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A Critical Appraisal of CLT on Grammar, and Implications for ELT in Bangladesh

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Abstract - Whether formal teaching of grammar is necessary or not for teaching a second/foreign language is a debatable issue now. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which has been a buzz-word in the domain of language teaching pedagogies all over the world for the last few decades discourages overt grammar teaching. Like many other countries, in Bangladesh too, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been introduced for English language teaching. But with the introduction of CLT, the quality of English language teaching and learning has remarkably deteriorated in the country. As a result, it is now important to investigate the substantiality of the principles of CLT with respect to overt grammar teaching, may it be from the theoretical perspective or from the contextual perspective. Based on this investigation, it is also required to determine what should be the proper position of overt grammar teaching in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Bangladesh. The present article has attempted to address all these points.

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I. Introduction

In a foreign/second language teaching the status of grammar has been a controversial matter/issue over the last 3 to 4 decades all over the world. With the advent of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), grammar, which was so far considered to be the most important/ dominant elements for language teaching, has lost much of its importance and glamour. The concept of CLT has opposed the dominance of grammar and claimed that the job of teaching or learning a language can be done better with emphasis on its meaning rather than on its form. Accordingly, a great change has taken place in all the areas of language teaching, including methodology, syllabus design, materials development and testing system. In all these areas grammar has been demoted to a less important entity/phenomenon and some other elements, such as, functions, notions, communicative tasks and activities, fluency, etc. have come to the front line. As in many other countries, in Bangladesh too CLT, after its introduction in the country in the 90s of the last century, has exercised enormous influence on teaching English as a foreign language at the primary, secondary and higher secondary levels of education for the last 15 years. In harmony with its principles, English textbooks for all classes at these levels of education were rewritten, and all-out measures were taken to replace the Grammar-Translation Method that had been traditionally followed in English language teaching in the country. But the results produced by the introduction of CLT are not found satisfactory. It is now noticed that the overall standard of English language teaching and learning at all levels of education in the country has greatly deteriorated. Citing Afroze & Rahman (2008) and Rahman (2011), Haider & Chowdhury (2012) say that after more than a decade of introducing CLT, students of secondary schools are still struggling to achieve desired level of proficiency in English. They remark that under such circumstances, there is a need for rethinking the effectiveness of CLT in terms of the existing classroom realities of Bangladeshi secondary schools. Many teachers and researchers of English language in Bangladesh now think that the deterioration of the standard of English education has occurred owing to the mismatch between the principles of CLT and the realities of our contexts. They point their fingers at a number of principles and assumptions of CLT, the most remarkable one being its principles to undermine the importance of grammar. They opine that the arguments of CLT to undermine the formal teaching of grammar are not substantial if considered from theoretical point of view. Besides, these arguments of CLT also do not match with the contextual realities of Bangladesh. In such circumstances, the present article has attempted to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the claims of CLT about grammar and how far are these claims authentic?
2. What should be the appropriate place of grammar for ELT in the context of Bangladesh?

II. What CLT Claims about Grammar

CLT came into being in the late 70s of the last century with new ideas, arguments and assumptions, paying very less importance to the formal learning of grammatical rules. According to its core assumption, any attempt to learn a language by learning its grammar is faulty and artificial, and hence should be avoided. The language learning theory underpinning CLT claims that a language can be learnt most effectively if it is learnt through communication. Referring to this principle of CLT, Richards and Rodgers (1986, p.67) say, "The target linguistic system will be learned best through the process of struggling to communicate." It is so because when learners are engaged in communication in the

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target language, they can acquire it subconsciously by concentrating their attention on the messages or the meanings of the language rather than on its formal aspects. This process of language acquisition is more effective and natural than the Grammar-Translation Method, and is similar to the way children learn their mother tongues. As to the accuracy of the language, CLT claims that if learners can achieve fluency in the language, it will automatically begin to take care of their accuracy in the language. "...it is only through use-plenty of use-that accuracy and appropriacy will come and communicative effectiveness increase" (Xiaoju 1990).

The concept of CLT has been greatly promoted by Stephen Krashen's *Monitor Theory* (1981, 1982) which comprises five hypotheses of language learning. In his *Monitor Theory*, Krashen undermines the role of grammar in second or foreign language learning. In his *Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis* of this theory, he states that there are two processes of developing competence in second language-one being *learning* and another being *acquisition*. *Learning*, he explains, is an explicit and conscious process in which we learn a language by knowing grammatical rules whereas *acquisition* is an implicit and subconscious process in which we acquire a language without being aware of the grammatical rules of the language. Comparing *Acquisition* with the process of a child's acquisition of its mother tongue, Krashen together with Terell (1988, p. 26) says, "Language acquisition is the 'natural' way to develop the linguistic ability, and a subconscious process: children for example are not necessarily aware that they are acquiring language, they are only aware that they are communicating." He (1982) places *acquisition* over *learning* and argues that permanence and fluency in language learning come from *acquisition,* not from *learning*. He also argues that *learning* never turns into *acquisition* and that the only function of learning is of a monitor, checking and making repairs on the output of the acquired system. Obviously, the significance of his *Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis* is that any attempt to learn a language by learning its grammatical rules is faulty and, therefore, should be avoided.

Krashen (1982, 1985) has tried to strengthen his views against the formal teaching of language with the help of his another hypothesis - the *Input Hypothesis*. This hypothesis of him (1985, p. 2) claims that "Humans acquire language in only one way - by understanding messages, or by receiving 'comprehensible input'." By 'comprehensible input' Krashen has meant the input that is one step beyond a learner's current level of competence, i.e., i+1, ' i ` being the current level and '1' being the next level. Claiming 'comprehensible input' as a prerequisite for the occurrence of language acquisition, he (1985, p. 13) argues that when learners are exposed to the comprehensible inputs of the target language, they subconsciously acquire the language. Therefore, what is important for language learning, according to Krashen, is comprehensible inputs, not grammatical rules.

In his *Natural Order Hypothesis* too, Krashen (1982, 1985) categorically argues against the formal teaching of grammatical rules. In this hypothesis, he opines that the simplicity-complexity order which syllabus designers and materials developers generally follow in designing grammatical syllabuses or in developing grammar-oriented materials is not natural or scientific. In case of language acquisition, he asserts that learners autonomously maintain one kind of natural order, that is, they acquire some elements of language earlier and some other elements later. But this natural order of language acquisition does not always go in line with the simplicity-complexity order of the grammatical items. Therefore, any attempt, according to him, on the part of teachers or materials and syllabus designers to grade and sequence the grammatical elements on the basis of the simplicity-complexity order may go wrong. That is why, instead of making such an attempt, it is better, he argues, to allow the learners to acquire the target language in a natural way, without bothering about the grammatical rules.

To facilitate language acquisition in a natural way, Krashen and others have suggested to provide learners with sufficient quantity of inputs. As to the question of grammar, Krashen (1985, p. 2) asserts that "if input is understood, and there is enough of it, the necessary grammar is automatically provided". To make sure of the sufficiency of comprehensible inputs, he advocates for exposing learners to enormous quantity of authentic texts or roughly-tuned materials. He opposes using finely-tuned materials or graded materials on the ground that such materials do not guarantee sufficient comprehensible inputs for all kinds of learners and that they also may not mach with the natural order of acquisition.

Like Krashen, many other proponents of CLT also oppose using graded and sequenced materials, such as, textbooks, course books, etc., branding them as artificial. They argue that authentic texts, the texts in which language items are not graded and sequenced and which are not developed for the purpose of language teaching, are real, global and appropriate, and do have much communicative value (e.g. Xiaoju 1990).

Not only in the theoretical perspective of CLT, but in its goal also, grammar has lost much of its glamour. The proponents of CLT argue that the goal of language learning should be achieving 'communicative competence'. According to Canale and Swain (1980), communicative competence has four different kinds of components such as linguistic competence, socio-linguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. They hold 'linguistic competence' only as a part of 'communicative competence' and, therefore, do not consider it adequate as the goal of

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language learning. They argue that there are many learners who are good in grammatical knowledge but are not competent in communication because they are lacking in other components of 'communicative competence'. These learners do not know how to use their linguistic knowledge in real life communication properly as per different socio-cultural, conversational and discourse-related demands. The proponents of CLT, therefore, put emphasis on how to use the target language appropriately for communications rather than on how to achieve grammatical knowledge about it.

Based on language learning theory and goal, a great change has also been suggested in respect of language teaching syllabuses in CLT. The proponents of CLT argue that the contents of a syllabus should be determined on consideration of what learners will do with the target language rather than what they will know about it. They claim that it is the learners' communicative needs, not their need of grammatical knowledge that should be given importance in determining the contents of a syllabus. While communicating we do, according to them, different types of functions or express different types of notions, and hence a language teaching syllabus should contain all these functional and notional elements, instead of the grammatical ones. In other words, it is the functional-notional syllabus as proposed by Wilkins (1976), not the grammatical or the structural one, which should be followed for language teaching. However, together with the functional-notional syllabus, they also recommend some other kinds of syllabuses including the task-based one as proposed by Prabhu (1983). The philosophy that underlies all these syllabuses is to facilitate language learning through communication, putting emphasis on the meaning rather than on the form of a language.

III. A Critical Look Into the Claims of CLT

Though the proponents of CLT have put forward a good number of arguments and views to undermine the formal teaching of grammatical rules in the language classroom, many of these arguments and views do not appear to be equally substantial to all concerned. Many language teachers, experts and researchers now raise questions against the authenticity of them, and do have different arguments and views. Besides, when considered from the practical point of view, the arguments and views of the proponents of CLT do not sound equally appropriate for all the contexts of language teaching

The very authenticity of the *Monitor Theory* of Krashen (1981, 1982) that underpins the concept of CLT and undermines the role of grammar in language acquisition is now questioned. Many critics now find it very difficult to agree with all the views Krashen has put forward in the *Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis* of his theory since he has failed to define clearly the distinction between acquisition and learning. According to McLaughlin (1987), it is not possible to determine which process is operating in a particular case, and therefore, the central claim of this hypothesis that 'learning cannot become acquisition' cannot be tested empirically. Criticizing the *Natural Order Hypothesis*, McLaughlin (1987, p. 56) says that this hypothesis is based largely on the morpheme studies and provides little information about acquisitional processes, and therefore is questionable in terms of methodological validity. Raising the same point, Larsen-Freeman and Long say (1991, p. 242), "Krashen's 'natural order' is his synthesis of the findings of the 'morpheme studies', studies which actually addressed accuracy, or difficulty, orders, not acquisition orders, it should be noted." Therefore, it can be said that Krashen's claim that 'rules' of second language are acquired in a predictable order and that acquisition orders of these 'rules' do not reflect their instructional sequences has not yet been proved. Question has also been raised against his *Input Hypothesis* as this hypothesis says nothing about how comprehensible input is actually used. McLaughlin (1987, p. 40) terms this hypothesis as untestable, and says, "There is no way of knowing what is comprehensible input, as was just pointed out. Children do profit in their language development from interacting with native speakers whose language is well-formed. No one would deny this." Refuting Krashen's claim that only comprehensible input is helpful and is to be acquired next, Mclaughlin (1987) argues that there is considerable evidence to show that first and second language learners acquire structures that are neither understood nor due to be acquired next. No one can deny that all these questions raised against the various claims of the *Monitor Theory* of Krashen have weakened the strength of this theory.

Not only in theoretical perspective, but in practical perspective too some of the key points of Krashen's *Monitor Theory* do not appear to be logical and appropriate for many language teaching contexts. In his *Natural Order Hypothesis* he has argued for natural approach to language learning, but in this approach what is essential for learners is their extensive exposure to the target language both inside and outside the classroom. Only the extensive exposure can make it possible for learners to acquire the language in the way a child acquires its mother tongue. If we consider the case of a child's acquisition of its mother language, we see that a child gets an exposure to the language for 8 hours a day on an average. Now, if the child takes 5 years to acquire it, it gets at least 14600 hours of exposure to its mother language. But there are many contexts where language learners do not get such an extensive exposure, especially in the contexts where the target language is used as a foreign language. In such contexts the only exposure learners do get to the target

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language is in the classroom and that too is only for 1 hour a day at best. Therefore, over long 10 years learners there get only 2500 hours of exposure to the target language, if the time is calculated taking 250 days as working days and the rest as holidays in a year. It is needles to mention that these 2500 hours of exposure of second/foreign language learners is not adequate if compared with the total time a child is exposed to its mother tongue. Even this time of the exposure which takes place in the classroom is not fully countable because in such contexts the target language is not always spoken in the classrooms, especially in the schools situated in rural areas. Obviously, in such adverse contexts, it is quite difficult for learners to acquire a foreign language through natural approach, or through communication only, without formal instruction of grammar. Rather, it can be said that in such contexts formal teaching of grammar can maximize the benefit and compensate for the insufficiency of time. Mentioning the time constraint and the lack of motivation on the part of learners that is found in the foreign/second language teaching, Ur (1988, p. 5) does not endorse the idea of teaching a foreign/second language in the way a first language is learnt, Instead, she favours teaching the elements of a language teaching syllabus bit by bit in a systematic and planned way to achieve the maximum benefit. Ur says,

In 'natural learning' – such as the learning of a first language by a child – the amount of time and motivation devoted to learning is so great that there is no necessity for conscious planning of the learning process: sooner or later the material is absorbed. However, in a formal course of study, there is very much less time available, and often less motivation, which means that learning time has to be organized for optimum efficiency. This means preparing a programme of study – a syllabus - so that bits of total corpus of knowledge are presented one after the other for gradual, systematic acquisition, rather than all at once.

Krashen and Terrell (1988) in their arguments for natural approach to language learning ignore the advanced cognitive development of adult learners and also the advances of formal teaching and learning. If the total effective time taken by an adult learner to learn a second/foreign language through formal instruction in which grammar is taught is considered, it is found that s/he takes far less time compared with the time a child takes to acquire its first language. In a study Burke (1974, cited in McLaughlin 1987, p. 46) found that the Army Language School in California regarded 1,300 hours as sufficient for an English-speaking adult to attain near-native competence in Vietnamese. Commenting on this information, McLaughlin (1987, p. 46) says, "Clearly, adult learners have cognitive skills that enable them to take advantage of formal instruction." What McLaughlin means is that adult learners, because of their cognitive properties, can learn a language within a shorter time and more effectively through formal instruction than through natural approach.

In a context where learners do not get any exposure to the target language outside the classroom formal instruction needs to be grammar-based. Regarding such type of context, McDonough and Shaw (1993, p. 35) say that a more grammar-oriented syllabus is to be preferred in a context where English is a foreign language and where learners have very little scope to be exposed to it. However, apart from the point of exposure to the target language, there are also many other contextual factors, such as, teachers' quality, class size, teaching-learning aides, class duration, priority to specific language skills, the testing system, etc., which greatly affect the mode of language teaching and hence the status of grammar. For example, in a context where teachers are not fluent or competent in the target language, where class size is large and class duration is short, where modern teaching-learning aids are not available, where priority is given to reading and writing skills, accuracy is emphasized and so on teacher-fronted classroom and grammar-oriented syllabus happen to be effective for language teaching there. In such contexts, learners can learn the target language better if they learn the 'overt grammar', following the deductive approach to learning. Referring to the benefit of 'overt grammar teaching', Chowdhury (2000) says, "This approach is most effective for the presentation of irregular patterns and exceptions because these by their very nature cannot be discovered through analogy. The deductive approach can save class time in such cases."

The arguments of the advocates of CLT to replace the grammatical syllabus with the functional-notional syllabus also have come under severe criticism. Commenting on Wilkins' proposal to replace the grammatical elements by the functional-notional elements in the syllabus, Brumfit (1980, p. 102) says, "The problem is that, inobjecting to previous syllabus specifications, Wilkins has simply proposed another set of specifications, which relate to actual learning procedures even less satisfactorily than the earlier specifications did." Besides, it is seen that the proponents of CLT oppose teaching grammatical items one by one in the additive fashion on the point that language, according to them, should be taught holistically, addressing many dimensions of language at a time since it is a skilled–based subject. But teaching functional-notional elements, instead of grammatical items, does not bring about any change in the teaching process since it is also done one by one in the additive fashion. Instead, teaching grammatical elements is found to be more prolific than teaching functional-notional elements. By learning one functional or notional item, we do not have its multiple applications, but learning one rule or grammatical item facilitates us to

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use it for multiple purposes. Pointing to this prolific aspect of grammar, Brumfit (1980) says, "The point about the grammatical system is that a limited and describable number of rules enable the learner to generate an enormous range of utterances which are usable, in combination with paralinguistic and semiotic systems, to express any function."

The use of functional-notional syllabus recommended by CLT may be applicable to the courses of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) where learners need to learn some specific uses of English as a second/foreign language with a view to doing some specific job after the completion of the course. In these courses short-term benefits for a particular group of learners are sought and short syllabuses are used, and therefore, it may be possible for the course designers to specify the contents of those syllabuses. But these types of syllabuses prove inadequate for any course of English for General Purpose (EGP) or English for Academic Purpose (EAP) as this type of course claims very extensive use of English involving all the four skills. For the courses of EGP or EAP under the main stream of education, it is very difficult to specify the needs of the learners in terms of functions and notions. According to Brumfit (1980, p. 101), the more sophisticated will be the language situation, the less will it be possible to make any predictions of needs to specify exactly the interaction of the various communication systems which will be required. Therefore, to design a syllabus based on learners' functional-notional needs may be possible for ESP which is less sophisticated, but it is quite difficult to design such a syllabus for EAP or EAP, where very extensive use of English is needed.

The arguments that Krashen and other proponents of CLT have made for using authentic texts to avoid materials based on graded and sequenced grammatical items also do not carry much weight. Many teachers and experts now opine that authentic texts prove problematic for learners, especially at elementary stage, as they find it difficult to cope with so many unfamiliar and complicated lexical and grammatical items, and idiomatic expressions. Referring to this point about authentic texts as 'the paradox', Williams (1983) says, " ...the use of authentic text with learners often has an effect opposite to that intended; instead of helping the learners to read for the meaning of the message, an authentic texts at too difficult a level of language forces the reader to focus upon the code". Therefore, authentic texts are very often found to produce negative result in the non-native contexts, just opposite to the claims of the proponents of CLT.

Besides, authentic texts, if considered from practical point of view, prove quite impractical in those language teaching programmes that have specific goals and time schedules. Language teaching and learning by using authentic texts may be possible in the cases where there is no compulsion/obligation for any specific goals and objectives to be obtained within a stipulated time. But in the programmes where teachers and learners need to achieve specific goals and objectives within a timeframe, it is impractical to use authentic texts, instead of using textbooks or course books based on sequenced syllabuses, in the classroom. Using authentic texts interferes with the systematic way of language teaching and learning, and thereby creates obstacles in the way of achieving the goals and objectives of a programme within the timeframe and other constraints. Arguing for scripted materials, that is, for textbooks based on graded and sequenced syllabuses Swan (1990) opines that they are useful for presenting specific language items economically and effectively. He also claims that in case of such materials course designers can maintain total control over the input and can provide the linguistic elements and contextual back-up according to requirement.

From the above discussion, it can be said that there are many controversies and weaknesses in the claims that CLT makes against the formal teaching of grammar. Besides, CLT has also failed to address the contextual differences while considering the role of grammar in language teaching. All these weaknesses and limitations of CLT signify that it would not be pragmatic to ignore the teaching of grammar on the claims of CLT. Rather, the importance of grammar in the second/foreign language teaching should be determined on the basis of the realities of the contexts where teaching will take place.

IV. The Contextual Realities of Bangladesh and Their Implications for ELT

About the contextual realities of Bangladesh, it is found that "in Bangladesh English is seldom used outside offices and higher educational institutes" (Chowdhury 2000). English is treated here as a foreign language and, therefore, is not used remarkably for official purposes. Bangladesh being a monolingual country, it is seldom used for daily communication too. As a result, students here do not get any exposure to it outside the classroom and have to rely solely on the formal learning of it in the classroom. They do not get any benefit from the wider society in the way children do get while learning their first language. Many of the learners, especially those who come from poor families, do not have any audio-visual instruments like radio or television at their homes and, hence, do not have any kind of exposure to English through these instruments as well.

In the classroom too, the students of this country do not have sufficient exposure to English. If the English medium educational institutes and a few other private ones are kept aside, all the educational institutes in the mainstream education are found to have a fixed timeframe for English course prescribed for each class. They have only one class for this course per day, the

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duration of which being from 40 to 60 minutes. Even during this short period of allocated time most of the teachers do not talk in English throughout the class, especially at the schools situated in the rural areas, as they are neither competent nor do have proper training on ELT. Haider & Chowdhury (2012) in a study on sixteen teachers of eight secondary schools situated both in the rural and urban areas of Bangladesh found only 2 teachers using English throughout the lesson for giving instructions. The rest of the teachers used a mixture of both Bangla and English as medium of instruction. While reading the English text aloud to the students most teachers used Bangla translations to explain the meaning of the text. Lacking in competence and training, most of the teachers in the country neither can project themselves as model English speakers in the classroom nor can efficiently engage students in using English in communicative activities. In addition to this, almost all the schools and colleges here are lacking in modern teaching-learning aids like audio and video equipments, language libraries, computer laboratories, photocopy machines, and so on. About the contextual realities of the schools and colleges in the country, Shahidullah (1996) says that the only teaching-learning aids found available at these educational institutes are chalk, dusters and blackboards. Therefore, learners at these educational institutes cannot use modern teaching-learning aids including the audio-visual ones for the purpose of learning English.

Apart from those constraints, the class size in the context of Bangladesh is very large, consisting of more than 50 students on an average. They sit here in the classroom on benches arranged in long rows. Because of these situational realities, the teachers in Bangladesh, even those who are competent, trained and enthusiastic, find it difficult to engage students in all types of communicative activities. In a study on the Foundation Course of English offered by the Department of English of Dhaka University, Chowdhury (2000) finds "a considerable gap between the theories of communicative teaching methodology and the realities of teaching in a class of forty or more learners." Providing a disappointing picture of the physical conditions of the classrooms used for the Foundation Course, he remarks that it is very difficult to conduct methodology-specific teaching under such circumstances.

Besides, of the four language skills, reading and writing skills are considered more important than the other two skills in Bangladesh. As it has been mentioned earlier, English is not used in the country for daily communications. It is mainly required here for reading and writing purposes and, therefore, these two skills are given priority over the other two skills. One of the main reasons of the importance of these two skills is their requirement for academic purposes. At the higher level of education, especially in the technical field of the country, English is the medium of instruction and almost all of the books available at this level are written in it. It is because of this reality, NCTB (National Curriculum and Textbook Board of Bangladesh) in its educational report (1996) on the curriculum and syllabuses for English at the S.S.C. and H.S.C. levels has specified reading and writing skills as more important than the other two skills for the country. It needs not to mention that these two skills have closer relationship with the grammatical syllabus than listening and speaking skills.

As in the other countries of Asia, in Bangladesh too accuracy of language is considered very important. In a survey Johnson (1984) has noticed that in the Southeast Asian countries teachers put emphasis on grammatical correctness, which they consider important for social appropriateness and meaningful communication. They do not allow their students to speak ungrammatical English in their presence, no matter how much understandable it is. Bangladesh sharing many of the common cultural traits with the other member countries of the Southeast Asia puts emphasis on accuracy in case of language use not only in the educational arena but also in the social arena. In all the examinations here, for example, may it be a certificate-awarding examination or an examination to select candidates for job, accuracy is considered the main criterion for evaluation. In the culture here, educational accuracy, may it be related to speaking or to writing, is always compared with moral accuracy, and therefore, inaccuracy or error in speaking or writing is always negatively evaluated. The persons who use incorrect language are always underestimated. Thereupon, grammatical knowledge is highly expected for the learners of English in this context.

The contextual realities in Bangladesh indicate that acquiring English through communication or through natural approach as proposed by Krashen and others is not possible here. "communicative process or natural approach works well where learners have the opportunity to learn the target language living in the target language speaking environment." But learners in Bangladesh do not have such an opportunity either in the classroom or outside the classroom. Therefore, putting restrictions on teaching grammar in the name of CLT is not only impractical but also ludicrous for this context. Learning English without learning grammatical rules may be possible at some English medium schools or at a few private educational institutes where English is extensively used, but not possible at the mainstream educational institutes of the country.

Since it is difficult to change the present scenario of a context overnight, it is pragmatic either to formulate a new approach suitable for the context or to adapt the existing approach to the contextual realities. The context of Bangladesh signifies that the method and the syllabus to be followed in the country should be grammar-based to enable the learners to learn English as a system so that they can generate sentences by using the system. Putting emphasis on learning the

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system of making sentences, Brumfit (1978) says, "To ask learners to learn a list instead of a system goes against everything we know about learning theory". Therefore, grammatical knowledge should be the cornerstone of the very process of learning English as a second language in the country.

V. Suggestions about Grammar Teaching

However, the very purpose of teaching grammar should be enabling the learners of Bangladesh to achieve a mastery over English so that they can use the language competently as per their requirements. That is, grammar should be taught as a means to the ultimate goal of acquiring language skills. Or, quoting Ur (1988), it can be said that "The learning of grammar should be seen in the long term as one of the means of acquiring a thorough mastery of the language as a whole, not as an end in itself" (p. 5). Therefore, the starting should be with the classroom activities that focus on grammar, but the ultimate goal should be enabling the learners to use the language meaningfully for different purposes. To ensure the ultimate goal of acquiring a thorough mastery of the language, the learners should not only be imparted grammatical knowledge but also be engaged in having a lot of practice of using English. It can be mentioned here that earlier when the Grammar-Translation method was followed in the country there was no proper emphasis on the practice of using English, and it was the cause of failure to impart language skills to learners as per expectation.

To derive maximum results from grammar teaching, the term 'grammar' should be taken in a broader concept, including both the elements of forms and meanings. According to Williams (1994), the conception of grammar includes not only a description of the rules for well-formedness, but also the rules specifying the relationship between grammatical forms and the real world. That is, what Williams has wanted to say is that the concept of grammar should include some kind of rules which are required to form correct sentences in terms of word order, morphology, structural elements, in the one hand, and also some other kinds of rules which are needed to use these sentences appropriately in terms of their inter-relationships and meanings, on the other hand. He has termed the first kind of rules as 'constitutive grammar' and the second kind of them as 'communicative formulate the relations between the formal events of grammar, such as, words, phrases, sentences, etc., and the conditions of their meaning and use. In linguistic terminology, he says, communicative grammar means 'relating syntax and morphology to semantics and pragmatics.'

Obviously, the syllabus to be followed for ELT in Bangladesh should be multidimensional with focus on grammar that should have two major aspects – formal and communicative. The formal aspect will be concerned with the elements of syntax, pronunciation, morphology, vocabulary, etc., whereas the communicative aspect will be concerned with a view of language in use and will, therefore, indicate how the formal elements are related to meanings, functions, notions, contexts, etc. Of all the elements having share of the syllabus, those concerned with the formal aspect should be considered as the primary items and should constitute the very backbone of the syllabus. The other elements including those of communicative aspect should be integrated with them as the secondary elements in the syllabus so that learners can have a very comprehensive view about language learning and can use it properly as per their requirements. The English textbooks or course books to be based on this multi-strand syllabus should include a lot of tasks and activities compatible with the classroom circumstances and also with the cultural and educational profiles of the learners to create opportunity for their practice of using English.

VI. Conclusion

In conclusion it can be said that many of the linguists, researchers or teachers are not now convinced of the point that learning grammatical rules always creates obstructions in the way of learning a foreign/second language. They also do not believe that communicative process or natural approach is the only effective way of learning a second/foreign language. Rather, they believe that in many cases formal instruction or formal teaching of grammar proves better than natural approach, depending on learners' personal profiles and contexts. In the contexts where learners do not have any exposure to the target language either in the classroom or in the wider society, and where there are so many problems in case of time, management, class size, quality of teachers, etc., learners there can learn better through grammar-based teaching-learning practices rather than through natural approach or communicative process as advocated by CLT. The contextual realities of Bangladesh are no better than those mentioned above, which signifies that learners here will learn English as a foreign language better if they learn it through grammar-based approach. Any attempt to teach English in the country without teaching its grammar will be quite impractical and, therefore, will not yield the desired results. The recent decline in the overall quality and outcome of ELT in Bangladesh undoubtedly can be traced to the attempt to teach English without teaching its grammar in accordance with principles of CLT. Therefore, instead of avoiding formal teaching of grammar, it should be exploited to maximize the success of ELT in the country. That is, grammar should be used as a catalyst to the achievement of mastery over English by the learners.

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