Exploring Perspectives and Practices of EFL Graduate Student-Teachers on Communicative Language Teaching

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Abstract

This qualitative research study aims at exploring the perspectives and practices of EFL graduate student-teachers on Communicative Language Teaching applied to their teaching contexts. The Institute of Foreign Language (IFL) of the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) was selected, and 5 MA in TESOL students were recruited to participate in the study, 4 males and 1 female, working as a teacher. All 5 participants were interviewed based on the principal questions of CLT, adapted from Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011), through phone-calling and Zoom when it was the time of the Covid-19 outbreaks. The findings showed that the perspectives of the participants on CLT include cooperative teaching, language function, communicative competence development, authentic material, and fulfilling the students' needs. In addition, CLT was implemented to put the students into real practice, EFL teacher as the facilitator and students as the practitioner, employing interactive learning between teacher-student and students-students within the evaluation and the error correction.

Keywords

Introduction

The growth in the English language needs produced the English Language Teaching (ELT) development as the English language learners desired to improve their academic knowledge and language competency. This growth of ELT revealed the emergence of language teaching assumed by English language teachers, learners, and stakeholders' beliefs in their sociocultural environment (Richards, 2006). This improvement in English language teaching partly assisted the teaching technique in Communicative Language Teaching (Harmer, 2007; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Littlewood, 1981; Richards, 2006). Communicative Language Teaching has been practiced as a communicative dominant in language teaching, and it became more adapted in a classroom setting to assist language learners in better their communicative competence (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

Communicative language teaching provides language learners more opportunities to socialize with their classmates through language interaction as a mainstream way to drive their linguistic achievements in the study context (Browne, 2007; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Littlewood, 1981; Richards, 2006). Conducting CLT in a classroom promotes functional and structural linguistic competence, meaning language learners construct meanings assumed as social contexts and linguistic feature formats through the communicative competence approach (Nunan, 1989; Richards, 2006).

However, Cambodian EFL teachers, though not all, practiced rote-learning teaching activities. The students drilled and repeated to socialize meanings and structures of selected topics. This language-teaching principle produced repetition drills of rote-learning instruction resulting in a surface understanding of natural linguistic features (Harmer, 2007). The language learners failed to conceptualize how systematic functions and linguistic formats convey various social aspects emerging lack-communicative competence. In alignment with this emergence, the effectiveness of CLT beliefs and practices were considered as teaching principles to only influence speaking ability in language classrooms. The language teachers, therefore, appreciated lecturing during classroom sessions allowing the language learners to listen and to imagine what new inputs should be and to ask several questions about the selected topic, resulting in less communicative competency of students' interactive functional and structural linguistic features with others as Richards (2006) argued that students may get filed to reach study objectives of interactive communication when lack-interactions of communicative activities are promoted.

The current study aims to explore the perspectives and practices of EFL graduate student-teachers on Communicative Language Teaching in their teaching, followed by two research questions: (1) What are the perspectives of EFL graduate student-teachers on CLT in their teaching? and (2) To what extent have they practiced CLT in their teaching?

Literature Review
Definitions of CLT
Communicative language teaching is known as a teaching activity that functions the input (Barkley, 2010), while Lewis and Hill (1992) stated that CLT is the collaboration of both teacher and students in language structuring; in other words, CLT starts with real-world activities promoting language learners to acquire input by facilitating both functional and structural linguistic features, which language learners operationalize usage for their linguistic contexts (Littlewood, 1981; Richards, 2006).
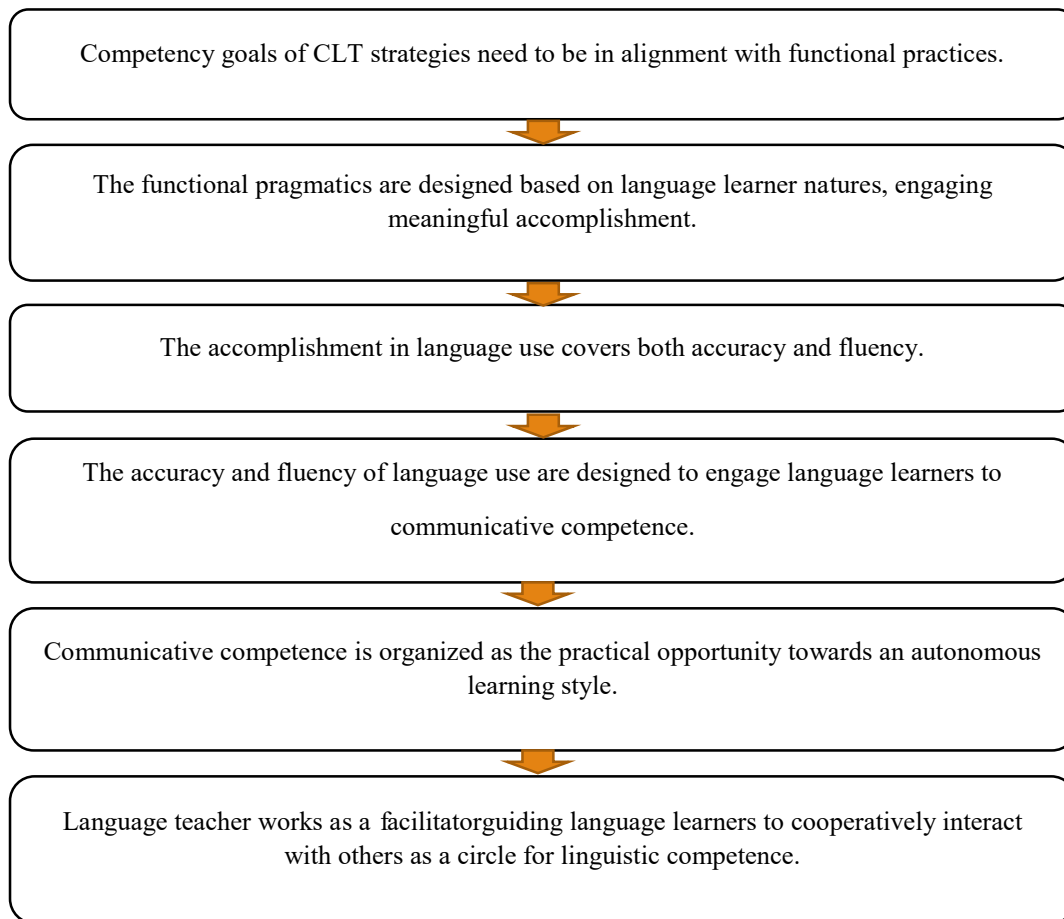
In other words, communicative competence is classified into 4 components: (1) linguistic competence refers to the grammatical rules, (2) sociolinguistic competence focuses on appropriate language use, for example, politeness and vocabulary, (3) discourse competence is understood as the combination of structural language, and (4) strategy competence refers to the ability to produce a smooth communication through verbal expressions and gestures (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Characteristics of CLT
Conducting CLT provides students with classroom practice tasks through mini-project activities allowing students-talk-time situations, in which students are allowed to lead the class through their practical activity. This teaching technique promotes learners' motivation through meaningful linguistic learning. CLT allows a natural language, in which the learners are familiarly adapted to real-world practices, and it creates a cooperative learning context supporting the learners with relationships and achievement of communicative purposes (Brown, 2006; Littlewood, 1981).

Harmer (2007) stated that CLT promotes language learners an opportunity to communicate with a variety of language functions in alignment with selected contents and purposes without considering any forms of structural rules. Brown (2006, p. 43) described six characteristics of CLT as follows (see figure 1):

Figure 1
Characteristics of CLT (Brown, 2006)

Competency goals of CLT strategies need to be in alignment with functional practices.

The functional pragmatics are designed based on language learner natures, engaging meaningful accomplishment.

The accomplishment in language use covers both accuracy and fluency.

The accuracy and fluency of language use are designed to engage language learners to communicative competence.

Communicative competence is organized as the practical opportunity towards an autonomous learning style.

Language teacher works as a facilitatorguiding language learners to cooperatively interact with others as a circle for linguistic competence.

In other words, the features of CLT are understood in various ways (Nunan, 1989): (1) Community of sharing, (2) Meaningful communication, (3) Language based-practice, (4) language enhancement through ongoing motivation, and (6) Communication in real-world situations.

Roles of the teachers and the students in CLT
Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) mentioned that the language teacher of CLT works as the facilitator assisting students to learn along the process. Language learners cooperatively work with their classmate through role-play or group works to achieve a common goal. During language sessions, the students consult, negotiate or confabulate with each other as a mainstream study.

In addition, the students need to work in groups rather than learning individually. They associate with their classmates in a comfortable manner in which they need to be responsible for their learning process to reach their study goals. The teacher controls the interactive performance and facilitates classroom flow rather than being a model of communication or presentation. The teacher helps learners become independent of their learning and engages students to motivate their study (Littlewood, 1981; Richards, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Teaching procedures and classroom activities in CLT

The CLT promotes free practice-competence approaches as the mainstream methods in developing language learners' ability, which means problem-solving, game-routing, and role-play proceeding are applied to draw students' attention. Information-filling and question-displaying teaching activities are considered CLT techniques because students learn to formulate the information and construct the answers through collaborative learning styles. The teacher satisfies the communicative purposes through authentic materials among small groups of students to operationalize classroom language-setting goals (Brown, 2006; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

Moreover, Richards and Rodgers (2014) mentioned that the CLT approach begins with communicative interaction through meaningful and authentic teaching materials in alignment with the classroom environment and learners' interests. This approach then flows the communicative progress satisfying language fluency and finishes with the students' output. The CLT procedures, therefore, are categorized into two main stages by Littlewood (1981, p. 86) as follows:

Figure 2
Methodological procedures of CLT (Littlewood, 1981, p. 86)
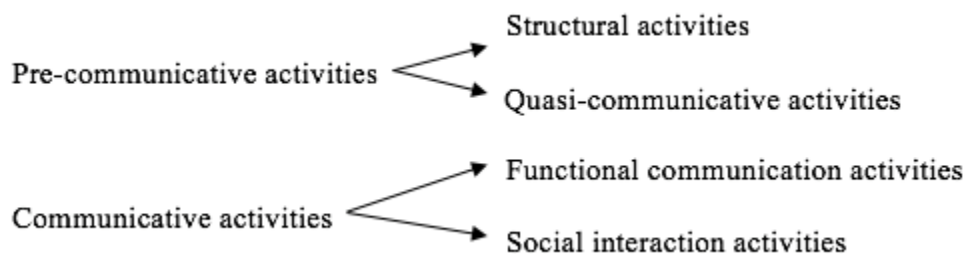
As shown in figure 2, Littlewood (1981) categorized communicative practice into two main groups (1) pre-communicative activity: both structural and communicative competence implemented to innovate students' interaction in the language learning process, and (2) communicative performances: both functional and reality practices of language activities through classroom contents, tasks, texts, and competency instruction for real-world inputs.

In addition, the practices of communicative language teaching were introduced into three main elements of practices (Richards, 2006, p. 15) such as (1) mechanical practice refers to the continuous and ongoing practical task in which students follow the principle activity of the mechanical objectives, (2) meaningful practice is understood as the empirical practice in which the students control themselves independently for the social practice, and (3) communicative practice is considered as the practical task through the communicative strand, where students work in the group associated with each other producing their speech based on their assumption toward linguistic competence and structural competence development.

Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983, p. 91) pointed out three practices of CLT regarding the language teaching. First, before-teaching operation refers to the activity of preparing a plan for a classroom activity, including materials designed, the expectation of the course, and technical processes for the classroom setting. Second, during-classroom operation is understood as the activities of teaching and learning during classroom progress as the language teacher monitors the plan that they have prepared with additional adjustments based on the real practice of

classroom setting. Third, after-classroom operation is considered as the evaluation stage of the classroom activity, in which the language teacher evaluates students' achievement through both ongoing assessment and summative assessment to examine what the students have received as well as to organize a further activity in alignment with the content and the outcome.

Methodology

This current study employed qualitative research design as a single case, conducted at the Department of English (DOE), Institute of Foreign Languages (FIL), Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) located in Cambodia, which was renowned for its quality in tertiary education and language training. According to the Student Information Booklet, the DOE offers two main Bachelor's Degree programs: Bachelor of Education in Teaching English as the Foreign Language and Bachelor in English for Work Skills. Also, the department offers a post-graduate program called Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MA in TESOL). The researcher intended to explore the perspectives and practices of CLT among the graduate students in the MA in TESOL program (DOE, 2020).

The purposive sampling selection was applied to recruit the participants for the purpose of rich data as well as to ensure the competencies of the participants in terms of qualitative research design (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016; Tongco, 2007). The participants met the criteria were selected to participate in the study: (1) doing MA in TESOL at the DOE at IFL of RUPP, Phnom Penh, (2) teaching English as a foreign language, (3) applying CLT in their teaching, (4) teaching experiences (at least 5 years).

Table 1
A Brief Background of the Participants

Participants	Name in the study	Semester of MA	Teaching experiences	Educational sector	Full-time teaching	Part-time teaching
A	ST1	4	Over 6 years	Private		✓
B	ST2	4	Over 10 years	Private	✓	
C	ST3	4	Over 5 years	Private	✓	
D	ST4	4	Over 12 years	Public	✓	✓
E	ST5	4	Over 7 years	Private	✓	

The five participants in this study are MA in TESOL students at IFL, working as a teacher at Phnom Penh City and provinces, and getting more involved in communicative language teaching. They are in the ages of late 20s to early 30s. They have been teaching English for more than four years, from beginner to advanced levels (see table 1).

To collect data, the researcher asked the participants to fill in the form about the participants' backgrounds. The researcher then interviewed the participants using interview questions through a telephone call and Zoom (a video-communication app) due to the outbreak of Covid-19. The interview was conducted individually and each participant spent around 45 minutes to 1 hour and 25 minutes answering all questions of the interviews. Before the interview, the researcher also asked permission from the participants to record the interviewed-telephone call and Interviewed-Zoom. The interview was taken at home, school, and office where the participants felt free to answer. To make sure the answers of the participants flowed accordingly, the researcher followed up with additional questions and examples of their practices for clarification regarding their real practical experiences and their personal assumptions in CLT. After the participants had been interviewed, the researcher read and prepared the information again to make sure that all aspects of the study were collected. The

clusters of data received from the participant were transcribed. The thematic analysis was employed to hierarchize the data into codes, sub-themes, and themes. It involved five-step "compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding" (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018, p. 2). The theme was chosen based on: its combination of codes, its potential datasets and its response to the question, its boundaries compared to the theoretical framework and data itself, its length and meaning, and its consistency.

Research Findings

Answer to research question 1: What are the perspectives of EFL graduate student-teachers on CLT in their teaching?

The understanding of CLT

All five interviewees (ST1, ST2, ST3, ST4, and ST5) addressed what they think communicative language teaching (CLT) as a collaborative activity between student-students and teacher-students to communicate. CLT promotes language practice as students work in pairs or groups producing language through real-life communication. For example, ST1 mentioned that CLT is the main activity in developing students to communicate by using language and kind of discussion related to student's daily lives, whereas ST5 stated that CLT refers to the interaction or negotiation between teacher-and-students, and students-and-students. Anyway, ST4 mentioned that, "…CLT is the collaboration of students' activity, which students need to do more activities to achieve the aim of the study… by going beyond communication…".

Definitions of CLT

In addition, the participants have defined CLT as a cooperative teaching, a language function, or an authentic communication. ST1 and ST2 indicated that CLT is a teaching technique making students communicate cooperatively. Language teacher creates community practice situations and students play a real practical role in using communication to achieve the aims of the study. Moreover, ST2 indicated that CLT can be defined as a teaching technique that a teacher applies to make students communicate with their friends. Within CLT, the teacher organizes the lessons using pair or group works allowing students to communicate grammatically and accurately.

Anyways, ST3, ST4, and ST5 mentioned that CLT is a language function, which means students co-construct knowledge through communication and daily practices. The students use communication as their habit. Its function of language use through communication produces such knowledge and language improvement. They feel like using the English language as its functional task makes them more comfortable in learning and this is a way to put language function into real practice.

Communicative competent development

Five interviewees think that CLT is really important in language teaching because CLT helps the teacher to develop students' communicative competence through real practices, interactive activities, and experience sharing. ST4 added that CLT is crucial because it promotes students to use what they learn. It is not only about keeping knowledge development, but it is also about the competency practice along the way. That is why they may know clearly where and what they can improve, what they need to make changes, what they do not understand, what they understand about the topic, what they should get help with, and whom they get it from. In addition, ST1 mentioned that, "…Teacher mostly makes students feel confident to talk and practice. It is one of the teaching methods… engaging students' communication as a means to develop communicative competence...".

Authentic materials and communication

All five interviewees mentioned that they like CLT because it plays an important role in promoting authentic communication in which students work a lot to co-construct language in alignment with authentic materials and communicative processes. ST4 pointed out that CLT requires students to do more activities. They need to talk, communicate, and interact with their friends rather than sit down and listen to the teacher's explanation. Anyways, it is good that the teacher promotes students to cooperatively work with teammates, producing language production, so that students may be able to see clearly what they have received. In the same way, ST3 indicated that teachers themselves need to consider using suitable materials that support the communicative process. For example, Crip-cards, statement-folders, pictures, newspapers, or magazines are needed in student-talk-time activities because these kinds of materials guide students to find in-depth understanding.

Students' needs

Five interviewees mentioned that CLT should be implemented in EFL teaching in Cambodia because of the changes in students' needs. As one teaching technique does not apply to all situations. That is why teachers may investigate more teaching styles to improve their students' proficiency level. In this case, CLT provides more opportunities for students to practice. The students learn not only structural language, but also reach an in-depth understanding of concept-based knowledge. They can control their speech and produce language within motivation based on the context. The students see how they can practice and apply their knowledge to the socio-cultural situation. It is not just learning the forms, but it also includes linguistic concepts and practical knowledge. This means that the students learn not only the formula, but they also learn how to make sentences and practice them with their classmates. For example, the students were assigned to work in groups to formulate the formula of Simple Present Tense. They then built some statements in Simple Present Tense and communicated with their teammates.

Anyways, ST1, ST2, and ST3 mentioned that as the language teacher allows students to work in pairs or groups, the development of language proficiency emerged along the way they practice. Both practice and proficiency come together as the language teacher employs CLT in their classroom. ST3 pointed out that CLT requires more activities to promote students' involvement. The students could develop their proficiency level as they do such exercises, work with their teammates, keep self-regulated learning, and enjoy learning through daily practices.

Answer to research question 2: To what extent have EFL student-teachers practiced CLT in their teaching?

Goals of CLT

Three interviewees (ST2, ST4, and ST5) indicated that the goal of CLT is to function language in a real-world context which means students are allowed to co-practice communication based on the selected topic to see how real communication assists real-life practices. Students feel more familiar with the content since they are assigned to play roles in a target situation. In other words, students learn a new concept and achieve it by going beyond presentation, explanation, and discussion. Their learning is about sharing and interacting with each other. In the same way, ST2 mentioned that,

> "…The most important aim of CLT is providing opportunity… to students to function their language uses in real-world contact… which means practicing communication in the class may lead students to cooperatively structure their language inputs..."

The goal of CLT is to make the students do more activities as the independent learner. The student is a target to communicate with their peers, facilitated by the classroom teacher. CLT class is active and crowded where the student is the main actor.

Teacher's roles

Five interviewees mentioned that a teacher works as a facilitator because he walks around the class facilitating what students are doing instead of telling them directly what they are learning about. The teacher comes and helps students when they have some challenges during their discussion. The teacher, anyways, composes and simplifies some more ideas about the topic when students feel not sure about the assigned topic. Moreover, ST5 added that the teacher's role in CLT is a facilitator because the teacher is a key person to make the class runs smoothly by simplifying what students need to do and allowing them to practice rather than leading the class with teacher talk time. A learning activity with suitable materials has been introduced for the students and then they could find a proper way to practice themselves as the teacher always stays with them.

Moreover, ST1, ST2, and ST3 indicated that a role of a teacher in CLT can also be a language guide because students are guided with some tips on how to do the activity. The teacher introduces roles of group discussion, role-play, or game-playing before allowing students to practice. The teacher guides and tells the direction where, what, and how the students need to do. In addition, ST1 said that, "...Teacher needs to guide students with statements and explanation of the lesson [sample activity] and provides students roles of how to run over it... instead of telling them to practice without introducing the roles...".

In addition, all five interviewees mentioned that a teacher also works as a monitor in communicative language teaching. The students are observed and controlled under the roles they are practicing. The teacher, anyway, monitors activities as a means of making students go straight to the point of the lesson. ST5 said that the teacher would allow students to read, and the teacher asks them to express their opinion, and then they share it with their friends or the whole class. The teacher then asks two or three students to exchange their ideas so that the students may get something new. They sometimes need to summarize the lesson based on what they understand and remember. Finally, the teacher asks a few students to conclude the lesson about what have learned.

Moreover, the teacher of CLT plays mixed roles as an explainer, an observer, a composer, an instructor, and a situation-based actor because along the way of language teaching activities, teaching hours or time allowance may result in changes in the practices so that teacher's role in the class may also change. The teacher sometimes needs to modify the role from an explainer to an observer when the students understand what they are going to do. In this case, the teacher just walks around the class observing what students are practicing with their classmates. For example, ST3 said,

> "…I regularly change my role when conducting CLT in the class based on classroom situation and students' needs... For example, I change my role from a guide to a listener when my students come… and lead the class with their presentation..."

Students' roles

All five interviewees pointed out that students work as practitioners in the CLT classroom. They discuss, work in pairs or groups, play games, explain, and share their knowledge with their friends. They, in addition, cooperatively work with each other, solve some challenges during their discussion, and they then share their group assumptions of the selected topic with

other students in the class. ST1 indicated that the role of the students is practitioner because classroom activity is operated by the students themselves. They associate with each other, listen to what their friends are sharing, and express their common ideas for improvement. The students, moreover, cooperate with their teammates in group discussions resulting in active classroom progress.

In addition, ST2, ST3, and ST5 mentioned that along the way students practice, they produce the activity for their group discussion about the target topic. They produce a sample based on what they have discussed so they could gain new knowledge as they associate with one another. ST3 said that the other role of the students in CLT is an activity producer. After they have already discussed it with their friends, it is time for them to produce what they understand about the topic. They sometimes make the class even more active and crowded. They learn and produce the activities at the same time as a challenging class.

As three interviewees (ST1, ST2, and ST5) said that students' roles are practitioner and language producer, ST3 and ST4 indicated that the student's role in CLT is independent learners because CLT helps them to independently learn new knowledge. The students are independent learners in CLT class because they contribute what they learned and experienced to their friends rather than sitting down and doing nothing in terms of learning a language. They lead themselves and co-construct knowledge about what they are doing, discussing, and communicating. They may not know what will happen next, but they control themselves along the way they do the activities which would make them autonomous learners.

Types of teaching and learning activities
All five interviewees mentioned that they use group discussion as a type of teaching and learning activity in CLT because this may provide students with more opportunities for communication and exchanging ideas. ST1 said that the teacher provides the students with the topic they need to discuss. The students are then clustered into groups discussing the assigned topic to find the group answer. After the discussion has ended, they stand up and share what their group has discussed with other group members and this produces the group of sharing.

In the same way, ST2 also mentioned that the teacher of CLT forms students into the group and provides questions to them. The teacher then offers time for the students to discuss and consult with their group members. During the process of group discussion, the students exchange their ideas and formulate concepts to find the answer. After they have already discussed, they share their group answer with the whole class. Last, the students were asked to conclude their group answers within real practices in alignment with the expected outcomes.

ST2, ST3, ST4, and ST5 mentioned that role-play is conducted as a type of teaching and learning activity in CLT when students get more involved in constructing language and flexibility in making the communication. ST3 added that the teacher introduces to the students how to do the activity of role-play. The students then asked the teacher some questions related to the role-play activity. They then join the group and talk to each other about the play to share their roles and statements. The students then play the role as they discussed and take turns until the role finishes. They make a final conclusion of the play to make sure they gain new knowledge from the role-play in alignment with the topic.

ST4 and ST5 pointed out that they also use debate for teaching and learning activities in CLT due to the fact that this type of debate promotes both structural knowledge and conceptual practices. ST4 said that the teacher assigns the students to work in groups providing a specific

question to each group. They join groups to find the answer and create questions. After they have finished their talk in groups, one group member stands up and asks questions they created to another group. The next group comes and answers the question as they have discussed. This role takes turns from one group to another until all questions and answers they created are finished. Conducting this activity, the teacher finds the students practice more in improving their language proficiency and concepts. Similarly, ST5 said that the teacher divides the students into two different groups, positive and negative groups. The positive group needs to find any reasons to support the topic while the negative group finds ideas to challenge the topic. Both groups come and argued their concepts based on their group assumption. The teacher finally encourages the students to make a final conclusion of the statement argued. This debate may provide the students with an improvement in terms of problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and proficiency development.

In addition, ST3 and ST4 indicated that conversation also plays a vital role in assisting students' ability in CLT classrooms because students learn how to communicate with each other as they gain knowledge from communicative practice. ST4 mentioned that the teacher assigns the students to work in different groups providing them with the problem statement. They need to find someone in the class to answer the problem, and then they need to report the answer to someone else using their own understanding. The teacher finally allows them to report their conversation and reflect on it to the whole class. The students appreciate the activity of making conversation as it assists them to be aware of the oral conversation.

Classroom interaction
All five interviewees mentioned that the interaction between teacher and students is really important to create learning opportunities for the students during classroom operations. ST1 said that the teacher guides the students to work in pairs or groups. The teacher then explains to them the process of how to do the activity. During their discussion, the teacher observes each group and the teacher guides them with some tips regarding the selected topic. The teacher sometimes stays next to students and listens to what they are talking about. If they could not reach the points, the teacher asks them some more details questions about the topic. The teacher finally allows them to present their points of view after the group discussion and make a conclusion.

In the same way, ST2 pointed out that the teacher guides the students with some tips on how to operate the activity. The teacher then asks them to talk. The teacher sometimes asks them some extra questions about the topic and they try to answer. Similarly, ST3 mentioned that the teacher goes around each group of students. If they need some help or have questions, the teacher gives them some ideas. The teacher also involves in the discussion process by listening to what they are talking about, by observing what they ask and answer, and by solving some obstacles as a guide. It is not just one thing, one concept, or one practice they learn, but it is also about functional practices they have achieved. In the same way, ST5 said that,

> "…Whole class discussion allows students to make a prediction about what they study (warm-up)... I approach my students and talk to them, help them with some ideas…, compose some related concepts about the topic and make them feel more familiar with the topic… and I let them share, not just the answer A, B, C, or D but also with reasons and students need it for their studies...."

In addition, all five interviewees also indicated that student-and-student interaction in communicative language leaching plays a very important role in developing students' cooperation to collaboratively improve their abilities in the language structure, the functional

language in real practices, and cooperative works. ST2 mentioned that the students normally communicate with each other on their given topic. They ask and answer the questions with their friends to make a final assumption for their group work. They sometimes do a role-play considered as a drama to function language in real-world contact.

Similarly, ST4 said that during working in groups, the students sometimes provide some more helps to another student when it is necessary; for example, asking questions, composing answer, and explaining to their peers. They can even correct their friends' errors during their talks. In the same way, ST5 pointed out that the students associate with their classmates through group work, pair work, role-play, and discussion. They share their answers and explanation with one another. They anyways share their common views about what they think of the topic as well as their practical experiences.

Students' motivation strategies

Three interviewees (ST1, ST4, and ST5) pointed out that, to motivate students' learning, questions are used to alert, remind, and draw students' attention with clear voice projection and eye contact straight forward to the students in a positive way. ST1 said that when the students lose motivation, thinking of something out of the lesson, or doing something else during a learning session, the teacher uses questions along with voice projection and eye-contact in a positive way to draw their attention. Similarly, ST5 also mentioned that the teacher sometimes calls their name with eye-contact in an appropriate manner to alert the students. The teacher also asks questions with a clear voice in positive behavior for the confirmation to make sure that students are with a lesson, not thinking of something else.

In addition, four interviewees (except ST3) indicated that enjoyable learning processes are applied to draw students' motivation which means the teacher uses real-world topics with suitable materials for the students to play games or fun activities. Along the way of the student's practice, the teacher also encourages students to cooperatively interact with each other. ST4 said that the teacher applies outside-classroom learning situations to draw students' learning motivation. They feel like learning is enjoyable as their learning moot is changed from inside to outside the classroom. The teacher sometimes uses prizes or awards for those who win the game or have a good rank in the class. Peer encouragement is also a convenient way to stop bullying and make friends everywhere.

Anyway, three interviewees (ST3, ST4, and ST5) also mentioned that identifying students' proficiency levels, learning styles, and needs of the students could help students in learning. The teachers may know how the students learn, so they could apply a teaching technique that is suitable to the students. In the same way, the teacher needs to know the background, proficiency level, ethnicity, disability, and personal problem of the students. This could help the teacher to be aware of the proper words and actions to be used in teaching and to avoid any misunderstanding regarding the culture shock. For example, ST5 said,

> "…To be easy to motivate students, I first examine what proficiency level they are…, what teaching style they like, and what exactly their needs would be whether it is about the background, disability, or ethnicity... Understanding these three factors would help me a lot in my language teaching because… I may be able to apply the proper way and teaching style for my students...."

Classroom leading

Four interviewees (ST1, ST3, ST4, and ST5) pointed out that before leading the class, the lesson was planned with aims, objectives, materials, and a specific type of teaching and

learning activity. ST1 mentioned that the teacher plans the lesson about what type of activity will be used in the class. The teacher makes sure materials are aligned with the aims and objectives of the lesson. Anyways, the teacher needs to know the students' appreciation of language learning and what learning activities they are familiar with. Similarly, ST5 also indicated that before leading a class with CLT, the teacher normally prepares the teaching plan what teaching and learning activities to be employed in the class, and what materials to be used to promote students and to help them reach the outcome. This plan of teaching-learning activity and materials designed have to be aligned with the study outcome.

More importantly, all five interviewees mentioned that they use group discussion, role-play, debate, and student-based practice followed by three steps of presentation, practice, and production. ST3 said the teacher introduces the activity to the students. The teacher assigns them to work in groups. They discuss and exchange ideas about a specific topic. They then share what they have discussed in groups with the class. Sometimes there are some challenges in the discussion because of contradicting ideas among students. The teacher finally encourages the students to conclude the overall concepts based on their answers and theories in the textbook. Similarly, ST4 added that the second phase of teaching English is during the process. In this phase, the student is the main actor. Any kind of interactive learning is employed to assist the activities for improvement.

Three interviewees (ST1, ST3, and ST5) also mentioned that the end of the class is the evaluation. The student's achievement is evaluated by comparing to the aim and objectives of the study as well as finding strengths and weaknesses through exercises. ST1 said the teacher asks students to do exercises to examine their levels of achievement. The reflective activity can be done to make the students find both good and bad points for improvement. The teacher can also take this opportunity to reflect himself what to do next to better the students' achievement. In the same way, ST5 also said,

> "…After my students have learned, I actually allow them to write a reflection… or I ask them to express their ideas about what they have learned. Sometimes… I evaluate them based on summative assessment. They answer the questions, fill the gap, do multiple choice…, do a small project about the topic they have learned, or write a report..."

Areas of language emphasized
All five interviewees mentioned that Communicative Language Teaching can be applied to more parts of language form such as grammatical form, language uses, and real-world context because CLT promotes student activity. ST1 said that CLT can be used to apply more contexts. Whenever student-students and teacher-students cooperate, associate, and interact with each other, CLT emerges. CLT focuses on how to use language in a real-world context. Anyways, this is sometimes based on the nature of the inputs because CLT can also be used for grammatical structure and concept-based formats.

ST4 said that CLT emphasizes various areas of language. Sometimes this is based on the lesson in the course book, for example, restaurant terms. It can be a short form, formal, informal, or cultural differences. The students may do the activity using the structures they have learned. The more students make conversation using the English language, the better opportunity they gain knowledge. ST5 also pointed out that,

> "…During my teaching in CLT, there are a lot of things to cover... I do not only focus on grammatical forms, but I also allow them to use their language (English) based on

the context... Doing this process, my students learn various functions such as grammar, language uses, and real-world context…"

ST1, ST2, and ST3 said that CLT can be applicable to all skills (speaking, writing, reading, and listening) based on language learners' needs. ST1 added that "To me…, CLT can be used for all skills because all language teaching skills must contain students… and teacher interaction…. It is applicable to any skills…". Anyways, ST4 said that the teacher of CLT addresses more on speaking and listening. This encourages the students to develop conceptual practice and critical thinking. He believes that learning a language is not only about accuracy, but it is also about how to solve the problem. Similarly, ST5 also mentioned that speaking skill is what the teacher of CLT focuses on more. However, this is based on the types of chapters or lessons. Sometimes four skills need to be integrated equally because of the student's needs. The teacher sometimes changes the skill focus because of the types of content and students' learning style.

Target language (English) and native language (Khmer)
All five interviewees indicated that target language is mainly addressed in CLT as the class focuses more on language production. However, it does not mean that students practice the target language a hundred percent. They can also use their native language to clarify some points they feel not familiar with. ST2 said that normally when the teacher conducts CLT in the class, he encourages students to speak English. It is around 80 % for the language we are teaching (English). It does not mean the teacher needs to use English all the time. He can also use the Khmer language. Conducting CLT requires the teacher good at language proficiency because it needs more communicative processes.

In the same way, ST4 mentioned that the teacher encourages the students to speak English as much as possible, but it does not mean that the students do not speak Khmer. This is based on the topic they are familiar with. If the topic that the students discuss is simply easily compared to their proficiency levels, they could communicate smoothly. In the case of difficult words, the vocabulary session is employed for the students. Similarly, ST5 added that,
> "…I encourage my students to speak English as much as possible... It does not mean they need to speak English all the time… They can actually speak in Khmer whenever they find it hard to speak in English or some certain situations that require them to speak in Khmer…, for example, technical terms they do not know. As a language teacher, I believe that L1 helps students to learn L2 because L1 provides them a foundation and a concept… while L2 works as the machine to generate the system for the practice…"

Students evaluation
All five interviewees mentioned that reflective writing is one of the evaluative techniques to reflect what students have achieved compared to the aim and objective of the study. ST1 said that to end the class, the teacher normally allows the students to write a reflection on what they understand about the lesson, a summary paper on points they have learned.

In the same way, ST3 indicated that reflective writing is the way the teacher applies in the class to evaluate student's achievement as well as teaching development because the students may describe what they really understand about the topic they learned, including what they like and what they do not really like. The reflection helps the teacher a lot to upgrade further teaching activities. Similarly, ST5 also pointed out that reflection paper is one way to see the student's improvement because they have the opportunity to express their feelings and experiences about the lesson.

Interestingly, three interviewees (ST2, ST4, and ST5) also mentioned that Italk-reflective action is another way to evaluate students' achievement. They may share what they have learned with the class using their personal concepts. During the Italk-time, teachers may find what they personally understand, which would be useful for further teaching and learning. ST2 said,

> "…I let my students do a short Italk action to review the knowledge they have achieved at the end of the chapter... This technique is useful for the classroom because almost everyone has time to express their impressions on the study…"

Similarly, ST4 mentioned that reflective talk helps the teacher to evaluate the student's achievement. It is not only to reflect on what they learn, but it is also about what they need more and what to do for the next session.

All five interviewees indicated that comparing what students achieved to the objective of the study and the final test of summative assessment play a role in evaluating students' learning because the teacher may be able to examine a specific area of the achievements for further teaching activity. ST2 added that this is based on what the students can apply what they learned. At the end of each month, the exam paper is prepared for the students to test their levels of achievement. The students are given suitable time to do a final test. The result of the final test also includes daily attendance, homework, and other additional tasks.

In the same way, ST5 said that there are two-semester exams a year to conclude an academic result for the students. This exam covers all compulsory subjects they studied in the class and English is one of the subjects. The semester-exam score also includes the total score for each month. At the end of the academic year, the students could see the average and the final score and this reflects their studies a year.

Error correction
Three interviewees (ST1, ST3, and ST4) indicated that students' errors can be tolerated, which means the teacher waits until the students finished their talks and provides feedback in a positive way. The error sometimes is not necessary to correct because students may know how to correct themselves by peer editing (the students correct the errors themselves based on their friends' feedback). ST3 said that this is based on kinds of error. If the error is not serious, it is not important to correct it. In case the error is serious, the immediate correction could be used. Similarly, ST4 also mentioned that the teacher does not correct students' errors at the time they make them. The teacher lets them go, but he takes notes when they make it. At the end of the class, the teacher brings them some feedback by giving them some examples, explanations, or correct answers.

Interestingly, two interviewees (ST2 and ST5) mentioned that there are two types of error correction such as immediate correction and distant correction. The error correction is based on the situation of the error. If the error is worse compared to the level or situational talk, this needs to be corrected immediately named as an immediate correction. In case the error is not worse, this needs to be tolerated known as a distant correction. ST5 also said that,

> "…There are two types of error correction, hot [immediate] and cold [distant] correction... I sometimes correct my students immediately when the error is not acceptable but in a positive way… Anyways, I also correct them after they finished the speech, explanation, or presentation… I return to them later in a positive way. To me…, I prefer cold correction because it is kind of a positive performance because the students may feel good, and they do not feel upset about making errors... they sometimes know

> the right way to correct themselves… at least, students have a moment to think about their errors and try to correct it...”

Discussion

Regarding research question, one about perspectives on CLT, the finding in this study showed that CLT is a kind of teaching activity promoting students to collaboratively interact with each other through language function, which means students practice the language in their class as their entertainment. This finding supports the previous studies of CLT (Barkley, 2010; Lewis & Hill, 1992; Littlewood, 1981; Richards, 2006) that CLT plays a vital role in drawing language learners to operationalize linguistic forms and usages. The finding seems to suggest that language teachers, practicing CLT, may consider actual activities they are going to apply in the class to draw students' learning as their own community of practices.

In addition, the finding also indicated that conducting CLT allows students to develop their communicative competence through structural and conceptual practices. Students have more opportunities to practice their communication covering both accuracy and fluency resulting in the proficiency development. Similarly, Brown (2006); Harmer (2007); Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011); Nunan (1989) also mentioned that CLT creates an opportunity for students to cooperatively practice the language. It is essential that language teacher may organize a plan to see the result behind the practices which leads to the real-world learning context. On the other hand, drilling and direct translation are still needed to some extent, for example, idiomatic expressions and formulas.

Regarding research question two about practices in CLT, the findings of this study are similar to the previous studies, Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011); Littlewood (1981); Richards (2006), who stated that the teacher's role is a facilitator operationalizing language learner to co-involve in teaching and learning activity while students are the practitioners associating with their friends practicing the language based on the teacher's instruction. In the same way, the finding indicates that the teacher is the language guide or monitor while students are the language producers or independent learners. In addition, the result of the study showed an additional role that both the teacher and students are flexible language cooperators. The finding suggests that both teachers and students need to be clear in playing a role to accelerate a smooth practice.

In addition, the finding revealed that the language teacher conducting CLT mostly employs group work, role-play, question-answer, the conversation, the problem-solving, the teacher-student interaction and the student-student interaction as the mainstream activities to achieve the study outcomes. In the same way, Brown (2006); Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011); Richards (2006) indicated that CLT starts with communicative interaction between students and students or teacher and students. Besides, Browne (2007); Littlewood (1981) also mentioned that classroom activity of CLT involves a collaborative learning process between the students and teacher, supporting the finding above. It is a constitution that the language teacher may organize the CLT classroom with associative and interactive learning plate forms to ensure an active classroom. By the way, the time constraint is still an obstacle to reducing the activity.

Anyways, language learners are engaged to learn by creating a suitable learning environment for an enjoyable learning process in alignment with the needs of the students and teaching materials (Kun-huei, 2010; Ming, Lingyun, Yu, Peng, & Xiaohui, 2016; Richards, 2006; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999). Similarly, the finding pointed out that to motivate students to learn

cooperatively, the language teacher may employ role-play, game, or group work, moving from inside to outside the classroom to make a new environment in learning. The finding seems to suggest that a student-centered approach with a suitable environment may be a role in motivating students to learn.

To some extent, CLT is more focused on speaking and listening skills (Farooq, 2015; Jacobs & Farrell, 2003; Nunan, 1989) while Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011); Richards (2006) indicated that CLT can be focused on four macro skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing). In the same way, the finding showed that CLT addresses not only four skills but also focuses on the grammatical form, language uses, and real-world context. It is essential that conducting CLT allows students to develop both linguistic forms and usages, and the language teacher may need to be aware of its impacts on students' proficiency level and time consumption.

Finally, the finding showed that the reflective writing, the Italk-reflection, and the summative assessment are conducted to evaluate students' achievement. Similarly, Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011); Richards (2006) mentioned that reflective strategies of the summative assessment help the language teacher to evaluate what students have achieved after the class. However, as Nunan (1989) mentioned, the evaluation could not reflect the student's ability at all, if a single part of the evaluation was missed. This shows an interesting case that the finding could identify only short-term evaluation. A long-term evaluation to reflect the overall students' achievement needs time and resources.

Conclusion

Communicative language teaching of EFL graduate student-teachers in the study were classified into two main points: (1) perspectives and (2) practices. First, they believe that CLT is a collaborative activity where communicative competence mainly focuses on authentic materials to fulfill the students' needs. Second, the teacher's role is a facilitator and the student's role is a practitioner; employing group work, role-play, debate, conversation, and other types of interactive learning; to encourage and motivate the students in learning processes. The classroom leading is divided into three phases: (1) before, (2) during, and (3) after teaching. This type of classroom leading demonstrates four skills: speaking, writing, reading, and listening, where speaking is more focused through the combination of English and Khmer. Reflection writing, Italk reflection, and summative assessment were employed to evaluate the student's abilities with three types of error correction: tolerated error, immediate correction, and distant correction.

However, students' proficiency levels are limited and some textbook contents are far beyond the student's ability to some extent, resulting in the inconvenient implementation of CLT. The single case was employed in the study because of time constraints and the finding only applies to the study site. The next study may focus on other sites for both teachers and students in a qualitative study of perspectives and practices where CLT is employed.

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