is still the official medium of instruction
in many South African schools, private or public. Huge knowledge or
information is inaccessible to many South Africans unless they are
competent in English. Job applications and interviews are carried out in this
language. When dealing with issues of national interest, government
officials use this language. They will argue that many South Africans and
ethnic groups can comprehend English. Thus, it is an "unbiased", "neutral",
"standard" and a "unifying", etc. language. It is, therefore, very much
unlikely that the South African president could one day deliver the State of
the nation Address in isiXhosa, seSotho or isiZulu.

Media institutions would rarely employ a person who cannot comprehend
English. Many of them - printing, radio stations and television channels -
have English as their main language.

One may cite commercials and interviews with the president on a national TV as examples. Even those media institutions that use other languages (not English), very often find themselves compromising their standards because of the influence of English.

What is discussed above is the undeniable situation of the country. Whether one views it as good or otherwise, the truth is, this is the status quo at the present moment. English has not only established itself as a national lingua franca, but it is also taking control globally, both in politics, economy and other social affairs.

The whole research in this study was based on the premise that, "with English you stand, and without English you fall", particularly in South Africa. Hence the utmost aim of this research work has been to come up with a teaching technique that would avert any "fall" of any South African.

The researcher was convinced that there was something wrong with the main existing teaching technique, the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) for failing to yield desired results after so many years it has been in place. Moreover, the time that the learners expend in learning the language (from grade one to grade twelve) is sufficient for them to have grasped and internalised a considerable knowledge and command of English, particularly at matric level. Consequently, the study had to examine the CLT approach thoroughly, before anything could be recommended.

The researcher is of the conviction that, although English was sometimes referred to as a "neutral" language, it is not always so with Black South African learners, especially in Black rural schools. In some instances English has been seen as a barrier to some learners' possible success. The Black High schools where this research was conducted have attested to this statement.

Considering the magnitudinal role of English already discussed, one could not dispute the fact that learners to whom English is a second language (ESL) are not competing from an equal footing with their English native speaking counterparts. The former are usually held back whilst the latter are put a step ahead by the status of the language.

All the above mentioned facts should lay a profound reason for the introduction of the best possible ever teaching technique. One could only hope that this piece of work will make a positive difference for the disadvantaged learners to be assisted.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The interest to conduct the study on the Communicative Language Teaching approach emanated from several factors. Basically there is one major problem that has been observed in secondary schools in the Northern Coast of KwaZulu Natal. That is, the inability of learners to communicate in English effectively in both the spoken and written form. Even the learners in senior grades eleven and twelve, are victims of this problem. It should be noted that these learners have been learning English since their primary education. This could have stemmed from the large use of isiZulu amongst learners and teachers alike. The monolingual usage of isiZulu means that English is hardly ever used inside as well as outside classrooms. The reason that prompted the researcher to embark on the study was that he himself was an educator and so he witnessed this unfortunate situation almost daily. Besides, he too, as a researcher had undergone this type of learning during his primary and secondary school education. As a researcher he then realised that unless one did something more than just being a teacher, this situation would remain as it has been for many years to come. The researcher thus vividly remembered his own days at school, that he would have not made it in English, particularly, if it had not been his own interest, dedication and commitment to use the target language in

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schoolwork. And that could be attributed largely to the fact that the youth then was not exposed to so many other social activities as today's youth seem to be. In short, the time that was there was largely devoted to learning.

Looking at today's youth who apparently give very little of their time to learning, one felt that the situation might be aggravated. As a result, the researcher was convinced that the most effective teaching method has to be acquired. In addition to this, the researcher was also struck by the alarming failure rate in English as a second language (ESL) by learners in the north of KwaZulu Natal. A considerable number of learners, at grade twelve, registered English at a higher grade (level) in the beginning of each year, but at the end of it they either failed dismally, or passed merely by obtaining a pass that was converted to standard or lower grade symbol. As a result of this one quickly became interested in exploring what the cause or causes of this state of affairs might be.

Research by several people has also influenced the conduct of this study. For example, research by Mrubata (1997) shows that first year students at tertiary institutions have difficulty in comprehending English, the sole language that is still used as a medium of instruction in higher education in many of these institutions. This problem, most unfortunately, affects students who come from schools which were previously disadvantaged educationally. Such schools include the ones where this survey was conducted. Citing Foggin (1991) Ndlovu (1993) also confirms this problem of first year students in tertiary institutions that:

Black first year students from disadvantaged backgrounds, have very limited repertoire of language thinking skills on their arrival at the university of Durban-Westville (Ndlovu, 1993: 22).

Citing Nuttall and Murray (1986) Ndlovu (1993) raises a very crucial point, too:

Pupils in Black schools in South Africa spend many hundreds of hours over a number of years attending classes in second language, and yet the successes of these learners in acquiring communicative competence in these languages is extremely modest, and are certainly not commensurate with the time and effort expended on language teaching programmes (Ndlovu,1993: 23).

Thus any teacher with a conscience, and teaching in these Black schools, would not be only worried by these findings, but would go a step further, to do something to have the situation investigated, hence the intention of this study. The focus of the study was on the learning of English as a second language. The area of concern that was closely examined, is the communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT). This is the central technique that is widely accepted and used by many teachers as the tool for teaching a second language to increase communication, both in speech and in the learners' written work.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem, as it was alluded to in the previous subheading, is the inability of learners, particularly learners in grades eleven and twelve to use English and apply rules of the English language correctly. This is particularly

manifested in their spoken and written English. At this stage of their education, a considerable number of these learners can generally not construct an English sentence which is grammatically correct. As observed above, this is despite the several years that learners have spent learning through English as the central medium of instruction. Very often a sentence will not only be incorrect, but it will also be difficult for one to follow what it means. This problem, one feels, must be given an equally deserving attention, considering the fact that these learners are expected to write their examinations in English and obtain a pass through its usage, mainly in their written communication.

This status quo raises some questions: How do these learners comprehend instructions and questions in other subjects (learning areas), since English is the medium of instruction for these learners? Does English, perhaps, play a negative role in the learners' education? Does it contribute to the general underperformance of learners in their school work? What is more worrying about this issue is that the problem is mainly in Black schools. It does not seem to be the case with schools previously known as Model C schools.

It should be mentioned that the exploration of teaching and learning in this study was carried out in relation to the observation that unless the learners are carefully taught the structure and practise the rules of use, the prognosis for claiming to be taught through the Communicative Language Teaching approach seems rather a fallacious way of equipping learners with communicative language skills.

1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to find out why the Communicative Language Teaching approach as the main technique to language learning and teaching is not yielding the expected results at matric level, particularly that this is the exit point from school. In the light of this, the study aimed at identifying the cause(s) of poor performance in English classes at high school level. This was conducted in selected Black high schools in the north coast of KwaZulu Natal.

Part of the aim of the study was also to (discover or) consider possible solutions, if any, that could attempt to address the current unfortunate state of affairs.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It was hoped that the research would attempt to bring forth to teachers, learners and education authorities at large what could be done to improve the learning and teaching situation of English as a second language in the area. Moreover, it was observed that the study was likely to raise questions on certain aspects of language learning and teaching, which would then call for further research. This is in order to improve the present situation. It is hoped that this would go some way towards developing language and teaching, and subsequently to the development of language acquisition as a whole amongst ESL learners in the area concerned.

One also believes that the academic progress of ESL learners is directly premised on their sound language proficiency and competence in the medium of instruction at a higher level, which is English. In this light the suggestions and recommendations made by this study might be found useful by all interested parties.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The main aim of this chapter is to give a literature review of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. However, the chapter starts by giving a brief history of some major foreign language teaching methods that were used before CLT emerged. It would, indeed, be necessary to know what was going on before the adoption of CLT. These methods used for teaching included the Grammar Translation, the Direct and Audiolingual, as well as the Oral Approach which is also known as the Situational Language Teaching approach (SLT).

2.1   THE GRAMMAR – TRANSLATION METHOD.

The Grammar-Translation method dominated European foreign language teaching from the 1840s to the 1940s. Its purpose (of language teaching and learning) was mainly to translate sentences and texts into and out of a foreign language. Under this method, classroom instructions were given exclusively in the learners' vernacular. The learners were never viewed as active participants of the lessons. They were always urged only to memorise given sentences.

In the middle of the twentieth century, the Grammar-Translation Method came under severe criticism because of its lack of applied linguistic theory (Richards and Rodgers 1986: 4-5).

2.2 THE DIRECT METHOD

The direct method became the first method to acknowledge the world outside the classroom because it attempted to enforce "communication" amongst learners, and it emphasized the exclusive use of the target language in classrooms. Although grammar and pronunciation were stressed, these language aspects were not taught explicitly. They were deduced by learners from concrete situations. The Direct Method was also known as the "total immersion" approach since it strongly stated that the learners' native language/s did not have to be used for communicating with them (learners).

In the mid-twentieth century the Direct Method began fading away, and several reasons were given for that. Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1991:10) argue that "the course was too loosely structured, and learners were presented with grammatical items in a very haphazard fashion". Besides being baseless, for it lacked linguistic theory, the method depended largely on the teachers' skills and abilities as if all teachers were proficient enough in its principles.

2.3 THE ORAL APPROACH OR SITUATIONAL LANGUAGE TEACHING

As the Direct Method was gradually fading away, British advocates for the Situational Language Teaching (SLT) like Palmer, (1917, 1921) Hornby, (1954) and others felt that English grammatical structures had to be systematised or graded into sentence patterns to help learners internalise the rules of English sentence structure. As a result, the first ever dictionary for

students of English as a foreign language was published soon in 1953. Its aim was to have the classification of English sentence patterns incorporated and developed by linguists. Consequently, several other books with analysed classified English features were produced.

From this (SLT), a language teaching method was born called Audiolingual Method.

2.4 THE AUDIOLINGUAL METHOD

Below are the major features defining the Audiolingual Method. Items of grammar had to be systematised and graded. Nothing could be presented in any language skill if it had not been heard before. That is, language skills had to be taught in the following order: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Oral proficiency was equated with accurate pronunciation and grammar, and the ability to respond appropriately in speech situations.

A textbook was an indispensable teaching material because it always contained organized lessons planned around different grammatical structures. Pittman (1963), in Richards and Rodgers (1986:39), is quoted as saying about the Audiolingual Method that, "The teacher is expected to be the master of his textbook".

The Audiolingual Method, too, viewed learners as passive organisms that had to imitate their teachers, repeat and memorise what they were told. Soon it was labeled as insufficient and ineffective, and it was thus replaced by a "method" or an "approach" that was to be known as Communicative Language Teaching.

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Basing one's argument on what Chomsky (1965) says, one should not be surprised by the failure of audiolingualism. Chomsky (1965) asserts that sentences are not learned by imitation and repetition, but are "generated" from the learner's underlying "competence". That is, a sentence is always an invention by a speaker or its writer, and its correctness is determined by the knowledge of grammatical rules the speaker or writer has already internalised.

2.5 THE COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING APPROACH

The Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) dates back to the 1960's. Several community factors prompted change in the teaching and learning methods of additional or target languages. The methods discussed previously had failed to produce desired results. The British had begun to emphasise the functional and communicative potential of language. The staunch CLT supporting linguists like Henry Widdowson (1979, 1983) and Chris Candlin (1976) drew heavily on the views of fundamental linguists such as Firth (1957) and Halliday (1970). They even referred to American linguists like Dell Hymes (1972) and John Gumperz (1972).

The establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC), currently known as the European Community (EC), saw European countries becoming interdependent and thus held the view of having an inter-communication amongst adults in particular. This made linguists like Van Ek and Alexander (1980) to come up with "Threshold Level" as a fundamental course in the new teaching methods, and in 1976 David Wilkins produced *Notional Syllabuses* which further developed CLT.

With the establishment of the International Association of Applied Linguists, communicative teaching ideas spread to other parts of the world. A new approach, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), was adopted both nationally and internationally. As a result, in the 1960s all the proposed methods of language teaching had fallen into disfavor. All the other methods had been portrayed as ineffective in many ways. Both American and British proponents of Communicative Language Teaching Approach, saw it as an "approach" (not method) whose main aim was to develop the learner's communicative competence.The definition of "approach" and "method" in particular is given under the sub-heading "Definition of Terms". For now we only concentrate on what is entailed by this CLT approach.

2.5.1. SIGNIFICANT POINTS ABOUT CLT

As communication has always been seen as the desired product by many methods, CLT sees it as both the product and means (vehicle) to its attainment (product). That is, learners should not think that they will have to master grammatical rules before they can communicate. They should communicate simultaneously as they learn the rules. The implication here is that the knowledge of grammatical rules does not necessarily precede communication, or it is assumed that the learners in question have already internalized grammatical rules to a particular reasonable level that they can communicate. This approach (CLT) challenges the common knowledge that grammatical accuracy cannot be neglected or discarded if any form of written or spoken communication is to accurately convey what it intends to communicate. The Communicative Language Teaching approach

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recommends that all language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) be equally developed right from the initial stages of learning. Teachers are expected to model the language so that the learners will deduce the rules of grammar. However, grammar can also be taught explicitly if there is "a need".

The correction of learners' grammatical mistakes can either be totally neglected or done infrequently. But it is strongly discouraged. If it is done, it should not be immediate. At least it should be delayed. That is, a teacher can make a "generalised" comment on committed mistakes after learners have completed the given communication activity. It is believed that the immediate correction may increase anxiety and decrease self-confidence in the learner, and thus fail the whole communication endeavor. Most importantly, the error correction technique is recommended only if it is applied in remedial work once the normal way of teaching has proved to be unsuccessful.

In a CLT classroom, the teacher should not be the only source of knowledge. The teacher's responsibility should be to lay conducive conditions for communication activities to happen, and thus steer such activities to success. Besides, both the teacher and learners should be participants in any learning activity that is given. Furthermore, the teacher should know the learners' needs for the language before he or she introduces new aspects of language, and in a particular way. Knowing the needs entails knowing even the stages of learning the target language the learners are at. The CLT approach believes in the integration of functional and grammatical teaching. Neither the meaning nor grammatical rules are given an upper hand over the other. This foregoing statement could provoke some questions: Are the functions

and grammar really equal? The answer is arguably "no", because one can hardly construct a meaningful sentence unless one has grammar knowledge. The most significant characteristic of the Communicative Language Teaching approach is its broad aim of developing the learner's communicative competence.

2.5.2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

A. A method: In the 1960's when the CLT emerged, a common feeling amongst many linguists was that a "method" was restrictive and that there had to be a broader "approach" to language teaching (Kilfoil and Van der Walt, 1989). Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1989) see a "method" as a rigid procedure established and favoured the supporters of a specific view of language teaching and learning.

According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), in citing Anthony (1963), a "method" is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon the selected approach (Richards and Rodgers, 1986: 15).

In short, a method is stereotyped and it is likely to become obsolete with ever-changing times and conditions of teaching.

B. An approach: Richards and Rodgers (1986), in citing Anthony

(1963), define an "approach" as, a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning .... It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught (Richards and Rodgers, 1986: 15).

C. CLT : Ndlovu (1993) defines the CLT approach as "an umbrella term that encompasses a number of approaches that emphasise meaningful communication."

Unlike a method, an approach is comprehensive and it focuses more on the description of a phenomenon, language in this regard. That is, it looks at what a language incorporates, how and for what it should be used, which things have to be considered when it is being taught, and so on. Probably an approach assumes that with a thorough description of a phenomenon having been given, a teaching method could thus be easily decided upon by the teacher concerned. One could arguably say that it might not be an easy thing for anyone to recommend hard and fast rules for teaching since the Communicative Language Teaching approach comprises several features of different teaching methods and techniques.

D. Competence: According to Chomsky, (1965) "competence" is the person's cognitive knowledge of a language. Richards, J., et.al, (1985) define "competence" as a person's internalised grammar of a language. In Chomsky's terms the notion of 'competence' entails one's grammatical knowledge of a given language.

E. Performance: Chomsky (1965), defines "performance' as the actual use of language in concrete situations. That is, the way a person uses his or her internalised knowledge in producing and understanding sentences.

One should mention that other linguists disapprove of the separation of "competence" from "performance". Such linguists

include Widdowson (1973, 1979), Halliday (1975), Munby (1978), etc. Citing Munby (1978), Ndlovu (1993) argues:

Competence should refer to an understanding and production of utterances which are not so much grammatical, but more importantly appropriate in the context in which they are made (Ndlovu, 1993:28).

To avoid any misunderstanding in this dissertation, the researcher has opted for the separation of the two terms.

F. Communicative Competence: According to Dell Hymes (1971, 1974) "communicative competence" refers to the learner's ability not only to apply the grammatical rules of a language in order to construct grammatically correct sentences, but also to know when and where to use these sentences and with whom. In other words it refers to both knowledge of a language (by the performer) to use language within appropriate social contexts.

Halliday (1975) feels that "communicative competence" should embody other societal behaviours like the socio-semiotic approach, since in most societies the use of a language is complemented by some body movements or gestures. For example, among African cultures, particularly among the Zulu Nation, taking off one's hat while addressing an elderly person and not facing him or her straight in the eyes, is a common practice. Referring still to the same culture, if one gives something to another person, especially an elderly person, one has to use both hands, irrespective of the weight of the item being given. If one were to disregard body language in the above examples, one would have communicated

very (much) inappropriately, thereby displaying great disrespect. Lastly, Canale and Swain (1980) summarise "communicative competence" into four important dimensions:

(i) Grammatical Competence which refers to knowledge of grammatical rules.

(ii) Sociolinguistic Competence which refers to the use of language to the appropriate people and at the appropriate time.

(iii) Discourse Competence: Ability to discern and understand morphemes and phrases gathered and arranged coherently in a context.

(iv) Strategic Competence: All other means, besides words, that a communicator employs in order to get his or her message conveyed.

Briefly all the above definitions, under "communicative competence" say one thing but in different ways. Most importantly, neither of them discards the knowledge of grammar in the teaching and learning of a target language.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES USED TO COLLECT DATA

3.1 QUESTIONNAIRES

The prospective respondents were provided with questionnaires which comprised both fixed-choice and open-ended types of questions. Questions that were asked were determined by the kind of information they sought. In all cases the questionnaires were left with the respondents to look at carefully and answer them at their own time and pace. Therefore, one could say that the questionnaire method did manage to give respondents enough time to provide answers that were satisfactory through out. It would appear, therefore, that this method was able to lessen possible anxiety from the respondents as they were all by themselves when they wrote down their responses, unlike in a situation where interviewees would be responding in the presence of the researcher.

As a result, one could argue that the credibility of the answers that were given through this method should not be doubted. When the respondents gave the answers, they were not influenced by any nod, facial expression, or any other physical gesture from the researcher.

3.2 INTERVIEWS

The interviewer (researcher) and interviewees (the same respondents of the questionnaires) had verbal exchanges as well, which were mostly conducted in a face-to-face fashion. This method presented a chance to the researcher and respondents to elaborate on their questions and responses, respectively.

That is, the interview sessions allowed the two parties a chance to clarify what might not have been clear in the questionnaires. With the use of this method the researcher was able to understand the questionnaires' responses better, since the respondents could then add some of the things they had not mentioned previously. The omission of such things initially might have come as a result of several factors. First, it could have been the already mentioned factor, of possible vagueness or misinterpretation of questions. Second, it could have been due to the limited space that was provided in the questionnaire/s for answers, etc.

3.3 OBSERVATION OF LESSONS

The researcher himself went to schools to conduct his own observation of lessons as they actually took place. The initial intention was to observe lessons only, but once he was there, he could not help taking note of other interesting incidents. Why was this method so important for the gathering of data? The researcher deemed this method very significant for different reasons: He was not going to rely entirely on what the respondents said. It was felt that observation was essential as the researcher was able to note down what he saw before his own eyes, and that is what he did. The researcher wanted to ensure that the findings of his survey were not based on unseen responses. That is, the observation sessions managed to identify some mismatches between what the respondents had claimed and what the researcher witnessed.

The significance of the observation method is summarised by Richards and Rodgers (1986) as follows:

Gathering observational data (as opposed to descriptive data) is ..... more essential, since it provides a more accurate record of what actually occurred, relying as it does on an outsider's observations rather than on what the teacher thought occurred or should occur (Richards and Rodgers, 1986 : 161-162).

The researcher also checked learners' English language exercise books and portfolios. The main purpose of this was to establish the amount and type of work that had actually been taught (or learned) from January to May of the year of the survey, 2003. Moreover, this technique managed to reveal the teaching method/s that had been applied so far. As a result, the researcher could then make some comparison with the way a teacher could have behaved in these two different circumstances. The researcher had to find out if there was any difference on the way the lessons were conducted, and why it was done in this way. Could it be that teachers took extra precautional steps only when they knew they were going to be observed, and perhaps behaved otherwise when they were alone? A further inquiry in scrutinising learners' note-books was to establish if there was indeed comprehensible communication expressed in what learners had been asked to do with language in particular (language) tasks. This was in classroom exercises or work that had been assigned to pupils as part of their homework.

From the explanation given here one could briefly say that in addition to being important individually, all the above methods were also effective as they complemented one another.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FINDINGS

4.1 A BRIEF GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The three participant high schools are situated in the deep rural areas of the northern coast of KwaZulu-Natal, next to a small town called KwaMbonambi. The area is still characterised by underdevelopment in terms of infrastructure. Although schools are there, a greater number of the community, particularly the elders, is illiterate. One could arguably attribute this status quo to political violence that has engulfed the area in the recent past. Although violence has calmed down, people still fear for their lives. As a result, more than 96 % of the teachers who work in this area does not stay there. That is, teachers live in towns and suburban areas like Empangeni, Esikhawini and Enseleni. Some of these areas are even more than 50 kilometres away from the place of work.

These schools traditionally have been Black schools as they still keep this trend even today. Their teaching staff also comprises largely African (Black) teachers. The community at hand is not characterised only by illiteracy, underdevelopment and violence, but unemployment and HIV/AIDS are also crucial factors that impact on the teaching and learning processes.

4.2 DATA PRESENTATION

There were many questions that were posed to the respondents. As a result, this chapter reports largely on the central questions that were asked. However, all questions irrespective of whether they were major or not, have been attached in appendices A-E of this dissertation.

4.2.1 RESPONDENTS

The individual respondents that participated in this research work amounted to thirty-five (35). The whole group of the respondents comprised different people, but who, because of their respective occupational positions, were deemed by the researcher to be relevant to the study in one way or another, and so they could come up with required information. The respondents included the following:

(i) TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

There were six (6) teachers of English language from three different high schools and each pair of them (teachers) came from one school. The researcher selected these three schools because of several reasons. Although there were 64 high schools in the Lower Umfolozi District, many of them had many things in common. So in his selection the researcher wanted to have schools which also had some differences in one way or another. Even though all of them were under one district and circuit, a big gap in their annual results was a cause for concern. The enrolment of the schools was also considered. For an example, schools A, B and C had about 1000, 500 and 250 learners, respectively.

The history and the respective times of coming into being of the schools were also considered. That is, the researcher wanted to find out if "old" schools performed better than the "new" ones, and/or vice versa. Moreover, some schools had more inexperienced teachers as they (schools) were new. The researcher thought it would be more enriching to get the ideas of both the old and new teachers on the field.

(ii)   THE PRINCIPALS OR HoDs

There were 64 principals who equalled the number of the high schools in the Lower Umfolozi District. Three of the principals participated in the study. One principal represented a school since there were three participant schools. To abide by the confidentiality agreement the researcher cannot disclose the names of the schools and principals that participated. However, if the disclosure is important changes could be considered.

(iii)   THE LEARNERS

There were twenty-one (21) learners who were selected from the three participant schools. One school was represented by seven learners who had been chosen from grades eleven and twelve, respectively. Of the seven learners, three were taken from grade eleven, and four came from grade twelve. The researcher, with the help of the educators, selected learners with low, average and high intelligence quotient.

PROFILE OF LEARNERS

The learners who participated in this study were of almost the same age (from 17-22 years). The gender was also fairly represented. That is, in a class where there were more girls, the respondent group was dominated by girls. In the situation where there were more boys they (boys) also dominated the group of the respondents.

Unlike their teachers, many learners (more than 95%) lived in the area where they learned, the area of this study. Many of them had their homesteads there. A considerable number of these learners came from

historically disadvantaged and poor families regarding finance. Their parents were both uneducated and unemployed. Another remarkable number of the learners no longer had parents (usually because of HIV/AIDS), and as a result, they (learners) were taken care of by their grandmothers and grandfathers.

Almost all the learners in the area of this study had isiZulu as their common language of communication. In fact the whole community was largely a monolingual one. Even the teachers who worked in the area shared the same common language with the entire community.

Although some of the learners at hand had access to materials like TV sets, newspapers, magazines, etc., most of them had access only to a radio as a means of public media. The learners themselves were also affected by some juvenile problems like early motherhood or parenthood, and they were also victims of incurable diseases and intoxicating substances.

(iv)   SUBJECT-ADVISORS OF ENGLISH (LANGUAGE)

There were only two of the subject-advisors who operated within the Lower Umfolozi District, and the Maphelane Circuit, where the research was conducted. Since the study was conducted within this district, only these two advisors participated in the study.

(v)   CONTENT- SUBJECT EDUCATORS

The researcher ensured that the three prospective participant educators of content subjects came from the schools which offered the same learning streams and learning areas (subjects). This, the researcher believed,

would make his research work easier and the conclusion he made would be more reliable. Of the three content-subject educators who participated in the study each one of them represented one subject and one school.

EXPLANATION OF THE KEYS USED IN THE PRESENTATION

Under every category of respondents in this chapter there is a table which presents a summarised form of the responses that were given to some questions by the respondents concerned. Many questions in this chapter have been rephrased so that they appeared as if they were all a yes-or-no type. The tables also present them (questions) as if they were of one type. The researcher deliberately opted for this way in order to make the presentation more convenient for himself as the presenter, and for the reader as well.

The bracketed numbers in this chapter indicate the exact questions in the appendix attached at the back of this mini-thesis. The numbers are then transferred to the tables in order to display how the respondents concerned responded to each number or questions that were represented.

4.2.2 ENGLISH (LANGUAGE) –EDUCATORS

Most English (language) teachers stated that the learners had a major problem of comprehending English as the medium of instruction. This was the answer that they (teachers) gave to question number (10) of the appendix concerned. When they were asked whether they used code –switching in their lessons, they were not afraid respond "yes" (12). On the question of whether their lessons were always, or at least, usually learner-centered (4), they said their lessons were always centered around learners and in the classroom the lessons were largely driven by the learners. That is, the

participation of their learners was good. A very small percent of teachers said that they never taught grammatical rules in isolation of functions. That is, most of them claimed that they did not teach structures if they were not contextualised (19). To the question that asked them if they had English as their specialised subject, most of them responded that they had (2). When asked whether the results that they produced every year were to their desired level (21), they were not ashamed to admit that they (the results) were not. The teachers were also asked if their lessons focused on the communicative aspects of language (15). Most of them responded that this was the case.

The table below represents a summary of the responses that were given to some of the questions by the teachers (educators):

TABLE 4.1

QUESTION NUMBER	NO OF RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES	
		YES	NO
10	6	2	4
12	6	6	0
4	6	5	1
19	6	1	5
2	6	5	1
21	6	0	6

15	6	6	0

Generally, all of the educators that were interviewed shared the same sentiment that the performance of their learners was poor. However, they attributed this to several factors. They complained about learners' absenteeism and lack of both discipline and continuity of syllabi from one grade to another. They further complained that their learners accessed English, largely, only during English periods in the classroom. The motive behind this could be multi-fold. For example, it could be that learners did not have additional resources, like television sets, that could further expose the language (TL) to them. In addition, this problem might have come as a result of the learners' laziness. That is, the "available" resources could be of help (to the learners) only if they (learners) use them.

Besides, teachers concerned also reproached their content-subjects colleagues. They argued that everybody knew that English was still the official medium of teaching, but some educators blatantly used isiZulu throughout. Such behavior, according to these teachers, belittled the rather crucial role English had to play in higher education generally. Learners, themselves, ended up not taking it as an important medium in understanding the content of a subject, as well as being the language through which their ideas could be expressed when dealing with their school work. This was particularly in view of the knowledge and fact that in content subjects and in language, the learners would be expected to write in English only, and not in code-switched language which was largely used in their lessons.

4.2.3 PRINCIPALS AND HoDS

Although the main respondents were the principals, they also referred quite often to the Heads of Departments (HoDs) of their respective schools before they could give their final responses. Because of this, the researcher deemed it necessary to have the above sub-heading comprising HoDs.

The questions posed to the principals were few since the greater part of the problem that was being examined by the study focused largely on the interaction between teachers and learners in the classroom. One of the questions that was asked to the principals was how frequent their English (language) teachers reported problems to them about the subject (1). According to their responses there were always such reports coming to them. This was confirmed by the fact that two of the three principals gave positive answers to the question that wanted to know if there were problems which had been reported to them, and were never resolved (2). And the problem that was common amongst them all was the unavailability or scarcity of English texts. There were several reasons which the respective respondents gave that had led to this kind of a situation. And they are enumerated later in this sub-heading (4.1.2)

The principals were also asked if their respective schools had teachers or a teacher of English who was teaching it (English), yet he/she had not specialised in it (10). According to their answers, it was a common reality in schools, particularly where the study was done that they had unqualified teachers. The other important question that was posed to the respondents concerned was whether the English (language) results were improving in their schools (8). This question referred to the three consecutive years, 2000,

2001 and 2002. The year of this study, 2003, was not included, because the results that were referred to, to weigh the "improvement" were matriculation results. All of the principals that participated in this study claimed that there was an improvement in the subject concerned. The table below gives the summary of the responses secured under this category of respondents:

TABLE 4.2

QUESTION NUMBER	NO.OF RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES			
		NEVER	SOMETIMES	ALWAYS	RARELY
1	3	0	0	3	0
		YES		NO	
2	3	2		1	
10	3	1		2	
8	3	3		0	

Almost all the respondents under this category cited the government as the cause of the problems they encountered and that their problems were not new, as they had been with them for some time. Every year they complained about either the unavailability or late arrival of prescribed textbooks in schools. The problem of unqualified educators seemed inevitable. It was constantly aggravated by promotions, transfers and the death of qualified educators. The vacancies they left behind, were not immediately filled up.

As a result, schools found themselves forced to improvise in order to keep teaching and learning going on.

4.2.4 THE LEARNERS

The learners were asked if they had problems in understanding English instructions (4), and 83% of them responded "no" to this question. That is, only 17% of the respondents said they had a problem. A question was also posed to the learners to find out the language in which they communicated at home (6). It was discovered that isiZulu was the most common one amongst all the respondents.

The researcher was quite aware of the possible disposal of items like radio, television set, etc. when he asked the learners whether they spoke or listened to English except when they were at school (7). Only 76% of them said they had exposure to English in this regard. However, their "exposure" was limited mainly to "listening" and to a less extent, "reading", since radio and television sets were the resources cited as common to all the learners. It also appeared that the other respondents 33% were not necessarily unable to access English outside the school premises. Most probably their "inability" came as a result of their indifference to English as a language and the role it plays in their education. Some of them said they did not have time to listen to the radio because they always played cassettes, and radio programmes were boring. Others said if there was information of great importance that they had to obtain from the radio, they tuned in to the station that used their common language. Responses like these ones confirm the statement that was made previously in the dissertation that, "useful" resources may not necessarily be useful to one unless one uses them.

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The learners were also asked what techniques they used if they failed to understand instructions in examinations (12). It was established that 100% of them would always request teachers' help in their common language. And according to their responses when asked about the frequency of this practice, it appeared that it was very common (13). That is, many of them responded that it happened always.

Figure 4.3 below tabulates the responses that were given by learners.

TABLE 4.3

QUESTION NO.	NO.OF RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES			
		YES	NO		
4	21	04	17		
6	21	21	00		
7	21	15	06		
12	21	12(i)	12(ii)	12(iii)	12(iv)
		00	21	00	00
13	21	13(i)	13 (ii)	13(iii)	13(iv)
		06	15	00	00

The learners, made their suggestions which they thought could improve their communicative competence in English. They suggested that teachers use English as much as possible. This, they argued, would alert every learner of the importance of English. Teachers should not quickly resort to the vernacular if they encountered difficulties in the target language. The other factor that they thought was responsible for their "poor language proficiency" was the scarcity of libraries. The availability of libraries could present them with a vast scope of English materials, like textbooks, newspapers, magazines, dictionaries and other texts written in English. Moreover, it could benefit them if they were given more activities that would compel them to strive, no matter how hard, to express themselves in the target language.

4.2.5 SUBJECT-ADVISORS OF ENGLISH

This category of respondents, did not have many interviewees. The two subject-advisors that participated in this study were the only ones available in the district within which the research was conducted.

Both of them stated without any hesitation that all schools in their district, Lower Umfolozi, had a written copy of the curriculum and thus syllabuses (3). And when asked if there was any room for the explicit teaching of grammatical structures in the curriculum, for grades 10, 11 and 12 in particular, there was an overwhelming "yes" from the respondents (6). They were also asked if they were satisfied with what they observed in schools during their visits there (C). Whilst one was satisfied, the other one expressed a feeling of dissatisfaction. Another question asked which the advisors had to answer was whether they believed that teachers of English

had sufficient expertise to cope with the items stipulated in the curriculum or syllabi (10). Both of them indicated that teachers still needed help in this regard. One more question required the subject-advisors to say if the English (language) results they produced every year were to their desired level (15). Their respective answers were an unambiguous "no".

Here is a summary of the findings from the subject-advisors.

TABLE 4.4

QUESTION NO.	NO.OF RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES	
		YES	NO
3	2	02	00
6	2	02	00
8	2	01	01
10	2	00	02
15	2	00	02

The subject-advisors' main concern was on teaching methods and the new assessment techniques. That is, they said, educators still needed to attend workshops that were regularly organised particularly during holidays so that they could be guided on these aspects. These aspects, according to the subject- advisors, constituted some of the many factors that dictated the kind of results (poor results) that the district always attained. They believed the results could be improved if the Department of Education could put more focus on the method(s) through which English was taught.

The subject-advisors also felt that the shortage of textbooks in schools had a negative impact on the kind of results produced each year. They argued that the department never made sufficient supply to schools. It then became the responsibility of parents to buy those books, and not all of them could afford. The reference made here was largely in respect of the prescribed literature books.

The advisors went on to suggest that teachers' low morale had an impact on the learning of English. This kind of morale could be attributed to several factors: The teachers' lack of knowledge to handle their subject content correctly could be one of the factors. The Africanisation campaign that has been brought by democracy in South Africa could be another factor. For example, "African Renaissance", in this regard, promotes the development of African languages which even includes possible replacement of English as the official medium of instruction. Other people might misconstrue this to mean "doing away with" foreign languages, which includes English, in particular. The subject-advisors believed that the teaching framework was not bad, but it needed the government to intervene in order to raise teachers' morale. It needs employing appropriate language teaching methods towards the improvement of learners' proficiency and competence in both language and content subjects.

4.2.6 CONTENT- SUBJECT EDUCATORS

As it was mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, there were three content-subject educators who participated in the research work. When posing questions to content-subjects educators, the researcher was aware that he could not directly ask them about the terminology "CLT". But he had to

ask them about the language (English) in general as it was their official medium of instruction.

They were asked if English was one of their respective specialized subjects (15). It was discovered that not even one of them had English as their specialised subject. There was another question that required them to say if they used code-switching in their lessons (6), and they all said they did. From his own experience as a teacher, the researcher knew that quite often learners would struggle to spell words correctly. Some teachers would still credit learners, and others would discredit them for an incorrect spelling. The content teachers were asked if they marked their learners correct in this regard, and they all said they did, indeed (12).

The content teachers were also asked if they thought replacing English with another language as a medium of instruction could improve their learners' performance (17). It was clear from their answers that they did not think so. They believed that the current medium of instruction only needed to be improved.

Below is the summary of the content teachers' responses given in a tabular form:

TABLE 4.5

QUESTION NO.	NO.OF RESPONDENTS	RESPONSES	
		YES	NO

15	3	00	03
6	3	03	00
12	3	03	00
17	3	01	02

The underlying fact amongst all these content educators was that their learners had problems in comprehending English. As a result, they (educators) used both English and isiZulu to deliver their lessons, otherwise English, alone, would have aggravated the already bad performance of the learners. When learners expressed their views to educators they (the educators) had to read between the lines and then see if they could "see" the intended message.

However, all three of the educators concerned expressed the view that something very serious needed to be done about English. This, according to them, would improve not only English, but many other subjects that were still taught in English as well. Although they could not say exactly what could be done, probably due to the fact that they did not know the source of the problem, they suggested that, among other things, teachers of English and their way of teaching be evaluated. Others said that they were pleased that this study was conducted. They hoped it could be one of the steps towards improving learners' English communicative competence and thus the learners' general performance in other subjects.

4.2.7 OBSERVATION ON LESSONS

Seven (7) lessons were observed in different schools and different grades, but mainly grades eleven (11) and twelve (12). Four (4) English lessons were observed, two of them from grade 11 and the other two from grade 12. Three other lessons on content subjects were observed. These included Geography and Business Economics (grade 12), together with Accounting (grade 10).

Many of the lessons observed shared a lot with regard to the methodology that was used. Because of this reason, and in order to avoid tautology, not all of the observed lessons will be discussed. Since the focus of the survey was on English, more of the lessons that are discussed in this chapter are English ones, and just one from a content subject. The reason for discussing only one out of three observed content-subjects' lessons, as it has been said earlier, was that all the three teachers followed precisely the same methodology (the Narrative), irrespective of the different subjects and grades involved.

LESSON ONE

Grade   : 11

Subject   : English

Topic   : Voice

Teaching method used: Narrative

The teacher had a sentence, whose subject was active, written on the chalkboard:

Muzi drives a car.

The treacher told the learners that "Muzi" was not only the subject of the sentence, but a doer of the action (driving) as well. And that a "car" was just a passive object. So in the case where a "car" is placed at the beginning of a sentence, certain changes would have to be done to the verb/s in particular, to show that it (a car) and "Muzi" still maintained their respective roles, recipient and doer of the action. He went on to demonstrate those changes and gave other exemplary sentences. At first the sentences were in the Simple Present Tense, but later in the lesson the teacher changed them into the Past Tense. He also displayed the "voice" changes accordingly. Generally, he used English as the medium of instruction.

However, as the lesson unfolded it became evident that the learners were not conversant with the tenses and past participle form of the verbs, which, according to the teacher, were the prerequisite to the mastery of the "voice". The learners were given a sentence by the teacher to write there and then in the Passive Voice. Although this was a small class (17 learners), the answer was arrived at after much "guess work" had been done. The way the learners struggled to get the right answer proved that the lesson had not been a success.

LESSON TWO

Grade   : 11
Subject   : English

Topic   : How do you summarise a passage?

Teaching methods: Question and Answer, and the Narrative methods.

The learners had been given a passage the previous day and had to do it as homework. They had to follow instructions which read as follows:

(i)   In not more than 70 words summarise the positive actions the Department of Education intends to take to ensure quality education.

(ii)   Use complete sentences.

(iii)   Write your points in isolated sentences, not in a paragraph.

(iv)   Number your points.

(v)   At the end of your summary write the number of words you have used.

Realising that the learners had not responded accordingly, the teacher ordered them to do the summary together in the classroom as he guided them through. The educator, during the lesson, used both English and isiZulu interchangeably quite often. But the learners still did not find it easy to identify correct answers. Only a few individuals kept on making their attempts. Eventually the educator had to channel them to the answers. By the time the bell rang (after 50 minutes) to end the period, one could hardly say the lesson had been a success.

LESSON THREE

Grade   : 12

Subject : English

Topic   : *Animal Farm* (a novel)

Teaching Method : Narrative

The teacher read a chapter page by page aloud for the learners throughout the period of fifty minutes. The learners also quietly read through their own copies as they listened to the teacher. Two or three learners shared a copy. The teacher stopped anywhere he felt there was a need for explanation. Explanation was given in isiZulu. One question in the beginning, and the other in the unfolding of the lesson were raised respectively. Both of these questions were asked by one learner. And this was the only remarkable feedback from the learners. At the end of the lesson the educator asked, "Is there anyone who has a question?" the learners just looked around without uttering a word.

LESSON FOUR

Grade   : 11
Subject   : Accounting
Topic   : Cash Receipts, Journal of M. Plumbers (September, 1991)
Teaching Method : Question and Answer Method

The educator spent about five to eight minutes writing in a tabular form on the board. What immediately caught one's attention was the fact that the learners raised their hands in anticipation of the questions the teacher was yet to ask. Even when they answered, they referred to their exercise books. Was this a revision lesson? The chapter on "analysis" will have to tell. It was also not easy for one to deduce if the learners comprehended the English language well, because the language used was very disjointed and the teacher was very brief in his utterances. That is, the teacher himself was not

using complete sentences in his utterances, as the lesson was about filling in a form. The educator could just say "amount?", "pay number?", "followed by?" etc. Almost every learner in the class "knew" the answers for the questions asked. If a "how" or "why" question was posed, the learners remained silent and the educator had problems in arriving at the correct answer.

4.2.8 PERUSAL OF ENGLISH LEARNERS' EXERCISE BOOKS

Twenty-one (21) portfolios or exercise books were collected and checked. Twelve (12) of them were for grade 12 learners, and nine of them for grade 11 learners. Each of the three schools that the researcher was working with was represented by seven portfolios, three from grade 11, and four from grade 12. Some of the language aspects already taught were found in all three schools represented, whilst other aspects had been done either by one or two schools only.

COMMON ASPECTS (GRADE 12)

These included the Reported Speech, Passive Voice and Creative Writing. The latter aspect was always dealt with collectively in teachers' cluster meetings. That is, teachers of the schools geographically close to one another grouped themselves (about 5 or 6 schools) to form a "cluster" that had regular meetings to standardise the learners' creative work.

Fortunately, the schools that contributed to the collection of data for this survey belonged to one cluster. Most importantly, the researcher's own

school was one of the cluster members. By May 2003, four pieces of writing had been done already, and this was the minimum required number for each year at grade 12. Grade 12 was the only grade whose creative writing was so closely monitored so far.

COMMON ASPECTS (GRADE 11)

They included the Passive Voice, the Reported Speech, tenses, particularly Simple Present and Simple Past, together with their respective progressives, and the formation of interrogatives from statements. For example, there was a demonstration sentence, amongst the many, which read thus:

       a. He is coming today. (a statement)

       b. Is he coming today? (interrogation)

INDIVIDUAL ASPECTS

Besides the common aspects, there were others which differed from the grades of one school to the same grades of another school. Although one would expect some standardisation to have been practised in treating the language aspects of the same grades, one understood that different teachers chose to teach certain aspects at their own chosen time. This means that teachers that had not taught some aspects at one stage, could still teach them at another time, hopefully.

Standardisation was strictly followed when it concerned literary work and creative writing, particularly at grade 12. As a result, teachers tended to give more attention to this type of work, and this could be the reason why there were very few individual language aspects that had been taught by

respective teachers. These aspects included parts of speech, synonyms and antonyms, relative pronouns, the difference in the usage of "a little" and "a few", and others.

4.3 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This section describes the researcher's perception about the way data was collected, the conditions and situations around the whole gathering of the information that was required. The collection of data did not always go smoothly for the researcher. At other times appointments with prospective interviewees had to be called off, unfortunately, at an eleventh hour. In most cases the intended interviews failed just because the "respondents" did not turn up at the meeting places. And they (respondents) would not accept any impromptu visit by the researcher. So all the techniques that were used - interviews, questionnaires, observation of lessons, etc. - were carried out according to appointments made, not by surprise.

One could not comment on every response that was given, but some answers were too crucial to be sidelined. More attention was given to the teaching methods that were used. This indicated if teachers were conversant with the CLT. The researcher's attention was soon taken by the fact that a teacher could not be observed teaching unless an appointment had been made by the subject teacher himself or herself. This had to be done this way even though the principal of the school had already given permission to the researcher to conduct the survey in the school. This does suggest that there was some doubt regarding the teacher's knowledge on aspects of a language to teach. One could argue that after the principal's permission, an

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appointment with the subject teacher for observation of a lesson was irrelevant. The aim of the observation was to find out what the teachers were doing on a daily basis when they taught. Observations were intended to establish what methods or approaches were used, and largely if there was communication during these lessons. It could be either spoken or written communication. And most importantly it was to find out if the CLT approach was used in those lessons. The aim was not to ask teachers to pretend that they always had successful lessons.

The findings have shown that more often English grammatical rules were taught in sentences and words isolated from context. That is, the teaching of explicit structures featured more frequently than contextualised language teaching. For example, in one of the lessons found in the learners' exercise books, the learners had been given isolated words with their descriptions next to them. Although the learners knew that "political" and "politically" were an adjective and adverb, respectively, one could not say that the learners could use these parts of speech successfully in real-life communication situations. Perhaps if the whole lesson had been contextualised as it is proposed by the CLT, it would have been better. However, CLT does not discard drills altogether. It recommends that learners be exposed to the richest possible (target) language environment to allow them to learn grammatical rules inductively. Deductive learning could also be considered in special cases.

The other important characteristic of the CLT that was always in the mind of the researcher was its integration of grammatical and functional teaching. In Richards and Rodgers (1986) Littlewood (1981) states that one of the most

characteristic features of the Communication Language Teaching approach is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language. Although any device which helps the learners is acceptable, contextualisation is a basic premise. Drilling may occur only peripherally.

What surprised the researcher was that during the observation of lessons, almost all the educators shunned any lesson that taught grammatical structures specifically and exclusively. The fact that they ignored their common-place method of teaching suggested that they were ashamed of using it in front of a visitor, the observer. The message the educators conveyed behaviourally was that they were aware that their teaching methodology was not only ineffective, but was unacceptable as well. If this assumption is correct, one wonders why educators continue using the teaching methods that are ineffective. This could be one area the Department of Education could focus on, with regard to improving the teaching methodology. Perhaps the educators are not well trained to implement the new teaching methods that are recommended by the Communicative Language Teaching approach. As a result, they (teachers) find themselves having no choice, but to resort to the old structuralist teaching methods.

The participation of learners in the lessons was also noticeable. In many lessons that were observed, learners were passive players. If there was participation from them, it was from the same few individuals in the class. The information constantly came from one side, the teacher's side. Everybody was looking up to the teacher as the source of information. This is totally against what CLT intends to do in classroom situations. The Communication Language Teaching approach always urges educators to

have lessons which are learner-centered. Kilfoil and Van der Watt (1991) put it as follows:

The learner and the fulfillment of his needs form the first and final concern of the communicative approach...if the language course is bad or, even worse, off-target, he (learner) will be confronted with situations and conversations he cannot handle (Kilfoil, W.R. and Van der Walt, C. 1991:14)

The above assertion could be the cause of passive participation of learners in learning activities. One could cite the previously mentioned lesson where the teacher had to abandon the "voice lesson" after he had realised that the learners lacked the prerequisite aspects, past tense and past participle form of the verb. Hopefully, if the preparation of the lesson had been based on the learner-centeredness principle, there would have been a better interaction during the presentation of the lesson. One could only believe so, because this learner-centeredness calls for a teacher to know and analyse the needs of learners so as to be able to maximise opportunities for learning to take place. Even the Interim Core Syllabus (1995) is unambiguous in this regard, as it puts it:

The focus should be on the pupil as a learner, starting from where pupils are, rather than from an idealistic notion of where they ought to be (Interim Core Syllabus, 1995 January: 1).

That is, the teacher must know the competence level of his learners in order to adjust his lesson accordingly. This would allow both the teacher and his learners to be producers of knowledge in the classroom.

It was further noted that there had been some disparities between the answers that were given in questionnaires and those that were discovered during the observation of lessons. There was a mis-match about the participation of learners in learning activities. Many learners who had claimed in the questionnaires that they did not have problems in comprehending English were also proven otherwise by the observation findings. Moreover, whilst there is nothing wrong, according to the CLT, to communicate in any language other than the target one, the learners had no reason to give the incorrect answer/response that they always communicated in English within their respective school premises. The observer had at several times witnessed learners communicating with educators in the school yard and even in the staffroom, using isiZulu as the common language.

These mis-matches continue to raise questions about the learners' improvement of the target language, and in this case in higher classes specifically. One could argue that both teachers and learners knew what had to be happening in this regard, but they did not have the right approach of implementing it. That is, maybe they were aware of the CLT principle which urges teachers and learners to ensure that the TL is exposed as much as possible as comprehensible input. Therefore, communicating in the learners' vernacular did not give them sufficient exposure to the language that the learners are to acquire and master.

As a result, they gave incorrect answers in order to deliberately hide the facts, and perhaps to have the researcher impressed. This could also be an indication of how wanting the teachers are with the Communicative

Language Teaching approach. That is, they do not seem to be aware that it is not unbecoming to also communicate in the learners' common language within the premises of the school. The CLT approach does not have a hard and fast rule that prohibits this kind of practice. Therefore, there was no need for respondents to give misleading responses. Basing one's statement on the foregoing paragraph, one could reiterate one's suggestion that the intervention of the Department of Education seems to be a great necessity in this regard. Teachers need to be refreshed through their attendance of workshops on the CLT approach, and be armed with appropriate teaching methods.

Since many respondents (learners) could hardly comprehend English, some people could be critical about it. People could think that the respondents could have misconstrued questions and thus gave misleading responses unintentionally. The researcher would like to unequivocally say that all the responses in this dissertation could and should be trusted. The questionnaires had been made available in both English and isiZulu in order to ensure that the respondents gave the answer/s as they understood the question/s. During the interviews too, English and isiZulu were used interchangeably throughout. The findings showed that learning activities where learners could discuss, argue, or express themselves in a situation that resembled the real-life communication, were rarely created. Learners were often found either listening to educators or writing. This teaching method developed some communication skills (listening and writing) at the expense of others (speaking and reading). The implication was that, the latter were less important. The proponents of the CLT approach advocate the integration of the four communication skills. English teachers are always urged to foster

this integration in their lessons, because they are interlinked to one another (Kitfoil and Van der Walt, 1991). Even the Interim Core Syllabus of 1995 states that educators should design their activities towards integrating as many of these skills as possible. Arguably, one could suggest that in "lesson three" cited earlier on, the teacher could have allowed the reading to be done by learners, and only have the explanation done by himself.

Once one has read through the findings, discussion and analysis of the survey thus far, one might be misled into thinking that the aim of the survey was to find out the negative things that transpired from the teaching and learning situation. Besides that the aims of the survey are clearly defined in chapter one of this dissertation, such a conclusion would have been informed by the remarkable disparity that probably exists between the syllabus and what happens at the implementation level (teaching and learning). This conspicuous gap emphatically indicates the indispensable necessity of the Department of Education to intervene.

4.3.1 How has the syllabus contributed to the non-effectiveness of the CLT?

The syllabus itself also needs some inspection, although it is not the central focus of the discussion. One would only refer to it in as much as it is relevant to the subject of the survey. It could be arguably stated that the syllabus or the Communication Language Teaching approach itself has had some counter-productive impact on English language teaching in schools. Such an impact could also be attributed to several factors which are enshrined in the syllabus.

Whilst the CLT states "what" should be taught in order to get "what type of product", it does not say much about the means (how) of arriving at the desired ends. That is, it provides educators with the content and the desired product only, but not the actual exponents for practising language use. The teaching methodology remains the teacher's concern. For example, the current syllabus (1995) allows teachers to code-switch when they present their lessons, yet learners, when writing assignments, tests and examinations, are required to respond in English only. Some educators, perhaps, because they do not know the extent to which they can use code-switching, end up using more of the learners' vernacular than the target language. This, therefore, becomes a self-defeating exercise, whose initial aim is to develop the learners' language proficiency and competence in the target language.

Another feature that could be a puzzle to teachers is the recommendation by the CLT that grammar can be taught only if there is a need. This kind of recommendation leaves the approach itself vulnerable to misrepresentation of its most important characteristic, using the language in order to master it. Moreover, the CLT approach always discourages teachers from teaching language aspects in isolation from function. In short, teacher A could not reproach teacher B for always teaching grammatical structures explicitly, as long as teacher B feels there is a need. The teachers' dwelling much on explicit grammar teaching could also be influenced by the scarcity of textbooks or other prescribed material for communicative language teaching. Confirming this statement, Moodley (1998) has the following to say about English teaching texts that are used in KwaZulu-Natal schools:

...the textbooks, like the syllabus on which they are based (1995 syllabus), provide limited, or no guidance to teachers on how to teach the speech act nor where they find information about the speech act (Moodley, 1998: 120).

Because of this status quo, teachers, most of whom are ESL speakers, could find it easier to continue with the structuralist methods.

Another worrying fact about CLT is that it has left considerable work or responsibility on the shoulders of teachers. Teachers are expected to know and analyse the needs of the learners. They must ensure that there is an atmosphere, in the classroom, that eliminates learners' anxiety and thus increases their (learners) self confidence. It is the responsibility of teachers to ascertain that learners are motivated. That is, learners should always feel eager to participate, explain, argue, negotiate, etc. Teachers should be both the inventors and facilitators of communicative activities in the classroom. They should be careful not to call learners into order when the learning activity is still on, except if it is a special case and there is a need.

Moreover, teachers are expected to be totally proficient in English. They should always be accurate and use language appropriately because they are observed by learners who will then imitate them. It could arguably be unfair to expect so much from teachers, most of whom are second and foreign speakers of English. The demands are overwhelming for teachers for their absolute effectiveness. One would first consider their poor and disadvantaged educational background and then give them their responsibilities accordingly. One of the factors that led to the downfall of the Direct Method (chap 2.2 above), was that it depended almost entirely on the

teachers' skills and abilities. If this is true, ESL teaching in high schools in the north coast of KwaZulu-Natal is heading for the worse.

Without sounding repetitive, one could say that the CLT is implicitly against the teaching of grammar, although it claims to be striking a balance between grammar and function (meaning). Munby (1978) confirms this assertion cited by Ndlovu (1993) when Ndlovu (1993) gives his understanding of "competence":

Competence should refer to an understanding and production of utterances which are not so much grammatical, but more importantly appropriate in the context in which they are made (Ndlovu 1993: 28).

The contention held in this discussion is therefore that CLT has done more harm than good to the teaching and learning of English. Can one communicate functionally correct without being grammatically accurate? The researcher is of the view that meaning is always based on thorough grammatical knowledge. This could be one of the syllabus areas that confuses educators. More clarity could be given in this regard. Teachers need not be left searching or at a loss with regard to what is to be done in the classroom. Let the method/s for teaching be clear and vivid to every teacher. Otherwise there would be no need for teachers to undergo training in teaching if in the end a teaching method would be at the teacher's discretion.

The lack of unanimity among the CLT proponents themselves about certain aspects seems to be exacerbating the situation. The disagreement is over the role of structural patterns in the communicative syllabi (Brumfit, 1980).

While some feel that grammar should be done away with, others argue that grammar-based curriculum and syllabi should not be abandoned totally, but be revised, because ESL learners still write grammar-based tests and examinations. The latter dispute the learner-centeredness approach that is recommended by the former to form the base to the communicative syllabi. They say that certain parts of the learner-centeredness approach are still very vague. For example, it could be impossible for a teacher to know and analyse the needs of every learner, particularly if one considers the large classes that teachers deal with. Or it will end up being a matter of generalising the needs of a few individuals. But then, the needs of learner A may not necessarily be the needs of learner B.

Mgqwashu (1999) is of the view that grammar is an invaluable feature in the learning of English in particular as a second language. About the CLT approach, he says,

Within the CLT approach, meanings, rather than structures, are given priority, which this study regards as a shortcoming (Mgqwashu, 1999: 38).

The division discussed in the foregoing paragraph might have added to the uncertainty of the educators.

Brown (1994) attributes the "unimplementation" of the CLT approach to its eclecticism. That is, CLT itself is a concoction of several methods. It comprises many remarkable features of other methods. He feels that this approach dips haphazardly into every attractive aspect of every conceivable method or approach, and then jumbles everything together. He adds that the

CLT approach is still characterised by a substantial body of research on the second language acquisition, from which "enlightened" approaches to teaching can be derived. Because of this latter assertion, one could think that perhaps the CLT approach was not ready to be implemented here. It could be that it was rushed into practice. Hopefully, a closer look at these concerns by language teachers and furthermore, by the Department of Education could improve the teaching and learning of English in Black schools.

Perhaps teachers have been unfairly reproached for the non-effectiveness of the CLT approach. It could be that they have been a true reflection of what they represent, the "flawed" syllabus and the way it seems to be "implemented", which seems considerably suspect in some instances.

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section attempts to present some suggestions as to what could be done to meet the challenges that are raised by the Communicative Language Teaching approach.

4.4.1 The findings indicated that many teachers were not conversant with the CLT approach. The language teaching situation makes teachers lose their confidence in the way they approach their lessons which ends up impacting on the manner in which they teach, and the learners themselves become the victims of this deplorable situation. This became evident during the observation of lessons by the researcher. Most of the teachers who were observed showed that they were nervous to teach particularly in front of the observer, the researcher. Probably the nervousness stemmed from their

uncertainty over their respective lessons, and their overall lack of knowledge in language teaching methods and approaches employed for effective learning to take place.

4.4.2 The CLT approach needs to have a firm and clear learning theory which would then breed a sound teaching theory that would guide the teachers. The researcher is of the view that there are many things that need to be considered if teaching and learning were to be successful. But the most remarkable phenomenon about CLT is that, it does not have an explicit learning and teaching approach as its base (Richards and Rodgers, 1986). If one reads this, one could realise that, indeed, teachers of English as a second language in Black schools particularly, are faced with real challenges there.

4.4.3 Another area about CLT that needs serious attention is the grammar-versus-meaning one. The fact that the CLT approach does not categorically recommend the teaching of grammar, implies that it calls for inductive learning. However this type of learning can arguably succeed in a situation where the learners are exposed to the target language environment in the richest possible manner. For the learner of the area where the study was conducted, this type of learning could not be the suitable one. The responses by the interviewees showed how rarely the learners accessed English, the target language in this regard.

Thus this recommendation by the CLT needs to be re-assessed. If need be, it could even be amended for the improvement of the approach. Indeed, one should always keep in mind the desired product of the syllabus as one is

Since the findings in this study showed that many teachers were still strong believers of structuralist methods, the newly introduced innovation should, indeed, be merged with them (Structuralist Methods).

The researcher is of the view that many teachers of English - ESL and EFL particularly - learned the English language when structuralist methods were still upheld (before 1995 syllabus was issued). That is, they attribute their success in English language and education generally to these methods. Consequently, they could not easily abandon them.

4.4.5 The newly introduced innovation should also come with supporting teaching materials in the form of textbooks and other materials. The education system could not just place everything on the shoulders of the teacher. Although teachers can be inventors of learning activities, some are naturally not good in this regard. Let them (teachers) be provided with textbooks with relevant teaching and learning activities so that they can have something to refer to. The teachers' familiarity with such activities could lead to the spontaneous generation of other activities.

4.4.6 Teachers also need a thorough in-service training on the Communicative Language Teaching approach. The same attention that has been given to the introduction of the Outcome Based Education system could be given to the CLT. The department could provide relevant language exponents that would spearhead the teaching through the CLT approach. Teachers should feel that teaching English communicatively is not one's choice, but a necessity. And when they encounter problems, they should look for solutions that would improve learning. In other words, it is crucial that the mindset of the teachers is put right first. Any attempt that is made to

making such amendments. Under the "General Aims" of the current syllabus issued in 1995, there is this unambiguous statement:

The purpose of the syllabus is to enable pupils to communicate successfully for personal, social, educational and occupational purposes (Interim Core Syllabus, 1995: 2).

4.4.4 One could further suggest that the structuralist methods not be totally discarded, as it seems to be the case at the present moment. Part of the structuralist method should be merged with the new approach. Rather than alluding to these "old" methods, it should be unambiguously stressed that they should be included in the new teaching and learning approach.

In the same vein, it could be argued that if the CLT approach per se were basically effective, the general aim of the syllabus (1995) mentioned above would have been easily realised and attained by learners, particularly if one considers how long it (the CLT) has been in place now.

The inductive learning method which is strongly advocated by the CLT, has several implications which further aggravate the situation. It requires teachers who have a native-like competence, and this should only be attained through a structuralist approach first. The CLT does not consider the fact, or it seems to be unaware, that many educators in Black schools are ESL or even EFL educators. As a result they, arguably, always see the teaching of grammatical rules as their starting point. Since the CLT approach does not emphasise the explicit teaching of structures, these teachers feel weakened.

improve learning would not succeed if the implementing people (educators) do not favour it on the basis that they are not clear about it. As McArthur (1983), in Katiya (1999), argues:

Education stands or falls by the quality of a person to whom the work is entrusted and not the quality of aids, however important these maybe. However good the materials are, however shiny the technology, the human guide remains central (Katiya, 1999: 74).

Ndlovu (1993) also stresses the importance of a teacher for the success of any syllabus. Citing Brumfit (1980) Ndlovu says the following:

Teachers can control the methods they use, they can control little else. Yet changes made to materials or syllabuses will be ineffective if teachers fail to understand them or feel unconvinced of the need for change (Ndlovu, 1993: 41).

4.4.7 It could benefit the Department of Education immensely as well if English language subject-advisors could be as close as possible to the educators throughout the year. The meeting of the two parties (advisors and teachers) should not be at the beginning and end of each year only. And it should not be only through papers (circulars) that they communicate. It is necessary that the advisors themselves witness the real interaction that teachers and learners engage themselves in. They (advisors) should not always depend on what the teachers tell them. This in many ways, as this study has shown from some of the respondents' responses, could be misleading for effective language and content teaching.

The outcry by the tertiary institutions about poor English communicative competence of Black students could also serve as one of the yardsticks to

measure the success (or failure) of the CLT. Such an outcry provokes some questions: Why is it that the learners who could hardly express themselves in English, have been found "capable" in the very same subject (English). There seems to be learners who were passed by the Department of Education. This situation is more problematic than it attempts to resolve the language proficiency and competence issue.

The researcher was lucky to be one of the educators (for grades 11 and 12) who attended the English orientation workshop at the beginning of the year (2003). As usual, the subject advisors started by giving a feedback report from the examiners. The report was based on the previous year's final (October/November) examination for grade 12. Amongst many things that the examiners had highlighted, there was a huge disparity between the oral performance mark (largely overseen by individual teachers) and written work mark (usually standardized) that had been scored by learners. Whilst the learners excelled in the former, they performed very poorly regarding the latter. Many of them had written incorrect spelling. They did not put capital letters and fullstops at the beginning and end of sentences, respectively.

When the subject-advisors mentioned the "learners' inaccuracy" as one of the examiners' concerns, the educators were not afraid to defend their learners. Their point was simple: English language was not their first language. Therefore, the markers had to read between the lines in order to "see" what the learners intended to convey. Other educators though, stood up firmly and said "reading between the lines" would deteriorate the quality of education, and result in the condoning of unacceptable standard of the language expected of teachers to teach.

The disparity mentioned above does not only call for the close cooperation between educators and subject-advisors, but it also raises some questions: Do educators, perhaps, "doctor" the learners' marks? Why does a learner obtain a B symbol in a paper, yet in real-life communication the same learner could arguably obtain a D or E symbol? The Department of Education, indeed, should monitor, very closely, the whole process that leads to the final mark of the learner at the end of the year. It could be that there is "foul" play practised somewhere during the process.

4.4.8 Having presented these observations one could unequivocally argue that there be a re-examination of the CLT's emphasis on the learners frequent practice of the language (TL) for effective results. It was evidenced by the research findings presented in this study that learners rarely had learning activities where they could be involved in a real life-like communication. But such emphasis should not supercede the importance of grammar. That is, it should not be construed as if it means that "meaning" is more important than grammar, or vice versa. These two aspects of communicative competence complement each other, and they should be treated equally for there to be successful communication which is grammatically accurate and also appropriately expressed.

One could arguably say that the CLT has stressed function versus grammar on assumption that the user of the language (the learner) has already internalised a considerable amount of grammatical rules. This conclusion of the CLT might have been derived from the findings of other research work done in other parts of the globe. That is, the factors that might have led to this conclusion could be entirely different from the factors existing in the

area of this study, rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal, which could also be dissimilar to the language situation in the Durban Metropole.

Therefore, in a situation where the learners' knowledge of grammar is considerably weak and thus deficient, where learners can hardly construct a grammatically correct sentence, teachers should be encouraged to teach grammar, even if it means its explicit teaching initially. However, teachers should be warned against dwelling considerably long on one aspect or activity. They should guard against excessive explicit teaching of one aspect without contextualised learning exercises. Teachers at other times may be misled by learners' "reluctance" to participate in the learning activities that require them to argue, discuss, negotiate, etc. This seems to be the bad tendency which is very common in Black schools. The learners feel anxious and nervous to communicate in the target language. This tendency could be attributed to, among other things, the lack of grammar knowledge in learners, or the teachers' "authoritative" style of teaching has either spoiled or is intimidating the learners. Learners could also be less inhibited in their language use.

The foregoing assumption further reiterates the call on the Department of Education to come in and help where it could. Both teachers and learners need help in this regard. Teachers need to be armed with teaching methods that are less authoritative, and reduce tension in the classroom. But the very methods should be effective enough to urge every learner to be involved in any learning activity brought before them for effective communication in whatever they need language use for.

It is surprising, to some extent, that the suggestions or recommendations that the researcher made above, seem to be the ingredients that the Communicative Language Teaching approach is made of. Therefore, the CLT approach does not need to be discarded, but it should be revised.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

At this stage, it is vividly clear that the Communicative Language Teaching approach is, in practice, not as effective as it promises to be. The findings of the research showed that many English teachers, at least, in the area where the study was conducted, were not only unable to implement the approach didactically, but they also seemed to have never undergone any appropriate training regarding this approach. This was shown by the defective usage that the observed lessons displayed in the approach to CLT. In other instances, one could feel that it was irrelevant to talk about the "non-effectiveness" of the CLT approach. In fact one could feel that it seemed more relevant to question the introduction of the approach. That is, the manner in which it had been introduced in schools. The way it was misrepresented in the observed lessons, one could easily conclude (incorrectly) that it had not yet been introduced. Despite it being popularly "used", it became difficult to ascertain that this was, indeed, the commonly held approach to increase learners proficiency in the target language. However, there had to be no doubt that the approach had long been introduced. Again, the syllabus itself (1995) puts it clearly:

The approach recommended in this syllabus is based on the principles of informing communicative language teaching (core-syllabus, 1995: 2).

The researcher also believes that Moodley (1998) was undoubtedly convinced that the Communicative Language Teaching approach had been

introduced already as an official innovation to be used in schools. Part of his enormous research was to examine if teaching materials (e.g. textbooks) were congruent with the temporary syllabus of 1995.

Having gathered a number of textbooks that were prescribed to English teachers and learners in KwaZulu-Natal, Moodley made this statement:

These eight (8) textbooks were then examined to see whether or not they claim communicative teaching as their goal,....(Moodley, 1998: 63).

Therefore, any other research whose aim would be to verify the introduction of the CLT approach to schools would just be a tautologous exercise. Moreover, the topic of this study suggests or implies that it already assumes that the CLT approach is non-effective. And thus the mammoth task of the study was to discover the factors behind this status quo. In other words it was intended to find out the factor or factors that could crucially lead to it being an effective learning and teaching tool or approach.

Although according to the findings of this study, there were several factors that seemed to have led to the unsuccessfulness of the CLT approach, their contribution to, or impact on this regard was not the same. Some factors were themselves a result of other factors.

One of the most significant factors was the manner in which the CLT approach was introduced in schools. According to Ndlovu, (1993), there are various possible strategies available that could be used to introduce a new innovation. Some of the strategies he mentioned were the following:

(i)   Empirical Rational Strategies

These strategies require that any innovation should be introduced in relation to existing facts that have been observed. That is, observed facts would determine, among other things, the manner in which the innovation can be best introduced.

(ii)   Normative Re-educative Strategies

Under these strategies the individuals involved (teachers in this regard) need to be re-educated about the new innovation, before it can be implemented.

(iii)   Power Coersive Strategies

Here the innovation is introduced from the management level, down to the subordinates, according to their respective ranks. Usually, even if the subordinates can feel uncomfortable about the innovation, they find themselves helpless and compelled to accept it.

Although three of the above types of strategies might have been considered in the introduction of the CLT approach, the Power Coercive seemed to have been given the uppermost hand. And this assertion seemed to be the reason for many problems that have ensued in the introduction of the CLT approach in this study as well. Teachers seemed not to have been prepared for the then coming innovation. They were not sufficiently provided with the necessary teaching materials. This behaviour was tantamount to some kind of

imposition of this approach in the lessons observed. All these factors were likely to cause negative attitude in teachers about the approach itself.

To redress this situation, teachers need to undergo some in-service training. This refers to those teachers who are already in the field. Those that are yet to come out of tertiary institutions need to be satisfactorily drilled in the CLT approach so that they can make a remarkable difference by being thoroughly knowledgeable when they come out to teach. However, this does not mean that only one particular type of strategy could be the answer to the challenges at hand. But teachers having been properly trained, and the existing conditions in Black schools having been thoroughly described, the CLT approach could be implemented in the best possible manner. That is, the necessary tools (teaching materials) and well trained manpower (educators), would require that there be preliminary arrangement or preparation for the approach to fit meaningfully when it is eventually implemented. The way the situation seems to be at the present moment, according to the findings in this study, one could rightfully state that the CLT approach is yet to be introduced. What is required is thorough knowledge imparting among teachers, by giving them a didactic way for its effectiveness.

One should, however, mention that one is aware of the expenses that might be caused by the application of the above suggested strategies. The reason for the Normative Re-educative strategies to be always the last resort could be that they are the most expensive type regarding time and finance. But experience has shown that to rush implementation without proper investigation first could turn to be not only wasteful, but counter-productive

as well. This was one of the weaknesses that led to the failure of the CLT approach in the area where this study was conducted, northern coast of KwaZulu-Natal.

It was also revealed in the previous chapters that the teaching methods that the teachers used, particularly during the conducting of the survey, ignored a number of recommendations made by the CLT approach. In most cases, the methods emphasised grammar at the expense of language practice. Grammar alone is, arguably, not adequate. According to Franke (1884), in Richards and Rodgers (1983), a language could be best taught by using it actively in the classroom. But in the schools where the survey was conducted, the learners were rarely given the opportunity which would allow them to express themselves in the target language in a free and real life-like manner. One here is referring to a situation reminiscent of a real communication where learners would, for example, construct their own sentences, use their own choice of words to discuss, argue, negotiate, explain, etc. From the observations made, such classroom situations were hardly observed, where there was interactive and free usage of the target language by learners.

It seems clearer now that this could be attributed to an improper approach. That is, it has come as a result of the imposition of the Communicative Language Teaching approach on teachers, who seemed to have little or no knowledge of how this is to be implemented for effective language learning. Moreover, the grammar aspects were not only taught in isolation from context, but were also appallingly disjointed. The learners were also treated as if they were non-living things, who were not expected to give their responses. Teachers were always the only source of information, unlike what

the CLT approach advocates. The CLT approach would always want both teachers and learners to be equal participants in the learning activity, and where learners take the lead and the teacher is usually the initiator and observer. The information would invariably need to come from both parties, but largely to be generated by learners from the problem-solving task given to them by the facilitator, the language teacher.

Therefore, both teachers and learners could not take the full blame for the latter's inability to express themselves proficiently in English even after they have completed grade twelve.

It is a common practice that everybody shifts the blame from one to the other. Although the administrators could also exonerate themselves, eventually they are the ones who may have to take the responsibility. And so they are the ones who could do something now, before it is too late. It was discovered that teachers themselves were aware of the non-effectiveness of the teaching methods they used, irrespective of whether they called them structuralist or communicative. By that, one does not mean that teachers ever alluded to a desire to discard the current approach for a new one. The outcry they made, although it was reproachful of the Department of Education, was more help-appealing. As a result, they would welcome any endeavour whose aim is to alleviate their teaching methods. But it was also marked that other teachers had never "heard" of the Communicative Language Teaching approach. If they had heard about it, they did not take it seriously. They began to show some seriousness when they realised that the whole research was focussing on it (CLT approach). This conviction could be true because the subject-advisers, in their responses, could not confirm that all the

teachers of English under their supervision had undergone training in the CLT approach.

Regarding the puzzling areas of the syllabus, and the CLT approach in particular, one could only hope that when teachers are re-educated or attend workshops, this matter would then be clarified and could enlighten teachers.

The study seems to have alerted the Department of Education and other interested stakeholders about the problems that are there in schools, particularly around the teaching of English as a second language. Hopefully, almost all the major factors that might have been responsible for the non-effectiveness of the Communicative Language Teaching approach have been brought to the surface. The onus is now on the hands of the Department to see to it that the situation gets redressed. The country could not afford ignoring this situation forever, particularly if one considers the magnitude English commands in almost all spheres of South Africans' lives. With or without English communicative competence, one is automatically either empowered or disempowered politically, economically and even socially, since English has become a lingua franca not only in South Africa, but in the whole world as well.

The appeal, therefore, is that the administrators in the Department of Education understand that the ultimate goal of the whole of this research process is to come up with the most effective teaching approach. That is, the approach that would change English from being a stumbling block, into a vehicle that would take learners to their desired levels of proficient and effective language acquisition and usage in their education, both inside and

outside the classroom. Thus the Communicative Language Teaching approach seems to be the best possible answer to the problems surrounding the teaching and learning of English in ESL schools in particular. The most important aspect about this approach is how it is to be effectively used. This is the area that needs full attention of the department.

It could also be added that it is not one's feeling or view that replacing English with the learners' vernacular as a medium of instruction would resolve the problems, at least, for now. A lot of information is still kept in English textbooks. So it is suggested that South Africans, and Blacks in particular, not be deprived the access to that kind of information. CLT is usable in both isiZulu, English and any other language. How it is to be employed is of central concern to teachers.

The Department of Education could remove the heavy burden from the shoulders of the teachers. There is a need to properly train teachers and provide schools with sufficient and necessary teaching materials, which seem to be currently absent. English teachers should enjoy teaching their subject. One could not expect teachers to create a tension-free atmosphere in the classroom if they (teachers) themselves are not free. It should be remembered that one of the factors that led to the downfall of the Direct Method, was its entire dependence on the teachers' skills and abilities (Refer to Chapter two).

5.2. ABRIDGED SUGGESTIONS

1. The researcher strongly believes that linguistic structures are important for the attainment of communicative competence of the

learners. As a result, they should be taught, even if it means explicit teaching.

2. The Communicative Language Teaching approach requires to be re-introduced at schools. This time it should be done in a proper manner. At least the coercive strategies this time should be less applied, unlike what seemed to have been the case initially.

3. Teachers in particular, need to be well prepared for any innovation to be successful, and CLT in this regard. This could be carried out in the form of workshops that teachers would attend so that they could be trained properly.

4. The administrators should be prepared to make some changes here and there in the CLT approach in order to have it adjusted to the conditions where it is applied.

5. Learners must be provided with as many libraries as possible so that they could easily access readers of the TL. A school could turn just one classroom into a library, for example. Libraries would make provision for readers like magazines, newspapers, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, textbooks, novels, etc. More advanced libraries could even provide learners with audiovisual materials in order to develop, integratively, as many of the communication skills as possible.

6. The subject-advisors of English in particular ought to have a closer cooperation with their teachers, and in a more frequent manner. The two parties (subject-advisors and teachers) should not meet only at the

beginning and end of the year, respectively. The subject-advisors need to witness the challenges that are encountered at the implementation level.

7. The teaching of linguistic structures ought to be "perfected" by the real use (practice) of the target language. That is, teachers need to create as much opportunity as possible for learners to communicate in the target language in a manner that is similar to the real-life situation.

8. Let there be adequate and relevant textbooks for the CLT approach as well. This would serve as a guide and reference for teachers during times of uncertainty. Such provision is likely to even lessen teachers' nervousness that seems to be so high, and raise their teaching morale.

9. The syllabus of each grade needs to specify the linguistic structures that would need to be taught. This, probably, would need to be correlated with the type of examinations that the learners would write. That is, one could not be expected to write, successfully, an examination which is largely grammatical, yet one's lessons had been function-oriented.

10. The syllabuses of all grades need to have a cohesive link to one another. There should not be unnecessary repetition of one particular language aspect in all grades. Every next grade need to add a comprehensible input to what was taught in the previous grade. This would bring the continuity that the teachers said they wanted to see

happening in the learning process, during the conducting of the survey.

11. All teachers who use English as the medium of instruction in their lessons, including content teachers, need to be encouraged to use it as much as they could. Rephrasing one's utterances for better understanding could be highly recommended as opposed to a sudden resort to code-switching.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNARE ON THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE "COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING" IN THE NORTHERN KWAZULU-NATAL COASTAL SCHOOLS

ENGLISH EDUCATOR QUESTIONNAIRE

You are required to respond as honestly as possible to the questions. No names are required and responses will be treated as confidential.

PLEASE MARK BLOCKS WITH "X" WHERE APPLICABLE

1. When did you start teaching English? Please mention the year...............

2. Is English your specialised subject? | YES | NO |

3. If your answer to question 2 is "no, why are you teaching English? Please explain............................

4. Did you experience any problem/s when you started teaching English?
| YES | NO |

5. If the answer to question 4 is "yes", did you inform the authorities (e.g. Principal, HoD, etc) about the problem you encountered? | YES | NO |

6. Was the problem resolved? | YES | NO |

7. When you started teaching English, were you provided with a syllabus?
| YES | NO |

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8. Are you now provided with the syllabus? | YES | NO |

9. If the answer to question 8 is "no", state how you choose the aspects to be taught.

9.1 I base my lessons on previous years' question papers.

9.2 I ask for help from my colleagues.

9.3 I teach what my teachers used to teach me when I was still a learner.

9.4 I depend on annual workshops organised by subject-advisors.

9.5 If you have a different answer, please state.........................

10. Are you convinced that all of your learners understand the language (English) you use when you deliver lessons? | YES | NO |

11. Which method do you then resort to if you realise that your learners have a problem with the understanding of a language:

11.1 Do you rephrase the question till the learners understand it?

11.2 Do you use code-switching (i.e., for example, using bits of the learners' vernacular?)

11.3 Do you just go on with the lesson because you don't want to "spoil" your learners?

11.4 Do you have a different answer?

Please explain...

12. Do you ever use code-switching in your lessons? That is, using of, say, isiZulu and English at intersentencial level? | YES | NO |

13. If your answer to question 12 is "yes", please indicate how often you do it.

13.1 sometimes

13.2 always

13.3 perhaps once a week

13.4 if other, please explain

....

14. Who would you say is the greater source of information during your lessons?

    14.1 the teacher

    14.2 the learner

15. Do you ever involve your learners in an activity where you observe them communicating in English in a real life situation?

YES	NO

16. If your answer to question 15 is "yes", how often do you do this?

    16.1 once a month

    16.2 once a term (quarter)

    16.3 twice a term

    16.4 if other, please state...

17. When learners are given the activity mentioned in question 16, do they all participate at once (i.e. in one lesson), or others wait for their opportunity in another activity, the other day or days? Please specify.

....

18. How do you deal with the unbecoming behaviour by some of the learners during the activity mentioned in 15? E.g., the learner keeps quiet whilst he or she is expected to give a response, or maybe the learner breaks grammatical rules, etc.

18.1 Do you intervene at once and make a comment?

18.2 Do you keep quiet because you do not want to disturb the rather smooth progressing discussion?

18.3 Do you keep quiet so that you make a generalised comment at the end of the activity?

18.4 If other, please explain...

19. Do you teach English grammatical rules in isolation of any activity or comprehension, etc.?

YES	NO

20. If your answer to question 19 is "yes", how often do you do it?

20.1 sometimes

20.2 always

20.3 perhaps once a term

20.4 If other, please explain...

21. Do you think the results you produce every year are to your desired level?

YES	NO

22. If your answer to question 21 is "no", what do you think has been an obstacle to your achieving of the desired results?

Please explain...

23. Besides textbooks and a chalkboard, which other teaching aids are at your disposal?

Please enumerate them...

24. Do you teach classes with more than 40 pupils?

YES	NO

25. Would you prefer to teach classes with a less number of pupils?

YES	NO

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26. If your answer to question 25 is "yes", can you please give a reason or reasons for it...

27. If you have any other concern about the teaching and learning of English which you think can help improve the results, please specify it.

....

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE "COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING" IN THE NORTHERN KWAZULU NATAL COASTAL SCHOOLS

PRINCIPAL/HoD QUESTIONNAIRE

You are required to respond as honestly as possible to the questions. No names are required and responses will be treated as confidential.

PLEASE MARK BLOCKS WITH "X" WHERE APPLICABLE

1. How frequently do your English Educators (esp. grades 10, 11 and 12) report problems about their subject to you?

    1.1 never

    1.2 sometimes

    1.3 always

    1.4 perhaps once a month

2. Do you remember any problem that was reported to you and was never resolved because of some reasons? | YES | NO |

3. If your answer to question 2 is "yes", please state the problem..........

    ....

4. Is your school in possession of a written English syllabus? | YES | NO |

5. If your answer to question 4 is "yes", did you give the syllabus to the English teachers?

YES	NO

6. Are you satisfied with what you observe from English lessons?

7. If your answer to question 6 is "no", please substantiate it?

YES	NO

....

8. Would you say English results are improving in your school?

YES	NO

9. Please provide herewith pass percentage for each grade for the past three years:

9.1 Grade 11

2000	2001	2002

9.2 Grade 12

2000	2001	2002

10. Do you have an English educator in your school (from grade 8 to 12) who has not undergone professional training?

YES	NO

11. If your answer to question 10 is "yes", please specify the educator's highest academic qualifications ....

12. Do you have a professionally qualified educator who did not specialise in English during his/her training, but he/she is teaching English at school?

YES	NO

13. If the answer to question 12 is "yes", please explain why this educator is teaching English.

....

14. Are you the principal or HoD?

....

15. How long have you been in this position?

    Since ....

16. What do you think still needs to be done to have English results
    reaching your desired level? Please explain...............................

17 Do you have any other concern or proposal to add? Please specify....

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE "COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING" IN THE NORTHERN KWAZULU-NATAL COASTAL SCHOOLS

LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE

You are required to respond as honesty as possible to the questions. No names are required and responses will be treated as confidential.

PLEASE MARK BLOCKS WITH "X" WHERE APPLICABLE

1. In which grade are you? ....

2. What symbol did you obtain in English in the previous grade? ....

3. Where you studying English at a higher or standard grade? ....

....

4. Do you have problems in understanding English instructions? | YES | NO |

5. If your answer is "yes", how often does this happen?

    5.1 sometimes

    5.2 always

    5.3 perhaps once a week

    5.4 if other, please specify

....

6. In which language do you communicate at home? ....

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7. Do you speak or listen to English besides at school? | YES | NO |

8. If your answer to question 7 is "yes", please state where and whom you usually use English.

....

9. Do you read newspapers?

   9.1 never

   9.2 sometimes

   9.3 always

   9.4 perhaps once a term

10. If you do read newspaper, state the name of the newspaper you read the most. ....

11. Where do you stay throughout the year?

   11.1 suburb

   11.2 town

   11.3 rural areas

   11.4 if other, please specify

....

12. If you do not understand instructions as you write English examinations, what do you do to solve this problem?

   12.1 I leave a space

   12.2 I ask for explanation in isiZulu

   12.3 I whisper to other candidates for help

   12.4 If other, please specify

....

13. How often do you do what you ticked as your answer in question number 12?

13.1 always

13.2 sometimes

13.3 perhaps once a month

13.4 if other, please specify

....

14. What type of class work do you usually do during English periods? Do you read, speak, listen or write in class? Arrange all four, starting with the most frequent to the least frequent ones.

....

15. When you talk with your teachers in school, but outside the classroom, which language do you use?

15.1 English

15.2 Zulu

15.3 Afrikaans

15.4 If other, please specify

....

16. Are there other people that you communicate with in English, besides your teachers? | YES | NO |

17. If your answer to question 16 is "yes", state who they are ....

....

18. Can you give a reason for your communicating in English with the person/people you mentioned in question 17. ....

....

19. How often does your teacher use isiZulu in English lessons in order to help you understand them better?

19.1 sometimes

19.2 always

19.3 never

19.4 perhaps once a week

20. What do you think should be done to make you a good English user? Please explain. You can use any language, even your vernacular, to answer this question. ....

....

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE INVESTIGATION INTO "COMMUNICATIVE
LANGUAGE TEACHING" IN THE NORTHERN KWAZULU NATAL COASTAL
SCHOOLS

SUBJECT-ADVISOR QUESTIONNAIRE

You are required to respond as honestly as possible to the questions. No
names are required and responses will be treated as confidential.

PLEASE MARK BLOCKS WITH "X" WHERE APPLICABLE

1. Does the Lower Umfolozi District have an English grammar syllabus? | YES | NO |

2. If the answer to question 1 is "yes, please specify its (the syllabus) time
   of release.

   Please state the year...

3. Do all district schools have it (syllabus) in its written form? | YES | NO |

4. If your answer to question 3 is "yes", which method did you use to have
   the syllabus distributed to schools?.......................................

5. Did you take any follow-up steps to ensure that, indeed, the syllabus did
   reach the targeted hands? | YES | NO |

6. Does the syllabus have room for the explicit grammar teaching for grades
   10, 11 and 12 in particular? | YES | NO |

7. As far as you know, are the teacher-training institutions acquainted with this English grammar syllabus? | YES | NO |

8. During your visits to schools, (if you do make them) does what you observe there satisfy you? | YES | NO |

9. If your answer to question 8 is "no", do you take steps? Please elaborate briefly ....

10. What is your view of teacher's expertise to cope with the items stipulated in syllabus? Please explain........................

11. Do you think there is a need for teachers to be retrained or workshopped, etc.? Please elaborate ....

12. Are you satisfied with the link between the syllabus, teaching and assessment? Please explain briefly..

13. Do you, or the Department suggest teaching methods to the teachers, or everything has been left with the institutions of teacher training?..

14. If you do suggest "other" teaching methods, does it mean you have no confidence in the institutions for training?
Please explain ....
....

15. Would you say the result the district obtains every year are to your desired level? Please explain ....

16. Do you believe that the current framework (the syllabus, its implementation, assessment, etc) is the best framework that can produce the best results ever? Please elaborate briefly...........
....

17. Do you have anything you would like to add?

Please specify...

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE "COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING" IN THE NORTHERN KWAZULU-NATAL COASTAL SCHOOLS

<u>CONTENT-SUBJECT EDUCATOR QUESTIONNAIRE</u>

You are required to respond as honesty as possible to the questions. No names are required and responses will treated as confidential.

<u>PLEASE MARK BLOCKS WITH "X" WHERE APPLICABLE</u>

1. Which content-subject are you teaching? ....

2. Please mention the grade/s in which you teach the subject..............

3. Which language do you use as a medium of instruction? ....

4. Are you convinced that all of your learners understand the language you use to deliver lessons?

YES	NO

5. If your answer to number 4 is "no" which other method/s do you use to ease the problems?

  5.1 Do you rephrase the instruction till the learners understand it?

  5.2 Do you use code-switching (I.e. using bits of the learners' vernacular)?

  5.3 Do you just go on with the lesson because you don't want to "spoil" your learners?

5.4 If you have a different answer, please state

....

....

6. Do you ever use code-switching in your lessons? That is, the use of, say,

   English and Zulu at intersentencial level. | YES | NO |

7. If your answer to question 6 is "yes", please indicate how often you do

   this

   7.1 sometimes

   7.2 always

   7.3 perhaps once a week

   7.4 if other, please state

....

8. Do you give your learners essay-type questions as assessment? | YES | NO |

9. Do the learners perform better in the essay-type questions than they do in

   the cloze ones? | YES | NO |

10. If your answer to question 9 is "no" can you please give a reason for this

    status quo?

    10.1 The learners are too lazy to give long responses.

    10.2 The learners misinterpret questions or do not understand them

         altogether

    10.3 Although they may have answers, the learners find it difficult

         to express themselves in the language.

    10.4 If other answer, please state...

11. When you mark your learner's work, do you consider the fact that the

    language of expression by the learners is not their vernacular? | YES | NO |

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12. How do you deal with some unexpected answers by some of the learners? E.g., In Biology, the learner writes "sells" when he/she had to write "cells".

12.1 Do you mark the learner wrong?

12.2 Do you mark the learner correct?

12.3 Do you mark the learner correct and then give him/her half of the maximum mark/s?

12.4 If you have a different answer, please state..............................

....

13. Would you say the results you produce every year are at your desired level? | YES | NO |

14. If the answer to question 13 is "no", what do you think has been the major cause of the poor performance? Please explain briefly

....

15. Is English one of your major (specialised) subjects? | YES | NO |

16. If the answer to question 15 is "no", please mention the language/s you specialised in (if there is any)..

....

17. Do you think the learners' performance can be improved with the replacement of the current medium of instruction by a new one? | YES | NO |

18. If your answer to question 17 is "yes", please state the language you would like to use as replacement..

....

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