EXPLORING THE USE OF CLT IN SAUDI ARABIA

A THESIS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

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By
Ghadah Hassan Batawi
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Ghadah Hassan Batawi, Candidate for the Master of Arts Degree
American University of Sharjah, 2006

ABSTRACT

Many studies have been conducted to investigate the success of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) adoption in EFL countries. Some of these studies advocate the implementation of CLT teaching, whereas many studies in other EFL countries reflect the success of traditional teaching methods and report certain difficulties in trying CLT. However, there is no specific study that addresses CLT implementation in the Saudi context.

Because teachers' understanding of an innovation plays a primary role in its success, this study aimed to investigate teachers' understandings and views regarding the use of CLT innovation in the Saudi context. This was accomplished by addressing the following questions: What are teachers' actual practices in language classrooms regarding certain aspects of CLT: the importance of grammar, error correction, teacher's role, student's role, group work, and testing? And will teachers face challenges in adopting CLT? If so, what are the major difficulties that teachers in Saudi Arabia believe they will encounter in implementing CLT?

To answer these questions, 100 female teachers participated to this study by filling out surveys. The findings of the surveys answered my initial question pertaining to teachers' actual practices in language classes. 12 of those teachers also contributed to the second phase of the study in which they constituted three focus group discussions. The

discussions were mainly about teachers' understanding of CLT and what obstacles they might encounter in an attempt to implement it.

The findings indicated that teachers employ a range of practices that reflected using a combination of methods while teaching. In other words, Saudi teachers exhibit features of both traditional and communicative approaches in their classrooms, leaning more towards the traditional methods of teaching. In addition, the findings of the study indicated some major obstacles that could hamper teachers in trying CLT. The difficulties are grouped into three main categories: difficulties caused by the teacher, the students, and the education system.

The results suggest that to successfully use CLT, educators, including teachers, supervisors, administrators, and curriculum designers must give attention to the following three areas: the value of training, reorientation of the society in general, and adapting rather than adopting CLT. In the long run, Saudi teachers should establish their own research in order to develop language teaching methods that are more suitable to the Saudi context.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work for my father, my mother, and my fiancé. Thank you all for your encouragement and patience throughout the process.

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

My experience as an English teacher for four years in both intermediate and secondary Saudi schools has led to the observation that many Saudi learners encounter problems in both speaking and writing. That is, they are unable to express themselves efficiently either when dealing with academic topics or common everyday topics. Students' difficulties may arise from their ability to utilize the learned linguistics forms and vocabulary correctly and appropriately in real communication. The problem could be partly attributed to the EFL learning environment. Students start learning English in grade 7 where they learn only through formal instruction. That is, they have little opportunity to be exposed to English through natural interaction. Most importantly, the problem could originate from the actual language classroom itself. Teachers' practices and misconceptions could hamper the growth of students' communicative competence. That is, I concur with many researchers' belief that teachers' knowledge and practices play a critical role in influencing students' learning. In other words, to enhance the quality of learning and thus students' communicative competence, language teachers need to be knowledgeable and skillful in the field of TESOL. Not only do teachers need to acquire linguistic knowledge, but also they need to know about topics such as second language acquisition, learning styles, language learning strategies, the cultural dimension of language, and current methodologies that enhance real language use.

Background: CLT in Saudi Arabia

The Saudi Arabian government has paid special attention to English teaching to ensure that Saudi citizens will be able to cope with the political and economic developments and globalization. Consequently, the Ministry of Education recently published a series of new objectives regarding English teaching policies. First, in 2004, the government decided English would be introduced in an earlier grade (grade four in elementary school). In addition, the government published a new curriculum which is more communicative. The goal of the new curriculum is to develop the learner's communicative competence through communicative activities such as group work and games. Furthermore, a serious of new textbooks (*English in Saudi Arabia*) was released

immediately with the publication of the new curriculum. The new textbooks incorporate more speaking, listening, and group work activities. Additionally, there was a shift in the assessment style. That is, although major tests are still grammar-based, a new continuous assessment tool was developed to measure students' communicative competence during class periods in a non-threatening way. This instrument was mainly a rubric that aimed to measure students' fluency rather than accuracy.

Research Questions/Assumptions

A commonly held view among many Saudi teachers is that language teaching primarily involves teaching knowledge about language rather than showing how to use the language meaningfully. This view could be due to the influence of the Grammar Translation Method that still, to a certain extent, permeates Saudi language classes. Despite the government's movement towards educational improvement, many Saudi teachers are incapable of coping with such reform. I was informed by my previous English supervisor that many experienced teachers resist the change, whereas novice teachers lack proper training. For this reason, examining the Saudi context becomes my target. The current study aims to examine the current practices and methods that Saudi teachers employ while teaching the language, their perspectives and attitudes regarding Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and constraints that deter them from applying CLT. Thus, the first part of this study will determine Saudi teachers' actual practices in language classrooms and their perceptions of CLT. The second part will focus on my main research question: To what extent is the implementation of CLT possible in the Saudi language learning classroom?

Overview of Chapters and Appendices

Chapter one indicated the problem that many Saudi learners are unable to express themselves efficiently either in speaking or writing using English. One contributing factor is probably teachers' practices and teaching methods that they use in language classrooms. A brief insight about the Saudi government's efforts to shift away from traditional teaching methods towards more communicative ones was provided. The reform is done by adapting curriculum objectives and changing text books accordingly in order to promote language teaching and learning in Saudi Arabia. The overall research questions and the purpose of the study were, then, highlighted. Chapter two reviews the

relevant literatures. It discusses a wide array of methods that were introduced by researchers and practitioners while looking for the best method to teach the target language. It, then, introduces CLT as a widely used method and relates it to learners' communicative competence. It also defines both weak and strong versions of CLT, illustrates some remarkable characteristics of CLT, and explains common difficulties that deter some EFL teachers from applying CLT in their context. Chapter three concerns the methodology of the current study. It specifies the two research questions and describes the methods used to answer these questions. For data collection, this chapter identifies two major tools: survey and focus group discussions. Then, the chapter introduces the participants of both the surveys and the interviews.

Chapter four focuses on the findings which are obtained from the collected data. The findings are analyzed, tabulated, and interpreted. The percentages of teachers' responses to the surveys are calculated. Teachers' comments and reactions in both the surveys and the interviews regarding classroom practices and the feasibility of CLT in Saudi Arabia are also included. In the final chapter, the conclusion with the findings are summarized and recommendations for educators including teachers, supervisors, administrators, and curriculum designers which raise the awareness to the necessity of increasing knowledge and skills in the field of TESOL. Attention is particularly paid in this chapter to the importance of teachers' training. A considerable focus is given to encouraging teachers to look for ways to adapt CLT in order to suit the Saudi context rather than merely adopt it. The chapter ends by emphasizing a need for further research which investigates more teachers' opinions about how to make language teaching and learning more communicative and thus more meaningful for students.

There are two appendices. Appendix A shows the original survey that is given to teachers. Appendix B lists the possible interview questions used for the focus group interviews.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Background

A noticeable problem among Saudi learners is their deficiency in communication. Saudi learners, like many Arab learners, find difficulties in conveying their ideas using English. Rababah (2003) finds that most Arab learners, including Saudi learners, cannot express themselves freely and fluently using the target language whether in academic or in real life situations. Rababah argues that the students' major difficulty is due to the fact that they cannot transfer the grammatical structures learned in the classroom to real communicative situations outside the classrooms. He asserts that "students' failure in using English is related to the students' deficiencies in communicative competence and self-expression" (p. 17).

Deckert (2004), Li (1998), and Rababah (2003) attribute students' incapability to achieve communicative goals using English to the methods of language teaching and the learning environment. In other words, learners' weaknesses reflect to a certain degree teachers' poor practices and methodologies in language classes. Regarding the Saudi context, Al-Hazmi (2003) argues that many teachers in Saudi Arabia, whether locals or non-locals, are not qualified enough to meet the demands of EFL classroom. He explains that most of them "are not well trained, nor do they receive in-service education upon assuming their posts at schools" (p. 342). Thus, as Al-Hazmi observes, many EFL teachers in Saudi schools lack language proficiency and are not acquainted with updated EFL teaching methodologies. The literature suggests that in Saudi Arabia one of the many factors that contribute to students' poor communicative abilities is teachers' lack of effective EFL teaching methodologies.

Historical Overview of Some Widely Used Teaching Methods

Researchers and teachers over the years have been looking for new and innovative methods to teach English as a second or a foreign language. Savignon (2002) demonstrates that teachers have found many methods for teaching language; however, as times and contexts change, a fashionable method is dismissed and becomes no longer desirable in a particular time or in a specific context. In the following section, a variety of recognized and widely spread teaching methods will be discussed.

4

Grammar-Translation Method

One of the earliest methods in language teaching was the Grammar- Translation Method. Brown (2000), Celce-Murcia (2001), Cummins (1998), Gunn (2003), and Larsen-Freeman (2001) point out that the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) took firm root and dominated English language teaching for a long time. At its heart, as they demonstrate, was for students to be able to read literature written in the target language. This is done primarily by approaching the language through analyzing its grammar rules and vocabulary, and thus translating sentences and texts to the learners' first language. Cummins (1998) points out that in GTM, "strict grammatical and lexical accuracy measures the [learner's] success" (p. 163). Larsen-Freeman (2001) adds that the roles of teachers who use GTM are very traditional. In other words, the teacher is the authority in the classroom, while students are told to memorize what the teacher says. Gunn (2003) makes the point that although GTM is useful for learners who learn language for academic reasons or are interested in language literature, it is inadequate for those who want to be fluent speakers of the target language. As GTM focuses exclusively on written language, it does not satisfy learners who want to work on their speaking abilities.

Audio-Lingual Method

During the 1950s, the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) which is an oral-based approach emerged to place spoken language before written language (Cummins, 1998). Brown (2000), Celce-Muricia (2001), Gunn (2003), and Larsen-Freeman (2001) emphasize that the Audio-Lingua Method has a strong theoretical base in psychology. It is developed by incorporating some principles from behavioral psychology. That is, it "was influenced by Skinner's (1957) research on conditioning and his proposal that language, like any other skill, could be learned through repeated actions" (Gunn, 2003, p. 25). The Audio-Lingual Method, as Brown (2000), Celce-Murcia (2001), Cummins (1998), Gunn (2003), and Larsen-Freeman (2001) note, focuses on learning a language through memorizing and repeating patterned speech in order to allow students to produce language automatically without thinking. Therefore, drill and practice exercises are used extensively to form strong habits and thus greater learning.

Larsen-Freeman (2001) demonstrates that teachers who use the Audio-Lingual Method are like an "orchestra leader" (p. 45), conducting and guiding the students'

behavior in the target language. The teacher is also responsible for providing a good model for students to imitate. She adds that in this method, it is very important to prevent learners from making errors in order to avoid the formation of bad habits. Therefore, students' errors have to be corrected immediately by the teacher. Brown (2000) explains that although the Audio-lingual Method received high success at that time, its popularity did not last for a long time. One of the most salient criticisms it received was its "ultimate failure to teach long-term communicative proficiency" (Brown, p. 75). In other words, students learning by the Audio-Lingual Method were unable to readily transfer the habits they had mastered in the classroom to communicative use outside the class. Besides, as he demonstrates, many researchers in the early 1960s discovered that language was not really acquired through a process of habit formation and over learning.

The Emergence of Further Methods: Silent Way, Desuggestopedia, Community Language Learning, and Total Physical Response.

Larsen-Freeman (2001) notes that researchers such as linguist Noam Chomsky believed that learning a language does not occur by forming a set of habits since people create and understand utterances they have never heard before. "Chomsky proposed that speakers have knowledge of underlying abstract rules, which allow them to understand and create novel utterances" (Larsen-Freeman, p. 52). Thus, it was argued that in learning a language, learners need to be active participants who are responsible for their own learning and become more involved in the learning process rather than simply responding to stimuli in the environment (Gunn, 2003). Accordingly, the emphasis on human cognition led to the establishment of the cognitive approach, which supports the idea that students should be more involved in their learning. The Cognitive Approach supposes that students bring background knowledge to the classroom, and in turn they learn better when the new piece of knowledge is related to something they already understand. In addition, students are encouraged to take charge of their learning and make hypotheses about the language (Gunn, 2003). Although the Cognitive Approach never gained the reputation of the Audio-Lingual Method, some of its basic principles has inspired new methods of language teaching (Brown, 2000). Brown (2000) continues that many different methods that gave some insight into language teaching appeared before

Communicative Language Teaching, including the Silent Way, Deuggestopedia, Community Language Learning, and Total Physical Response.

Silent Way

Although the Silent Way did not stem directly from the Cognitive Approach, it shares certain characteristics with it (Gunn, 2003). Stevick (1998) says that the Silent Way, which was introduced by Caleb Gattegno in 1972, is a problem-solving approach in which teachers utilize physical objects, color charts, and rods to introduce new vocabulary and syntax. He illustrates that in this method, a teacher is silent much of the time to give the students the opportunity to grow independently. Growing independently involves students' ability to utilize their knowledge of the target language, and actively participate in learning with minimal correction or feedback. Stevick (1998) adds that teachers who use this method are technicians or engineers. In other words, learning mainly occurs when learners make use of what they already know, while teachers give help when it is necessary, focus on students' perception, and foster learners' autonomy.

Gunn (2003) points out that although teachers' silence could cause some students' anxiety, "it is one of the key concepts to meet the Silent Way objective of subordinating teaching to learning" (p. 28). Thus, as Stevick (1998) explains, the teacher's silence is a tool which helps to foster autonomy, removes the teacher from the centre of attention, and frees the teacher to closely observe the students' behavior. However, the Silent Way as a method has its limitation. Brown (2000) notes, "In one sense, the Silent Way was too harsh a method, and the teacher too distant, to encourage a communicative atmosphere" (p. 106).

Desuggestopedia

Another educational innovation is Desuggestopedia which was introduced by Lozanov in 1979 (Gunn 2003). Larsen-Freeman (2001) emphasizes that Desuggestopedia is an illustrative method of the affective-humanistic approach—an approach in which there is respect for students' feelings. Blair (1982), Brown (2000), Gunn (2003), and Larsen-Freeman (2001) demonstrate that this method aims to encourage students to use the target language communicatively by eliminating the psychological barriers that learners might bring with them to the class. Accordingly, students are encouraged to create new identities by selecting target language names and new occupations. Thus, as

they explain, assuming new identities enhances students' feeling of security and allows them to be more open and feel less inhibited. Larsen-Freeman (2001) and others state that a Desuggestopedia class is colorful, cheerful, and full of posters hanging around. This is because, as she emphasizes, one of its principles is that learning is facilitated in a pleasant environment where students can learn indirectly from the surroundings. What is more, the activities are done with musical background as it is believed that "songs are useful for freeing the speech muscles and evoking positive emotions" (Larsen-Freeman, 2001, p. 78). Brown (2000) adds that teachers who use Desuggestopedia correct students' errors gently, indirectly, and in a non-confrontational manner. Desuggestopedia was criticized for a number of issues. Brown (2000) states one serious criticism was its impracticality since equipped classes, music, and comfortable chairs are not always available.

Community Language Learning Method

Community Language Learning Method takes its principles from the Counseling-Learning Approach developed by Charles A. Curran (Larsen-Freeman, 2001). Brown (2000), Gunn (2003), and Larsen-Freeman (2001) state that this method is student-centered. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning, while the teacher takes the role of a counselor and a facilitator. In other words, students reflect on the language and reflect on their experiences, whereas the teacher listens carefully to them and understands what they are saying. They maintain that the Community Language Learning Method aims to teach the target language communicatively in a secure and friendly atmosphere by dealing with students as whole persons, actively involving them in the learning process, and utilizing their native language in the initial stages if needed. This enhances active experimentation with language use and enhances students' confidence.

According to Brown (2000), Gunn (2003), and Larsen-Freeman (2001), responding to students' feeling is very important in this method. Therefore, one regular activity is encouraging students to comment on how they feel. The teacher listens and responds to their comments carefully. In dealing with students' errors, Larsen-Freeman (2001) shows that teachers should correct students' errors gently and not pay much attention to the errors. Although the Community Language Learning Method overcomes some of the threatening affective factors, there are some practical and theoretical

8

problems with it. Brown points out that the teacher's role in this method is "too non-directive" (p. 104). In other words, students do not need to struggle for a long time to discover a concept that could be easily clarified by the teacher's direct explanation.

Total Physical Response

Another method introduced by James Asher in 1977 was Total Physical Response (TPR), which is intrinsically a comprehension approach (Brown, 2000; Larsen-Freeman, 2001). Larsen-Freeman asserts that teachers who use Total Physical Response believe in the importance of having their students enjoy the experience of learning to communicate in a foreign language. Larsen-Freeman argues, "In fact, TPR was developed in order to reduce the stress people feel when studying foreign languages and thereby encourage students to persist in their study beyond a beginning level of proficiency" (p. 113). Unlike other methods, in the Total Physical Response, learning should start first with understanding and later proceed to production. That is, after learners internalize how the target language works, speaking will appear gradually (Celce-Murcia, 2001).

Brown (2000) and Larsen-Freeman (2001) add that Total Physical Response assumes that physical activity enhances learning. Accordingly, the teacher's initial role is the director of students' behavior, and students are imitators of the teacher's nonverbal model. That is, students listen to the teacher's commands and follow the teacher's commands by responding physically. Thus, learning takes place through performing actions as well as by observing actions. Regarding students' errors, teachers should correct only major errors in a gentle manner (Larsen-Freeman, 2001). Total Physical Response has its share of criticism. Brown (2000) argues that although it is effective for beginners, it seems inappropriate for advanced language learners.

Communicative Language Teaching

As the field of second language teaching was developing, teachers seemed to swing from one method to another every few years looking for the method of the moment. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which was also introduced in 1970s, "has been put forth around the world as the new or innovative way to teach English as a second or foreign language" (Savignon, 2002, p. 13). Nunan (1988) illustrates that CLT is advocated by teachers who grew unsatisfied with traditional, teacher-centered, and form-focused approaches. CLT is particularly supported after "the

realization that knowledge of grammatical forms and structures alone does not adequately prepare learners for effective and appropriate use of the language they are learning" (Berns, 1990, p. 79).

Definition of CLT: CLT and the Learner's Communicative Competence

A great deal has been written in recent years about the definition of CLT. Berns (1990), Brown (2000), Li (1998), and Nunan (1988) demonstrate that in CLT, learners not only create grammatically correct structures, but also need to use the language to accomplish real-life tasks. A basic concept underlying these various definitions, as noted by Brown (2000), is that it is a communicative approach which aims to develop the learner's communicative competence.

Gunn (2003), Hiep (2005), Li (1998), and Savignon (1997, 2002) assert that communicative competence is based on Hymes' work of sociolinguistics in 1972. In arguing against Chomsky, Hymes proposed that knowing a language is more than knowing grammatical, lexical, and phonological rules. Therefore, he suggested that in order to use the language effectively, learners need to develop communicative competence. Communicative competence is, as defined by many researchers, the ability to use the language appropriately in a real social encounter (Berns, 1990; Gunn, 2003; Hiep, 2005; Savignon, 1997). Savignon defines it as "the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning involving interaction between two or more persons or between one person and a written or oral text" (cited in Berns, 1990, p. 89). In order to understand the term communicative competence, Savignon identifies four distinctive characteristics that are associated with the term (Berns, 1990). The term communicative competence has, first, a "dynamic, interpersonal nature" (Berns, 1990, p. 89). In other words, two or more persons have to engage in negotiating meaning. Second, the term could be applied to both spoken and written language. Third, the competence of communication is associated with the role of the variety of situations in which communication takes place. Finally, communicative competence is a relative concept that depends on the cooperation of all participants and a situation (Berns, 1990).

Berns (1990), Gunn (2003), Hiep (2005), Li (1998), and Savignon (1997, 2001) illustrate that Hymes' definition of communicative competence was examined by many practitioners. Thus, in 1980, Canale and Swain provided an elaborated definition of

communicative competence. In Canale and Swain's original article, communicative competence comprised three components: grammatical, sociolinguistics, and strategic competence. The fourth component, which is discourse competence, was later added in 1983 by Canale (Berns, 1990; Gunn, 2003; Hiep, 2005; Li, 1998; Savignon, 1997, 2002). Grammatical competence refers to linguistic competence—the knowledge of syntactical, phonological, and lexicological systems. Sociolinguistic competence deals with the social rules of language use, which involves an understanding of the social context where communication takes place, including role relationships, the shared knowledge of the participants, and the communicative purpose of their interaction. Discourse competence is the ability to understand an individual message and how its meaning is represented in relation to the entire text and discourse. Finally, strategic competence entails the strategies employed for successful communication, such as how to initiate, terminate, maintain, and repair a dialogue.

Drawing on the implication of Canale and Swain's definition of communicative competence, Savignon proposed a classroom framework that shows how learners can gradually expand their communicative competence through practices and experience in communicative contexts. Savignon (2002) asserts that "organization of learning activities into [these] components serve not to sequence ELT program, but rather to highlight the range of options available in the curriculum planning and suggest ways in which their very interrelatedness benefit the learner" (p. 19). Savignon's model identified five components of a communicative curriculum: language arts, language for a purpose, personal English language use, theatre arts, and beyond the classroom. Savignon (2002) explains that language arts include exercises used in the mother tongue programs to focus attention on formal accuracy. Language for a purpose is the use of language for real communication goals. Personal English language use relates to the learners' emerging identity in English. Theatre arts provide learners with the tools they need to act in a new language, such as interpreting, expressing, and negotiating meaning (Savignon, 2002).

Weak vs. Strong Version of CLT

Gunn (2003), Holliday (1994), and Nunan (1988) suggest two types of CLT: weak and strong versions. According to them the weak version, which is probably well-

known among language teachers, stresses that learners need to communicate with their teacher and with other learners to practice language forms. Holliday (1994) says,

[The weak version] focuses on the practice of language use, with the basic lesson input as presentation of language models. These models can be in the form of 'structures', albeit within the context provided by a 'function', 'notion' or 'topic', followed by a 'communicative activity' to practice language item. (p. 170)

However, the strong version, as Holliday (1994) shows, focuses on "learning about how language works in discourse as an input to new language production" (p. 171). In other words, language ability could be developed through activities that stimulate real performance. Thus, class time should be spent not on controlled practice leading towards communicative language use, but in activities which require learners to do in class what they will have to do outside the class.

Another difference, as they emphasize, is that in the weak version of CLT, pair work and group work are typical activities that are required to practice communication, enhance the learning of conversational strategy, and emphasize the social dimension of language learning. However, in the strong version, learners' actual involvement with the text is considered a productive communication. Holliday (1994) explains that students are supposed to solve language problems in order to accomplish the language task. In other words, students need to work out how the text is constructed and identify what language clues are presented to help them to understand the text. Gunn (2003) indicates that the weak version has its pros and cons. In other words, although the weak version of CLT enhances social interaction as learners work together in discussing authentic materials, student discussions "also have their disadvantages as students' speech may contain a number of errors that students may not even be aware are errors" (p. 31). What is more, Holliday (1994) points out that it could be impractical for large classes, especially where acoustics or furnishing are very bad or in social situation where collaborative work and student initiation are not preferable.

Characteristics of CLT

According to Brown (2000), CLT has some "interconnected characteristics" (p. 267). Berns (1990), Brown (2000), Ellis (1996), Holliday (1994), Kim (1999), and Li (1998) stress that CLT's primary focus is meaning. They view learning an L2 as

acquiring the linguistic means to perform different kinds of functions. In other words, the class is not restricted to grammatical structures; instead learners acquire linguistic forms to produce meaningful language. Larsen-Freeman (2001) adds that learners "need to know that many different forms can be used to perform a function and also that a single form can often serve a variety of functions" (p. 128). Thus, as she shows, the concentration is on fluency more than accuracy because this will give students the opportunity to express their ideas and opinions freely. This could be managed by using communicative activities such as games, role plays, and problem solving tasks that allow the learners to use the language genuinely (Lamie, 1999; Larsen-Freeman, 2001).

To accomplish the goal of real communication, Hedge (2000) supports the use of authentic language. In other words, in a CLT classroom, a teacher needs to provide situations similar to those learners may encounter in real life. As Hedge (2000) puts it, "If the goal is to equip students to deal ultimately with the authentic language of the real world, they should be given opportunities to cope with this in the classroom" (p. 67). Consequently, learners are compelled to use the language meaningfully to negotiate meaning, share knowledge, and exchange ideas, thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Therefore, teachers need to choose activities "according to how well they engage students in meaningful and authentic language use rather than in the merely mechanical practice of language patterns" (Li, 1998, p. 679). Gebhard (2000) provides a wide variety of authentic materials that teachers can productively use in their classrooms including newspapers, magazines, movies, cartoons, documentaries, dramas, and TV commercials.

Another characteristic of CLT is that it favors learner-centered teaching. In developing a learner-centered philosophy, Cummins (1998), Li (1998), and Nunan (1988) demonstrate that rather than imposing exercises, the course should be responsive to the learners' needs emanating from their stage of language development and their personal interests and aspiration. In other words, students are no longer passive recipients, but rather, they are active participants who make decisions about their learning, self-monitor their own learning, and whose needs, concerns, and interests are considered by their teachers. Therefore, a learner-centered curriculum, as Nunan (1988) explains, becomes "a collaborative effort between teachers and learners, since learners are closely involved in the decision- making process regarding the content of the curriculum and how it is

13

taught" (p. 3). Consequently, Nunan asserts the necessity of teaching some essential learning skills besides language skills. Such aim may include providing learners with efficient learning strategies, assisting learners in identifying their own preferred ways of learning, developing skills needed to negotiate the curriculum, encouraging learners to set their own objectives, encouraging learners to set realistic goals and time frames, and developing learners' skills in self evaluation.

Another dimension of CLT is the role of the teacher in the communicative class. Larsen-Freeman (2001) and Lightbown and Spada (2003) state that the teacher needs to adopt the role of a facilitator. In this role, as they illustrate, one of his/her major responsibilities is to establish situations likely to promote communication. What is more, during the activities the teacher acts as an advisor, answering students' questions and monitoring their performance. Larsen-Freeman (2001) and Lightbown and Spada (2003) add that teachers view errors as a natural outcome of the development of communication skills. Therefore, they are tolerated during fluency-based activities and return to them later with an accuracy based activity. Regarding the questions teachers ask in class, Lightbown and Spada (2003) emphasize that genuine questions are asked more than display questions since "the focus is on getting information from the students rather than on accuracy in grammatical form" (p. 101).

CLT is also characterized by the use of group activities. Brumfit (1984) makes the point that group work is an important part of a communicative methodology because it increases students' talking time and enhances the quality of learning. That is, group work enables the teacher to design fluency activities that simulate natural conversational settings more closely than any other mode of classroom organization. Besides, Brumfit (1984) adds, "it will combine most effectively all aspects of communication, learning, and human interaction … in the most integrated, non-threatening, and flexible mode of class organization available to the teacher" (p. 78). Psychologically, Brumfit (1998) says that group work increases the participation or the involvement of the student in the task of learning the language. That is, some students are more gifted in learning the language, communicative, or extroverted, while others are shy or introverted. Thus, in small groups, all these types can meet and mix in order to maximize the quality of learning each student receives.

14

CLT and Assessment

Following the shift to developing the learners' communicative skills, the traditional paper and pencil tests are not compatible with the activities and the tasks that take place in the language classroom. That is, Huerta-Macias (2002) illustrates that traditional tests are not authentic because they do not represent activities students typically perform in classrooms. In other words, they do not match assessment to instruction. Another concern is, as Coombe and Barlow (2004) point out, these traditional tests, which are often only administered two or three times per year cannot be used to closely monitor students' progress in the school curriculum throughout the year. However, even if they are given more frequently, traditional tests are often deficient in measuring what students really know about the language.

Consequently, as Coombe and Barlow (2004) state, educators and practitioners recognize that in order to evaluate the multi-skills, knowledge, and strategies that determine students' progress, they need more authentic tools of assessments which are more student-centered, consider what learners can do rather than what they are able to recall, focus on communication, and decrease the level of anxiety. Alternative assessment has been described as an alternative to traditional testing and all of the problems found with such testing. Alternative assessment is defined as a continuous process which involves both the student and the teacher in monitoring students' progress in language by using non-traditional methods (Coombe & Barlow, 2004). Santos (1997) adds that alternative assessment can be used within the context of instruction and can be easily integrated to the daily classroom activities.

Portfolio assessment, which is one form of alternative assessment, is defined as a "record of work over time and in a variety of modes to show the depth, breadth, and development of the student's abilities" (Shaaban, 2001, p. 7). Brown (2004) confirms that a portfolio requires close cooperation between the teacher and the student in identifying which samples of the student's work are to be included. Moreover, he adds, a systematic revision is imperative as it prevents the students from including everything. If portfolios are implemented as an alternative means of assessment, they have several advantages over traditional assessments. Perhaps the most relevant benefit of a portfolio is its impact on teaching and learning processes. Berryman and Russell (2001) state,

15

The portfolio assessment was specifically designed to encourage professional development, to produce positive washback from assessment, rather than the all-too-common negative results of assessment, where teachers teach to test, and valuable curriculum and teaching are crowded out. (p. 80)

Additionally, a portfolio is as an excellent tool that matches assessment to teaching. Chen (2006) considers a portfolio a tool which "integrates assessment with pedagogical tasks to facilitate and monitor learning and teaching" (p. 4). That is, students' works that are assessed are mainly results of class work, and are not separated from class activities like traditional test questions. Therefore, students are performing authentic and meaningful tasks in which they directly apply what they learn. Another indicator of authenticity is that portfolios are capable of measuring diverse skills, knowledge, and strategies all together, unlike traditional tests which measure discrete points (Coombe & Barlow, 2004).

What is more, portfolios encourage genuine communication among students. Chen (2006) explains that tasks and activities that cover different language skills are combined with peer and self assessments to provide students the chance to practice language and work in groups. Besides, they promote critical thinking, support students' autonomy, and personalize learning. Santos (1997) explains, by giving students a chance for reflection on their works, they will have the opportunity to think critically about their works, select their best works, and self-assess their strengths and weaknesses. Thus, they will be more involved and responsible for their own learning, and in turn learning will be more individualized. Brown (2004) adds that portfolios can increase students' motivation and thus enhance learning. That is, when learners take responsibility for their own learning, they become more enthusiastic and search for information they need to continue the process. However, in a traditional testing culture, Chen (2006) notes that portfolio assessment could be an invalid tool of assessment as student involvement in assessment is a new approach for the students. Thus, they may not trust it as a serious tool of assessment or they may express their suspicions regarding the accuracy of peer assessment (Chen, 2006).

Difficulties in Introducing CLT in an EFL Context

A number of studies investigate the implementation of CLT in the EFL context. Deckert (2004), Ellis (1996), Gahin and Myhill (2001), Liao (2004), Li (1998), Sato and Kleinsaser (1999), and Yang and Cheung (2003) note that some studies in some EFL countries advocate the implementation of CLT teaching, whereas studies in other EFL countries reflect the success of traditional teaching methods. However, "the majority of accounts have recognized the difficulties EFL countries face in adopting CLT" (Li, 1998, p. 680). For example, Li (1998) reports that the obstacles that deter CLT adoption fall into four groups: by the teachers, by the students, by the educational system, and by the method itself. However, Gahin and Myhill (2001) provide another model that categorizes these constraints into extrinsic and intrinsic ones. Additionally, Sato and Kleinsaser (1999) make the point that in Japan, the three major challenges for teachers in adopting CLT include subject matter articulation, lack of institutional support, and teachers' lack of proficiency.

In reviewing the relevant literature, the overall impression is that practitioners have endeavored to sort out the challenges that face EFL teachers in implementing CLT. The following section will detail these obstacles following Li's frame work. The rationale for selecting Li's classification is that it is comprehensive as it synthesizes most of the challenges that many researchers concur with. According to Li, as mentioned before, the difficulties in adopting CLT are experienced by the teachers, by the students, by the educational system, and by the method itself. Li (1998) reports six constraints faced by teachers: deficiencies in spoken English, deficiencies in strategic and sociolinguistic competence in English, lack of training in CLT, few opportunities for retraining in CLT, and little time and expertise for developing communicative materials. Deckert (2004), Gahin and Myhill (2001), Li (1998), and Sato and Kleinsaser (1999) reach a consensus that most of the teachers that participated in their studies admitted the fact that their own deficiency in spoken English constrain them in applying CLT in their classrooms. Li (1998) says, "Although the teachers generally felt that they were highly proficient in English grammar, reading, and writing, they all reported that their abilities in English speaking and listening were not adequate to conduct the communicative classes necessarily involved in CLT" (p. 686). Similarly, Deckert (2004), Gahin and Myhill

17

(2001), and Sato and Kleinsaser (1999) make the point that teachers, in their studies, agreed that they needed to be fluent themselves to begin to teach communicatively.

According to Li (1998), teachers' deficiency in strategic and sociolinguistic competence could limit the use of CLT. In two studies carried out by Gahin and Myhill (2001) and Li (1998), many teachers admitted that "the fear of losing face because of not being able to answer students' questions all the time discouraged [them] from using CLT" (Li, 1998, p. 187). That is, in contexts such as South Korea and Egypt, teachers are seen as "knowledge holders" who are supposed to know everything and be always correct (Gahin & Myhill, 2001, p. 15). Therefore, their incapability to answer questions related to sociolinguistic aspects of English may make students feel uncomfortable and not trust their teacher. A third challenge that many teachers face in applying CLT, according to Li, is the lack of training or retraining opportunities in CLT. Deckert (2004) points out that "in-service training can broaden teachers' repertoire of techniques for furthering in-class communication between students, and it can help teachers explore how some ESL/EFL textbooks can be adapted to serve as a springboard of communicative activities" (p. 5). Thus, Li emphasizes that the lack of systematic training leads to fragmented understanding of CLT and makes it difficult for teachers to take the risk of trying the new communicative method. Gahin and Myhill (2001) maintain that training courses are needed to for changing teachers' behaviors and beliefs and for giving teachers confidence with communicative teaching principles.

Furthermore, teachers' misconceptions about CLT are one of the principal obstacles (Li, 1998). Gahin and Myhill (2001) note that "most classroom teachers do not fully understand the principles of CLT in practice" (p. 11). Li (1998), Karavas-Doukas (1996), and Sato and Kleinsasser (1999) illustrate that their studies revealed that many teachers believe that CLT concentrates on fluency, whereas accuracy is totally neglected. Such misunderstanding, they continue, makes teachers feel that CLT contradicts their beliefs about language learning. Finally, Li (1998) and Sato and Kleinsasser (1999) report that many teachers complain that CLT uses activities that are time consuming. In other words, developing communicative materials seem difficult for teachers since most English text books had been developed under the influence of Grammar-Translation and

Audio-Lingual Methods. So teachers have to spend additional time and effort to create their own activities if they want to use CLT.

As noted by Li (1998), the second group of obstacles comes from the students. First, some teachers in Li's study identified students' lack of motivation to work on their communicative competence as a great limitation. That is, students still care much more about grammar, although they realize how important it is to be able to communicate in English. Second, students' resistance to change the culturally convenient roles of both teachers and students is another difficulty that prevents teachers from trying CLT. In other words, Li (1998) explains that students have become accustomed to the traditional classroom structure, in which they sit and take notes while the teacher lectures. As Li (1998) puts it, "After so many years of schooling in a traditional setting, students rely on the teacher to give them information directly, making it very difficult to get the students to participate in class activities" (p. 691).

In addition, according to Li (1998), the third group of difficulties relates to the educational system. Some of these constraints are large class size and grammar-based examination. First, Gahin and Myhill (2001) and Li (1998) identify large classes as a major constraint. Li elucidates that teachers found it very difficult to apply CLT with so many students in one class because they believe that oral English and close monitoring are very important in CLT. That is, teachers reported that in using CLT with big number of students, the class becomes very noisy and difficult to manage. Gahin and Myhill (2001) continue that "large class size …[acts] against group work activities" (p. 9). They add that teachers' error correcting strategies are also badly affected. That is, they reported that teachers found it difficult to move around to guide and monitor the groups where there is no space for the teacher to stand. Gahin and Myhill (2001), Li (1998), and Sato and Kleinsasser (1999) emphasize that another obstacle emerges from the traditional testing. Sato and Kleinsasser (1999) makes the point that "teachers find that assessment tasks that are focused on the four skills offer another obstacle" (p. 503). Li (1998) explains that because of the focus of grammar in most tests, which has remained unchanged, teachers have to spend considerable class time to teach students grammar.

The last group of obstacles found in Li's model is the difficulties caused by CLT itself. One major problems that was reported in Li's study is "CLT's inadequate account

of EFL teaching" (p. 695). That is, Li (1998) reports that teachers realize that CLT does not differentiate between ESL and EFL contexts. In other words, CLT does not consider some of "the salient features of teaching and learning … including the purpose of learning English, learning environment, teachers' English proficiency, and the availability of authentic English materials" (p. 694). Hiep (2005) adds that the transfer of CLT to an EFL context seems problematic since pedagogy imported from abroad conflicts with the social, cultural, and physical conditions of the recipient countries. However, he argues that the problem is not with the methodology itself, but rather how it is adapted to fit EFL students. In order for CLT teaching to become successful in an EFL context, Hiep (2005) and Li (1998) argue that an essential educational reform should take place. That is, CLT should be modified to suit the local condition. In order to do this, as they explain, teachers need first to refine their understanding about how foreign language teaching/learning should be done. Teachers also need to "adapt rather than adopt CLT in their English teaching" (Li, 1998, p. 696). Deckert (2004) suggests a gradual shift to CLT in which teachers can increase the degree of meaningful interaction among their students.

The literature that has been reviewed in this section gives insight into the area under discussion in this study. It has provided a historical overview of a variety of teaching methods which were developed by various researchers who were looking for the most suitable method. Although the general consensus now is that there is no one "best" method, CLT is still widely used. CLT puts the focus on the learner. The essence of CLT is the engagement of learners in communication to allow them to develop their communicative competence. Two versions of CLT have been identified. The weak version stresses student-student and teacher-student interaction in communicative activities, whereas the strong version entails students' interaction with the text including constructing meaning, suggesting hypotheses, and decoding text clues to unlock the text. The review also highlights some major characteristics of CLT such as prioritizing meaning, student-centeredness, and group work implementation. It focuses on the versatile role of the teacher that comprises a facilitator and an advisor. It also discusses the way the teacher deals with errors and the type of classroom questions.

Finally, the review addresses some major obstacles that deter some EFL teachers from applying CLT in their classes. A wide array of difficulties were reported by many researchers; however, they are sorted following Li's model that display these challenges in a well-organized sequence. The consensus among writers in this field is that the obstacles in applying CLT could be handled by modifying CLT in a way that is appropriate to the EFL context and learners' needs in each unique setting. Such adaptation will give learners the opportunity to acquire a good working command of English by considering the social, cultural, and physical conditions of EFL countries. Although these studies identify many crucial problems regarding CLT adoption in different EFL countries, there has been little research done on the adoption of CLT in the Saudi context. That is, Saudi teachers' perceptions about CLT teaching remain unclear.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

In this exploratory study, my goal was to examine the folloeing research question: To what extent is the implementation of CLT possible in the Saudi language learning classrooms? To deepen my understanding of concepts and issues relevant to Saudi teachers' perceptions of the communicative approach and to develop insight to subsequent research on it, the overall question was broken down into the following more specific ones:

1. What are teachers' actual practices in language classrooms regarding certain aspects of the communicative teaching method: the importance of grammar, error correction, teacher's role, student's role, group work, and testing?

2. Will teachers face challenges in adopting CLT? If so, what are the major difficulties that Saudi teachers believe they will encounter in implementing CLT?

The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods. To collect data, two major tools used were a teacher's survey and focus group discussion. The collected data helped to identify whether teachers were ready to accept and implement CLT in their classrooms. In addition, this research gave some suggestions on ways to improve teaching methods in this context.

Data Collection

In order to be given access to the teachers I required, I first had to contact the head supervisor of the English Department in the Ministry of Education in Jeddah. I gave her an official letter written by my thesis advisor at the American University of Sharjah. The letter requested permission to conduct this research as a requirement for obtaining a MA TESOL. Thus, the letter asked for permission to have access to 100 female teachers in order to distribute my questionnaire and for 12 volunteers from among the teachers to conduct group interviews. Once the authorization was approved, I distributed the surveys to 21 public schools and five private schools that teach both intermediate and secondary levels in Jeddah. Prior to contacting the teachers, I met the school principals of each school, gave each of them a copy of the letter, and got their permission to contact

teachers. All teachers were informed that filling out the surveys was optional and they had the right to complete it or not; however, all the 100 copies were returned completed. Teachers were also told that their information would remain confidential and their identities would remain anonymous. I was told by some teachers that the survey took around 20 to 30 minuets to finish. For some schools, I collected the surveys by the end of the day, while other copies were collected the day after. Upon collecting the surveys, three focus group discussions were conducted consecutively. Discussions took place in two government schools and one private school.

<div align="center">Participants</div>

Survey Participants

The participants in the formal questionnaire were 100 female Saudi teachers. Considering the Saudi conservative context, and being a female researcher, my research subjects were female as I could not have access to male teachers. At the time of the study, 23 teachers were teaching in middle schools, and 77 were teaching in high schools. Their experiences in teaching English varied from three to 20 years, with an average of over 10 years. 62 teachers indicated that they had received few teacher education courses, while the other 38 participants had no pre- or in-service training.

Interviewees

12 of the survey participants working in three different schools were chosen to formulate three focus group interviews. In selecting the focus group participants, following Krueger (2000), the participants should be "homogeneous in a way that it is important to the study, … [however] group members could vary by age, gender, occupation, and interest" (p. 11). In the current study, I allowed for the most possible variation in participants' age, teaching experience, and grades taught. For this purpose, one private and two government schools were selected to conduct the three group discussions with. The selection of these schools was based on the diversity of the informants' background information that was provided in the surveys. Such variety is a factor contributing to the validity of the qualitative part of the study.

Design of the Instruments

The Attitude Scale

The first part of the analysis consisted of a pilot study and a 25 item questionnaire as a main quantitative tool of collecting data. In order to develop an appropriate questionnaire, in June 2006, I administered a pilot survey to seven Arab teachers studying in the MA TESOL program in the American University of Sharjah. The final version of the questionnaire was modified based on some useful suggestions collected in the pilot study. First, it was found that some teachers in the pilot study misunderstood some statements as they were too concise, so they suggested more elaboration. Other teachers commented that the language level could be difficult for average non-native English teachers. Consequently, they suggested rewording for some terminology. Finally, other teachers suggested organizing the items thematically instead of presenting them randomly.

The beginning of the survey gathered some biographical data on the participants including their years of experience, teaching levels, and whether they had enrolled in any professional development courses. The questionnaire consisted of two types of questions: scaled responses and open ended questions. The former type was 25 statements referred to some favorable and unfavorable statements that covered the main aspects of the Communicative Language Teaching Method. The statements fell into the following thematic groups: group work, error correction, testing type, role of the teacher, role of the students, and the importance of grammar (see Appendix A). Responses to the scaled statements was done by circling one of the options of the five-point scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and uncertain) provided next to each statement. Additionally, I gave respondents space to add their comments if they had any after each statement. The respondents' choices would indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with each item. The open-ended questions consisted of three wh-questions that aimed to elicit the participants' knowledge about communicative teaching and their views regarding its practicality. I also provided enough space for participants to express their views regarding the given questions.

The Focus Groups Discussions

   The main purpose of the second part of this study was to highlight obstacles that Saudi teachers may face while applying CLT. In order to obtain teachers' responses, I constructed three focus groups of four teachers in each. On the day after doing the survey, the first focus groups members who were working in the private school agreed to meet in the school cafeteria, while the other two interviews whose informants were working in the public schools met in the teachers' rooms. First of all, I familiarized the teachers with the purpose and the nature of the focus group and informed them that the discussion would be an informal, but productive, chat about the topic. The interviews lasted for nearly 40 minutes each. Similarly the other group discussions were conducted in the next two days. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted in a systematic way to explore vital issues relevant to the topic (see appendix B). Teachers were enthusiastic and raised pivotal concerns. The discussions were mainly conducted in English; however, I gave the teachers the choice to use their preferable medium to express their views. Most teachers opted to choose English at first; however, the discussions actually turned out to be in Arabic as some teachers felt more comfortable in discussing their opinions in Arabic. Some teachers refused to be audio-taped for traditional reasons. Thus, I respected their desire and took some notes. Both the surveys and the focus group interviews provided a wealth of data to be analyzed. The findings from the data analysis are the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Two sources of data were used to examine Saudi teachers' perceptions to the feasibility of CLT in the Saudi context. The first source of data comprised a questionnaire I carried out at the beginning of the study with Saudi teachers. The second source of data included focus group interviews that I conducted with teachers to obtain more descriptive information. Data from these sources is categorized and analyzed in this chapter.

Survey Analysis

The questionnaire items which aim to investigate teachers' actual practices in language classrooms were divided into six areas. Responses were subsequently divided according to these categories:

1.   Responses to statements 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 were classified under the category "The importance of grammar in language class." From responses to these items, I was able to determine the status of grammar in teachers' perceptions, the amount of grammar teachers teach, the hierarchy of other language skills in the English lesson.

2.   Responses to statements 6, 7, 8, and 9 were classified under the category "Error treatment." Replies to these statements allowed me to know teachers' perceptions about students' errors, the way they respond to students' errors, and how much time teachers spend in correcting students' error.

3.   Responses to statements 10, 11, 12, and 13 were under the title "Teachers' role" and let me understand perceived role of the teacher, the degree of freedom they have, and what they actually do in their classes.

4.   Responses to statements 14, 15, 16, and 17 were classified under the category "Students' role." The responses to these statements helped me to identify the conventional role of students in the class, the level of students' autonomy, and to what extent they are responsible for their learning.

5. Responses to statements 18, 19, 20, and 21 were classified under the class "Group work implementation." They reflected teachers' beliefs regarding the usefulness of group work versus whole class discussion.

6. Responses to statements 22, 23, 24, and 25 were under the class "Traditional testing/Portfolio assessment" Data from these statements helped me to understand the successfulness of traditional exams, teachers' background knowledge regarding portfolio assessment, and whether portfolio assessment is applicable in this context.

In terms of underlying methodological principles, the research presented here reflects a preference for descriptive statistics and a belief in the value of individuals' perception on the phenomenon under study. Thus, I have described the findings in terms of number/percentage of various responses in tables. Besides, I did not edit teachers' quotes in order to add to the credibility of the study. "Strongly agree" and "agree" were joined while interpreting the data. Similarly "Strongly disagree" and "disagree" were gathered. All the responses were then divided into the previous six categories.

The Status of Grammar in Language Class

In an attempt to test the importance of grammar in a language class, five statements were devoted to examine this issue. The first statement addressed the teachers' views of grammar teaching. Statement number one said, "I believe that grammar is the most important component of language that I want my students to master." In responding to this statement, 76 participants favored the statement, while 24 did not. The result reveals that the majority of teachers viewed grammar as an integral component of language, and thus they wanted their students to learn the grammatical structures of the language. In replying to the second item, which is "While teaching, I concentrate on grammar, vocabulary, reading, and writing more than speaking and listening since theses are the areas which show up in the students' final exams," 62 responses were positive, and 38 were negative. One teacher who showed agreement with the statement commented in the space provided after the statement, "We should focus on all language areas although this is not always the case in reality, grammar takes much more time and

27

effort to explain." Five other teachers added that they are restricted by the textbook and they do not have much choice. As one of them put it, "When it is a grammar lesson, I have to teach grammar, and when the lesson is mainly about speaking I have to teach speaking, the lesson content is prescribed in the teacher's book." The third statement, which states that "it is important for students to focus on what they are trying to say and not how to say it," aimed to measure teachers' preference for fluency over accuracy. This statement showed that 50 participants concurred with the statement, 44 rejected it, and 6 teachers chose "uncertain". One of the 44 participants wrote, "I want my students to say grammatically correct sentence and I don't want them to speak the language of the street."

Statement number four was utilized to see how much of the class time is devoted to speaking and listening. Replies to "In my class, I focus on speaking and listening more than grammar and vocabulary" revealed that most of the teachers expressed their disagreement. 72 respondents chose disagree and only 28 agreed. Finally, the last statement under this category was "Students need to master the grammatical rules of English in order to become fluent in language." This statement aimed to figure out teachers' understanding regarding the relationship between mastering the grammatical structures and the learners' fluency level. Again the findings were approximately split into two classes. 54 teachers agreed with statement while 42 disagreed. Two more subjects selected uncertain. Those who agreed perceived a direct relation between fluency and form, whereas those who disagreed did not see such relation. One secondary level teacher who agreed with the statement commented by saying, "Grammar is everywhere, how can students speak a meaningful utterance without knowing the word order, for example?"

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	U
1. I believe that grammar is the most important component I want my students to master	20	56	22	2	0
2. While teaching, I concentrate on grammar, vocabulary, reading, and writing more than speaking and listening since these are the areas	16	46	21	17	0

28

which show up in students' final exams.					
3. It is important for students to focus on what they are trying to say and not how to say it.	26	24	34	10	6
4. In my class, I focus on speaking and listening more than grammar and vocabulary.	12	16	58	14	0
5. Students need to master the grammatical rules of English in order to become fluent in the language.	12	42	26	16	4

Table1. The Status of Grammar in Language Class

Error Treatment

In exploring teachers' attitudes relevant to error correction, statements number six, seven, eight, and nine discussed teachers' policy of dealing with errors. In responding to statement number six, which was "Generally, teacher must correct all students' grammatical errors in speaking and writing so that errors do not become a habit," 62 participants agreed that errors must be immediately corrected in order to prevent bad habit formation, while the other 38 participants disagreed. Four of those who agreed wrote that teachers should correct errors in students' writing only. In the terms of one of them, "Students might go back to their note and learn from their errors, however students may feel embarrassed if the teacher correct their speaking." The next statement reversed the meaning in order to dig deeper into teachers' perception of the notion of error correction. This statement said, "Since errors are a normal part of the learning, much correction is wasteful of time." In responding to this statement, 56 teachers answered negatively, 40 teachers agreed with the statement, while 4 teachers circled uncertain. Six of those who disagreed with the sentence commented that correcting students' errors, as one of them put it, "is not a wasteful of time, students learn from their mistakes." Teachers' responses indicated that most of them favored immediate correction of errors and believed in its usefulness.

Statement number eight was utilized in order to identify the type of errors teachers correct. This statement, which stated, "Teachers' correction must focus on the

29

appropriateness (meaning) and not the grammatical structure of students' writing," received 54 agreements and 46 disagreements. It is interesting that when the statement was reworded concerning speaking in item number nine, which stated "When students make oral errors, it is best to ignore them, as long as I can understand what they are trying to say," the number of disagreements decreased slightly (38), and the number of agreement (56) increased slightly, while 6 teachers were uncertain. This could indicate that most of the participants prioritized correcting written mistakes while they are more lenient in correcting oral errors.

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	U
6. Generally, teachers must correct all students' errors in speaking and writing so that errors do not become a habit.	34	28	26	12	0
7. Since errors are a normal part of learning, much correction is wasteful of time.	4	36	40	16	4
8. Teachers' correction of errors must focus on the appropriateness (meaning) and not the grammatical structure of students' writings	6	48	34	12	0
9. When students make oral errors, it is best to ignore them, as long as I can understand what they are trying to say.	20	36	36	2	6

Table 2. Error Treatment

Teacher's Role

Items 10, 11, 12, and 13 were designed to identify teachers' perceptions of their major roles in language classes. Responses to statement 10, which was about viewing teachers' role as a knowledge transmitter, were significant. Item 10 states, "I always devote considerable time giving explanation and examples as I believe that the teacher's main role is to impart knowledge." 72 participants favored spending most of the class time giving explanation, 24 participants disagreed with the statement, and 4 participants showed their uncertainties. Surprisingly, in replying to statement number 11, "I believe that reducing my talking is the first step toward communicative classroom," 86 of the

participant concurred with the statement, 10 participants selected disagree, and 4 chose uncertain. Although 10 and 11 were two apparently opposing statements, they received nearly similar responses. In other words, a high number of participants agreed with both statements. This could be because of participants' misunderstandings of what the two statements imply. Another interpretation could be participants were responding while having in mind different teaching contexts in which both teacher-centered and learner-centered practices have an important role to play.

Other responses of note on the same issue were clearly shown in item 12, "I believe in what Hafez Ibrahim said "Pay due respect to the teacher. He/She is nearly a prophet." So, I do control my class and don't allow students to negotiate things like quiz times or homework deadline with me." A total of 78 participants disagreed with the statement, while only 16 teachers agreed, and 6 teachers reflected their uncertainties. This finding was surprising to me as we, Muslims, are driven from a background that fully respects the instructor. However, one of the participants explained, "Showing respect to the teacher does not mean being unable to express one's needs and opinions. Reasonable negotiation is allowed." Finally, responses to item 13 indicated that 94 teachers affirmed that teachers need to incorporate supplementary materials to cater to students' needs and interest, while only 6 teachers disagreed. This clearly signals that most teachers see the necessity of integrating extra materials that motivate and entertain students. However, one teacher commented, "I usually select several activities from some international book such as Wow, Headway, or Interchange." This means that some teachers draw on commercial books as supplementary materials rather than using materials they must create themselves.

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	U
10. I always devote considerable time giving explanation and examples as I believe that the teacher's main role is to impart knowledge.	6	66	10	14	4
11. I believe that reducing my talk is the first step toward communicative class.	48	38	6	4	4
12. I believe in what Hafez Ibrahim said, "Pay due respect to the teacher. He/She is nearly a prophet. So, I do control	2	14	42	36	6

my class and do not allow students to negotiate things like quizzes times or homework deadlines with me.					
13. A text book alone is not able to cater for all the needs and the interests of students. The teacher must supplement it with other materials such as magazines, news papers, or advertisements.	58	36	2	4	0

Table 3 "Teacher's Role"

Students' Role

In this section, the items were designed to identify how teachers perceive students' roles in language classrooms. Four statements were devoted for this purpose. Statement 14 stated, "In my typical class, students spend long time negotiating controversial topic, expressing their views about current events, and discussing some cultural issues." Around 70 teachers agreed to the statement, although some of them noted that they are restricted by the syllabus and the nature of the topic. Only 24 teachers disagreed. One of those who disagreed stated that her students are young and they cannot sustain a long conversation using English. Six teachers were uncertain. Statement 15 measured the degree of responsibility students have towards their learning. It stated, "I always allow my students to decide the topics they want to learn about and the activities they prefer." Responses to this statement were sharply split. 52 participants were with the statements, 44 were against it, and four teachers were uncertain. Similarly, in measuring the degree of students' autonomies, 50 respondents agreed with the statement "Since learners come to the language class with little background of the language, she is unable to suggest what the content of the lesson should be or what activities are useful for her." However, 40 respondents disagreed, while 10 of them were uncertain. This data was an indicator that teachers' views were divided. Six of the teachers who disagreed expressed that they themselves are restricted to the syllabus. Subsequently, they cannot give the freedom to their students to choose the topics or the activities they like. Again, it is apparent that the notion of rigid adherence to the syllabus may make language lessons, for some teachers, more text-driven.

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	U
14. In my typical class, students spend long time negotiating controversial topics, expressing their views about current events, and discussing some cultural issues.	18	52	28	0	1
15. I always allow my students to decide the topics they want to learn about and the activities they prefer.	12	40	42	2	4
16. It is impossible in a large class of students to organize my teaching so as to suit the needs and interests of all learners.	22	62	14	0	2
17. Since the learner comes to the language class with little of the language, she is unable to suggest what the content of the lesson should be or what activities are useful for her.	8	42	38	2	10

Table 4 "Students' Role"

Group Work

Four statements in table five were constructed to measure teachers' attitude regarding group work and to what extent it is useful and practical in Saudi classes. Replies to statement 18, which stated "Group work allows students to discus topics for themselves and thus have some measure of control over their learning. It is therefore a valuable technique," showed that the majority of the respondents favored the use of group work and viewed it as a valuable technique. 96 of them agreed to the statement, while only four teachers disagreed. Statement 19 and 21 discussed some of the advantages of group work implementation. Statement 19, which said, "Group work takes too long to organize and wastes a lot of valuable teaching time," got 88 disagreements and 12 agreements. In the same vein, item 21, which discussed teacher's inability to monitor all students' performance while they are working in groups, received 74 disagreements, 22 agreements, and four uncertainties. The teachers' replies affirmed that most of them prefer group work although it may need time and effort. One teacher commented, "Yes! Although it needs more time to prepare, it is useful especially for weak students—they can work with better students while doing certain activities and feel better when doing tasks successfully."

It is also interesting that one teacher, who was involved in the group discussion later said,

Group work is about sharing and exchanging experiences. It is not the final product, the process of sharing class mates while doing certain tasks is the most important. I am completely with it especially our Islam induces us to share others and help each other. Then, welcome to Communicative Language Teaching if it supports our values.

However, two teachers in the survey who were against group work use wrote that large classes act as an obstacle for them although they like the idea of letting students work in groups. Item 20 aimed to detect teachers' attitudes regarding traditional instruction which mainly focuses on one way transmition of information from the teacher to students rather than utilizing group work as a major teaching tool. 70 teachers indicated that group work cannot replace formal instruction, 18 agreed that group work can replace formal teaching, while 12 teachers were probably not sure whether group work can substitute formal teaching or not. Teachers' responses to this statement tallies with their positions in statement number 10 which said that the teacher's main role is to explain and give information. Thus, it seems that most of the teachers could not detach themselves from the "knowledge holder" identity.

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	U
18. Group work allows students to discuss topics for themselves and thus have some measure of control over their learning. It is therefore a valuable technique.	46	50	4	0	0
19. Group work activities take too long to organize and wastes a lot of valuable teaching time.	6	6	66	22	0
20. 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 formal instruction by a competent teacher.	20	50	14	4	12
21. Group work activities have little use since it is very difficult for the teacher to monitor students' performance.	6	16	64	10	4

Table 5. Group Work

Testing

      The last four items in the survey dealt with the type of tests teachers usually use to assess their students' achievements. In responding to statement 22, which stated, "I periodically use traditional quizzes to assess my students' progress" 84 participants reflected their agreement, 14 disagreed, and 2 teachers were uncertain. One of the participants who agreed to the statement added, "Students should always be tested in order to study. If they don't have weekly quizzes they will not memorize." Replies to the next statement which was, "I believe that tests do not reflect students' actual levels," was clearly opposite to the previous one. 79 teachers believed that tests do not measure students' real levels, while 21 teachers saw tests as a valid way of assessing students' proficiencies. Surprisingly, although the majority of these teachers acknowledged tests' deficiencies in evaluating students' performance, they continue using tests as a major tool of assessment.

      Two statements aimed to examine teachers' knowledge regarding portfolio assessment and to what extent they find it practical. Responses to statement 24, which was "I use portfolio as an alternative assessment," indicated that 78 participants were uncertain, 14 teachers agreed to the statement, and eight of them were against the use of portfolios as an alternative assessment. In the same vein, in response to item 25, "I find portfolio impractical and I do not consider it as a valid tool of assessment," 73 teachers were uncertain, 21 agreed with the statement, while six disagreed. The high percentage of uncertainty may be because many teachers were unfamiliar with the term "portfolio," how it is used, or for what purposes. Eight teachers underlined the word "portfolio," three teachers drew a question mark beside it, and one teacher underlined it and wrote "What is this?" What is more, even eight of those who stated that they used portfolio as an alternative assessment, agreed to the statement that indicated that portfolio is impractical and could not be considered as a valid way of assessment. This contradiction in teachers' responses indicates their misunderstanding. Besides, interview participants asserted that traditional tests are officially considered the only formal way of assessment, whereas portfolio could not replace pencil and paper tests in any way.

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	U
22. I periodically use traditional quizzes to asses my	16	68	8	6	2

students' progress.					
23. I believe that tests do not reflect students' actual level.	19	60	15	6	0
24. I use portfolio as an alternative assessment.	4	10	8	0	78
25. I find portfolio impractical and I do not consider it as valid tool for assessment.	8	13	6	0	73

Table 6. Testing

Open-ended Questions

Further explanatory findings were obtained by the open-ended questions. Because only 37 participants answered this part, data will be presented in percentages. The 37 teachers constitute 100% of the research subjects for this discussion. 67% replied to my question, "What teaching method do you use in your class?" Most of the responses indicated that participants were unclear about what the term "method" particularly refers to, or that they were unable to articulate a certain method that features their teaching. For example, as one of the teachers put it, "I use an array of methods, for example a board, colorful markers, posters, and the textbook." Another respondent said, "I use pictures, data show, working sheets, and group work and pair work." A further reply was "listening, reading, and writing. Of course I use all of these in my class."

The second open-ended question targeted teachers' knowledge of CLT and whether they use it in their classes. When asked, "Have you heard about communicative language teaching (CLT)? What do you know about it?" answers of the 37 teachers fell into three categories. The first group of teachers expressed their lack of knowledge about CLT. 25% of the teachers revealed that that they do not know what principles CLT holds. One of them wrote, "I have never heard about it, but I think it focuses on communication." The second group of teachers, 16% of the teachers, revealed some understanding of the method. They asserted that it is about giving students the chance to discuss topics as the major theme of CLT. One of them said, "Yes, I have heard about it. It focuses on talking and conversation." Another teacher added, "It lets students spend most of the class time in negotiation and expressing themselves." Another teacher explained, "I think it is about teaching students how to use real English while discussing

36

things with non-Arabs." The last category, which was the majority, 59% of the teachers, indicated that CLT means group work. One of them stated, "It is group work. Students sit in rings to do certain exercises under the supervision of the teacher." Another participant wrote, "It is like group work. Students are divided into groups to increase their interaction while doing some activities."

The last question asked teachers if they currently use CLT, and it required them to mention some challenges that could impede CLT adoption. In answering "Have you tried CLT? Why or Why not?" 58% of teachers expressed the inapplicability of CLT in their teaching contexts. Two of them simply said, "No." Another teacher illustrated, "I use it every now and then because the book does not give you the chance to try new things." Similarly, another teacher pointed out, "I can't. I have to stick to the book." Another teacher gave further explanation, "I did not. I have to focus on reading more than speaking since the book requires this." One more interesting answer by one of the teachers was, "No, I did not know about it, but I probably use it one day in the future." A further reason emerged when one of the teachers said, "I tried to use it, but my students are very weak and they do not like English." 42% of the teachers claimed that they have tried CLT. Many teachers in this group wrote "yes" without giving further interpretation. However, four of them gave some comments. For example, one pointed out, "Yes, I tried it. It is very useful, interesting, and successful." Another teacher added, "Although it needs lots of effort from the teacher side, it is useful because students learn the language to use it in daily life."

<div align="center">Focus Group Interviews</div>

Three different groups contributed to this study. Despite my effort to obtain a range of perspectives, the findings based on data collected from these three groups cannot be generalized to the teaching force in Saudi Arabia as the research sample, only 12 teachers, was small. However, the information gleaned from these interviews helped to add to the thick description of this qualitative study. Group members were working in both private and public schools, teaching intermediate and secondary levels, and had a diverse range of experiences. In the three interviews, I started by introducing myself to the participants and thanking them for agreeing to be a part of the study. Then I told them that we would have a friendly and informal chat. I also informed them that thestudy was

part of a degree requirement and it had nothing to do with their annual evaluation. I also motivated them by telling them that I wanted to learn from them, and by their assistance, they would contribute to the sum of knowledge. Then I clarified the goal of the study, explained some major principles of Communicative Language Teaching in terms of grammar teaching, error correction, teacher's and students' roles, and testing. Then I highlighted some principal obstacles that could hinder teachers in similar contexts such as Japan and China from applying this method and asked them which of these impediments could be found in the Saudi context. Then, I ended up the conversations by telling teachers that the discussions were interesting and informative. I told them that I learned valuable information and I once again expressed my gratitude for their assistance. What follows is the description of the three groups of participants in turn together with the data collection and analysis procedures used with each.

Group One: Teachers from the private school

The first group of interviewees consisted of four teachers who worked in a private school. Two teachers were teaching, at the time of the study, in the mid-level, while the other two were teaching secondary students. One of the mid-level teachers had worked for three years, while the other one had about five years experience. One of the high school teachers, the master teacher of English in the school, had 18 years of experience, whereas the other one had worked for eight years. In answering my first question, "What methods are you using now?" the head teacher replied, "I think we don't follow a particular method. We use a variety of methods according to the nature of the topic." Probing deeper to understand what she meant by "variety of methods," I told her, "By variety of methods, you mean the Grammar-Translation Method, the Audio-Lingual Method, Total Physical Response …and the like!" She answered, "No, I mean giving explanation, drilling, role-play, group work, and pair work." The other three teachers concurred that they use similar methods of teaching. Then, I moved to the next question, "Have you heard about Communicative Language Teaching?" Again the head teacher said, "Yes, I guess it is about teaching through communication!" I nodded in agreement and I directed my question to the whole group, "What do you know about it?" The other secondary teacher answered, "We know that it is the method of the moment, but we don't have enough information about it."

I then discussed some fundamental issues regarding CLT and asked them to what extent they find this method applicable in Saudi Arabia. First, one of the mid-level teachers conceded that she currently uses some aspects of this method in her teaching. She said, "We always put our students in groups, we encourage them to talk, and I don't threaten my students." The head teacher cut in to add, "I am with the communicative teaching as it encourages students to be more involved; however, I cannot fully follow it. I have to spend around 40% of the class time in teaching grammar to keep up with the textbook." She continued, "We teachers have a misconception that grammar teaching is what distinguishes good teachers from bad ones. I think that's why we work on our grammar as well as our students'." Talking about accuracy and fluency, the group reached a consensus that, as one of the intermediate teachers who was teaching for three years put it, "I like my students to be accurate and I find it necessary to correct their grammatical errors while writing; however, in speaking I leave room for making oral errors in order not to embarrass them in front of their classmates." Talking about students' autonomy in selecting their preferred topics, teachers emphasized they themselves do not have the freedom to select materials. They illustrated that they are too restricted by the textbooks; however, they can incorporate additional materials that are relevant to the existing topics. Teachers concurred that they could involve students in materials selection in the future, provided that students hand it to the teacher beforehand in order to give a chance for the teacher to check its appropriateness culturally and to have enough background about it.

Upon discussing some challenges that other EFL teachers face in trying to adopt CLT and asking whether these difficulties are relevant to Saudi Arabia, the teachers agreed that teachers' inadequate speaking level is a prime obstacle in applying this method; however, none of them felt that they have this problem. All of the teachers reached a consensus that having insufficient sociolinguistic competence could, to a certain extent, hinder the use of CLT. The head teacher pointed out, "We may not have enough cultural background about the target language. Besides, my students could have greater knowledge about English culture due to their contact with native speakers while traveling. However, I do not mind telling students that I learn from them." A mid level teacher added, "I always tell my students that since I am not a native speaker of English, I

cannot capture every dimension of the language. Yet, learning is an ongoing process and it is interesting to learn from them." Regarding students' passive style of learning, all teachers confirmed that this is another challenge. They explained that their students are completely dependent. They always require their teachers to explain everything in the class, provide more examples, and identify the issues that may come in the exams. A secondary level teacher stated, "After all, we have to satisfy our students' needs and encourage them to study."

When I asked teachers if teaching communicatively allows students to perform well in their formal exams, all teachers answered negatively. They indicated that formal exams are grammar-based. Asking if teachers have certain tools of assessment to measure students' level of communicative competence, they noted that they have a prescribed rubric to continuously assess students' ability to converse during class time. However, it is deficient because it mostly measures students' abilities to read and not to converse. Besides, it determines a relatively low percentage of students' final grades. Thus, the two high school teachers affirmed that since their students need to obtain high grades in order to be accepted in university, in the terms of one of them, "it is logical for both students and a teacher to focus on grammar, writing, and reading since they constitute a high ratio of students' final grades." Finally, teachers in this school said, upon asking them if large class sizes could be an obstacle that they do not have large classes and the maximum number of students in a class is around 20 students.

Group Two: Teachers from the First Public School (Mid-level)

The second group of teachers revealed further insight into the topic being examined. Group members were all mid-level English teachers. Their experiences ranged from seven to 14 years. The interview was conducted mainly in Arabic at the teachers' request. While explaining some basic components of CLT, the participants showed some rejection to it. For example, the teachers stated that they were against not immediately correcting students' grammatical errors while speaking for many reasons. First, as indicated by one of them, "I cannot ignore students' errors because when the English supervisor attends my class, she will blame me for not correcting students' errors." Another teacher who has been teaching for 8 years continued, "When students speak focusing on meaning without paying attention to the structures of their utterances, other

40

students in the class may perceive these errors as correct structures and incorporate them into their language system. In other words, students learn from each other." A further explanation by the third member was, "I am completely with teaching grammar explicitly and correcting students' grammatical errors as soon as they are committed while both speaking and writing because I believe that each person learns from his/her mistakes." The fourth participant provided an example, "Let's take Wed, one of my students, as an example. She is very fluent, able to communicate very well, and convey her message successfully, yet she usually obtains lower grades in exams compared to her collogues due to grammatical and spelling mistakes."

Talking about giving students a degree of autonomy and responsibility to decide for their learning, teachers expressed that they are required to adhere to a syllabus. Consequently, it is difficult to allow students to decide their topics. One of them said, "We are under pressure. We have certain textbooks to follow and we do not want to add to our loads." One teacher made the point, "I am with the communicative approach only for the beginning grades. Once students become fluent, attention should be directed to developing students' accuracy." Asking teachers if they want to teach using the communicative approach, they replied that although it contradicted some of their beliefs they saw it as useful at least because it focuses on the learners' interests and needs.

Addressing some of the difficulties that could face them if they start using it, all of the teachers emphasized that teachers' weak linguistic and cultural competence, following mandated textbooks, and grammar-based examinations are the greatest impediments. The participants stated that teaching communicatively could embarrass them while teaching because they may, for example, stumble in finding suitable vocabulary while freely discussing some issues without previous preparation. They might also lose face when being asked about cultural issues they lack sufficient knowledge about. Besides, as aforementioned, the textbook which does not encourage teaching communicatively is another challenge. Furthermore, this group of teachers also asserted that students need to be taught in a traditional way to fulfill the test demands.

Group Three: Teachers from the Second Public School (Secondary Level)

Data obtained from this group reflected a degree of understanding of the communicative approach and a deep belief in the importance of using language rather

than just learning about it, yet teachers expressed their sincere concerns. Thus, I directly elicited what deters them from implementing CLT. The first problem that stops teachers from using CLT, as highlighted by them, was the textbooks. One the teachers said, "Although I am trying to adapt the lesson to be, as much as I can, more communicative, the topics and the activities are irrelevant to students' real lives, outdated, and mismatch students' needs and interests." Additionally, teachers find it very difficult to constantly introduce additional materials. One of the teachers indicated, "We are under pressure. We have to cover the syllabus in a certain time. Even when I introduce some interesting materials, the supervisor warns me that I am behind." When asked if students' levels have any effect, another teacher replied, "Students' levels are very low. In trying this method, only two or three pupils would participate, while the others, in a class of say, 30 students, will remain silent." Moreover, she added, "It is very difficult to convince students to change their understanding of how teaching and learning should be. In other words, it is very hard for these students who are used to being taught for 10-12 years traditionally to forsake the familiar way of teaching and learning."

While discussing the appropriateness of grammar-based exams in measuring students' communicative competence, one of the teachers inquired about the term "portfolio" in the questionnaire. I then provided a brief explanation about what a portfolio is, how it is used, and for what purposes. Teachers concurred that although pencil and paper tests are inadequate tools for measuring students' progress, portfolios could not be used as an alternative for these traditional tests which are officially required. After hearing the brief background about the nature of portfolio assessment, teachers noted its impracticality in their setting. For example, one teacher stated, "Portfolios could only be used as documents for students to trace their progress and to celebrate their success, but they could not be used for assessment." In asking about class size and if they saw it as a hindrance in applying the communicative way of teaching, this group of teachers affirmed that the number of students in each class is about 45 students. Therefore, they indicated that they find difficulties in implementing group work, controlling students' behaviors, and evaluating students' performances. One of the teachers said, "When students work in groups, the class becomes very noisy. It is very difficult to make sure that students are following. There is not even enough space for the teacher to move

around." Teachers in this group expressed their concerns as one of them said, "We feel that we have very much to give, lots of great ideas, yet in this atmosphere we cannot execute any." Another teacher continued, "It is always my concern as well as my students'. When can we get out of the neck of the bottle and help students to cope with the societal and the global demands?"

Findings

On the basis of data collected from 100 teachers in a range of contexts, the findings from the data analysis at the two stages of the study enabled me to answer my research questions. The first phase of the study which involved collecting quantitative data via a questionnaire dealt with my initial inquiry: What are teachers' actual practices in language classrooms regarding certain aspects of the communicative teaching methods: the importance of grammar, error correction, teacher's role, students' role, group work, and testing? Results obtained from the quantitative data, the initial stage of the study, were leading-up to my essential research question: Will teachers face challenges in adopting CLT? If so, what are the major difficulties that teachers in Saudi Arabia believe they will encounter in implementing CLT? To answer this question, group interviews were conducted to provide descriptive qualitative data.

Answering Question One: Teachers' Current Practices in Language Classrooms

Data collected from the surveys concerns teachers' current practices in language classrooms. Responses to the surveys showed that teachers' practices could be viewed along a continuum where communicative teaching and traditional methods of teaching are located at opposite ends. Although none of the teachers rigidly adhered to either one of these ends, they reported a range of practices that reflected using a combination of methods while teaching. In other words, these Saudi teachers exhibited features of both traditional and communicative approaches in their classrooms, leaning more towards the traditional methods of teaching.

In examining the status of grammar in language classes, the majority of the teachers viewed grammar as an integral part of language classes. That is, data collected from both the surveys and the interviews confirmed that teachers spend considerable class time, around 40%, in teaching grammar and other skills such as writing and reading. Both questionnaire respondents and interviewees found it logical to spend more time on

teaching these skills at the expense of speaking and listening since they constitute the majority of students' final grades. Concerning the notion of developing students' fluency over accuracy, research subjects, both survey and interview participants, showed clear divergence. Although some teachers expressed the necessity of developing students' fluency over accuracy, others viewed this assumption as inadequate. This discrepancy in teachers' opinions could be because the former type of teachers were more in favor to the communicative dimension of language teaching, while the latter type of teachers opted to the traditional methods of teaching.

In treating students' errors, teachers revealed different policies. The data collected from the questionnaire revealed that teachers' opinions regarding this issue were divided. However, a higher number of teachers preferred correcting students' errors as soon as they occur. The discussion with some group members attributed this behavior to the teachers' beliefs that students, first, can learn from their mistakes if they notice them. Second, errors could transfer among students if they are not corrected immediately. Third, teachers reflected their concerns that, while being observed by supervisors, they might be criticized if they overlook students' errors. In distinguishing between written and spoken errors, teachers' attitudes in the survey were not conclusive. The dilemma of teachers' opinions was resolved by asking for further interpretation in the interviews. Data collected from the interviews asserted that although oral mistakes could be tolerated, as some teachers reported, all written mistakes should be highlighted by the teacher. This could be because, as stated by some teachers, that consistent correction of students' oral errors could inhibit students and discourage them from speaking. However, in correcting students' written errors, students can learn from them if they revisit them later.

72% of the research subjects expressed their preferences for a teacher-centered class for many reasons. First, some teachers could be influenced by the traditional teaching methods or they could be affected by the way they have been taught. Second, as verified in interviews held with teachers, by transmitting information to students, teachers meet students' needs and try to cope with their passive learning style. Third, delivering teacher-fronted classes is a way, as some interviewees noted, to settle students down and to maintain discipline. Interestingly enough, although most of the teachers responded

positively to the statements that favored a teacher-centered class, they responded similarly to statements that favored a student-centered class. At this point, it is noticed that participants agreed with apparently two opposing statements. In other words, they prioritized teachers' excessive explanations in class, but at the same time they stated that they encourage students' talk, negotiation for meaning, and expressing opinions. The cause of these apparently inconsistent responses could be due to teachers' lack of awareness of the proper roles that both teachers and students should have. Another way to interpret this conflict could be teachers' understanding that both teacher-centered and student-centered practices have important roles to play in different context. The answer to why teachers favored both statements was partially resolved in interviews held with the teachers. The interviews enabled me to assess the depth of the teachers' knowledge and how they saw the two opposing practices fitting in their classroom routine. It turned out that although a few teachers were aware students must be fully engaged in language classroom, many teachers exhibited lack of understanding of how much talk should both teachers and students have in the class. What is more, many teachers felt that although giving students the opportunity to be the springboard of the discussing sounds motivating to many student, it could inevitably put teachers in trouble and make them lose control.

Nearly all teachers favored the implementation of group work. They saw it as useful and interesting. They also indicated that it is an effective technique because it involves students, gives them the opportunity to talk using English as a medium, and allows better students to help weaker ones in accomplishing language tasks. However, it is worth mentioning that despite admitting its effectiveness, 70% of the teachers viewed group work as an occasional activity to change the class routine and noted that it could never compensate for whole class instruction. Again the teachers' views could be due to teachers' beliefs of the value of teacher-centered class in which the teachers are supposed to stand in the front of the class and give elaborate explanation.

Regarding testing, 84% of the research sample affirmed that they use traditional tests periodically to assess students' performance. Almost all of the participants reported that pencil and paper tests are conventional ways to measure students' progress and to force them to memorize. However, 79% of teachers conceded that tests are not transparent to students' real levels. The contradiction between teachers' beliefs and their

actual practices was interpreted by some interview participants who illustrated that traditional tests are the sole official assessment in Saudi Arabia. Concurring with my expectation, a large majority of these Saudi teachers lacked knowledge of what a portfolio is. After a brief explanation provided to some interviewees, they asserted that it could not be used as an alternative to pencil and paper tests as it is not mandated officially.

Summary of Teachers' Practices

The study uncovered teachers' current practices in English classrooms by using the attitude scale. Teachers' responses showed their favorable and unfavorable attitudes towards both communicative teaching and traditional teaching method, opting more towards the traditional methods. In detecting the status of grammar in language classrooms, most of the teachers viewed grammar as an integral component of an English lesson. Thereby, many of them focus on it while teaching at the expense of other language skills like speaking and listening. Second, in treating students' errors, many of the teachers favored immediate error correction, particularly in students' written work, whereas students' oral errors could be ignored by some teachers. In addition, most of the teachers preferred delivering teacher-fronted classes, but at the same time they reported with some reservation that they encouraged student-centered classes. Group work was favored by almost all of the participants; however, they reported that it could not replace whole-class instruction. Finally, most of the teachers considered traditional tests as primary assessment tools to measure their students' achievements although they believed that they do not necessarily reflect students' actual levels. Responses to the attitude scale of the 100 teachers involved exhibited clear contradictions among teachers while responding to some statements. However, overall the data indicate that traditional approaches to teaching English is more common than more student-centered approaches such as CLT.

The attitude scale also revealed respondents' internal inconsistency when they ticked both positive and negative statements. For example, many teachers responded positively to statements that prioritized teacher-centered class as well as statements that focused on student-centered classes. Another example that showed internal inconsistency was in the open ended questions. Although many teachers indicated that they did not

know about CLT and other teachers reflected their limited understanding to CLT by saying it is all about group work, many of these teachers indicated that they use CLT in their classes. The internal inconsistency exhibited in the attitude scale could be attributed to inner confusion within many teachers about what constitute effective teaching as well as their lack of knowledge of CLT principles. The dilemma caused due to the discrepancy in teachers' opinions and inner inconsistency was partly resolved by teachers' group interviews. Though the sample of the interviewees was far less compared to that of the attitude scale, it helped to clarify teachers' views of how they viewed effective teaching practices.

Answering Question Two: Major Difficulties Hampering CLT Adoption

Moving to the second part of the study which investigated obstacles that teachers in Saudi Arabia might have encountered in applying CLT in their classrooms, I identified frequent comments in regard to these constraints and grouped them into three main categories: difficulties caused by the teacher, the students, and the education system.

By the Teachers

Most of the interview participants, like the teachers in Li's study in Korea in 1998, considered teachers' deficiencies in English language the major problem that could stop teachers from using CLT; however, they did not explicitly declare that they themselves have this problem. I observed weakness, for example, in speaking skills during interviews. Though teachers had the freedom to choose the preferable medium of discussion, some of them started the conversation in English and quickly converted to Arabic to provide clearer explanation. Another weakness in some teachers' language proficiencies was noticed upon filling out the questionnaire. The questionnaire asked respondents to select "uncertain" if they did not understand the statement. Consequently, some teachers who circled "uncertain" may have found the language level was high for them or they met some unfamiliar vocabulary. Another reason that prevents teachers from applying CLT is the weakness of sociolinguistic competence. All 12 interview participants considered their low knowledge of the target culture to be a problem if they use CLT. Some of the teachers reported that they do not mind telling their students that teachers are humans who are not supposed to know everything and be correct always. However, other teachers reported that being unable to answer all students' questions

makes them lose face and feel unconfident. Thus, all respondents preferred to have enough time to prepare for the material beforehand. A further significant reason that could hamper CLT use might be teachers' lack of sufficient knowledge of CLT principles. The interviews with the teachers revealed their lack of the theoretical underpinning of what the term method particularly implies. What is more, although many teachers were aware that CLT involves group work, successful implementation of CLT requires more than just knowing about group work.

 By the Students

The second type of difficulties relates to students. All interview participants, especially government schools teachers, reported that the students' low proficiencies could constrain them from adopting CLT. Teachers explained that the majority of the students' levels are very weak because they start learning English at the seventh grade, although as noted earlier since 2004 English was introduced at the fourth grade. Moreover, teachers reported, including private school teachers, that students' passive style of learning might be a primary constraint on their desire to use CLT. Some teachers asserted that students have become accustomed to listening to explanations, writing what is on the board, and studying for the exams. After spending many years in schools using this familiar way of learning, it is difficult to change students' way of thinking.

 By the Educational System

Most of the respondents referred to the textbooks they use as a great limitation. All teachers, including some teachers who filled in the questionnaire, stated that they are required to teach the prescribed textbooks that do not stress real communication. Some teachers reported that they barely incorporate additional interesting materials because they have to finish the syllabus in a limited amount of time. Second, in one of the government school groups, members reported that having large classes that contain around 45 students makes it impossible to use CLT. They explained that it would be very difficult to manage the class while using communicative activities. They also explained that group work would also be difficult. Third, grammar-based examinations are another important problem. Teachers reported that they have to teach students for the exams. In other words, they have to train their students to do well in the traditional exams.

Therefore, they found it logical to devote considerable time explaining grammar, reading, writing, and vocabulary and pay less attention to speaking and listening.

Summary of the Difficulties

The second part of the study was focused on the challenges teachers believed could deter them from applying CLT. The major challenges were grouped under three categories: by the teachers, by the students, and by the education system. Teachers considered low proficiency language level as a problem; however, they did not consider themselves as being deficient. In addition, they labeled having low sociolinguistic knowledge as a problem, yet some of them welcomed exchanging experiences and learning from students. Problems caused by students involved their weak proficiency levels and their passive style of learning. English was introduced formally in the seventh grade as a subject with four periods per weak each lasting for 35minuetes. What is more, students are accustomed to the traditional cultural way of teaching where the teachers are supposed to impart knowledge while students listen attentively to their teachers and take notes. The last category dealt with obstacles related to the educational system. Textbooks adherence was frequently ranked as a prime hindrance. Large classes were also mentioned by some government teachers who suffer from this problem. Finally, one repeated theme was the mismatch between the communicative classroom teaching and the traditional examination. The clash between the communicative teaching method which values spoken fluency and communication and the exams that assess accuracy in reading and grammar inevitably impede CLT adoption.

The answer to the major research question which is to what extent the implementation of CLT possible in the Saudi language classroom is not a simple one. Although many teachers have expressed their interests in CLT, their actual classroom practices exhibit features of both traditional and communicative teaching methods opting more to the traditional methods of teaching. Being introduced to communicative methodological principles, many teachers revealed a set of challenges that they might encounter while trying it. Unless these challenges are seriously addressed by the teachers with the administrative and the societal support, proper CLT application could be difficult.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

The present study explored the use of CLT in Saudi Arabia by investigating teachers' perceptions regarding it. To examine what teachers think and believe on the phenomenon under study, a questionnaire and focus group interviews were designed for this purpose. The study was implemented in two phases. First, it uncovered teachers' actual practices in language classrooms. Then, it highlighted some major constraints that teachers felt they might face in trying to use CLT.

This study is important because it was carried out in a context which has been mostly overlooked in the literature. The Saudi Arabian government aspires to enable Saudi citizens to keep up with societal and economic development and globalization. Consequently, it has recently paid considerable attention to the area of English teaching and curriculum innovation. Therefore, revealing teachers' understanding of such innovation and examining to what extent they are ready to apply it are crucial. Although the findings of this study could not be generalized to more than the sample it represents, it appeared that the data confirmed much of the literature written about CLT adoption in various EFL contexts. Thus, much of what teachers in Saudi Arabia reported about their classroom practices and about their constraints in trying to implement CLT is similar to many EFL countries.

The findings of the study revealed that teachers in Saudi Arabia utilize a combination of both traditional and communicative approaches in their classroom practices, with aspects of traditional teaching appearing more prevalent. The study also uncovered clear discrepancies among teachers' beliefs and practices as well as intrapersonal confusions and inconsistency within a teacher. This could be attributed to teachers' fragmented and incomplete training in effective language teaching and learning practices. The second phase in the study showed some difficulties that teachers expected to encounter in an attempt to use CLT. The difficulties were subsumed under three categories: by teachers, by students, and by the educational system. In general, the study suggested that for the adoption of CLT to be successful, the whole approach of education needs to be modified by teachers, students, and the educational system.

Implications

In any effort to improve language teaching and learning, teachers are central in achieving this aim. In other words, the way teachers understand and use the innovation determines its success. Therefore, for the success of the communicative approach in the Saudi context, educators including teachers, supervisors, administrators, and curriculum designers must give attention to the following three areas: need for training, reorientation of administrators, students, and parents, and adapting CLT rather than adopting it.

Need for Training:

Researchers assert that training courses are powerful for teachers' practices and beliefs and for giving teachers confidence with communicative teaching principles. Teachers in Saudi Arabia lack formal and systematic training. The focus of the training courses should be, first, the teachers' beliefs. Teachers need to articulate their beliefs, reveal the contradictions in their beliefs, and thus realize the areas that need further clarification and support. Li (1998) makes the point, "If CLT is to be implemented in a previously traditional classroom, teachers, students, parents, administrators and other stakeholders must shift their conceptions of what constitute good English teaching" (p. 696). That is, Saudi teachers need to understand that English is not merely a subject matter that students have to study and memorize in order to pass exams. Rather, they have to realize that language use is the main goal of teaching a language, and in turn their teaching practices have to be modified to meet this goal.

In addition, teachers in Saudi Arabia need to learn about the methodological principles that CLT holds and various teaching methodologies in general. Although it is a good start that most of the teachers were interested in group work and defined it as a major feature of CLT, they need to know that CLT is more than just implementing group work. What is more, teachers need to be informed of the limitation of text-centered and grammar-centered practices. In order for such reform to take place, Ghahin and Myhill (2001), Heip (2005), and Karavas-Koukas (1996) assert teachers need to know some theoretical underpinnings relating to CLT principles, learners' communicative competence, theories of first and second language acquisitions, learning strategies, learning styles, and teaching methodologies. For this to be obtained, reading relevant literature and attending in-service training courses and workshops that educate teachers

and thus alter their beliefs are imperative (Gahin & Myhill, 2001; Karavas-Doukas, 1996; and Li, 1998).

 Reorienting Administrators, Students, and Parents

Teaching practices cannot be adjusted by teachers alone. Teachers must have the administrative support to make such reform. That is, if teaching performance is evaluated by administrators based on teachers' ability to speak English, explain linguistic points, maintain discipline in the classroom, and use the blackboard, administrators need also to be oriented. In other words, administrators also need to be informed with what constitute effective teaching and learning. What is more, teachers with the administrators' assistance should educate parents that teachers' evaluations should be based on effective implementation of communicative teaching. Students who will be introduced to CLT in class also need help in adjusting. That is, in introducing CLT to students who are used to studying English in a traditional way, teachers may face some reservations. Thus, teachers need to educate their students to basic goals of language learning as well as students' role and teachers' role in the class (Decker, 2004; Li, 1998).

Adapting Rather than Adopting CLT

Hiep (2005) asserts that for CLT implementation to be successful, EFL teachers need to develop their definition of CLT that suits their own context. That is, he explains that the western version of CLT carries certain expectations and assumptions about the goals and strategies of English teaching and teachers' and students' behaviors and status. Therefore, EFL teachers should select and adapt aspects of CLT that fit the local context. Thus, Saudi teachers need to develop their version of CLT that is most adequate to the Saudi situation but still focus on teaching language skills in a more communicative way. The adaptation involves teaching reading, writing, speaking, listening, and grammar more communicatively as well as using suitable instruments to evaluate students' progress.

 Reading

Because one of the main purposes of teaching English in Saudi Arabia is to allow students to be able to read some scientific, medical, and technical documents written in English and translate them to Arabic, teachers should continue focusing on developing students' reading skills. However, Li (1998) suggests, "Instead of spending much precious time on intensive reading and grammatical analysis, teachers might introduce

some ideas from CLT, such as extensive reading and reading for meaning" (p. 697). The focus can still be on materials needed for exam and university expectations but less on translation.

Speaking and Listening

Although an English class must include all four skills, teachers need to pay more attention to listening and speaking skills. Teachers in Saudi Arabia must be aware that the need for fluent people who can communicate orally in English is increasing as a result of globalization and international trade. Therefore, speaking and listening activities must be put forth in coping with the societal demands. Hiep (2005) explains that conducting a communicative class does not entail imposing the Western communicative style. Thus, Saudi teachers and students have the choice to select the most suitable technique that triggers real communication and fits the students' discourse style. For example, a teacher can allow students to voice their opinions either through small group discussion or whole class discussion, or a combination of both depending on students' preference.

Grammar

Saudi teachers should change their perception about the role of grammar in language class. They should not prioritize grammar-based activities and consider mastery of form as their primary goal. Teachers must bear in mind that the purpose of teaching grammar is to help students to be better communicators and not making it the end of their teaching. This does not mean to exclude the teaching of grammar, but rather teachers must use grammar-consciousness- raising tasks to raise students' awareness to the rules that will serve them when they read and write in academic settings as well as when they communicate. Teachers also should avoid teaching grammar using old traditional teaching methods in which communication was not an important goal. Instead, they need to modify their activities to allow for more communication among students and stress autonomy and creativity (Yang & Cheung, 2003).

Assessment

As a step to educational reform, teachers with administrative support should explore a new dimension of assessment. Thus, they need to seek alternatives or complements in order to make the assessment more transparent to students' levels and teaching process. For example, portfolios could be used informally to trace students'

progress. In order to know more about portfolio assessment, its usefulness, and the stages of implementation, teachers need to read the related literature, attend workshops and seminars for training, and frequently consult their colloquies about problems and possible solutions (Chen, 2006). Additionally, teachers could share with administrators the need for additional methods to assess students' learning and support teaching. Teachers and administrations also need to educate parents about how portfolios work and what advantages they have over traditional tests (Dudley, 2001).

Introducing students to portfolios can take some time. Teachers have to present the idea of portfolios to students and not expect perfection. Students need to understand the idea over time, learn on what basis they select their work, and be able to evaluate themselves. Teachers can also show their students examples of English portfolios prepared by other students. They can also motivate students by asking them how they feel about tests and whether they think they truly show how much they learn (Coombe & Barlow, 2004).

Although I believe, with Neiman (1999), that portfolio assessment and traditional tests can "coexist and complement each other" (p. 5), at this time, portfolio assessment is difficult to implement as the educational system in Saudi Arabia officially prioritizes grammar-based exams and does not encourage the incorporation of portfolios as a valid means of assessment. I think teachers need more time to modify their teaching methods, know about portfolios, and educate parents and administrators. However, I strongly recommend portfolios as a teaching tool. I concur with Dudley (2001) who argues that portfolios are not about assessment, but about achievement, reflection, and celebration.

Limitations of the Study and Insight for Future Research

The finding of this study cannot be generalized to include all English teachers in Saudi Arabia or even those teachers who work in Jeddah. 100 subjects is a relatively small sample in comparison to the number of English teachers in Jeddah. Thus, the first limitation of this study was probably the small sample size of the questionnaire respondents and the focus group members. A second limitation could be in selecting the interviewees. Despite my effort to follow Krueger (2000) who notes that grouping people who regularly interact, either socially or at work, may "inhibit disclosure" (p.11) on the topic, I found that grouping teachers who did not know each other was impossible. That

is, teachers from different schools had to agree to meet during the school day in a selected place. I found this undoable since participating in this work was voluntary and teachers were not obliged to leave their schools and ruin their schedules for this work to be done. Consequently, I realized that grouping teachers who worked in the same school was more suitable for teachers.

Although teachers of each group varied in years of experience and teaching levels, being colleagues who worked in the same institution probably impeded some teachers from freely expressing their views. In other words, some teachers perhaps preferred to reach a consensus and avoided contradictions in opinions. What is more, involving the master teacher in one of the group discussions, the private school group, probably led some teachers in that group to constantly agree with what their head teacher said as she might be in a power position. A possible additional form of data which could contribute to further the study of this topic is classroom observation, particularly observation of some of interview members who welcomed CLT adoption or stated that they already use it in their classes. In doing this, teachers' practices could be objectively examined and discrepancy, if there is any, between teachers' practices and beliefs would be identified.

Although I was limited by time and access to teachers, the study was informative in highlighting teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices in Saudi classrooms. The study also revealed clear difficulties in adopting CLT innovation in Saudi Arabia. We need to build on these insights and go beyond merely saying we have difficulties. We need to know how to adapt CLT to suit our learners' needs, our culture, and our unique context. Hopefully the implications and recommendations presented here provide English teachers with the support of administrators a view of practical ways to adapt CLT and inspire them to find their own methods to make English teaching and learning more meaningful. Further research that includes participants who represent more teachers from all over Saudi Arabia is needed to continue uncovering and examining teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices. Moreover, further studies are needed to show the difficulties in trying to use CLT and how teachers interact with varying challenges in this particular context. Other data sources such as classroom observations could provide further insight into teachers' beliefs and practices. Insights obtained from these studies

could truly lead to significant improvement in English teaching and learning in the Saudi context as the findings and the recommendations of these studies would be tailored to suit this setting. Since many Western teaching methodologies are difficult to introduce in EFL countries, EFL countries need to develop better methods to suit the local needs rather than relying on methodologies and materials designed to suit ESL settings. To achieve this, EFL teachers should establish their own research to develop language teaching methods that consider the EFL contextual, social, cultural, and economic factors.

Final Thought

Congruent with the Saudi government's efforts to improve English teaching, teachers' beliefs and practices need to be changed for language teaching and learning to become more meaningful. This study revealed that although teachers have the initiatives to use CLT, serious constraints could hamper its implementation. Teachers with administrative support need to overcome these problems in order for CLT application to become successful. For this change to take place, teachers need to have clear and correct understanding of CLT. Besides, they need to have the professional skills to overcome these constraints. Future studies should continue to explore further problems due to CLT implantation and suggest ways to overcome them.

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Appendix A

Teachers' Current Practices in English Language Classroom

I. Please give information about **yourself** for each of the categories below. *You don't need to write your name*

1. How many years have you been a teacher of English?....................

2. Which grade(s) are you teaching?........................

3. Have you taken any courses in the area of teaching a foreign language?

      Yes   No

II. Please read each statement and circle one appropriate answer. (Note that there is a space after each statement if you make any comments). For this questionnaire the following five responses are prepared.

- Strongly Agree (SA)
- Agree (A)
- Disagree(D)
- Strongly Disagree (SD)
- Uncertain (U) [You are not exactly sure what the statement means]

1. I believe that grammar is the most important component   **SA A D SD U**
  of language that I want my students to master.
…………………………………………………………………………………………….

2. While teaching, I concentrate on grammar, vocabulary,   **SA A D SD U**
  reading, and writing more than speaking and listening
  since these are the areas which show up in students' final exams.
…………………………………………………………………………………………..

3. It is important for students to focus on what they are   **SA A D SD U**
  trying to say and not how to say it.
…………………………………………………………………………………………

4. In my class, I focus on speaking and listening   **SA A D SD U**
  more than grammar and vocabulary.
…………………………………………………………………………………………

5. Students need to master the grammatical rules **SA A D SD U** .
   of English in order to become fluent speakers.

   …………………………………………………………………………………

6. Generally, teachers must correct all students' errors **SA A D SD U**
   in speaking and writing so that errors do not become a habit.

   …………………………………………………………………………………

7. Since errors are a normal part of learning, **SA A D SD U**
   much correction is wasteful of time.

   …………………………………………………………………………………

8. Teachers' correction of errors must focus on the **SA A D SD U**
   appropriateness (meaning) and not the grammatical structure
   of students' writings.

   …………………………………………………………………………………

9. When students make oral errors, it is best to ignore them, **SA A D SD U**
   as long as I can understand what they are trying to say.

   …………………………………………………………………………………

10. I always devote considerable time giving **SA A D SD U**
    explanation and examples as I believe that the.
    teacher's main role is to impart knowledge.

    …………………………………………………………………………………

11. I believe that reducing my talking is the first step **SA A D SD U**
    toward communicative classroom.

    …………………………………………………………………………………..

12. I believe in what Hafez Ibrahim said "Pay due respect to **SA A D SD U**
    the teacher. He/she is nearly a prophet." So, I do control
    my class and not allow   students to negotiate things like
    quizzes times or homework deadline with me.

    …………………………………………………………………………………

13. A textbook alone is not able to cater for all the needs **SA A D SD U**
    and interests of students. The teacher must supplement it with other
    materials such as magazines, newspapers, or advertisements.

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

14. In my typical class, students spend long time negotiating   **SA   A   D   SD   U**

    controversial topics, expressing their views about current

    events, and discussing some cultural issues.

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

15. I always allow my students to decide the topics   **SA   A   D   SD   U**

    they want to learn about and the activities they prefer.

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

16. It is impossible in a large class of students to organize   **SA   A   D   SD   U**

    my teaching so as to suit the needs and interests of all learners.

……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

17. Since the learner come to the language class with   **SA   A   D   SD   U**

    little of the language, she is unable to suggest what the content

    of the lesson should be or what activities are useful for her.

……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

18. Group work allows students to discuss topics   **SA   A   D   SD   U**

    for themselves and thus have some measure of control

    over their learning. It is therefore a valuable technique.

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

19. Group work activities take too long to organize and   **SA   A   D   SD   U**

    waste a lot of valuable teaching time.

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

20. Students do their best when taught as a whole class   **SA   A   D   SD   U**

    by the teacher. Small group work may occasionally be useful

    to vary the routine, but it can never replace formal instruction

    by a competent teacher.

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

21. Group work activities have little use since it is very   **SA   A   D   SD   U**

    difficult for the teacher to monitor students' performance.

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

22. I periodically use traditional quizzes to assess   **SA   A   D   SD   U**

my students' progress.

……………………………………………………………………………………………

23. I believe that tests do not reflect students' actual levels. **SA   A   D   SD   U**

…..

24. I use portfolio as an alternative assessment. **SA   A   D   SD   U**

……………………………………………………………………………………….

25. I find portfolio impractical and I do not consider **SA   A   D   SD   U**   .

it as a valid tool for assessment.

………………………………………………………………………………………

III. 1. What teaching methods do you use in your class?

………………………………………………………………………………………

Have you heard about Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)? What

do you know about it?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Have you tried CLT? Why or why not?

………………………………………………………………………………………

Appendix B

Possible Guided Interview Questions

1.Are you concerned about the methods you use in teaching English?

2.What methods are you using now?

3.Have you heard about CLT? Have you tried it?

4.Why did you or why didn't you try CLT?

5.The following are difficulties that other EFL teachers had in using CLT. Do you think you will face similar difficulties in your teaching context?

1. teachers' levels in spoken English.

2. teachers' levels in sociolinguistic competence in English

3.Students' low English proficiencies

4.Students' passive style of learning

5.Lack of authentic teaching materials

6.rigid adherence to the textbook

7.Grammar-based examination

8.large classes

(Adapted from Li, 1998)

VITA

Ghadah Batawi was born in Jeddah, on November 20, 1976. She received a B.A. in Language and Literature in 2000 from King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah. She has taught English for three years in both intermediate and secondary schools in Jeddah, where she was awarded honors upon delivering many model lessons under the supervision of English supervisors. She is also a member of TESOL Arabia.