تصورات معلمي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية للعليم التواصلي

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الملخص :

تهدف هذه الورقــة إلـــى مراجعة تصورات المعلمين تجاه تدريس اللغة التواصلــي في أماكن تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية. كما أن هذه الدراســة تعتزم لاكتشاف ما إذا كان مدرســـو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية على دراية بالسمات الرئيسية لتدريس اللغة التواصلية لتحقيق هذه الأهداف ، تم استخدام المنهج الكمي. حيث تم جمع البيانات من أربعين معلماً باستخدام استبيان ، وقد أظهرت نتائج هذه الدراســـة أن غالبية مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية يمكن اعتبارهم من أتباع تدريس اللغة التواصلية ، ومعظمهم يدركون ويفهمون قيمة تطبيقه في فصولهم ، ومع ذلك فقد أظهرت الدراسة ـ أيضًا ـ أن هناك بعض المفاهيم الخاطئة حول أهــداف تدريس اللغة التواصلي ، والتي نتجت عن ســوء فهم بعض مصطلحات تدريس اللغة التواصلية كانت هناك فجــــوة صغيرة بين تصـــوّرات المعلمين تجاه تدريس اللغة التواصلية وممارستهم في فصولهم الدراسية، ويمكن التغّلب على هذه الفجوة من خلال تزويد معلمي الجامعة بدورات تدريبية أثناء الخدمة حول كيفية ربط نظرية تدريس اللغة التواصلية بالممارسة في فصول تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية ، وعلاوة على ذلك ، يجب على الجامعة إجـــراء بعض ورش العمل حول CLT لشـــرح أي سوء فهم ولتحفيز المعلمين على استخدامه بنجاح.

Teachers' Perceptions towards the Use of CLT in EFL Context
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Abstract

This paper aims to review the teachers' perceptions towards communicative language teaching in English language teaching settings. It also intends to discover whether EFL teachers aware of the main features of CLT or not. In

order to achieve these aims, quantitative approach was used. The data was collected from 40 university teachers by using a questionnaire. The results of this study showed that the majority of English teachers could be considered as CLT followers, most of them are aware and understand the value of applying it in their classes. However, it also showed that there are some misconceptions about the goals of CLT which caused as a result of the misunderstanding of some terms of CLT. There was a small gap between teachers' perceptions towards communicative language teaching and their practice in their classes. This gap can be overcome by providing University teachers with in-service training sessions about how to link CLT theory into the practice in ELT classes. Furthermore, the University should make some workshops about CLT to explain any misconception and to motivate instructors to use it successfully.

Introduction

The worldwide demand of English has created an enormous request for quality language teaching and effective language teaching materials and resources. Due to the importance and necessity to communicate in English in recent decades, many countries have shifted from traditional grammar-based teaching method to communicative-focused instruction (Vongxay 2013). These transitions of change took place through a collection of practices, materials, and beliefs about teaching and learning (Richards and Rodgers, 1986). This paper attempts to probe teachers' perceptions towards using communicative language teaching (CLT, henceforth) in EFL context.

Literature Review:

Definition of CLT:

Based on some scholars (Richards, 2005; Leung, 2005; Spence-Brown, 2001; Sauvignon, 2000), CLT is an approach that represents a philosophy of teaching that is based on Communicative language use, it is also based on communicative competence According to Banicu (2012) CLT places great emphasis on helping learners use the target language in a variety of contexts and on learning language functions. CLT is defined by Richards, et al., (1992: 65) as "an approach to foreign or second language teaching which emphasizes that the goal of Language learning is communicative competence". Savignon (1972) has defined the term *communicative competence* as "the ability to

function in a truly communicative setting" (p: 8). Communicative competence doesn't only represent the grammatical competence as the only issue in communicative competence, but also the sociolinguistic competence should be incorporated (Hymes, 1972). It was stated that "there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless" (Hymes, 2001:60) and he described communicative competence as "the tacit knowledge" of the language and "the ability to use it for the communication".

Benefits of CLT

The first benefit of using CLT is communication and interaction aspects. According to Littlewood (2000) a communicative approach views "language not only in terms of its structures (grammar and vocabulary), but also in terms of the communicative functions that it performs. Increasing the interaction between learners helps them to have more opportunities to use the target language. In addition, the interaction between students would help them receive feedback for their mistakes. Moreover, CLT enables learners to build good confidence. Since, the base of CLT is communicative competence the real life situation activities can give learners all possibilities to learn English (Ibid). The second benefit of communicative language teaching is the assessment. Spence-Brown (2001) indicated, tests should "reflect the use of language in the real world" (p. 463). Doye (1991) noted: an authentic test are supposed to be "one that reproduces a real-life situation in order to examine the student's ability to cope with it" (p. 3). It means that in CLT, students after the assessment can use the language outside the classrooms as a result of this the validity of the test will increase. Finally, CLT provides the best practice in English language teaching (ELT) because it provides 'communication' which allows language learners to develop their communicative capacities (Power, 2003).

Features of CLT

There are different features of communicative language teaching. Below, the researcher explained some of the principles of CLT in ELT:-

Form, Meaning and Use in CLT

Learning English demands the development of the learners' knowledge of the linguistic form, meaning and functions. CLT is an approach that focuses on the systematic treatment of both form and function of the language

(Littlewood, 1981). Some researchers argued that CLT's primary focus is on the function and/or use rather than on the structure and/or the form (Larsen-Freeman 1986). Moreover, Lightbown, (1989); Norris and Ortega, (2000) stated that learners who are taught in classes with no attention is paid to language form will lead to lack of accuracy and the absence of development in many areas of the language. They added that only with form-focused instruction, learners will improve their knowledge and their ability to use the language. Brown (2001) pointed out that accuracy is judged in context rather than on merely the abstract. This does not mean that the knowledge of grammar is ignorant in CLT, but it means that grammatical structure is incorporated under different functional categories (Brown, 1994). Littlewood explains that "one of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language, combining these into a more fully communicative view" (1981:1)

Fluency and Accuracy in CLT

Both fluency and accuracy are both goals in CLT (Brown, 2001). Fluency is not only concerned with the habit of talking the language, but it extends to the knowledge of some important capacities such as the ability to talk for a period of time without continuous pausing, the capacity to show semantic and syntactic mastery of the language, presenting innovative resourceful use of the language and finally the ability to produce suitable output in a variety of language contexts (Brumfit, 1984). It was argued that in CLT sometimes greater focus was given to fluency over accuracy. This priority may be resulted from the demand of creating expressive, natural and meaningful environment of learning English (Brown, 2001). Savignon (1972) proved that when adding a communicative component to structure-based teaching, learning a language becomes more effective and less traditional. Other researches supported these findings, CLT was not intended to reduce the importance of accuracy, but it was intended to judge accuracy in context rather than on merely the abstract (Brown, 2001).

Error Correction in CLT

Errors are an essential part of the language learning process, they are an evidence that the learners are developing their competence (Richards, J. C. &

Rodgers, T. 2001) Learners create language 'through trial and error' (Finocchiaro and Brumfit 1983: pp. 91-93). Previous researches were in support of these findings, they proved that teachers sometimes are unwilling to correct learners' mistakes during the conversation. Error correction has also been the most important cause of creating reluctant speakers in classroom. Therefore, some researches stated that if there is a strong need to correct learners' errors, teachers should be more selective in choosing the way they would correct learners' error in order to let learners convey their ideas freely and naturally (Brown and Nation, 1997).

CLT is the Development of the Four Skills Altogether

The four skills appears together in the real world, so CLT's basis is the coverage of the four skills altogether (Yurovsky, 2018). Advocates of CLT should encourage linking them in the real communication. Opportunities should be given for improving both the learners' accuracy and fluency. Learners should be pushed to experiment and try out to use what they know; their errors should be tolerated as they indicate that the learners are building their communicative competence. Learners should be encouraged to induce grammatical rules from the context (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Krashen (1982) stated that grammar could be learned unconsciously through exposure to the target language, the use of the language within a context helps the learners to induce the rule. Furthermore, the linguistic skills and communicative abilities should not be isolated in CLT, they should be contextually incorporated (Savignon, 1997). One good example of other skills (writing and reading) except the oral skills that can be thought through CLT is what discussed by Widdowson (1978) about the role of attention to CLT discourse as: "What the learners need to know how to do is to compose in the act of writing, comprehend in the act of reading, and to learn techniques of reading by writing and techniques of writing by reading" (P. 144).

CLT is a Learner-centered Approach rather than Teacher-centered One

Based on an experimental study that Nita and Syafei (2012) conducted on the use of CLT in language teaching, it has been proven that this approach is a learner-centered approach which focuses on communication and realistic situations. People learn language best when using it to do things rather than through studying how language works and participating rules (Richards,

2005). CLT builds the learners' self-esteem in a way that encourages them to use the language confidently and spontaneously. It enhances language usage in authentic situations which satisfy their needs (Wahjuni, 2012). Moreover, Richards and Rodgers(1986:79) said "practitioners of CLT view materials as a way of influencing the quality of classroom interaction and language use. Materials thus have the primary role of promoting communicative language use". Collaborative classroom environment would motivate the learners to language learning (Belchamber, 2007).

Furthermore, Larsen-Freeman (1986) suggested that teachers must make sure that students interact a lot in the classroom among themselves and with teachers. It was explained that, most of the classroom activities in CLT are carried out around learners. The teacher is supposed to direct the learner-centered class, and work as a guide and as a facilitator. Learners often complete different tasks assigned by teachers to engage themselves in real communication using authentic materials and realia. The teacher is supposed to direct the learner- centered class, and work as a guide, as a facilitator. The role of teacher sometimes could be partners for communication in the class with students (Littlewood, 1981, cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

The Role of L1 in CLT Classes

CLT's advocates pointed out that it's necessary to find the right balance between the use of L1 and L2 in ELT, teachers should make sure students understand and at the same time maximizes the use of the target language (Turnbull, 2001). Both the quantity and quality of target language input are crucial factors in L2 learning (Gass, 1997; Lightbown, 1991). The is supported by Swain and Lapkin (2002) who reported that the idea is that sometimes the use of L1 in the classroom saves time, provides clearer and more concise explanation and keeps students on track. The use of the L1 enabled students to continue with the task and in the process to move forward in achieving their linguistic goals (ibid). In task-based learning (one form of CLT) for beginners 'DON'T ban mother tongue use but encourage attempts to use the target language' (Willis, 1996: 130). Despite the evidence that the L1 can have an important and positive role to play in L2 learning, CLT researchers mentioned that teachers must be careful about exactly how much L1 use is productive. And some CLT researchers suggest that languages

teachers present in the classroom must base on the comprehension of the students, otherwise no learning can occur (Turnbull, 2001).

Aims of the Study

This paper aims to review the teachers' perceptions towards using CLT in English language teaching. It also intends to discover whether EFL teachers aware of the main features of CLT or not.

Research Question

1. What are the teachers' perceptions towards using CLT in EFL teaching
          at   English department at Zawia University?

Methodology used in this Study

Quantitative approach was adopted in this study. The data collected with the questionnaire has been analyzed quantitatively. Based on the literature reviewed a questionnaire was used to collect responses from University instructors (teachers) at English Department Zawia University .While preparing the questionnaire, utmost attention was paid to the teachers' awareness of CLT as an approach to English teaching. The data gained from the questionnaire was analyzed by using SPSS software.

Participants

This sample group consisted of forty (40) teachers, all of them are female teachers aged between 30-45 years old. All of them live in Zawia city. They are great speakers of English; furthermore, the teachers participants are Masters and PHD holders who are teaching in English department at Zawia University, their years of experience are varied from 5- 17 years.

Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of twelve items. It was given to each English teacher. Writing comments to clarify the answer chosen is allowed if needed. It was designed to take into account some of the CLT features which have been illustrated previously in this research. The aim of this instrument was to check the knowledge that English teachers have about CLT and if they are implying CLT into their classes and their opinions of implying it in classrooms.

Data analysis and Discussion

Items	Agree	Partially agree	disagree	Partially disagree
1- People learn a language best when using it to do things rather than through studying how language works and practicing rules.	95% 38 teachers	0% 0 teacher	0% 0 teacher	5% 2 teachers
2- People learn a language through communicating in it.	85% 34 teachers	10% 4 teachers	0% 0 teacher	5% 2 teachers
3-Communicative Language Teaching is only concerned with teaching speaking.	30% 12 teachers	10% 4 teachers	50% 20 teachers	10% 4 teachers
4- Classroom activities should be meaningful and involve real communication.	70% 26 teachers	5% 2 teachers	20% 8 teachers	5% 4 teachers
5- Teachers should use communicative activities during your lessons.	70% 26 teachers	10% 4 teachers	20% 8 teachers	10% 2 teachers
6- Both accuracy and fluency are goals in Communicative Language Teaching.	50% 20 teachers	40% 16 teachers	10% 4 teachers	0% 0 teacher
7- students should be given opportunities to develop their fluency	65% 26 teachers	20% 8teachers	10% 4 teachers	5% 2 teachers
8- As a teacher, you correct errors to ensure that accuracy comes before fluency.	10% 4 teachers	0% 0 teacher	65% 26 teachers	25% 10 teachers
9- Teachers should speak only in English while teaching	45% 18 teachers	35% 14 teachers	15% 6 teachers	5% 2 teachers
10-Teachers should allow students to use L1 in class	20% 8 teachers	0% 0 teachers	45% 18 teachers	35% 14 teachers
11- Teachers should let students to choosing what they will learn and help in preparing lectures?!!	60% 24 teachers	25% 10 teachers	5% 2 teachers	10% 4 teachers

12- Teachers should give chances to students to discuss the subject of lectures.	60% 24 teachers	25% 10 teachers	5% 2 teachers	10% 4 teachers

The analysis and discussion of this questionnaire is presented in terms of certain themes and categories such as communicative teaching (Practice VS. theory), Skills taught with CLT (Speaking (oral skills) VS. the four skills, CLT goals of teaching (Fluency, accuracy, and error correction), the importance of using communicative meaningful activities in CLT, learner-centered VS. teacher-centered approach in CLT and finally L1 use in CLT.

Statement 1&2: Communicative Teaching Practice (Use) Versus Theory (Form)

The bulk (95%) of the respondent teachers believed that learners' best learn a language through using it which develops learners' ability to use the knowledge in context rather than barely learning about the 'how' it is formed. In completion of statement 1; in statement2, the majority of teachers (85%) supported that the primary function of language use is communication. Both in Statement 1&2, none of the participated teachers (0%), supported the opposite of these ideas. As was explained by many researchers such as Hymes, (1971) who argued that one of the fundamental principles of CLT is that learners need to engage in meaningful communication and to attain communicative fluency in ESL settings. Thus, CLT's primary goal for learners is to develop communicative competence.

Statement 3: Skills Taught with CLT Speaking (Oral Skills) Versus the Four Skills

The findings of statement 3 showed that half of the teacher (50%) disagreed that CLT is only concerned with teaching speaking, they commented that teachers who claim themselves CLT followers should provide materials that are not only focus on teaching speaking, but they should also provide materials that develop the four skills. As was explained by Richards and Rodgers (2001) is that in CLT the four skills which are speaking, listening, reading, and writing are intended to support and encourage learners to engage in communicative activities, not the skills in knowing the rules of grammar, memorizing patterns and meaning of words. The previous findings also was supported by Savignon, (1997) when he stated that Many CLT researchers

agreed that one of the basic tenets of CLT was that linguistics skills and communicative abilities should not be treated in isolation from each other. CLT should be a language educational approach that was intended to include communication, which was not intended to exclude form (Ibid).

The table above also showed that 30% of the participated teachers agreed with statement 3, they commented that CLT is best used to teach oral skills like speaking and listening because some language skills such as grammar is too complex to be taught. This idea was previously explained in my researches, it was explained that some second language acquisition researchers in CLT classrooms, particularly those engaged in classes in which no attention is given to language form, has shown that students often fail to reach high level of development and accuracy in many aspects of language (Lightbown, 1989, Norris and Ortega, 2000). They indicated that only the inclusion of form-focused instruction leads to improvement in students' knowledge and their ability to use that knowledge (ibid). Krashen's belief was totally the opposite, Krashen (1982), who stated that grammar can only be acquired unconsciously through exposure to the target language, so they believe that a special attention should be given to the meaning, not the form.

Statement 4&5: the Importance of Using Communicative Meaningful Activities in CLT

In the findings to statement 4, majority of the participant teachers (70%) believed that teachers should use communicative activities during their lessons. The same percentage (70%) was in respondent to statement 5 which expressed that Classroom activities should be meaningful and involve real communication .They commented that best language learning can be achieved when learners engage themselves in meaningful communicative tasks inside a classroom. These results were previously supported by many researchers such as Belchamber, (2007) who stated that collaborative classroom environment would motivate the learners for language learning. In additions, Nita and Syafei (2012) stated that CLT's main focus is on activities that include communication in realistic situations. Larsen-Freeman (1986) suggests that teachers must make sure that students interact a lot in the classroom among themselves and with teachers. She added that most of the classroom activities in CLT are carried out around learners. The

teacher is supposed to direct the learner- centered class, and work as a guide, a facilitator. Learners often complete different tasks assigned by teachers to engage themselves in real communication using authentic materials and realia (ibid). A quarter of the participant teachers partially agreed with statements 4&10 and that (20%) of the participants disagreed with using meaningful communicative activities in the classroom.

Statement 6, 7 & 8: CLT Goals of Teaching (Fluency, Accuracy, and Error Correction

In responding to statement 6, half of the participated teachers (50%) stated that in CLT both fluency and accuracy are goals in CLT. They commented that CLT was intended to include communication, which was not intended to exclude form. Savignon (1972) did an experimental study to examine the contributions of CLT to L2 learning, Learners in the communicative group also performed at least as well on the linguistic tasks as learners in the other two groups. These results demonstrated the benefits of adding a communicative component to structure-based teaching. 40% of the participated teachers, which is a bit less than half of the participants, partially disagreed because they thought that fluency is more important than accuracy. These findings were supported by previous researches as stated according to Brown (2001) in CLT sometimes fluency is more emphasized than accuracy in order to encourage learners to speak in the language expressively and naturally.

In completion to statement 6, in statement 7, more than half of the participated teachers (65%), supported that students should be given a chance to develop their fluency. The same result (65%), was given by the responding teachers as a reaction to statement 8 concerning error correction, more than half of the participants (65%) supported that error correction should not be done at the time of the teaching activity. A quarter (25%) of the participated teachers partially disagreed with the idea of statement8 because they thought that teachers should consider whether the error is worth the interruption, and if it is, so S/he should also think the appropriate ways of dealing with the errors. Previous researches were in support of these findings, they proved that teachers sometimes are unwilling to correct learners' mistakes during the conversation. Error correction has also been the most important cause of

creating reluctant speakers in classroom. Therefore, teachers should be more selective in choosing the way they would correct learners' error in order to let learners convey their ideas freely and naturally (Brown and Nation, 1997).

Statement 9 & 10: English Use only Versus L1 Use in CLT

In responding to statements 9, nearly half of the participants (45%) agreed that English only should be used in class they believed that the more English is used, the best results of teaching we get. They added that learners need as much exposure to the target language as they can in order to become successful learners of that language. This is supported by considerable evidence that both the quantity and quality of target language input are crucial factors in L2 learning (Gass, 1997; Lightbown, 1991). The findings of statement 9, also showed that only 15% of the teachers disagreed on the merely use of English in class. Again(45%) disagreed on the use of first language in class, a little less than this percentage, exactly 35% of the participated teachers partially disagreed with the statement 10 that "students should be allowed to use L1 in the class. They supported the idea that ", they think that sometimes the use of L1 in the classroom saves time, provides clearer and more concise explanation and keeps students on track. Swain and Lapkin (2002) report that "the use of the L1 enabled students to continue with the task and in the process to move forward in achieving their linguistic goals. In task-based learning (one form of CLT) for beginners 'DON'T ban mother tongue use but encourage attempts to use the target language" (Willis, 1996:130). Despite the evidence that the L1 can have an important and positive role to play in L2 learning, CLT researchers mentioned that we must be careful about exactly how much L1 use is productive. And some CLT researchers suggest that languages teachers present in the classroom must base on the comprehension of the students, otherwise no learning can occur. A teacher's goal needs to be to find the right balance between the use of L1 and L2, which makes sure students understand and at the same time maximizes the use of the target language (Turnbull, 2001).

Statement 11&12: CLT is a Learner-Center or a Teacher-Centered Approach

The findings of the study showed that most teachers (60%) in statement 11&12 believed that students have the right to choose the topics that will be

explained and that they should participate in lecture preparation. Their belief came from that in CLT the teacher is not the dominant in class, S/he should work with the students to achieve the target of the lesson; accordingly, they think that students have the right to help in deciding what they are going to learn and how they are going to learn it.

Furthermore, the role of teacher sometimes could be partners for communication in the class with students (Littlewood, 1981, cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2000).A quarter (25%) of the responding teachers partially agree because they think that there should be some guidelines that help the students in their choice. Only 5% of the participants disagreed with the idea of statement 11&12. Previous researches were in support of these findings, they stated that in CLT, teacher is a facilitator and guide, learners not only receive the knowledge transmitted by teachers but they should construct their own knowledge facilitated by teachers (Brown, 2001).

Conclusion and Implications of the Study

This study was conducted to examine teachers' views towards communicative language teaching (CLT) in English Language teaching (ELT). The findings of this study showed that a good percentage of Libyan EFL University instructors are somehow knowledgeable about the effectiveness of CLT in ELT. The results also indicate that most teachers agreed that CLT develop the learners 'skills, connect the language form and language meaning and it explores important techniques that makes learning English more effective and less traditional. It also showed that Teachers are also aware that CLT is a major key in improving their English use not only in class, but also in authentic settings. However, results also indicate that there is a small gap between teachers' beliefs towards CLT and their practice in their classes. It also showed that some teachers had some misunderstanding of CLT concepts that hinder them from applying it perfectly in their classes. Based on the results of this study it is recommended that the educational authority in Libyan Universities should provideteachers with some training sessions on their role and learners' role in L2 classes as advocated by CLT. In-service training courses about how to apply CLT effectively in ELT settings could help teachers to overcome the gap between their beliefs and how to apply them in class. It also helps to correct some of the misconceptions

that some teachers have. Teachers should be aware that while selecting class contents, it is necessary to take L2 learners' preferences and suggestions into consideration. Learners must be encouraged to use the target language as much as possible inside a L2 classroom. To ensure use of the target language, interaction among the learners has to be given high priority. Therefore, teachers should create enough opportunities for learners to use English in the class (Larsen-Freeman, 1986).

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