

EFL Teachers Perceived Difficulties In Implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Kuwait

Professor Najat A. Al-Mutawa
College of Education - Kuwait University.

Abstract.

Attempts to introduce communicative language teaching (CLT) into EFL contexts prompted many innovations in foreign language education. Unfortunately the innovations met with little success, leading to difficulties in the implementation of CLT worldwide. This has not stopped efforts to be exerted in order to introduce CLT in the hope that it will improve ELT.

Teachers' perceptions of the feasibility of a CLT innovation play a crucial role in determining the success or failure of such innovations. They would provide answers to the following questions: Why has CLT been so difficult to implement in EFL? How appropriate is CLT for EFL contexts?

The aim of the study is to assess EFL school teachers' understanding of the difficulties of CLT implementation in Kuwait. The study concludes that the overwhelming majority of EFL teachers are generally dissatisfied with CLT implementation in class. However, significant differences were found between Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti teachers on the one hand, and between secondary school teachers and basic- education teachers on the other.

The study has widespread ramifications since many countries share some of the characteristics of ELT in Kuwait.

صعوبات استخدام الطريقة التواصلية في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في دولة الكويت كما يدركها المعلمون

أ.د. نجاة عبد العزيز المطوع

كلية التربية - جامعة الكويت

الملخص

أدت محاولات إتباع الطريقة التواصلية في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية (لغة أجنبية) إلى ظهور تعديلات كثيرة لجعل هذه الطريقة تتواءم مع أهداف تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. لكن هذه التعديلات ظلت قاصرة عن الوصول إلى المستوى المطلوب، وبرزت صعوبات كثيرة في تطبيق الطريقة التواصلية في أماكن عديدة من العالم تتعلق بالأهداف، والمعلم، ومواقف التدريس، وأساليب التقويم. ولما كان استطلاع آراء المعلمين القائمين بالتنفيذ باستخدام الطريقة التواصلية أساساً لتعرف مواطن الصعوبة، واحتمالات التحسين، تأتي هذه الدراسة محاولة لتحقيق هذا الغرض.

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى تعرّف آراء المعلمين في الصعوبات التي تواجه تطبيق الطريقة التواصلية في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في مدارس دولة الكويت. وتشير النتائج إلى أن الغالبية (بصفة عامة) يجدون صعوبات في إتباع الطريقة المذكورة، وأنهم يرون عدم مناسبتها في ظل الإمكانيات المتوافرة، وطبيعة العملية التعليمية-التعلمية. كما وجدت فروق جوهرية تتعلق بجنسية المعلم، والمرحلة التي يتم التدريس فيها، وانتهت مناقشة النتائج إلى استنتاجات تربوية وتدرسية لمواجهة تلك الصعوبات.

EFL Teachers Perceived Difficulties In Implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Kuwait

Introduction

Foreign language teaching methods and approaches are continually in a process of development. Normally, the first step is to introduce a method/approach. The next logical sequence is to be accepted and applied before being criticised. The criticism may involve both reform and revision, or the complete rejection of the method/approach, and perhaps its replacement with another. To cite an example, language researchers who are concerned with the effectiveness of approaches and methods are often confronted with the perceived division between structure-based and CLT-based approaches (Mei, 1995). Such concern implies lack of confidence in the effectiveness of CLT. It is felt that CLT is totally fluency-based and that its methodology involves activities that should not require grammatical accuracy.

During the past five decades, theorists of FL teaching and learning have stressed the importance of giving learners the tools needed in order to communicate successfully with native speakers. This has led to increasing emphasis on preparing learners to use the language smoothly and fluently in order to express their ideas appropriately. The result has been a rejection of such approaches as the grammatical/structural, which focus on the rules of the language, and accept CLT, which appeared in the 1970s and flourished in the 1980s.

The Kuwaiti educationists, realising that the grammatical syllabus does not help much to develop learners' competence, decided to introduce CLT into English teaching at the intermediate and secondary schools. In 1979 the Ministry of Education in Kuwait introduced a new English Teaching Syllabus, with the stated aim of teaching English to develop the students' communicative competence. In the same year, in

co-operation with Oxford University Press, the MoE introduced the textbook series Crescent English Course designed for the development of communicative competence. The change was considered an innovation from the traditional teaching into CLT.

In the new curricula, the goal of ELT is to develop the learners' communicative competence in English through meaningful drills and communicative activities. Students are to learn by means of authentic materials, such as newspapers and magazines. CLT is thus an "approach that aims to (a) make competence the goal of language teaching (b) develop procedures for teaching the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication" (Richards & Rogers, 1986). The principles of CLT are compatible with a functional perspective on linguistics (Halliday, 1973), as translated into classroom practice by means of the notional-functional syllabuses of Wilkins (1977) and Van Ek (1977). A sociocultural aspect of CLT further enhances the presentation of such language functions. The language was introduced in a variety of contexts, with some formality, politeness and cross-cultural issues (Al-Mutawa & Kailani, 1989). In this way students learn to use language appropriately in different types of situations, to perform various tasks and to use language for social interaction with other people. Furthermore, CLT is characterised by focusing meaningful tasks rather than on language per se. Thus, teachers select learning activities/tasks according to how they engage the students in meaningful and authentic language situations rather than in the merely mechanical practice of language patterns. Another feature of CLT is its learner-centred view of foreign language teaching. Learners possess individual interests, needs and goals that should be reflected in the design of teaching methods (Richards & Rogers, 1986; Savignon, 1991).

The last ten years, however, have been characterised by a growing dissatisfaction with several aspects of CLT. Consequently, many researchers called for reforms and suggested changes (Widdowson, 1990; Larsen-Freeman, 1990; Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). Indeed, most of such dissatisfaction and the consequent research focussed on two main issues, namely the linguistic base of CLT, and the pedagogical treatment of linguistic forms in CLT (Celce-Murcia et al., 1997).

Difficulties of CLT Application

CLT application in Kuwait has faced a number of problems. These problems relate to the approach itself as well as to the present situation of ELT and learning in the country. They include the teachers' lack of English proficiency, lack of cultural knowledge and unfamiliarity with CLT. According to Medges (1986), the communicative classroom requires a teacher of extraordinary abilities, together with sustained energy and education. He also points out that CLT places a heavy burden on the shoulders of non-native speaking teachers. Thus, they differ in the extent to which they master the four skills. As he states "A great proportion of the energy of non-native speaking teachers is inevitably used up in the constant struggle with their language deficiencies, leaving only a small fraction for attending to their students' problems. By putting an especially heavy linguistic strain on the teacher, the communicative approach further reduces the time non-native teachers have available for their students." Since EFL teachers in Kuwait are non-native speakers of English, most of them lack the ability to speak English in the class fluently. Their low level of teacher education and language learning may reflect this deficiency.

Teachers' lack of cultural knowledge is another difficulty affecting CLT. Campbell and Zhao (1996) state that inability to change to CLT is the result of many factors, one of which is the teachers' limited knowledge of the target culture. Moreover, the teacher faces problems if s/he is unable to answer spontaneous questions about the target language or culture as they arise from interactions in the classroom. This forced many EFL teachers in Kuwait to adopt inappropriate ways of teaching.

In addition, not many teachers are familiar with CLT. They are used to the traditional method, and it is hard for them to adapt to radical changes. This is substantiated by Li's view (1984) of some teachers' reluctance to try CLT for being unfamiliar and requires a lot of energy from them.

The testing system in Kuwait has yet another powerful influence on ELT, and any move towards CLT must be judged in light of how well the students are successful in the test. As stated by NG and Tang (1997), "teachers see their primary goal in teaching as to prepare students for public examinations." To prepare students for these

examinations, teachers have to follow strictly the prescribed schedule, leaving no room for adjustment to suit different abilities in the skills developing process, and no time for conducting language activities in class.

Needless to say, CLT is a learner-centred methodology, which emphasises fluency over accuracy. Although fluency is much needed, it does, however, create a problem of providing enough concrete feedback for learners to correct their mistakes and keep focused on the immediate classroom tasks. Students often do not receive enough feedback as to how they are doing in class. As a result, learners lose interest and motivation (Ryan, 2001).

Van Lier (1988) identifies the main weakness of CLT as inherent in the approach itself: in his view, it is a collection of principles that are loosely bundled together, offering the learner little or no direction. That is, some ELT teachers give a class syllabus on the first day that rarely gets used. Rather than practice language for the sake of language, learners can benefit more if they know specifically in each class what language they are trying to practice and in what context. Consequently, it is useful to set small achievable goals on a daily basis and make learners aware of how they are to accomplish them.

Related Literature

Several studies highlighted the principal difficulties faced by EFL teachers in implementing CLT in the classroom. In China research has indicated that making exclusive use of either the communicative approach or the structural/grammar translation method does not suit ELT today (Zhenhui, 1998; Harvey, 1985; Forseth, 1991; Ting, 1987).

Fun (1998) conducted an exploratory study of teachers' attitudes towards CLT in Hong Kong. The aim was to investigate whether the principles of CLT had been applied to English teaching, and to address the problems hindering the implementation of this approach in the classroom. In addition, the study examined whether teachers' background influenced their teaching beliefs and the use of the communicative approach to language teaching. To achieve these objectives, questionnaires and interviews were conducted on a sample of 114 EFL teachers in 12 secondary schools.

The findings of the study revealed that teachers in general favoured

CLT in theory, but in practice they followed more traditional approaches because of the constraints on its implementation in the classroom. They preferred to be flexible in adopting teaching approaches. Additional findings showed that teachers' backgrounds, which include teachers with English degrees and teaching in high schools, had a significant influence on the frequency of using CLT in English classes. The study concluded that policy makers should review the current English syllabus and evaluate the suitability of CLT for language teaching in Hong Kong.

These conclusions are also reiterated by another study (Mei, 1995). A sample of ELT practitioners in Japan was asked to explain the essence of a CLT approach. The responses indicated an incomplete understanding of the basic tenets of CLT. The lack of clear understanding translated into doubts about the effectiveness of the approach itself. Furthermore, another study in Japan by Sano et al. (1984) concluded that the goal of communicative competence seemed too distant for the students.

In her case study of Pakistan, Shamin (1996) emphasises learners' resistance as a barrier to her attempt to introduce the communicative approach in the ELT classroom. In Vietnam, Ellis' study (1994) identified class size, grammar-based examinations, and lack of exposure to authentic language as problems in implementing CLT.

In South Africa, efforts to foster a communicative approach to the teaching of English in KwaZulu, were met with reluctance by teachers and students to adopt the decentralised ways of interacting associated with CLT (Chick, 1996).

Although these studies highlight the main problems caused by CLT, EFL teachers' perceptions of difficulties related to CLT remain largely unexplored.

Research Questions

This study discusses the present practice of CLT, and the EFL teachers' perceived difficulties of implementing it in the classroom. It seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the general perceived difficulties of ELT teachers in implementing the CLT, in relation to such factors as the status of

EFL teachers, the characteristics of the communicative approach, the educational administration, and the learners' attitudes towards CLT?

2. Are there significant differences in perception of the above difficulties- between EFL teachers regarding the following variables: gender, nationality, teaching experience, qualification, cycle and educational area?

Subjects

This consisted of a random sample of 440 EFL teachers in primary, intermediate and secondary public schools in Kuwait. The salient features of the sample can be summarised as follows:

1. Two thirds of the sample consisted of female teachers, their ratio being 67%,
2. The majority of EFL teachers i.e. 57 % are non-Kuwaiti,
3. The largest number of respondents hold BA English and Education (48%), while 41 % hold BA English and Literature, and 11% hold other BAs.
4. Forty nine percent of the sample has teaching experience for more than ten years.
5. The majority of respondents (65 %) work in secondary schools. The remaining third works in both primary and intermediate schools (basic education),
6. Sixty eight percent comes from three areas, namely Asma, Mubarak and Ahmedi.

Instrument

A questionnaire consisting of 31 items was developed for the study. The objective was to ascertain EFL teachers' perceptions of the difficulties they encountered in communicative language teaching. (see Appendix). The instrument was reviewed by a number of jurors who had experience in CLT application. They were requested to review the draft items of the questionnaire from the points of view of relevance, suitability and layout. Some items were accordingly clarified, and others

replaced. The variables for analysing the teachers' perceptions, to which the numbers 5 to 1 were assigned are Strongly Agree, Agree, Uncertain, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The final version had four components with a total of 31 validated items. These were as follows:

1. Status of EFL teachers, consisting of items 1-10;
2. Status of CLT approach, consisting of items 11-18;
3. Students' attitudes towards CLT, items 19-24; and
4. Educational administration items 24-31.

Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for the total number of respondents' scores. This was found to be (0.89), indicating the test to be highly reliable. The final version of the instrument was distributed to the sample during October November 2001.

Findings

Responses of the sample were tabulated and summarised as percentages (see Appendix). The results reveal general dissatisfaction with CLT implementation in class. The overwhelming majority (90%) of ELT teachers believes that large-sized classes make CLT application difficult. A slightly smaller majority of respondents (80%) cannot find enough time for evaluating students' performance in listening and speaking skills. Teachers' dissatisfaction is again evident by the view of another majority, varying between (70%) and (88%), who expressed concern about the students' level in the language. They cited a number of factors that militate against CLT implementation. These factors include students' low English proficiency, lack of exposure to authentic English, lack of motivation to work on the communicative competence and their passive style of learning.

With regard to CLT methodology, a substantial majority (73%), (74%) and (80%) stated that CLT requires too much preparation time. They put the blame on lack of appropriate CLT texts, authentic materials and oral CLT tests in the Teacher's Guide. Such shortcomings, according to (80%) of the sample, are due to insufficient funding to provide resources for implementing CLT adequately.

In addition, more than three quarters of respondents (79%) think that CLT disregard of grammatical form will guarantee breakdown in

communication. This is reflected in the headmasters' concern regarding students' examination scores rather than communication, as stated by (78%) of respondents.

A notable finding of the study was that three quarters (74%) of ELT teachers admit that they are not familiar with CLT. This is substantiated by (68%) of respondents who stated that opportunities offered for training in CLT are scant.

In order to ascertain the differences between groups with regard to sex, nationality and stage, the t-values were calculated. Comparison of the results for different groups showed no significant differences in perceptions between male and female teachers as shown in Table (1).

Table 1: t Value of Differences Between Males and Females

Sex		N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
1. Teachers	Male	144	3.14	.86	.905	NS*
	Female	296	3.21	.78		
2. CLT	Male	144	3.68	.56	1.25	NS
	Female	296	3.60	.58		
3. Students	Male	144	4.04	.61	.523	NS
	Female	296	4.00	.65		
4. Adminis.	Male	144	3.56	.82	.394	NS
	Female	296	3.58	.65		
5.Total	Male	144	3.55	.61	.086	NS
	Female	296	3.55	.51		

*NS = Non significant

However, significant differences between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis were found with regard to the administrative issue as indicated in Table (2). The t-value was (2.19), with the Kuwaiti EFL teachers showing more satisfaction about CLT implementation. Their mean was (3.66), while the mean of non-Kuwaitis was (3.51). However, there were no significant differences between the two groups with regard to the remaining variables namely, teacher competency, CLT methodology and students' level.

Table 2: t Value of Differences Between Kuwaiti and Non-Kuwaiti

Nationality		N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
1. Teacher	Kuwaiti	198	3.27	.79	1.79	NS
	Non-Kuwaiti	251	3.13	.81		
2. CLT	Kuwaiti	189	3.58	.62	1.51	NS
	Non-Kuwait	251	3.66	.54		
3. Student	Kuwaiti	189	4.06	.59	1.21	NS
	Non-Kuwait	251	3.98	.66		
4. Adminis.	Kuwaiti	189	3.66	.64	2.19	* P < .02
	Non-Kuwaiti	251	3.51	.75		
5. Total	Kuwaiti	189	3.59	.51	1.36	NS
	Non-Kuwait	251	3.52	.57		

Significant differences emerged between basic education teachers and secondary school teachers of English as indicated in Table 3. The formers were more positive in their perceptions of CLT implementation than the secondary schoolteachers as shown in their higher M = (3.34), (3.80), (4.07) and (3.74) compared with (3.11), (3.54), (3.98) and (3.49). This may be due to the need for emphasising both listening and speaking skills more than structure to ensure fluency before accuracy at the early stages of teaching English.

Table 3: t Value of Differences Between Basic Education and Secondary

Stage		N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
1. Teacher	Basic Educ	153	3.34	.88	2.77	** P < .00
	Secondary	287	3.11	.75		
2. CLT	Basic Educ	153	3.80	.53	4.61	*** P < .000
	Secondary	287	3.54	.58		
3. Student	Basic Educ	153	4.07	.61	1.44	NS
	Secondary	287	3.98	.64		
4. Adminis.	Basic Educ	153	3.74	.74	3.606	*** P < .000
	Secondary	287	3.49	.65		
5. Total	Basic Educ	153	3.69	.60	4.00	*** P < .000
	Secondary	287	3.47	.50		

ANOVA was employed to determine which groups are more concerned with the subsidiary variables. As Table (4) shows the Scheffe range of differences illustrates discrepancies in three components, namely teacher, CLT and administration between the perceptions of holders of BA in education and holders of BA in English language and Literature. The difference is also manifested between holders of BA Ed. and holders of BA English Literature plus Diploma in Education. The higher Means of English and Education qualification (teacher $M = 3.66$, $SD = .56$; student $M = 4.12$, $SD = .57$, administration $M = 3.99$, $SD = .68$) show that this group of teachers has more awareness of the difficulties facing them in CLT implementation (teacher $p < .010$, student $p < .006$, administration $p < .031$). Other groups' lack of sufficient background in EFL teaching strategy made it difficult for them to give accurate judgement on CLT implementation. Means may also indicate that the most serious difficulty facing teachers is related to the student' indifference and lack of proficiency in English.

Table 4: ANOVA for ELT Teachers' Perceived Difficulties by Qualification

Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Scheffe
1. Teacher	Between Groups	9.069	2	4.535	7.22**	EL x Ed Ed x EL + D
	Within Groups	274.342	437	.628		
	Total	283.412	439			
2. CLT	Between Groups	.373	2	.186	.559	
	Within Groups	145.657	437	.333		
	Total	146.030	439			
3. Student	Between Groups	4.634	2	2.317	** 5.925	EL x Ed
	Within Groups	170.872	437	.391		
	Total	175.506	439			
4. Adminis.	Between Groups	9.265	2	4.633	*** 9.561	EL x Ed Ed x EL + D
	Within Groups	211.750	437	.485		
	Total	221.016	439			
5. Total	Between Groups	4.865	2	2.432	*** 8.583	EL x Ed Ed x EL + D
	Within Groups	123.840	437	.283		
	Total	128.705	439			

ANOVA was also employed to determine which years of experience are more relevant with the dependent variables. It can be seen from Table (5) -regarding CLT variable- that there is a significant difference between teachers with 1-4 years of teaching experience

($M = 3.51$ & $SD = .61$) compared with those having 5-9 years of experience ($M = 3.73$ and $SD = .58$) in favour of the latter ($p < .023$).

Table 5: ANOVA for ELT Teachers' Perceived Difficulties by Teaching Experience

Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Scheffe
1. Teacher	Between Groups	2.281	2	1.140	1.77	
	Within Groups	281.131	437	.643		
	Total	283.412	439			
2. CLT	Between Groups	2.522	2	1.261	3.84*	1-4 x 5-9
	Within Groups	143.508	437	.328		
	Total	146.030	439			
3. Student	Between Groups	1.269	2	.634	1.59	
	Within Groups	174.237	437	.399		
	Total	175.506	439			
4. Adminis.	Between Groups	2.471	2	1.235	2.47	
	Within Groups	218.545	437	.500		
	Total	221.016	439			
5. Total	Between Groups	1.740	2	.870	2.99	$P < .05$
	Within Groups	126.965	437	.291		
	Total	128.705	439			

ELT teachers from various zones have also shown differences in their views regarding CLT implementation. ANOVA results indicate significant differences between groups with regard to variables of teacher and administration. As illustrated in Table (6) teachers from Hawally area show the most concern and dissatisfaction with CLT implementation (teacher $M = 3.91$ $SD = .86$; administration $M = 4.26$, $SD = .89$ in comparison with areas of Asima, Farwania, Ahmedi, Mubarak and Jahra. Such results were in favour of Hawally teachers ranging from ($p < .000$ to $p < .025$). In addition, with regard to the

student variable a significant difference exists between Farawanih ELT teachers ($M = 3.80$, $SD = .83$) and those of Mubarak area ($M = 4.21$, $SD = .56$) in favour of the latter.

Table 6: Anova for ELT Teachers' Perceived Difficulties by Area

Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Scheffe
1. Teacher	Between Groups	20.367	5	4.073	***	1 + 2 + 3 + 4
	Within Groups	263.044	434	.606	6.72	X 5
	Total	283.412	439			
2. CLT	Between Groups	3.766	5	.753	*2.298	
	Within Groups	142.264	434	.328		
	Total	146.030	439			
3. Student	Between Groups	9.040	5	1.808	***	2 x 6
	Within Groups	166.466	434	.384	4.713	
	Total	175.506	439			
4. Adminis.	Between Groups	14.614	5	2.923	***	1+2+3+4x5
	Within Groups	206.402	434	.476	6.146	5 x 6
	Total	221.016	439			
5. Total	Between Groups	10.295	5	2.059	***	1+2+3+4x5
	Within Groups	118.411	434	.273	7.546	6 x 2
	Total	128.705	439			

* 1 = Asima 2 = Farwania 3 = Ahmadi 4 = Jahra 5 = Hawalli 6 = Mubarak

Implications for CLT Implementation

It is widely known that EFL teaching has been experiencing a significant paradigm shift in recent years. A primary reason for this stems from the decline of CLT (Hadley, 1998). Starting as early as 1980's, some applied linguists began to question the relevance of CLT for EFL learning (Swan, 1985; Kharma & Hajjaj, 1986). Debate on ELT methodology in Kuwait and the Gulf Arab States has been going on for the past two decades (Coward, 1986-1987; Byrd, 1986; Abu-Hashim et.al. 1997). It is generally acknowledged that although ELT teachers are aware of the importance of communicative competence, students do not respond well to CLT. Consequently teachers have to revert to the grammar/structural approach. In other words, many

teachers are more interested in training students how to read and write well in addition to teaching students to master the grammar component of the language. This negative response, however, is indicated by the majority of EFL teachers -under study- who expressed their concern about the students' low English proficiency level.

According to Holliday (1994), many EFL teachers around the world are unsure about the appropriateness of CLT to the conditions prevalent in their classrooms. This is true in the case of EFL teachers in Kuwait who are experiencing a difficulty in CLT implementation, which they feel they ought to adopt to keep pace with developments, but which does not seem to suit the nature of their classrooms. This is clearly illustrated in the opinion of the overwhelming majority of EFL teachers (90 %) who stated that large-sized classes make CLT application rather difficult.

Many teachers still avoid practising the approach because the communicative component, i.e. oral communication, is not part of the exam score on the English test. On the contrary, these exams are structure -based. Teachers, under pressure to make their students do well on such tests, often devote class time to teaching test-taking skills and drilling students on multiple-choice grammar items. The view is held by the majority (80%) of the sample that cannot find enough time for evaluating students' performance in listening and speaking skills.

Two thirds of the sample reported that few INSET opportunities for retraining in CLT were available. A substantial number of EFL teachers holding English literature degree had not had PRESET opportunities. This resulted in a general uniformity of classroom methodology. Personal experience of observed teachers indicates that most classes are teacher-centred. Teaching usually comprises a series of questions and answers. All classes have movable student desks, and a few teachers take the initiative to change the room configuration to accommodate paired or group work.

Another pertinent point is the distinction made between EFL and ESL-based instruction. Two thirds of sample (65%) stated that CLT is more suitable for ESL as distinct from EFL communities. Indeed, much of the English language instruction in the world is not ESL-based, but takes place in an EFL situation, often with teachers who themselves are non-native speakers of English. In many of these areas, focus on form

(structure) is still dominant, and CLT is considered an instructional option. Here grammar teaching has never left the classroom. In fact, many educators think that a focus on form is exactly what EFL learners do not need, since their problem is not the lack of instruction on grammatical features, but the absence of opportunities for communicative language use.

Most EFL teachers in Kuwait are non-native speakers. They acquire their knowledge in English at junior and higher schools, colleges and universities. They differ in the extent to which they master the four linguistic skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. Personal observation indicates that the language knowledge of some EFL teachers is insufficient and only slightly exceeds the level at which they teach. However, a qualified teacher is not only required to be competent in the four skills. S/he has to have a firm and comprehensive grasp of the grammatical structures of the language, in order to pass on the knowledge to students, to explain the difficult grammatical points, to answer students questions, and to correct students' mistakes (Si-Qing, 1988).

Some respondents feel that CLT will yield fruitful results regarding pupils' improved abilities of listening and speaking. Yet, there is something missing in the pupils' accuracy in using English. Eighty percent of respondents state that CLT disregard of grammatical form will guarantee breakdown in communication. This phenomena has continuously stimulated research on methods for integrating grammar instruction with CLT that "would enable learners to recognise the properties of target structures in context, and develop accuracy in use" (Fotos, 1998). In Byrd's opinion (1986) "a specific treatment of the structural and vocabulary systems, interwoven into the communicative course, would give them the result they wanted: a conversant student who can speak and write with reasonable correctness". Liao (2000) also suggests that the "proportion of grammar teaching in a language course needs balanced development. Too much emphasis on one at the expense of the other almost reaps the following consequences: (1) if overlooking grammar, students may be able to communicate, but they will do so incorrectly; (2) if overstressing grammar, students will be able to compose sentences correctly, but they will not be able to communicate appropriately and effectively." (p5).

Kozo (2000) believes that teachers who place too much emphasis on accuracy instruction sacrifice the learners' fluency. Integration of fluency and accuracy can thus help to raise the oral proficiency of any school learner. Of course fluency alone does not lead to accuracy in a classroom. But this does not mean that we should do away with fluency. Rao (1999) conducted an experiment in two schools in India to examine the validity of the paradigm accuracy first and fluency later. The study concluded that integration of fluency and accuracy is sure to enable learners to face the challenges of globalisation. Her experiment has shown that just formal language teaching is not enough. There should be adequate explanation where needed, but there is a need to focus on involving students in a number of structure tasks/activities which require the use of a number of structure items. This will eventually lead to fluency in the language. In contrast, when fluency is given priority, learners gain confidence that they can speak the language even if it is not grammatically correct. Consequently, they feel motivated in the next stages of learning structure through structure tasks/activities.

The movement towards focus on form, that is to concentrate on structure during CLT, is assuming greater significance in ESL/EFL syllabus design. The inability of communicative ESL/EFL teaching alone to promote high levels of accuracy in learners is now clear (Williams, 1995). Learning English in Kuwait involves some effort, as it is a foreign language. Hence the suggestion for reinforcing a structure and communication combined should be the mode of teaching in the Kuwaiti context may be a valid one.

In conclusion, it is difficult to provide the necessary conditions for EFL teachers that can meet the high requirements of CLT, with its emphasis on the EFL teacher. It may be reiterated that several prerequisites are needed for CLT. Firstly, near native language proficiency. Secondly, the teachers must possess strong organisation ability. Thirdly, they need a cheerful extrovert personality. Consequently, the demands of CLT on teachers are exacting that a developing country such as Kuwait will find it difficult to fulfill.

REFERENCES

- Abu-Hashim, M.M. et al. (1997). An Evaluation Study of Developed Crescent English Textbooks in Qatar. Curriculum Dept. Ministry of Education, Doha, Qatar.
- Al-Mutawa, N. & Kailani, T. (1989). **Methods of Teaching English to Arab Students**. London: Longman
- Byrd, D.R.H. (1986). English Language Instruction in the Gulf Arab States: A Report on Programs, Curricula, Teachers and Teaching Procedures, and Students. Gulf Arab States Educational Research Centre (GASERC), Kuwait.
- Celce-Murcia, M. et al. (1997). Direct approaches in L2 instruction: a turning point in communicative language teaching? **TESOL Quarterly**, 31 (1), 141-152.
- Coward, J. (1986). A Report on Visits Made to Intermediate & Secondary Schools in Kuwait. Curriculum and Textbooks Dept., Ministry of Education, Kuwait.
- Coward, J. (1987). Guidelines for the Writing of English Language Textbooks in Kuwait, Curriculum and Textbooks Dept., Ministry of Education.
- Chick, J.K. (1996). "Self-talk; Collusion in apartheid education". In H. Coleman (Ed.), **Society and the language classroom** (pp.21-39). Cambridge: CUP.
- Defeng, Li (2001). Teachers' perceived difficulties in introducing the communicative approach in South Korea. In D. R. Hall & A. Hewings (Ed.), **Innovation in English Language Teaching**. Routledge. Chapter 13: 149-166
- Ellis, G. (1994). The appropriateness of the communicative approach in Vietnam: An interview study in intercultural communication. Unpublished Master's Thesis, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Australia.

- Forseth, R. (1991). Conversation class: How to keep your students talking in English. **ELIC Teaching**, 8, 35-44.
- Fotos, S. (1998). Shifting the focus from forms to form in the EFL classroom, **ELT Journal**, 52 (4), 301-307.
- Fun, W. S. (1998). Teachers' Perceptions of Communicative Language Teaching in Hong Kong Secondary Language Classroom: An Investigation into the Implementation of the Syllabus for English (Forms 1- 5). MA Dissertation Hong Kong, China.
- Hadley, G. (1998). Returning Full Circle: A survey of EFL syllabus designs for the new millennium, **RELC Journal**, 29 (2), 50-71.
- Halliday, M. (1973). **Explorations in the Functions of Language**. London: Edward Arnold.
- Harvey, P. (1985). A lesson to be learned: Chinese approaches to language learning. **ELT Journal**, 39, 183-186.
- Holliday, A. (1994). The house of TESEP and the communicative approach: the special needs of state English language education. **ELT Journal**, 48 (1), 3-11.
- Kharma, N. & Hajjaj, A. (1986). **Tradition and Innovation in ELT: An Arab Perspective**. Longman Group UK Ltd., PP 54-70.
- Koso, M. (2000). Effective Ways of Communicative Instruction in the Japanese EFL Classroom: Balancing Fluency and Accuracy. **ERIC DIGEST**: 442 297.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (1990). On the need for a theory of language teaching. In J.E. Alatis (Ed.), **Georgetown University Round Table on Language and Linguistics 1990**. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Li, X. (1984). In defence of the communicative approach. **ELT Journal**, 38/1:2-6 OUP.
- Liao, X. Q. (2000). Communicative Language Teaching: Approach, Design and Procedure. **ERIC DIGEST** 444 382, USA.
- Liao, X. Q. (2000). Communicative Language Teaching Innovation in China: Difficulties and Solutions. **ERIC DIGEST** 443 294, USA.

- Medges, P. (1986). Queries from a communicative teacher. **ELT Journal**, 40/2.
- Mei, W.S. (1995). Form-based instruction in communicative language teaching: some considerations. **Guidelines**. SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, Singapore, 17 (2),12-21.
- Nishimra, K. (2000). Effective Ways of Communicative Instruction in the Japanese EFL Classroom: Balancing Fluency and Accuracy. Report ED 44 297.USA.
- Ng, C. & Tang, E. (1997). Teachers' needs in the process of EFL reform in China. A report from Shanghai. Perspectives 9/1:63-83. Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong.
- Rao, K. (1999). Fluency or Accuracy? Local Constraints in the Process of Globalisation. Paper presented to the 34th RELC International Seminar, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, Singapore, 19-21 April.
- Richards, J.C. & Rogers, T. S. (1986). **Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching: A Description and Analysis**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ryan, S. B. (2001). Overcoming Problems Related to Communicative Methodology. **The Internet TESOL Journal**, 7 (11).
- Sano, M. & others (1984). Communicative language teaching and local needs. **ELT Journal**, 38, 170-177
- Savignon, S. (1991). Communicative language teaching: State of the art. **TESOL Quarterly**, 25, 261-277.
- Scarcella, R. C. & Oxford. R. I. (1992). **The Tapestry of Language Learning**. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Shamin, F. (1996). Learner resistance to innovation in classroom methodology. In H. Coleman (ed.), **Society and the Language Classroom** (pp. 105-121). Cambridge: CUP
- Si-Qinq, C. (1988). A challenge to the exclusive adoption of the communicative approach in China. SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, Singapore, Guidelines, 10 (1), 67-75

- Swan, M. (1985). A critical look at the communicative approach. **ELT Journal**, 39 (1), 2-12.
- Ting, Y. R. (1987). Foreign Language Teaching in China: Problems and perspectives. **Canadian and International Education**, 16, 48-61.
- Van Ek, J. A. (1977). **The Threshold Level for Modern Language in Schools**. London: Longman.
- Van Lier, L. (1988). **The Classroom and the Language Learner**. New York: Longman.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1990). **Aspects of Language Teaching**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wilkins, D. (1976). **Notional Syllabuses**. Oxford University Press.
- Wilkins, D. (1989). An integrated approach for language structure and communication. Paper presented to the Seminar on "A New Approach to Developing ELT Materials for Schools". Ministry of Education, Kuwait in Co-operation with Longman, 18-20 February.
- Williams, J. (1995). Focus on form in communicative language teaching: research findings and the class teacher. **TESOL Journal**, 4: 12-16.
- Zhenhui, R. (1998). Developing an English-teaching programme by integrating the communicative approach with traditional Chinese methods. **Guidelines**, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, Singapore, 20 (2), 77-95.

Appendix : Percentages of Sample Responses

No	Statement	*SA	*A	*UC	*D	*SD
1	Teachers lack enough ability in speaking English.	10	26	15	25	24
2	Few opportunities for training in CLT.	18	50	10	18	5
3	Teacher's lack of lesson planning competence in English.	8	25	16	37	14
4	Difficulty in correcting students' oral exercises.	15	23	8	40	14
5	Teachers' traditional attitudes towards foreign language teaching.	15	19	17	32	17
6	Teachers are not familiar with CLT.	31	43	10	12	4
7	Teachers having little time to write communicative materials.	13	39	18	24	6
8	Difficulty in correcting students' written exercises.	14	30	6	32	19
9	Lack of time for evaluating students' performance in listening and speaking.	32	48	6	11	3
10	Teachers' limited knowledge of the target culture.	8	34	17	28	13
11	CLT is more suitable for ESL than EFL students.	18	47	20	10	5
12	In CLT, language functions are not graded like the structures of language.	9	45	20	22	5
13	Group work often not followed well in CLT for fear of noisy classes.	17	49	11	18	5
14	CLT requires too much preparation time.	22	51	11	14	2
15	Lack of appropriate CLT texts and authentic materials.	26	48	9	14	3
16	Lack of oral CLT tests in the Teacher's Guide.	31	53	6	8	3

*SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree UC = Uncertain D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

No	Statement	SA	A	UC	DS	SD
17	CLT disregard of grammatical form will guarantee breakdown in communication.	28	51	10	8	3
18	CLT syllabus places heavy demands on pupils.	11	27	18	39	5
19	Students' low English proficiency.	51	37	6	5	2
20	Students' lack of exposure to authentic English.	48	39	9	4	-
21	Students are not accustomed to CLT.	22	44	13	19	2
22	Students' lack of motivation to work on their communicative competence.	31	48	11	10	-
23	Students not willing to express their opinions for fear of offending others.	27	43	15	12	2
24	Students' passive style of learning.	37	41	13	8	1
25	Focussing on structures in marking exam papers.	26	46	8	18	3
26	Lack of support from administration.	6	28	19	25	22
27	Insufficient funding to obtain resources for CLT.	42	38	10	5	4
28	Lack of support from fellow teachers of English.	13	26	17	33	11
29	Teacher's lack of classroom management	11	10	13	41	26
30	Large- sized classes.	63	27	4	5	1
31	Headmasters are interested in scores students get in exams.	43	35	10	11	1