



## THE CORRELATION BETWEEN TEACHING METHOD AND ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES

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### Abstract

With the establishment of presidential decree 1875 on “the measures of strengthening the system of learning foreign languages” in 2012 the grammar translation method used throughout the republic was totally changed into CLT method. The method we used to teach our students focus on just getting some knowledge about language. As a result, majority of our students tended were unable to use the language they are learning.

In this article, we analyze the correlation between teaching method in secondary education and assessment system in entrance exams.

**Keywords:** Curriculum requirements, assessment criteria, correlation, placement tests, communicative competence, CEFR, CLT.

### Introduction

If principles set in curriculum aim at enabling learners to use language in real life situations, afterwards, testing system is also supposed to be developed to evaluate learners` communicative skills.

Our goal is to analyze the problem regarding to negative wash-back students receiving taught in one way and assessed in another way.

Johnson (1989) maintains that “In many education systems the key question for students, teachers, parents, school administrators, and even inspectors is not, “Are students gaining in communicative competence?” but, “Are they on course for examination?” The majority of learners tend to learn languages with the purpose to achieve high results in exams and be able to continue their education in university.

Cook (2003) states that if communicative language is taught, its learning success is supposed to be assessed not based on grammar and pronunciation, but based on the learner`s ability to perform, to interact with the language. That is to say, if we are supposed to teach the CLT method we have to assess our students` evaluation based on their communicative competence. Furthermore, assessment has to be consistent, valid and provide a positive wash-back effect regarding to learning languages. If a learner knows that he would come across with what he learns in class in entrance





exams, he will be motivated and encouraged to continue learning during the class. Or if he knows that he is not expected to be assessed according to the method or what he learn in class, he simply ignores the school program by paying more attention to what he is supposed to be evaluated on exam day.

This kind of situations have been observed in Asian countries such as South Korea, China, Bangladesh when they begin implement CLT method instead of grammar translation method.

Seth (2002) states that "...examination system illustrates the importance of education as a determiner of social status, the Korean concern with rank and status, and the universal desire for and belief in the possibility of upward mobility". That is to say, that exam plays a huge role in Korean culture and it determines not only one's knowledge, but also his future success and status.

Dailey (2010) states that as a result of globalization the need for the English language in Korea increased as this foreign language plays a huge role in promoting international exchange, enhance economic relations and expanding one's knowledge on science. Therefore, to meet the needs, Korean government began to exploit communicative approaches to the national curriculum. Despite the advancement in technology, some drawbacks in teaching and assessing in CLT, have been observed. In 1993, the existing grammar tests replaced with the College Scolastic Ability tests in placement tests. However, at the beginning the tests contained only reading and listening questions. It was believed that CLT method, taught at school does not fully meet students' needs in terms of entrance exams. After becoming aware that speaking and writing skills taught at school would not be evaluated in exam, students and their parents require teachers to focus on other skills rather than teaching writing and speaking competences at school. As a result, the entrance exams created a mismatch between language policy and school curriculum because of the role of entrance exam in student's life made it much more important than implementation of CLT. That is to say, both parents and students were so obsessed to pass the entrance exam and focused on just preparation for the skills which are tested in exams and ignored speaking and writing skills taught at school despite the fact that these skills are considered to be necessary in communicative approach. As a consequence, the outcomes, set for communicative approach were not achieved.

Dailey (2010) states that with the addition of listening comprehension tasks to entrance exams, students began to develop their listening comprehension skills. It served as a motivation to acquire this skill as students realize the necessity of learning it if they would like to achieve high results.





Iqbal (2016) states in the 1990s the Ministry of Bangladesh the CLT method was implemented instead of Grammar-translation method in all educational institutions of Bangladesh with the hope of enabling students to use English in authentic contexts. The government redevelop the curriculum, changed the textbooks, sent teachers to in-service institutions, yet the objectives are still hardly to achieve. The author further states that one of the main reasons for this issue is that testing system, which is on practice nowadays, does not reflect the true aspects of CLT. Most teachers prefer to use grammar-translation way aiming to help their students to achieve high results in exams.

Billah (2015) says that students in Bangladesh fail in both to learn correct English and to communicate soundly using broken English. Why? As our students' main purpose is to pass the exam, they intend to focus on grammar rather than to learn how to interact with language. While learning English for general purposes at primary and secondary education, they learn using a CLT method, however, assessed in a Grammar-translation method in exams. In consequence, they become neither good at grammar, nor at other language skills.

## Material and Methods

As the main actors in this sphere are teachers and learners, the need analysis was conducted involving both of them. The study concerns 200 students and 10 EFL teachers of academic lyceum under UzSWLU.

The procedure went in two steps. The first step: Questionnaire (among 3<sup>rd</sup> course students of our lyceum)

The second step: Interview among teachers (15 ELT teachers working in our lyceum were involved). In the questionnaire 200 of our graduators participated. They were asked questions related to the university that they are going to enter, the entrance exams, preparation and their English classes at lyceum.

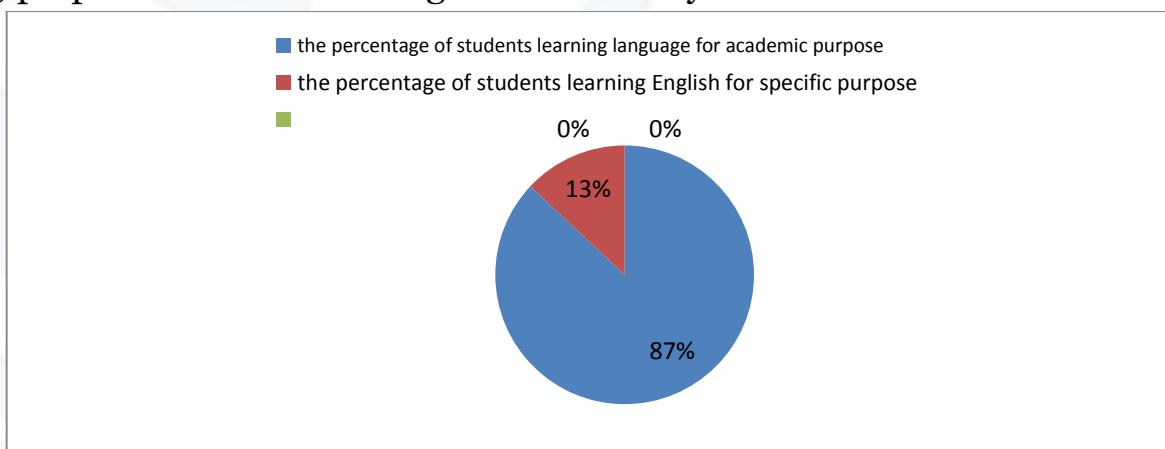


Figure A





According to questionnaire more than 80% percent of students in our lyceum are learning English to be enrolled whether the state or international universities whereas less than 15% percent learn it for specific purpose

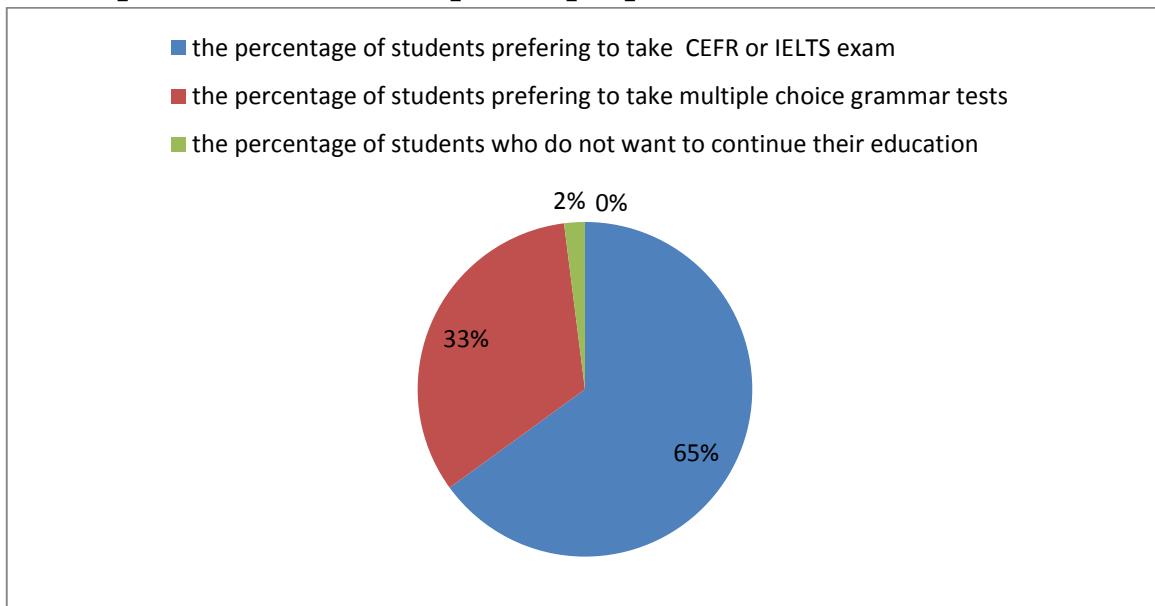


Figure B

## Results

Based on the collected data we can say that majority of students learn English for educational purpose and would prefer to take exams whose questions designed to evaluate students' level and competence. 65% of students state that both in classes and in private tutoring they learn listening, reading, writing and speaking so that they could get certificates enabling them to be admitted to the university. They do not usually do grammar tests during EFL classes except to learn some grammatical structures which help them in writing. As our lyceum is considered to be a lyceum with a language profile more and more students prefer to continue their further education both in state universities and foreign universities. It can be natural that they would prefer to take tests designed to evaluate their 4 language skills rather than their grammar and vocabulary skill. The 35% of the students' state that they have already taken commercialized language tests and gained international and national certificates. However, 33% of students claim that they are learning and doing grammar tests because they think it is the most reliable system provided by the government, being free from different changes compared to certificates.

The next step of data collection was an interview held among the 15 EFL teachers of academic lyceum under UzSWLU. 10 of EFL teachers have 10 years experience, 3 of them have international experience and 6 of them have national CEFR certificates.





According to standard and curriculum set for secondary education, they are supposed to teach in CLT method.

Teacher 2,3,7 stated: " Of course it is challenging to teach both in CLT and grammar translation method, yet it is the thing that we are doing in class we cannot teach grammar in an integrated way since both we and students are aware that they come across with these kinds of grammar-oriented tests on placement exams. Moreover, their parents are also asking us to help their children to do well at exams and focus on preparing their children to universities. As one of our main goals is to assist students to continue their education, we sometimes have to teach based on their needs. Of course, there are some students who would prefer to continue their education abroad and would prefer to be taught in CLT method. Therefore, there is a dilemma that makes us teach in both methods to meet students' need."

These are problems that more and more teachers tend to come across nowadays. Despite the fact that standard and curriculum principles require teachers to implement CLT method, while due to the exam frame, parents and students require to be taught in grammar translation method. As a consequence, teachers have to still apply for grammar tests in classroom which may disturb a student preparing for CEFR based tests. If exam tests were also designed in a communicative way, students would realize that what they learn in class will be something they may come across in the exams and will possess a positive wash-back in terms of assessment. Furthermore, since higher education is considered to be important parents would urge their children to learn 4 language skills as well as grammar so that they could enter the university and become qualified. It, consequently would serve to develop the role of CLT throughout the republic.

The teachers also added: "... Multiple choice on grammar used in entrance exams are considered to be practical which means easy to check. Who will check the writing and assess the speaking if the government implements communicative testing instead of grammar tests? Again, teachers will be involved to evaluate the stuff. Yet, the question is whether teachers throughout the republic are ready to assess these skills or not. It is time and money consuming process."

It is obvious that every assessment tool is supposed to meet the criteria set for assessment. According to Brown (2010), tests should go through within 5 principles.

They are:

practicality

validity

reliability

authenticity





wash-back

If we analyze multiple choice tests on grammar, they meet only one principle-practicality that is easy to check and administer. What about other criteria? If we implemented communicative testing which includes assessing learners` ability of reading, listening, writing, speaking, it would be valid which means that assessment is build up based on what students have learned at school and lyceum program. As a result, students may have positive wash-back as they get aware of the correlation between the entrance exams and what they learn at school and get motivated to learn program school or lyceum provide. In addition, due to huge range of different tasks that can be used outside the classroom, communicative testing can be authentic, compared to multiple choice grammar tests that tend to be used just inside classroom. Finally, multiple choice grammar tests lack of reliability as they do not provide consistency because of options students usually have while doing this test whereas variety of tasks used in communicative testing may give an opportunity to assess students` real ability. Of course, there will be need for teachers to assess students` writing and speaking performance. However, the number of teachers having international experience and different certificates on language proficiency has been increasing nowadays. For example, more than 100 students studying at Webster university opened in Tashkent for Masters of art have a chance to familiarize with international experience regarding to curriculum development, ESOL methods, assessment, language policy being educated by professors and doctors having international experience. Throughout the years, the number of teachers who can be involved as an expert in the university exam will increase.

Teachers 1,4,5,6,8,9 state: "The communicative competence is that what is needed nowadays. It is high time students begin to learn languages to exchange information, to have an access to international relations in terms of economy, education, science. If we changed the way we teach, we must change the assessment as well. Why do we have to teach using one method and assess our students using another method? It would be better to apply communicative testing in entrance exams and the role of speaking and writing will increase. Students will begin communicating using English as they know they will encounter with speaking in admission tests and it will serve as a "push" to learn school program eliciting communicative skills. Now we have some commercial tests like national CEFR which enables students entering the university without taking an exam on English, but it is held only two or three times a year."

As Kheng and Baldauf (2011) states the English is the most frequently used language to exchange socio economic ecology, to publish international articles related to science, to conduct international conferences. If we want to survive in the era of





globalization, we have to facilitate our students to be able to use the language for different purposes. Just implementing the method by the government will not give perspectives-we have to make our students feel responsibility and necessity to learn how to use and perform in foreign language. The implementation of new communication-based tests assessing students` ability to perform in foreign language can assist students to acquire these skills.

## Discussion

Having analyzed the process of assessment we put forward the following recommendations:

implementing a new communicative testing system on the basis of CEFR, instead of multiple choice questions on grammar in placement test since it can give us a chance to assess learners` ability of using foreign language. This kind of test tend to be time consuming so the test for foreign languages can be held separately on another day from other tests on other academic subjects. At the beginning it would be advisable to implement this kind of tests in the universities with language profile- that are specialized in foreign language teaching. For example, in UzSWLU, the exam on English should be based on assessing applicants` listening, reading, writing, speaking and grammar vocabulary competence. This is mainly because the fact that this kind of prestigious universities with the language profile should admit students who are able to interact with the language and use it for their needs as they are future teachers who can make contribution to the development of CLT method in Uzbekistan.

enhancing teacher training courses so that more and more teachers do not only get some knowledge about how to teach effectively in CLT, but also to find out how to assess effectively using communicative testing in formative and summative assessment. This is mainly due to the fact that after implementing communicative testing teachers will have to get rid of using grammar-translation method to need their students need related to entrance exams and have to design formative and summative assessment they use in school or lyceum in communicative testing way. Moreover, more and more teachers will be needed to check students` writings and assess their speaking skills. As we know, unlike the multiple questions on grammar, administering these tests are considered to be a little challenging in terms of practicality. They are not easy to check. Therefore, we will need more and more experienced teachers to assess students` performance.

publishing different test-books that students may use independently to be able to pass entrance exams. Nowadays there is some limitation in implementing different foreign textbooks into lessons in our country. Despite the fact that new books designed in





teaching and learning communicative skills are published, there is still need for some test books that can be used independently for preparation to entrance exams.

## Conclusion

Having analyzed, we can say that what you teach in class should mirror what you assess in exams. The first reason why we have to apply communicative testing to our entrance exam is that it follows the principles of assessment:

**Validity**- the students will not be confused what to learn so that they can enter the university; what they have in class they are supposed to have in exam. That is to say if students learn reading, listening, speaking and writing skills, they are supposed to be assessed according to these skills using an appropriate, valid tool.

**Reliability**- communicative testing can give us a chance to design tests using different tasks, which can provide the consistency of results. That is to say, multiple choice questions used in grammar tests cannot evaluate learners' real ability.

**Authenticity**- the wide range of real-life based tasks can be used not only in class and exams, but also in everyday life situations.

**Wash-back**- learners will have a clear understanding what to learn and have a positive wash-back to be encouraged to do well during the class with the hope that the tasks they are doing in class can help them to achieve high results in exam.

However, there are some challenges to implement communicative testing in entrance exams.

Firstly, unlike multiple choice questions it can be impractical as it demands much more time both to administer and check the exam paper. It may require assessing foreign language section of exam separately from other academic subjects whose results are checked by machine automatically.

Secondly, more teachers have to be involved to check students writing and speaking performance. The solution to these problems can be to commercialize the English exams which happen in most other countries. The fee paid for exam can be used to facilitate some technology and organize the communicating tests.

If the curriculum, teaching and testing are synchronized we can achieve our goal set for learning languages. If the assessments mirror what you teach in school, then, our students begin to feel comfortable, get motivated and encouraged to learn being aware the consistency in teaching and testing. As a result, in addition to correlation with assessment principles such as validity, authenticity, reliability in our tests, the role of teaching in CLT method in all educational institutions throughout the republic may increase. We can develop and strength the trust in consistency of education in our





republic not only among our population but also around the world or international experts.

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## Appendix

Questionnaire (for students)

1. Why do you learn English  
to enter the university  
to find a job  
to be able to speak  
for other reason

2. What skill are you taught in class?

Grammar

Listening

Writing

Speaking

Reading





3. Who is active during the lesson?

Teacher

Students

4. Do you have group and peer work in class?

Yes

No

5. Do you do independent learning?

Yes

No

6. Which university would you like to enter?

State university

Foreign university

Do not want to continue studying

7. Do you have a certificate of language proficiency?

Yes

No

If "yes" tick one

CEFR

IELTS

TOEFL

Other

8. What test would you prefer to take in the entrance exams?

Grammar tests

Communicative tests ( assessing 4 language skills)

For questions 9 and 10 you have extra space if you want to describe your answer more in detail

9. Why do you prefer to take exams based on grammar tests

They are easy

They are reliable

They are practical

I have no other option





10. Why do you prefer to take CEFR or IELTS exam rather than grammar tests in entrance exam

They are reliable

They are practical

They are easier than grammar tests

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Interview questions ( for teachers)

How long have you been teaching English?

Have you international experience?

Do you have a language proficiency certificate?

What method do you use in class to teach your students? Why? Do you know its advantages and disadvantages?

What are some obstacles to design your classes in CLT method?

Do you agree with assessment system the government is using to evaluate students' ability? If "Yes" why? If "No" Why?

How do you assess your students?

How do you design your assessment tools?

What are advantages and disadvantages of grammar tests?

What are advantages and disadvantages of communicative tests?