Appropriateness of Communicative Language Teaching to Sudan Context: Teachers, Perspective

Prepared by Dr. Tahiya Alshaikh Alhameem Yousif

Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics at Alzaiem Alazhari University- Faculty of Education-English language department.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the extent to which Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), is appropriate to secondery schools in Sudan. The researcher used the descriptive analytical method. Three instruments were used for collecting data: questionnaire, interview and participants observation. The total number of the population of the study is 398 secondary school teachers in Khartoum state. The sample was composed of 108 teachers, which represent 27.1% of the total number of population. All the teachers selected responded to the questionnaire, while ten of them were interviewed and observed in the classrooms. Results showed that although the teachers have positive attitudes towards CLT, they failed to implement it in their classrooms due to many difficulties related to the training and the teaching environment. Based on the results obtained, the study highlights four main recommendations: first, teachers must receive basic professional training on CLT(training could take the form of workshops, seminars or conferences). Second, teachers' attitudes towards CLT should be changed positively. Third, to tackle the generally low level of speaking skills among teachers, a language improvement component should be included in teachers> training programs. Lastly, English syllabuses at secondary school should be of a communicative nature.

Key words: context, communicative, Appropriate.

مستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلي الكشف عن مدي ملائمة طريقة التدريس التواصلي في اللغة الإنجليزية للمرحلة الثانوية بولاية الخرطوم. استخدمت الباحثة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي، وتم استخدام ثلاث أدوات لجمع بيانات الدراسة: استبيان، ومقابلة، وملاحظة المشاركين. بلغ العدد الكلي لمجتمع الدراسة 398 معلماً للغة الإنجليزية بالمرحلة الثانوية بولاية الخرطوم، و إشتملت عينة الدراسة علي108 معلماً، بنسبة 27.1% من المجتمع الكلي للدراسة. لقد أجاب كل أفراد العينة على الاستبيان، وهناك عشرة معلمين منهم أجريت معهم مقابلة واستخدمت معهم أداة الملاحظة داخل الفصل. تشير نتائج الدراسة إلى أن اتجاهات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية إيجابية نحو استخدام طريقة التدريس التواصلي، رغم أنهم لا يجيدون تطبيق هذه الطريقه داخل الفصل ويعزي ذلك للعديد من الصعوبات التي ترجع للتدريب والبيئة الدراسية. بناءً على النتائج

أعلاه، تتقدم الدراسة بأربع توصيات رئيسية: أولاً ضرورة أن يتلقى المعلمون تدريباً أساسياً في استخدام طريقة التدريس التواصلي(يمكن أن يأخذ التدريب شكل ورش عمل و سمنارات أو مؤتمرات). ثانياً: اتجاهات المعلمين نحو طريقة التدريس التواصلي يجب أن تغير إيجابياً. ثالثاً: لمعالجة مشكلة الطلاقة في اللغة الانجليزية بين المعلمين يجب أن تشتمل برامج التدريب على مفردات تحسين اللغة. و أخيراً، يجب أن تكون المناهج الدراسية الانجليزية في المرحلة الثانوية ذات طبيعة تواصلية.

كلمات مفتاحية: سياق, تواصلي, ملائم.

1.Introduction

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has its roots in England, which is a primarily English as a second language (ESL) environment. In the early 1960s, concepts about second language teaching were changing, and the theoretical assumptions behind them were also being rethought. It was during this time of re-evaluation that CLT was born. The CLT approach quickly spread in Western countries, until finally it gained popularity among language teachers around the world. Once CLT began its journey across the West, it took many different shapes and forms. It has been almost three decades since its inception, and still linguists discuss its theory and models. Some say that a strong aspect of this teaching approach is its ability to develop and change according to each country's own situation. Nevertheless, there are some general assumptions concerning the term CLT.

1.1 Statement of the Problem.

Despite the apparent popularity of CLT in the last thirty years or so, there have been opposing views of the appropriateness and feasibility of implementing CLT in EFL contexts.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the appropriateness of CLT in Sudan. In addition, this study investigates the constraints that teachers face in implementing the communicative approach in the Sudanese context.

1.3 Questions of the Study:

1. What are teachers' attitudes towards CLT?

2. What are the constraints that act against successful implementation of CLT in the Sudanese English language-teaching context?

1.4 Significance of the Study

CLT has been widely explored and studied by many researchers in the field of English language teaching. Unfortunately, due to their insufficient data, these Sudanese studies fail in providing a well-documented account of the actual situation in the Sudanese context with regard to CLT and its utilization in English classrooms. Moreover, their conclusions are often oversimplified.

1.5 Delimits of the Study

The study is limited to the possible constraints teachers face in implementing CLT in the Sudanese context of English language teaching and learning. The study is restricted to English language teachers of 30 government and private secondary schools from three localities in Khartoum State, Khartoum, Bahri and Omdurman.

2. Literature Review

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001:16), CLT began as a theory of language as communication, focused on developing learners' communicative competence. The term communicative competence is best described as the ability of classroom language learners to interact with other speakers - to make meaning - as distinct from their ability to recite dialogues or perform on discrete-point tests of grammatical knowledge. A focus on communicative competence involves many aspects of the widely known language skills, which are reading, writing, speaking, the role of the teacher has become more passive. In the CLT approach, the teacher has the role of facilitator of communication and independent participant (Breen & Candlin, 1980). This moves the focus of the classroom from teacher-centered to student-centered. This is a unique aspect of CLT, which is a learner-centered and experience-based view of second language teaching (Richards and Rodgers, 1986:69). Therefore, teachers are expected to develop and use authentic materials that meet the needs of their particular class. In addition, teachers need to motivate students and provide them with a comfortable environment for language learning. Littlewood (1981) adds that a teacher roles in CLT include: guide of students' learning, coordinator and manager of activities, language instructor, provider of new language, advisor when necessary. With this in mind it is important to investigate what kind of demands CLT puts on teachers. More specifically, what kinds of demands does CLT put on English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers, working with students in non-English speaking countries where authentic materials are hard to find? An approach that was designed to facilitate learning primarily in ESL environments presents difficulties when incorporated into non-Western countries (Burnaby and Sun, 1989; Gorsuch, 2000; Li, 1998; Tarvin and Al-Arish, 1991). The main reason for this may be cultural aspects of the non-Western EFL environment.It is important to make a clear distinction between ESL and EFL. ESL instruction happens inside an English-speaking country; therefore, the environment is rich in opportunities for the learner to test the target language outside of class. In fact, the ESL environment,imakes language-learning a necessary part of daily survival. Therefore, every level of learner can acquire the target language both inside and outside the classroom context. On the other hand, EFL instruction takes place in non-English speaking countries. initiative and the students' desire to acquire the target language. Thus, providing language experience and using authentic materials becomes more of a challenge for teachers. Ellis explains

"ESL teaching is primarily designed to develop communicative competence, with little or no curricular demands and pressures of examinations… whereas (EFL) is part of the school curriculum, and therefore subject to contextual factors such as a teacher's language proficiency, teaching resources, the availability of suitable materials, may or may not test communicative competence."

Ellis 1996:215

In most countries, including Sudan, foreign language tests are grammar-based, contradicting the principals of CLT. Thus the learner can become frustrated with a teacher's focus on communicative skills rather than on grammar and form. This study attempts to fill the gap in research on teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards CLT in EFL countries, giving special attention and focus to Sudan. Previously, English was the most commonly taught foreign language in Sudan, in both private and public schools. Teachers in Sudan have started to realize the need for communicative competence, and various institutions have provided workshops and training sessions on CLT. However, the university entrance exam has continued to influence foreign language teaching in Sudan.

3.Research Methodolog

Mixed methods research may be defined as "the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research" (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003, p. 212). Mixed-methods approach enables the researchers to draw on all possibilities (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) and provides a broader perspective to the study as the qualitative data helps describe aspects the quantitative data cannot address (Creswell, 2003). Using both forms of data allows researchers to simultaneously generalize results from a sample to a population and to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of interest. Amores (1997, p. 521) defines triangulation as "the collection and comparison of data from two or more separate observations or illustrations of the behaviors being studied". This was a major tool used in this study to gather data. Data were collected through written survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with the participants, and classroom observation.Given the purpose of this study, qualitative research appeared to be the most appropriate methodology. It is not only significant to document Sudanese EFL teachers' attitudes regarding CLT use in their classrooms, but it is also crucial to determine how their EFL teaching context has affected and shaped their attitudes and perceptions. In this study, mainly three types of data collection were used: a written questionnaire survey), semi-structured interviews, and classroom observation

4.Study Results, Analysis and Discussion

The themes generated from the questionnaire, the interview and the observation are

discussed under these four major categories:

1. Teachers' understanding and attitudes towards CLT
2. School information
3. CLT methodology
4. Difficulties and challenges in implementing CLT

Teachers' Understanding and Attitudes Towards CLT

The interview data suggested that teachers understood CLT principles. Richards & Rodgers, (2001:86) mentioned that the adoption of the principles of CLT marked the beginning of a paradigm shift that led to many changes in how second language teaching is conducted and conceived. These changes, considered to be some of the characteristics of CLT in practice, include learner centeredness, focus on both meaning and linguistic forms in context, use of collaborative activities, promotion of authentic materials and of relevant and meaningful classroom activities, and new roles for teachers as facilitators and negotiators of meaning.

School Information

Number of Students in the Classroom

Table (4.1) Number of students in the classroom

Number of students	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 30	4	3.7
30-40	16	14.8
41-50	32	29.6
More than 51	56	51.9
Total	108	100.0

As seen in table 9, secondary schools in Sudan have an average of between 40 and 51 students per class. Due to such high student numbers and the limited time allocated to each student in the lesson, it is challenging for teachers to carry out supplementary communicative activities when there is a strict requirement to cover all the items in the curriculum. The interview data in the current research supports that this is a problem. All ten participants mentioned that they have large classes, and that this makes it hard for them to use group work, especially in classrooms with fixed and immovable desks and chairs. Moreover disciplinary issues were said to dominate large classes.

Classes Teachers Teach Each Year

Table (4.2): Number of annual classes per teacher

Number of classes	Frequency	Percent
1	0	0. 00
2	8	7.4
3	36	33.3
4	63	59..3
Total	108	100.0

The data revealed that the setting in which teaching occurs imposes many constraints on teachers. Related to setting is the issue of teaching load. The reality is that teachers in Sudan are overworked and underpaid. Therefore, in order to make a living, most teachers have an average of 4 classes to teach each week, which imposes great constraints on class preparation time. 59.3% (63) teachers stated that they taught 4 classes per week each year. Therefore, creating a fully communicative environment, in which they are expected to use authentic materials, and provide opportunities for communicative interactions, may not be realistic.

Teachers' Teaching Load

Table (4.3): Teaching Load

Teachers' load (hr)	Frequency	Percent
Less than 5	8	7.4
5-10	20	18.5
11-15	80	74.1
Total	108	100.0

In regards to the hours of class, the questionnaire revealed the heavy workload that Sudanese secondary school teachers must contend with. According to the survey data, almost three quarters of the teachers 74.15% (80), disclosed that they taught more than 15 hours per week. This only included the contact hours, not grading and other out-of-class duties. What is more, 18.5% (20) affirmed that they taught 5 to 10 hours of English classes. Only 7.4%(8) out of 108 respondents taught less than five hours per week. Teachers' heavy workloadwas a major difficulty reported in the current study that was vastly mentioned by other authors. Burnaby and Sun (1984), Halliday (1994), Hui (1997), Li (1998), Li (2004), and Rao (2002) demonstrated in their studies that this issue was a significant constraint that hindered the effective implementation of CLT in EFL classrooms.

Access to Authentic Material in the Target Language
Table (4.4): Access to Authentic Target Language Material

Access to authentic material	Frequency	Percent
Yes	23	21.3
No	85	78.7
Total	108	100.0

As seen in table 12, access to authentic material in the target language served as a barrier to the adoption of CLT in Sudanese English classrooms. Lack of support from administrators, as well as insufficient funding from the Ministry of Education is regarded as a big challenge for teachers who would like to employ CLT in their classrooms. Pertaining to the lack of financial support is the shortage of authentic language teaching and learning materials

CLT Methodology

This part of the research asks questions about: (1) the types of activities teachers use in the classroom, (2) teaching methods, (4) CLT and (5) CLT principles.

CLT Activities in the Classroom

Table (4.5): CLT activities in the classroom

No.	Statement		Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
1	Fill in the blank	Percent	85.2	14.8	00.0	00.0	100.0
		Frequency	92	16	00	00	108
2	Silent reading	Percent	88.9	11.1	00.0	00.0	100.0
		Frequency	96	12	00	00	108
3	Role play	Percent	7.4	7.4	11.1	74.1	100.0
		Frequency	8	8	12	80	108
4	Translation	Percent	77.8	00.0	00.0	22.2	100.0
		Frequency	84	00	00	24	108
5	Drills	Percent	66.7	7.4	7.4	18.5	100.0
		Frequency	72	8	8	20	108
6	Problem solving	Percent	7.4	7.4	25.9	59.3	100.0
		Frequency	8	8	28	64	108
7	Modelling	Percent	7.4	14.8	40.7	37.0	100.0
		Frequency	8	16	44	40	108

CLT is a language teaching approach that emphasizes the communication of meaning, through communicative activities, rather than the practice of grammatical forms in isolation. It aims at developing the knowledge and skills language learners need for appropriate interpretation and use of a language in different communicative settings. Relating to the issue of classroom activities, a large majority of teachers, 85.2% (92) reported that they always use fill in the blank. An even greater number, 87.8% (96), reported that they always use silent reading.

77.8% (84) always use translation 66.7% (72) always use drills. These types of activities are not communicative, and they just teach grammar and right or wrong answers. The data reveals that teachers who participated in the study did not use CLT activities in their classrooms. Teachers relied more on grammar and reading activities, which were not communicative but rather lessons on explicit grammar rules. Teachers relied exclusively on the book. In class, all the activities individual work on book exercises, which were mainly grammar-centred. Teachers seemed to have problems in implementing communicative activities. In addition, students in the secondary schools had problems with discipline. Teachers perceived that the disruptive behaviour of students would become complicated if communicative activities were to be implemented. In order to implement an effective CLT approach in the classroom, teachers must begin by understanding the demands and procedures of the approach to be used. The data suggests that while teachers claim to understand CLT principles, without exception they failed to implement what was required of them, and thus, failed to provide opportunities for communicative interactions and activities in their classrooms.

Teaching Methods

Table (4.6): Teaching Methods

Teaching methods	Frequency	Percent
Direct method	24	22.2
CLT	12	11.1
Grammar translation method	60	55.6
Others	12	11.1
Total	108	100.0

Traditional teaching methods such as Grammar Translation Method and Direct Method do not help EFL students to communicate effectively in English (Littlewood, 2007). CLT advocates teaching practices that develop communicative competence in authentic contexts (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). It has been recognized as an effective approach to increase students' abilities to communicate in English (Savignon, 2001). To solve the problem caused by traditional methods, CLT has been introduced to EFL countries to improve students' abilities in using English in real contexts (Littlewood, 2007). However, most teachers in the current study (55.6%, or 60) use the grammar translation method to teach English. 22.2%(24) use the direct method. 11.1%(12) use other English teaching methods. Only 11.1% (12) use CLT.

Use of CLT
Table (4.7): Use of CLT

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Yes	84	77.8
No	24	2202
Total	108	100.0

When teachers in the current study were asked whether they have tried using CLT in their classes, more than three quarters (77.8%, 84) of the questionnaire participants responded positively, while the remaining 22.4% (24) said that they had never used CLT. In spite of the efforts and resources, numerous Sudanese teachers of English do not seem to have gone through any fundamental changes in their conception of effective CLT in their daily practices. That is, CLT has not received actual support. Although teachers claim to be followers of CLT, they are just paying lip service. In reality, there has been resistance due to lack of resources, large class size, limited instructional time, teachers' lack of language proficiency and sociolinguistic competence, examination pressure, and cultural factors that largely hinder and affect the implementation of CLT.

Principles of CLT
Table (4.8:) Principles of CLT

No	Statement	Answers		
		True	Don't Know	Not True
1	CLT is student/ learner-centred approach.	104	0	4
2	CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy.	100	1	7
3	CLT emphasizes communication in a second language (L2).	106	1	1
4	CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening skills.	71	3	34
5	CLT requires teachers to have a high proficiency in English.	49	8	51
6	CLT involves only group work or pair work.	67	0	41
7	CLT requires higher knowledge of the target language culture	38	12	58
8	CLT involves no grammar teaching.	29	0	79
9	CLT involves teaching speaking only.	43	0	65
10	CLT is basically an ESL methodology, not EFL.	42	12	54

Table 16 features the response to one of the sections from the questionnaire. It was intended to elicit teachers' perceptions regarding the general principles of CLT. This question

involved ten items, some of which are descriptive characteristics of CLT, and the others are common misconceptions about CLT that have been reported. Responses to this question demonstrate Sudanese teachers' understanding of what is involved in CLTobservation. The interview data also showed that teachers had a certain understanding of CLT principles. The interview participants highlighted the use of language for communicative purposes, and the use of communicative activities in language teaching.

Difficulties and Challenges in Implementing CLT

Although most participants have tried using CLT in their classrooms and agreed that it is essential to utilize CLT to improve the effectiveness of English teaching practices in Sudan, they mention that there are many difficulties and challenges they face in their attempts to implement CLT.

Teacher-Related Difficulties and Challenges

In this category the questionnaire data revealed six major constraints related to the teachers themselves, which were later confirmed with the interview results. These reported difficulties involved:

1. Teachers' deficiency in spoken English,
2. Lack of knowledge about the appropriate use of language in context,
3. Lack of knowledge about the target language culture,
4. Few opportunities for teachers to get training in CLT,
5. Little time for developing materials for communicative classes.
6. Teachers' misconceptions about CLT.

Deficiency in Spoken English

Table (4.9): Deficiency in Spoken English

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Major challenge	76	70.4
Challenge	24	22.2
Mild challenge	00.0	00.0
Not a challenge at all	8	7.4
Total	108	100.0

The questionnaire data showed that over 90% of respondents considered their own deficiency in spoken English as a challenge of some degree, prohibiting them from applying CLT in the classroom. Approximately one quarter, or 22.2% (24), of teachers considered it a "challenge" while a further 70.4% (76) considered it a "major challenge". Only 7.4% (8) respondents thought this was not a challenge at all. Considering the earlier argument in the literature review, stating that CLT requires fluency on the part of the teacher, the literature supports that this is indeed a big challenge in the effective use of CLT.

Lack of knowledge About the use of Language in Context

Table (4.10):Lack of Knowledge about the use of language in context

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Major challenge	52	48.1
Challenge	44	40.7
Mild challenge	4	3.7
Not a challenge at all	8	7.4
Total	108	100.0

In recent decades teachers of EFL have been encouraged to implement CLT to help develop students' English abilities. This is due to the awareness of English being the most widely spoken language in the world, covering various areas such as technology, science, and business. The survey participants testified that their limited knowledge of the target language, as well as sociolinguistic aspects of the language served as barriers to implementing CLT in the classes. 40.7% (44) of the respondents named this as a challenge, while 48.1% (52) believed that this was a major challenge. Only 7.4% (8) respondents stated that this was not a challenge at all.

Lack of Knowledge about the Target Culture

Table (4.11): Lack of knowledge About the Target Culture

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Major challenge	56	51.9
Challenge	44	40.7
Mild challenge	00	00,0
Not a challenge at all	8	7.4
Total	108	100.0

Concerning the target culture, over 90% of respondents consider their lack of knowledge relating to it to be a challenge of some degree. 51.9% (56) of teachers find it to be a major challenge in implementing CLT. 40.7% (44) find it a challenge. Only 7.4% (8) participants don't consider it a challenge at all. Generally, foreign language textbooks and materials contain information about and reflect the target culture, so that students can become proficient in the target culture.

Lack of Training in CLT
Table (4.12: Lack of training in CLT

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Major challenge	80	74.1
Challenge	24	22.2
Mild challenge	00	00.0
Not a challenge at all	4	3.7
Total	108	100.0

The participants in the current study differed in their responses to the question regarding the opportunities they had for training or retraining in CLT. 22.2% (24) of the teachers considered this a challenge, while 74.1% (80) labelled it a major challenge. Only four (3.7%) participants felt that getting training in CLT was not a challenge at all. This variation in the participants' responses became clear after the interviews. Three of the interviewed participants reported that there were many opportunities for training in CLT: conferences, seminars, and workshops on CLT. For example, British Council in Khartoum organizes teaching workshops.

Lack of Time for Developing Communicative Materials
Table (4.13): Lack of time for developing communicative materials

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Major challenge	80	74.1
Challenge	20	18.5
Mild challenge	8	7.4
Not a challenge at all	0	00.0
Total	108	100.0

Teachers stated that they lacked time for developing materials for communicative classes, which in turn became a constraint for them in using CLT. It was claimed that the prescribed secondary level course books (SPINE Series) are communicative in nature because they were published by experts in the field, who claim they are communicative. However, the respondents stated that they are highly structured and the units are based on the various grammar points. Thus, they felt that they had to develop extra materials and design their own activities in order to use CLT in the classrooms. According to the questionnaire data, 74.1% (80) of the respondents considered their lack of time as a major challenge facing them in their efforts to develop communicative materials. 18.5% (20) thought this was a challenge, while 7.4% (8) saw it as a mild challenge

Misconceptions About CLT

Table (4.14): Misconceptions about CLT

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Major challenge	0	00.0
Challenge	4	3.7
Mild challenge	88	81.5
Not a challenge at all	16	14.8
Total	108	100.0

The questionnaire data revealed that teachers mostly had strong perceptions regarding what was involved in CLT (See Section 5.4.4). Even though there were some uncertainties with regard to a few items, the greater number of the participants appeared to be well aware of the general principles of CLT. Hence, the majority of the teachers confirmed that misconceptions about CLT were not truly obstacles for them to make use of communicative activities in the classes. 81.5% (88) of the respondents believed that misleading notions about CLT served only as a mild challenge. Further, 14.8% (16) teachers indicated that they were not a challenge at all. The remaining 3.7% (4) respondents noted that those misconceptions about CLT were serious barriers to implement CLT successfully in **English classes.**

Students-Related Difficulties and Challenges

The second major category of constraints was associated with the students. These concerns consisted of: the students' low English proficiency in general, the students' passive style of learning, the students' resistance to participate in communicative classroom activities, and their lack of motivation for developing communicative competence. It is worth noting that this study concerns teachers, but presenting some difficulties and challenges on part of the students is crucial, since they influence teachers' perceptions and practice of CLT in the classroom.

Low English Proficiency

Table (4.15(Low English Proficiency

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Major challenge	96	88.9
Challenge	12	11.1
Mild challenge	00	00.0
Not a challenge at all	00	00.0
Total	108	100.0

The survey data demonstrated that students' low English proficiency was one of the

principal obstacles for the teachers to use CLT in English classrooms. 88.9%(96) of the survey participants admitted that their learners' low English proficiency was a major challenge. 11.1% (12) participants, in addition, named this as a challenge. The interviewed respondents reported that due to limited hours of instruction per week, students' progress was too slow. Consequently, the respondents complained that using CLT would be difficult as students' lack speaking abilities in English. The researcher noticed that students have very limited knowledge of English.

Passive Style of Learning

Table (4.16): Passive style of learning

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Major challenge	80	74.1
Challenge	20	18.5
Mild challenge	4	37
Not a challenge at all	4	37
Total	108	100.0

It was remarkable to see that a great majority of the survey respondents found students' passive style of learning as a serious obstacle that prevented them from implementing CLT in the English classes. 74.1% (80) of respondents expressed that this stood as a major challenge. 18.5% (20) respondents regarded this as a challenge while, 3.7% (4) chose mild challenge as a response. Only four respondents didn't consider students' passive style of learning to be a challenge at all. The researcher observed that students have a passive style of learning. Many of the students indicated a preference for learning styles that were fundamentally incompatible with CLT. Students feel a little bit shy; they feel uncomfortable when they are asked to speak in English. They feel reluctant to speak in front of the whole class.

Resistance to Participate in Communicative Activities

Table (4.17): Resistance to Participate in Communicative Activities

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Major challenge	84	77.8
Challenge	16	14.8
Mild challenge	4	3.7
Not a challenge at all	4	3.7
Total	108	100.0

Students' resistance to participating in communicative class activities was reported as another significant limitation to utilizing CLT in English classes in Sudan. Most of the survey participants 77.8%(84) reported that students' reluctance to engage in communicative class

activities emerged as a major challenge in applying CLT. 14.8% (16) saw it as a challenge.

Lack of Motivation for Developing Communicative Competence

Table (4.18): Lack of Motivation for Developing Communicative Competence

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Major challenge	84	77.8
Challenge	16	14.8
Mild challenge	4	3.7
Not a challenge at all	4	3.7
Total	108	100.0

Students' lack of motivation for developing communicative competence was also referred to by the respondents as a significant constraint in CLT practices. Many learners have little immediate need to use English, and lack motivation to communicate in English outside the **classroom**. 77.8% (84) of participants labelled this as a major challenge, while 14.8%(16) asserted that it was a challenge. Moreover, 3.7%(4) teachers considered this point as a mild challenge, and another four of them reported that it was not a challenge at all. Most students do not see any practical value of communicative abilities; they still care more about English grammar than being able to speak the language. As reported by the interviewees, the reason for the ever-existing popularity of grammar can again be traced back to the issue of English teaching led by grammar-based examinations.

Educational System - Related Difficulties and Challenges

The third chief category of difficulties and challenges is related to the current educational system in Sudan. Within this category, four key constraints were listed: (1) lack of support and lack of authentic material, (2) traditional views on teachers' and learners' roles, (3) large classes, and (4) grammar-based examinations.

Lack of Support

Table (4.19): Lack of support

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Major challenge	96	88.9
Challenge	8	7.4
Mild challenge	4	3.7
Not a challenge at all	0	00.0
Total	108	100.0

According to the questionnaire data, lack of support was one of the biggest challenges that EFL teachers had to deal with in their attempts to adopt CLT. More than three quarters of the teachers surveyed, 88.9% (96), reported lack of support as a major challenge. At the same

time, 7.4%(8) teachers regarded this as a challenge.

Traditional View on Teachers' and Learners' Roles

Table (4.20)Traditional view on teachers' and learners' roles

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Major challenge	84	77.8
Challenge	12	11.1
Mild challenge	12	11.1
Not a challenge at all	0	00
Total	108	100.0

Concerning teachers' and learners' roles, the questionnaire data revealed that most teachers view the traditional role of teachers and learners as not being compatible with CLT. 77.8% (84) view that as a major challenge in implementing CLT. 11.1%(12) see it as a challenge. 11.1%(12) state this is a mild challenge.

Large Classes

Table (4.21): Large Classes

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Major challenge	88	81.5
Challenge	12	11.1
Mild challenge	8	7.4
Not a challenge at all	0	00.0
Total	108	100.0

As was discussed earlier in this study, having large classes is one of the key problems in the Sudanese educational system in general (see section 5.3.1). The questionnaire data revealed that a large number of students in classes was also a serious barrier to the use of CLT. While, 81.5% (88) respondents considered this as a major challenge, 11.1% (12) viewed it as a challenge. There were only 7.4% (8) respondents who thought that large classes acted as a mild challenge for implementing CLT.

Grammar-Based Examinations

Table (4.22): Grammar-Based Examinations

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Major challenge	100	92.5
Challenge	8	7.4
Mild challenge	0	00
Not a challenge at all	0	00.0
Total	108	100.0

As demonstrated by the questionnaire data, 92.5% (100) respondents thought that grammar-based exam types were a major challenge for them to implement CLT, while 7.4%(8) believed this was a challenge.

5.5.4 CLT-Related Difficulties and Challenges

The fourth and final category regarding the reported difficulties and challenges to use CLT in Sudan pertained to CLT itself. Two different problems were referred to by the respondents in this category: (1) the lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments, and (2) CLT's inadequate account of EFL teaching.

Lack of Effective and Efficient Assessment Instruments

Table (4.23) Lack of Effective and Efficient Assessment Instruments

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Major challenge	92	85.2
Challenge	16	14.8
Mild challenge	0	7.4
Not a challenge at all	0	00.0
Total	108	100.0

CLT should be supported by communicative testing. Although there is a long way to go before this can be fully realized in Sudan due to economic and technical difficulties, it is still a goal towards which Sudanese teachers and policy makers should aim. Lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments was identified by the questionnaire respondents as one of the difficulties facing CLT. All respondents (100%) agreed that it presented a challenge of some degree, with the majority, 85.2% (92), citing it as a major problem. 14.8% (16) noted that it was a challenge. It was noteworthy that only 3.7%(4) respondents regarded this issue as a mild challenge.

Inadequate Account of EFL Teaching
Table (4.24) Inadequate Account of EFL Teaching

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Major challenge	88	81.5
Challenge	12	11.1
Mild challenge	8	7.4
Not a challenge at all	0	00.0
Total	108	100.0

The literature points out that CLT techniques, which originated in Western countries, are not always culturally attuned to EFL contexts. The survey participants expressed that CLT failed to give an adequate account of EFL teaching. According to a great majority of the respondents, 81.5%(88) of them, CLT's inadequate account of distinctive features of EFL teaching contexts produced a major challenge in terms of the implementation of CLT in Sudan. 11.1% (12) view this as a challenge, 7.4% (8) reported it as a mild challenge.

5.Conclusion

The study of teachers' thinking has become an interest in the field of education, especially in language teaching and learning, as it is a means of understanding teachers' behaviour in the classroom. Since teaching is a complex process, teachers have to confront a lot of activities, and in trying to understand how teachers deal with these dimensions of teaching, it is necessary to examine the beliefs and attitudes underlying teachers' classroom actions or behaviour. It is widely accepted that the attitudes and beliefs regarding a given subject inform one's behaviour towards it; thus, attitudes and beliefs about CLT shape teachers' practical implementation of CLT. In this study, an attempt has been made to discover secondary school teachers' attitudes towards the communicative approach alongside the possible constraints they face in implementing it in the Sudanese context of language teaching and learning. The findings of this study indicate that the majority of respondents have generally favourable attitudes towards CLT. In the literature, a lack of opportunity to receive training in CLT was referred to as another key challenge for teachers working in EFL contexts. In addition, students' low motivation to improve their communicative competencewas identified in the literature as a considerable challenge to be overcome. Teachers pointed out that students felt that they primarily needed to learn grammar, and thus they did not have much motivation to develop their spoken English for communicative purposes. Lastly, the respondents heavily emphasized CLT's inadequate account of EFL teachingas a major constraint in employing CLT in English classrooms. Teachers noted that there are considerable differences between EFL and ESL teaching. These differences include: the purposes of learning English, the

learning environments, the teachers> English proficiency, and the availability of authentic English materials.

Recommendations

1. Syllabus designers should take into account teachers> attitudes and beliefs about CLT.
2. Teachers> heavy workload should be decreased in order to increase their work conditions and quality of teaching.
3. The average number of students per English class must be dramatically reduced as a matter of priority.
4. Oral evaluation assessment should be included in the university entrance exam and in the Sudanese secondary school system in general.
5. The target language should be used as a vehicle for communication.
6. To combat the generally low level of speaking skills among Sudanese EFL teachers, a language improvement component should be included in teacher training programs.
7. Teachers in Sudan must receive more professional development.
8. Teachers need more freedom to incorporate authentic materials and to supplement the prescribed textbooks..
9. CLT must be adapted for use in EFL settings.

REFERENCES

Amores, M. (1997): A new perspective on peer-editing. Foreign

Breen, M and Candlin, C. (1980):The Essential of A communicative Curriculum language Teaching. Applied Linguistics. 1(2) 89112-

Buraby, B. and y. Sun (1984). Introduction to research methods. London: Sage.

Burnaby B. and Y.Sun. (1989): Chinese teachers> views of western language teaching: context informs paradigms>. TESOL Quarterly 23238-219 ,3/.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ellis, E.M. (1996) gualism among Teachers of English as a Second Language: (Doctoral thesis, Griffith University, 2003).

Ellis, G. (2003) culturally appropriate is the communicative approach? ELT Journal, 50(3), 213218-.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1994): Language as Social Semiotic. London: Edward Arnold.

Hui, G. (2002):Potential Cultural Resistance to Pedagogical Imports:
in EFL classroom. Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 1, 618622-.

Gorsuch, G. (2000): EFL educational policies and educational cultures: Influences on teachers> approval of communicative activities. TESOL Quarterly, 34,67571-

Li, D. (1998): It>s always more difficult than you plan and imagine: Teachers> perceived

difficulties in introducing the communicative approach in South Korea. TESOL Quarterly, 32 (4), 677703-.

Li, D. (2004): Chinese EFL teachers' perceptions of implementation of communicative language teaching at tertiary level (Unpublished master's thesis). McGill University, Montreal, Canada.

Littlewood, W. (1981):Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press..

Rao, Z.H. (2002): Chinese students' perceptions of communicative and non-communicative activities in EFL classroom. System, 30(1), 85105-. Research, 8(2), 199222-.

Richards, J.C., & T.S. Rodgers.(1986)):Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards,C and S. Rodgers. (2001): Approaches and Methods in

Modern Language Journal, 83 (4), 49417 5-.

Tarvin, W.L., & Al-Arish, A. Y. (1991): Rethinking communicative language teaching: Reflection and the EFL classroom. TESOL Quarterly, 25, 927-.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (1998). Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.