

12-2017

Teaching Assistants' Perception of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in an English as a Second Language (ESL) University Environment.

Glymaris Lugo Cruz
St. Cloud State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/engl_etds

Recommended Citation

Lugo Cruz, Glymaris, "Teaching Assistants' Perception of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in an English as a Second Language (ESL) University Environment." (2017). *Culminating Projects in English*. 111.
https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/engl_etds/111

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of English at theRepository at St. Cloud State. It has been accepted for inclusion in Culminating Projects in English by an authorized administrator of theRepository at St. Cloud State. For more information, please contact rswexelbaum@stcloudstate.edu.

**Teaching Assistants' Perceptions of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in an
English as a Second Language (ESL) University Environment.**

by
Glymaris Lugo

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
St. Cloud State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Arts
in Teaching English as a Second Language

December, 2017

Thesis Committee:
John P. Madden, Chairperson
Michael W. Schwartz
Shawn C. Jarvis

Abstract

This qualitative study investigates teacher perceptions on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in an English as a Second Language (ESL) university environment. The study includes ten (10) participants who are all teaching assistants (TA) in the English Department at a Midwestern regional university in the United States. They are all between the ages of 24 to 48 and from varying nationalities and educational backgrounds. All participants will be interviewed in audio-recording using a semi-structured four-phased instrument. The purpose of this study is to elicit teachers' reports of their knowledge, thoughts, opinions and applications related to CLT in teaching English Language Learners (ELL). Results demonstrated that participants do not have a full understanding of the CLT approach and favor combining different teaching methods. These outcomes could be attributed to lack of teacher training and involvement in research.

Keywords: CLT knowledge, teacher perceptions, CLT application, teaching assistants, communicative language teaching.

Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
I. Introduction	7
Problem Statement	7
The Beginnings of CLT	8
II. Literature Review	10
Communicative Competence	10
Teacher Perceptions of CLT	13
CLT Classroom Practices	16
Against Communicative Competence / CLT	17
Common Misunderstandings Related to CLT	19
An Example of CLT Development	21
Summary	22
III. Methodology.....	23
Research Questions	23
Participants.....	23
Data Collection Instrument.....	27
Procedure	28
IV. Results and Analysis.....	30
Analysis Introduction.....	30
Defining CLT.....	32
Choosing CLT.....	40
Applying CLT.....	50

Chapter	Page
Teacher Task.....	56
V. Discussion.....	59
CLT Reported Knowledge.....	59
CLT Thoughts and Opinions	63
CLT Application.....	70
Pedagogical Implications.....	72
Future Research	73
Limitations	74
Conclusion	75
References.....	77
Appendix A: Background Information (Data Instrument).....	81
Appendix B: Interview Questions.....	82
Appendix C: Teacher Task	84

List of Figures

1. Educational Background.....	24
2. Participant Age Range	25
3. Participant MA TESL Semester Enrollment	25
4. Participant Future Plans after Graduation.....	26
5. ESL Courses Taught in Current Teaching Program	27
6. Least communicative ELT topics	56

List of Tables

1. Teacher reported definitions	33
2. Teacher reported classroom applications.....	51
3. Communicative activities.....	57

I. Introduction

“Communicative language teaching (CLT) refers to both processes and goals in classroom learning, for which a central theoretical concept is *communicative competence*” (Byram, 2004, p. 124). Why do language teaching professionals use CLT? The purpose of learning a new language is to be able to use that language to communicate, however that may not always be the goal in all learning environments. Nevertheless if the goal is the former, this ability to communicate may be in speaking or in writing and relative to environments. An example of this could be, the ability to communicate in a casual conversation with a native speaker of the target language or through a text message/social media versus the ability to communicate in an academic or professional context.

Problem Statement

This qualitative study focuses on interviewing ten English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, specifically teaching assistants (TA) on their reported knowledge and beliefs regarding CLT. The participants are enrolled in a graduate master’s (MA) in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) program at an upper mid-western regional university in the United States. They come from a variety of nationalities as well as different cultural, educational and professional backgrounds and range from second language speakers of English to native speakers of English. Among the required courses in their graduate program, there is one known as Theory in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). In this course they learn about research, theories, methods and approaches that have been developed through the history of the SLA field. Amidst these methodologies, CLT is one of the approaches that is taught and discussed in class. The participants for this study are TAs for two ESL programs in the English department. Half of the total of participants were recruited from each program, which encourage but do not require the

use of CLT. The purpose of this study is to learn the reports on knowledge and beliefs by these teachers regarding CLT. Also, to learn the role CLT has played or plays in their teaching experience, since it is an approach that through the years has been controversial and at the same time so in demand.

The Beginnings of CLT

Sandra Savignon developed CLT from the concept of communicative competence (originally introduced by sociolinguist Dell Hymes in the 1970's, to be discussed further in the literature review of this paper) through a study of beginning college French students in a program which at the time used the audiolingual approach. The students were normally assigned to a language laboratory during their fifth period. In the study, Savignon (1972) instead had two experimental groups participate in a training program performing communicative acts and discussions on French culture respectively (pp. 15-16). Results demonstrated that the communicative skill group performed better than the other experimental and control groups "on the tests of communicative skill and on teacher's evaluation of oral skill" (Savignon, 1972, p. 17). The premise of her study was due to a learning gap she discovered as a French teacher. She noticed that through the audiolingual method being used, there was a contradictory focus on helping the student reach linguistic competence and not allowing them to practice speaking in authentic environments until they had fully developed their linguistic accuracy. This method provided no opportunity for communicative competence development and was evident during the language table periods allocated by the program for apparent language function use in the target language (Savignon, 1983, p. 21). The study was a breakthrough which led the author to publications that helped cement CLT as a foreign language (FL) pedagogical method.

According to Savignon (1972), “communicative competence may be defined as the ability to function in a truly communicative setting – that is, in a dynamic exchange in which linguistic competence must adapt itself to the total informational input, both linguistic and paralinguistic, of one or more interlocutors” (p. 8). Savignon (1983) suggested an approach that “began with meaning rather than with grammatical structures” (p. 21). “That is not to say that linguistic or formal exercises are not useful. They are. But they are most useful when they accompany or follow rather than precede communicative experiences, and they should be based on needs generated by those experiences” (Savignon, 1983, p. 31). Although Savignon (1983) took care of fully developing the theory and suggested practices of CLT, she was fully acquainted with the tendency where, “the testing and teaching practices that prevailed were never as pure in practice as in theory” (p. 23). She has since stressed the importance of teachers ideally occupying both extremities of the theory development and practice spectrum, that of researcher and teacher (Savignon, 1983, p. 55). She has also been very much aware of how community values (politics, economy, school administrations) influence what the teacher ends up teaching in class (Savignon, 1983, p. 116).

The above presented premise and foundations of CLT through the works of Savignon (1972, 1983) introduces the following literature review.

II. Literature Review

Communicative Competence

“Central to an understanding of communicative language teaching is an understanding of the term communicative competence” (Savignon, 1987, p. 235). A further step back from CLT brings the attention of this study to sociolinguist Dell Hymes, the first to introduce the concept of communicative competence. In a keynote address he gave at the University of Pennsylvania in 1978 he stated, “Linguistic competence needs to be viewed as part of communicative competence, and the character of competence needs to be understood in relation to the social history and social structure that shape it in a given case” (p. 29). He outlined the state of language use at the time with the cultural melting pot. He used as examples the African American and Native American dialects as well as the growing integration of Spanish in the United States (US), as factors influencing English language teaching (ELT). He stressed the importance of the linguistics and education fields working hand to hand and both taking full responsibility in the process of this interaction. He points at the linguistic field in saying, “I have argued against the mainstream in linguistics for years, precisely because it has been inadequate to study of the role of language in human life” (p. 30). However, he does not absolve the education field and declares their limitations, “One often says, start where the child is, develop the child’s full potential. To do that, linguistically, one must have knowledge of the ways of speaking of the community of which the child is part” (p. 30). Meaning that professionals in the education field need to inform themselves constantly on the language and society of the populations they are working with.

Hymes (1978) built awareness of the changing times in the second language acquisition field and provided a glimpse at the direction it was taking where CLT could begin to surface,

From every side it begins to be recognized that linguistics as we have known it is inevitably part of a larger field. At the first, language structure was divorced from language use. Now language use is included along with language structure by most. Eventually it will be generally recognized that it is not use that is a derivative of structure, but structure that is dependent on use. (p. 37)

He intended for linguistics to be a part of the study of communicative interaction (Hymes, 1978, p. 37). He went deeper into the concept by explaining what the notion of competence would be like, especially in the US, saying it “will go beyond innate and universal abilities to the kinds of competence valued and permitted in a given society, to opportunities and obstacles of access of kinds of competence” (p. 37). Hymes (1978) encouraged professionals in the field to not view language education as a whole within the US society, but one that is varied and has different representations of competence (p. 38), which is still the case today.

Furthermore, he analyzed the word ‘competence’ as introduced by linguist Noam Chomsky almost a decade before his publication. He argued that Chomsky presents ‘competence’ as an ideal level of grammar knowledge potentiality (“abstract grammatical potential”) possessed only by children in learning their L1, but that social considerations were completely absent from this definition (Hymes, 1978, pp. 42-43). Hymes (1978) describes Chomsky’s definition of the word as “an immaculate innate schemata, capable of generating anything, unconstrained and unshaped by social life” (p. 43). However, “in education the terms ‘competence’ and ‘competency-based’ have become associated with a quite different conception. The emphasis is upon specific, demonstrable, socially relevant skills” (Hymes, 1978, p. 43). But to achieve competence in language education according to Chomsky’s definition is limiting because it gives an idea that demonstrated skills according to competence is “something that was once in hand, lost, and now to be gone back to” (Hymes, 1978, p. 43).

In sum, Hymes believed that the purpose of language learning is to achieve communicative competence and that both the linguistics and education field should serve this purpose. The role that structure plays in communicative competence depends on the needs in the learner's use of that target language. The meaning or representation of competence for a second language learner depends on the combination of multiple factors and cannot be entirely equated to this perfect grammatical knowledge that a child possesses in their L1.

Later in 1981, Canale and Swain followed Hymes' vision by developing a theory of communicative competence involving three main areas: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. Canale and Swain (1981) is a publication focused on outlining the definitions and implications of each of these three areas. It was inspired by the need to measure 'communicative competence' of students enrolled in general French as a second language programs in elementary and secondary schools in Ontario" (pp. 31-32). "We will assume that a theory of communicative competence interacts (in as yet unspecified ways) with a theory of human action and with other systems of human knowledge (e.g., world knowledge) and is observable indirectly in actual communicative performance" (Canale and Swain, 1981, p. 32). The authors offered this theoretical framework for use in second language teaching and testing (Canale and Swain, 1981, p. 32).

According to the authors, grammatical competence "includes knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, semantics, and phonology" (Canale and Swain, 1981, p. 32). Sociolinguistic competence is sub-categorized by the author into Sociocultural rules of use that "specify the ways in which utterances are produced with respect to communicative events" and, Rules of discourse which are "the combination of utterances, making reference more to notions such as topic and comment" (Canale and Swain, 1981, p. 33). Finally, strategic competence is

the work of “verbal and nonverbal communicative strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or insufficient competence” (Canale and Swain, 1981, p. 33). Canale and Swain (1981) conclude their paper by stressing the importance of probability of occurrence knowledge in communicative competence, which is developed in all of the three main areas (p. 34). Meaning, “the knowledge of relative frequencies of occurrence that a native speaker has with respect to grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence” (Canale and Swain, 1981, p. 34).

Teacher Perceptions of CLT

Woods & Cakir (2011) also refer to CLT as “multi-dimensional and dynamic”, stating the surprisingly limited research that has been done on teacher knowledge and beliefs of the method (p.1). Woods & Cakir (2011) categorize their study between “a personal–impersonal dimension, and a theoretical–practical dimension” (p. 1). The investigation took on these two dimensions related to CLT with the participation of six newly-graduated (from undergraduate courses) Turkish teachers of English. The paper outlines an interesting review between types of teacher knowledge and how objective or subjective they may be, where they suggest that personal belief systems and knowledge structures may be very much intertwined (Woods & Cakir, 2011, p. 5). What is considered practical knowledge is not actually gained by the teachers through experience but from theoretical/textbook instruction of what they should do in practice (Woods & Cakir, 2011, p. 7).

This study did not include observation of participants’ teaching, but rather conducted surveys on participant background knowledge of CLT and elicited perceptions of their CLT knowledge through watching a pre-determined video-tape of classroom teaching (Woods & Cakir, 2011, p. 10). The background surveys produced textbook definitions of CLT methodology

but also in a personalized manner that drew from their experiences and stories (Woods & Cakir, 2011, p. 11). However, the video-watching phase results “was closer to the views of the instructor who carried out the teaching than to both the principles expressed in the literature and their own original articulation of their understandings” (Woods & Cakir, 2011, p. 12). The authors concluded regarding theoretical knowledge linked to actual experience that, “once it is connected to the more fine-grained texture of actual experience, the theoretical concept is deconstructed, personalized and reinterpreted” (Woods & Cakir, 2011, p. 13). Pedagogical implications propose that learning concepts is not learning the meanings but personalizing them through teacher practice in the classroom. Also, concepts such as CLT do not automatically translate into classroom practices. Teachers experiencing these concepts in the classroom can provide valuable information that can lead back to the drawing-board and begin the process of “re-theorization” resulting in the next step that future research will produce (Woods & Cakir, 2011, p. 14). As presented by Gonzalez-Pino (2011) in an article that evaluates the ironic lack of communication in teaching CLT,

While we may think that after twenty-five years of attention to the value of proficiency-oriented goals, teaching, and measurement we are all on the same page, the results suggest that we are not and that we need a renewed dedication to the worthwhile goals and standards we set out so long ago where the implementation is still in progress. (pp. 792-793)

Chiu-Yin (2012) took a similar stance to Woods & Cakir (2011). She presented CLT as “a term that refers to various approaches and methods for teaching a second language (L2) communicatively. The main purpose of CLT is to develop learners’ communication skills and ability” (p. 1). The author’s study was intended to bridge the gap between the literature and what teachers actually understand of CLT and practice in their classrooms. Chiu-Yin’s (2012) study included a triangulated research (observations, three-level semi-structured interviews and the

collection of documents and records) of six instructors of beginning and intermediate Spanish of a university in the United States. Recursive data analysis method was used with themes divided into Perceptions of CLT and Activities Used in CLT. Results on perception demonstrated that, “most of them believe that oral ability is the major goal of CLT, whereas a few teachers understand that communication refers to the focus of the four skills” (Chiu-Yin, 2012, p. 7). The four skills refer to: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Savignon (1983) explained that communicative competence is not only related to speaking, in her support of discourse competence as one of the four components of communicative competence, she explains the transmission of meaning through listening, speaking, reading and writing (pp. 35, 38). However, many of the instructors admitted that they were not sure what CLT was due to their lack of practice with the method (Chiu-Yin, 2012, p. 7). In terms of attitudes towards CLT, “they agree that students need a variety of methods to learn an L2 effectively” (Chiu-Yin, 2012, p. 8). They also believe that it takes a lot of effort to put together CLT based lesson plans (Chiu-Yin, 2012, p. 8). Finally regarding activities used in CLT, the researchers realized that the activities implemented by the participants in this study were not entirely CLT based, they were a combination of CLT with other teaching methods based on learner needs and not so much on keeping a focus on CLT (Chiu-Yin, 2012, p. 10).

Savignon (1983) stated that, “communicative language teaching begins with an identification of the needs and interests of the learners. In all cases the needs and interests of the learners can be defined and programs designed to meet them” (p. 124). She further outlines that the combination of teaching methods has always been common in language classrooms (Savignon, 1983, p. 23). Pedagogical implications suggest that understanding of teacher perceptions and beliefs is vital, especially after what they discover through putting these theories

in practice in the ESL classroom that the theory does not always directly translate to the classroom (Chiu-Yin, 2012, p. 13). However, limitations on teacher perception could also be affected by affective memory. “If an individual had a negative experience about a certain activity, avoidance of the same type of activity will result” (Chiu-Yin, 2012, p. 12).

CLT Classroom Practices

The reason that teachers may feel that ELT requires a combination of methods or that CLT lessons take a lot of effort to put together as presented in Chiu-Yin’s (2012) literature, could be explained with a perspective provided before by Hiep (2007) in an article about CLT. The author states that CLT is a broad theory that “has generated many different ways of understandings, descriptions, and uses of CLT, challenging what it actually means to classroom teachers” (Hiep, 2007, p. 193). Each classroom has a different context that will vary depending on whether it is an ESL or EFL environment, on learner goals and policies of the institution it functions under. Hiep (2007) confirms that practices of CLT “may vary depending on the dynamics of a certain context which constructs the actual meaning of communicative competence as well as the tools to develop it” (p. 195). In his article he outlines the differences of western English speaking context versus other contexts such as those in China or Vietnam. The teachers in this study agree with the goal of CLT, which is helping students learn how to use the language and they try to match this tool with the context of their learning environments (Hiep, 2007, p. 200).

However as stated by the author himself,

Their desire to implement CLT, which is manifest through efforts to promote common Western CLT practices such as pair work and group work, conflicts with many contextual factors. These factors range from systemic constraints such as traditional examinations, large class sizes, to cultural constraints characterized by beliefs about teacher and student role, and classroom relationships, to personal constraints such as students’ low motivation and unequal ability to take part in independent active learning practices, and

even to teachers' limited expertise in creating communicative activities like group work. (Hiep, 2007, p. 200)

Savignon (2007) wrote in a reassessment she made at that time of the phenomenon of CLT in the face of changes in FL teaching with the development of globalization and technology,

Central to a representation of CLT, however, is the understanding of language learning as both an educational and a political issue. Language teaching is inextricably tied to language policy. The selection of methods and materials appropriate to both the goals and context of teaching begins with an analysis of learning in a given educational setting. (p. 209)

Against Communicative Competence / CLT

Swaffar (2006) describes the supposed breakthrough of communicative competence out of the antiquated audio-lingual method as more of an “evolution” of the same concept rather than an actual “revolution” (p. 246). She states that they both “share an emphasis on oral communication in generic contexts as the cornerstone of beginning and intermediate foreign language (FL) learning” (Swaffar, 2006, p. 246). Swaffar (2006) advocates cultural literacy as the element missing from the communicative competence approach. “Communicative competence could take on an entirely new meaning if the ability to read, write, listen, reflect, and communicate intelligently about a culture’s multiple facets were to become the chief goal of FL programs at all levels, from beginners to graduate students” (Swaffar, 2006, pp. 248-249). The author reports that communicative competence applications at beginner and intermediate levels FL classrooms “still reflect its audio-lingual predecessors focusing on student recall of information rather than on analysis of that information” (Swaffar, 2006, p. 247). Nonetheless according to Savignon & Sysoyev (2002), culture is not an aspect absent from the aim of communicative competence where she explains how “sociocultural competence is integral to L2 communicative competence” (p. 513). “Explicit teaching of sociocultural strategies will promote

development of a L2 sociocultural competence and help prepare learners for subsequent active and adequate participation in intercultural communication and dialogue of cultures” (Savignon & Sysoyev, 2002, p. 513).

Magnan (2007) later brings a similar perspective as Swaffar (2006) did. He first introduces that “CLT is widely accepted in the United States and many nations” (p. 249), which is a bold statement considering the research presented above that demonstrates that not all teachers generally agree or therefore even understand the CLT approach in its entirety. Magnan (2007) evaluates CLT in this article in answer to the “U.S. Senate Resolution designating 2005 as the Year of Languages” (Blake & Kramersch, 2007, p. 247). The US federal government realized the importance of the new generations acquiring second or even third languages to be able to compete in the new globalized world community. In an attempt to visualize what foreign language education in the US looks like, CLT is taken into consideration (Blake & Kramersch, 2007, p. 247).

Magnan (2007) speaks of utilizing CLT as the means to accomplish this goal, through research he supports the argument that language is learned for social functions by stating that, “language develops from individuals and their social foundations” (p. 250). The author presents the CLT approach for this population of students as one of individual tasks conducted in pairs where learners talk about themselves in the target language. However he finds limitations in this approach, without exposure to the culture of the target language American students will learn the language with still their own culture in mind and not absorbing that of the other and therefore limiting their social functions.

Magnan (2007) concludes that,

Short-range, we need to acknowledge that CLT gives students only linguistic tools (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, basic pragmatic routines) and to accept that attaining true communicative competence is rarely possible in our current instructional settings. Then, long-range, we must turn to developing a competence that is responsive to foreign communities because it will be developed through them. It is this long-range goal that will move us nationally toward both enhanced language-skill ability and a policy of foreign language education leading to intercultural competence. (p. 251)

This statement gives out the idea that the modern understandings of communicative competence are exactly the opposite of what Hymes envisioned in the seventies, almost to the point of irony or even absurdity. Although this source was not geared towards English Language Learners (ELLs), it is interesting to see the position of CLT with other languages or contexts, such as the foregoing study presented by Chiu-Yin (2012).

Common Misunderstandings Related to CLT

Wu (2008) outlines common misunderstandings that teachers and researchers have regarding CLT. This article is written from the perspective of CLT in FL education, specifically English teaching in China. Wu (2008) states that many English teachers advocate for the use of CLT in the L2 classroom because it responds to their needs (p. 51). Interestingly the Chinese student needs are presented here as communicative, but travel and speaking to people from other countries are the only examples given of these needs, which does not reflect a day-to-day scenario. The four common misunderstandings of CLT reviewed in this article are: (1) CLT means an exclusive focus on meaning, (2) CLT excludes corrective feedback, (3) CLT means listening and speaking practice, (4) CLT means avoidance of the learners' first language (L1). The author states that CLT does encourage an appropriate focus on form as part of its approach, helping students to use this knowledge to communicate (Wu, 2008, p. 50). As reported in the introduction of this paper, Savignon (1983) advocates for the "from meaning to surface

structure” of the three general interpretations of communicative competence that she presents (pp. 24, 30-33).

It is necessary to make a pause in this section to include additional resource arguments that prove that grammar is not neglected in communicative competence:

Hymes (1978) also presented a response to the so questioned role of grammar in communicative competence explaining that,

Grammar is precipitate of a normative selection from among the ways of speaking, the true verbal repertoire, the full organization of means of speech. Grammar began that way in the service of Hellenistic cultural hegemony and continues that way in the service of a certain conception of science. A valid notion of verbal competence reaches out to include the full organization of means and meaning of speech, and becomes part of a notion of communicative competence. (p. 43)

In addition, Canale and Swain (1981) agree with Hymes by stating, “Grammatical competence will be an important concern for any communicative approach whose goals include providing learners with the knowledge of how to determine and express accurately the literal meaning of utterances” (p. 33).

Continuing with Wu’s (2008) outline of common misunderstandings, CLT actually makes use of recast as a way of providing students with corrective feedback within context and maintaining the communicative motivation of the learner (p. 51). Looking back, Savignon’s (1972) study proved to be successful with participant performance of communicative acts where, “grammar and pronunciation errors were expected and were always ignored when they did not interfere with meaning” (p. 25). Furthermore, all linguistic skills should be developed and used to communicate. Finally, CLT supports the controlled use of the L1 in the classroom to assist in making clarifications and understanding (Wu, 2008, p. 51-52). This also agrees with Savignon’s (1972) study where participants were free to insert L1 words where they did not know the L2

word for it or ask in French how to say the word in French, what they said was more important than how they said it (p. 30).

An Example of CLT Development

Gatbonton & Segalowitz (2005) had intended to prompt the “communication” in the CLT field by creating and providing actual classroom practices designed according to the CLT approach. Six years later researchers such as Gonzalez-Pino (2011) and others presented earlier in this paper are still putting the research community consensus into doubt. Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005) provided a theoretical analysis of the “great challenges facing CLT methodology and how to promote automatic fluency within this framework” (p. 325). L2 learners should not only achieve communicative competence but moreover achieve automaticity as part of their communicative competence. The authors provided this tool all the while recognizing the common skepticism that many researchers and teachers in the FL teaching field have towards CLT.

“Automatic fluency is defined here as the smooth and rapid production of utterances, without undue hesitations and pauses, that results from constant use and repetitive practice” (Gatbonton and Segalowitz, 2005, p. 326). This tool should not be confused with pattern practice and drills which have “come to be seen as incompatible with communicatively oriented approaches” (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005, p. 326). The Automatization in Communicative Contexts of Essential Speech Segments (ACCESS) methodology “captures the major elements of the CLT approach” (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005, p. 328), it provides the learner with opportunity for repetition within the framework of CLT. ACCESS lessons are composed of three phases: Creative Automatization Phase, a Language Consolidation Phase, and a Free Communication Phase, one leading into the other (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005, p. 329). The

authors exemplify this model with a communicative task called FAMILY where learners are able to learn and practice repetition of speech utterances by creating an imaginary family tree using themselves. There is even room in this exercise for grammatical competence, supported by CLT where the teacher has the chance to provide corrective feedback or explanations as the students are verbally creating their work (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005, p. 337). This analysis is intended to add the goal of automaticity within the CLT framework and help it evolve by promoting fluency (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005, p. 345-346).

Summary

So many questions can be considered unanswered from the review of this literature, for there is a mix of understandings and positions related to CLT. The different categories within this literature review layout the shape that the interviews for this study might take in answering the research questions below. The purpose of this study is not to solve an actual problem, but to inform on teacher reported knowledge and beliefs regarding CLT, and reflect on what pedagogical and theoretical implications this may have. The research literary works above have presented other studies related to teacher perceptions and classroom practices similar to this one. It is the hope of this researcher that the present study can add to the collected findings on teacher perceptions of CLT to date. Therefore, provide evidence on what the next steps should be in the SLA field related to CLT. Arguments against CLT, misunderstandings and developments of the approach can be compared to the participants' responses to better analyze the data of this project.

III. Methodology

Research Questions

1. What do teachers report about their knowledge of CLT?
2. What do teachers think about CLT?
3. How do teachers report applying CLT to their teaching?

The outline of the research questions for this study are intended as a walk-through with the participants from what they report they have learned about CLT in their graduate courses to reported classroom experience and practices to a hypothetical application of CLT knowledge. Although the participants may not have been trained in CLT, the fact that they have theoretical formal education on the approach is of great benefit to this study, in comparison maybe with an ESL teacher who has not had any formal education in the TESL field. At the same time they are teaching assistants (TAs) within the same institution, so there is a great connection between what they learn and the institutional ideologies and even policies of where they work. The programs for which they work encourage but do not mandate the use of CLT. This research also depicts what role CLT plays in reported classroom practices and the participants' beliefs related to it. Since this study did not include observations, an 'application of knowledge' research question was included at the end and a directly related teacher task was given for the participants to complete. The latter is part of the last phase of the interview as a way of participants demonstrating their knowledge and/or experience of and with CLT.

Participants

This study gathered interview data from ten participants whom are teaching assistants (TAs), five from an intensive English program and five from an ESL program for undergraduate students at a regional university in the upper mid-west region of the United States. At the time of

this study, all participants were enrolled in a TESL graduate program of the aforementioned university as part of the requirements to hold the position of TA. They have varying educational and teaching backgrounds. Figure 1 below shows the data related to participant educational background. Five out of ten participants have undergraduate backgrounds in English. Two participants have TESL education backgrounds. One of these participants has a second specialty in Spanish education. Another participant has a bachelors in Spanish education as well. Two participants have other educational backgrounds unrelated to English education.

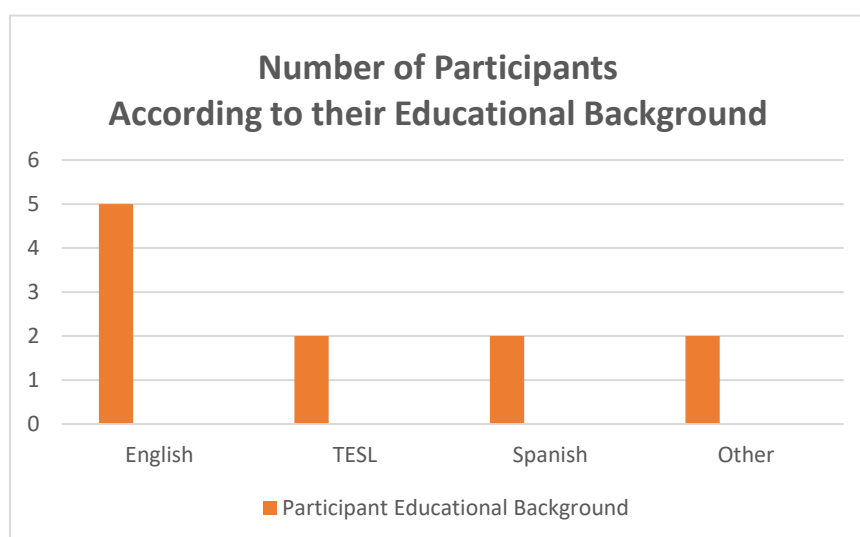


Figure 1: Educational Background

Figure 2 below shows the data related to participant age at the time of the study, which ranged between 24 and 48. One participant was 24 years, one participant was 25 years old, two participants were age 27, two were age 28, two were age 29, one was age 41 and one was age 48.

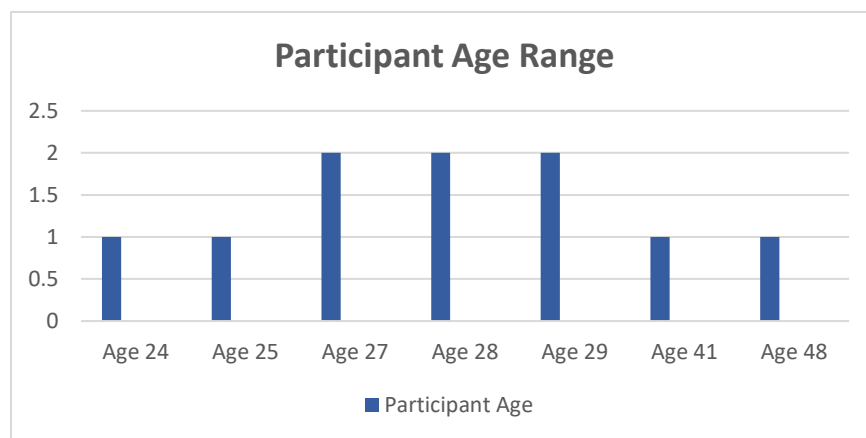


Figure 2: Participant Age Range

They are from varying nationalities including United States, Thailand, Mexico, El Salvador, South Korea, Lithuania and Sri Lanka. As an additional indicator of participant level of education, the researcher included the question of number of semesters completed in their current MA TESL program, demonstrated in Figure 3 below. Four participants are on their 2nd semester, three participants are on their 3rd semester, two participants are on their 4th semester and one participant is on the 5th semester.

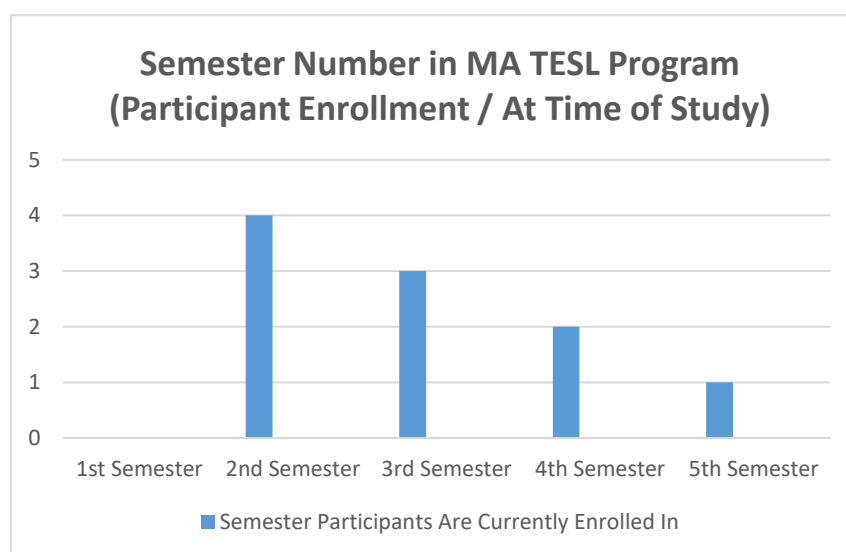


Figure 3: Participant MA TESL semester enrollment

In addition, the MA TESL program gives students the opportunity to complete the courses towards obtaining their K-12 License, which will allow them to teach ESL in the state public school system. Only four participants in this study either already had (from their undergraduate studies in the US) or were in the process of obtaining their K-12 License. In regards to participant future plans after they graduate (demonstrated in Figure 4 below): four participants plan to teach in the state public school system, two participants are planning to enroll in a Linguistics doctoral program, three participants plan to teach ESL at a university and one participant plans to teach EFL overseas.

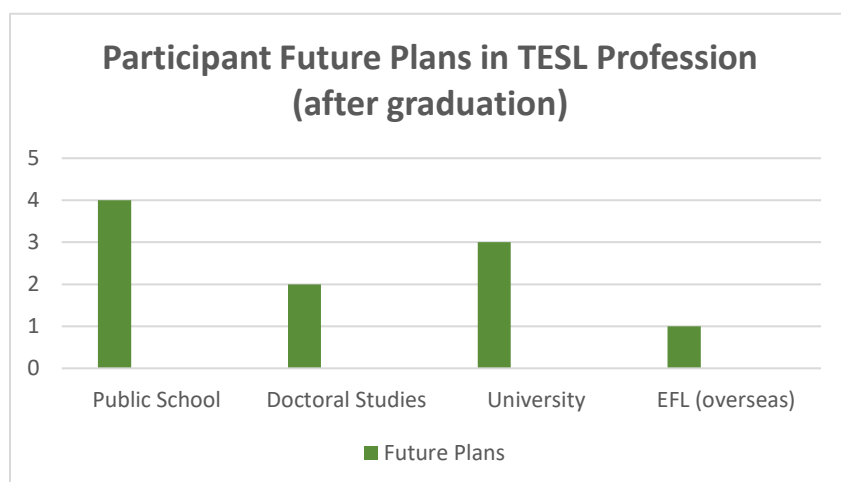


Figure 4: Participant Future Plans after Graduation

Participant years of teaching experience include: four participant has 1 to 3 years of experience, the remaining six participants have 4 to 7 years of experience. Seven participants have taught both in ESL and EFL environments, where three have only taught in ESL environments.

In the ESL programs that they currently work for (see Figure 5 below): five participants have taught reading courses, three participants have taught writing courses, eight participants have taught listening & speaking courses, four participants have taught vocabulary courses, one

participant has taught pronunciation, two participants have taught oral presentation courses and one participant has taught grammar.

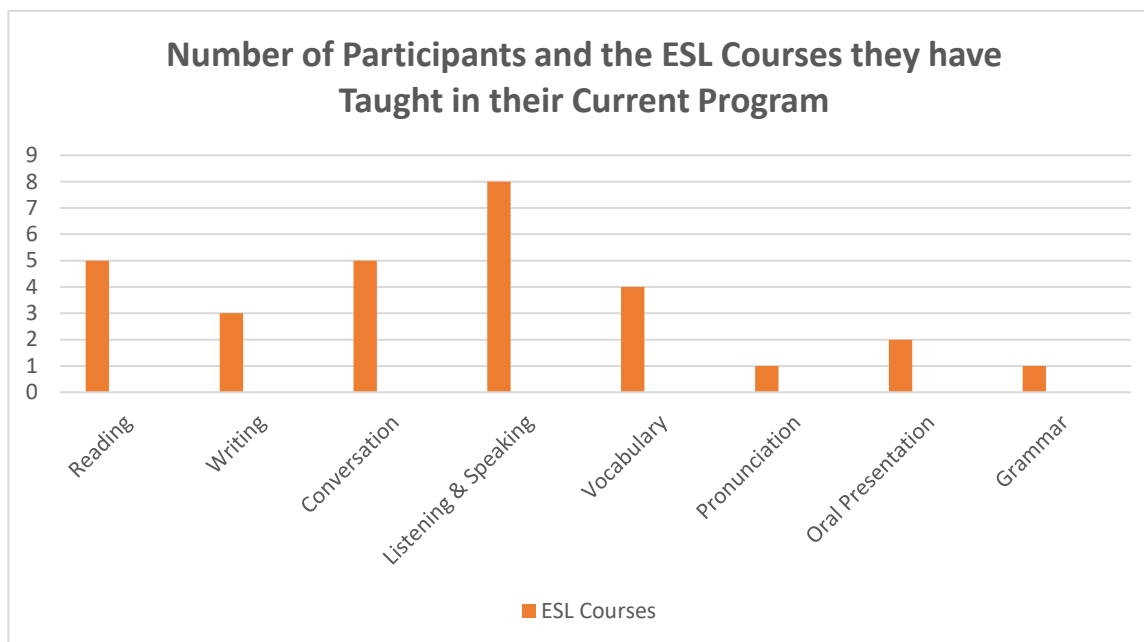


Figure 5: ESL Courses Taught in Current Teaching Program

Before teaching in their current programs: five participants taught English, two participants tutored in English, two participants taught Spanish and one participant taught math.

Data Collection Instrument

The present is a qualitative study that was conducted through a four-phased individual semi-structured interview process. Phase 1 – is a fill-out form (see Appendix A.) where participants reported background information without including their name. Phases 2 through 4 were audio-recorded in their majority. After completing the form, the audio-recorded interview (see Appendix B.) included a set of preview questions regarding general classroom practices. Phase 2 – focused on teacher Reported Knowledge of CLT that include the sub-categories of Theoretical Understanding of CLT, Classroom Experience with CLT and CLT & Academic English. Phase 3 – is Beliefs about CLT, sub-categorized into Thoughts or Opinions. The final

Phase 4 – related to the Application of CLT including teacher tasks, sub-categorized into an Ordering Task and then a Create a Lesson Task that involved brainstorming and then verbally explaining it to the researcher. The Ordering Task entails a form with a continuum (see Appendix C.) created by the researcher and a numbered list of common subjects that are covered in the ESL courses the TAs teach. The participants worked with this form as part of the study. Finally, the Ordering Task form was used as a prompt for the Create a Lesson Task to hypothetically create a communicative lesson.

Procedure

The purpose of this study was not to collect data of actual teacher classroom practices, but an elicitation of indirect or secondary information where teachers verbally reported their knowledge, beliefs or thoughts about CLT. As stated above, participant background information was collected in writing through a fill-out form (see Appendix A.) in the interest of time. Followed by a set of preview questions (see Appendix B.) on their individual general classroom practices. Then in Phase 2 (again see Appendix B.), the researcher went into the actual topic of CLT starting with questions related to teacher reported knowledge of CLT from the graduate courses they have taken to the application of CLT in their classrooms. Given that the participants are ESL teachers of academic English, the researcher included a question which explores the role of CLT in academic English. Next in Phase 3 (again see Appendix B.), the interviewer inquired about the interviewees' thoughts, beliefs or opinions regarding the CLT approach as teachers. Finally, in Phase 4 the participants demonstrated their understanding of CLT by applying it through a teacher task created by the investigator. The Ordering Task included a paper form with a continuum on it (see Appendix C.). Each extremity of the continuum is labeled as Less Communicative and More Communicative. Underneath there is a numbered list of common

topics that are covered in the courses the participants teach. Their job was to use the numbers attached to each topic and place them along the continuum according to their understanding of how they would rank them along it. They analyzed each topic and decided whether they thought these topics were less communicative or more communicative. Afterwards, from these topics that they organized they chose one that they had placed at the beginning of the continuum as least communicative. The researcher gave them a few minutes to brainstorm and then hypothetically create (Create a Lesson) and verbally report how they would make that particular topic into a communicative lesson.

IV. Results and Analysis

Analysis Introduction

The data was analyzed using Corbin & Strauss' (2008) approach to grounded theory of qualitative research. The analysis process began with somewhat of an inductive reasoning where the search "begins with data and ends up with a theory" (Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p. 421). Yet in this particular study there was no theory to be developed, but only the questioning of the understanding and use of an already established approach – CLT, among university ESL teaching assistants. The choice of inductive reasoning as the starting point for the analysis was to avoid preconceived notions of meaning in the data. Deductive reasoning (Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p. 421) will play a role towards the end of the analysis, where data will be compared to prior investigations on CLT theory research and practice in the discussion section of this project. Inductive data analysis was guided by conceptualization and descriptions with the use of theme development (Nunan & Bailey, 2009, pp.423-424), categorized by higher-level concepts that were subcategorized into lower-level concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 52). The lower-level concepts provided the properties and dimensions for the higher-level concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 165). The analysis plan was outlined as follows:

1. After the first interview with the first participant, the researcher read all of the transcribed material without making any notes so as to enter into the participant's perspective before inducing any ideas, this helped the researcher step out of her framework (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 163).
2. The researcher first divided the data according to the responses from each research question (the interview question phases had already been categorized according to each research question when designing the data collection instrument).

3. Then, the researcher began coding by dividing the data into sections which were determined through natural breaks in the interview transcripts that indicated a change of topic (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 163).
4. Each section was examined in depth using the analytical tools of asking questions and making comparisons (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, pp. 69-78). This operation was written up in memos, which represented the mental dialogue of this researcher with the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, pp. 169-170).
5. Each memo was labeled with a concept, these concepts were of course temporary subject to findings in new data that was collected after.
6. A list of concepts/codes were saved from each interview analysis to refer to in following data collection analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 192).
7. In addition, data was later analyzed within the context of CLT. (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 245) Process was identified through the discovery of patterns in participant interviews (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, pp. 261-262).

Limitations in putting this analysis plan in to stemmed from the decision to make the interviews semi-structured with the intention of analyzing each interview before the following one. This was aimed at the possibility of new questions that could surface before the next interview and the chance to gather as much information as feasible. However, this would have been effective if the same participant were to be interviewed more than once. New questions drawn from each interview resulted obsolete for the following participant since their responses were unpredictable and different. This study was not designed in an ethnographic form for this type of analysis to be effective. However, having a semi-structured form did allow to acquire more details on participants' responses. In addition, patterning answers proved to be very

adequate for this type of data. Furthermore, the decision to create broad questions was beneficial in the sense that it truly reduced the chances of answers being manipulated by what the researcher wanted to hear. However, it confused the analysis in making it difficult to answer the research questions on some occasions.

Regardless of these limitations in the process of executing the research, the data analysis structure in this study led to the determination of major themes, these major themes are summarized and outlined below.

Defining CLT

The first research question of this study was aimed at learning what participants had to say on their reported knowledge of CLT. A variation of definitions, descriptions and contexts were verbalized by the participants when reporting on their knowledge of CLT. The researcher has outlined these components into the following themes:

- Teacher reported definitions
- Insufficient knowledge of CLT
- CLT is popular
- CLT and EFL
- CLT includes reading and writing

The names of the participants' (P) are omitted and labeled with numbers 1 through 10 in the interest of confidentiality.

Teacher reported definitions

The table below captures the collection of phrases used by the participants to define CLT. Oral communication, real life situations and production of language seem to be the common themes in this compilation.

Table 1: Teacher Reported Definitions

Participants	Definitions
P1	Activities that lead to communication. Production of language for communicative purposes. For the purpose of having day to day conversations.
P2	did not provide a definition
P3	provided a schema which she learned from an English teaching certification program outlined below this table.
P4	Students being able to communicate with others. The goal is to have students communicate, that's it.
P5	Focused on communication. Get the students to talk, to listen. At least just speak, to be able to communicate, to get messages across.
P6	A student-oriented method...
P7	About teaching English through communication, whether it be writing or speaking. Learn the language through producing it to communicate. They have to talk to learn the language. They are forced to talk and produce the language.
P8	Dealing with real life situations, where you get students to interact orally with people. Creating natural situations for students. Communicating more in the real world. It's creating situations where students can practice more natural language exchange.
P9	Practical ways of understanding language. How to communicate something that in real life they need to know how to communicate. Focused on things that students need right away.
P10	In order for students to gain access to language, they need to be able to use it in conversation. Engagement with language. Emphasis on reception and production.

P3 provided a schema taught to her by an English teaching certification program that according to her was designed following CLT. She said that these classes, "...were mainly focused on teaching and practicing oral communication". The purpose of this program was to directly place the trainees into a teaching job overseas once they had completed the course. The given structure was to be applied to every lesson, it included:

1. Input written or listening.
2. Students had to notice whatever new structure you were teaching them, you couldn't point it out to them.

3. They come up with the initial idea of what they think the rule is.
4. Consolidation step where the teacher brings it all together from what they think the rule is to what it actually is.
5. Guided practice.
6. Then free practice.

Interestingly, in these reports participants also mentioned what they understand CLT is not when differentiating it from something else, referring mainly to writing, reading and grammar as not CLT related,

P1: “So it’s not focused on...what, academic language? If I may say, like, it’s mostly for the purpose of having a day to day conversation.”

P4: “Students being able to communicate with others than let’s say being able to write an academic paper or do more writing or reading or things like that, that require a higher degree of vocabulary or a higher degree of proficiency.”

P5: “Get the students to talk, to listen, and to not just focus on the content or the grammar.”

P8: “As far as I know CLT is about communicating more in the real world, it’s not so much about writing academic essays.”

P10: “They need to have some sort of engagement with the language on a greater sense than just like reading it or having somebody process it to them.”

Insufficient knowledge of CLT

Four out of ten participants reported they had already learned or studied CLT before enrolling in their current graduate program. P1 has a bachelor’s degree in TESL from her home country and says to have studied about it there. P3 enrolled in an English certification program that was intended to relocate her to teach overseas, which was supposedly designed according to

CLT. P5 and P10 also have bachelor's degrees related to linguistics and studied about CLT there, also as language learners they were partly taught their second languages with the use of CLT. However, none of the participants reported having a full training on CLT, moreover some participants outwardly reported that teachings they have received on CLT seemed to be incomplete.

P2: "Because most of the courses that I'm taking kind of cover theoretical backgrounds of language teaching, but I feel like I don't really learn a lot about how to teach and what to teach to students."

P4: "Honestly I think I've learned just a little bit in one class but that was it. I don't think that that's...CLT is kind of promoted or taught more in other classes besides just one particular class, teaching methods class, where they expose you to all these different teaching approaches and that was just for some time maybe two, three weeks when we looking at CLT and its benefits and negatives"

"I don't know much of it and I haven't really studied on my own more about it."

"For me learning about them it was more informational than how they actually looked like in action. So in taking this course I felt like I was reading a book and learning about 'oh there is this method, there is that method and this and that', but I just didn't feel like I know how they look like. I have seen CLT and I have seen direct teaching and that's why I feel that they are successful because I've seen it in action, not just myself doing it but other teachers doing it and having success with those. But with the other ones I just read about them but I don't really know how you actually put them into practice. So again learning about these teaching methods it was more of an informational session, but not necessarily how to implement them in your classes."

P8: "We're told we teach them that, but we're never really taught how to do it."

“I’m not sure that some of my professors’ classes...they always tell us ‘yeah this is how we do things’ but they never show us how to do it or if we’re effective or not, so as far as like being able to say how we do it or why we do it; I don’t know if I can have an answer for that.”

P9: “I feel like my first semester I got like a strong introduction to it and then a little bit in the English program when I was teaching a conversation class...like the textbook kind of was based on communicative language exercises.”

“...But I feel like this last year it has not been a focus much at all in the classes that I have been taking.”

“I don’t feel like, I feel like there was a good introduction and then it was just kind of left hanging.”

P10: “To be honest the teaching method stuff, it’s weird. The teaching method stuff is not really well covered in our program compared to like the actual like linguistic theory or like the acquisition of language. Because that class is such like a historical perspective, where it’s like ‘this is what we’ve done’, but it doesn’t really say, it doesn’t really go into like a detail like ‘this is a lesson plan that you would see for a blah blah blah blah’ right, it doesn’t do that it just says ‘know these’.”

Some participants expressed having learned more about CLT from actual practice in the classroom than from their graduate courses, as P9 said above about the course he taught where the textbook contained communicative exercises.

P2: “I think most of what I know about communicative teaching comes from my experience with my job now rather than the classes that I’m taking.”

CLT is popular

It could be said that the popularity behind CLT answers to a basic logic where the purpose of learning a language is to communicate in it, so it makes sense that it be the way and the goal of learning a language. However, student needs will inevitably vary so it cannot be blindly prescribed to every learning situation. There will be more discussion further related to student needs when discussing the section related to the second research question of this study. The responses provided by participants describing CLT as popular had no explanation as to why that is. They were claims that gave more of a 'just is' or 'matter of fact' sense. There are theorists that present new ideologies and approaches that they have carefully studied like Hymes, Canale, Swain and Savignon, but later as it goes down the "grapevine" and as much as teachers are not involved in the research field (more on this later) it results in sort of a telephone effect, hearsay where teachers do what they see other teachers or authority figures do.

P1: "It's very popular (laughs) and I think that if you ask most of the teachers they would say that that's the one that they prefer, because like I said it's pretty...I don't know, new, popular?"

P3 reported the way CLT was presented to her when she was trained in it by the English certification program mentioned above, "I was told, 'CLT is the best way to teach, according to current research CLT is the future, this is the way everybody's doing it these days', and I didn't really know anything about teaching at all, so at that time I was just like 'ok that's what it is' and now that you're asking me this I feel like maybe that's not it, but that's still what it is in my mind."

P10: "Audiolingual was a big one, I mean that was used in America a long time and then communicative language approach or whatever the heck it's called. Those two have been probably the biggest emphasized ones in America."

“I’ve watched teachers teach in our ELT programs, most of them teach like they’ve watched others do or they’ve...they get ideas from each other, from other English teachers online or stuff like that. Which typically tends to be the communicative approach or audiolingual, because that’s what people have done in America, for the most part.”

Nevertheless participants do recognize the neutral stance that their current graduate program takes related to CLT and other methods of teaching ESL.

P3: “I definitely remember, like I kind of remember talking about all the methods, like CLT, audiolingual approach and some others. But I think our teacher really didn’t specify what method is best or anything like that, he kind of just showed us there are these options.”

P10: “I don’t think our professor personally endorsed any method, he just wanted us to know them, it wasn’t like he was ‘Do this!’.”

One participant did mention that the program he teaches in which is connected to his graduate program does encourage the use of CLT:

P8: “So communicative teaching, that’s one of the ones that we’re told that we teach our students or that we teach...CLT it’s called? We’re told we teach them that but we’re never really taught how to do it.”

CLT and EFL

Many of the participants are not native English speakers and have learned and taught English as a second language in their own countries, some placed EFL in their home countries as an example or point of comparison for defining CLT.

P5: “I remember that I could totally see the difference between how teachers from my country taught me and how like foreigners like from the US or UK taught me, like they used like a complete different teaching method. Teachers from my country they would focus more on like

direct- translation methods that they would just focus on grammar and how to ace the entrance exam, they don't teach you how to speak at all or how to communicate.”

P7: “So basically teaching English through communication, maybe writing or speaking because most of the time especially in Asia it's so not communicative, it's basically receptive, not productive.”

Two participants added how using CLT could actually have a negative effect in the US when applying it with the wrong students or with students that are not ready for it.

P6: “It's student-oriented method, big time and in certain instances you have students that come from backgrounds or cultures that is teacher-oriented and when you try to push it or practice it as the only method it can backfire or you can lose students' respect in a sense or would not be successful for their learning.”

“So basically its higher-level skill that some of lower-level students at our program, they do have it in their L1 but it's very hard for them to do this English. And so again, I do use it but then I have to prepare them for that, so if for example we went to the Native American week, we went to the movies, prior to that I had to introduce the vocabulary, I had to introduce a little bit of background not to overwhelm.”

P7 shared a teaching experience in the ESL program she currently works for at the university where she began teaching a listening and speaking course to new-to-country East Asian university students all from the same country. She prepared a lesson for them that required them to verbally respond and interact:

“They would not respond to me in any way, I would show them something and then I would talk to them, but they would simply not say anything like cold face, like poker faces, not even a smile and when that happened in the very first days I was so confused because I have to fill that gap,

that silence, and I have to come up with something because I used to build up my plans thinking the students would give me this answer. So I had to just find a way to fill it up and one day I remember I didn't have anything to fill it up and I tried to show them a video and fill that gap but, I don't know. I just wanted a nod, nothing they would just sit like this."

CLT includes reading and writing

Although some participants above presented reading and writing as not communicative by differentiating it from CLT, two participants clearly explained reading and writing as part of the communicative approach or a skill where CLT could be integrated.

P6: "Communicative language learning it's not only speaking, it can be put into writing as well, or reading for that matter."

P7 responded to the question of applying CLT with an example of a reading activity that she gave to her students. As an introduction to explaining this activity she said, "If you take something like reading, it seems like it is very, very passive and it is receptive when you learn the language but I think incorporating something like you read something..."

P7 earlier on defining CLT, "So basically teaching English through communication, maybe writing or speaking..."

Choosing CLT

The second research question in this study sought to explore the personal thoughts and opinions of the participants related to CLT. So as not to manipulate responses, the researcher asked very broad questions into what the informants want for their language learning students in general and what methods they believe can take them there (see Appendix B.) – Interview questions: What are you trying for your students to achieve? What do you want for your students? Can you give me examples? What methods do you believe can help them achieve this?

Can you give me examples? Participants argued that the decision of using or not using CLT is not based on whether they like it or not. The decision is based on the objectives within the classroom which determine the teaching methodology or combination of methodologies to be chosen. The participant responses related to these objectives were classified into the following themes:

- Student needs
- Combinations of other methods and classroom experiences
- Developing communicative skills is important
- Meaningful language is important

Student needs

Six out of ten participants placed the decision of using CLT (and/or other methods) or not depending on students' needs.

P1: "I think that students need...you have to see what they need more than what the method says."

P2: "It's very important to know the learners, their needs at the beginning of the semester so that I don't waste their time."

P3: "I kind of just structure my lessons off of what's in the textbook and add some additional steps that I think will be beneficial to my students. And sometimes that is communicative and sometimes it's, you know, some extra help."

P4: "The communicative approach when they actually have to do talking...if they have to talk or if its activities...something that requires them to have a conversation with someone else, then I feel like that's the best method."

“Well for what I’m doing right now basically academic English is what is really reinforced and promoted, so in this particular setting I try to make activities or even teach them ways that it will be useful for them once they go to college because, that is their goal. They are there because they want their English to be proficient enough so that they can move on to their undergrad degrees or their graduate degrees.”

P6: “When it comes to actual lessons you mix and match, you put them in a way that would benefit the students most.”

P10: “When they are using the language for something they want, like going to a coffee shop. And they need to you know...and they want something, they want a drink of coffee, right, that’s really what they want.”

“...when I have the ability to be like ‘this person really needs this’ and then I work towards that.”

Combinations of other methods and classroom experiences

Many of the participants who discussed student needs as a priority linked that topic to combining methods in line with those needs. Also, according to the participants the experiences in the classroom determine the methods used.

P1: “I don’t think that there is a method or there are methods that can help students achieve, I think that’s too broad to say that it will help them.”

“It’s important to know the methods but at the same time there are things that the methods will say that you cannot understand until you have the experience of teaching, so there are things that you do in your teaching that are effective that might violate what an approach or what a method says but you know from your experience that it’s effective.”

P2: “It’s important to keep the classes communicative, but sometimes there has to be a lecture time as well. If I just keep going and going in a communicative way and if there’s no debriefing or if there is no introduction of expressions or grammar, they don’t really feel like learning anything.”

P4: “And CLT, I like CLT because like I said they have to be able to communicate no matter where if it’s at the supermarket or at the administration office, they have to talk. So once they learn the vocabulary I think CLT is a good supplemental approach to what you do with direct teaching.”

P6: “So again the different methods that we covered in the class they were discussed and taught individually but then when it comes to actual lessons you mix and match, you put them in a way that would benefit the students most.”

P10: “I mean teaching is one of those things that I feel you have to do in order to really like get it done. You can learn as much as you want but you’ve really gotta get in the classroom and actually do it and see what works and what doesn’t.”

Developing communicative skills is important

When asking the participants what they wanted for their students, communicative skills stood out in the total of their responses among other things.

P2 sets a goal for her students based on his own experience as a second language learner himself, “I know how many times we get judged by our lack of vocabulary words or our mispronunciation, so I want my students to at least seem, sound intelligent when they are engaging in academic discussions”

P2: “Also their presentation skills, because many of my students, they really need to learn how to speak more succinctly. Especially students from a country in South Asia, they just ramble on and on sometimes about unimportant matters.”

P3: “Well I do think that giving them time to communicate and time to work through their ideas, negotiate meaning is really important.”

P6: “I always tell my students it’s safe to make mistakes here with us and talking, communicating, asking questions it’s very important. Because even though you do not know or professor does not know or the teacher does not know, there’s a way to find out and asking questions will help you and help others to build the trust and build the path toward the end of your program.”

P7: “So what I want them actually is to master the academic language if I could use it, academic writing.”

P9: “So for listening, how do you take good notes in a classroom, speaking obviously a lot of your classes have where you’re gonna give a class presentation, and so to set them up to really do well.”

P10: “But a lot of them are kind of what I talked about, especially with listening and speaking with like the ability to give a formal speech, the ability to have an academic discussion, knowing the rules of academic debate and stuff like that.”

“We worked a lot with academic words and how an academic discussion you could use tone to influence. You know we did things like, [Oh you’re gonna go visit a professor and you go to their door and they’re like, ‘As you can see on the door my office hours are from ten to twelve.’, now what do they mean when they say that, they mean that you’ve come late. But you have to know that by the tone that they’re using, cause they’re not saying you’re late or you’re...they’re

not gonna say it directly to you, you have to infer it from their tone.] So those sorts of like prosody things we worked on like inferring from somebody's tone. And I always put them in situations that were in the university itself a lot so..."

Meaningful language use is important

Other thoughts or opinions that the participants shared related to the goals they have for their students or what they want them to achieve was the importance of communication or use of language in their students being meaningful.

P4: "For me communication, it has to be meaningful and especially when you're learning as a student."

"I want them to be able to communicate, but meaningfully, not just like randomly and trying to say something but they really don't know what they're saying."

P10: "So a lot of my objectives, not my objectives, a lot of my activities involve some sort of like meaningful use of language. Something where it's like 'you want to do this' even with like lower-levels right. Where we're doing something like 'Alright we're gonna go to a coffee shop and you're gonna order something and you need to blah blah blah...' right something like that, where I'm limiting them to the types of words that they're gonna use, I think, but at the same time there is the possibility that anything could happen."

"And then using it, especially...actually the one thing I really...meaningful, meaningful language use was really big when I was in school. The students have to have a reason to use the language, because if they don't have a reason to use it then there's no point of them even like learning the language."

However, some participants did express their personal preferences that possibly stem from their classroom experiences or on how they have interpreted the education they have received so far in the TESL field. Personal preferences were classified into the following themes:

- Affinity for CLT,
- Prior beliefs
- CLT is best used with beginner level language learners
- CLT is not the best approach for teaching vocabulary

Affinity for CLT

Two participants directly expressed that they like CLT and their reasons why.

P4: “I like CLT because like I said, they have to be able to communicate no matter where if it’s at the supermarket or at the administration office, they have to talk.”

P5: “Personally I really like CLT because I think it’s like a very...because you teach them how to talk, right? So by my complimenting their outfits or I play along with them, I smile, I make them feel like I’m one of their friends.”

“I think that’s part of my CLT method because I feel like they are like my friends and like I’m not at that high of a position, so it’s more comfortable that way.”

“The most would be CLT because I really...I like it the most, because I thought it was very fun and very realistic for me at that point, yeah...and I think it makes sense the most to me.”

“It influences...well especially CLT...yeah, because I got more information about it and because personally I like it already. This method I feel like it’s the best, it stood out to me more than other teaching styles, yeah the communication and I think in our program it focuses more on get the students to speaking English as their second language. So yeah, I think that stood out to me the most and I got to use that more than other teaching styles.”

Two participants expressed their thoughts on how they found that CLT led to faster acquisition of language and better retention.

P7: “But I think when you have the communicative approach then you see your students producing language and you can give feedback to them and correct. And I think the process is much faster than when it’s just a one way process like that.”

P9: “Something they need, so because it’s based out of their need like how to make a phone call to set up an interview, those kinds of things, how to make a reservation somewhere, how to order a pizza from a pizza delivery guy. You know, whatever it would be those are things that they can grasp and learn and because it’s immediate and not something that maybe ‘I might need to use this word in ten years’, it sticks with them, the retention is better.”

Prior Beliefs

Even though teachers may be keen to trying new styles, they may also struggle with prior beliefs. This could be from learning contexts where they first formed themselves as teachers. Also, it may involve ways in which they learned a second language themselves, meaning it worked for them so therefore they strongly believe it will work for their students.

Participants 2 and 7 come from EFL teaching backgrounds and shared that these environments are more teacher-centered. Even though they agree with the more interactive student-centered style in the US and are interested in applying it, their intentions before entering class become a struggle to break old habits. They find themselves resorting back to teacher-centered styles unconsciously through the course of their lessons.

P2: “I was a little dogmatic before I came here, ‘okay I know everything about teaching’ you know, and ‘my students like me’, whatever. After I came here I realized that the activities that I was implementing in my class were really limited. I felt like something was lacking and after

internalizing these methodologies I felt like I grew as a person, I mean still I'm far from perfection, at least I have more resources to rely on."

P7: "I think even though I learned to...you know this should be student-oriented, I think I...when I plan I want it to be like that, but then in the classroom I think that I tend to follow that teacher-oriented method, that happens. So over the years, I've been teaching for like two and a half almost three years now, but I think I am reducing that...but I think that it's still there. Yeah, so it's like a continuum in a transition period, I would say. But I tried a lot to give them activities and stay back, not to talk in the middle of activity or anything, so I'm trying to restrain myself, stay back and practice that. I think that helps a lot."

Participants 4 and 10 shared methods they remembered based on their experiences as learners, what they felt that was personally effective in learning a new language:

In response to what methods she remembered the most P4 said,

"I remember the ones that to me stood out the most and that I've seen used in the schools that I've worked at...that they work. And also when I...the ones that they used at a language school that I used to attend when I was learning English".

She explained her inclination for direct-teaching as an example because, "...I always thought that that was the best thing because of their success in having students...like 90 percent of the students were passing this test, like the TOEFLs and the Cambridge Certification test. So most of the time when I'm here in the program I relate back to that particular school that I went to because of their success of students passing tests".

In answering if he applies any of the methods that he learned P10 responded, "...I probably use more communicative method than I do anything, maybe like audiolingual too as well just because I was raised under one. I went to school with teachers who used communicative, my

Spanish teachers in high school and middle school were always communicative theory and some audiolingual. I had one teacher who was very into like audiolingual and then I was taught that way.”

CLT is best used with beginner level language learners

Regarding CLT appropriate use according to level P9 said that,

“It’s my personal feeling...is more geared towards maybe building a foundation upon which language learners, like it’s a beginning point. So I’ve used it more with lower-level learners, I haven’t used it as much in like the other program I work, for reading and writing class...so upper level.”

P4: “Students being able to communicate with others than let’s say being able to write an academic paper or do more writing or reading or things like that, that require a higher degree of vocabulary or a higher degree of proficiency.”

CLT is not the best approach for teaching vocabulary

A special pattern appeared in the participants’ data related to teaching vocabulary that the researcher thinks is important to point out as a subcategory in this section, three of the participants mentioned this topic and seemed to have similar opinions related to the matter.

P1 was once observed by her supervisor in a vocabulary class. After the observation she met with her supervisor for feedback,

“...She asked me how I would make that more challenging so that they would apply academic vocabulary into their discussions, and she actually didn’t give me an answer and I couldn’t come up with an answer. I think that’s one of the challenges that I have, like I don’t know how to make students in discussions use the vocabulary that they need or that they are learning or that they are supposedly learning into their communication.”

P4: “CLT works for certain activities but I don’t feel like CLT is the best approach for me teaching academic vocabulary. I just don’t see how you can teach academic vocabulary just with CLT, there has to be direct-teaching first before you do that.”

P10: “The big thing that this program has reinforced is that there have been some problems with CLT that a lot of...that some experts feel need to be corrected or focused on. Things like for example, like vocabulary right? That vocabulary needs to be...my professor always says that vocabulary needs to be studied, you can’t just get it by like speaking a lot right?”

Applying CLT

The third and final research question of this study was teachers’ reports on how they apply CLT in their own classrooms. However, the interesting aspect of this section was the amount of reactive responses to the question of how they applied CLT in their classrooms, multiple participants were quick to clarify that they do not use CLT only, that they generally combine other methods in their lessons. The role of CLT in academic English is also discussed in this section because it is specifically the field in which the participants of this study work in. Therefore, participant statements were respectively organized into the following themes:

- Classroom Practices
- CLT is not the only method applied
- CLT and academic English

Lastly, this segment includes a teacher task that attempted to link the gap between what teachers say they do in applying CLT to how they would actually apply it given a specific lesson to create. The teacher task category below was outlined into the themes of:

- CLT Continuum
- Creating a lesson plan

This in no way intended to replace or produce the results that an actual classroom observation would provide. The purpose of this entire study is merely to learn teachers' reported knowledge and perceptions related to CLT.

Classroom Practices

All of the participants shared stories and examples of their own classroom practices of what they understand is the application of CLT. Activities that stood out were group work, real life situations, role play, conversations, classroom discussions and oral presentations.

Table 2: Teacher Reported Classroom Applications

Participant	Application of CLT
P1	Jigsaw readings (collect information).
P2	Debates and group presentation.
P3	Listening to dialogues, writing structures and practicing dialogues through role play. Question structure thru noticing, written practice then real life role play situation.
P4	Role play.
P5	Greeting students and having short conversations in class, role play.
P6	Watch a movie about a historical event, research, have a classroom discussion, ask questions.
P7	Reading, group work, research, oral presentations, explaining new vocabulary to classmates.
P8	Pragmatics, real life situations.
P9	Real life situations, reading.
P10	Real life situations.

CLT is not the only method applied

Participants each discussed their own general classroom practices and how they apply CLT. Four out of ten participants directly pointed out that they do not adhere to just one method when asked the question of how they specifically apply CLT in their own classrooms.

P1: "Well, it's just that I take the methods very loosely, depending on the activity or the topic that I need to develop, that's how I think of the activities that I can use. It depends on the topic that I'm teaching at the moment."

P3: “I would say, to be honest I don’t think I really apply one particular method. I kind of just structure my lessons off of what’s in the textbook and add some additional steps that I think will be beneficial to my students. And sometimes that is communicative and sometimes it’s, you know, some extra help.”

“I think learning like different methods and different steps that have been proven to work really, well...like I just kind of internalize those steps, like I never really went back to the textbook and I was like ‘I have to follow this, this, this’. It was more just like ‘okay that’s good to know that’s how people do it’. I have a way that I do things and maybe I incorporated some of those but I wasn’t very strict about picking a certain way to do things.”

P4: “Because like I said, I don’t subscribe to one method, I kind of like look at one and I choose what I feel...not what I feel, but what I think is useful for that particular group of students.”

CLT and academic English

The participants in this study are all enrolled in an MA TESL graduate program at the same university and as part of an assistantship that finances this program they all work within two ESL programs in the department teaching international university ELL students. The focus of both programs is to teach academic English to international students in preparation for their undergraduate or graduate degrees in English speaking countries. The researcher of this study found it necessary to ask the participants what role they believed CLT plays in academic English. Six out of ten participants responded that CLT can be applied to academic English.

P2: “A lot of people including myself think that academic English is not necessarily communicative because when you hear academic English you immediately think about articles or books. Like any language is inevitably communicative, I think be it just street English or

academic English, because no matter what you are trying to do the main goal of using language is to communicate.”

“When they’re watching a video clip of a lecturer that’s a communication because the lecturer is getting his messages across and you are interpreting that input somehow, academic English can also be communicative in that sense.”

P3: “When I think of communicative language teaching I think more of when I was a general English teacher in the...overseas. But there is a lot that can be done with CLT for academic English because obviously the students need to be able to communicate with their fellow students, professors, they need to be able to understand when people are speaking to them. So I think the biggest way that you can use CLT in academic English is to really continue to use the same principles that underlie CLT but have it be in a context of an academic setting.”

P5: “That’s really hard. Because I feel, it’s like the opposite right? You teach to speak but then academic English is like formal language. I don’t know, maybe CLT could be like the foundation that helps them thrive more later, in terms of...it could be, it could help them like build a better foundation for them to learn new fancy words or something. I don’t know if I have a good enough answer for that.”

P6: “The students get used to the idea of critical thinking and expressing their opinion in a respectful way but still being able to communicate what they know or what they feel, so especially in the US you need to have the ability to read, understand, evaluate and then express your opinion. So those are huge academic steps anywhere that students are expected to have when they go into bachelors and master’s degree.”

“CLT enables students to learn the structure, how the language works, how it can be used and how it can move them forward in where they want to go in achieving their degree, it provides

specific structure in a sense that what is expected in this culture, communication and the way you express your ideas in speaking or writing, because communicative language learning it's not only speaking, it can be put into writing as well, or reading for that matter.”

“Students need to understand that their success here would be very much in line with the communicative language approach in learning or even teaching, so that's part of the culture here.”

P7: “So when you get there...so there I think the teacher and the students both have to communicate right? So as I told before, they would try to define things if you ask them to. Rather than being a one-way process, they would try to define things and express their ideas so then you know as a teacher what their level is and what kind of vocabulary they use.”

P10: “I actually think like it's a pretty...I still think it serves, I just think that teachers need to think about the types of communication that you do in academia.”

“So like one of them is that I think that's where you start is like ‘Well what do you need to do?’ Well like there's group work, you need to do group work and typically you're discussing like things that are of an academic nature in those group discussions. So having students like be able to use those words or understand...at least understand the words that their group members might use, things like <theory> or <proposal> or <comprised of>. You know they're gonna use those in class, they're an educated audience so you need to be able at least understand what those mean and probably communicate them back.”

P10 added that CLT also serves in group work and presentations they will give at the academic level.

Three out of ten participants reported not knowing if CLT can be applied to academic English or how to apply it. For P1, when she was challenged by her supervisor to teach academic vocabulary in a communicative way, she admitted she did not know how.

P1: “But I think that’s one of the challenges that I have, like I don’t know how to make students in discussions use the vocabulary that they need or that they are learning or that they are supposedly learning into their communication. And that is I think one of the biggest challenges that I have because if you strive for communication, academic language is not necessary for like every day interaction.”

“...So what I try to do when I was teaching listening and speaking, I focused a lot on helping them to listen to lectures because that is one of the skills that they really need. Like I think that you can go through your academic years without ever talking, but you cannot go without being able to listen to your professors.”

P8: “There’s a connection in there somewhere of course, but as far as like academic essays the connection is not super clear. As long as you’re interacting with English great, but I’m not sure if I have any more to say than that. Yeah right, I don’t know.”

P9: “I feel like communicative language learning...it’s my personal feeling, is more geared towards maybe building a foundation upon which language learners...like it’s a beginning point. So I’ve used it more with lower level learners, I haven’t used it as much in like my reading and writing class, so upper level. But part of that was how the class was structured for us so...yeah, so I guess I’m not sure it’s overly effective for academic...like if we’re talking about university level. I think it’s geared more towards beginner programs or in the public schools like new to country.”

Teacher Task

CLT Continuum

On the teacher task where the participants had to rate a list of sixteen ELT topics on a continuum (see Appendix C.) from less communicative to more communicative, they placed at the beginning of the continuum the following topics in first place as least communicative. Figure 8 below demonstrates the top five ELT topics chosen as least communicative on the continuum by the total of participants.

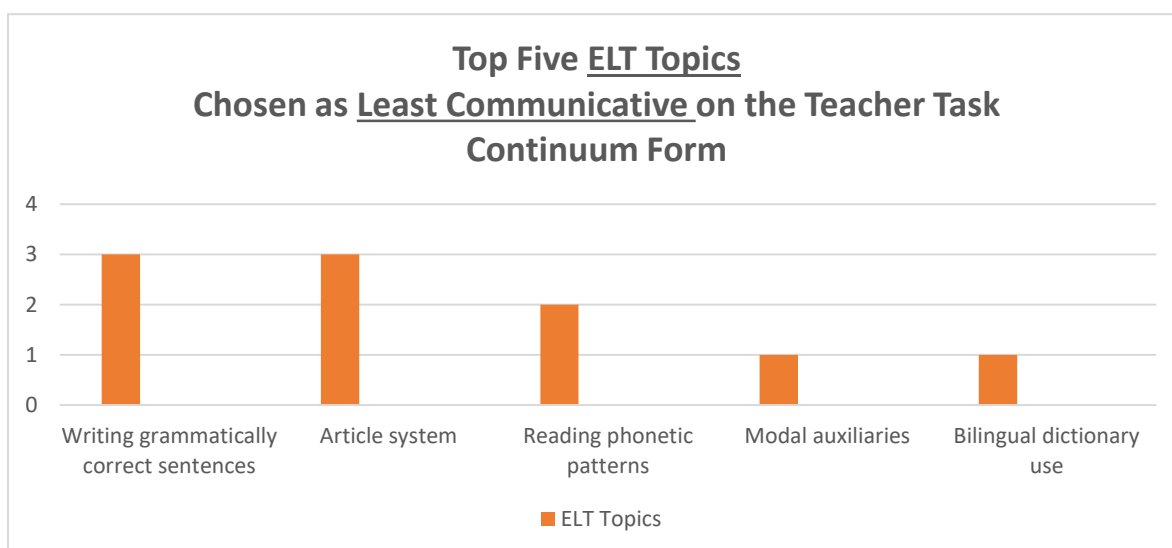


Figure 6: Least Communicative ELT Topics

Three out of ten participants marked Writing Grammatically Correct Sentences as least communicative. Three participants marked Articles System as the least communicative topics to teach. Two out ten participants marked Reading Phonetic Patterns as the least communicative topics on the continuum. One participant marked Modal Auxiliaries and the last participant marked Bilingual Dictionary Use. The participants chose these options as topics that are unrelated to learners' communicative skills for which CLT would be the least appropriate

‘method’ to teach. At the same time the results of this task are implying that participants saw grammar, phonetics and syntax are less related to CLT.

Creating a lesson plan

That being said, the second part of the teacher task was to take that topic that they placed first as least communicative and (brainstorm) create a lesson plan, which they only had to report verbally. Figure 9 below presents the communicative activities that the participants came up with to teach that certain topic.

Table 3: Communicative Activities

Participants	Teaching Topic	CLT Based Activities (according to participants)
P1	Reading Phonetic Patterns	Group work – read aloud
P2	Writing Grammatically Correct Sentences	Group work – writing
P3	Reading Phonetic Patterns	Reading phonetic sounds aloud, group work, writing text messages using IPA
P4	Writing Grammatically Correct Sentences	Group work – write a story (blog)
P5	Modal Auxiliaries	Classroom discussion, write a dialogue, role play
P6	Writing Grammatically Correct Sentences	Writing sentences, group work, group discussions, negotiating meaning
P7	Article System	Write a story, peer review discussion
P8	Article System	Classroom discussion, real situation examples, apply using the context
P9	N/A (did not give a response)	N/A
P10	Using a Bilingual Dictionary	Produce ideas, jigsaw, give a presentation

All participants’ suggested activities involved some level group work as a way to make the teaching of that topic more communicative. Yet what is not clear in many of the created lesson plans is, how the interaction with another learner or the application of CLT is building towards the correct use of that specific form or ELT topic. P7 suggested peer review as part of

her lesson where this interaction would lead the learners to corroborate their use of the form. The overall media of lesson plan activities of the participants presented writing and speaking as forms of production or communicativeness.

V. Discussion

CLT Reported Knowledge

The first research question of this study asks what the participants' reported knowledge of CLT is. Participants described CLT as involving mainly oral communication, real life situations and production of language. Some also described CLT as the opposite of academic language, reading, writing and/or grammar. They admitted to having insufficient knowledge regarding CLT due to lack of direct training. Three participants presented CLT as popular and widely used, especially in the US from what they have seen other teachers use or how they were taught as second language learners themselves. CLT was also defined as opposed to what is done in EFL environments by non-native English speaking participants. They explained how in their home-countries there is a greater use of teacher-centered or exam-focused approaches.

In response to the participants presenting exam-focused environments as the opposite of CLT a quote from Savignon (2002) shows CLT could still work in this kind of setting if the teacher had to use grammar-translation method,

Similarly, a teacher who has only a grammar-translation manual can certainly teach for communicative competence. What matters is the teacher's understanding of what language learning is and how it happens. The basic principle is that learners should engage with texts and meaning through the process of use and discovery. (p. 22)

In addition, some participants expressed how teachers should be careful in applying CLT when working with students who are accustomed to teacher-centered learning, arguing that it could have a negative effect. Finally, although some participants defined CLT by differentiating it from reading and writing, two participants did clearly define the communicative approach as involving reading and writing as well.

The views of the participants in this study could be reflecting beliefs in state of development (personal reference: Dr. John P. Madden, 09/27/2017). As they continue to grow in

the field, become more involved in research and possibly have the opportunity of in-service education, they will be able to better understand and develop their own beliefs related to teaching approaches such as CLT. As stated by Lave and Wenger (2000), “rather than learning by replicating the performances of others or by acquiring knowledge transmitted in instruction, we suggest that learning occurs through centripetal participation in the learning curriculum of the ambient community” (p. 172). The broad definitions and claims of insufficient knowledge reported by the participants of this study related to CLT could be explained through two key components: (1) The wide approach that is CLT similar to that of an umbrella, a description used by Hosam (2016), “The term Communicative approach is an umbrella for all teaching methods whose goals are improving students’ abilities to communicate” (p. 183). Participants in this study seemed to single out CLT as unrelated to other teaching methods.

For example:

P2 implied that the lecture portion of a lesson is unrelated to CLT in the following quote,

“It’s important to keep the classes communicative, but sometimes there has to be a lecture time as well. If I just keep going and going in a communicative way and if there’s no debriefing or if there is no introduction of expressions or grammar, they don’t really feel like learning anything.” P4 suggested that vocabulary could not be taught through CLT,

“And CLT, I like CLT because like I said they have to be able to communicate no matter where, if it’s at the supermarket or at the administration office, they have to talk. So once they learn the vocabulary I think CLT is a good supplemental approach to what you do with direct teaching.” P6 denotes that CLT is a method and not an approach,

“So again the different methods that we covered in the class they were discussed and taught individually but then when it comes to actual lessons you mix and match, you put them in a way that would benefit the students most.”

More than a step by step detailed instruction CLT is a direction to gravitate towards, under which many different methods can function. In her work *Communicative Language Teaching: Linguistic Theory and Classroom Practice*, Savignon (2002) outlines an example on

how to shape a communicative curriculum with the use of five components [Language Arts, Language for a Purpose, My Language Is Me: Personal Second Language Use, You Be . . . , I'll Be . . . : Theater Arts and Beyond the Classroom] (p. 11). She stresses the use of the word 'components' to imply that there should not be any sequence or order to their application (Savignon, 2002, p. 11).

The focus of CLT has been "the elaboration and implementation of programs and methodologies that promote the development of functional language ability through learners' participation in communicative events" (Savignon, 2002, p. 4). Savignon (2002) goes on to explain in this section that CLT is guided by the political and educational guidelines of language learning and recognizes the importance of having an assorted set of learning goals and teaching strategies to go with it (p. 4). CLT is not just concerned with oral skills nor is it not concerned with grammar. Some examples of the mistaken belief that CLT is only concerned with oral skills are reflected in the responses of some of the participants of this study,

P5: "...Get the students to talk, to listen." "...At least just speak, to be able to communicate, to get messages across."

P7: "...Learn the language through producing it to communicate." "...They have to talk to learn the language. They are forced to talk and produce the language."

P10: "In order for students to gain access to language, they need to be able to use it in conversation."

This may be the case in some instances but it is not all CLT is concerned with, it encompasses all aspects of language learning. All these learned aspects are for the purpose and in the action of using the language, as opposed to learning it and then storing it in the back of learners' minds. The communicative use of language can, by default, develop the learner's knowledge and skill of linguistic features such as grammar. Language use can be reflected in the

form of listening and speaking, but also in the form of reading and writing. According to Savignon (2002), “The concern of CLT is not exclusively with face-to-face oral communication. The principles apply equally to reading and writing activities that involve readers and writers in the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning” (p. 22). Some participants in this study defined CLT by distinguishing it from reading writing while others expressed that reading and writing are included in the CLT approach. The idea that CLT only relates to oral skills and the knowledge that it favors focus on meaning before form has led to misconceptions that are apparent in the participants of this study. They compartmentalize other methods as separate from CLT and seem to fail to understand the bigger picture of its perspective. CLT offers a flexibility and open perspective in this era of the language learning field when research has discovered over time that the human brain is such a mystery in the ways in which it acquires a language. However, this openness also gives room for confusion and misconceptions.

(2) The second key component is lack of teacher engagement in research. Four out of ten participants claimed to not have been taught enough about it. One of the participants (P4) recognized that apart from not having learned much in class related to CLT, she also had not dedicated herself to researching on her own: “I don’t know much of it and I haven’t really studied on my own more about it”. This lack of teacher engagement in research or the motivation to do so could also be connected to the feeling that research does not give practical suggestions that they can directly use in the classroom. Borg (2007) conducted a study investigating teachers’ research engagement in ELT. Among factors related to resources, institutional cultures and teacher conceptions related to research, one of the results in Borg’s (2007) study stood out that directly related to the responses of participants in this present study, “9 teachers said they did not read research because it does not give them practical advice for the classroom; 34 teachers also

said that a characteristic of good-quality research is that it gives teachers ideas they can use” (p. 743).

This resonates with responses from participants in the present study that expressed having learned about what the methods are, but not how to put them into practice. The textbooks and material used in the participants’ graduate courses related to teaching methods are based on research in the SLA field. P2 stated: “Because most of the courses that I’m taking kind of cover theoretical backgrounds of language teaching, but I feel like I don’t really learn a lot about how to teach and what to teach to students.” P4 similarly responded: “For me learning about them it was more informational than how they actually looked like in action.” “...learning about these teaching methods it was more of an informational session, but not necessarily how to implement them in your classes.” P8 said: “We’re told we teach them that, but we’re never really taught how to do it.” According to Borg (2007), “Teachers are commonly found to report that they are unable to see what published research means for their classroom practice” (p. 744). This scenario inevitably leads to the participants’ thoughts and opinions related to CLT in a sort of cause and effect manner, what they say they know about CLT ends up influencing how they view it (as effective or not for their own classroom practices).

CLT Thoughts and Opinions

The second research question for this study explored participants’ thoughts and opinions related to CLT. Participants in their majority did not have a definitive response as to whether they liked or found it useful. According to them the choice of using CLT is based on objectives such as student needs (that can call for a combination of different methods within one lesson, not solely CLT), development of communicative language skills and meaningful use of language in the classroom. Personal preferences did come into play: two participants expressed their affinity

for CLT over other teaching ‘methods’ and two other participants indicated how they believe that it leads to faster language acquisition. Two participants confessed how prior beliefs affect their teaching approaches and how now (in this new teaching environment) they are trying to take a student-centered approach, more in lines with the style of CLT. Two participants argued that CLT is better intended for lower-level beginner language learners, while three participants declared that CLT is not the best approach for teaching vocabulary.

In response to the interview questions, the participants tried to compartmentalize for the researcher what CLT entails. This was not possible simply due to the nature of CLT in itself, it is not that kind of approach and it seemed like the participants understood CLT to be mainly related to oral communication skills. They were trying to classify a list of methods that they mentioned to the researcher as separate from CLT to demonstrate that they use a combination of methods in teaching. However, these methods could all fall under CLT if the goal was to help the students communicate in the target language (functionally use it). Once again, it is important to reiterate that using a language can include listening and speaking, but also reading and writing.

Interestingly, the participants visualize CLT as a tool that you use or limiting according to a certain type of student need. They do not seem to visualize it as an approach in learning a language overall, at all levels of competence. According to the literature that has been reviewed for this study, CLT is not meant to be used like a tool as you would use a specific task or activity to help a student develop a certain skill. It seems that the concept of CLT is concerned with the grander scheme of the purpose of learning a language, as is explained in the first key concept (1) above in the section of CLT Reported Knowledge (see Hosam, 2016 and Savignon, 2002 cited earlier).

Regarding the circumstances under which participants say they choose methods, it is important to point out that CLT is very much concerned with student needs in general. CLT is based on a framework: communicative competence [strategic competence, grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence (Canale and Swain, 1981) and discourse competence (Savignon, 2007)]. Within that framework, CLT covers all aspects of language learning but parting from the premise that language is a social behavior as presented in Hymes (1978). Savignon (2002) explains as follows, "...CLT puts the focus on the learner. Learners' communicative needs provide a framework for elaborating program goals with regard to functional competence. Functional goals imply global, qualitative evaluation of learner achievement as opposed to quantitative assessment of discrete linguistic features" (p. 4). Therefore, it could be implied that if the goal or need of the student is to improve grammatical skills, they could still achieve it through CLT. Through demonstrating that they can use the grammar correctly, not just listing all known grammar as a memorized or discrete item. This could also serve as a response to CLT not being an appropriate approach for teaching vocabulary (as expressed by three of the participants in this study).

P4 argued,

"CLT works for certain activities but I don't feel like CLT is the best approach for me teaching academic vocabulary. I just don't see how you can teach academic vocabulary just with CLT, there has to be direct-teaching first before you do that."

P10 stated,

"The big thing that this program has reinforced is that there have been some problems with CLT that a lot of...that some experts feel need to be corrected or focused on. Things like for example, like vocabulary right? That vocabulary needs to be...my professor always says that vocabulary needs to be studied, you can't just get it by like speaking a lot right?"

The use of initial direct-teaching methods would not be discouraged in CLT, but after this foundation has been laid communicative activities would be appropriate. “Communicative language teaching need not entail complete rejection of familiar materials. Materials designed to promote communicative competence can be used as aids to memorization, repetition, and translation, or for grammar exercises” (Savignon, 2002, p. 22). In the case of vocabulary knowledge, it is essential for language use in all four skills. CLT seems to welcome the use and combination of all or any methods as long as it entails the functional social use of language to transmit meaning, it raises the question of: what other purpose is there to language if not to communicate with it and use it in real time? This is an aspect that the participants seem to be very clear on, regardless of the method used they placed importance on the development of communicative skills and meaningful use of language for their learners. “The essence of CLT is the engagement of learners in communication to allow them to develop their communicative competence” (Savignon, 2002, p. 22).

In as much as the second language acquisition field has evolved through the decades, hard learned habits are still difficult to break. Personal preferences and what comes easy and natural can sometimes blur the bigger picture. For example, the affinity to CLT expressed by two of the participants because it is a ‘method’ that is widely used and they have seen the most in action, among other reasons. However, explanations of their affinity towards CLT, seemed to be focused again on the benefits it provides to beginner-level learners of basic oral communication skills. This reverts back to the analysis on how informed participants are about the CLT approach when they visualize oral skill development only in the beginning stages of language learning and not a continuous never-ending process. Also, it demonstrates the seemingly unawareness that CLT involves more than just oral skills.

In addition, one of the biggest challenges that CLT creators or any other theorists could have when introducing a new idea is getting teachers to look at it from an objective point of view. In the day to day we can see that many of the things people do in life is through habit, because it works for them or they have seen it work before. This commonality about humans in general has nothing to do with whether CLT is the correct approach or not. Consequently, various participants in this study were aware or have become aware (as they verbalized their responses or in class) of the presence of their strong habits when trying to adopt and implement new ways of teaching.

An issue to this effect was presented by Borg (2014) in an article investigating Chinese college English teachers' (CET) beliefs about effective language teaching,

Teachers did commonly refer to their role in delivering or transmitting knowledge to learners, and there may be a tension between this conception of their role, on the one hand, and their ability to teach communicatively, on the other, given that communicative work often creates situations where students learn in ways which are less dependent on direct input from teachers. (p. 111)

Borg (2014) added, "Overall, the basic tension highlighted here is between CETs' beliefs in the value of communicative, interactive, personalized, and student-centered learning and their actual teaching practices, which tended to be more teacher-fronted" (p. 112). In the case of the participants of this study, if you add lack of training or knowing how to put these new approaches and methods into action with the presence of old habits, the combination can be negative for teacher development and the implementation of new teaching styles. Responses from the participants of this present study related to prior beliefs reflected this tendency. For example, P2 said: "I was a little dogmatic before I came here, 'okay I know everything about teaching' you know, and 'my students like me', whatever. After I came here I realized that the activities that I was implementing in my class were really limited." P7 stated: "I think even

though I learned to...you know this should be student-oriented, I think I...when I plan I want it to be like that, but then in the classroom I think that I tend to follow that teacher-oriented method, that happens.” “...But I tried a lot to give them activities and stay back, not to talk in the middle of activity or anything, so I’m trying to restrain myself, stay back and practice that.”

A study made by Orafi and Borg (2009) exemplifies how teachers from EFL contexts can struggle with breaking habits in teaching although they intend to make changes at the out-start. Three teachers from Libyan secondary schools attempted to implement a new communicative English language curriculum. The observation study demonstrated a gap between the teachers’ intentions and what actually occurred in the classroom. For example, pair work and the use of English were not used in the classroom and in place the classes were conducted in a teacher-centered manner and with a large use of Arabic (Orafi and Borg, 2009, p. 250). Through post observation interviews and analysis Orafi and Borg (2009) produced four key issues that could explain the gap in that particular setting: (1) the need for extensive teacher training before implementing a new system, (2) the reality of established practices where students are accustomed to a certain way of learning and how this level of change could initially affect them, (3) the influence of assessments where if a new system is instilled but the assessments do not change along with it, the teacher will inevitably gravitate towards what needs to be taught for the purpose of the exam (4) and finally teachers beliefs of students capabilities (pp. 251-252).

Orafi and Borg (2009) summarized the dichotomy in this study as,

The experiences of the teachers studied here reflect their reactions to a curriculum which promotes novel practices they feel ill-equipped to implement, which challenge their beliefs and experiences, which threaten their authority, which are at odds with the instructional practices of teachers of other subjects, which students resist and cannot cope adequately with, and which are not supported by the assessment system. (p. 252)

This can be related to the participants quoted above expressing their strong habits, in that now they do not have the teaching environment constraints they had in their home-countries that allows them more freedom to let go of old habits. However, it is presently a new teaching environment for which they still need training. Instead of having a group of students from the same nationality, they now have students from differing nationalities and different customs in ways of learning. Lastly, the learning objectives of their current teaching environments is not exam focused which changes the aim of what is being taught in class.

On the other hand, two participants mentioned that they viewed CLT as more appropriate for beginner learners. Their initial CLT definitions described it as an approach to develop basic oral skills in a language, but where does this oral skill development end? Does it end in merely casual conversations or does it continue on to other levels of register? This could explain the surprised reaction of the participants to the inquiry of the role of CLT in academic English, which will be further examined in the third and final section of this discussion.

As mentioned before, one of the greatest oppositions that CLT has encountered from its critics is how it does not concern itself enough with learner acquisition of bottom-up features such as grammar or vocabulary. This is not the case with CLT, as explained in the introduction of this paper (from Savignon, 1972) CLT focuses first on meaning and then form and in addition does not always immediately concern itself with grammatical mistakes in communication as long as the message is clear. However, it also does not hold a complete disregard for linguistic features such as grammar. This could be linked to participants' remarks on how they believed that CLT lead to faster acquisition. The active use of the language with a secondary (but nevertheless present) focus on linguistic features such as grammar and vocabulary could lead to faster acquisition.

CLT Application

In the third and final research question of this study when asked if they apply CLT in their classrooms, again many participants pointed out that they do not solely apply CLT, rather they use a combination of methods. This repeated statement has resurfaced throughout the present study in different forms as a response to more than one of the questions. Therefore, it is prudent to once again point out from Savignon (1983) that CLT does not reject the combination of methods within the classroom, but describes it as something common. Activities that stood out in their remarks of actual application of CLT were group work, real life situations, role play, conversations, classroom discussions and oral presentations. Curiously Savignon (2002) states,

Communicative language teaching does not require work in small groups or pairs; group tasks have been found helpful in many contexts as a way of increasing the opportunity and motivation for communication. Classroom work in groups or pairs should not, however, be considered an essential feature and may well be inappropriate in some contexts (p. 22).

Participants in this study on reported CLT application included group work activities as methods they generally use, where Savignon (2002) warns to be cautious that group work activities may not always be appropriate depending on the language feature that is intended to be taught.

The question of the role of CLT in academic English provoked a lot of thought in the participants. Many of them paused for an extended period of time before answering or remarked that it was a difficult question to answer. Some participants revealed that they did not expect or had never thought of it before. This is interesting given that the ESL environment in which they work in is focused on academic English and the use of CLT is encouraged. As was implied by P8, “So communicative teaching, that’s one of the ones that we’re told that we teach our students or that we teach...CLT it’s called? We’re told we teach them that but we’re never really taught how to do it.” It is intriguing that to put both aspects within the same question would cause such

a surprise among the interviewees. Six out of ten participants said that CLT can be applied to academic English and three participants said they did not know. None of the participants denied its role.

The choices in the teacher task reflected their initial expressions of what they consider the opposite of CLT, where the majority marked as least communicative those topics related to grammar and reading. Initially in the reported knowledge section of this study, participants defined CLT as one focused on oral communication, real life situations and production of language. Consequently, in creating the lesson plans they included a lot of group work and role play in the activities that on the surface made them seem like communicative lessons. What is not clear is how the communicative act is linked to or is actually developing the skills they are supposedly addressing in the lesson (as was stated in Results and Analysis section, p. 64).

This section on participant application of CLT mirrored their reported knowledge, thoughts and opinions. What they know and think about the topic is what they demonstrate in how they say they apply it or would apply it in a hypothetical situation (teacher task). Participants in this study not only shared their beliefs related to CLT but also their general beliefs as teachers, what they believe are the most effective methods according to their experiences as teachers and learners and that in relation to CLT. These prior or established beliefs surely influenced their decisions in ranking the topics on the continuum for the teacher task. Each participant (with the exception of one) created a lesson plan taking the least communicative topic and making it into a communicative one. The teachers aimed to produce what they believe would be effective teaching of that particular topic under the CLT approach.

Pedagogical Implications

Research suggests that having conducted this same study with the present group of participants after having completed an in-service teacher education program on CLT would have produced completely different results. A program that would give the participants the opportunity to directly study, research, practice and reflect on that which they are training for. This is the example that an experiment from Borg (2011) set when studying the impact of an intensive eight-week in-service teacher education program on teacher beliefs.

The investigation by Borg (2011) showed that,

...the program had a considerable, if variable, impact on the teachers' beliefs. The course allowed teachers to think more explicitly about, become aware of, and articulate their beliefs, to extend and consolidate beliefs they were initially and sometimes tacitly positively disposed to, and to focus on ways of developing classroom practices which reflected their beliefs. Teachers also experienced shifts in prior beliefs they held about aspects of language teaching and learning. (p. 370)

The act of presenting the participants with the interview questions in this study could almost be considered as unproductive, when only one of them reported to have received actual training through direct study and purposeful practice. In-service education could answer to the needs expressed by the participants in this study in how what is learned in teaching methods' courses could be put to practical use. An example of this was demonstrated in the work of Wyatt and Borg (2011) on how teachers' practical knowledge developed through an in-service BA TESOL education program in the Middle East where they learned about, designed and used communicative tasks. According to Wyatt and Borg (2011) teacher practical knowledge is more likely to develop if: (1) the teacher education is distributed over time, (2) they have the opportunity to experiment with new ideas, (3) they have regular space to analyze and reflect on their beliefs and classroom practices, (4) they are engaged in research and interpret it in accordance to what happens in the classroom, (5) they receive consistent, tutoring, supervision

and mentoring, (6) their classroom practices not be formally assessed, (7) their classroom contexts be in line with what they are studying and finally, (8) that teachers be open to change (p. 249).

ELT conferences are another way in which teachers can bridge the gap between research and actual classroom practices. As stated in a research article conducted by Borg (2015), he discovered through a questionnaire process that ELT conferences can help teachers' "enhanced knowledge of ELT techniques leading to changes in practice; networking with other ELT professionals; and enhanced professional confidence and motivation" (p. 39). Perhaps, continued education could also be a requirement within graduate courses, not just after they become actual professionals in the field. This researcher however recognizes the limitations of graduate students in covering the costs of these seminars or workshops and understands why it is suggested and not required.

Future Research

Borg's (2011) work could be a suggestion for redevelopment of the current academic ESL programs these participants work for. An in-service program could be designed where the graduate assistants can develop lesson plans under a specific approach and method(s) guided by research done in this approach as part of a research project or their (practicum) graduate course. They would have the opportunity of reflecting upon the results of their work, what they set out to do versus what actually happened in their ESL classrooms. Limitations that occurred either related to student types, prior teaching beliefs and/or the development of new teaching beliefs. Only through these experiences of putting what is learned from others' research into action, can teachers feel confident to embark on their own research as a result of trying what other investigators have suggested. This type of in-service education can give teachers hands-on

understanding of approaches and not having them applied guided (or misguided) by hearsay or what they see other teachers do or even how they learned themselves as second language learners.

Furthermore, the reflection on the role of CLT in academic English presents a topic for further study of the development of communicative competence in more advanced levels of ELT. Communicative competence can be evaluated on basic beginner levels of communication in a language, but also at academic or professional levels. When a person is learning a second language, do they need to learn it enough to have a casual conversation with a native speaker at a coffee shop or do they need to be competent enough to defend a case at a court of law in that language? The participants seemed surprised to be presented with the question of the role of CLT in academic English since most of them confessed to have never really thought about it or labeled CLT as ineffective for higher-level ELLs.

Limitations

The participants' actual applications of CLT in the classroom would have provided more content validity to this project. Nonetheless, the purpose was to merely introduce the topic with participant reports on knowledge and perceptions of CLT. Further research like the suggested in-service program could give a more detailed response on what occurs with CLT in the SLA field.

The fixed use of the word 'method' in the interview questions could have had some level of influence versus including the word 'approach' could have prompted different responses. Throughout the development of this project the researcher had much confusion in labeling CLT as an approach or method. Fortunately, more literature review and the analysis of participant responses helped clarify this puzzle, which will be finally clarified in the conclusion.

Although the interviews were semi-structured to allow the flexibility of inquiring further at the responses of the participants, certain inquiries occurred to the researcher at the moment of analysis and regretfully not at the moment of the interviews. For example, it would have been useful to ask why the participants thought that the development of communicative skills and meaningful use of language were important in the CLT Thoughts and Opinions portion of the interview. This could have answered the question of where these beliefs stemmed from, if it was from an agreement with the CLT approach or not. The researcher could infer that placing importance on the development of communicative skills and meaningful use of language states participants' value of CLT, but by inquiring more on this the responses could have been clearer.

Also, as they created the lesson plans the researcher should have asked them how the communicative activities were helping the students develop the specific ELT topic/feature they chose. The data collection instrument should have included a post discussion/reflection of their choice of activities for the lesson plan and how that activity helped the student reach the objective of learning the linguistic feature (ELT topic).

Conclusion

Since the greatest struggle for participants of this investigation has been defining CLT and therefore being able to express their thoughts, opinions and applications as a result of it, it seems appropriate to review its definition with the following quote by Savignon (2002):

The essence of CLT is the engagement of learners in communication to allow them to develop their communicative competence. Terms sometimes used to refer to features of CLT are “task-based” (see Chapter 5), “content-based,” “process-oriented,” “interactive,” “inductive,” and “discovery-oriented.” CLT cannot be found in any one textbook or set of curricular materials. Strict adherence to a given text is not likely to be true to the processes and goals of CLT. In keeping with the notion of context of situation, CLT is properly seen as an approach, grounded in a theory of intercultural communicative competence, that can be used to develop materials and methods appropriate to a given context of learning. No less than the means and norms of

communication they are designed to reflect, communicative language teaching methods will continue to be explored and adapted. (pp. 22-23)

The experimenter of this study sought to simply learn the reported knowledge, thoughts, opinions and applications of teaching assistants in an academic ESL environment. However, unexpected factors arose that deeply influence the knowledge and application of CLT. An example of this is, teacher involvement and perspectives related to research, teacher beliefs and habits, and actual training of teachers in CLT. The conclusion that we can draw from this analysis is something that could be applied to any new approach that is introduced into the SLA field, direct training and testing is necessary to bridge the gap between research and classroom practices, otherwise the two will never meet. Notwithstanding, this would require the monetary and time investment of people in the field to make into a reality. Administrative and educational policies are involved in whether or not and how new teaching approaches are implemented in schools. These obstacles are what can lead to misinterpretations of new or established teaching avenues.

It is also important to add that the participants of this study have less than ten years of teaching experience. Those that have the most years of experience taught outside of the US in different educational environments. In addition, they are in mid-process or have just completed their graduate degree in TESL. Once again, their responses may reflect the professional stage in which they are at (personal reference: Dr. John P. Madden, 09/27/2017). Therefore, studies like the present bring attention to new professionals in the field which are vital for the prolongation of the field. Efforts should continuously be made involve newcomers into this process and continue to progress the classrooms that serve in the language learning field.

References

- Blake, R. & Kramsch, C. (2007). Guest editor's introduction. In: The Issue – National Language Education Policy. *The Modern Language Journal*, (2), 247-249.
- Borg, S. (2007). Research engagement in English language teaching. *Teaching & Teacher Education*, 23(5), 731-747. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2006.03.012
- Borg, S. (2011). The impact of in-service teacher education on language teachers' beliefs. *System*, 39 (Beliefs about SLA Revisited), 370-380. doi:10.1016/j.system.2011.07.009
- Borg, S. -. (2014). College English teachers' beliefs about effective language teaching. *Asian Journal Of English Language Teaching*, 97.
- Borg, S. (2015). The benefits of attending ELT conferences. *ELT Journal: English Language Teaching Journal*, 69(1), 35-46. doi:10.1093/elt/ccu045
- Byram, M. (2004). *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning*. New York: Taylor & Francis.
- Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1981). A theoretical framework for communicative competence. In A. S. Palmer, P. J. M. Groot & G. A. Trosper (Eds.), (pp. 31-36). Washington: TESOL.
- Chiu-Yin, W. (2012). A case study of college level second language teachers' perceptions and implementations of communicative language teaching. *Professional Educator*, 36(2), 18-34.
- Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. L. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., c2008.

- Gatbonton, E. & Segalowitz, N. (2005). Rethinking communicative language teaching: A focus on access to fluency. *The Canadian Modern Language Review / La Revue Canadienne Des Langues Vivantes*, (3), 325.
- Gonzalez-Pino, B. (2011). Continuing dearth of communication in the era of communicative language teaching. *NAAAS & Affiliates Conference Monographs*, 783-795.
- Hiep, P. H. (2007). Communicative language teaching: Unity within diversity. *ELT Journal*, 61(3), 193-201.
- Hosam, D. (2016). We couldn't communicate in English, could we? The communicative approach practices, a critical view. *International Journal of Languages' Education and Teaching*, Vol 4, Iss 2, Pp 183-192 (2016), (2), 183. doi:10.18298/ijlet.577
- Hymes, D., & Pittsburgh Univ, PA School of Education. (1978). Language in education: Forwards to fundamentals. *Keynote Addresses from the Horace Mann Lecture Series and the Paul Masoner International Lecture Series*, 1972-1978.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (2000). Chapter 8: Legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice. In Cross Jr., R. L. & Israelit, S. B. (Eds.), *Strategic Learning in a Knowledge Economy: Individual, Collective and Organizational Learning Process* (pp. 167-182). Reprinted by permission doi:10.1016/B978-0-7506-7223-8.50010-1
- Madden, J. P. Personal reference: Thesis advisory (09/27/2017).
- Magnan, S. S. (2007). Reconsidering communicative language teaching for national goals. In: The issue – national language education policy. *The Modern Language Journal*, (2), 249-252.

- Nunan, D. & Bailey, K. M. (2009). Qualitative data analysis. In *Exploring Second Language Classroom Research: A Comprehensive Guide*. Boston, MA: Heinle, Cengage Learning (pp.412-436)
- Orafi, S. S., & Borg, S. (2009). Intentions and realities in implementing communicative curriculum reform. *System*, 37, 243-253. doi:10.1016/j.system.2008.11.004
- Savignon, S. J. (1972). *Communicative competence: An experiment in foreign-language teaching*. Philadelphia: Center for Curriculum Development.
- Savignon, S. J. (1983). *Communicative competence: Theory and classroom practice: Texts and contexts in second language learning*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Savignon, S. J. (1987). Communicative language teaching. *Theory into Practice*, 26(4), 235.
- Savignon, S. J. (2002). Communicative language teaching: Linguistic theory and classroom practice. In S. J. Savignon (Ed.), (pp. 1-27). New Haven, CT: Yale UP.
- Savignon, S. J. (2007). Beyond communicative language teaching: What's ahead? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 39, 207-220. doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2006.09.004
- Savignon, S. J., & Sysoyev, P. V. (2002). Sociocultural strategies for a dialogue of cultures. *The Modern Language Journal*, (4), 508.
- Swaffar, J. (2006). Terminology and its discontents: Some caveats about communicative competence. *The Modern Language Journal*, (2), 246.
- Woods, D., & Çakır, H. (2011). Two dimensions of teacher knowledge: The case of communicative language teaching. *System*, 39(3), 381-390.
- Wu, W. (2008). Misunderstandings of communicative language teaching. *English Language Teaching*, 1(1), 50-53.

Wyatt, M., & Borg, S. (2011). Development in the practical knowledge of language teachers: a comparative study of three teachers designing and using communicative tasks on an in-service BA TESOL programme in the Middle East. *Innovation In Language Learning & Teaching*, 5(3), 233. doi:10.1080/17501229.2010.537340

Appendix A: Background Information (Data Instrument)

Data Instrument

Participant Background Information Form (Phase 1)

Program: IEC EAP

Country / US State of Origin: _____

Age: _____

Undergraduate Major: _____

MA in TESL Semester: ____ 1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4

Are you in the process of obtaining / or have K-12 license? ____ yes ____ no

Shortly describe your professional plans after obtaining your degree in MA in TESL:

Teaching Experience:

How long have you been teaching? _____

Types of English environments you have taught in, check the one(s) that apply:

English as a Second Language (ESL)

English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

What courses have you taught in IEC/EAP?

What courses have you taught **before** working in IEC/EAP?

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Preview Questions

Classroom practices

1. How do you generally sequence your lessons? Tell me about a normal day in your classroom of the courses that you teach.
2. What teaching methods do you generally use? Can you give me an example? Can you tell me a story about this?
3. Tell me about a very good lesson that you have given.
4. Tell me about the least successful lesson you have given.

Phase 2: Reported Knowledge of CLT

Theoretical Understanding of CLT

You are currently enrolled in the MA TESL program,

5. How much have you learned about CLT? Tell me about it.
6. From your teaching methods class, what method(s) do you remember the most?
7. Do you apply any of these methods? Give me an example.
8. How has it influenced your teaching? Tell me about it.

Classroom experience with CLT

9. Give me examples of CLT in your classroom. Describe communicative lessons that you have taught.

CLT & Academic English

10. How do you think CLT serves academic English teaching?

Phase 3: Beliefs about CLT

Thoughts or Opinions

1. What are you trying for your students to achieve? What do you want for your students?
Can you give me examples?
2. What methods do you believe can help them achieve this? Can you give me examples?

Phase 4: Application of CLT Knowledge – Teacher Task

Ordering Task

1. The researcher will present the participants with a worksheet task where they will order a list of learning objectives (using numbers) along a continuum ranging from Less Communicative to More Communicative.

Create a Lesson Task/Think-Aloud

1. The participants will choose what they think is the least communicative learning objective and will be given a few minutes to brainstorm ideas and then (in a think-aloud session) verbally describe how they would make these objectives more communicative in a lesson.

