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Iranian EFL Teachers' Attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching

Peyman Rajabi[1]*, and Gholam Abbas Mombeiny Godazhdar[2]

1. Assistant Professor, TEFL Department, Malayer Branch, Islamic Azad University, Malayer, Iran
2. M.A. Student, TEFL Department, Malayer Branch, Islamic Azad University, Malayer, Iran.
*Corresponding author's e-mail:paymanrajabi2002@yahoo.com

Abstract – This study aimed at investigating Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes toward Communicative language teaching (CLT). The three main purposes of this study included, first, investigating EFL teachers' attitudes toward CLT. Second, exploring teachers' underlying reasons for their attitudes. Third, investigating if there is any contradictions between teachers' beliefs toward CLT and their practice in classroom. A mixed method approach was used in this study. It was a three-phase research design, starting with quantitative data collection through a questionnaire, followed by two qualitative data collection through interviews and classroom observation. The qualitative phase was used to explain the results of the quantitative phase. The results of this study indicated that generally the Iranian EFL teachers held favorable attitudes toward principles of CLT and displayed characteristics of CLT in their beliefs and practices. Not much gap was observed between the teachers' beliefs toward CLT and their realized practices in the classroom.

Keywords: approach, attitudes, communicative competence, CLT, EFL

1. INTRODUCTION

Many researchers believes that the history of formal teaching of English in Iran dates back to 1938-1939 (See for example Foroozandeh 2010). In first English textbook series designed and published by the ministry of culture in academic year of 1938-1939 included six books for six grades of high school education. The Iranian committee of writers of this series and a group of English speaking educators who launched and implemented this joint project under the sponsorship of the ministry of culture had adopted the Direct Method (DM) and Reading Method (RM) and the series course books were not designed based upon any official curriculum. Foroozandeh (2010:68) evaluates that "the 6-book series did not follow the same design and procedure in all the lessons. The 1939 series was not accompanied by any work book or teachers manual, but the "foreword to teachers" provided comprehensive guidelines on classroom managements, student-teacher relationship, the importance and necessity of adopting a humanitarian approach to language teaching and learning, taking account of learner factors, error correction, and dictation."

This series was taught up until 1964 when it was replaced by a very well-known and widely discussed series called "the Graded English series". Graded English which was also a 6-

book series was claimed to adopt the main stream approach of its time (situational language teaching) and the textbooks were designed in a way that get the students acquainted with the basic knowledge and information of English necessary for daily life and future academic studies.

The Graded English series stayed in circulation of formal education system up until the Islamic revolution in 1979. English was simultaneously known as the language of enemies (i.e. the United States and the United Kingdom) on the one hand (Borjian, 2013) and as a tool for progress (Riazi, 2005) on the other. Teaching English as a foreign language is a challenging task in developing countries in general and in our country in particular (Razmjoo and Riazi, 2006). However, English teaching underwent some consecutive reforms and early after the revolution and it was completely removed from the schools and replaced by other series; the most well-known one is "Right path to English" which was based on behavioristic theories and Audio-Lingual Method.

A brief survey of English textbooks taught in formal k-12 education system of Iran shows that they were mostly and generally developed under the influence of structural and formal camps such as RM, DM, GTM, and Audio-Lingual Method has failed in developing learners' communicative ability in real-life situations in the previous Educational system.

Recently the Iranian Ministry of Education has changed the Educational System from K 12 System to what is known as 6-3-3 System. The six-year primary cycle covers grades 1 to 6 for children 6 to 12 years old. This phase is both free and compulsory. Students take exams at the end of each year on which their promotion to the following grade is based. The first three-year secondary cycle titled "Secondary School Stage One" covers grades 7 to 9 for children 12 to 14 years old. Like the preceding cycle, this cycle also provides students with general education. One of the new subjects in the curriculum of this cycle is Foreign Languages. English language has been included as part of the Iranian school curriculum as a compulsory subject taught from grade 7 in junior high schools (age 12-15).

Most of language teaching experts have noticed the failure of the traditional approaches such as Audio-Lingual method, which came to practice after the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979. At that time, syllabus designers designed a series of course-books, titled "Right Path to English". As this Method has failed in developing learners' communicative ability in real-life situations in the previous Educational system, the syllabus designers have shifted to adopt new English for School series titled "Prospect".

Publishers of prospect series claimed that this series is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) based and English teachers have been encouraged to implement CLT to help develop students' abilities to use English appropriately in context.

A study conducted by Azam Ahmadi and Ali Derakhshan, (2014) revealed that Prospect1 follows the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) principles and fulfills students' needs.

CLT advocates teaching practices that develop communicative competence in authentic contexts (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). However, the theories and practices of CLT have faced various challenges in many EFL contexts (Anderson, 1993; Ellis, 1996).

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is generally regarded as an approach to language teaching (Richards and Rodgers 2001). As such, CLT reflects a certain model or research paradigm, or a theory (Celce- Murcia 2001). It is based on the theory that the primary function of language use is communication. Its primary goal is for learners to develop communicative competence (Hymes 1971), or simply put, communicative ability. In other words, its goal is to make use of real-life situations that necessitate communication.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) originated from the changes in the British Situational Language Teaching approach dating from the late 1960s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This method was developed in the 1970s (Richards, 2006) as a result of changes in British language teaching. The development of this method or approach was a reaction to previous methods that had concentrated on form and structure rather than meaning (Richards, 2006). Stemming from the socio-cognitive perspective of the socio-linguistic theory, with an emphasis on meaning and communication, and a goal to develop learners' "communicative competence", Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach evolves as a prominent language teaching method and gradually replaced the previous Grammar-Translation Method and Audio-Lingual Method (Warschauer & Kern, 2000). That the purpose of language learning is to acquire "communicative competence" with a focus on meaning and communication is among the most salient reasons (Nunan, 1989).

The CLT approach highlights learners' communicative competence (Hymes, 1972), which is defined as learners' ability to efficiently express what they mean in the target language and successfully achieve communications in real-life situations (Lightbown and Spada, 1999). Hymes's theory of communicative competence was a definition of what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community. In order to do so, learners not only need to acquire the linguistic but pragmatic knowledge of the target language (Hedgcock, 2002).

It is clear that teachers' attitudes are important in their decision to implement CLT because many English teachers have been teaching the traditional methods such as the Audio-Lingual Method for several years. The reason for the mismatch between CLT theory and practice may be teachers' attitudes (Karavas-Doukas, 1995). Since teachers' attitudes reveal teachers' thinking about teaching language, the investigation of teachers' attitudes serves as a starting point to identify the possible contradictions between teachers' beliefs and CLT principles. Littlewood (1981) suggests that the idea of the communicative approach may conflict with EFL teachers' existing thoughts about teachers' roles and teaching methods. Thus, to implement the relatively new communicative approach in Iran, it is important to investigate Iranian junior high school teachers' attitudes toward CLT.

"Educational change depends on what teachers do and think, it's as simple and as complex as that. It would all be so easy if we could legislate changes in thinking." Fullan (2007)

Despite the importance of teachers' attitudes in determining the successful implementation of innovatory ideas and in understanding teachers' classroom behaviour, teacher attitudes have been neglected in second language classroom research (see Grotjahn 1991; Kleinsasser and Savignon 1991; Nunan 1991).

Karavas-Doukas (1996) suggests that the mismatch between teachers' beliefs and practices may contribute to the neglect of examining teachers' attitudes before implementing any new approach, i.e. only promoting the approach and trying to convince the teachers of the effectiveness of CLT does not successfully change the teachers' existing beliefs about language learning and teaching. The goal of most language teaching methods is to teach learners to communicate in the target language. Being able to communicate required more than linguistic competence, it required communicative competence (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) propose a conceptual framework of attitude construct, which consists of four categories: cognition, affect, conation, and behavior. In the framework, attitudes are a function of beliefs. In other words, beliefs have causal effects on attitudes. Typically, a person learns a number of beliefs about an object by direct observation or information from outside sources. People hold a set of beliefs about the object, and these beliefs serve as the basis that determines their attitudes. (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

In the framework, attitudes are viewed to have influence on behavior. Specifically, a person's attitude toward an object affects the person's intentions to perform behaviors relating to that object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). However, the relation between attitude and behavior depends on particular conditions. That is, when the person thinks he/she has more resources and fewer obstacles, he/she is more likely to perform the behavior according to his/her intentions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) indicate that behavior can be determined by intentions; intentions are the results of overall attitude, and attitudes are a function of salient beliefs. However, these causal effects not only work in one direction. Performance can provide new information that changes beliefs, attitudes and intentions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

Teachers' Attitudes toward CLT Karavas-Doukas (1996) suggests that the mismatch between the beliefs and practices may contribute to the neglect of examining teachers' attitudes before implementing any new approach. That is, only promoting the approach and trying to convince the teachers of the effectiveness of CLT does not successfully change the teachers' existing beliefs about language learning and teaching.

Mangubhai et al, (1998) investigated language teachers' attitudes toward CLT in Australia. The results showed that teachers held moderate attitudes towards five factors relating

to CLT, role of grammar, group work, error correction, learner role, and teacher role. The highest scores fell in the area of learner role. This suggests that the teachers think that the learners can contribute to their own learning. Similarly, in the study of Razmjoo and Riazi (2006), the teachers as a whole expressed positive attitudes toward the five principles of CLT. The teachers held strong views about CLT in the areas of grammar role and teacher role.

Karim's (2004) survey study examined university-level EFL teacher's attitudes toward CLT in Bangladesh. The findings showed that most teachers displayed positive attitudes toward the basic principles of CLT. In addition, the teachers were aware of the features of CLT and their perceptions of CLT corresponded with their reported CLT practice (Karim, 2004).

In Italy, Hawkey (2006) applied both survey and face-to-face interviews to investigate whether teachers agreed with the advantages of the communicative approach in language teaching. The teachers stated positive views about CLT such as "CLT improving learner motivation and interest", and "CLT improving communicative skills" (p. 247). In addition, teachers' interviews suggested that the teachers were motivated to use pair-work activities to meet the learners' communicative needs (Hawkey, 2006).

Liao (2003) investigated high school English teachers' attitudes toward CLT in China. The first-phase survey study reported most Chinese teachers are supportive of the implementation of CLT. The findings indicated that among 302 participants, 94% responded favorably toward CLT and were willing to practice it (Liao, 2003). In the second-phase interview study, four interviewees were selected from survey participants who displayed favorable attitudes toward CLT. The teachers expressed their agreement with CLT such as, "the teacher should take into account the students' need", and "the aim of the class is to enable students to communicate easily in real life situations" (p. 125).

Razmjoo and Riazi (2006) in their study compared the overall attitude of English teachers in high schools and private institutes. The results revealed that both groups of teachers hold a highly positive attitude towards the premises of CLT. They further investigated the extent to which CLT principles are practiced in Iranian public high schools and private language institutes to see which context is closer to CLT tenets. The results of their study indicated that only private language institutes implemented quasi-CLT type of approach in their classes. In other words, while institutes' teachers implement the CLT approach partially in their classes, the high school teachers attach no importance to CLT and its principles in real practice" (p. 167).

In another study, Mowlaie and Rahimi (2010) tried to find the discrepancies between the attitudes of English language teachers in one language school in Iran towards the tenets of CLT and their classroom practice. The results showed that their practice is not in harmony with their attitude. The researchers further interviewed the teachers to pinpoint the reason for those discrepancies to find that the main reason lies in the lack of enough training on the teachers' part on the one hand and expectation of the students from the classroom on the other hand.

Dordinejad et al. (2011) also examined the perceptions of Iranian language teachers in a private language institute by administering an attitude questionnaire. They found that the teachers favor group work activities; however, dialogues, vocabulary, reading, and grammar activities are not interactively integrated. They further concluded that the discrepancy between the teachers' perception and practice is due to their cultural background.

A research by Shahin Vaezi, Ehsan Abbaspour (2014) on 17 EFL teachers, showed that although Iranian EFL teachers have a positive attitude towards principles of CLT they do not materialize their claims in the classroom. Based on the findings of the current study it can be concluded that mere familiarity with an approach and having a positive attitude towards it cannot guarantee it implementation in the classroom as many other factors are there to be considered. In this regard, materials, assessment, and the role attributed to the teacher both by the general EFL teaching context and particularly by the students all affect the extent to which CLT may be adopted. They also claimed 16 EFL classes were observed to measure the state of the practice of language teaching and learning in the classrooms against the principles of CLT. The findings revealed that although teachers held a positive claim towards practicing CLT, the state of the practice of language teaching and learning was not in favor of the premises of CLT.

Chang's (2000) survey study in Taiwan investigated 110 high school English teachers' attitudes toward CLT and their practice of CLT. The results showed that Taiwanese high school English teachers hold positive attitudes toward CLT. Moreover, the teachers who hold positive attitudes toward CLT tend to use activities that are more communicative in their classroom practice. Liao's (2003) case study investigated two high school teachers' attitudes toward CLT and their CLT practice. The results indicated that the teachers held strong beliefs and positive attitudes toward CLT. Their favorable beliefs and attitudes led them to try out CLT in the classrooms and adopt CLT successfully. These research findings indicate that many EFL teachers display favorable attitudes toward CLT and the teachers' views seem to shift to a more communicative paradigm. However, a number of studies point out the teachers' concerns about CLT.

Hawkey (2006) reported that Italian teachers of English think some correction of grammar and lexis errors is necessary.

Li's (2004) study of Chinese teachers' opinions at a tertiary level indicated that the teachers thought that learners must be given feedback when they produce L2 to modify their production. Since the students already knew how to negotiate meaning in their first language, what they needed to learn were words in order to use them in L2 (Li, 2004).

The interview data in Carless's (2004) study revealed that some students used the simplest linguistic forms to complete the tasks. Burnaby and Sun (1989) reported that Chinese college students learn the knowledge of English for future jobs in China, such as reading technical articles or translation of documents (Burnaby & Sun, 1989). This view is confirmed by Tsai's (2007) study. Taiwanese teachers also thought that EFL students have no immediate need

to communicate in English. On the other hand, they need grammar and reading skills in order to learn content knowledge.

3. METHODS

The main purpose of this study is to examine Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes toward CLT and the rationales underlying their attitudes toward CLT. To achieve this purpose, an explanatory mixed method research was conducted. The first-phase quantitative study investigated teachers' attitudes toward CLT, while the second and third- phase qualitative study explored the reasons underlying the teachers' attitudes toward CLT and the possible contradictions between teachers' attitudes, beliefs and CLT practical implementation and principles in the classroom.

The question guiding the first-phase quantitative study was:

What are Iranian EFL teachers' overall attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching?

The research question in the second-phase qualitative study was:

What are the reasons underlying the teachers' attitudes toward CLT?

And the research question in the third-phase qualitative study was:

Are there any contradictions between teachers' attitudes, beliefs and CLT practical implementation and principles in the classroom?

3.1. Participants

The participants of the current study were 55 EFL teachers who worked in public schools of Khuzestan province, Iran in the academic year 2014-2015. To go through the details, they were 40 female and 15 male EFL teachers. The youngest teacher was a twenty five-year-old woman and the oldest one was a forty seven-year-old man. Their teaching experience ranged from eight to 27 years.

The participants in this study are members of Khuzestan English Language Teachers Association (KELTA). KELTA has at least 2000 members. They are English teachers who are teaching English in junior high schools, high schools and universities all over Khuzestan province. More than 500 members are teaching English to seven and eight graders in junior high schools. Out of this population, participants were selected randomly. The sample was considered to be representative of the whole Iranian EFL teachers.

3.2. Materials

The study had three phases of collecting data including distribution of questionnaire (adopted from Karavas-Doukas, 1996), interview, and observation.

This three-phase study followed a mixed-method research design. The first phase of this study was quantitative since the researcher collected numerical data through distributing questionnaires. The second phase was qualitative: the researcher interviewed some of the participants (who had already taken part in phase 1) to elaborate on their responses to the questionnaire. The third phase also was qualitative: the researcher observed the practice of some teachers who were interviewed in the previous phase.

Questionnaire: The main instrument used to elicit data for the study was a written questionnaire. Attitudes towards CLT were measured by Attitudes towards CLT Questionnaire (Karavas-Doukas, 1996).

The scale consists of 24 items anchored on a 5-point Likert scale. The items are placed in random order, and next to the items is a grid consisting of five columns: from “strongly agree”, “agree”, “uncertain”, “disagree”, “strongly disagree”; each column had a particular value, i.e. 5, 4, 3, 2,1 respectively. (See Appendix A).

Respondents were asked to tick the appropriate box, to indicate how far they agree or disagree with each item. It is decided that a high score on the scale would imply a positive attitude. There are12 favourable items and 12 unfavourable. The favourable items are statements 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 24. The rest are unfavourable.

Thus, favourable statements (i.e. statements based on CLT principles) were scored 5 for “strongly agree” down to 1 for “strongly disagree”; for the scoring of unfavourable items the scoring was reversed (unfavourable items were scored 1 for “strongly agree” up to 5 for “strongly disagree”). The items have been categorized into five subscales including:

1. Group/pair work (four statements);
2. Quality and quantity of error correction (4 statements);
3. The role and contribution of learners in the learning process (6statements);
4. The role of the teacher in the classroom (4 statements);
5. Place/importance of grammar (6 statements).

The highest possible score that could be obtained in the attitude scale and the one indicative of the most favourable attitude towards the communicative approach was 120 (by scoring 5, the highest mark on all 24 statements), while the lowest and the one indicating the least favourable attitude towards the communicative approach was 24. Respondents' scores could therefore fall within a continuum from 24 to 120, the middle (neutral) point of the continuum being 72 (achieved by being uncertain about all 24 items).

The cut off score was 72. Those who obtained a score higher than 72 were supposed to have positive attitudes, those who obtained a score lower than the cut off score were supposed to have negative attitudes toward CLT and finally the score 72 was taken as the neutral or middle score of this study's attitude scale.

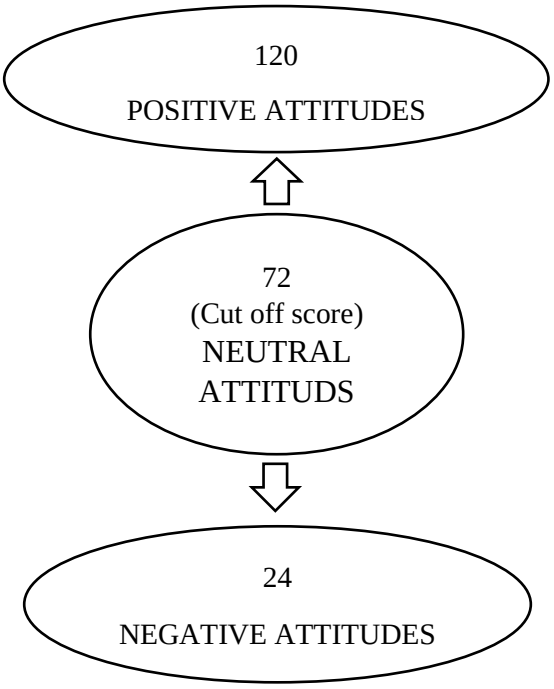

Figure 1. The positive, negative and neutral, attitudes

Interview: Likert-type scale Questionnaires do not explain why a teacher holds a specific attitude; therefore, to complete the gathered data for the study, the researcher employed face-to-face, semi-structure interviews to explore the participants underlying attitudes. During the interviews, the researcher asked the interviewees predetermined, open-ended questions, but allowed flexibility concerning follow-up questions.

Classroom Observation: The last step for collecting data was unstructured observation of classroom practices of the teachers who had previously been interviewed. The purpose of this phase was to know whether the teachers who participated in the interview and clearly explained their reason for being in favor of CLT employed what they said or not. In other words, the researcher wanted to know if there was any contradiction between what they stated about CLT and what they acted in the class.

These three phases of data collection, indeed, are complementary and they complete each other.

3.3. Procedures

For the first-phase of the research, a questionnaire was sent to each participant using the date bank of Khuzestan English Language Teachers Association via his or her e-mail. Meanwhile the selected participants were informed to complete and resend the questionnaire in two months. Two weeks later the first completed questionnaire was received. At the end, 55 questionnaires were sent back. 22 via e-mail and 23 manually.

For the second-phase, the researcher interviewed some of the participants (who had already taken part in phase 1) to elaborate on their responses to the questionnaire. Among those participants who send back their questionnaires, 10 participants were selected randomly to take part in a face-to-face interview. The interview questions were designed based on items of the questionnaire and the five main principles of CLT because it was necessary that participants explain in details the reasons behind their responses to items of the questionnaire.

For the third-phase, among 10 interviewee, five participants were selected randomly. They were informed to let the researcher have a classroom observation. Four participants agreed. The purpose of the classroom observation was to see if there was any possible contradictions between teachers' attitudes, beliefs and CLT practical implementation and principles in the classroom.

4. RESULTS

As mentioned before, to study Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes toward communicative language approach, a questionnaire contains 24 items, which were randomly ordered (to prevent any deviation) was considered. These items were categorized into five subscales based on main principles of CLT, which were mentioned earlier including the following factors: Group/pair work; quality and quantity of error correction; the role and contribution of learners in the learning process; the role of the teacher in the classroom and place/importance of grammar.

Since the number of items allocated to the five dimensions was not equal, to compare these aspects with each other, and extract interval scale for each of the dimensions, the mean of five options had been used. Options were "strongly agree", "agree", "uncertain", "disagree", "strongly disagree"; each had a particular value, i.e. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. In favorable items, the scale ranged from five to one, with five being "strongly agree" and one being "strongly disagree". The unfavorable items were recoded, so the positive end of the scale was five. (Likert scale with scores in the reverse direction).That was, the closer the mean was to the value of five, the more favorable the teachers' attitudes were. Table 1 shows teachers' attitudes towards these principles.

Table 1. ***Descriptive statistics of five subscales in brief***

Items based on CLT principles	Mean	Std. Deviation
Group/pair work	3.8500	.65546
Quality and quantity of error correction	3.3955	.69170
The role and contribution of learners in the learning process	3.0818	.53660
The role of the teacher in the classroom	3.5273	.45306
Place/importance of grammar	3.8061	.49041

According to the table1, participants' responses to the qualitative variables (factors): Group/pair work; quality and quantity of error correction; the role and contribution of learners in the learning process; the role of the teacher in the classroom; place/importance of grammar are changed and calculated to quantitative variables. The mean level of these quantitative variables are 3.85, 3.39, 3.08, 3.52 and 3.8 for the 5 factors respectively.

Since statistical indicators calculate the quantitative variables, they can be compared to each other easily. Table 1 suggests that among the five principles, the principle with highest mean was group/ pair work (*M*=3.85), followed by the role of grammar (*M*=3.80), the role of the teacher (*M*=3.52), and error correction (*M*=3.39). The role of the learners was indicated as the lowest mean among the five principles (*M*=3.08). What is noteworthy is that teachers did not show any negative attitudes towards CLT. The means of none of all the subscales are above three.

In general, to evaluate and measure the study of EFL teachers' attitudes toward CLT variable, five dimensions; Group/pair work; quality and quantity of error correction; the role and contribution of learners in the learning process; the role of the teacher in the classroom; place/importance of grammar, have been analyzed using covering analysis method.

The descriptive statistics to determine these variables is shown in the table below:

Table 2. ***Descriptive statistics of variable score***

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Score	55	39	69	108	84.42	8.623	74.359
Valid N (list wise)	55						

Based on table 2, the obtained mean for the study of EFL teachers' attitudes toward CLT is (*M*=84.42). In fact determining the critical value of 72 is to decide the positive or negative attitudes of the responders, the closer mean to 120 shows participants' positive attitudes toward CLT.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that teachers hold a favorable attitude toward CLT and displayed characteristics of CLT in their beliefs. Based on the teachers' teaching experience, the findings demonstrated that CLT could make English teaching meaningful and interesting. The present study found that the teachers disliked using traditional methods of teaching that requires the students to memorize numerous grammar rules. CLT aims to develop students' communicative competence. To communicate effectively, the students are involved in different kinds of

activities that require practicing various skills to understand their peers and make themselves understood by others. Further, CLT creates a non-threatening language environment that lowers the learners' anxiety and make class input comprehensible. In the classroom where CLT is applied, the students can develop their language as well as social skills when they work together with their group members to achieve a common goal. Finally, in CLT, both students and teachers play different roles than those in the traditional classrooms. Instead of waiting for the teacher to make decisions for them, students take the initiative and responsibility for their own learning.

The findings also showed that teachers' favorable and positive attitudes towards CLT were not related to difficulties they experienced in their classes in general. This suggests that teachers' attitude is not the only factor to ensure the implementation of innovation and change in the educational system. Other factors such as the nature of that innovation and socio-organizational context of change should be considered (Rogers, 2003; Carless, 2013).

To answer the second question of the study, i.e., what are the reasons underlying the Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes toward CLT, an unstructured interview was conducted. The interview questions were designed based on items of the questionnaire and the five main principles of CLT because it was necessary that participants explain in details the reasons behind their responses to items of the questionnaire. According to the gathered data from this phase of data collection, the majority of participants agreed with CLT because this approach helps students improve their communicative competence and grammatical knowledge. Their attitudes revealed that grammar is not sufficient as a single factor and does not guarantee learners' success in a communicative context.

The results of the interview for pair work showed that participants agreed with such activities. Although arranging such activities takes more time, learners participate in group/pair activities more eagerly. In terms of quantity and quality of error correction, the interviewed teachers believed that errors are parts of learning. However, paying attention to the condition of errors is important. If errors, for instance, occur while learners have discussions, they are ignored or teachers write them down on a piece of paper in order to correct them at the end of the discussion, or at least when the speaker is done with his/her speech. Based on what the researcher acquired from the interviews, teachers generally hold positive views toward the role of teachers in CLT classes because they consider the teacher as learning facilitator not only transformer of input. It is better for teachers not to teach every item directly, they believed, but to transfer his/her knowledge indirectly through activities and examples and make learners take responsibility for their own learning through interaction with their classmates and exploring the grammatical points together. In this case, they could learn better and improve faster. In other words, teacher is not a mere instructor in the class: rather, he owns some other roles in addition to transferring knowledge.

Class observation was the last phase of data collection. This phase was not only a complementary step for the other two phases of collecting data, but it also seemed crucial to understand how much teachers put their beliefs into action. Class observation was conducted to

answer the third question of the study, i.e., is there a gap between teachers' attitudes toward CLT and their actual classroom practices? The researcher wanted to make sure, if teachers' approaches were based on the five principles of CLT and if they practiced what they believed in. In order to achieve this goal, four classes of those participants who participated in the interviews were observed. Briefly, the results of the observations showed that teachers did whatever they believed or expressed in questionnaires and interviews. In other words, they put in to practice whatever they believed in. Teachers, who were familiar with the CLT approach and its principles, were mostly successful in teaching and managing the class and fulfilling the learners' needs. Consequently, in order to answer the third research question one can say not much gap or contrast was observed between participants' beliefs toward CLT and their practical practices in the classroom.

6. CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicated that participants generally hold positive attitudes toward CLT. In other words, it was demonstrated that there was a general agreement among participants about main principles of CLT and they indicated characteristics of CLT in their beliefs. These positive and favorable views were confirmed to be important in translating and delivering the main principles of CLT in to practice.

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Appendix A

Attitudes towards CLT Questionnaire (Karavas-Doukas, 1996).

Items	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Uncertain 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. Grammatical correctness is the most important criterion by which language performance should be judged.					
2. Group work activities are essential in providing opportunities for co-operative relationships to emerge and in promoting genuine interaction among students.					
3. Grammar should be taught only as a means to an end and not as an end in itself.					
4. Since the learner comes to the language classroom with little or no knowledge of the language, he/she is in no position to suggest what the content of the lesson should be or what activities are useful for him/her.					
5. Training learners to take responsibility for their own learning is futile since learners are not used to such an approach.					
6. For students to become effective communicators in the foreign language, the teachers' feedback must be focused on the appropriateness and not the linguistic form of the students' responses.					
7. The teacher as 'authority' and 'instructor' is no longer adequate to describe the teacher's role in the language classroom.					
8. The learner-centred approach to language teaching encourages responsibility and self-discipline and allows each student to develop his/her full potential.					
9. Group work allows students to explore problems for themselves and thus have some measure of control over their own learning. It is therefore an invaluable means of organizing classroom experiences					
10. The teacher should correct all the grammatical errors students make. If errors are ignored, this will result in imperfect learning.					
11. It is impossible in a large class of students to organize your teaching so as to suit the needs of all.					
12. Knowledge of the rules of a language does not guarantee ability to use the language.					

13. Group work activities take too long to organize and waste a lot of valuable teaching time.					
14. Since errors are a normal part of learning, much correction is wasteful of time.					
15. The communicative approach to language teaching produces fluent but inaccurate learners.					
16. The teacher as transmitter of knowledge is only one of the many different roles he/she must perform during the course of a lesson.					
17. By mastering the rules of grammar, students become fully capable of communicating with a native speaker.					
18. For most students language is acquired most effectively when it is used as a vehicle for doing something else and not when it is studied in a direct or explicit way.					
19. The role of the teacher in the language classroom is to impart knowledge through activities such as explanation, writing, and example.					
20. Tasks and activities should be negotiated and adapted to suit the students' needs rather than imposed on them.					
21. Students do their best when taught as a whole class by the teacher. Small group work may occasionally be useful to vary the routine, but it can never replace sound formal instruction by a competent teacher.					
22. Group work activities have little use since it is very difficult for the teacher to monitor the students' performance and prevent them from using their mother tongue.					
23. Direct instruction in the rules and terminology of grammar is essential if students are to learn to communicate effectively.					
24. A textbook alone is not able to cater for all the needs and interests of the students. The teacher must supplement the textbook with other materials and tasks so as to satisfy the widely differing needs of the students					

Age: ..... Sex: .....

University Degree: ..... Years of teaching: .....