

# **TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING AND PRACTICAL PROBLEMS IN ITS IMPLEMENTATION**

**BY:**

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# **ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

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**JUNE, 2003**

## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, graduate student hereby declare that, this thesis is my original work, has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Key Words:**

- .Attitude**
- .Communicative Language Teaching**
- .Implementation**
- .Innovation**
- .Problems**

This study is about communicative language teaching. It attempted to find out secondary school English language teachers' attitudes towards communicative language teaching. It also set out to investigate the possible impediments that may hinder the implementation of the approach in the classrooms. Thus, the following two basic questions were formulated: 1) what are teachers' attitudes towards the communicative approach in English language teaching and learning? 2) What are the constraints that act against a successful implementation of the communicative approach in the Ethiopian English language teaching and learning context?

A questionnaire that consisted of 30 items was distributed to 80 English language teachers in ten government secondary schools that are found in West Gojjam and Bahir Dar Special Zones of Amhara Region. The questionnaire was primarily designed for collecting data as regards teachers' attitudes towards communicative language teaching. For in-depth scrutiny of the problems teachers face in implementing CLT, ten teachers (one from each school) were interviewed and subsequently observed while teaching in the classrooms.

The collected data was analyzed through means, percentages and z-test. The findings indicated that teachers generally have mildly favourable (positive) attitudes towards communicative language teaching. They, however, articulated a number of constraints that hamper the effective accomplishment of CLT as planned. Though the results indicate that teachers have mildly positive attitude towards communicative language teaching, implementation of CLT can be more effective if teachers have strong attitude towards it. It is, therefore, suggested that policy makers, syllabus designers, teacher educators and other concerned bodies should take into account



teachers' attitudes and beliefs. Besides, in adopting an innovation, it is important to consider the circumstances it is operating so that the communicative approach can fit well in to the Ethiopian English language teaching / learning context.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Today, communicative language teaching (CLT) is viewed as the most effective and widely used approach in EFL/ESL teaching, and most modern methods and techniques emphasize it (Anderson 1993; Kumaravadivelu 1993; Cook 2001; Savignon 2002), and most textbooks and materials are designed for it. In Ethiopia, the modalities and approaches regarding the teaching of the language are not different from the current and widely used language teaching approaches elsewhere. It follows the communicative language teaching approach, with the learner at the center (ICDR 1994). As a result, CLT has its place in this country, and new English language teaching textbooks were produced for secondary schools on the basis of the communicative approach (Ministry of Education 1997). The 'New English for Ethiopia' books now seem to be in contrast to the traditional, structural, grammar-based materials which had been used in the country. The new syllabus seems to have been designed in such a way that enables the students to use English for social interaction where necessary. Thus, "the teaching and learning of English in our high schools ...would be expected to follow the communicative approach to language teaching" (Surafel 2002: 71).

However, in the Ethiopian language teaching and learning context, the change in teaching materials by way of employing new syllabuses and the change in teaching

approaches have not been paralleled by an attempt to achieve a change in the attitudes of teachers involved in implementing the curriculum innovation. Teaching materials are often given priority, with large sums of money spent on developing course books and inviting foreign expertise to prepare conferences and workshops (e.g., expertise from the British government, MOE 1997; EELTNET 2000). To be more specific, though the syllabuses claim to be communicatively oriented, there seem to be a common understanding that the teachers' orientation about the different theories and principles of communicative language teaching approach is limited.

Besides, these programmes do not attempt to explore teachers' attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning. Also, focus has not been given in identifying the constraints that might conflict with the philosophy behind the teaching materials though many teachers, students and some education officials are often heard complaining certain difficulties they have encountered in the attempt to implement the approach.

Regarding the implementation of new teaching materials, Karavas (1996) and Nunan (1987) say that teachers feel a wide gap between theory and actual classroom practices. This is partly because teachers' existing attitudes and beliefs are being largely neglected prior to or along with the introduction of a new approach. In other words, courses designed seem to give priority to train teachers in the contents of the new approach and persuading them of its effectiveness (Karavas 1996). Hence, Kennedy and Kennedy (1996) say that changes in ELT materials and methods require a change in teachers' attitudes and beliefs. In relation to the importance of

teachers' attitudes and beliefs, Kleinsasser and Savignon (1991) as quoted by Karavas, argue:

*In our quest for the improvement of language teaching, we have overlooked the language teacher. Exploration... of teachers' perceptions of what they do and why they do it holds promise for understanding the frequently noted discrepancies between theoretical understanding of second/foreign language acquisition and classroom practice (1996: 188).*

Moreover, Fang (1996) cited in Abiy (2002) claims that the research emphasis on teaching and learning has shifted from process-product observations to a focus on teachers' thinking and beliefs. This shift of emphasis towards teachers' perceptions might be because, for one thing, knowledge is understood as the development of beliefs and attitudes (Blanton and Moorman 1987). For another thing, teachers' perception of the practicality of new teaching practice (philosophical acceptance of an innovation) influences later implementation (Sparks 1988). It is also believed that teachers' actions are highly influenced by their beliefs and attitudes, even more than they are determined by their knowledge (Williams and Burden 1997). Wright (1987) says the whole educational process is deeply influenced by beliefs and attitudes. All those members of the teachers' role sets have beliefs and attitudes, which influence the teaching /learning process. Above all, Richards and Lockhart maintain that "... what teachers do is a reflection of what they know and believe, and that teacher knowledge and 'teacher thinking' provide the underlying framework or schema which guides the teacher's classroom actions" (1994: 29).

More importantly, teachers' attitudes and beliefs shape the sense they make of any educational innovation, and play a critical role in how they behave in the classroom

situation (Topper 1999), and "beliefs about the innovation, about its consequences and the contextual variables associated with it are all important in determining behaviour...." (Kennedy and Kennedy 1996: 359). Similarly, Karavas (1996) points out that teachers' beliefs and theories although in many cases unconsciously held, have an effect on their classroom behaviour, particularly teachers inevitably bring their personal views of life that interferes with the work, into the classroom (Mc Arthur 1983). The teachers may not always be fully aware of the effects of this fact, and it can be useful to examine its implications for the classroom teaching/ learning process.

Consequently, it can be argued that the cycle of curriculum innovation is incomplete, because changes in methodologies and materials are not supported by an attempt to achieve a parallel change in teachers' attitudes and beliefs. The individual users' (teachers in this case) subjective perceptions of newness, which is the most influential agent that determines whether an approach to organizing language instruction count as innovation, is not taken into account.

Many classroom researches (e.g., Anderson 1993; Hui 1997; Nolasco and Arthur 1986 and Surafel 2002) show that teachers face difficulties in promoting the communicative approach as intended. The teachers' perceived difficulties might be divided into two main broad categories: (1) internal and (2) external constraints.

Internal constraints represent those factors that come from within teachers themselves, such as poor subject knowledge and methodology. External constraints; on the other hand, refer to factors that come from structural and organizational elements, which teachers have no control over like students and parents' beliefs, lack

of resources and administrative obstacles. The two sets of constraints are interdependent.

Nolasco and Arthur (1986), for example, list down some of the most common problems perceived by Moroccan secondary school teachers as: students' interest, discipline, physical constraints (e.g., arrangement of desks), students' preference of grammar and exam practice, large class size, administrative problems and students' reluctance to use English when put into pairs. Wright (2000) also indicates that large classes, lack of supplementary materials, lack of confidence as teachers are not mother tongue speakers, and expectation by school authorities, students, etc., to teach in the traditional fashion are some of the problems that act against the favourable implementation of communicative language teaching.

Home research done by Surafel (2002) shows that large class size, inadequate background knowledge of the students, scarcity of textbooks, absence / scarcity of supplementary materials (for listening and reading) and exam practice are some common problems English language teachers face while they are trying to implement the approach. Amare (1998) in his article, 'Teachers' Perceptions of Educational Problems in Ethiopia,' has identified the following problems: overcrowded classes, shortage of instructional materials, heavy teaching loads, etc. He further mentions that teachers' attitudes are another source of problems in the teaching/learning process in Ethiopia.

So far, it seems that no research has been conducted about teachers' attitudes of CLT in the Ethiopian context of language teaching and learning, and as a result of this, it is difficult to know what secondary school English language teachers believe

about communicative language teaching. Besides, as CLT was spread around the world to contexts different from that in which it was developed (believed to be developed in Europe and America), it is essential to document the prevalent constraints in our context of language teaching and learning.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate teachers' attitudes towards the communicative approach. In addition, this study explores the constraints teachers face in implementing the approach in the Ethiopian context, and suggests some ways of coping with them. Hence, the research questions of this study are:

1. What are teachers' attitudes towards the communicative approach in English language teaching and learning?
2. What are the constraints that act against a successful implementation of the communicative approach in the Ethiopian English language teaching and learning context?

## **1.3 Significance of the Study**

This study will have the following benefits:

- a) Teachers' attitudes are a crucial variable in the implementation of change (of materials, methods, etc.). The introduction of new materials and methods need to be supplemented with the change of teachers' attitudes and beliefs. This study, therefore, will help education officials and other concerned bodies to

take into account teachers' beliefs and attitudes, which influence the teaching and learning process.

- b) This study will help English language teachers, education officials and other bodies to recognize the constraints that exist in our secondary schools in an attempt to implement the 'new' English course books.
- c) This study may also be used as a basis for future studies in the area.

#### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This study, as stated earlier, addresses secondary school English language teachers' attitudes towards communicative language teaching, i.e., it tries to explore teachers' attitudes to the main aspects of CLT. In addition, the study is limited to find out the possible constraints teachers face in implementing CLT in the Ethiopian context of English language teaching and learning. To keep the study in manageable size, the study has been delimited only to English language teachers of ten government secondary schools found in West Gojjam and Bahir Dar Special Zone of Amhara Region.

#### **1.5 Limitations of the Study**

The researcher is well aware that it would have been better to extend the number of subjects and schools for the study. However, due to time constraints, the study is limited to 80 teachers from ten government secondary schools. The researcher also felt that demonstrating all aspects of the communicative approach could not be carried out within a short period of time, and would require an intensive study which



caters for all aspects of CLT. Therefore, the questionnaire that the teachers were made to fill in, were limited to only some features of the communicative approach.

## **1.6 Definition of Terms and Abbreviations Used**

### **1.6.1 Definitions**

Attitude: The predisposition or tendency to react specifically towards an object, situation, or value, usually accompanied by feelings and emotions; attitudes cannot be directly observed but must be inferred from overt behaviour, both verbal and nonverbal (Good 1973).

Attitude scale: a technique for measuring a person's reaction to something (Richards et al 1992).

Beliefs: mental constructions of experience-often condensed and integrated into schemata or concepts that are held to be true and that guide behaviour (Sigel 1985) quoted by Pajares (1992).

Likert Scale: a common scale to measure a person's reaction to something. With this scale a statement of belief or attitude is shown to someone, and they are asked to show how strongly they agree or disagree with the statement by making a scale (Richards et al 1992).

### **1.6.2 Abbreviations**

CLT – Communicative Language Teaching

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

ELT – English Language Teaching

ESL – English as a Second Language

ICDR – Institute for Curriculum Development and Research

MOE – Ministry of Education

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. Review of Related Literature**

#### **2.1 Theoretical Background to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

Since the mid-sixties, the focus in linguistic theory has shifted from the study of language in isolation to the study of language in a social context (Savignon 1991, 2002). It is this socio-linguistic perspective, which is the unifying principle and the driving force behind a communicative approach to language teaching. Although this socio-linguistic approach is basically a language theory rather than a learning theory, taking into account Richards and Rodgers' (1986) definition of approach, CLT encompasses a theory of language and a theory of language learning, and see it as an approach than a method. Briefly, they define an approach as a set of theories about the nature of language and of language learning. It is axiomatic, as it takes a number of assumptions as a starting point. A method, on the other hand, is the level at which theory is put into practice and at which choices are made about the particular skills to be taught, the content to be taught, and the order in which the content will be presented. Besides, these writers claim, "at the

level of language theory, CLT has a rich, if somewhat eclectic theoretical base" (1986:71).

### ***2.1.1 Language Theory***

The rise of interest in the individual and in relationships among individuals, which characterized the sixties, marked the emergence of socio-linguistics, that branch of science where sociology and linguistics meet. A new light was shed on language, not simply as a system of structurally related elements, which form a rule, but as a vehicle for the expression of meaning and social interaction. In other words, the structural view was supplemented with a functional, a semantic and interactional view. It was this idea of language as communication that started off the whole communicative movement (Widdowson 1978, 1979; Savignon 1991). And it was Hymes (1972) that made history by challenging Chomsky's view on linguistic competence, and replacing it by the notion of communicative competence cited in (Richards and Rodgers 1986 and Savignon 1991).

In the words of Canale and Swain (1980:7) communicative competence refers to the "interaction between grammatical competence, or knowledge of the rules of grammar, and socio-linguistic competence, or knowledge of the rules of language use". In other words, rules of use and rules of usage are complementary and not mutually exclusive. According to Canale and Swain "the primary goal of a communicative approach must be to facilitate the integration of these two types of knowledge for the learner" (1980:25). Savignon (1991) notes that communicative competence characterizes the ability of language learners to interact with other

speakers to make meaning, and "[it] is relative, not absolute, and depends on the cooperation of all the participants involved" (1983:9). Broadly speaking, communicative competence is an aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts.

According to socio-linguistic theory, the act of communication is seen not as basically an exchange of linguistic messages, but rather as a social phenomenon in which the use of language plays a part. In the field of the ethnography of communication, which Stern (1983:220) defines as "the study of the individual's communicative activity in its social setting." language is a sub-ordinate, yet integrated part of social and situational systems, which are actually behaviour patterns. Halliday (1978) argues the existence of a semantic network is the linguistic realization of patterns of behaviour. He postulates that "the more we are able to relate the options in grammatical system to meaning potential in social contexts and behavioural settings, the more insight we shall gain into the nature of the language system" (1978:44). In his functional account of language use, Halliday has criticized Chomsky's linguistic, theory of competence. He says "Linguistics ... is concerned ... with the description of speech acts or texts, since only through the study of language in use are all the functions of language, and therefore all components of meaning, brought into focus" (1970:145). This view complements Hyme's opinion of communicative competence, and we can only understand language if we view it as an instrument or as a communicative tool. To which Widdowson (1979:50) adds that "once we accept the need to teach language as communication, we can obviously no longer think of language in

terms only of sentences." This statement provides the justification for the emphasis on discourse in CLT.

### ***2.1.2 Learning Theory***

According to Richards and Rodgers (1986) little has been written about learning theory unlike theory of language. However, two of the general learning theories, which emphasize common features among learners, are cognitive theory and skills theory.

**A) Cognitive Theory** - According to cognitive theory, learning involves the ability to understand, to anticipate, and to relate new information to pre-existing mental structures. This focus on meaningful learning is derived from an attempt to make sense of the world. The heavy reliance of CLT practitioners on the mental schema theory is exemplified by Brumfit's statement that "new learning must be closely assimilated with what is already known, and if language is being learnt for use, then new learning must be directly associated with use" (1979:189). Hence, at the level of learning theory this view supports Halliday's claim about the semantic network as a bridge between linguistic form and behaviour pattern, a link between words and the world. As Stern (1983:261) posits "The learner must become a participant in a real-life context of language use as a condition of effective learning." Macdonough (1981:27) describes the cognitive process as "hypothesis testing", and adds, significantly, that "rules can only be found if the risk of error is run" (1981:29). This view is reflected in the great tolerance of CLT towards errors. Errors are not to be avoided at all cost; they are not to be seen as evidence of

non-learning, but being an external manifestation of the continual revision of the inter-language system. They are essential elements in the learning process.

**B) Skills Theory** - This theory emphasizes the importance of cognitive learning and practice. However, advocates of this theory reject mechanical practice altogether as being totally irrelevant to genuine learning. Skills theory links mental and behavioural aspects of performance through a hierarchically organized set of plans, in which low level of automation is necessary to free attention for high level of planning. In this regard, Littlewood states the following:

*The cognitive aspect involves the internalization of plans for creating appropriate behaviour. For language use, these plans derive mainly from the language system they include grammatical rules, procedures for selecting vocabulary, and social conventions governing speech. The behavioural aspect involves the automation of these plans so that they can be converted into fluent performance in real time. This occurs mainly through practice in converting plans into performance (1984:74).*

Skill practice is considered as a legitimate learning principle (Richards and Rodgers 1986), provided that it "offers natural options of language use which reproduce the kinds of choice that occur in spontaneous communication" (Stern 1983:260).

## **2.2 The Origins of Communicative Language Teaching**

Educators such as Galloway (1993), Savignon (1987,1991) and Richards and Rodgers (1986) state that the origins of communicative language teaching are many, in so far as one teaching methodology tends to influence the next.

Galloway says that the communicative approach could be said to be the product of educators and linguists who had grown dissatisfied with the audio-lingual and grammar-translation methods of foreign language instruction. Richards and Rodgers (1986), on the other hand, claim that the origins of communicative language teaching are to be found in the changes of situational language teaching approaches, which influenced the British language teaching tradition till the late 1960s. Meanwhile, Savignon (1991) asserts that the emergence of CLT can be traced to concurrent developments on both sides of the Atlantic, i.e., in Europe and the United States.

Educators and linguists (e.g., Candlin (1981) and Widdowson (1978) saw the need to focus in language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures. They felt that students were not learning enough realistic, whole language in those methods, i.e., situational language teaching, audio-lingual or grammar-translation method (Richards and Rodgers 1986; Savignon 1987, 1991; Galloway 1993). Students did not know how to communicate using appropriate social languages, gestures, or expressions; in brief, they were at loss to communicate in the cultures of the language studied. In respect of this point, Widdowson remarks the following:

*The problem is that students, and especially students in developing countries, who have received several years of formal English teaching, frequently remain deficient in the ability to actually use the language, and to understand its use, in normal communication, whether in spoken or written mode (1972:15).*

Similarly, Howatt says that "the original motivation for adopting a communicative approach in the early seventies was remedial, an attempt to overcome the inadequacies of existing, structural syllabuses, materials, and methods" (1984:287). There was a positive response from linguists, methodologists and classroom teachers offering the best hope for the elaboration and diffusion of language teaching methods and materials that work, encourage and support learners in the development of their communicative competence (Savignon 1991). A case in point, as Richards and Rodgers (1986) describe, British language teaching specialists emphasized another fundamental dimension of language that was addressed in current approaches to language teaching at that time the functional and communicative potential of language. To put simply, the rapid application of these ideas by textbook writers; and the equally rapid acceptance of these new principles by British language teaching specialists, curriculum development centers, and even governments gave prominence nationally and internationally to what came to be referred to as communicative approach.

Although the movement began as largely British innovations focusing on alternative conceptions of a syllabus since the mid 1970s, the scope of communicative language teaching has expanded. Interest in and the development of communicative style teaching mushroomed in those years; authentic language use and classroom exchanges where students engaged in real communication with one another became quite popular. Also, numerous textbooks for teachers and teacher trainers expound on the nature of communicative approaches and offer techniques for varying ages and purposes (Brown 1994). In the intervening years, the communicative approach has been adapted to the elementary, middle,



secondary and post secondary levels, and the underlying philosophy has spawned different teaching methods known under a variety of names, including notional-functional approach, functional approach, teaching for proficiency, proficiency-based instruction, and communicative language teaching (Richards and Rodgers 1986; Savignon 1991, 2002; Galloway 1993). In this study the terms communicative approach and communicative language teaching refer to the same thing and they are used interchangeably throughout the paper.

### **2.3 Major Features of Communicative Language Teaching**

The communicative approach to language teaching is, relatively, a newly adapted approach in the area of foreign/second language teaching. CLT is a "hybrid approach to language teaching, essentially 'progressive' rather than 'traditional'...." (Wright 2000:7). CLT can be seen to derive from a multidisciplinary perspective that includes, at least, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology and educational research (Savignon 1991). It is generally accepted that, proponents of CLT see it as an approach, not a method (Richards and Rodgers 1986; Savignon 1991; Brown 1994). For Brown, for instance, "[Communicative language teaching] is a unified but broadly- based theoretical position about the nature of language and language learning and teaching"(1994: 244-245). He further maintains that though it is difficult to synthesize all of the various definitions that have been offered, the following four interconnected characteristics could be taken as a definition of CLT:

1. Classroom goals are focused on all of the components of communicative competence and not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence.

2. Language teaching techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Language forms are not the central focus but rather aspects of language that enable the learner to accomplish those purposes.
3. Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use.
4. In the communicative classroom, students ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts (Brown 1994: 245).

The communicative approach is a hazy concept, which can have a variety of meanings along the continuum between a strong version and a weak one. Johnson (1979) argues that the weak version attempts to integrate communicative activities into an existing programme, whereas the strong version claims that language is acquired through communication. Howatt summarizes the distinctions between the two versions as follows:

*There is, in a sense, a 'strong' version of the communicative approach and a 'weak' version. The 'weak' version which has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years, stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching.... The 'strong' version of communicative teaching, on the other hand, advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not merely a question of activating an existing*

*but inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself. If the former could be described as 'learning to use' English, the latter entails 'using English to learn it' (1984:279).*

Howatt adds that creating information gap activities, games, role-plays, dramas, simulations etc., are some of the exercise types in the weak versions of CLT.

Although we have different versions and various ways in which CLT is interpreted and applied, educators in the area, Littlewood (1981); Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983); Brumfit (1984); Candlin (1981); Widdowson (1978, 1979); Johnson and Morrow (1981); Richards and Rodgers (1986); Larsen-Freeman (1986); Celce-Murcia (1991) and Johnson (1982) put some of the major characteristics of CLT as follows:

1. It is felt that students need knowledge of the linguistic form, meaning and functions. However, CLT gives primary importance to the use or function of the language and secondary importance to its structure or form (Larsen-Freeman 1986; Johnson 1982). This does not mean that knowledge of grammar is not essential for effective communication, rather systematic treatment of both functions and forms is vital. Stressing on this, Littlewood says "one of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language" (1981:1). "CLT suggests that grammatical structure might better be subsumed under various functional categories...we pay considerably less attention to the overt presentation and discussion of grammatical rules than we traditionally did" (Brown 1994:245). Emphasis is also given to meaning (messages they

are creating or task they are completing) rather than form (correctness of language and language structure). For Finocchiaro and Brumfit "meaning is paramount" (1983:91) since it helps the learners to manage the message they engage with the interlocutors.

2. "Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques" (Brown 1994:245). However, at times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy because "fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal" (Finocchiaro and Brumfit 1983:93) and accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in contexts. Fluency is emphasized over accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use. It is important, however, that fluency should never be encouraged at the expense of clear, unambiguous, direct communication. And much more spontaneity is present in communicative classrooms (Brown 1994).
3. Language teaching techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Classrooms should provide opportunities for rehearsal of real-life situations and provide opportunity for real communication. Emphasis on creative role plays, simulations, dramas, games, projects, etc., is the major activities which can help the learner provide spontaneity and improvisation, not just repetition and drills. Another characteristic of the classroom process is the use of authentic materials because it is felt desirable to give students the opportunity to develop the strategies for understanding language as it is actually used by native speakers. In the classroom, everything is done with a communicative

intent. Information gap, choice and feedback are thought to be truly communicative activities (Johnson and Morrow 1981).

4. Grammar can still be taught, but less systematically, in traditional ways alongside more innovative approaches. Savignon (2002:7) says "... for the development of communicative ability [communication depends on grammar], research findings overwhelmingly support the integration of form-focused exercises with meaning-focused experience". Grammar is important; and learners seem to focus best on grammar when it relates to their communicative needs and experiences. Disregard of grammar will virtually guarantee breakdown in communication (Savignon 1991, 2001; Thompson 1996). These writers also say there are some misconceptions about CLT that makes difficult for many teachers to see clearly what is happening and to identify the useful innovations that CLT has brought. One of the persistent misconceptions is that CLT means not teaching grammar although "the exclusion of explicit attention to grammar was never necessary part of CLT" (Thompson 1996:10). In CLT involvement in communicative event is seen as central to language development, and this involvement necessarily requires attention to form (structure). In fact, it is certainly understandable that there was a reaction against the heavy emphasis on structure at the expense of natural communication. Nonetheless, it would seem foolish to make mistakes on the side of using communicative approach exclusively and totally disregard grammar teaching. Regarding this, Celce-Murcia comments:

*In spite of the intuitive appeal and the anecdotal evidence supporting proposal for exclusively communicative language teaching, there is equally*

*appealing and anecdotal evidence... that a grammarless approach ... can lead to the development of a broken, ungrammatical, pidgenized form of the target language beyond which students rarely progress (1991: 462).*

Savignon also remarks that, "communicative language teaching does not necessarily mean the rejection of familiar materials [grammar]"(2002:7). Rivers in her famous statement strengthened Savignon's remark in that "Saying that we do not need to teach grammar is like saying that we can have a chicken walking around without bones" cited in Arnold (1994:122).

Nowadays, it seems that educators accept that an appropriate amount of class time should be devoted to grammar, but this does not mean a simple return to a traditional treatment of rules. Rather "the focus has now moved away from the teacher covering to the learners discovering grammar" (Thompson 1996:11).

5. Communicative approach is not limited to oral skills. Reading and writing skills need to be developed to promote pupils' confidence in all four skills areas. Students work on all four skills from the beginning, i.e., a given activity might involve reading, speaking, listening, and perhaps also writing (Celce-Murcia 1991). Of course, oral communication is seen to take place through negotiation between speaker and listener (most likely among students), so too is interaction between the reader and writer, but no immediate feedback from the reader. Hence, in the classroom, emphasis is given to oral and listening skills, as contact time with language is important. It paves way for more fluid command of the language. Learners do not hear the teacher all the time, but

having personal contact themselves, practicing sounds themselves, permutating sentence patterns and getting chance to make mistakes and learn from doing so. The idea of emphasizing the oral skills creates uncertainty among teachers. They misconceived CLT as if it were devoted to teaching only speaking. But, "CLT is not exclusively concerned with face to face oral communication" (Savignon 2002:7). The principles of CLT apply equally to reading and writing activities that engage readers and writers in the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning. In other words, it is important to recognize that it is not only the speaker (or writer) who is communicating. Instead, communication through language happens in both the written and spoken medium, and involves at least two people. Thompson (1996) further states that, though there is a complaint that CLT ignores written language, a glance at recent mainstream textbooks shows that reading and writing materials have been given attention too.

6. Students regularly work in groups or pairs to transfer (and if necessary to negotiate) meaning in situations where one person has information that others lack (Celce-Murcia 1991). More emphasis should be given to active modes of learning such as pair or group work in problem-solving tasks in order to maximize the time allotted to each student for learning to negotiate meaning. Many people assume group/pair work is applicable in all contexts. However, classroom group and/or pair work should not be considered an essential feature used all the time, and may well be inappropriate in some contexts. Thompson (1996) and Savignon (2002) claim that group and/or pair work are flexible and useful techniques than that suggests, and they are active modes

of learning which can help the learners to negotiate meaning and engage in problem-solving activities.

The use of pair/group work is a physical signal of some degree of control and choice passing to the learners; but that needs to be complemented by real choice (learners need to be given some degree of control over their learning). Therefore, the use of pair/group work needs to be complemented by real choice for the following reasons: (1) they can provide the learners with a relatively safe opportunity to try out ideas before launching them in public; (2) they can lead to more developed ideas, and therefore greater confidence and more effective communication; (3) they can also provide knowledge and skills which may complement those of their partners which in turn lead to greater success in undertaking tasks (Thompson 1996).

7. Errors are seen as a natural outcome of the development of the communication skills and are therefore tolerated. Learners trying their best to use the language creatively and spontaneously are bound to make errors. Constant correction is unnecessary and even counter-productive. Correction noted by the teacher should be discreet. Let the students talk and express themselves and the form of the language becomes secondary. If errors of form are tolerated and are seen as a natural outcome of the development of communication skills, students can have limited linguistic knowledge and still be successful communicators (Larsen-Freeman 1986).
8. Evaluation is carried out in terms of fluency and accuracy. Students who have the most control of the structures and vocabulary are not necessarily the best



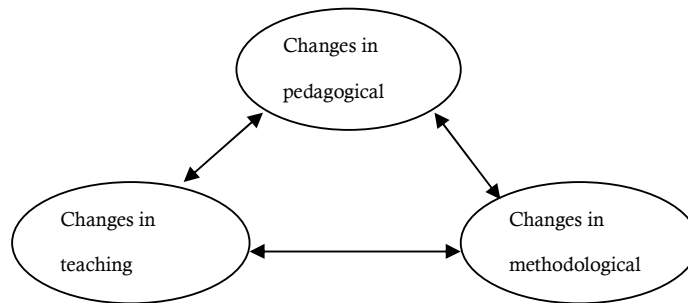
communicators. A teacher may use formal evaluation i.e., he/she is likely to use a communicative test, which is an integrative and has a real communicative function (e.g., Madsen 1983; Hughes 1989). A teacher can also informally evaluate his students' performance in his role as an advisor or co-communicator (Larsen-Freeman 1986). Savignon (1991, 2002) reports that the communicative approach follows global, qualitative evaluation of learner achievement as opposed to quantitative assessment of discrete linguistic features.

9. The students' native language has no role to play (Larsen Freeman 1986). The target language is used both during communicative activities and for the purpose of classroom management. The students learn from these classroom management exchanges, too, and realize that the target language is a vehicle for communication. Whatever the case may be, "the teacher should be able to use the target language fluently and appropriately" (Celce-Murcia 1991:8). However, for others (e.g., Finocchiaro and Brumfit 1983) judicious use of native language is accepted where feasible. Teachers may provide directions of homework, class work and test directions by using the native language.
10. The teacher is the facilitator of students' learning, manager of classroom activities, advisor during activities and a 'co-communicator' engaged in the communicative activity along with the students (Littlewood 1981; Breen and Candlin 1980). But he does not always himself interact with students; rather he acts as an independent participant. Other roles assumed for the teacher are needs analyst, counselor, researcher and learner. Students, on the other hand, are more responsible managers of their own learning. They are

expected to interact with other people, either in the flesh, through pair and group work, or in the writings. They are communicators and actively engaged in negotiating meaning in trying to make themselves understood. They learn to communicate by communicating (Larsen-Freeman 1986). Above all, since the teacher's role is less dominant, the teaching/learning process is student-centered rather than teacher-centered. In other words, it is the learner who plays a great role in a large proportion of the process of learning.

## **2.4 Curriculum Innovations and its Management**

Since the communicative approach is underpinned by a set of beliefs and principles, it matches Markee's (1997:53) model of primary curriculum innovation. By primary innovation, he means change at three dimensions: (1) teaching materials; (2) methodological skills and; (3) pedagogical values, which constitute the core dimensions of teaching and learning (Fullan 1993). Change in one dimension necessitates change in the other two dimensions. There is a reciprocal interaction between the three dimensions of curriculum innovation. This relationship is complex due to unsettled debate related to whether change in teaching materials and methodological skills leads to a change in pedagogical values or vice versa, or whether change in both occurs simultaneously (Markee 1997). Fullan (1993) observes that, in practice, empirical evidence suggests that pedagogical values or beliefs may change as a result of experience. To resolve this debate he concludes that it is perhaps sufficient for our purposes to recognize that the relationship between beliefs and behaviour is reciprocal; trying new practices sometimes leads to questioning one's underlying beliefs; examining one's beliefs can lead to attempting new behaviour. This reciprocity between beliefs and behaviour is shown below.



**Fig. 1.** The dimensions of primary curriculum innovation (Markee 1997:54)

The idea that the relationship between beliefs and behaviour is reciprocal has obvious implications for teacher and curriculum development. If we accept the idea that teachers should "behave their way into new ideas and skills, not just think their way into them" (Fullan 1993:15), then this suggests that change agents can use syllabus design and materials development by teachers as a convenient entry point into the larger process of curricular innovation. However, innovations must also engage teachers in the more abstract tasks of developing their methodological skills and changing their ideas about what constitutes good teaching. And changes at one point of the innovation dimension need to be accompanied by changes at other points of the dimension (Markee 1997).

Communicative language teaching is an innovation in English language teaching (Anderson 1993; Savignon 2002; Beale 2002 and Liao 2000). When it was introduced into Ethiopia in the 1990s, it seems that it faced a considerable resistance because a new textbook was introduced to an educational system by the Ministry of Education (ICDR 1994; Surafel 2002) with little or no consultation with the ultimate users especially, the teachers. "As a result, it is common to hear teachers complain and throw their anger towards the MOE for adopting the 'new' language teaching

material with no understanding of their attitudes and beliefs. Supporting this, Kennedy suggests:

*If the theory underlying the method represented in the textbook is something, which represents an innovation to the users [teachers], problems can arise if no further strategies are implemented to explain the changes to the teachers and to train them in new techniques (1987: 164).*

She adds that change in material or method does not simply operate at a surface level, but primarily represents an increase in understanding and knowledge of teachers. For this reason, awareness-raising of beliefs and their origins is important if we wish to change or get teachers to question beliefs (Kennedy and Kennedy 1996), or it is helpful to appeal to values and ideals which teachers hold in order to create a desire for change (De Lano et al 1994). When introducing a new approach, it may be necessary for the teacher to revise, refine, or change attitudes, which may not be compatible with the principles of the approach (Kouraogo 1987).

Broadly speaking, it is important to use appropriate change strategies (e.g., Kennedy 1987) that emphasize active participation and involvement of teachers in an innovation, or "it is essential that all teachers fully participate in an innovation" (De Lano et al 1994:494). This participation is thought to prevent resistance to innovations and to allow a smoother negotiation of the gap between the idealization of the syllabus and the methodology used by the teacher to materialize it in the classroom (Kouraogo 1987). On top of this, the idea that classroom teachers should be given a more significant role in aspects of curriculum renewal (syllabus design/revision, methodological innovations, implementation etc.) is a current theme in educational literature.

## **2.5 The Communicative Approach, Teachers' Attitudes and Practical Problems**

Teachers bring personal characteristics into the style of their teaching. These characteristics include beliefs that have developed over their lifetimes, and are the result of accumulated events and knowledge of the world. Beliefs can be diverse and developed from a range of angles: experience as a student, perceived exemplary instruction one is exposed to, one's own cognitive capacities to process learned information and the socio-cultural and political setting of one's developmental years that are currently affecting one's life. Together these beliefs result in attitudes that are firmly entrenched by an individual.

In curriculum innovation, teachers' attitudes are seen to play a crucial role in determining the implementation of an approach. For one thing, the introduction of a new programme or approach will be in competition with well-established theories of language teaching and learning which are the products of previous teaching and learning experiences, prejudices, and beliefs (Freeman and Richards 1993). For the other thing, teachers' educational attitudes and theories although in many cases unconsciously held, have an effect on their classroom behaviour, influence what students actually learn, and are a potent determinant of teachers' teaching style (Karavas 1996).

Attitude change is an essential and inevitable part of any pedagogical innovation since a change in materials or methods does not simply operate at surface level, but represents an increase in understanding and knowledge (Kennedy 1987). If incompatibilities between the philosophy of an approach and teachers' theories exist, teachers will tend to interpret new information in the light of their own theories, and

will tend to translate innovative ideas to conform to their own style of teaching Wagner (1991) cited in Karavas (1996). In order to fill this gap, therefore, we need to investigate teachers' attitudes for they help us to identify the difficulties teachers face when implementing curricular innovations in the classroom (Dingwall 1985) and it can also help in establishing the most appropriate kind of support that is needed in in-service teacher development (Breen 1991) both cited in Karavas (1996). However, positive attitudes towards communicative language teaching and positive intentions to do it in the classroom may be influenced by factors that may be divided into two broad categories: (1) internal and (2) external constraints.

Internal constraints represent those factors that come from within teachers themselves, such as poor subject knowledge. External constraints refer to factors that come from structural and organizational factors, which teachers have no control over like students and parents' beliefs, lack of resources or administrative obstacles. The two sets of constraints are interdependent.

Hui (1997) classifies constraints in CLT into five: economic, administrative, cultural, population, and the teachers' academic ability. By economic factors, Hui means that the unavailability of resources such as: photocopying, over-head projectors and computers, absence of enough English books, etc. The influence of administrators is observed, especially when teaching performances are evaluated, the focus is on the teachers (how well they speak English, how well they use the blackboard, etc.) rather than students and their learning processes. "As a result, teachers are more active than students, who simply follow their teachers rigidly and mechanically (1997:38). Hui also reports that students in China are reluctant to air their views loudly for fear of

losing face or offending others. This is due to Chinese culture, which seeks compromise between people. For this reason, "group discussion may be less fruitful than individual essay writing" (p.38). Secondly, in Chinese cultures teachers are viewed as knowledge holders, and are expected to display their knowledge in lectures. For Hui population factors refer to large English-learning population (students). These large numbers of students create over-crowded classrooms which leave hardly any room for free communicative activities, especially which require moving around." Hui adds that if the constraining factors are not overcome, traditional, non-communicative approaches are likely to return under other guises or it is same as "... [To] fill the new bottles of CLT with old wine" (P. 41). Anderson (1993) says the most obvious obstacle to teaching communicatively is the great demands it places upon the teacher. Maley puts the following, as quoted by Anderson,

*.... Teachers do not have the security of the textbook since they must select, adapt and invent materials they use; the students may be perplexed by the communicative approach since they are not accustomed to it; this approach is more difficult to evaluate than other approaches; and perhaps greatest of all, is the fact that the communicative approach tends to go against traditional practice and would be opposed by most older teachers and learners (1993:473).*

Moreover, the greatest drawbacks in using the communicative approach for many teachers is their primary responsibility of preparing their students for the English section of the national examination-a must for the few who will be allowed to go to the university or college. This discrete-point, structurally based examination does not test some skills like listening and speaking. Burnaby and Sun (1989) confirm that

students put pressure on teachers to teach them structures or grammar-focused activities to meet their strong expectations in the traditional national examinations.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. METHODS OF THE STUDY**

This study, as indicated in chapter one, was intended to find out the attitude of secondary school English language teachers towards the communicative approach to language teaching / learning, and to document the possible impediments teachers face in attempting to implement the approach as intended. For this purpose, therefore, a descriptive research method was chosen as it is used to specify or describe a phenomenon without conducting an experiment (Selinger and Shohamy 1989). Questionnaires, interviews and observations seemed to be appropriate instruments to collect data for the study since objectively recorded teacher behaviours such as actions, utterances and verbal expression of their attitudes (opinions) towards the concept can be elements of descriptive studies (Mc Arthur 1983). A triangular approach was used to collect data from a total of 80 secondary school English language teachers (details are given below).

#### **3.1 Subjects**

The subjects of this study were English language teachers in ten government secondary schools. These schools are found in West Gojjam and Bahir Dar Special Zone of Amhara Region. Among the 11 secondary schools found in the two zones, 10 were included in this study. All English language teachers who teach in those schools (both junior and senior) were included in the study. A total of ninety questionnaires were distributed from which eighty (88.9%) were filled in and returned.



These secondary schools both in West Gojjam and Bahir Dar Special Zones were selected because I have acquaintance with some school principals and English language teachers. I, therefore, selected them with them the anticipation of getting support from the principals and the teachers during administration of the instruments.

**Table 3.1 Number of schools, their types, locations and number of English language teachers**

	Name	Types	Locations (zone + town)	Number of English lang. Teachers
1	Dembecha Secondary School	Academic	W. Gojjam Zone - Dembecha	6
2	Damot Senior Secondary School	Academic	W. Gojjam Zone - Finote Selam	11
3	Shkudad Senior Secondary School	Academic + Technical	W. Gojjam Zone - Bure	11
4	Merawi Senior Secondary School	Academic	W. Gojjam Zone - Merawi	7
5	Adet Secondary School	Academic	W. Gojjam Zone - Adet	6
6	Achefer Senior Secondary School	Academic	W. Gojjam Zone - Durbete	8
7	Ghion Secondary School	Academic	Bahir Dar Sp. Zone - Bahir Dar	9
8	Tana Haik Comprehensive Secondary School	Academic	Bahir Dar Special Zone - Bahir Dar	10
9	Bahir Dar Technical and Vocational School	Technical + vocational	Bahir Dar Sp. Zone - Bahir Dar	4
10	Fasilo Secondary School	Academic	Bahir Dar Sp. Zone - Bahir Dar	8
<b>Total</b>				<b>= 80</b>

### 3.2 Instruments

In this research multiple instruments were used, i.e., the main data collection instruments for this study were questionnaire, interview and observation.

#### 3.2.1 Questionnaire

According to Selinger and Shohamy (1989) a questionnaire is widely used in second language acquisition researches to solicit information about certain conditions and practices, in particular to collect data on phenomena which are not easily observed, such as attitudes and self-concepts. It is also used to obtain background information

about the research subjects (Koul 1984). A number of techniques are used to collect data through questionnaires. The Likert scale is one of them, in which individuals respond to statements between the extremes on the continuum that represent their attitude, i.e., by responding to scales from strongly agree to strongly disagree to each statement.

The study involved of a pilot study by which questionnaire and interview items were tested. To develop appropriate instruments for the main study, I carried out a pilot study among 10 English language teachers who are teaching at Bole Senior Secondary School (Addis Ababa). A forty-item questionnaire was developed for the pilot study, for the main study; however, 10 of them were rejected as they lacked clarity, specificity and representativeness. According to Selinger and Shohamy the main purpose of pilot study is "to try out the instruments" (1989: 195). Therefore, the pilot study helped me to assess the quality of the instruments and to revise them before they were used in the main research. Every possible effort has been made to avoid ambiguities in designing the questionnaire. Besides, all effort has been made to make the questionnaire as comprehensive and representative as possible to the major tenets of the communicative approach.

A questionnaire consisting of 30 items (15 favourable and 15 unfavourable) was given to the sample subjects. Favourable statements (items: 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25 and 29) are those which are in line with the principles of the communicative approach, and unfavourable statements (items: 1, 4, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 21, 24, 26, 27, 28 and 30) represent the non-communicatively oriented view of language teaching and learning. This technique is supposed to be advantageous

for the following reasons: (1) It helps to cross-check the responses of the subjects; (2) It can help the researcher in identifying whether the participants have clearly understood the content of the questionnaire or not; (3) It can also help to distinguish whether the subjects give their responses with concern or not. Nevertheless, both are intended for the same purpose, i.e., to get information about teachers' attitudes towards communicative language teaching. Five options to which the subjects showed their reaction were given to each item. The options were ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree". The statements covered the main aspects of the communicative approach: group work, error correction, the place and importance of grammar, the roles and needs of the learners, the role of the teacher, the role of mother tongue, the role of the four language skills, classroom activities, evaluation process and the role of accuracy and fluency. All items of the questionnaire were drawn out from these aspects and the contents of the questionnaire have been divided into 10 thematic units:

- 1) Group/ pair work  
Consist of 4 items 2, 14, 18 and 27.
- 2) Quality and quantity of error correction  
Consist of 4 items 5,12, 20 and 22.
- 3) The role and needs of the learners  
Include items 4, 19, 23 and 25.
- 4) The role of the teacher  
Consists of 3 items 10, 24 and 26.
- 5) The place and importance of grammar  
Include items 1, 3, 15 and 16.

6) The nature of activities in the classroom

This part consists of 3 items. These are 18, 28 and 29.

7) The evaluation process

Consists of 2 items 21 and 30.

8) The role of mother tongue

Consist of 2 items 9 and 13.

9) The four language skills

These are items 8 and 14.

10) The role of accuracy and fluency

These include items 6 and 7.

The questionnaire primarily consisted of two sections:

- 1) The first part is the personal information section to provide an accurate description of the respondents' age, sex, area of specialization, qualification and experience.
- 2) The second part comprised the attitudes scale (30 items) to find out teachers' attitudes to the communicative approach.

Development of items of the attitudes scale was based on three considerations: (1) review of related literature (e.g., Littlewood 1981; Richards and Rodgers 1986; Larsen-Freeman 1986; Johnson and Morrow 1981; Nunan 1987; Harmer 1991, etc.); (2) review of previously designed scales (e.g., Cook 2001; Horwitz 1988; Karavas 1996, etc.); (3) appropriateness of the instrument for the target sample and relative ease of construction. The rating scale constructed for this study was the Likert technique of scale construction. As Karavas (1996) points out the Likert type scale (or method of summated ratings) is the most widely used method of scale

construction because of (1) its relative ease of construction, (2) its use of fewer statistical assumptions, and (3) the fact that, in contrast to other scaling techniques, no judges are required. Karavas says unlike the two other very common techniques of attitude scale construction (Thurstone and Guttman), Likert scale does not use experts to judge which statements are most appropriate for the attitude scale. Besides, it does not use a laborious procedure called Scalogram analysis to select the most appropriate items for inclusion in the scale (1996: 195).

### **3.2.2 Interview**

Selinger and Shohamy (1989) point out that the use of interview as a data collection instrument permits a level of in-depth information, free response, and flexibility that can not be obtained by other procedures. In this study semi-structured interview which consisted of ten specific and defined questions was used. There were specific core questions determined before hand, but at the same time it allowed some elaboration in the questions and answers.

Interviews with ten voluntarily selected teachers, who filled in the questionnaire, were held in order to obtain the range of constraints that teachers face in the teaching of English in a communicative way. Volunteer sampling technique is used to collect information from the samples that are conveniently available, and willing to co-operate for providing information (Koul 1984). There were few main questions from which I generated many other follow-up questions. This helped me to explore detail information on the prevalent problems teachers face in teaching English language in secondary schools. It also allowed the interviewees to give free responses.

Ten basic interview questions were prepared (see Appendix B). The main content of each question focuses on the problems teachers face in the implementation of communicative language teaching. The interviews took place in a face-to-face situation with the subjects.

### **3.2.3 Classroom Observation**

It is true that observation has always been considered as a major data collection tool in second language acquisition researches, because it allows the study of a phenomenon at close range with many of the contextual variables present (Selinger and Shohamy 1989; Koul 1984). Thus, the main purpose of having classroom observation was to ascertain the prevalent problems given by the teachers during the interview. This is to say that the observation was mainly done to cross-check whether the problems forwarded by teachers exist or not. Although there was not a normally prepared checklist to look for in the observed context, the interview results (impediments) were checked. The observation had nothing to do with the lessons taught rather its purpose was to confirm how far the teachers' responses during the interview were serious enough to affect the teaching/learning process.

Ten classroom lessons were observed. In each school one teacher (who took an interview) was observed. In all the observations made, I took the position where my presence did not disturb the class. In other words, the observation was made without intervention in any way. Voluntary teachers were selected for observations and the sections were chosen on random basis.

### **3.3 Data Collection Procedure**

According to Selinger and Shohamy (1989) once I have selected a specific design for the study which is consistent with the objectives of the research, the next step is to collect the research data. In collecting the data it is important to use procedures which elicit high quality data, since the quality of any research study depends largely on the quality of the data collected and the data collection procedure.

As stated above, this study has employed multiple procedures to collect data from the sample subjects. The study was made in West Gojjam and Bahir Dar Special Zones of Amhara Region. From a total of 11 secondary schools found in the two zones, 10 were taken for this study.

Questionnaires that consisted of 30 items were distributed among 90 English language teachers of which 80 (88.9%) were filled in and returned. Among those teachers, who filled in and returned the questionnaires, 10 were interviewed and subsequently observed while teaching. From each school one teacher was selected for detail interview on voluntary basis. The semi-structured interview helped me to get the necessary information on the problems teachers face in implementing CLT, and the observation strengthened the information gathered in the interview.

The questionnaires were randomly distributed, among the teachers that vary in teaching experience, qualification, specialization, age and sex. More specifically, the samples included experienced teachers (n<sup>o</sup>. 23), semi-experienced (n<sup>o</sup>. 20) and inexperienced (n<sup>o</sup>.37). The teaching experience recorded ranged between 1 and 36

years. The samples' qualification included diploma (n°. 20) and B.A. or B.ED. teachers (n°.60). Also the samples included specialized (B.A. or diploma in English) teachers (n°.60) and non-specialized teachers (pedagogical science, psychology and educational administration majors) (n°. 20). Male teachers were 69 and female teachers 11. The age ranges of the subjects were also between 22 and 56.

**Table 3.2 Personal information of sample subjects**

Age (range in years)	20-30 22	31-50 47	51 and above 11
Experience (in years)	0-8 (inexperienced) 37	9-15 (semi-experienced) 20	16 and above (experienced) 23
Qualification	Diploma 20	B.A. (B.ED.) 60	
Specialization	English (major subject) 60	Education (Pdsc, EdAd, Psych.) 20	
Sex	Male 69	Female 11	



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA**

In this section, the collected data were presented and interpreted. Once the research data have been collected using different types of data collection procedures as described in the previous chapter, the next step is to analyze those data. It generally consists of presentation of the statistical results obtained, illustrated tables, detail descriptions of the interviews and observations' result including quotations from the actual data, and the possible implications of the results to the research topic.

#### **4.1 Analysis of the Data**

When coding the data, the researcher coded all favourable statements as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Undecided (U) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The unfavourable items, on the other hand, were recorded in the following manner: 5 = 1, 4 = 2, 3 = 3, 2 = 4, 1 = 5. In this way, all scale values were summed to give overall positive scales. Hence, it was decided that a high score on the scale would imply a favourable attitude, i.e., favourable statements would be scored 5 for 'strongly agree' down to 1 for 'strongly disagree'; for

the scoring of unfavourable items, on the other hand, the scoring was reversed in that unfavourable items scored 1 for 'strongly agree' up to 5 for 'strongly disagree.'

To make the discussion easier, the items in the questionnaire fell in to the following 10 thematic units:

1. Group / pair work (4 statements)
2. Quality and quantity of error correction (4 statements)
3. The role and needs of the learners (4 statements)
4. The role of the teacher in the classroom (3 statements)
5. Place or importance of grammar (4 statements)
6. The nature of activities in the classroom (3 statements)
7. Language skills (2 statements)
8. The role of mother tongue in the classroom (2 statements)
9. The roles of fluency and accuracy (2 statements)
10. The evaluation process (2 statements)

For statistical purpose, arbitrary coding systems developed by Likert for coding respondents' responses were used. Each item was answered on a five point Likert scale ranging from strong agreement (5 points) to strong disagreement (1 point) to a favourable (positive) statement, and from strong agreement (1 point) to strong disagreement (5 points) to unfavourable (negative) statements. Likert assigned numerical values to responses in the following manner:

- A. 1 point for strong disagreement with a positive statement;

- B. 2 points for mild disagreement with a positive statement;
- C. 4 points for mild agreement with a positive statement;
- D. 5 points for strong agreement with a positive statement;
- E. 1 point for strong agreement with a negative statement;
- F. 2 points for mild agreement with a negative statement;
- G. 4 points for mild disagreement with a negative statement;
- H. 5 points for strong disagreement with a negative statement;
- I. 3 points for any 'no opinion' responses.

(Taylor 1973: 176)

The collected data were analyzed and interpreted as follows: all the data were tallied. The tallies were counted and registered as frequency that showed the number of respondents. Then the percentage and the mean were computed. Z-test was also used to observe the differences between attitude and teachers' background.

#### **4.1.1 Teachers' Attitude towards the Communicative Approach**

The highest possible score that can be obtained in the attitude scale and the one indicative of the most favourable attitude towards the communicative approach is 150 (by scoring 5, the highest mark for all 30 statements), while the lowest and the one indicating the least favourable attitude towards the communicative approach is 30 (by scoring 1, the least mark for all 30 statements). Respondents' scores were therefore placed on a continuum from 30 to 150 of which the lowest score obtained was 80 and the highest 134. The middle (neutral) point of the continuum being 90 (achieved by uncertain about all 30 items).

As Karavas (1996) points out establishing a neutral point (neutral score) is the difficult task in the Likert type scale since the neutral point is not necessarily the mid-point between the extreme scores. This is because a respondent can obtain middle of the range scores by either being uncertain about many items, or by holding inconsistent or strongly favourable and strongly unfavourable attitudes towards the object. For purpose of presentation, however, the score 90 was taken as the neutral or middle score of this study's attitude scale.

As stated above, the attitude scale of this study was given to 80 secondary school English language teachers, 10 of them were interviewed and later on observed in their classrooms. Table 4.1 shows their scores on the attitude scale. The teachers are referred to by numbers from 1-80 which was given randomly. The scores were put in descending order.

**Table 4.1 Teachers' scores of the attitude scale**

Teachers	Scores	Teachers	Scores	Teachers	Scores
T <sub>3</sub>	134	T <sub>56</sub>	111	T <sub>55</sub>	102
T <sub>69</sub>	133	T <sub>20</sub>	110	T <sub>26</sub>	101
T <sub>1</sub>	130	T <sub>5</sub>	110	T <sub>62</sub>	101
T <sub>19</sub>	129	T <sub>8</sub>	110	T <sub>2</sub>	100
T <sub>6</sub>	128	T <sub>33</sub>	110	T <sub>44</sub>	99
T <sub>18</sub>	127	T <sub>45</sub>	110	T <sub>48</sub>	99
T <sub>38</sub>	126	T <sub>68</sub>	110	T <sub>74</sub>	99
T <sub>24</sub>	124	T <sub>11</sub>	109	T <sub>60</sub>	98
T <sub>31</sub>	124	T <sub>16</sub>	109	T <sub>17</sub>	97
T <sub>4</sub>	123	T <sub>29</sub>	109	T <sub>47</sub>	97
T <sub>79</sub>	123	T <sub>22</sub>	109	T <sub>63</sub>	97
T <sub>14</sub>	122	T <sub>54</sub>	109	T <sub>76</sub>	96
T <sub>7</sub>	121	T <sub>71</sub>	109	T <sub>30</sub>	95
T <sub>70</sub>	121	T <sub>15</sub>	108	T <sub>43</sub>	95
T <sub>10</sub>	120	T <sub>61</sub>	108	T <sub>42</sub>	95
T <sub>28</sub>	119	T <sub>65</sub>	108	T <sub>41</sub>	95

T <sub>50</sub>	119	T <sub>12</sub>	107	T <sub>77</sub>	95
T <sub>9</sub>	117	T <sub>23</sub>	106	T <sub>13</sub>	94
T <sub>72</sub>	116	T <sub>32</sub>	106	T <sub>21</sub>	94
T <sub>64</sub>	115	T <sub>39</sub>	106	T <sub>34</sub>	93
T <sub>67</sub>	114	T <sub>36</sub>	106	T <sub>37</sub>	93
T <sub>59</sub>	114	T <sub>57</sub>	106	T <sub>49</sub>	93
T <sub>53</sub>	114	T <sub>25</sub>	105	T <sub>78</sub>	92
T <sub>80</sub>	113	T <sub>35</sub>	105	T <sub>75</sub>	91
T <sub>52</sub>	113	T <sub>66</sub>	105	T <sub>40</sub>	90
T <sub>73</sub>	112	T <sub>46</sub>	104	T <sub>27</sub>	*80
T <sub>59</sub>	112	T <sub>51</sub>	103		

\* Result below the neutral point (in this case the middle score)

The mean score for the sample attitude scale was 108 and standard deviation 11.42. The scores indicate that the majority ( $n = 79 = 98.8\%$ ) of the teachers tend to hold mildly favourable to favourable attitudes towards the communicative approach. Except one teacher ( $T_{27} = 80$ ), the rest scored 90 and above, which was the middle point of the continuum. Looking at face value, the scores seem to suggest that, on the whole, teachers hold favourable (positive) attitudes towards the communicative approach. However, sometimes the teachers had responded inconsistently to many of the statements in the attitude scale; in other words, they tended to respond in the same manner to both favourable and unfavourable statements. This may reveal their lack of understanding of many of the principles of the communicative approach. This does not mean that the respondents do not understand or comprehend the statements. Concerning this, Karavas suggests the following:

*It should be noted at this point that an individual's agreement with two apparently opposing statements (one, for example, dealing with the merits of teacher-centered instruction, and the other with the merits of learner-centered instruction) does not necessarily imply a lack of understanding, or an inconsistent attitude on part of the respondent. A teacher may well respond to both statements having in mind teaching contexts in which both teacher-centered and learner-centered practices have an important role to play (1996: 193).*

To illustrate the respondents' reactions to each statement, the sum and mean scores were computed. Then, statements of the same thematic groups were discussed together. The mean score for item number 1, for example, becomes:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Mean (x)} &= (8 \times 1) + (30 \times 2) + (10 \times 3) + (26 \times 4) + (6 \times 5) \\ &= 8 + 60 + 30 + 104 + 30 \\ &= 232 \\ &= 2.9\end{aligned}$$

The mean score, 2.9 indicates the average number of teachers' responses on the given statement. It shows teachers' mild disagreement with the idea of emphasizing grammatical correctness in the communicative classrooms. The same method was applied for the rest of the statements.

**Table 4.2 Scores of teachers' responses to each statement**

Item no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Grand mean
Types	*U	**F	F	U	F	F	U	F	U	F	F	U	U	U	U	
Scores of teachers	223	381	384	236	300	275	256	327	321	250	357	268	297	254	260	
Mean	2.9	4.7	4.1	2.9	3.7	3.4	3.2	4.0	4.0	3.1	4.4	3.3	3.7	3.1	3.2	
Item no.	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
Types	F	U	F	F	F	U	F	F	U	F	U	U	U	F	U	
Scores of teachers	273	298	344	310	321	269	252	329	240	332	274	284	290	286	290	3.60
Mean	3.4	3.7	4.3	3.8	4.0	3.3	3.1	4.1	3.0	4.1	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.6	

\* Unfavourable items to the communicative approach.

\*\* Favourable items to the communicative approach.

As can be seen from Table 4.2, most of the mean scores of the teachers to the items are above 3.0, which is the neutral point in the scale. Only the mean scores of items 1 and 4 are less than the "no opinion" or neutral point that then suggests teachers do not have a favourable attitude towards the statements.

Most of the teachers' scores were centered between 3 and 4; in other words, teachers' scores in general ranged in the area between "undecided" (3) and "agree" (4). The highest mean score was recorded in item number 2 (4.7) and the lowest in items 1 and 4 (2.9). In the latter cases, teachers' responses indicated mild disagreement to those unfavourable items. In short, the idea that grammatical correctness is the most important criteria in which language performance is judged scored less because teachers may not have a clear understanding about the role of grammar in the communicative classroom. Similarly, the lower mean score of item number 4 (2.9) may also indicate teachers' lack of clear understanding about the role of the learner in the classroom.

Nevertheless, from the above results, it is possible to suggest that teachers in most cases have positive attitude towards the items or the results indicated that teachers generally have mildly favourable attitude towards the statements. The mean score of item number 2 was the highest (4.7) and this may suggest that teachers in general accept the importance of group work in the communicative classrooms. Looking at face value, in general, the results (the mean scores) ranged between 3 and 4, which indicate that teachers mildly approve of most of the tenets of communicative language teaching. Likewise, the grand mean is 3.60. It is above the mid point in the scale. It shows that the respondents' responses were on average inclined to a mildly



favourable or moderate approval to the given principles of communicative language teaching.

To illustrate the respondents' reactions to each scale value, the frequency and percentages were computed. For instance, the computation for item number 2 (importance of group work in CLT classrooms) was as follows:

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Values</b>	<b>Frequency (Fr.)</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	5	60	75
Agree	4	18	22.5
Undecided	3	2	2.5
Disagree	2	—	—
Strongly Disagree	1	—	—

The results indicate that 75% of the teachers strongly agree, 22.5% agree, and 2.5% are undecided. The same procedure was applied to compute the percentages of all 30 items.

As can be seen in Table 4.3, the respondents' reactions to each statement were computed in order to see the value teachers scored for each scale. If we take item number 2, for example, 60 (75%) of the responses were given to 5(strong agreement), 18(22.5%) to 4(agree) and 2(2.5%) to 3(undecided). The scales in item number 1 (unfavourable) were 8(10%), 30(37.5%), 10(12.5%), 26(32.5%) and 6(7.5%) for the values 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

**Table 4.3 Combined frequency and percentages of all respondents**

Scale values	5		4		3		2		1		Total	
	1*		2		3		4		5			
Items	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%
1*	8	10	30	37.5	10	12.5	26	32.5	6	7.5	80	100
2	60	75	18	22.5	2	2.5	-	-	-	-	80	100
3	28	35	40	50	8	10	3	3.75	1	1.25	80	100
4*	11	13.75	20	25	15	18.75	28	35	6	7.5	80	100
5	18	22.5	40	50	6	7.5	14	17.5	2	2.5	80	100
6	20	25	30	37.5	4	5	20	25	6	7.5	80	100
7*	9	11.5	22	27.5	4	5	34	42.5	11	13.25	80	100
8	35	43.75	28	35	4	5	12	15	1	1.25	80	100
9*	30	37.5	40	50	5	6.25	4	5	1	1.25	80	100
10	12	15	22	27.5	16	20	24	30	6	7.5	80	100
11	44	55	30	37.5	5	6.25	1	1.25	-	-	80	100
12*	7	8.75	20	25	7	8.75	30	37.5	16	20	80	100
13*	4	5	9	11.25	11	13.75	38	47.5	18	22.5	80	100
14*	12	15	18	22.5	8	10	33	41.25	9	11.25	80	100
15*	4	5	17	21.25	20	25	30	37.5	9	11.25	80	100

16	25	31.5	30	37.5	5	6.25	18	22.5	2	2.5	80	100
17*	5	6.25	10	12.5	8	10	40	50	17	21.25	80	100
18	37	46.25	34	42.5	6	7.5	2	2.5	1	1.25	80	100
19	26	32.5	34	42.5	7	8.75	10	12.5	3	3.75	80	100
20	36	45	26	32.5	10	12.5	5	6.25	3	3.75	80	100
21*	9	11.25	15	18.75	8	10	37	46.25	11	13.75	80	100
22	5	6.25	36	45	10	12.5	24	30	5	6.25	80	100
23	22	27.5	50	62.5	4	5	3	3.75	1	1.25	80	100
24*	10	12.5	34	42.5	4	5	30	37.5	6	7.5	80	100
25	28	35	41	51.25	6	7.5	5	6.25	-	-	80	100
26*	6	7.5	11	13.75	17	21.25	36	45	10	12.5	80	100
27*	4	5	15	19.25	6	7.5	43	53.75	12	15	80	100
28*	-	-	6	7.5	26	32.5	30	37.5	18	22.5	80	100
29	12	15	37	46.25	18	22.5	12	15	1	1.25	80	100
30*	-	-	16	20	10	12.5	42	52.5	12	15	80	100

\* Unfavourable statements and their corresponding scale values.

In some instances, few scales were not marked by teachers, for example, scales 1 and 2 in item number 2, and this implies the responses converged to some scales only.

#### **4.1.2 Analysis of Attitude Scale in Relation to Teachers' Background**

##### **4.1.2.1 Teachers' Attitudes and Age**

There were few clear differences according to age and teacher attitudes. The results of the z- test indicate that there were significant mean differences between old teachers (51 and above years) and young teachers (30 and below years) in their views of error correction and fluency and accuracy (see Table 4.4 below). This may

be because older teachers tended to follow a more traditional (grammar-focused) approach than the younger (who are grown up in a communicative era).

**Table 4.4 Differences in attitudes due to age**

Thematic units	Age Mean Scores								
	51 & above & 31-50 years			51 & above & 30 and below years			31-50 & 30 and below years		
	51 & above	31-50	z-test p ≤ 0.05	51 & above	30 & below	z-test p ≤ 0.05	31-50	30 & below	z-test p ≤ 0.05
Group / pair work	16.36	16.10	0.35	16.36	16.95	0.18	16.10	16.95	1.45
Error correction	13	14.53	1.64	13	15.36	*2.64	14.53	15.36	1.17
Learners' needs and roles	14.09	15.59	1.83	14.09	14.86	0.84	15.59	14.86	1.26
Grammar	12.81	14.02	1.37	12.81	14.63	1.76	14.02	14.63	0.9
Teachers' roles	9	9.31	0.44	9	9.86	1.08	9.31	9.86	0.88
Classroom activities	11.27	11.65	0.64	11.27	12.04	1.59	11.65	12.04	0.92
Evaluation process	6.9	7.04	0.27	6.9	6.77	0.39	7.04	6.77	0.60
The role of mother tongue	7.81	7.63	0.3	7.81	7.45	0.54	7.63	7.45	0.41
Language skills	6.72	7.19	0.80	6.72	7.22	0.75	7.19	7.22	0.43
Accuracy and fluency	5.72	6.48	1.55	5.72	7.22	*2.37	6.48	7.22	1.48

\* There is significant difference between the two variables

As can be seen in Table 4.4, no statistically significant differences were found between old teachers and middle-aged teachers (31-50 years), also between middle-aged and young teachers.

#### 4.1.2.2 Teachers' Attitudes and Teaching Experience

The attitude scale indicated that there were some significant differences based on different levels of teaching experiences (see Table 4.5 below), particularly between inexperienced teachers (who taught English language 0-8 years) and their more experienced counterparts (who taught English language for at least 16 years). For

instance, there were significant differences in evaluation items between inexperienced and semi-experienced teachers (who taught English language 9-15 years), the result also indicates that there was a clear difference between semi-experienced and experienced teachers in relation to teachers' roles in the classroom. On the other hand, there were no statistically significant differences between semi-experienced teachers and experienced teachers. Inexperienced teachers were more likely to be aware of the evaluation process in the communicative approach. Their high score towards the views of error correction may be attributed to their recent college training of the communicative methodologies. No statistically significant differences were found between semi-experienced and experienced teachers.

**Table 4.5 Differences in attitudes due to teaching experiences.**

Thematic units	Teaching Experience Mean Scores								
	Inexperienced and semi-experienced			Inexperienced and experienced			Semi-experienced and experienced		
	Inexp.	Semi-exp.	z-test $p \leq 0.05$	Inexp.	Exp.	z-test $p \leq 0.05$	Semi-exp.	Exp.	z-test $p \leq 0.05$
Group / pair work	16.70	16.65	0.08	16.70	15.56	1.9	16.65	15.56	1.61
Error correction	15.16	14.65	0.69	15.16	13.39	*2.32	14.65	13.39	1.44
Learners' needs and roles	15.21	15.05	0.25	15.21	15.26	0.08	15.05	15.26	0.3
Grammar	14.34	14.30	0.03	14.34	13.39	1.52	14.30	13.39	1.36
Teachers' roles	9.59	10.00	0.65	9.59	8.73	1.38	10.00	8.73	*1.96
Classroom activities	11.62	12.2	1.21	11.62	11.43	0.41	12.2	11.43	1.51
Evaluation process	8.70	7.15	*2.74	8.70	6.69	*3.5	7.15	6.69	1.03
The role of mother tongue	7.62	7.85	0.50	7.62	7.08	1.24	7.85	7.08	1.51
Language skills	7.21	7.15	0.14	7.21	6.43	1.66	7.15	6.43	1.54
Accuracy and fluency	6.81	6.7	0.22	6.81	6.21	1.38	6.7	6.21	0.89

\* There is significant difference between the two variables

These findings may also suggest that it is the semi-experienced and experienced teachers who are least likely to hold beliefs or to adopt teaching aspects which are communicative. On the one hand, this may be because their training was not recent and rooted in a different language teaching methods. Alternatively, the more experienced teachers may be more firmly convinced by traditional methodologies

(e.g., methodologies that emphasize form over fluency) through experience, and are less willing to change. As a result, the more experienced teachers were less likely to approve of the major tenets of the communicative approach.

#### 4.1.2.3 Teachers' Attitudes and Specialization

The results indicate that there were no statistically significant differences in most of the mean value scores. However, significant difference was observed in group/ pair work activities, which specialist teachers (whose degree or diploma is English majors) tended to score higher than their non-specialists counterparts (teachers whose major areas is not English).

**Table 4.6 Differences in attitudes due to specialization.**

Thematic units	Specialization Mean Ranks		
	Specialized	Non-specialized	Z-test $P \leq 0.05$
Group / pair work	17.65	15.65	*3.52
Error correction	14.30	15.15	1.17
Learners' needs and roles	15	15.75	1.31
Grammar	13.96	14.2	0.35
Teachers' roles	9.31	9.75	0.73
Classroom activities	11.6	12	0.92
Evaluation process	6.95	6.95	—
The role of mother tongue	7.48	7.6	0.3
Language skills	6.77	7.55	1.63
Accuracy and fluency	6.6	6.65	0.11

\* There is significant difference between the two mean ranks

The highest mean score of group/ pair work activities by specialist teachers may indicate that their belief towards CLT is profoundly established than the non-specialist teachers. The same mean score was observed in evaluation process items.

#### 4.1.2.4 Teachers' Attitudes and Qualification

In general, looking at the mean scores, there were no big differences between bachelor teachers and their diploma counterparts. Nevertheless, a significant difference is observed in the evaluation process (see Table 4.7). This is because their long stay in college (university) training might have helped them to get deep-rooted knowledge towards students' evaluation in CLT. No statistically significant differences were found in other elements.

**Table 4.7 Differences in attitudes due to qualification**

Thematic units	Qualification Mean Scores		
	B.A.	Diploma	Z-test $P \leq 0.05$
Group / pair work	16.6	15.7	1.52
Error correction	14.53	14.5	0.03
Learners' needs and roles	15.03	15.66	0.95
Grammar	14.16	13.4	1.25
Teachers' roles	9.53	9.1	0.68
Classroom activities	11.66	11.71	0.11
Evaluation process	7.28	6.05	*2.56
The role of mother tongue	7.55	7.3	0.57
Language skills	7.05	6.95	0.23
Accuracy and fluency	6.63	6.6	0.63

\* There is significant mean difference

#### 4.1.2.5 Teachers' Attitudes and Sex

As is shown in Table 4.8, there were significant differences in some aspects like error correction, learners' needs and roles and teachers' roles. In all the three cases, the

males tended to favour these beliefs and practices. The results may highlight that female teachers do not have firmly established beliefs and attitudes to these aspects.

**Table 4.8 Differences in attitudes due to sex.**

Thematic units	Sex mean scores		
	Male	Female	Z-test $P \leq 0.05$
Group / pair work	16.66	15.5	1.27
Error correction	14.59	12.54	*2.69
Learners' needs and roles	15.22	14.09	*2.40
Grammar	14.18	13.92	1.38
Teachers' roles	9.7	7.91	*2.53
Classroom activities	11.78	11.27	0.87
Evaluation process	6.98	6.92	0.11
The role of mother tongue	7.92	7.81	0.19
Language skills	6.91	7.36	0.84
Accuracy and fluency	6.62	6.45	0.31

\* There is significant difference between the mean scores

On the whole, the attitude scale results highlighted that the differences were not big enough to come to conclusion that one category is more willing to adopt communicative practices. It is possible, however, to judge at least there were some significant differences which seem to have a positive effect on both attitudes and practices on the part of male teachers than their corresponding females.

#### **4.1.3 Analysis of the Interviews and Observations**



The semi-structured interview was aimed to provide an insight into the responses made in the attitude scale and to elicit teachers views of the constraints facing them in implementing a communicative methodology. It attempted to extract the possible problems secondary school English language teachers faced in their attempt to accomplish the communicative approach as intended. The observation is also meant to consolidate the data gathered through interviews or it primarily focuses on cross-checking the existing problems documented by teachers. For in-depth analysis of the interviews and observations ten English language teachers were selected. For purpose of presentation, the teachers are referred to by randomly given numbers T<sub>1</sub>, T<sub>2</sub>, T<sub>3</sub>... T<sub>10</sub>. And , for the sake of simplicity the constraints were considered in two main categories: (1) external and (2) internal constraints.

#### **4.1.3.1 External Constraints**

Teachers' responses in the interview indicated that there were powerful impediments working against their acceptance of CLT and most of the constraints they face were external. Teachers generally agreed that lack of resources (facilities), large class size, arrangement of desks, lack of supplementary materials, students' English abilities and their low level of motivation to learn, students' expectations, strong influence of the national examinations (e.g., ESLCE), the textbook, students' discipline and lack of appropriate teacher training provisions were the most common problems that act against the effective implementation of CLT. Many of the teachers reported that the absence of facilities in their respective schools hindered them from the successful implementation of CLT. One teacher (T<sub>4</sub>) commented, "I have been in three high schools for the last four years, but I didn't see even one overhead

projector (OHP) in those schools," and he went on "there is no xerox here or in the previous schools, ... now the school is chosen for a preparatory programme and there are some computers for the information technology department but we [English language teachers] are not allowed to use it." One teacher who is a native speaker (British) expressed the situation in a regretful mood, "I have worked in two high schools in Ethiopia. One high school in Asela and the other in Bahir Dar and in both schools there is not electricity.... In both schools there were tape-recorders, but no body has a key for the store room or one has any batteries..., and it was impossible to get all sorts." (T<sub>5</sub>). Another teacher (T<sub>7</sub>) added that "There is not electricity in the school which in turn makes things difficult to use tape-recorders and televisions accordingly....," and surprisingly, "When exam time approaches the school administrators have to run either to the zone education department or other places to bring the duplicating machine." Generally speaking, the scarcity of or limited resources available made it difficult for teachers to prepare and present the teaching materials in line with the communicative principles.

Almost all teachers complained about the class size to be a major impediment to promote the communicative approach. The teachers noted that they are unable to control such a large group of students. "If I use group work, the group should not exceed more than four or five students. How can I do this within this situation?" (T<sub>10</sub>), added, "If I want to make groups and / or pairs, the arrangement of the chairs makes another problem, it is fixed." "It makes the students boredom and that they are not attended to by the teacher"(T<sub>3</sub>). Evaluating students' performance is also affected, "Though the teacher's feedback is essential for the learners, I usually had difficulty in reaching all the students while they are discussing in their groups" (T<sub>1</sub>), he added,

"Instead of going to each group, I give correction from the front. Besides, "I try to manage the classroom from the black board (front side) for the fact that there is no place to move around to guide and monitor the groups." As a result, most students do not understand what the teacher is saying and the relationship between the teacher and students at the back row becomes loose, "For they want to be out of the game" (T<sub>6</sub>). In the same way, using tape recorders and videos in large classes is difficult, "... because there is too much noise in the class, the sound of the tape-recorder seems music of a bar where there are many customers" (T<sub>2</sub>). Large class-size makes communicative language teaching challenging as teachers find it difficult to involve students at different levels.

One of the teachers (native speaker) expressed the whole situation she came across in teaching English in the Ethiopian secondary schools:

*... the environment is difficult to work in because of lack of money, big class sizes, the furniture is uncomfortable and the students cram together very close. It is difficult for the teacher to walk around or to set up group work and the class in Bahir Dar any way is get very hot because of the temperature. It is uncomfortable.... Generally, you have only a blackboard and chalk. It is not conducive for learning (T<sub>5</sub>).*

The other point teachers raised was that, the students do not consider they are learning. This is true especially when they wanted the students to be in groups. T<sub>9</sub> said, "It makes the students feel that the class itself is monotonous and that they feel I am joking on them." He went on saying, "The students assume they are learning when they are exposed to something on the blackboard.... However, present day language teaching and learning is far from this." Related to this, T<sub>2</sub> described, "The majority of the students expected their English lessons to emphasize grammar than

the skills (listening and speaking)." "They don't feel free when they are assigned to do activities like listening or speaking, and in that environment I don't feel I can comfortably use communicative activities in class" (T<sub>6</sub>).

Another most challenging problem teacher's face is the pressure exerted by students related to examinations. The majority of students expected their English lessons could assist them to sit for national examinations and in effect will help them to join college or university. Students were not interested in the contents of the new English textbooks. "Two years ago, I was teaching at grade 12, the students constantly asked me to reject the new book instead to teach them the old one (grammar oriented), especially, students were not happy on the listening and speaking sections. "I remember what one student said to me," I won't be asked to listen or speak in the ESLCE" (T<sub>8</sub>). This makes the focus of teaching and learning more on examination success than to become effective communicators. In addition, although a large majority of teachers have been found to recognize the value of communicative language teaching to learn the English language, the exclusion of testing communicative skills (e.g., speaking and listening) in national examinations affects the communicative approach negatively.

Furthermore, teaching performances are evaluated by supervisors, administrators and even by students. The supervisors want English language teachers to use the blackboard effectively, to demonstrate language points (rules and uses), and sometimes on teachers ability to speak and how he handles the blackboard along side classroom discipline. They do not evaluate an effective implementation of the communicative approach. The approach demands to have continuous assessment

but the school regulation does not allow that. "We must be formal.... I am expected to submit the daily lesson plan, the annual report and other tasks, I don't want to get less efficiency" (T<sub>8</sub>). As many of the teachers reported, students (with few exceptions) do not like teachers who are devoted to their profession. Instead, "... they like teachers who greet them, do not control their absence / presence etc...., students evaluate the quality of the teacher with his/her personality, if he has good rapport with them, he/she is a good teacher, finished" (T<sub>7</sub>). This and other pressures make teachers to give up the models of the teaching syllabus and methodology.

Another most challenging problem the teachers raised was the level of the students that does not match with the level of the course. Most of the teachers, however, emphasized that the new textbook is by far better than the old one for it gives priority to communication. Nevertheless, the language ability students have acquired in lower classes (background) is found to be quite inadequate to practice the language at their present grade level. This was substantiated by (T<sub>5</sub>) as follows:

*The text book on the whole seems too difficult for most of the students, the level is too high... also often the exercises are very difficult, boring to be honest, and sometimes not even appropriate for grade 9 or 10.... And generally, the level is too difficult, it is unrealistic. They have come straight from grade 8 .... So the majority of the students I would say the level is too hard and therefore demotivating for teachers because they feel like they can not make any progress.... and I often want to return to the basics to start at elementary again.*

She further pointed out that the content of the text book needs revision because most of it is grammar-oriented and the students become busy in doing grammar activities. "It is very difficult to introduce speaking and listening because the students say 'we don't want to learn this, we want grammar' ... and so too much grammar." Besides, both the comprehension text and the reading text are often about science, pollution,

nature and other things which do not arouse the students' interest. "So... I would say the topic material needs to change. It needs to be about life skills, about writing a letter, about music; about sport ...it is learning a language it is not learning about facts." (T<sub>5</sub>). She then summarized the whole situation in the following manner:

*The book is too difficult, students are reluctant to participate in the lessons but they can work, the content of the material is dry and boring. Because it is dry and boring for the students, it is dry and boring for the teacher. And if the teacher is bored the students are bored (T<sub>5</sub>).*

Another major impediment is the deeply-rooted Ethiopian cultural traditions and values that students refrain from expressing their views in front of the public. This might affect the proper implementation of group work activities in the classroom. Most of the interviewees agreed that some Ethiopian values discourage students' oral communication; proverbial examples include: "Silence is gold", "Don't say much about you" and "keep your mouth shut but your eyes and ears open." Moreover, it is a tradition that in the Ethiopian culture, teachers are seen as authoritative and students are not in a position to argue, they are to be obedient. This makes students uncomfortable when asked by the teacher to participate in a dialogue. "At first I was frustrated with the students' stillness... but gradually I saw improvement" (T<sub>5</sub>). The other teacher, T<sub>8</sub> said, "Since the text book says work in groups / pairs, I tried most of the time to accomplish those activities. However, the students become quiet as if they were in a church listening one's preaching about the Gospel." Students also have a bad image towards errors. They assume making a mistake means committing crime, though errors are signs of learning in the communicative approach.

The other major concerns articulated by the teachers were the influence of colleagues, absence / scarcity of supplementary materials, insufficient time is allotted to cover the contents in the syllabus, and sometimes parents' influence (related to examinations). Although it is not powerful there are some influences from colleagues; "Some teachers assume group work is a means to the English teacher to escape from teaching," surprisingly enough, "Other subject teachers referred to we (language teachers ) 'no chalk and talk more sitting in front' " (T<sub>6</sub>). Teachers of social studies do not use group work or even pair works in their classes. As a result of this, they assume group work activities as a waste of time. So, it is one source of challenge, which makes things difficult for English teachers to teach in a communicative way.

#### **4.1.3.2 Internal Constraints**

Most teachers reported that they do not think they are competent enough to teach English as a foreign language. One of them, (T<sub>7</sub>) said, " I took some courses that can help me to teach in a communicative way, but that was not supplemented with other trainings (workshops, seminars, etc.), so all the teaching principles I got in my college training is now diminishing." On the contrary, there were few teachers who believe that they have got the necessary training both in college and in-service training. For instance, T<sub>1</sub> commented the following, "I am competent enough to teach language because I have got the necessary training in my previous college stay at Kotebe, and also I took some workshops, e.g., in EELTNET by British Council). Above all, I was abroad (in Saudi Arabia) for a year teaching English and I have a lot of experiences."

Some teachers also announced that they do not feel confident on what they have taught and the way they test it. "I don't feel good because I am not teaching as I was expected to teach," in fact, "I do this for reasons which are beyond my control." For example, "... all my exams are written... I do not assess students' speaking and listening skills" (T<sub>9</sub>). In effect, teachers expressed feelings of discontent and worry about the inconsistent expectations placed upon them (the mismatch between the syllabus and examination types). On the whole, most teachers expressed that they do not have the time, courage or motivation to create and motivate students to use English as means of communication.

To summarize the findings of the study, the responses of teachers generally showed that they have affirmative attitudes to the communicative approach. A large number of the respondents have shown that they approve of communicative principles in theory, but faced a range of impediments in the actual classrooms. The interviews results highlight that some teachers were not fully aware of the practicality of CLT in the classrooms. They seemed to advocate the principles of the communicative approach, the facts were, however, they emphasized traditional practices. Teachers' responses exhibited inconsistency in replying to the attitudes scale, which may indicate their awareness of the underpinning philosophy of the communicative approach is not strongly built.

In addition, the findings of this study show that the differences between the teachers' background and attitude scale were not big enough, but there were few significant differences. Looking at the mean results highlighted that experienced teachers appear to be least favourably persuaded towards communicative principles and



practices. The reason may be that experienced teachers are more resistant to change and find it difficult to harmonize new theory with their experiences. Plass' (1998) study would appear to corroborate with this idea, "resistance to change is perhaps the greatest challenge to the implementation of learner-centered methodology" (1998: 317). Male teachers look to be more willing to adopt communicative features than their female counterparts. This may partly because they are more responsible to accommodate themselves to the special nature of classroom situations that the communicative approach favours.

The respondents enunciated myriad of impediments they faced in the classrooms, and most of them were beyond their control. The teachers felt strongly that communicative approach was good for teaching English if the context teachers operate is taken into account. However, from the responses they pronounced, it is possible to say that the teachers seem to throw the constraining factors at others instead of making themselves as possessing insufficient knowledge about CLT, or they looked innocent with the bigger issue of overcoming the problems though classroom teachers are the key to control the constraints (Hui 1997). It is a common knowledge that classroom teachers are the first persons to face classroom problems whether there is change or not. Thus, it is advisable if teachers have understood the essence of an innovation (in this case CLT) and be motivated to overcome the constraints associated with it. This can be achieved on condition that teachers are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills in both pre-service and in-service training courses. This may be done, for the fact that training courses can promote teachers' theoretical as well as practical abilities.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section comprises the conclusions and recommendations of the research results. After the conclusions of the study had been made, some possible suggestions were given.

#### **5.1 Conclusions**

The study of teacher thinking has become one of the interests in the field of education, especially in language teaching and learning as it is a means of understanding teacher behaviour in the classroom. Since teaching is a complex process, teachers have to confront with 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 which underlie teachers' classroom actions or behaviour. And it is widely accepted that such behaviour is shaped by the attitude and beliefs one has towards the subject (in this case communicative language teaching). In this study, an attempt has been made to ferret out secondary school teachers' (limited to 10 secondary schools) attitudes towards the communicative approach along side the possible constraints they face in implementing it in the Ethiopian context of language teaching / learning.

The findings of this study generally indicate that the majority of respondents (teachers) have favourable attitude towards communicative language teaching. Most

of the results of the 'average' scores of the attitude scale ranged between 3 and 4.5, which then suggest teachers have mildly positive attitude towards CLT. The mean results of few statements, in contrast, were less than 3, revealing teachers' mild disagreement with the statements. In addition, the mean results of each item failed to record the two extreme scores in the attitude scale, i.e., it is unlikely to find either 5 (strong agreement) or 1 (strong disagreement) in the teachers' responses of each statement, implying that teachers' moderate acceptance of the idea of communicative principles. In the attitudes scale, however, the respondents showed inconsistency to many of the statements. In other words, they inclined to react in the same way to both favourable and unfavourable statements, which may imply that the teachers' knowledge of the principles of communicative language teaching is not firmly established. As Karavas (1996) suggests an individual agreement with two apparently opposing statements (e.g., one favouring accuracy and the other favouring fluency) does not necessarily imply a lack of understanding, or inconsistent attitude on the part of the respondent. Instead, a teacher may well respond to both statements having in mind teaching contexts in which both principles have an important role to play.

The findings of this study also showed that there were some statistically significant differences between the respondents' background (age, sex, qualification, experience and specialization) and attitudes towards the communicative approach, especially, as regards error correction and evaluation. Nevertheless, there were not significant differences between some of the variables (e.g., old teachers and young teachers) and the attitude scale. The mean values generally show that there were not big differences between the variables and teachers' attitudes, and it may be difficult to

come to the conclusion that one category is more likely to adopt communicative principles. It is possible, however, at least to accept that there were some significant differences which seem to have a positive effect on both attitudes and practices in harmony with the tenets of the communicative approach.

The data obtained from the interviews and observations revealed that there were a range of constraints that hinder the possible implementation of CLT. The most common impediments documented by teachers were: large class size, low level of students' abilities and lack of motivation, lack of resources (facilities), students' expectations and attitudes, students' low level background knowledge, the textbook, teaching loads, examination pressures, cultural influence, influence of colleagues and teachers' English speaking abilities (proficiency). Almost all the interviewees agreed that these factors exerted powerful influence on their classroom instructions. The majority of the constraints categorized by the teachers were external, i.e., problems that are beyond teachers' control. There were also some respondents who attributed the difficulties to internal factors (to their language abilities), this is to say that the low level of competency they have in English language was one of the likely impediments that act against the implementation of communicative language teaching in their classrooms. The analysis of the observations indicated that most of the constraints forwarded by teachers do exist in the actual classrooms.

To sum up, the findings of this study has shown that the majority of the respondents have mildly favourable attitudes towards communicative language teaching, but faced a number of constraints that hamper them from effective implementation of communicative methodology in the classrooms.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, therefore, the following recommendations were given:

1. As the findings indicate, teachers generally have mildly positive attitude towards the communicative approach. None the less, these results are not sufficient enough to bring about the desired change into effect. The implementation of the communicative approach may become more successful if teachers have strong positive attitude than their mild ones. Therefore, it is important that policy makers, syllabus designers, and teacher educators take into account teachers' beliefs and attitudes when there is change of teaching materials and methods.
2. In order to have effective implementation of an innovation (the communicative approach), it is important to consider the context in which it is operating. Hence, the Ministry of Education and other concerned bodies should take measures to minimize the constraints teachers face while they implement CLT in the actual classrooms.
3. The Ministry of Education and other concerned bodies (e.g., ICDR) should organize successive workshops, seminars and in-service trainings so that teachers can get the chance to share experiences on how to cope with the existing problems in secondary schools. In relation to this it may be important to quote what Androsenko cautiously suggests "transition to communicative methodology is unthinkable without adequate teacher training and education" (1992: 3).

4. The National Organization for Examination (NOE) should change the mode of examinations. Efforts should be made to make the contents of the examinations in line with the syllabuses designed. Assessment procedures should be amended to include communicative language testing in the national examinations.
5. English language teachers should make themselves ready for a change, since change is inevitable they are expected to equip themselves with the innovative language teaching has brought and this in turn can help them to find remedies to the difficulties they encounter in the classrooms.
6. It is vital that teacher training institutions should strengthen their language proficiency requirements for teacher trainees.

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