

Saudi EFL Students' Beliefs on Communicative Language Teaching

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Abstract

This paper explores Saudi EFL students' beliefs on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) at the University of Qassim. The study used a descriptive quantitative approach. Eighty-nine students have responded to the researcher-made questionnaire addressing six areas of the CLT (students' belief, the grammar function; the function of students' native language; work in pairs and classes and errors and correction). The findings show that students have a positive belief in the CLT, particularly in terms of teachers' and students' roles. In the teachers' position, mother tongue and pair and class functions, teachers and schoolchildren held different CLT opinions. This study

indicates that CLT in the Saudi context is favorably accepted in the Language teaching process. Implications of the study are presented and discussed.

Key Words: *Communicative Language Teaching, Saudi EFL, Language Learning*

Introduction

English is a foreign language dominating manufacturing, finance, education, humanities, and all occupations and lifestyles. The willingness to use English in multiple contexts is a crucial skill for learners to gain global competence. English language skills help a person to understand the different people of the world. World school institutions are implementing action to train students for international communication skills.

The English Language Teaching (ELT) discipline has widely acknowledged communicative language teaching (CLT) since its inception in Second Language Teaching in the 1970s (Rahman & Pandian, 2018; Rahman et al, 2018; Thornbury, 2016). This is reinforced and reinforced by several academic articles, conference papers and books (Wei, et al, 2018; Mulyanah, et al, 2018; Savignon, 2018) is focused on the assumption that language expertise means not only understanding of language structures or rules but the application of language (communicative expertise). Therefore, studying a language in a foreign language involves knowing not just grammatical rules but also how and when to apply them (suitability). In other terms, students in L2 can develop their communication skills by engaging actively in exercises to discover the expression's definition. Adil (2020) developed another interpretation of CLT, providing practical and systemic perspectives on language instruction that demonstrate that language structures are essential and can be used as springboards for experimental practice. Kohnke and Moorhouse (2020) subsequently restated the CLT as a set of guidelines that include learning the language, how language learners prepare, and the styles of training practice, which make learning more viable and teacher and student positions in classrooms.

In the last years, teachers and students have believed in CLT in multiple educational contexts as an essential way to learn the CLT process. The various study has examined teachers' perspectives of CLT of numerous forms or the students ' perceptions of the use of CLT (Albahri, Yang, &

Moustakim, 2018; Bao, et al., 2016; Kustati, et al, 2018; Mohammed Al-Amri, 2020; Nuby et al., 2020). However, teachers and students are persuaded to use CLT in the ELT classroom as scarce, although a ton has been separately written in terms of teacher's or learners' opinions. Research by Islam (2020) claimed that classroom tasks or incidents significantly impacted students' involvement in understanding. It must also be noted if teachers' and students' views lead to the classroom level's academic activities.

This research follows the principle of communicative competence, consisting of four similarly essential aspects, grammar skills, discourse skills, sociolinguistic skills, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence is the underlying concept of this report. Grammar competence is a speaker's ability to grasp arbitrary grammar laws, and each learner must be grammatically competent to participate successfully in communication circumstances. Today's language education includes grammar teaching. Teachers don't know how to perform classroom tasks. Language teachers need to determine the usefulness of Communicative Language Instruction (CLT) to boost EFL students' proficiency and interim behavior in the English language.

Literature Review

Students and Teachers Role

Teachers are recognized as leaders of educating schoolchildren. Teachers and students, however, play a crucial role in information processing in the CLT classroom. Al Mamari, Al-Mekhlaf, & Al-Barwani (2018) regard the trainer as a coach who co-ordinates and conducts community learning. Nunan (1989) addresses teachers' and students' positions as workers who consider social and interpersonal problems. Communication between the two students is also part of the learning experience. Kustati, Yusuf, & Maarof (2018) describe the teacher as a co-learner in the CLT School. Students were situated to select their teaching materials, method, and assessment (Sato & Oyanedel, 2019). This form of choice offers students a sense of influence regarding the performance of their education. In this regard, though, not all outcomes are compatible. Teachers believe themselves to be an instructor, a learning resource, and a co-communicator in Asia (Shao & Gao, 2016). Funghomchoei and Kardkarnklai (2016) have also stated that teachers consider themselves facilitators, whereas students think their teachers' information providers. They often saw the instructor as a motivator and a mate. Sato and McDonough (2020) claim that even as

students are pursuing teachers to build an immersive learning atmosphere, they also consider the instructor fundamental to the classroom and the students' information provider.

Regarding their position as students, students thought they wanted their learning processes to be shared and monitored (Mangaleswaran & Aziz, 2019; Al-Ahdal & Shariq, 2019; Al-Ahdal, 2020; Magulod, 2019). Ho (2020) revealed a difference between the opinions of teachers and the findings of classes. The teachers perceived themselves as facilitators, but they refused to encourage several students' behavior over the six months. These instructors invest a large part of the day without students getting the ability to communicate. The functions of teachers and learners are not transparent, or concrete in the situations addressed here.

Grammar Teaching Role

The CLT method is based not on form but meaning. Fichman et al. (2017) suggested a methodological system consisting of pre-contact and communication activities and that grammar acts as a whole communication mechanism. In the pre-communication stages, students learn a variety of language skills or knowledge to connect. Students are expected to develop their talents. The purpose of language skills is to allow students to build partial communication abilities and to strengthen their language skills. A quasi-communicative vocabulary (context and structure) or a systemic one (totally systemic) with modern skills can be used. Students may use the expertise or information acquired by pre-communications workouts to negotiate the relevance of situations through a way of communication.

In comparison, Parkinson and Dinsmore (2019) believed that, while second-language teaching can entail learners gaining information subconsciously, grammar is still a major part of linguistic learning. This means that students can explore the meaning of their language skills. In his perspective, implicit learning would emerge first. Learners should be prepared to render production mistakes when studying is a mistake editor. Different studies have recorded grammar problems (Aziz & Dewi, 2019; Harun, et al, 2020; Akramova & Burkhonova, 2019). Due to the importance of evaluations, Ghannam (2019) reported that students prefer teachers' grammar, memorization, and examination. The studies indicate a myth about the role of grammar in the CLT method. Teachers agree that CLT does not involve grammar that could lead to CLT grammar-translation, as grammar is considered appropriate. In general, Blseke-Rechek et al. (2019)) find

that teachers don't want to use CLT, so they don't rely on grammar. At the same time, CLT takes the position mentioned above of grammar and communication as a whole.

The Role of Learners' Mother Tongue

The role of the mother tongue of learning in the ELT classroom was addressed at length by scholars (Dorji, 2017; Farsia, 2016; Ull & Agost, 2020). Rahman et al. (2018)) propose that students use their natural language to encourage student thoughts, check comprehension, teach lessons, or facilitate the learning process. Besides, Rahmatuzzan (2018) suggests that if the literacy of students L1 is limited, the available linguistic repertoire should be used. Changing the code would allow teachers to explain the meaning of the ESL classroom. Research into Iranian students' attitudes towards CLT showed that the mother tongue's wise use in the school was favored, particularly when teaching tasks or homework was needed. On the contrary, Poul (2019) found that teachers felt translation reduced the student's enthusiasm for learning. The CLT approach's goal is to maximize the opportunity for students to use their English through communicative activities such as pairing or working together (Reddad, 2018).

Corrective Feedback

CLT aims to increase learners' potential to meet communication targets. In this context, fluency and accuracy became the focus of discussion. The measures of fluency or accuracy should lead to the goal of unique learning interactions. It advises that non-communication activities such as finalization of workbooks be prepared for rehearsal so that students can produce their language goals consistently. Therefore, accuracy evaluation is essential. Communication activities such as role-play make it easier for students to talk fluently. This focus on fluency will correctly tolerate mistakes. The latest findings are available on the error correction and evaluation feature.

Research Purposes

Therefore, the present study contributes to the fulfillment of filling out the research gap, which aims to answer the following research purposes. What are the students' beliefs on the use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) mainly on the following: teacher and students; The use of grammar; The use of mother tongue; Language teaching strategies; Corrective feedback.

Methodology

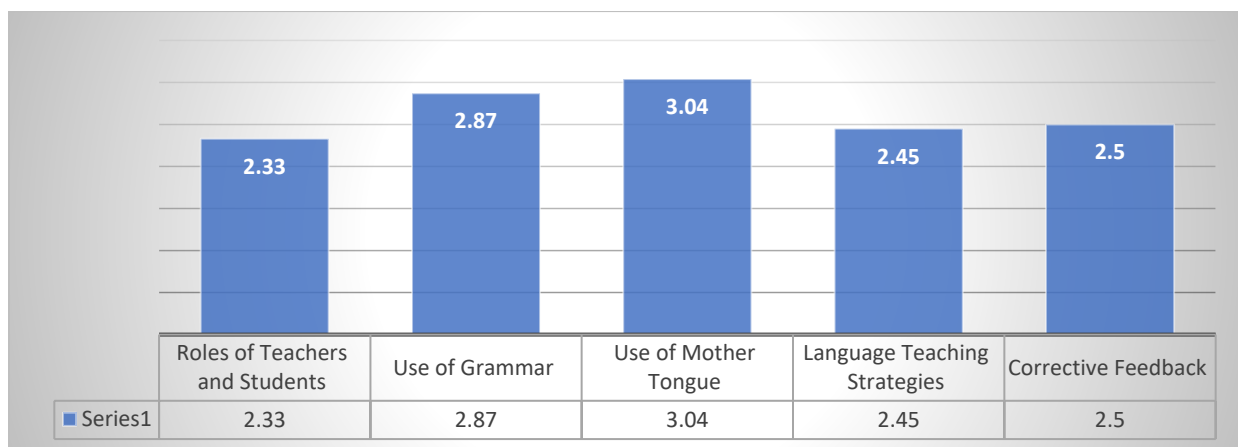
This study investigates the views of teachers and students about CLT by means of a theoretical approach to broad research. Using the sampling ease strategy. This study was performed at Qassim University. Data were gathered via an online survey sent to participants via social media to reach them quickly. The MA TESOL members, who learned English in their school and trained for their MA, addressed the inquiry as students. The questionnaire used illustrates six dimensions of CLT: the status of teachers, the intent of students, the grammatical status, the role of students' native language, the work of peers/groups and error and correction. In a previous study, its efficiency and pertinence have been demonstrated. There is a selection of objects covering each of the six CLT lengths. Twenty-four items used in the questionnaire. The data were analyzed with version 23 of IBM SPSS. The data have evaluated using the 5-point scale Likert. Any negative remarks have reversed to preserve consistency. Therefore, if the average mean values of a sub-category are lower, the interviewees are more optimistic regarding CLT. Furthermore, a t-test experiment explored the difference between teachers and students' perspectives on CLT.

Results and Discussion

Overall, the results suggest that teachers and students in the study accept CLT. Participants, the participants' role, the teachers' role, and the function of pairs/groups were primarily involved in three factors studied. The overall outcomes for the part of the learners are significantly low in both classes of participants. Note that lower grades reflect more robust affirmative views. Teachers and students recognized the importance of the students' role in the management of the learning method, negotiation with their colleagues and their teacher, sharing of ideas or impressions, and suggest resources and learning exercises. This requires a significant degree of autonomy for students. Participants also treated the teacher as a lecturer. This may mean that the students treat the teacher as promoting learning activities and motivating the students to learn the language.

Table 1. Beliefs of Students on CLT

Dimension of CLT	Mean	SD
Roles of Teachers and Students	2.33	.31
Use of Grammar	2.87	.43
Use of Mother Tongue	3.04	.49
Language Teaching Strategies	2.45	.36
Corrective Feedback	2.50	.56

**Figure 1. Beliefs of Students on CLT**

Other dimensions of CLT, including remedial input, the role of grammar, and the students' natural language role, were also deemed fairly positive concerning CLT. This can suggest a preference for measuring contact-based learning performance. Language learning mistakes can presume inevitable learning implications and therefore they should be accepted. Importantly, since the mean error corrections are extraordinarily small, the participants should have taken both accuracy and fluency into account. The basic definition of grammatical concepts or modes cannot be highly preferred for participants. Instead, they can opt for teaching/learning grammar by communicative contexts and practices that are less common in grammar. Finally, this may mean that the local language usage is always unnecessary to facilitate language training and learning for teachers and students.

This study looked at the views of Saudi students in CLT regions. The results suggest that students favored complete CLT. The results contribute to the results of other studies. Results on instructor role and student role are consistent with previous research disclosing that teachers saw their position as school facilitators (Lawrence, 2018; Kubanyiova, 2020). This can also be due to the use of pairs/groups, allowing students to participate actively in learning activities, cooperate in definition negotiation, and recommend learning content and activities. The instructor's role in this scenario is to create an engaging learning environment, supporting student interest and encouragement in learning. As Nguyen (2017) states, students want to be comfortable listening to their classmates in pairs/groups and not dependent on their coach. The participants have found the variables addressed in this study (error and correction, grammar feature, and native language feature) to be fairly positive in CLT. However, these findings questioned earlier studies in the area of syntaxes and errors and correction (Yildiz & Senel, 2017; Harun, et al, 2019; Valls-Vargas, Zhu, & Ontañón, 2017; Al-Harbi & Alshumaimeri, 2016). These previous studies have demonstrated that grammar is overly emphasized in the classroom, where error-correcting is utilized in a close manner. While individual differences occur compared with previous research, which should be predicted since there are inevitably various backgrounds in both of the participants of the current sample, but teachers were more optimistic than students about the position of teachers, the work of students, the role of students and the role of the students.

Conclusion

The research analyzed CLT views of learners in Saudi Arabia and concluded that the function and role of teachers and the job of pairs/groups considered significant CLT aspects. Peer/group work's critical feature has enabled learners to play an essential part in the learning process, while their role supports the learning process. The research shows some gaps between teachers' opinions and students' attitudes on three factors (the teachers' position, the position of the native language, and work with the pair/group), indicating that teachers were more optimistic about CLT on these values than students were. What were gaps not enough to threaten CLT adoption in the classroom? It is necessary to note that all respondents who were centered in Saudi Arabia in this report. Therefore, teachers and students from outside the city did not reflect the outcome. More details should be gathered from a broader range of contexts in the Cambodian education system, especially in remote regions, to analyze the extent to which CLT can be promoted in Saudi Arabia.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following are the recommendations offered: (1) Language teachers must be willing to properly combine the usage of the CLT to EFL students both in language and in the subject fields to assist students in learning grammar skills and attitudes; (2) Professional development should be initiated for Language teachers focused on the merits and advantages of the CLT; (3) the use of techniques that balance the personality, styles and inclinations of men and women in language learning may be regarded.

Implications

The analysis results on the usage of Communicative Language Instruction include practical teaching and language training considerations to allow students to learn their communicative skills more effectively. This study argues that it is challenging for students to improve communication skills while their grammatical skills are low; hence, literature must demonstrate the CLT process's efficiency. It means that language teachers should be reasonably willing to follow an eclectic approach to teaching in the English language and involve students in mastering and exposing language laws to the actual usage of language.

After reaching the goals stated in this study, this study has several inconveniences, which will affect future courses. First, the course is confined to a minimal, intermediate sample size of Chinese EFL students, limiting discrepancy examination. Secondly, using the simplified pre-test design, as the weakest version of a quasi-experimental test design did not include the requisite factors and variables to integrate ALM and CLT. The use of a mixed process method is proposed for further analysis. These hybrid research designs may be more detailed in the triangulation of the data collected using two or more approaches. Third, future studies are encouraged to duplicate or modify study backgrounds at different educational levels in Saudi, taking into account and correlating other variables, including cultural history, parenting, income levels, and linguistic performance. Finally, the cognitive and attitudinal influence of different methods of language teaching which are not included in the study must be identified, including the grammatical form, direct approach, oral approach, situational language teaching, physical response (TPR), community language learning (CLL) approach as well as other Saudi language teaching approaches.

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Questionnaire

Saudi EFL Students' Beliefs on Communicative Language Teaching

Name: _____

Roles of Teachers and Students	5	4	3	2	1
1. Teachers and students play a crucial role in information processing in the CLT classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
2. Communication between the two students is also part of the learning experience.	5	4	3	2	1
3. Teacher as a co-learner in the CLT classroom	5	4	3	2	1
4. Teachers believe themselves to be an instructor, a learning resource, and a co-communicator in CLT	5	4	3	2	1
5. CLT is a participatory role of teacher and student.	5	4	3	2	1
Use of Grammar	5	4	3	2	1
6. Grammar is still a major part of linguistic learning in CLT.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Grammar is difficulty to learn in CLT.	5	4	3	2	1
8. Teachers agree that CLT does not involve grammar that could lead to CLT grammar-translation	5	4	3	2	1
9. CLT takes the position mentioned above of grammar and communication as a whole.	5	4	3	2	1
Use of Mother Tongue	5	4	3	2	1
10. The use of mother tongue in CLT is effective.	5	4	3	2	1
11. CLT improves the use of mother tongue.	5	4	3	2	1
12. The L1 have an important and positive role to play in L2 learning	5	4	3	2	1
13. The use of the L1 enabled students to continue with the task and in the process to move forward in achieving their linguistic goals	5	4	3	2	1
14. Communicative Language Teaching insists that the less the L1 is used in the classroom, the better the teaching.	5	4	3	2	1
Language Teaching Strategies	5	4	3	2	1
15. CLT promotes interesting language learning strategies	5	4	3	2	1
16. CLT helps to facilitate effective language interaction	5	4	3	2	1
17. CLT makes the language classroom interactive	5	4	3	2	1
18. CLT improves my linguistic skill	5	4	3	2	1
19. CLT learning strategies develop my confidence.	5	4	3	2	1
Corrective Feedback	5	4	3	2	1
20. CLT corrective feedback improves my fluency and accuracy in language.	5	4	3	2	1

21. Communication activities such as role-play make it easier for students to talk fluently.	5	4	3	2	1
22. CLT has error correction and evaluation feature.	5	4	3	2	1
23. Language assessment is important in CLT	5	4	3	2	1
24. Accuracy evaluation is essential	5	4	3	2	1

Interview Questions

1. How do you see your role in the CLT classroom?
2. What are the difficulties faced in learning grammar, using CLT?
3. How does CLT improve a learner's communicative competence?
4. What are the problems you encountered in using the CLT in your classroom?