THE USE OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT): TURKISH EFL
TEACHERS' PERCEIVED DIFFICULTIES IN IMPLEMENTING CLT IN TURKEY

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

CLT has been widely explored and studied by many researchers in the field of English language teaching. There have been many studies conducted on the use of CLT in EFL settings. However, there are only few studies in number that specifically deal with CLT and its implementation in the Turkish context. Hence, this study was designed to investigate the Turkish EFL teachers' understanding of English teaching, predominantly the difficulties and challenges they face in the implementation of CLT practices in the Turkish context.

This study first presents an overview of English language teaching in Turkey, and then investigates the definition and principles of CLT which is followed by a brief history of CLT. In addition, a review of existing literature related to communicative competence, as well as how it functions in CLT is presented. Furthermore, this study examines the impact of ESL vs. EFL contexts on the implementation of CLT methodology.

A mixed methods research design was used for this research. Participants for this study were sixty-one Turkish teachers of English teaching at primary and secondary levels. The main modes of data collection consisted of online questionnaire and semi-structured and informal interviews.

The results show that Turkish EFL teachers, whilst aware of the achievements, observe many difficulties in implementing CLT in their classrooms. These difficulties stem from four directions, namely, the teacher, the students, the educational system, and CLT itself. The results suggest that despite showing keen interest in change and being eager to identify with CLT, Turkish teachers are not rather optimistic about the complete adoption of CLT, and thus feel that only by overcoming the difficulties from those four sources, and by establishing more favorable conditions for the implementation of CLT can teachers truly benefit from CLT in their English classrooms.

To my Fiancée

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as a methodology was first proposed in England in the 1970s. This methodology was regarded as revolutionary since it placed an essential emphasis on communication in language learning classrooms. Being primarily an ESL (English as a second language) methodology, it rapidly gained a widespread acceptance in the Western countries. Following the emergence of CLT in English-speaking countries, it began to spread all over the world. Signifying the *new* and being endorsed as a reaction against the traditional language teaching methodologies, CLT has served as a major source of influence on English language teaching practice in both ESL and EFL (English as a foreign language) environments.

Despite the apparent popularity of CLT in the last thirty years or so, there have been opposing views on the appropriateness, as well as the feasibility of implementing CLT in EFL contexts. Some ELT (English language teaching) scholars have accentuated the significance of the local needs and the conditions of the particular EFL contexts, and the benefits of the traditional methods of language teaching (Bax, 2003; Harvey, 1984; Incecay & Incecay, 2009). Yet some others have taken a strong position for adopting CLT in Asian countries[1] (Li, 1984; Liao, 2004; Maley, 1984). Nevertheless, the majority of the ELT scholars have advocated the idea that neither of these extremist positions will benefit English teaching and learning in Asian

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[1] The studies I could find regarding the use of CLT in Asian countries mainly deal with the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, and Vietnamese contexts.

contexts. Given the present English teaching circumstances in Asian countries, those researchers have revealed that implementing CLT approach fully in those countries is almost impossible. They have also pointed out that certain barriers be overcome for the effective implementation of CLT in Asian countries (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Chick, 1996; Ellis, 1996; Hiep, 2007; Hu, 2002; Li, 1998; Rao, 2002; White, 1989).

After more than three decades of discussion, not much has changed in English classrooms in Turkey with regard to moving towards a more communicative approach. The Ministry of National Education (MONE) is a government ministry of the Republic of Turkey, responsible for the supervision of public and private educational system, agreements and authorizations under a national curriculum. Although the current English teaching curriculum imposed by the MONE is clearly based on the CLT methodology, and a student-centered approach has been officially adopted, traditional methods such as the Grammar-translation method still dominate the EFL classroom practices in Turkey. Why is it that teachers hardly ever, if at all, utilize the practices of CLT in their teaching? What are the reasons for CLT not getting into Turkish EFL classrooms? An investigation of Turkish EFL teachers' understanding of English teaching, predominantly the difficulties and challenges they face in the implementation of CLT practices in their classes can be very informative and provide guidance as to how to introduce CLT in EFL settings more effectively and efficiently. Thus, the present study is vital to facilitate positive changes in English teaching, as well as to provide local practitioners real assistance.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

CLT has been widely explored and studied by many researchers in the field of English language teaching. There have been many studies conducted on the use of CLT in EFL settings (Ellis, 1996; Gorsuch, 2000; Incecay & Incecay, 2009; Li, 1998; Rao, 2002; Sun & Cheng,

2002). However, there are few studies that specifically deal with CLT and its implementation in

the Turkish contexts (Bal, 2006; Incecay & Incecay, 2009). In addition, due to their insufficient

data, these studies fail in providing a well-documented account of the actual situation in Turkey

with regard to CLT and its utilization in English classrooms. Also, their conclusions are often

oversimplified. Thus, this study aims to lay out a lucid and thorough description of current ELT

practices in the Turkish context.

Furthermore, the literature in Turkey predominantly focused on English teaching at

primary and tertiary level, thereby overlooking English teaching in the secondary schools. Yet,

there is a good number of students at the secondary level in Turkey. According to 2007 statistics,

out of 14,817,654 students in total, 3,245,322 students were enrolled at the secondary level in

Turkey (MONE, 2008). Hence, the current study places a significant emphasis upon the teachers

working for both primary and secondary schools, who have been so far neglected in previous

studies.

In addition, the Communicative Approach has been extensively adopted by textbooks and

curricula in second language teaching, especially in ESL countries. This holds true for Turkey,

too. In 2007, the MONE in Turkey revised and updated the National English Teaching

Curriculum in primary and secondary levels (MONE, 2008). According to this recent reform,

CLT has been introduced as the basis of the curriculum, one of the main goals of which is

reported to "develop written and oral communication skills of learners" (MONE, 2008). Also,

this curriculum dictates that "what matters is the use of language as a means of communication

rather than the rules of grammar" (MONE, 2008). Following the adoption of the new CLT-based

curriculum, MONE replaced all the existing textbooks used in schools with newly written course

books based on the CLT approach. Despite these positive steps taken towards integrating CLT

methodology into English teaching in Turkey, there seems to be an apparent disparity between the proposed curriculum and the actual classroom practices. Therefore, the present study is significant in that it aims to inquire about the possible reasons as to why CLT as an innovative approach cannot be effectively integrated into English classrooms. Besides, the findings of this study will be useful to the overall use of CLT in other EFL situations, providing insights about the potential issues needed to be addressed for the development of English teaching in different EFL contexts.

1.3 FOCUS OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on the following questions:

1. What problems are inherent in English teaching in Turkey?

2. What can communicative language teaching contribute to English teaching in Turkey?

3. How feasible is communicative language teaching in Turkey?

4. What are the difficulties and challenges that Turkish EFL teachers face in implementing CLT in their English classrooms? Can these difficulties be overcome? How and to what extent?

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature review begins with an overview of English language teaching in Turkey to provide the background to the present study. The second section of this chapter investigates CLT as one of the most recent developments in ESL/EFL teaching methodology. Within this framework, definition and principles of CLT are explored which then is followed by a brief history of CLT. Furthermore, a review of existing literature related to communicative competence, as well as how it functions in CLT is presented. In addition, the chapter examines the impact of ESL vs. EFL contexts on the implementation of CLT methodology. Finally, the third section, the most immediately relevant, encompasses studies on the necessity, feasibility and the explanations of utilizing CLT in Turkey and other EFL contexts.

2.1 AN OVERVIEW OF ENGLISH TEACHING IN TURKEY

This section consists of the background to the study which lays out a historical overview of English teaching in Turkey and how English has been taught so far. The section ends with a detailed account of the current curriculum imposed by the Ministry of National Education (MONE) in Turkey. This information is provided here in order to provide context for the choices made in this study.

2.1.1 History of English Teaching in Turkey

Located at the intersection of Asia and Europe and in proximity to the Middle East and Africa, Turkey plays a strategic and vital role in building peace and stability in the region. The

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geopolitical location of Turkey, together with a status that entails acting as a cultural bridge between the East and the West, makes the learning of English particularly significant.

There are political reasons for the eagerness to learn English in Turkey, as well. Turkey became a member of NATO in 1952 and has started official negotiations with the European Union (EU), hoping to achieve full membership. Over the last two decades or so, gaining full membership to the EU has always been given the most priority on the political agenda of Turkey. It can be argued that Turkey has taken many steps and come closer to joining the EU. If this can be accomplished soon, it will be necessary to have civil servants with high competence in English for English is becoming the most dominant official language of the EU. Thus, recent governments have adopted policies that support and promote learning and teaching of English. It is not surprising, therefore, to see the prevailing popularity of English as a foreign language in Turkey.

In Turkey, the official language and the medium of instruction in educational institutions is Turkish. At present, English is the only foreign language that is offered as a required subject at all levels of education in Turkey. There are other foreign languages such as German and French; but these are offered as elective subjects in a very small number of schools.

In order to understand the Turkish educational context, it is essential to present a historical overview of English teaching in Turkey. It is recognized that the introduction of English language into the Turkish education system dates back to *The Tanzimat Period,* the second half of the eighteenth century, which marks the beginning of the Westernization movements in the education system (Kirkgoz, 2005). This period is succeeded by the *Republican Turkey* which covers the time period between 1923 and 1997. The third milestone in the history of English teaching in Turkey is considered to be the phase that started with the *1997 Education*

Reform which brought about drastic changes and developments in the educational system, and in particular the teaching of English in Turkey.

2.1.1.1 The Tanzimat Period (1839 - 1876)

The Tanzimat Period refers to the period dating back to second half of the nineteenth century during the Ottoman times. This period is significant in that it marks the beginning of the Westernization movements in the education system (Kirkgoz, 2005). The foreign language introduced during this period was French. The increasing importance of French, which seemed to be a natural result of teaching the sciences by using French materials and teachers, was one of the major changes in language education that the Tanzimat reforms brought about. Davison (1990) argues that "almost from its inception, that empire was physically and politically oriented toward Europe" (p. 89). In addition, Doran's report reveals that since the end of the 18th century, the cultural and economic modernization of Turkey has rested upon the reformers' knowledge of a Western language (1969).

Together with the constant changes in education system in the Ottoman Empire, missionary schools started to flourish. The first educational institution that used English as the medium of instruction was Robert College. This school was founded in 1863 by an American missionary named Cyrus Hamlin. Although these missionary schools initially accepted Armenian, Bulgarian, Greek, and Jewish students, Turks were also attracted by the American schools since the knowledge of English resulted in prestigious and high-paying jobs (Allen, 1968).

Even though French was the most popular foreign language and very influential at that time, the American schools increasingly earned a distinct reputation due to the quality and the

consistency of the education offered in these schools, which eventually gained English

dominance over other foreign languages. Other reasons for the popularity of these schools among

the Turks were the elite positions that graduates were able to get, as well as the neutral political

atmosphere in the schools. As Washburn (1909) unveils in his recollections, this neutral

environment was primarily created by choosing English as the medium of education.

2.1.1.2 Republican Turkey (1923 - 1997)

After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, Ataturk, the founder of the

republic, and his associates initialized a series of reforms, aiming to create an independent and

modern country. Among these reforms, education was given a special attention. Education, for

instance, was made accessible to everyone, all the schools were unified, the alphabet was

changed from Arabic to Latin, and schools were secularized. In short, as Eskicumali (1994)

writes, a "new" mentality, outlook and value system was introduced in the Turkish society. He

goes on to say that "education undoubtedly played one of the most important roles in the

transformation of the new country" (p. 101). Ataturk himself realized the utmost need to improve

education; yet, there were no clear goals and principles. There were two groups of people crucial

to help with the necessary transformation. Of these, the first group was the Turkish pedagogical

reformers. These people were predominantly educated in the Western type schools during the

Ottoman Period. Therefore, they spoke a foreign language and they were highly influenced by

foreign education systems. As pointed out by Childress (2001), a "Westernized elite made up of

secularized intellectuals and bureaucrats took charge of reforming education" (p. 65). The second

group of people was foreign experts who were invited to Turkey during the first few decades of

the new Republic. The new government established by Ataturk highlighted the importance of

adopting Western culture and scientific ideas. Eskicumali (1994) proposes that this emphasis

became evident when the government allocated one-fourth of its educational budget to consultation with foreign experts, the first of who was John Dewey.

It was not until 1943 that the issue of foreign language teaching, in particular English was mentioned at the National Education Summit, the highest level of meetings held by The Board of Education and Discipline (BOED) every four years and that discusses the education-related issues at the national level. Because illiteracy was a major problem during the first decades of the Republic, the foreign language teaching evidently would not be a priority. The BOED established a foreign language teaching policy only in 1988.

Starting from 1923 until 1997, the Turkish education system consisted of a five-year compulsory primary education, and a six-year secondary education. Secondary education was composed of a three-year middle school, and a three-year high school education that eventually prepared students for Higher education. In Turkey, the schools are basically classified into two categories as state-run public schools and private ones. Public schools are classified as standard/general, vocational (technical, commerce, fine arts), and Anatolian schools. There are no preparatory English classes but approximately eight periods of English instruction per week in standard high schools and vocational schools.

Among the public secondary schools, Anatolian high schools were given a distinct status as opposed to the other state schools in that admission into Anatolian high schools was granted through a centralized entrance examination. Anatolian high schools were founded through a government decision and named so as to be differentiated from standard high schools. They were similar to private high schools in that they had a year of preparatory English and that they used English as a medium of instruction. Anatolian schools were founded to meet the demands of

those parents who desired foreign language instruction for their higher achieving children but who could not afford private school tuition.

The length of education in these schools was four-years, the first of which involved intensive English courses. In the successive three years, the medium of instruction for the mainstream subjects such as Mathematics and Science was English. However, after 2002, the MONE required that teaching of mathematics and science be in Turkish. This was partly due to the lack of sufficient teachers qualified to teach these subjects in English. Indeed, the actual problem was that the graduates of these schools were disadvantaged in the centralized Turkish-medium university entrance examination (Dogancay-Aktuna & Kiziltepe, 2005).

Anatolian schools were modeled after Robert College. The first Anatolian high school was opened in 1955 and since then Anatolian high schools have proved to be very successful. The success of these schools can be ascribed to the competitive entrance exam, the one-year intensive English program, the selection of the textbooks, as well as the high-caliber teaching staff. For most people, these schools provided the "golden key" to access to prestigious universities and thus a prosperous future. According to Dogancay-Aktuna (1998), the opening of Anatolian high schools marks the first phase of the spread of English through schooling.

Since the mid 1980s, Turkey has increasingly been influenced by forces of globalization through English language (Robins, 1996). The need to communicate with others for economic, social, and perhaps most significantly, cultural issues deepened the importance of a commonly known language. English has come to be the most predominant means of interaction for those involved in international communication at this point. Hence, it can be argued that the rise of English language in Turkey is closely tied with globalization. The changing status of English is clearly revealed by the fact that it is now broadly referred to as *global English, lingua franca,*

world English and *international English*. Ahmad (1993), in his study regarding sociopolitical development of Turkey in the 1980s, remarks that "English had become the *sine qua non* for a successful career in virtually any field, and thus parents struggled to have their children acquire a working knowledge of the language" (p. 210).

Due to the ever-increasing prominence of English, the number of schools providing English medium instruction boomed in the mid 1980s. According to MONE statistics, there were 193 English-medium secondary schools (103 private, 90 state-owned) in the 1987-1988 academic year. By the 2006-2007 school year, the number of private secondary schools reached 717 while the number of Anatolian high schools was 415 (MONE, 2008).

As for the higher education, the universities in Turkey are divided into two categories: state and private. All the universities in the country are controlled by Yuksek Ogretim Kurulu [Higher Education Council], referred to as YOK. At present, there are 139 universities (94 state-owned, 45 private) in Turkey (YOK, 2010). Middle East Technical University (METU), established in 1956, was the first state-owned university with English-medium instruction. METU has influenced the other institutions in the country in many ways, but most notably with its policy of English medium instruction. Following the model set by the METU, many private universities were founded in Turkey, the first of which was Bilkent University, established in 1983 in the capital city Ankara. Today, most private universities offer English-medium instruction to their students. In addition, these universities provide one-year of intensive English program to students whose English proficiency fall below the level set by the university.

Regarding the other universities that offer Turkish-medium instruction, the English language is integrated into the curriculum as a compulsory subject. According to most state-owned universities' English teaching policy, in the third semester of a four-year degree program,

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students need to take a course on 'Reading and Speaking in English' that aims to improve students' knowledge of general English. This course is followed by 'English for Specific Purposes I and II' which is intended to expose students to the relevant terminology of their field, as well as to facilitate reading and understanding the relevant literature. The final required foreign language course is 'English for Business' which aims to advance students' oral and written communication skills that will help them do business with foreign people and companies (Dogancay-Aktuna & Kiziltepe, 2005).

2.1.1.3 1997 Education Reform

In 1997, Turkish educational system underwent a number of fundamental changes regarding the English teaching policy at all levels of education. These changes were resulted from the MONE's efforts to reform Turkey's ELT practice which had long been neglected. The reform was introduced as "The Ministry of Education Development Project" and aimed at promoting effective English teaching in both public and private schools in the country.

The innovation which took place in 1997 primarily extended the duration of compulsory primary education from 5 to 8 years. So, with the new project three-year middle school education was embedded into primary education. Another innovation adopted by the MONE was the introduction of English from grade 4 upwards. Previously, English used to be introduced only at the middle-school level. The main incentive behind this innovation was to expose students to English longer than before so that they could acquire it more successfully (MONE, 2001).

The MONE lists the objectives of the new English curriculum for grades 4 and 5 as follow:

- raise pupils' awareness of a foreign language,
- promote a positive attitude towards learning English language,

- increase pupils' interests and motivation towards learning English language,
- establish classroom situations in the context of games so that pupils can have fun while learning English,
- set up dialogues and meaningful contextualized learning activities (Kocaoluk & Kocaoluk, 2001).

The 1997 curriculum states that the main objective of the secondary level English education is to improve the basic communicative skills of the learners through the integration of the four skills so that learners can be engaged in successful communication in the target language (MONE, 2001). In this sense, the 1997 curriculum can be regarded as a milestone in English language teaching in Turkey since for the first time in Turkish history the concept of the "communicative" approach was introduced into the ELT curriculum (Kirkgoz, 2005).

This reform brought about numerous positive changes in the higher education, too. Since the new curriculum required skilled teachers who would be able to meet the needs of their students, one major innovation that took place was to do with the curriculum of education faculties. Education faculties gave more emphasis on the teacher training courses, and they upgraded the quality of pre-service teacher training programs. Following the endorsement of the new curriculum, teacher training departments were reshaped, increasing the number of methodology courses, as well as extending the teaching practicum component to include both primary and secondary schools. This way, teacher trainees had more opportunities to observe the actual teaching practices, thereby receiving more practical and hands-on experience in schools. Furthermore, English language teaching departments felt the need to add a new course at the undergraduate level: *Teaching English to Young Learners*. This was an essential step in that prospective teachers would be better qualified as to meet the distinct needs of young learners.

2.1.2   How English Has Been Taught in Turkey

The beginning of English medium instruction and the teaching of English as a foreign language in the Ottoman Empire dates back to 1820s when the American missionaries first arrived to Istanbul (Kocabasoglu, 2000). During the Tanzimat times, the number of American missionary schools progressively increased. In 1840, there were only 6 schools with 84 students. However, by 1870, the number increased to 233 schools with some 5880 students (Kocabasoglu, 2000). Most of these American schools, established their curriculum supported by professors from American universities. Robert College, for instance, recruited American professors of high quality as its faculty. As reported by Gates (1940), American college graduates were hired to teach English under the supervision of the professors. He explains that "it placed the teaching of English in the hands of those to whom it was their mother tongue, thus ensuring a good pronunciation and a sound knowledge of idioms" (p. 170). Schools like Robert College had educated and dedicated administrators, consistent policies, as well as teaching materials from the US, all of which created a strong connection between the high quality of education and the English language in the public opinion. This positive attitude toward English and teaching of English continues today in Turkey.

Despite the numerous reports of the success of American missionary schools, there is no account of how English had been taught in those schools until 1940s. Tarhan (1998), in his study in which he compared three private schools with regular schools in terms of the methods used in ELT in these schools, found out that Robert College adopted the Audiolingual Method to teach English between 1945 and 1960. Given that this method became the dominant approach in ELT after the World War II, it is no surprise that American schools implemented the practices of audiolingualism at that time.

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The Audiolingual Method proposes that students form correct language habits in English. The habits of the native language Turkish are considered to get in the way of learners' attempts to master English. For this reason, the use of mother tongue in class is discouraged among students in English lessons. Dialogues are heavily used through imitation and repetition in order to present students with new vocabulary and structures. Furthermore, teachers rely on heavy use of repetitive drills until the students are able to produce the structural patterns spontaneously.

Tarhan's (1980) study also demonstrated that state schools in Turkey were reported to use the Direct Method in 1945 – 1960. The popularity of this method can be tied to the influence of E. V. Gatenby on English language teaching in Turkey. Gatenby was a strong advocate of the direct method. In 1944, he started working as a Professor of Pedagogy and Head of the English Department at the Gazi Educational Institute in Ankara, at that time the only Teachers' Training College in Turkey. As Phillips (1956) comments, in addition to having three full-time appointments at the time, "he was giving a series of English lessons by radio from Ankara, which made him very well known and enjoyed all over Turkey, and preparing a quarterly Pedagogical Bulletin in Turkish." Furthermore, Gatenby was "preparing a series of textbooks, to be used in Turkish schools, for the Turkish Ministry of Education" (p. 88).

According to Direct method, the chief goal of English learning and teaching was to communicate in the language. Useful, every day English were given emphasis as the major content of English lessons. Students were encouraged to directly associate meaning with English; that is, they were told to think in English. To achieve this, teachers explained new meaning using realia, visual aids or demonstrations. They also intensely used English as the language of instruction. As for the teaching of grammar, it was taught inductively. In other words, teachers

provided their students with examples from which students were expected to figure out the

grammar rules and generalizations (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

The Grammar Translation method, which has long been the predominant English

teaching method in Turkey now, became the foremost approach in the late 1960s. The teaching

of English was chiefly based on a teacher-centered transmission model until 1980s. In this view,

there was a central focus on grammar and vocabulary at the expense of communication. Students

were provided with detailed rules and formulas about grammar, which then was followed by

activities that required students to translate texts and sentences to and from English. Also,

teachers highlighted the significance of accuracy in learning English. The medium of instruction

in language classes was Turkish, and it was "maintained as the reference system in the

acquisition of the second language" (Stern, 1983, p. 455).

The introduction of communicative language teaching was first initiated in the 1980s

when the ELT syllabus was attempted to be revised to integrate communicative language

teaching into the curriculum. The details of this major shift of emphasis to CLT in Turkey will be

discussed at a further section.

2.1.3   The Current English Teaching Curriculum

The 1997 curriculum has been redesigned, necessitating a number of further innovations

in the language policy in Turkey. This was principally due to Turkey's enduring efforts to join

the EU. In order to conform to the ELT standards set by the EU, the MONE has undertaken some

policy changes to be reflected at different levels of education. The MONE gave the current ELT

curriculum its final form in 2008. With the 1997 reform, the duration of compulsory primary

education was increased to 8 years while the secondary education was three years. However,

with the latest reform in the schooling system that took place in 2005, the duration of all secondary-level schools was increased to four years. Moreover, in order to achieve European standardization in ELT in all types of schools, the MONE put an end to the one-year intensive English program that used to be carried out in Anatolian schools.

Currently, English is a compulsory subject both in primary and secondary levels of education in Turkey. English is taught starting from 4th grade in state schools. The MONE requires a minimum of two hours of English teaching for primary grades 4 and 5. For grades 6 through 8, five to six hours of English teaching is recommended. As for the secondary schools, 10 hours of English lessons are offered per week at grade 9. For the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades, four lessons per week should be allocated to the teaching of English regardless of whether they are Anatolian schools or regular state schools. This is by no means the case for private schools. Given the flexibility to make changes to the allocation of time for each lesson, most private schools tend to increase the number of lessons allocated to English teaching. Many private schools start teaching English three hours per week at Kindergarten level, and the same emphasis is given at all grade levels in order to allow students to acquire the target language much faster than their peers in state schools. Also, regular state schools are required to adopt the English course books that are locally prepared and approved by the MONE. Anatolian and private schools have more freedom in the selection of course books to be used in English classes. They can purchase books from international publishers. Since they charge their students substantial amounts of money, i.e. about 10,000 USD per year, students in these schools are more fortunate than their counterparts in the state schools in terms of the teaching resources available, and the money invested on the technological equipments used in English classrooms.

What is striking about the new curriculum is that it provides a detailed theoretical framework, as well as clear rationale behind the decisions taken with regard to various issues such as selection of teaching materials, curriculum design issues, assessment and evaluation, the role of teacher in language classrooms, how young learners differ from adults in learning a foreign language and so on. The recent curriculum appears to be the most comprehensive and elaborate curriculum to date. Similar to the 1997 curriculum, the current English curriculum adopts a *communicative* view to ELT, highlighting the importance of meaningful communication for learning English more effectively.

The ELT curriculum and the syllabi are divided into two components: the first component provides the foundation of English, covering the primary level English teaching (grades 4 through 8), and the second one covers the secondary level English instruction (grades 9 through 12). The general objectives of the ELT curriculum for secondary education are to enable students to:

- entertain themselves as they learn English,
- familiarize themselves with the target language culture,
- differentiate between the cultures of English-speaking countries,
- realize their own values, and also show tolerance and respect to individuals different from themselves,
- convey their own cultural values to foreigners,
- get to know the world's cultures through written and visual media,
- express themselves, communicate with others, cooperate with others, as well as improve their problem-solving skills,
- develop themselves personally, socially, and culturally,
- develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills,
- develop their vocabulary knowledge in the target language,
- develop their learning skills by means of information technologies,

- reach the standards detailed in the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages,"
- be motivated to use the target language, believing the importance of learning a foreign language (MONE, 2008).

The present curriculum lays out a detailed description of the goals and objectives for each grade, which are given with their corresponding structural items. The lessons are organized around different themes (History and Museum) that are illustrated with topics (museum, statutes, art galleries, and winter tourism), skills to be acquired (listening for specific information, reading for general understanding), context (inter-personal dialogue, dramatization), language functions (asking for directions), and sample tasks and/or projects (creating flyers for historical places) to be carried out in class. This curriculum mainly follows a functional-notional and skill-based syllabus. It also details the linguistic and communicative competence that students are expected to have acquired when they complete each grade level.

With regard to the course design, the recent document states that given that in recent years, the shift has moved from more teacher-centered approaches to more learner and learning-centered approaches, the MONE adopts *process-oriented approaches* to curriculum design. The basic theoretical hypothesis in *process-oriented approaches* is that underlying any language behavior are certain skills and strategies which the learners use in order to comprehend or produce discourse. The learning situation is important since learners become aware of their abilities and potential in the learning situation. Understanding how learning takes place is also important since it motivates learners to tackle with target language tasks on their own even after the end of the course which eventually leads to learner autonomy. The desired learner autonomy is proposed to be achieved through giving students projects to carry out so that they can have

opportunities to control their own learning and learn according to their own individual styles and preferences.

In most Turkish schools, English is taught as an isolated subject in the curriculum; thus, according to the MONE, a possible innovation is thought to be teaching English through a cross-curricular model. The MONE reports the following:

> Cross-curricular studies can be a way of teaching English through content in which the target language is the vehicle of interaction and knowledge, not the subject matter. Cross-curricular studies facilitate learning, integrating all subjects through the use of foreign language, allowing learners to inquire and connect experience and knowledge. By bringing together several disciplines and making content connections across subjects such as mathematics, science, arts, music, social studies, etc. in the classroom, we can show learners that a topic is relevant, related to their real world and previous experience (MONE, 2008).

A further major innovation that the current ELT curriculum brought about is to do with assessment. The current curriculum proposes the use of performance-based assessment in English classes. This is achieved through the practice of "portfolio assessment." As opposed to the conventional sit-down "paper and pencil" tests that cause anxiety in students, portfolios appear to be more authentic and realistic, and they are also claimed to be more harmonious with the principles of communicative language teaching. Portfolio assessment focuses on documenting the student's progress. It also emphasizes what students know and what they can do rather than what they do not know or cannot do. Unlike standardized tests, students are evaluated on what they integrate and produce rather than on what they are able to recall and reproduce.

According to the MONE, although there is no single definition of portfolio assessment, the main goal is to gather evidence about how students are approaching, processing, and

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completing real-life tasks in a particular domain. Through portfolio assessment, parents whose importance had long been neglected in the Turkish education system can also be involved in the assessment process; portfolio assessment allows the teacher and the parent to discuss and review the child's development on a concrete basis rather than discuss the learner's performance in the abstract.

The MONE reveals that evaluation procedures must be in line with the teaching methods and techniques. Hence, the suggested evaluation devices are all taken from the European Language Portfolio (ELP). The *Principles and Guidelines* approved by the Council of Europe (DGIV/ EDU/LANG (2000) define the three components of the ELP as follows:

The Language Passport: This section provides an overview of the individual's proficiency in a foreign language (English in our case) at a given point in time. The overview is defined in terms of skills and the common reference levels in the Common European Framework. It records formal qualifications and describes language competencies and significant language and intercultural learning experiences. Furthermore, it includes information on partial and specific competence. The Language Passport allows for self-assessment, teacher assessment and assessment by educational institutions and examinations boards. It requires that information entered in the Passport states on what basis, when and by whom the assessment was carried out.

The Language Biography: This facilitates the learner's involvement in planning, reflecting upon and assessing his or her learning process and progress. It encourages the learner to state what he/she can do in each language and to include information on linguistic and cultural experiences gained in and outside formal educational contexts. It is organized to promote pluralingualism, i.e. the development of competencies in a number of languages.

The Dossier: This offers the learner the opportunity to select materials to document and illustrate achievements or experiences recorded in the Language Biography or Passport (MONE, 2008, p. 24).

Along with this proposal, the school or institution may choose different models when recognizing such an evaluation device.

2.2 COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT)

CLT is a recognized theoretical model in English language teaching today. Many applied linguists regard it as one of the most effective approaches to ELT. Since its inception in Europe in early 1970s, CLT has served as a major source of influence on language teaching practice round the world. As Li (1998) comments, CLT has extended in scope and has been used by different educators in different ways.

It is most likely that when asked to name the methodology they make use of in their classrooms, the majority of language teachers today assert "communicative" as the methodology of choice. However, when pushed to give a detailed account of what they mean by "communicative," their explanations diverge broadly. What is involved in CLT? Does CLT mean teaching conversation, an absence of grammar in a course, or an emphasis on open-ended discussion activities as the main features of a course? The answers to these questions can be best understood by examining CLT in terms of its historical development, of a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the language classroom. The next section examines these features in detail.

2.2.1 History of CLT

There have been many changes in ideas about syllabus design and methodology over the last 50 years or so. CLT as a promising approach has encouraged a re-evaluation of approaches to syllabus design and methodology. Richards (2006) classifies trends in language teaching in the last 50 years into three phases:

Phase 1: traditional approaches (up to the late 1960s)

Phase 2: classic communicative language teaching (1970s to 1990s)

Phase 3: current communicative language teaching (late 1990s to the present). (p. 6)

According to the traditional approaches, grammatical competence was the foundation of language proficiency. Thus, grammar was given a central place in language teaching methodology. A *deductive* approach to teaching grammar was adopted by language teachers. Students were provided with detailed grammar rules and then given opportunities for practice. Language learning was essentially understood as constructing a strong knowledge of grammatical patterns and sentence structures. The four skills of language, i.e. speaking, listening, reading, and writing were introduced after a basic grasp of language was constructed through controlled practice and oral drills. *Accuracy* was given emphasis at the expense of *fluency*. From the earliest stages of language teaching, teachers highlighted the magnitude of accurate knowledge of grammar, as well as an accurate pronunciation. Learners were discouraged to make errors since it was thought that errors could become a permanent part of student's speech.

Audiolingualism, initiated in North America, and the *Situational Language Teaching*, initiated in the United Kingdom, are the two methodologies that were based on these assumptions. Syllabuses during this period mainly consisted of word lists and grammar lists that were graded across levels.

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Richards and Rodgers (2001) portrays a typical audio-lingual lesson as involving the following procedures:

1. Students first hear a model dialog (either read by the teacher or on tape) containing key structures that are the focus of the lesson. They repeat each line of the dialog, individually and in chorus. The teacher pays attention to pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. Correction of mistakes of pronunciation or grammar is direct and immediate. The dialog is memorized gradually, line by line. A line may be broken down into several phrases if necessary. The dialog is read aloud in chorus, one half saying one speaker's part and the other half responding. The students do not consult their book throughout this phase.

2. The dialog is adapted to the students' interest or situation, through changing certain key words or phrases. This is acted out by the students.

3. Certain key structures from the dialog are selected and used as the basis for pattern drills of different kinds. These are first practiced in chorus and then individually. Some grammatical explanation may be offered at this point, but this is kept to an absolute minimum.

4. The students may refer to their textbook, and follow-up reading, writing, or vocabulary activities based on the dialog may be introduced.

5. Follow-up activities may take place in the language laboratory, where further dialog and drill work is carried out. (pp. 64-65)

Situational language teaching proposes that a typical language lesson involve a three-phase sequence, known as the *P-P-P cycle*: Presentation, Practice, and Production.

Presentation: The new grammar structure is presented, often by means of a conversation or short text. The teacher explains the new structure and checks students' comprehension of it.

Practice: Students practice using the new structure in a controlled context, through drills or substitution exercises.

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Production: Students practice using the new structure in different contexts, often using

their own content or information, in order to develop fluency with the new pattern

(Richards, 2006, p. 8).

This lesson structure (PPP) proposed by situational language teaching has been

extensively used in language teaching materials and still continues to be used in customized

forms. However, the view of language learning that underlies this approach to language teaching

has been criticized on a number of grounds. As Rutherford (1987) notes, PPP views language as

a series of products that can be acquired sequentially as accumulated entities. Yet, second

language acquisition (SLA) research has shown that L2 acquisition is a *process* that is

incompatible with teaching seen as the presentation and practice of a series of *products*. In the

same vein, Skehan (1996) questions the theoretical assumptions of situational language teaching:

The underlying theory for a P-P-P approach has now been discredited. The belief that a

precise focus on a particular form leads to learning and automatization (that learners will

learn what is taught in the order in which it is taught) no longer carries much credibility

in linguistics or psychology. (p. 18)

As far as the linguistic theory is concerned, the eminent American linguist Noam

Chomsky criticized the narrow behaviorist stimulus-response view of language and language

learning espoused by Skinner (Savignon, 1987). Chomsky argued that structural linguistic theory

was insufficient in explaining the principal characteristic of languages – the creativity and

uniqueness of individual sentences. His view of language and language learning moved the focus

of American linguistic studies from surface structural features toward a concern with deep

semantic structures. Thus, this paradigm shift led the way for the development of more

communicative approaches to second language learning (Savignon, 1987). Yet, Chomsky's focus

was on the interpretation of sentences. He characterized the linguistic competence as the

sentence-level grammatical competence of ideal native speaker. Hymes (1971) reacted to this view by proposing the term *communicative competence* which referred to the use of language in social context. Communication, therefore, involved negotiation of meaning between speaker and listener, and author and reader.

Meanwhile, British applied linguists highlighted the importance of another fundamental aspect of language – the functional and communicative potential of language that was inadequately addressed in the language teaching theories at that time. Drawing on the work of functional linguists (e.g. John Firth, M. A.K. Halliday) and American sociolinguists (e.g. Dell Hymes, John Gumperz, and William Labov), and philosopers (e.g. John Austin and John Searle), British applied linguists claimed that language teaching needs to focus on communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures (Li, 1997).

In Europe, during the 1970s, with the mounting interdependence of European countries, there was an increasing number of immigrants and guest workers. This situation led the Council of Europe to build up a syllabus for learners based on functional-notional concepts of language use. In this syllabus, a threshold level of language ability was defined for each of the European languages in terms of what learners should be able to *do* with the language (van Ek, 1975). Language functions were rooted in assessment of learner needs. Subsequently, the term *communicative* was used to describe programs that adopted a functional-notional syllabus.

Since its emergence as essentially a British innovation, CLT has expanded in scope and now is widely utilized as one of the most prominent language teaching methodologies around the world. Despite its apparent popularity, many teachers remain somewhat confused about what exactly CLT is. Accordingly, it is relevant at this point to define and lay out some important characteristics of CLT in light of the existing literature.

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2.2.2 Definition and Principles of CLT

There is considerable debate as to appropriate ways of defining CLT, and no single model of CLT is universally accepted as authoritative (McGroarty, 1984; Markee, 1997). Yet, according to Richards and Rodgers (2001), CLT starts with a theory of language as communication, and its goal is to develop learners' communicative competence. Despite being a simplistic account of CLT, this idea of communicative competence is considered to be the main conception of CLT. Communicative competence included knowing what to say and how to say it appropriately based on the situation, the participants, and their roles and intentions. Traditional grammatical and vocabulary syllabuses and teaching methods did not include information of this kind. It was assumed that this kind of knowledge would be picked up informally.

In fact, CLT is not a monolithic and uniform approach to language teaching (Ellis, 2003). In accordance with a classification proposed by Howatt (1984), CLT consists of a 'weak' and a 'strong' version. The weak version of CLT is based on the assumption that the components of communicative competence can be identified, and thus systematically taught (Ellis, 2003). From this perspective, CLT can be thought to be an interventionist and analytic approach to language teaching, which means that CLT does not display a fundamental difference from the earlier traditional approaches. This weak version of CLT highlights the significance 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 (Howatt, 1984). Such a version of CLT proposes that instead of teaching the structural properties of language, teachers pay attention to particular notions such as 'possibility', 'possession', as well as language functions such as 'making requests' and 'giving advice.' Howatt (1984) describes the weak version of CLT as "learning to use English" (p. 279). It is possible to claim

that this version is manifested in the proposals for *notional/functional syllabuses* put forward by Wilkins (1976) and Van Ek (1976).

On the contrary, a strong version of CLT is based on the claim that "language is acquired through communication" (Howatt, 1984, p. 279). In other words, learners do not go through a learning experience in which they acquire the structural properties of a language and then learn to use this structural system in communication. As a matter of fact, they discover the system itself as they learn how to communicate in a language. This version proposes that teachers provide learners with ample opportunities to familiarize themselves with how language is used in actual communication. As Howatt (1984) puts it, the strong version of CLT entails "using English to learn it" (p. 279).

Other authors in the field have defined and characterized CLT in various ways (Brown, 2001; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Littlewood, 1981; Richards, 2006; Savignon, 1991). According to Larsen-Freeman (1986), the most obvious attribute of CLT is that ''almost everything that is done is done with a communicative intent'' (p. 132). In CLT, meaning is given prime importance, which is achieved through interaction between reader and writer, and through negotiation between speaker and listener. There are a variety of communicative activities (e.g. games, role plays, simulations, and problem-solving tasks), which offer learners an opportunity to practice their communication skills meaningfully in different contexts and by taking on different roles. In the process of utilizing these kinds of performance activities, learners avoid using their native language and teachers occasionally, if ever, correct students' mistakes.

Another typical feature of communicative language teaching is that "it gives planned emphasis on functional as well as structural features of language, combining these into a more completely communicative view" (Littlewood, 1981, p. 1). Teachers who espouse CLT move

beyond teaching structural rules of the target language, and create opportunities for learners to use the target language in a meaningful way. In doing so, they help their learners build up communicative competence.

Small group work can also be regarded as an important tenet of CLT. Larsen-Freeman (1986) puts forward that activities in a communicative class are commonly carried out by students in small groups. Negotiation of meaning can be accomplished by involving learners in group work in which they can freely interact with each other. Through small group activities, the students are engaged in meaningful and authentic language use rather than in the simply mechanical practice of language patterns. Emphasizing the importance of pair and group work as an indispensable aspect of CLT classroom, Richards (2006) argues that carrying out activities in pair and group work will benefit the learners in the following ways:

- They can learn from hearing the language used by other members of the group.
- They will produce a greater amount of language than they would use in teacher-fronted activities.
- Their motivational level is likely to increase.
- They will have the chance to develop fluency. (p. 20)

Similarly, it is desirable for a language teacher to present learners with the opportunity to develop strategies for understanding language as it is actually used by native speakers (Canale and Swain, 1980). In this respect, using authentic materials can be helpful for language teachers to expose their students to the target language the way it is used by native speakers. Richards (2006) lists the following arguments in favor of the use of authentic sources as the basis of communicative classroom learning:

- They provide cultural information about the target language.
- They provide exposure to real language.

- They relate more closely to learners' needs.
- They support a more creative approach to teaching. (p. 20)

Another feature of CLT is "its learner-centered and experience-based view of second language teaching" (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 69). As cited in Li (1998), individual learners have their unique interests, learning styles, needs, and goals that should be reflected in the design of instructional methods (Savignon, 1991). Li (1998) further states that it is crucial for teachers to develop materials based on the established needs of a particular class. Besides, in a CLT classroom, students must be made to feel secure, unthreatened, and non-defensive, so teachers adopting CLT should avoid taking on a teacher-centered, authoritarian attitude (Taylor, 1983).

Brown (2001), in describing the key principles of CLT, offers the following six characteristics:

1. Classroom goals are focused on all of the components (grammatical, discourse, functional, sociolinguistic, and strategic) of communicative competence. Goals therefore must intertwine the organizational aspects of language with the pragmatic.
2. Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Organizational language forms are not the central focus, but rather aspects of language that enable 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. Students in a communicative class ultimately have to use language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom. Classroom tasks must therefore equip students with the skills necessary for communication in those contexts.

5. Students are given opportunities to focus on their own learning process through an understanding of their own styles of learning and through the development of appropriate strategies for autonomous learning.

6. The role of the teacher is that of facilitator and guide, not an all-knowing bestower of knowledge. Students are therefore encouraged to construct meaning through genuine linguistic interaction with others. (p. 43)

Furthermore, Richards (2006) notes that with the introduction of CLT, language teachers and teaching institutions all around the world soon began to reorganize their teaching, syllabuses, and classroom materials. In planning language courses within a communicative approach, grammar was no longer the starting point. It was claimed that meaningful communication provides the learner with a better opportunity for learning than through a grammar-based approach. He then summarizes the overarching principles of CLT as follows:

- Make real communication the focus of language learning.
- Provide opportunities for learners to experiment and try out what they know.
- Be tolerant of learners' errors as they indicate that the learners are building up their communicative competence.
- Provide opportunities for learners to develop both accuracy and fluency.
- Link the different skills such as speaking, reading, and listening together, since they usually occur so in the real world.
- Let students induce or discover grammar rules. (Richards, 2006, p. 13)

I adopt the definition and principles of CLT proposed by Richards (2006) for the purposes of this thesis. As a final note, it can be maintained that there has been overwhelming agreement among the scholars in the field that the goal of CLT is to develop communicative competence. The authors concur that CLT has as its primary objective to help students develop communicative competence in the target language. Then the question that emerges is 'what is

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communicative competence?' The following section will review some common concepts dealing with the issue of communicative competence.

2.2.3   Communicative Competence

In his linguistic theories, Chomsky makes a distinction between two aspects of language, namely 'competence' vs. 'performance'. He argues that competence is consisted of the underlying knowledge of the grammatical system. By competence, Chomsky means the shared knowledge of the ideal speaker-listener set in a completely homogeneous speech community. Chomsky affirms that such underlying knowledge enables a user of a language to produce and understand an infinite set of sentences out of a finite set of rules. By performance, he refers to the use of this underlying knowledge to communicate. However, this linguistic model proposed by Chomsky has been harshly criticized for being too simplistic (Halliday, 1979; Hymes, 1972). They pointed out that this model fails to account for the social aspects of language. Agreeing with Chomsky on competence-performance distinction, most scholars feel that competence should involve, in addition to grammatical sectors, psycholinguistic, sociocultural, as well as de facto sectors, in Hymes' terms.

Hymes believes that Chomsky's view of competence is too idealized to describe actual language behavior, and therefore his view of performance is an incomplete reflection of competence. He also points out that the theory does not account for sociocultural factors or differential competence in a heterogeneous speech community. Claiming that a linguistic theory must be able to deal with a heterogeneous speech community, differential competence and the role of sociocultural features, Hymes (1972) offers a broader concept of competence, namely 'communicative competence'. He puts forward that native speakers, in addition to linguistic competence, attend to another rule system while speaking, which is labeled as the rules of

language use. As cited in Li (1997), Hymes claims that a person who acquires communicative competence acquires both knowledge and ability for language use with regard to:

- whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible;
- whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available;
- whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
- whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails. (Hymes, 1972, p. 281)

Compared to Chomsky's view of competence – that of abstract knowledge of grammar, Hymes' theory of what knowing a language involves presents a much more inclusive view.

Savignon (1997) promotes a classroom model of communicative competence that involves Canale and Swain's four components of competence. She defines communicative competence as "functional language proficiency; the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning involving interaction between two or more persons belonging to the same (or different) speech community" (Savignon, 1997, p. 272). In her book *Communicative Competence: Theory and Classroom Practice* (1997), Savignon portrays communicative competence as having the following elements:

1. Communicative competence is a dynamic rather than a static concept. It depends on the negotiation of meaning between two or more people who share to some degree the same symbolic system…
2. Communicative competence applies to both written and spoken language, as well as to many other symbolic systems.
3. Communicative competence is context specific. Communication takes place in an infinite variety of situations, and success in a particular role depends on one's understanding of the context and on prior experience of a similar kind…

4. There is a theoretical difference between competence and performance. Competence is defined as a presumed underlying ability and performance as the overt manifestation of that ability. Competence is what one knows. Performance is what one does.

5. Communicative competence is relative, not absolute, and depends on the cooperation of all the participants. (pp. 14-15)

While Savignon has explored and written extensively on communicative competence, it was Canale and Swain (1980) who created a more detailed theoretical framework for communicative that was highly recognized in the field.

Canale and Swain (1980) believe that the sociolinguistic work of Hymes is significant to the development of a communicative approach to language learning and teaching. Nonetheless, just as Hymes states that there are principles of grammar that would be useless without rules of language use, they uphold that there are rules of language use that would be useless without rules of grammar. Canale and Swain (1980) thus further developed the notion of communicative competence. They described communicative competence as consisting of four basic components, the total of which is assumed to enable a learner to acquire the target language to the extent that he/she can be an indistinguishable speaker of the target language:

Grammatical or Linguistic Competence: In a broader sense, the term refers to the grammatically appropriate usage of the linguistic structures of the language. For speakers of a language, it is a prerequisite that their speech be in line with the grammatical rules and within the boundaries drawn by the linguistic impositions of the language in question. Until recently, grammatical competence has mistakenly been put in the heart of the ultimate aim of language teaching, which has resulted in learners of a language, say English, who produce grammatically correct utterances but who are not able to communicate effectively in the language.

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Sociolinguistic Competence: This term corresponds to the learner's ability to use the language properly in different social contexts. Sociolinguistic competence thus displays the learners' knowledge of going beyond the literal meaning of utterances, as well as recognizing intention beyond those utterances in particular social situations.

Discourse Competence: This competence deals mainly with the ability to organize the ideas in a coherent and smoothly flowing way to ensure unity in meaning. Discourse competence brings to our attention that learners must also be mindful of the discourse patterns of the language that they are learning.

Strategic Competence: Strategic Competence refers to the learners' ability to acquire verbal and non-verbal communication strategies. The strategies are the means by which learners deal with potential breakdowns in communication which arise from either "limiting conditions in actual communication or insufficient competence in one or more of the other areas of communicative competence, and to enhance the effectiveness of communication" (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 10). Dörnyei and Thurrel (1992) give a comprehensive account of the strategies communicators deal with in order to avoid potential breakdowns in communication. They cite the components of openings, turn-taking, interrupting, adjacency pairs, conversational routines, topic shift and closings as elements of conversational rules and structures; message adjustment and avoidance, paraphrasing, using approximations, mime, and appeal for help as consisting conversational strategies; along with a brief summary of what actually a speech consists of.

This theoretical model of communicative competence has undergone some further modifications over time. Bachman (1990) has proposed a more complex model of communicative competence, which he calls "Language Competence." Bachman's model of language competence is illustrated in the following figure (Figure 1):
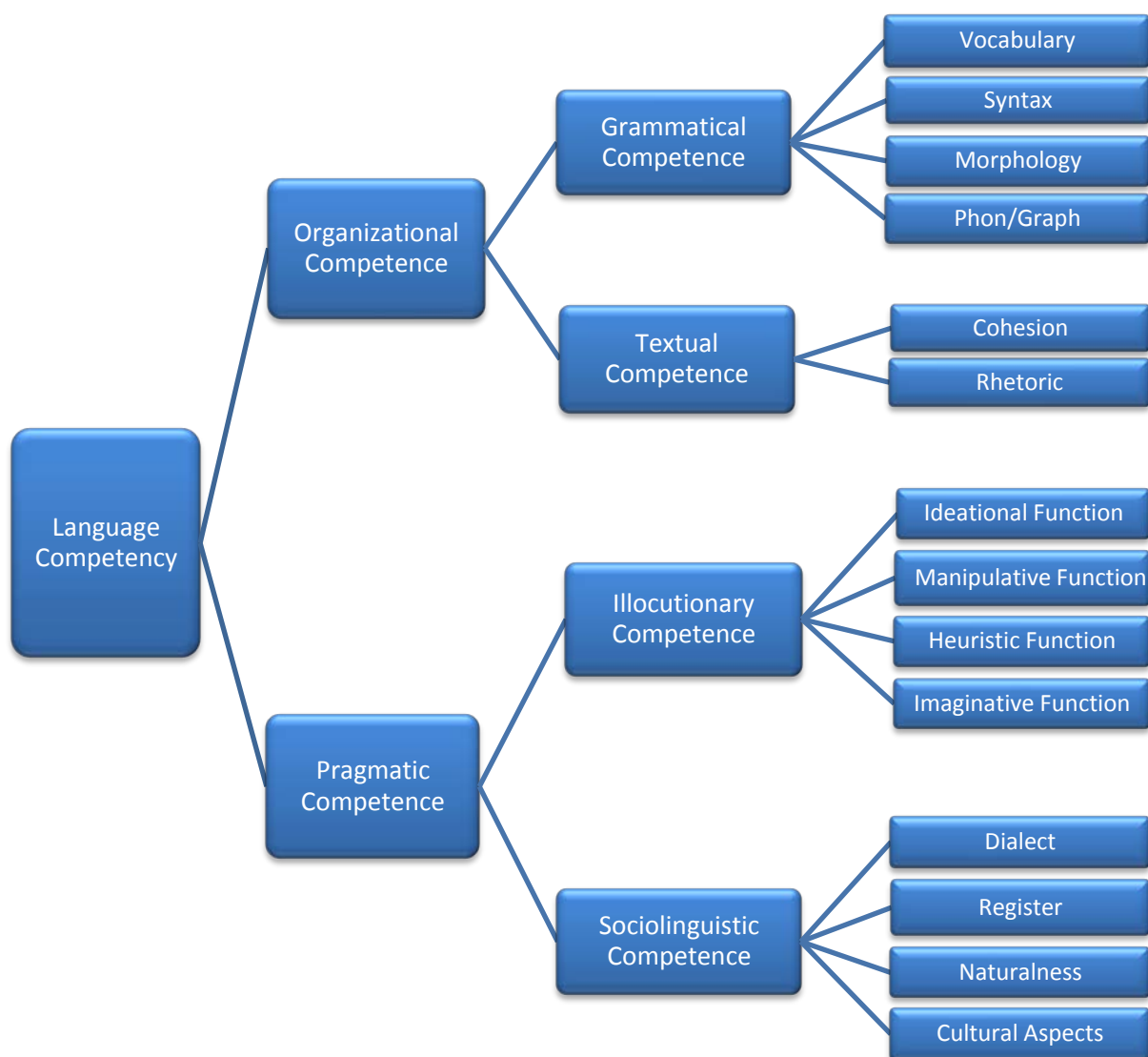
Figure 1. Components of Language Competence (Bachman, 1990, p.87)

According to this model, grammatical and discourse competence are placed under one node which Bachman called organizational competence. Organizational competence involves the rules and systems that govern what we can do with different forms of language, both at sentence-level and discourse level. Also, sociolinguistic competence as defined by Canale and Swain was divided into two separate pragmatic categories, namely illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence. Illocutionary competence was to do with the functional aspects of

language – that of receiving and sending intended meanings. By sociolinguistic competence, Bachman referred to issues of formality, politeness, register, metaphorical, as well as cultural aspects of language.

Bachman also appends strategic competence as a completely separate element of communicative language ability, which essentially serves an executive function of making the final decision, among all possible alternatives, on wording, phrasing, and other means for negotiating meaning (Li, 1997). The components of communicative language ability in communicative language use are illustrated in the figure below (Figure 2):
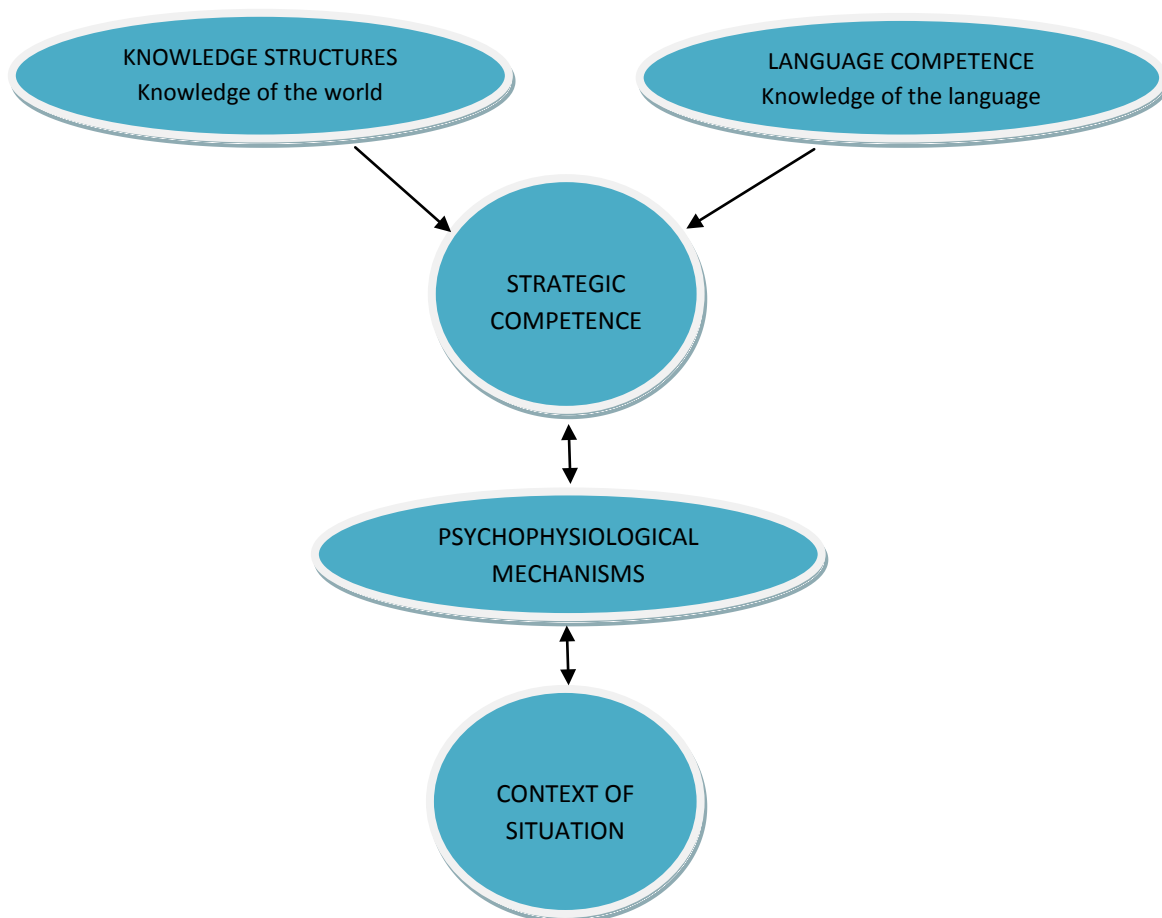
Figure 2. Components of communicative language ability in communicative language use (Bachman, 1990, p. 85)

In order to enable learners to attain communicative competence in CLT classroom, it was needed to create new classroom activities that would necessitate learners to negotiate meaning and interact meaningfully in the target language since using activities that demanded accurate repetition and memorization of sentences and grammatical patterns failed to serve this purpose. The next section will focus on classroom activities that are typical to be found in CLT classroom.

2.2.4   Classroom Activities in CLT

Communicative intent is always given a prime position in every CLT activity. In a communicative class, students are provided with opportunities to use the language a great deal through communicative activities. There are various classifications of activities that are typically found in a communicative language classroom. Paulston and Bruder (1976), for example, in their book *Teaching English as a Second Language: Techniques and Procedures* classified the activity types that they thought were of maximum benefit in enabling students to attain communicative competence into the four categories below:

i.   *Social Formulas and Dialogs:* These cover such speech encounters as greetings, partings, introductions, excuses, compliments, complaints, hiding feelings, etc. It is actually very difficult to lie, to complain and to turn someone down for a date in another language, and the learners of a foreign language need to be taught how to get along with those situations in an appropriate manner (Paulston & Bruder, 1976).

ii. *Community Oriented Tasks:* Those are sets of exercises which compel the student to interact with native speakers outside the classroom.

iii. *Problem-Solving Activities:* The students are presented with a problem and some alternative solutions, from among which they have to choose one or create their own.

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iv. *Role Plays:* In role plays, students are assigned a fictitious role. The students may even act out the role of themselves. The simplicity of role plays and the improvisation is a matter of student proficiency. Paulston and Bruder (1976) maintain that the teacher should attach importance to the format of the role play which consists of three basic components, whether or not it is a complex one. In the *situation*, the teacher clearly explains the scene and the plot of the role play, which is followed by the description of the task and the action to be accomplished. Then, the teacher assigns the *roles*, the list of characters, making sure that the roles are not too elaborate for the students to carry out. *Useful expressions* part contains the linguistic information, primarily expressions and phrases that will facilitate the acting out of the roles.

Celce-Murcia (1991) also examined the classroom activities that help learners develop their communication skills and grouped them under four basic headings for the ease of discussion:

i. *Linguistically Structured Activities:* These activities generally revolve around the presentation or the practice of certain linguistic structures. What she suggests is that although these activities are not inhibitive, they may pretty well turn out to be so unless they are contextualized and made meaningful. The *structured interview*, where the students question each other for factual information, thus exchanging real information; and *language game* can best exemplify useful linguistically structured activities.

ii. *Performance Activities:* These are activities in which students prepare something beforehand and deliver their message to the class, which is or can be followed by a classroom discussion. Peer evaluation is an invaluable technique to ensure that the

audience is more than passive listeners (knowing that they will evaluate the presenters based on the given criteria draws their attention to the presenter). Role plays and dramas are among the ones that can be cited as examples of performance activities in the sense referred to by Celce-Murcia (1991).

iii. *Participation Activities:* In participation activities, students take part in some communicative activities in natural settings. Guided discussions, interviews, and oral dialogs best exemplify these types of activities. Here, the factor of authenticity arouses interest and motivation on the part of the learners, calling for a natural need to carry out what is expected by the activity.

iv. *Observation Activities:* In observation activities, learners are expected to observe and/or record verbal and nonverbal interactions between two or more native speakers of the target language, which is of extreme benefit in that the students appreciate and become aware of the target language as it is actually used in real life.

Another possible distinction can be made between fluency and accuracy activities. It is mostly agreed that one of the goals of CLT is to develop fluency in language use. In Richard's (2006) terms, "fluency is the natural language use occurring when a speaker engages in meaningful interaction and maintains comprehensible and ongoing communication despite limitations in his or her communicative competence"(p.14). He further suggests that in order to build up fluency, teachers should develop classroom activities in which students need to negotiate meaning, use communication strategies to avoid potential breakdowns in communication.

Richards (2006) highlights that activities focusing on fluency have the following features:

- They reflect natural use of language,
- They focus on achieving communication,
- They require meaningful use of language,
- They require the use of communication strategies,
- They produce language that may not be predictable,
- They seek to link language use to context. (p.14)

Finally, other activity types that are typically implemented in a CLT classroom can be listed as follow:

Information-gap activities: The concept of information gap is an important aspect of communication in a CLT classroom. This essentially is based on the fact that in their everyday lives people generally communicate in order to get information they do not possess. This is referred to as an information gap. If students can be involved in information gap activities in order to exchange unknown information in language classrooms, more authentic communication is likely to occur in the classroom. By doing so, they will draw available vocabulary, grammar, and communication strategies to complete a task.

Jigsaw activities: These activities are also based on the information-gap principle. The class is divided into groups and each group has part of the information needed to complete an activity. The class is supposed to fit the pieces together to complete the whole. In that way, they need to use their language resources to communicate meaningfully and so take part in meaningful communication practice.

Communication games: These games primarily involve information-gap activities which are intended to provoke communication in the classroom. The games are generally in the form of puzzles, drawing pictures and putting things given in the correct order. The students have a piece of information which is part of the total, what they need to do is to walk around to get the

necessary information in order to reach the entire information, through which an artificial need on the part of the learners is created to get them to speak. Students feel it as a challenge to participate; thus an unconscious learning and practicing of knowledge occurs which erase out the fears learners have for speaking in the class (Johnson & Morrow, 1981).

Discussion and debates: Discussion and debates are of widely utilized activity types due to their low effort demanding nature of the teacher. Every now and then, an intimate atmosphere of discussion occurs in the classroom, however, when appropriately exploited, these discussions will undoubtedly end up in speaking opportunities of extreme worth, both in terms of language presentation and practice. Either encouraging competition or cooperation, which one to choose is a matter of familiarity with the students; the teacher may foster discussion over debate.

Prepared talks and oral presentations: These are the talks which are prepared by students about a specific topic and given in the class with the aim of persuading, informing students about a topic or just to entertain them.

2.2.5   Teachers and Students' Roles in CLT Classroom

The learner-centered characteristic of CLT and the new type of classroom activities imply different roles in the language classroom for teachers and learners than from those found in more traditional second language classrooms. Learners in CLT classrooms are supposed to participate in classroom activities that are based on a collaborative rather than individualistic approach to learning. They are portrayed as active participants in the language learning process. Therefore, CLT alters the role of the teacher. Also, CLT as a methodology has much to do with interaction. It uses communication as a means to reach the goal, which is also communication. Accordingly,

it would be wise to claim that teacher's and students' roles in CLT classroom have a dynamic feature, and thus they tend to vary all the time.

Breen and Candlin (1980), in defining the role of the teacher in CLT classroom, notes the following central roles:

> The first role is to facilitate the communication process between all participants in the classroom, and between these participants and the various activities and texts. The second role is to act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group. A third role of the teacher is that of a researcher and learner, with much to contribute in terms of appropriate knowledge and abilities, actual and observed experience of the nature of learning and organizational capacities. (p. 99)

This draws attention to a distinctive feature of CLT – that of a "learner-centered and experience-based view of second language teaching" (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 69). It is thus advisable for teachers adopting a communicative approach to produce and use authentic teaching materials that meet the needs of their particular learners. Moreover, teachers need to motivate their students, as well as provide them with a comfortable classroom atmosphere for language learning. Littlewood (1981) states that the roles of teacher in CLT consist of, but are not limited to, coordinator and manager of activities, language instructor, source of new language, consultant when needed, as well as participant.

In addition, it is typical in a CLT classroom that it is not merely the teacher, but everyone present who manages the classroom performance. Allwright (1984) maintains that teachers can no longer be regarded simply as teachers and learners just as learners, since they both are managers of learning. The traditional image of the teacher as the dominating authority figure in the classroom is dissolved into such a role that necessitates facilitating the communicative process in the classroom where students feel safe, unthreatened and non-defensive.

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Furthermore, Hu (2002) proposes that the roles of students in CLT classroom are supposed to be "those of negotiators for meaning, communicators, discoverers, and contributors of knowledge and information" (pp.95-96). Likewise, Mangubhi et al. (2004), in their descriptions of students and teacher's roles in CLT classroom, assert that students are vigorously involved in expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning while the teacher takes on more of a facilitator and participant role in the language classroom.

Finally, Deckert (2004), referring to the student centered characteristic of CLT, emphasizes that "CLT approach features low profile teacher roles, frequent pair work or small group problem solving, students responding to authentic samples of English, extended exchanges on high interest topics, and the integration of the four basic skills, namely speaking, listening, reading, and writing" (p.13). He further states that CLT discourages pervasive teacher-controlled drills, quizzing of memorized material, and extensive explanation on forms of English.

Since the main aim of the present study is to investigate teachers' perceived difficulties in implementing CLT in Turkish context, which is essentially an EFL environment, it is noteworthy to provide a description of ESL and EFL settings, and to present the relevant literature that deals with how CLT relates to each distinct learning environments. Thus, the next section of the literature review will differentiate ESL and EFL environments.

2.2.6 Differentiating ESL and EFL Environments

Both ESL (English as a second language) and EFL (English as a foreign language) entail teaching of English to the speakers of other languages. However, learning and teaching environments vary in ESL and EFL settings. ESL essentially refers to the learning of English as the target language in the environment in which it is spoken as the primary language of

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interaction, communication, as well as business. Turkish speakers learning English in the UK or Russian speakers learning English in the US illustrates the notion of ESL learning. EFL, on the other hand, differs from ESL in that EFL refers to the learning of English in the environment of one's native language, i.e. Turkish speakers learning English in Turkey or Russian speakers learning English in Russia. It is noteworthy to identify the fundamental differences between ESL and EFL to better understand their implications on the use of CLT in each different learning and teaching environment.

First, learning in an ESL setting may or may not take place in a classroom setting. Yet learning English in an EFL environment implies that it is much more likely to occur within the context of the classroom. The foremost point is that learners in an ESL environment has access to speakers of the target language and thus abundance of exposure to English in its natural use outside the classroom whereas this is not usually the case for EFL learners.

Also, since ESL learners have the chance to continue learning English outside the classroom through interactions in their everyday lives, learning the target language for these students is more than a curriculum discipline, it is rather part of survival. Therefore, ESL learners need to learn the language to survive and grow (Ellis, 1996). The English language classroom in ESL settings typically functions on the principle of immersing learners in the target language society. Hiep (2007) argues that it is, therefore, essential in the ESL classroom to establish what Holliday (1994, p. 54) calls "*the optimum interactional parameters*, within which, learners, by interacting with each other on meaningful things, can best develop the communicative skills they immediately use in their real life." Yet, learning English for EFL learners is generally part of the school curriculum rather than a survival necessity. Hence, it is usually only during class time that

EFL students have exposure to English; so they are unable to test and practice strategies as easily (Ellis, 1996).

In addition, learners in an ESL setting generally have different native languages from their peers. This being so, for ESL learners, using the target language becomes salient in interacting and making friends with classmates in and outside the language classroom. As pointed out by Ellis (1996), it is most likely that culturally heterogeneous language classroom produces higher motivation and faster adaptation of learning strategies on the part of learners. On the other hand, EFL learners almost always share the same native language with their classmates. As a result, they generally feel tempted to use their native language when they need to initiate a conversation in the language classroom (Oliveira, 2002).

A further distinction can be made between ESL and EFL contexts on motivational grounds. Motivation can be conceptualized as being either *integrative* or *instrumental* in second language learning. Integrative motivation refers to the desire to learn the target language for purposes of communication, identifying with the target language community, and having an interest in the target language culture. Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, has to do with the desire to learn the target language for practical reasons, such as passing an exam or getting a high-paying job (Gardner, 2001). It can be argued that successful second language acquisition depends on integrative motivation. Language learning in ESL settings is by and large considered to entail integrative motivation because learners in ESL environments need to function in the target language community. ESL teaching in such environments is predominantly designed to help learners develop their communicative competence. On the contrary, learners in EFL contexts are often instrumentally motivated to learn English. They usually learn English either

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because it is a school requirement or they need to pass a certain university entrance examination (Gorsuch, 2000; Li, 1998; Liao, 2000).

Moreover, Ellis (1996) maintains that the role of the teacher in ESL settings is more of a facilitator since a great deal of language learning will take place outside the classroom. In contrast, the teacher in EFL contexts is regarded as the "sole provider of knowledge and experience" in terms of the target language and its culture. This is mainly due to the fact that EFL is "a cultural island" for learners and they basically depend on their teacher to learn the target language and its culture.

Finally, Maple (1987) illustrates the differences between teaching EFL (TEFL) and teaching ESL (TESL) in the following table (Table 1):

Table 1. Differences between TESL and TEFL (Maple, 1987, pp. 35-36)

TESL	TEFL
Acquisition-rich environment	Non-acquisition environment
The teacher is usually a native speaker of English (or fully bilingual).	The vast majority of teachers are non-native speakers of English. The English proficiency of these teachers varies widely – from fully bilingual to minimally functional.
Students are more apt to have integrative motivation than in TEFL situations.	Students are almost all totally instrumental in motivation. Most are studying English for their own needs or for pleasure.
Students need English and usually perceive this need. It will be put to use immediately or in the near future for school, work, or acculturation.	Most students do not see any need at all for English, at least while they are studying it although many see it as a "deferred need."
Students usually study in intensive programs (8 to 25 hours per week).	Most students study only a few hours per week (2 to 4), over quite a few years.

Table 1 (cont.)

Class size is usually small, even in public schools (rarely over 25, often only 10 to 15 students per class).	Class size is usually larger, except in better private programs. In public schools, 50+ students in one class is not unusual.
Teachers assume that students want to assimilate or at least to become adjusted to the society of the English-speaking country.	Teachers know that students do not want to become "mini-Brits" or "mini-Americans" becoming part of the L1 culture.
Most ELT texts are written with the ESL market in mind, therefore containing material and skills development for survival in the US or UK.	Using ESL texts for EFL means either deleting such culture-bound material or else teaching students things they will not need.
The native-speaker ESL teacher often plans curricula and uses activities most appropriate to US or UK learning styles	The EFL teacher must consider the students' learning styles when planning the curriculum and the methods to be used.

2.2.7 Use of CLT in EFL Contexts and Barriers to Adopting CLT

It has been argued by researchers and writers that taking a set of teaching methods developed in one part of the world and using it in another part bring about problems and challenges (Holliday, 1994; Kramsch and Sullivan, 1996; Pennycook, 1989). According to these authors, education is bound to a particular cultural environment, and good teaching practices are socially constructed in this environment. Accordingly, as cited in Hiep (2007), assuming that what is suitable in one particular educational setting will naturally be suitable in another is to disregard the fact that ELT methodology is rooted in an Anglo-Saxon view of education. Likewise, Phillipson (1992) maintains that since Anglo-American ELT trends lack appreciation of various distinct linguistic, cultural, and educational contexts around the world, they cannot thus produce appropriate teaching and learning materials that will address the local and culture-

specific needs of learners. The particular context in which an innovation is introduced determines its success or failure. Markee (1997) argues that "as a socially situated activity, its success is affected by ethical and systemic constraints, the personal characteristics of potential adopters, the attributes of innovations and the strategies that are used to manage change in particular contexts" (p. 41). Breen and Candlin (2001) similarly suggest that "any realization of communicative curriculum must reflect a realistic analysis of the actual situation within which the language teaching will take place" (p. 24).

CLT was initially developed as a Western ELT methodology in the 1970s. However, since then, it has been extensively adopted in both ESL and EFL contexts all around the world. Although implementing CLT in EFL contexts results in a number of problems and challenges, it would be dubious to claim that these problems cancel out its potential usefulness as a language teaching methodology in EFL environments. Larsen-Freeman (2000) warns that in the battle against imported methods, "we may fail to understand the cause of the problem and run the risk of overacting and losing something valuable in the process" (p. 67).

In this framework, along with the growing popularity of CLT in most EFL countries, there have been many studies conducted on the feasibility of CLT innovation and potential problems in its use in EFL contexts such as China, Greece, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, Vietnam and so on.

Ellis (1994) examined the suitability of the communicative approach in the Vietnamese context. He found that one of the main problems in using a communicative approach in Vietnam was that teachers were dependent on the inherent traditional teaching practices. Also, there was too much focus on grammar-translation in the Vietnamese examination system. According to the study, teachers reported that they did not have the essential knowledge of the target language

culture. Based on the findings of the study, Ellis concluded that CLT in its unique form is not suitable for Vietnamese context. He pointed out that "although there is a strong demand for communicative competence in Vietnam, it is not matched by adequate teacher training, communicative language materials and suitable learning environments" (p. 69).

In a similar study, Karavas-Doukas (1996) investigated teachers' attitudes toward the use of communicative approach in Greece. It was reported that although the English curriculum in Greece was based on the premises of communicative language teaching, teachers showed a tendency to carry on the traditional teacher-oriented instruction style. The findings of this study suggested that teachers either did not understand or were unable to see the practical implications of the CLT principles.

In another significant study, Li (1998) looked into Korean teachers' perceptions of the implementation of CLT. The results of Li's study confirmed that the teachers encountered difficulties in using CLT practices in their classes. The difficulties reported by the Korean teachers were divided into the following four categories:

1. Difficulties caused by teachers:
   - ✓ Deficiency in spoken English,
   - ✓ Deficiency in strategic and sociolinguistic competence,
   - ✓ Lack of training in CLT,
   - ✓ Few opportunities for retraining in CLT,
   - ✓ Misconceptions about CLT,
   - ✓ Little time for and expertise in material development
2. Difficulties caused by students:
   - ✓ Low English proficiency,
   - ✓ Little motivation for communicative competence,
   - ✓ Resistance to class participation

3. Difficulties caused by the educational system:
   ✓ Large classes,
   ✓ Grammar-based examinations,
   ✓ Insufficient funding,
   ✓ Lack of support
4. Difficulties caused by CLT itself:
   ✓ CLT's inadequate account of EFL teaching,
   ✓ Lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments. (Li, 1998, p. 687)

According to Li (1998), teachers were reluctant to implement CLT in their language classrooms due to these problems listed above. He claimed that in order for teachers to be willing to make use of CLT in EFL contexts, many adjustments must be made. He further stated that "a conflict apparently exists between what CLT demands and what the EFL situation in many countries, such as South Korea, allows. This conflict must be resolved before EFL teaching in these countries can benefit from CLT" (pp. 695-696).

Sato and Kleinsasser's (1999) research on the potential problems of teachers in Australia teaching Japanese as a foreign language in using CLT in their classes revealed that there was inconsistency between teachers' perceptions of CLT and their actual classroom practices. Those teachers predominantly employed grammar-based activities in their classes rather than the communicative ones. It was reported that they lacked time to prepare authentic teaching materials for their classes. Moreover, teachers had fragmented knowledge of CLT, and their beliefs about language teaching and learning were mostly anchored in their own second language learning experiences.

In addition, in a study that addressed the issues of CLT use in Taiwan, Liu (2005) found out that despite the prevalent popularity of CLT in Taiwan, it was rather difficult to apply CLT into the actual language classroom. Since the education system is mainly exam-oriented in

Taiwan, EFL teachers put a heavy emphasis on preparing their students for the National College Entrance Examination in Taiwan. They essentially teach grammatical structures of English because the exam largely consists of questions that assess that structural forms of the language.

Finally, a case study conducted by Incecay and Incecay (2009) investigated the perceptions of 30 Turkish college students to see the appropriateness and effectiveness of communicative and non-communicative activities in their EFL classes. The results of this study suggested that EFL countries such as Turkey needed to modify their teaching methods in a way that would take students' previous educational habits into consideration. It was reported that students benefited from CLT if communicative and non-communicative activities were combined in English classrooms. That is, aligning CLT with traditional teaching practices seemed to be beneficial for EFL students.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents an overview of the research methodology. It contains an account of the procedures used in the study, including research design, selection and description of the participants, setting, instruments used for data collection, data analysis and trustworthiness of the study.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Since the present study aims to respond to the research questions of qualitative and quantitative nature, data collection and analysis techniques from both methodologies were implemented, thus mixed-method approach was chosen as the methodology of this research. Mixed methods research may be defined as "the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research" (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003, p. 212).

Mixed-method approach enables the researchers to draw on all possibilities (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) and provides a broader perspective to the study as the qualitative data helps describe aspects the quantitative data cannot address (Creswell, 2003). Using both forms of data allows researchers to simultaneously generalize results from a sample to a population and to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of interest.

In this study, the mixed methodology helped explain the Turkish EFL teachers' perceived difficulties in the implementation of CLT with the help of the survey questionnaire, and with the

help of the follow-up interviews the difficulties and challenges that were not covered by the questionnaire were revealed.

A core aspect of mixed-method research methodology is the use of triangulation to validate data. This serves to guarantee credibility in reporting findings. Amores (1997) defines triangulation as "the collection and comparison of data from two or more separate observations or illustrations of the behaviors being studied" (p. 521). This was a major tool used in this study to gather data. Data were collected through written survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with the participants. The use of these two data collection instruments helped validate both the answers in the questionnaires and interviews.

3.2 PARTICIPANTS

The participants for this study were sixty-one Turkish teachers of English teaching at primary and secondary levels. These participants were asked to complete the online questionnaire, and six of them were asked to participate in the succeeding interview. The participants were essentially recruited from two sources. The first source was a group of Turkish EFL teachers who used to be my classmates and acquaintances from Bogazici University in Turkey where I received my undergraduate education in the department of *English Language Teaching*. They are currently teaching EFL to Turkish students at the primary and secondary school levels. The other source was a group of Turkish teachers who were affiliated with the English Language Teachers' Association in Turkey, also known as INGED. Those participants were contacted through the mailing list of INGED.

Of these sixty-one participants, while thirty-two of them are females, twenty-nine are males. That is, there is almost an equal distribution of gender among the participants (Table 2).

Table 2. Gender ratio of survey participants

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Female	33	54.1
Male	28	45.9
Total	61	100

With respect to the age range, the majority of the participants (61%) are 26 to 30 years old whereas fourteen of them (23%) are recent graduates of colleges who are aged between 20 and 25. Five participants are in their early thirties while three have 36 to 40 years of age. The remaining two participants are 46 to 50 years old (Figure 3).
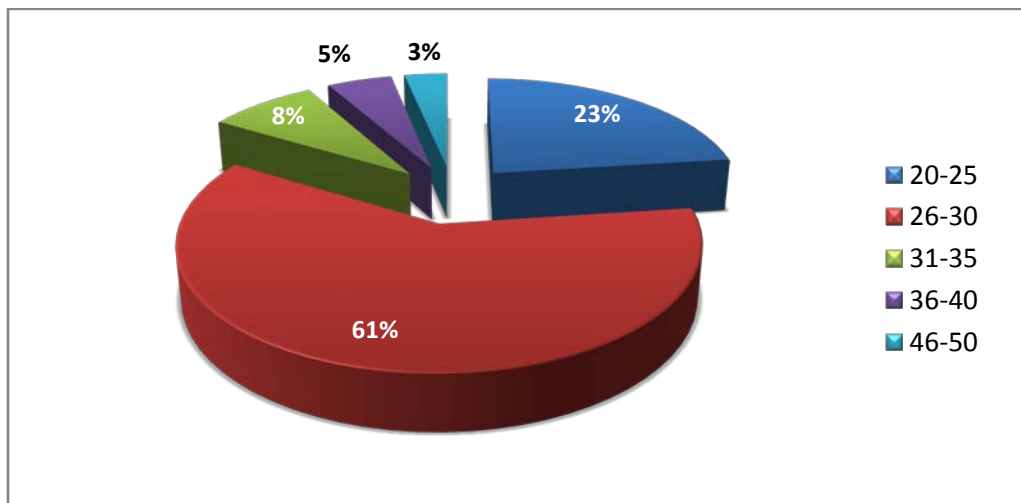
Figure 3. Age distribution of survey participants

As with the teaching experience of the participants, it varies from one year to 23 years. Among the participants, eleven teachers have 1-3 years of teaching experience, thirty-seven of them have 4-6 years of experience, six have 7-9 years, yet four others have 10-12 years of teaching experience. The remaining three participants have been teaching for 14 or more years (Table 3).

Table 3. Teaching experience of survey participants

	Frequency	Percent (%)
1 – 3 years	11	18.0
4 – 6 years	37	60.7
7 – 9 years	6	9.8
10 – 12 years	4	6.6
13 or more years	3	4.9
Total	61	100

As far as the school information is concerned, forty-eight of the participants are working at a school located in an urban setting while thirteen of them are working in a rural setting. The majority of the teachers – forty-seven of them – are working at a state-run public school whereas the remaining fourteen are working at a private school.

Table 4. School setting/type of survey participants

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Urban Public	35	57.3
Urban Private	13	21.4
Total	48	78.7
Rural Public	12	19.7
Rural Private	1	1.6
Total	13	21.3

As for the distribution of the survey respondents in terms of institutions, twenty-three teachers are working at the primary level – 1 through 8th grades – while the rest of the thirty-eight teachers are currently working at the secondary level – 9 through 12th grades. Of these thirty-eight secondary school teachers, the majority of them are working for a General High

School while the remaining eighteen teachers are distributed among Anatolian High Schools, Vocational/Technical High Schools, Teachers Training High Schools, and Science High School (Figure 4).
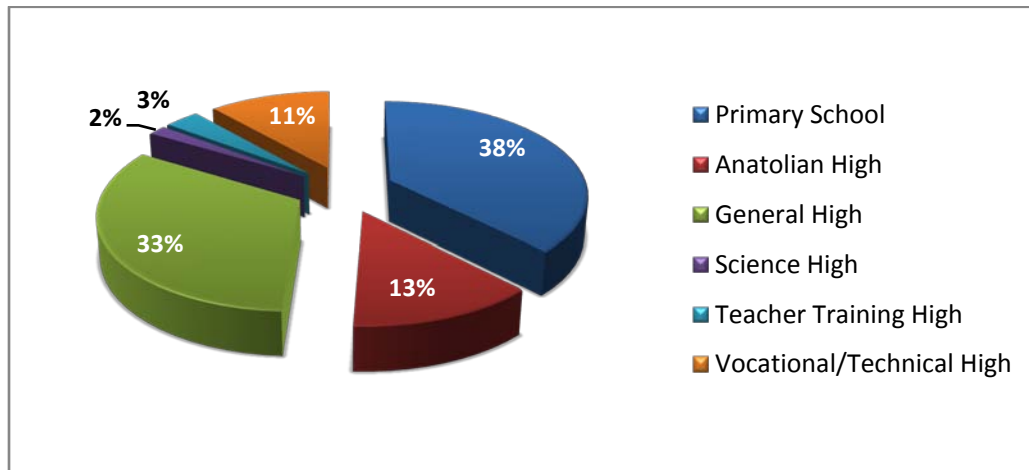
Figure 4. Institutional distribution of survey participants

Regarding the academic degrees earned by the participants, thirty-six of them hold a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree majoring in *English language teaching*, *Western languages and literatures*, or *Translation and interpretation* programs. The rest of the twenty-five teachers are holders of either Master of Arts (MA) or Master of Education (M.Ed.) degrees (Figure 5).
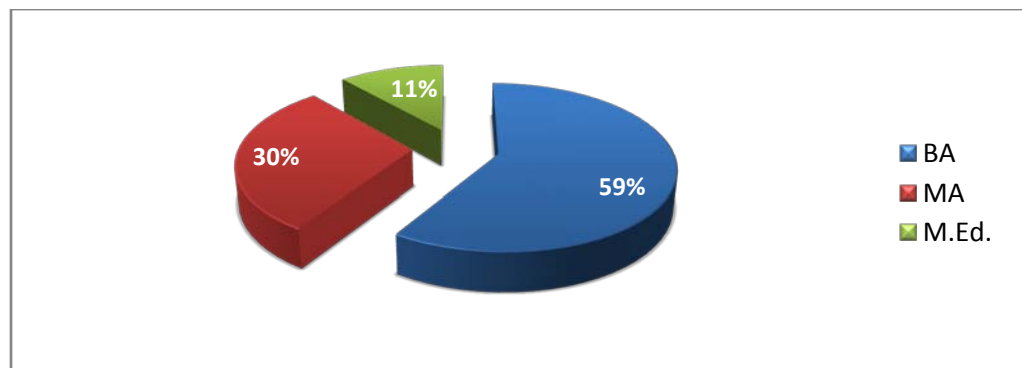
Figure 5. Academic degrees of survey participants

Six participants were chosen for the subsequent interviews. It could have been desirable to choose more participants for the interview had it not been for the time constraints. In the selection of the interview informants, first the background information of the survey participants was tabulated. Afterwards, Patton's "maximum variation sampling" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was followed in order to ensure that the participants chosen for the interviews are representative of the sample of sixty-one as a whole. For the purposes of confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for the interview participants. The distribution of the interview participants with regard to the age, experience, academic degree, school setting, school type, and teaching level is illustrated in the following table (Table 3):

Table 5. Background of interview participants

	Gender	Age	Experience	Degree	School Setting	School Type	Teaching Level
Tugba	F	27	6 years	MA	Rural	Public	Primary
Gokhan	M	28	6 years	BA	Rural	Public	Primary
Serhat	M	28	6 years	BA	Urban	Private	Primary
Abdullah	M	30	8 years	M.Ed.	Urban	Public	Secondary
Ulku	M	32	11 years	M.Ed.	Urban	Private	Secondary
Tuncay	M	42	23 years	BA	Urban	Public	Secondary

3.3 INSTRUMENTS

Given the purpose of this study, mixed methods research seems to be the most appropriate research methodology to be used. It is not only significant to document Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions regarding CLT use in their classrooms, but it is also crucial to determine how their teaching context, in this case an EFL environment, affected and shaped their perceptions. In this study, mainly two types of data collection methods were used: a written

survey questionnaire (Appendix A) and semi-structured interviews (Appendix B). These instruments permitted the participant teachers to identify in their own terms what aspects of their particular context they perceived to be constraining in implementing CLT, whether these be cultural, economic, political, or administrative.

3.3.1 Written Questionnaires

The advantages of using questionnaires as data collection tools mainly come from the fact that with the help of questionnaires large amount of data can be collected quickly and economically from a large sample (Krathwohl, 1998). Also, questionnaires, as one of the most common forms of data collection tools, can easily be assessed in terms of reliability. In this respect, reliability refers to the ability of questionnaire to produce the same results in different implementations, leading to a consistency and dependability of the results (Leftwich, 2007). Moreover, the strengths of questionnaires generally include accuracy, generalizability, and convenience (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). However, besides these strengths, the questionnaires usually fall short in examining complex social relationships or intricate patterns of interaction (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). In this study, data related to the perceptions of the teachers gathered via the questionnaire was further reinforced via face-to-face interviews.

The written survey questionnaire used in this study was designed for Turkish EFL teachers teaching in public and/or private schools in Turkey. Questionnaires were given to the sixty-one participants to explore the difficulties and challenges that EFL teachers in Turkey have and might encounter in their attempts to implement CLT, as well as to investigate their understanding of the possibilities of overcoming these difficulties. The questionnaire involved both open-ended and closed-ended questions.

The survey was composed of four main parts. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of questions that dealt with participants' personal information. The questions in this section asked about participants' age, gender, academic background, years of experience in teaching English, whether they had any work experience in an English-speaking country, and lastly if they had ever taken a test of English such as TOEFL, IELTS and so on.

The second part involved questions that had to with participants' school information. The questions in this section asked about the type schools participants were working for (i.e. private vs. public, primary vs. secondary and so on), setting their schools were located (i.e. urban vs. rural). There were also questions in this part about the classes that the participants were teaching, including the grade level(s) and the number of classes they were presently teaching, the average number of students in their classes, and finally how many hours of class they taught per week. The results of the first two sections were partially discussed earlier in this paper.

The third part of the survey questionnaire included questions pertaining to English language teaching methodologies, particularly CLT. In this section, the participants were asked to specify what teaching methods they were implementing in their classes, as well as how frequently they were using a particular method. The participants' were also queried about their own experiences as language learners with particular teaching methodologies. Moreover, the questions in this section asked about whether the participants tried CLT in their classes and the reasons for using or not using CLT, whether they participated in any kinds of training programs devoted to CLT and if so how they benefited from it. Finally, the participants were asked to define CLT in their own words, and identify what was involved in CLT methodology.

The fourth and final part of the survey explored the participants' opinions with regard to the perceived difficulties and challenges in adopting CLT in their classes. The difficulties and

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challenges in this section were divided into four categories: teacher-related difficulties, student-related difficulties, difficulties related to the educational system, and CLT-related difficulties. For each of these categories, the participants were asked to choose from a 4-point scale: *major challenge*, *challenge*, *mild challenge*, and *not a challenge at all*. This online survey may be found in Appendix A.

3.3.2 Interviews

In addition to the questionnaire, interviews with the 6 research participants were conducted as another important mode of data collection for this study. As described by Berg (1989), there are three types of interviews: the standardized (formal) interview, the unstandardized (informal) interview, and the semi-standardized (semi-structured) interview. For this study, semi-structure interviews were used. Berg (1989) notes that this type of interview is conducted in "a systematic and consistent order, but it allows the interviewers sufficient freedom to digress; that is, the interviewers are permitted (in fact expected) to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared and standardized questions" (p. 17). An interview is a very personal way of gathering information since it allows for adaptability in questioning. From this point of view, the interview data helped me gain deeper insights regarding the use of CLT in the Turkish context, which would be harder to achieve otherwise. Furthermore, the interview data complemented and expanded on the questionnaire data as it enabled me to get follow-up information in the case of ambiguous and incomplete responses from the questionnaires.

Each interview lasted about thirty minutes and they involved a list of open-ended questions addressing the various issues related to CLT, and the use of it in EFL contexts, particularly in Turkey (See Appendix B). The participating teachers were asked to review the questions briefly before the interview. As Marshall and Rossman (1999) state "typically,

qualitative in-depth interviews are much more like conversations than formal events with predetermined response categories" (p. 108). Hence, it was made clear to the interviewees that the interviewer could ask some additional questions based on the responses given by the particular interviewee on the previously posted online questionnaire. Moreover, it was noted that some further questions might emerge in the course of the interview depending on the interviewee's responses to the interview questions. Also, the participants were free to speak their minds and add any relevant information. Similarly, they were ensured that they had all the rights not to answer any question(s) that they felt uncomfortable with. Closed-ended questions were avoided, and most questions focused on teachers' perceptions from their experiences implementing CLT practices, or not, in EFL teaching contexts.

The language of communication during the proposed interviews was a matter of consideration for me. My personal experience reveals that most EFL teachers in Turkey are not fluent speakers of English. They generally find it somewhat difficult to express themselves in English as fully as Turkish. Based on such understanding, it was made clear to the interviewees that either Turkish or English or a combination of both would be used in the interviews depending on their personal choice. It turned out that in most cases only Turkish or a combination of Turkish and English were preferred by the interviewees. Accordingly, complete understanding between the researcher and the participants were ensured and the participants could express themselves fully.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

In collecting the data for this study, all necessary ethical procedures were followed. The researcher completed the Human Subjects Research Education Module of the IRB (Institutional Review Board) at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Before the implementation of

the study, potential participants were contacted via e-mail and the nature of the study was explained to them. The researcher highly encouraged the participation of the Turkish teachers contacted by elucidating that the present study would give them an opportunity to voice concerns about their teaching environment, as well as to reflect upon issues arising from this issue for their own professional development.

After this study was officially approved for use of human subjects by the SLCL (School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics) Human Subjects Review Committee, participating teachers were sent an e-mail that included the link to the online survey questionnaire. An informed consent form (see Appendix C) was appended to the beginning of the survey, aiming to make the participants become fully aware of the nature of the study and its purpose along with the participants' rights. The participants were informed that their participation in this study was strictly voluntary and any information obtained in connection with this study and that could be identified with them would remain confidential and would be disclosed only with their permission. It was also made clear that there were no known physical, psychological, social, or legal risks in this study beyond those of ordinary life. Furthermore, it was highlighted that there was no cost to the participants for participation in this project. Finally, it was explained to the participants that their decision whether or not to participate would not affect their future relations with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, or with the investigators.

After signing the consent forms electronically, the participants were asked to complete the actual survey questionnaires, which took them approximately 20-30 minutes. The online survey was made accessible to the participants for two months between November 20, 2009 and January 20, 2010. In addition to the questionnaires, six participants were asked to participate in the semi-structured interviews. All interviews were recorded in order to gather accurate

information. Each interview was transcribed as soon as possible afterwards and transcripts of the interviews were sent to the participants for verification. The transcriptions were kept in a folder on the researcher's password-protected personal computer. Moreover, when any direct quotes were used in the final report, a pseudonym was assigned so that it would be impossible for anybody to be identified as an individual.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Burns (2000), data analysis means to "find meanings from the data and a process by which the investigator can interpret the data" (p.430). Similarly, as noted by Marshall and Rossman (1999), the purpose of the data analysis is to bring meaning, structure, and order to the data. Interpretation requires acute awareness of the data, concentration, as well as openness to subtle undercurrents of social life.

As the initial step in analyzing the data for this study, I read through all the information gathered from the completed questionnaires and the transcripts of the interviews. As I belong to the same professional group and have a similar background as those of the participants, as the researcher, I hold an insider's understanding of the participants' beliefs and perceptions. My teaching experience in EFL settings, both in Turkey and Uzbekistan was valuable in perceiving and interpreting the significance of the data obtained in the questionnaire and interviews. In addition, the review of the related literature in the previous chapter provided guidelines for data analysis. This prior grounding and planning were utilized to suggest the problems and difficulties investigated in the questionnaire and interview. Moreover, in order to code and analyze the data systematically, I took advantage of the intuitive and interpretive capabilities of an insider's experience, as well as of the relevant literature.

Questionnaire data analysis included the analysis of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were analyzed with the help of the statistical analysis software program SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Frequency calculations (i.e. how many teachers selected each answer) were used to produce descriptive central tendency statistics that were used to present an overall picture of the teachers' perceptions of CLT, and the difficulties and problems they faced in their attempts to implement CLT in English classrooms. The open-ended questions, on the other hand, were analyzed through the themes and categories prompted by the questions with respect to teachers' understanding of and attitude towards CLT and its use in Turkey. In the process of data analysis, patterns were identified, which were divided into categories.

In analyzing the qualitative interview data, I used content analysis technique, which can be described as drawing up a list of coded categories and each segment of transcribed data into one of these categories. Content analysis enables researchers to shift through large volumes of data with relative ease in a systematic fashion. It also allows inferences to be made which then can be corroborated using other methods of data collection (Merriam, 2001). Within this framework, with the interview data in hand, I identified patterns of the different categories of constraints that the interview participants reported. Themes were also worked out regarding the possibilities, means and degrees to overcome the reported difficulties. Furthermore, cross-comparisons were made among the two categories of the participants, namely, primary and secondary, with reference to their responses to the interview questions.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This chapter lays out the results from the questionnaire, dealing with both closed-ended and open-ended questions, as well as presents the emerging themes from the interviews. The themes generated from both the questionnaire and the interviews are discussed under four major categories; namely, attitudes towards English and ELT profession, concerns over the problems inherent in English teaching in Turkey, desire for changes in English teaching in Turkey, understanding of CLT and its potential for English teaching in Turkey, and finally difficulties and challenges in implementing CLT in Turkey.

4.1 ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENGLISH AND ELT PROFESSION

When asked about their attitude towards English language and English teaching profession, all of the interview respondents expressed that they had a positive attitude towards English in general. They reported that they had keen interest in learning English when they were students, which thus led them to choose *Foreign Languages* as their specialization in high school. In response to why he chose English language teaching profession, Ulku revealed the following information:

> I chose this profession simply because I had genuine interest in learning and teaching English. I had been learning English for about seven years when I decided to become an English teacher, and I had always loved learning this language (Ulku, December 30, 2009).

A similar high level of integrative motivation was expressed by another teacher in the following way:

> The underlying reason for me to choose ELT profession dates back to my middle school years when I had an American pen friend. I used to write pages of letters to my friend using an old dictionary. We used to share lots of cultural information. This experience aroused a genuine interest in me to further learn English. I also spent most of my time at the American Cultural Association at the time. I just loved English (Tuncay, December 28, 2009).

Yet, two of the respondents articulated that they had somewhat instrumental motivation towards learning English. They believed that the knowledge of two languages, i.e. Turkish and English, would be useful in securing a high-paying job. In this respect, teaching English, as compared to teaching another subject, is considered to be more prestigious and English teachers earn more money than their colleagues who teach other subjects.

> When I was in high school, I was well aware that learning English would provide me a better future. Therefore, I decided to learn English. My primary focus in high school was to learn English at an advanced level. I did not necessarily want to be an English teacher. It may well have been some other job related to English (Tugba, December 26, 2009).

4.2 CONCERNS OVER THE PROBLEMS IN ENGLISH TEACHING IN TURKEY

The major problems that the interview respondents reported in English teaching in Turkey included: large classes; teachers' heavy workload; heavily-loaded program to cover; mismatch between curriculum and assessment; and students' poor communicative abilities. Table 6 summarizes the interview data pertinent to inherent problems of English teaching in Turkey, which will then be discussed item by item. The number of participants who emphasized

the relevant theme is indicated. As there were six participants in the interviews, the maximum

number possible for each category was 6.

Table 6. Problems inherent in English teaching in Turkey

	Frequency
Large classes	4
Teachers' heavy workload	6
Heavily-loaded program	5
Curriculum/Assessment mismatch	6
Students' poor communicative abilities	4
Students' low motivation	5

4.2.1   Large Classes

Four respondents indicated that having high numbers of students in their classes was a

major problem. Interestingly, one of the respondents working for a public secondary school

acknowledged the following information:

> There was a regulation imposed by the Directorate of National Education, stating that the
> minimum number of students in a class has to be 30. This was mainly because there
> weren't enough English teachers, but too many English classes. This was the case for the
> state-run public schools (Abdullah, January 2, 2010).

The teachers confessed that large classes made it hard for them to make use of group

work, especially in the classrooms with fixed and immovable desks and chairs. Additionally, it

was expressed that due to the over-crowded classes, it was almost impossible to give

individualized attention to each learner. Moreover, disciplinary issues were said to dominate

large classes. The teachers complained much about the classroom management problems that

were resulted from over-crowded classrooms.

Since the classrooms are over-crowded, classroom management becomes a very serious challenge for the teacher. There is usually chaos in such large classes. When I try to use group work in my class, students become too active and really hard to control. Also, I can only allocate half a minute of individual attention to each of my students (Gokhan, January 10, 2010).

The questionnaire data also verified the existence of this problem. According to the survey results, twenty teachers reported that the average number of students in their English classrooms ranged from 26 and 30 students. Another sixteen teachers recounted that they had around 31 to 35 students on average. Yet, some eight teachers stated that the average number for them was between 36 and 40 students. Figure 6 demonstrates the average number of students per an English classroom as reported by the survey participants.
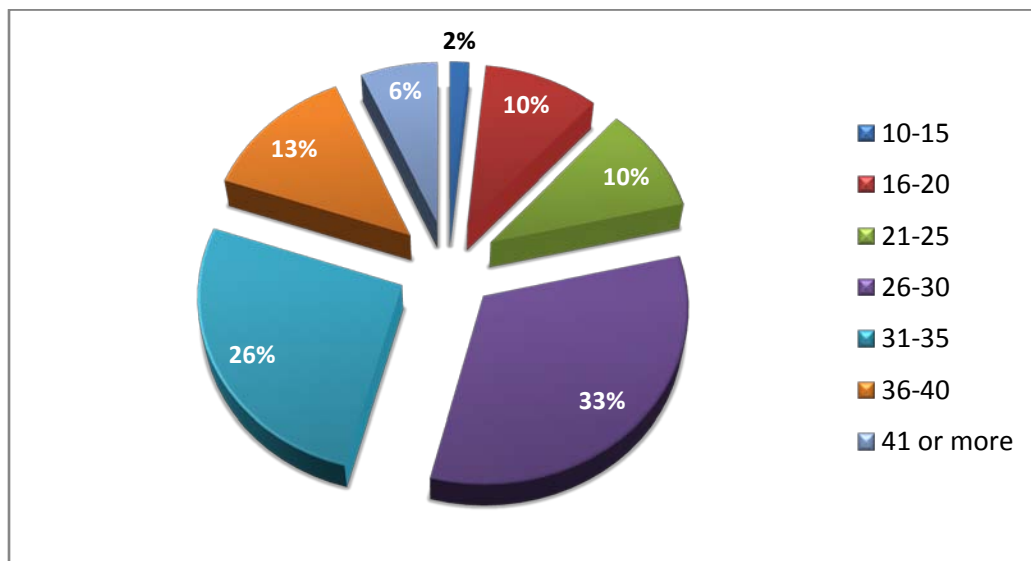
Figure 6. Average number of students in a classroom

4.2.2   Teachers' Heavy Workload

All the interview respondents revealed their concerns for the heavy workload of the English teachers in Turkey. They reported that having too much work to do decreased their

overall performance in teaching English. Considering the fact that they also had extra duties in addition to teaching, i.e. departmental and all-school meetings, recession and lunchtime duties and so on, it was hard to keep up with all the work at an optimal level. One of the teachers even admitted that when the school was over, most teachers run away from it instantly.

> I have 30 hours of class per week. So, it is quite much work to deal with. On top of that, I am teaching all secondary levels, actually. I am teaching five different classes. I feel exhausted at the end of the day. You know using a communicative activity requires you to prepare different activities for your classrooms; so, it takes time. When you have such a heavy workload, you have their exams, their written work to evaluate, and you have your private life also. So, 30 hours of class teaching gives you not much time to prepare authentic communicative activities. It is another huge problem, I guess (Abdullah, January 2, 2010).

The teachers' heavy workload was also demonstrated by the questionnaire results. When asked about the number of classes that they teach a year, 17 teachers responded that they taught four different class sections. This was followed by five classes. 13 teachers expressed that they taught five different classes in total. Likewise, it was interesting to see that 10 teachers reported teaching seven class sections. There were no teachers who taught one single class; yet, four teachers elucidated that they taught two class sections only, which was the lowest number of separate classes taught as reported by the survey participants. Figure 7 summarizes the data pertaining to the number of classes taught by the survey respondents.
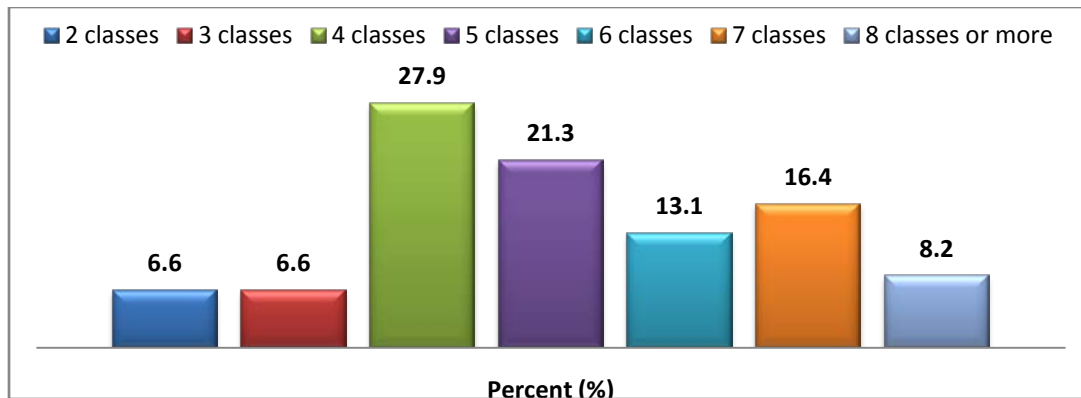
Figure 7. Number of classes taught by survey participants (per academic year)

In addition, the questionnaire data with reference to the hours of class that the teachers taught per week presented a clearer depiction of the heavy workload of the survey respondents. According to the survey data, almost half of the teachers – 26 of them – disclosed that they taught some 26 – 30 hours of class per week. This only included the contact hours; grading and other out-of-class duties were excluded from these data. What is more, 16 of them affirmed that they taught 31 to 35 hours of English class while some 12 teachers had 21 to 25 hours to teach each week. The sum of teachers who taught less than 20 hours of English classes appeared to be only five out of 61 respondents. Figure 8 gives a detailed account of weekly class hours taught by the survey participants.
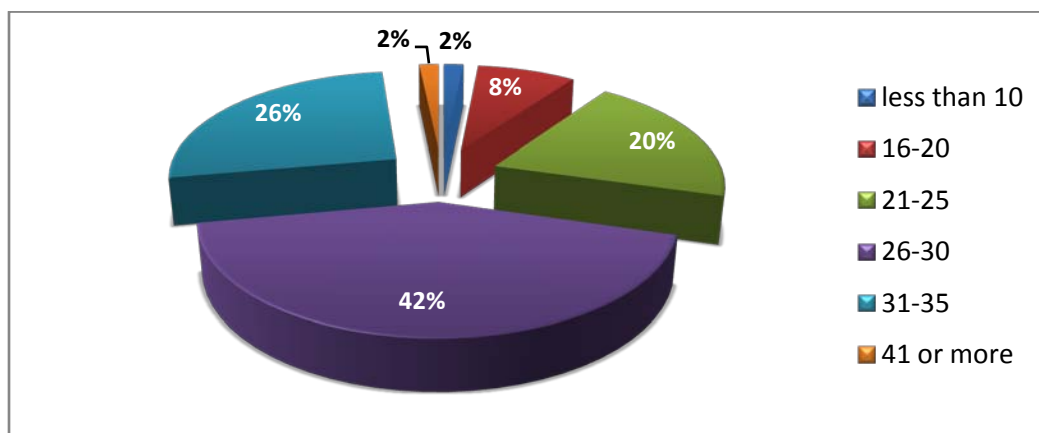
Figure 8. Hours of class taught by survey participants (per week)

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4.2.3 Heavily-loaded Program

In the interviews, another major problem reported by five respondents was heavily-loaded English teaching program. Teachers were concerned that they were supposed to cover too many language items, i.e. essentially grammar points, in a limited period of time. This being so, they essentially had to skip activities that focused on productive language skills such as speaking and writing so that they could cover the necessary grammar points in a timely fashion. It was highlighted by the respondents that finishing all the grammar points on time was vital in that students were tested only on grammar in nationwide standardized tests that they were supposed to take at the end of each school year. The following excerpt from an interview displays how annoying this situation is for a teacher.

> Another problem is related with the loaded program. We, as teachers, have such a loaded program and so many points to cover that we cannot help but do the exercises as fast as possible. And once trapped in this dead-end, the first two things to fly out the window is productive activities, namely speaking and writing. I mean it is so frustrating, I cannot really remember the last time I did a meaningful writing activity. Of course, I am asking the students to write sample sentences using the target structure, but is this really writing? Well, I do not think so (Ulku, December 30, 2009).

Another respondent expressed his feelings on how much pressure this heavily-loaded program placed on both teachers and students, questioning the necessity to bombard the students with too many language items in a given period of time.

> We have such a dense English teaching program that a high school student supposedly reaches the advanced level here in Turkey. Why do we need that? When you put such a heavy load on students, than you do not give your students the chance to practise the language; so, they cannot speak it. The ministry requires us to cover too many language items and thus this puts our students under too much pressure. What is ironic here is that

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the syllabus we are asked to follow dictates the use of communicative approach. We are told that we need to create student-centered classrooms, promote creativity, authenticity and so on. When this is the case, most teachers, required to finish the whole points in the syllabus in limited time, skip pair work, group work, or any other communicative activities (Tuncay, December 28, 2009).

Another problem inherent in English teaching in Turkey was reported to be the mismatch between the English curriculum and the assessment practices, which will be discussed now.

4.2.4 Mismatch between Curriculum and Assessment

All of the interviewees pointed out the disparity between what the curriculum dictates and what is actually assessed on the large-scale standardized tests given at the end of each academic year. As mentioned earlier, the national English curriculum as imposed by the MONE clearly states that it is based on the premises of communicative language teaching. However, the English questions on these standardized tests are principally testing grammatical and vocabulary knowledge of students. There is also a number of reading comprehension and sentence-level translation questions, too. Yet, speaking, listening, or writing skills are not assessed in those multiple-choice tests.

> …the biggest problem is related with the mismatch between the aims of the books, the aims put forward in the teaching materials we are provided by the MONE, and the aims of the national exam the students are given upon the completion of their studies. There is a very strong mismatch between these three equally important elements and this creates very big problems. You simply cannot teach students speaking because it is not assessed in these exams. The course book mostly has listening and speaking as its focus. However, the tests focus on grammar, vocabulary, and reading skills only, all tested through multiple-choice questions (Gokhan, January 10, 2010).

Most of the respondents also acknowledged that they were somewhat affected by their students' test scores. They stated that if their students received low scores from YDS or SBS (national standardized entrance examinations), their administrators, as well as the parents would criticize them as being an ineffective teacher. Moreover, the interview participants disclosed that their students' exam scores would affect them in terms of popularity with students, sense of achievement, status in the eyes of colleagues, popularity with parents, status in the eye of administrators, self evaluation, as well as promotion. The respondents, particularly the ones that worked for private schools said that they felt under too much stress because of the possibility that they could lose their job if their students' overall YDS/SBS success did not satisfy the administrators.

> In Turkey, it is only the entrance exams that matter to the administrators, to the parents, and even to the students. No matter how well you teach, no matter how much effort you put on improving your students' communicative skills, if your students do not get high scores from these exams, you will have a hard time in your school (Serhat, January 5, 2010).

Furthermore, it was astonishing to hear the participants express that even if their students had a high command of English they would not perform well enough on the test without any focused test preparation. Therefore, teachers feel obliged to increase their students' test scores. They unveiled that in their teaching they neglected the materials that are not tested due to the pressure to improve their students' test scores .This, in turn, makes them teach what is tested in the YDS/SBS rather than teaching what exactly is necessary to improve their students' overall English proficiency. In line with this, the interview results affirmed that the immediate goal of English teaching in senior classes at the secondary level was to help students obtain high scores in the YDS (university entrance examination). Teachers do not give much importance to

speaking, listening, and writing because they are not tested in the YDS, and this results in narrowing of the curriculum. That is why the most popular activities in senior English classes, as reported by my interviewees, were reviewing grammar points, practicing for the test, and taking mock tests.

> Since education is solely exam-oriented in Turkey, students are always in a fierce competition with each other. Our education, unfortunately promotes an individual learning style. Therefore, students are always left by themselves because they will be on their own when they are taking these entrance examinations. I mean there is no group work. Besides, there are no other criteria to admit students into high schools or universities besides these exams. So, especially with the senior classes like 11 and 12th grades, we have no choice but to forget using collaborative group work in our English classes (Tuncay, December 28, 2009).

As Tuncay commented above, there was obviously no room for communicative, interactive, and creative classroom practices in English classes.

4.2.5 Students' Poor Communicative Abilities

In the interviews, four of the respondents expressed their concerns regarding the fact that most Turkish students have poor communicative abilities even after learning English for several years. In most schools, English is still taught with the traditional methods or a combination of them. In expressing his views on the major problems in English teaching in the Turkish schools, one of the teachers noted the following:

> The biggest problem in our schools relates to the strong bonds with traditional methods to teaching English. Teachers are not educated enough to use current methodologies, and by current methodologies, I do not mean just the CLT by the way; and therefore they cannot break the cycle and teach in varying ways. Even those educated enough to use different methodologies are facing problems with the curriculum, ways of testing, inadequacy and

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low-quality of the classroom materials and low motivation level of the students. For that reason, these teachers lose their interest in teaching in time, unfortunately (Ulku, December 30, 2009).

When this is the case, the ability to use the language for communicative purposes is generally not stressed in English teaching. Students rarely, if ever, get opportunities to practice or use what they have learned in class. Besides, students do not feel the need to use English outside the classroom for conversational purposes.

> One of the biggest criticisms that English teachers in Turkey have from everybody, from children to grown-ups is that our students learn English but they cannot speak it. They learn English for 5-6 years, even 10 years but they cannot speak it. How come this is possible (Tugba, December 26, 2009)!

Respondents also mentioned that primary school education in Turkey is heavily focused on memorization of rules and facts. Thus, when students start learning English in the fourth grade, they have too much difficulty to adjust themselves to the language learning and teaching practices which do not resemble to the ones that they are already accustomed to. This issue is further aggravated when the students begin their secondary education.

> I am a teacher at a high school and my students come from primary schools; so, the kind of education that they receive in primary school affects their later education at high school. So, our students are not accustomed to learning in a communicative way, learning in a group and doing pair work, they find it difficult to adjust themselves to the concepts of CLT. You know in the primary level, they first have to learn everything by heart. They basically memorize the rules and facts. So, that is a huge problem. They think they have to formulize everything they see. That is why they depend on grammar rules all the time. Speaking, listening, reading for them is just a waste of time. They don't understand the rationale behind learning them because they are not used to learning by doing group work, pair work, and being involved in speaking activities (Abdullah, January 2, 2010).

4.2.6   Students' Low Motivation

Five respondents identified students' low motivation to learn or speak English as another characteristic problem of English teaching in Turkey. Teachers explained that even though there were an increasing number of students who acknowledged the importance of learning English for their future careers, being too much concerned with the entrance examinations, most of them lacked the motivation to learn the language. Starting from the 10th grade, high school students in Turkey get to select different foci of study for their senior years such as social sciences, mathematical sciences, and foreign languages. If, supposedly, a student selects social sciences as his/her focus of study, that means s/he does not need to answer any questions on English in the university entrance examination. This being so, such students who constitute the majority of the student body in high schools see no value in putting effort on learning English, and thus lose their interests and motivation to do so.

> When students think that they will not need to speak or learn English, they just don't want to spend their time on it. And the other problem is that they don't need English for their university entrance examination. There are no questions of English in the exam except for those students who choose to study foreign languages in high school. As a result, they think they won't answer any questions on English so they won't need to learn it. They just want to focus on university examination. Having them do their homework and worksheets is a huge problem for me (Ulku, December 30, 2009).

One respondent stressed that the number of students who choose foreign languages, in particular English, as their special focus of study in the high school he worked for kept decreasing steadily over the recent years.

> Last year, only four out of 120 students chose English as their focus of study. Come to think of it. How unmotivated students are becoming! Even if some of them want to choose English division, they succumb to the parental pressure as to choosing math and

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natural sciences because being an engineer pays much more than being an English teacher or a translator. Then, unfortunately, students lose all of their motivation. However you try to motivate your students, it fails since they cannot give their own decisions freely (Tuncay, December 28, 2009).

The main reason for this decrease was tied to the low motivation of students, as well as the pressure parents put on students to select mathematical sciences when they start the 10th grade.

4.3 DESIRE FOR CHANGES IN ENGLISH TEACHING IN TURKEY

Another theme that has emerged from the present study is that all the interview respondents articulated desires for changes in English teaching in Turkey. The respondents highlighted the fact that a student who is a graduate of a four-year degree program normally has had 10-12 years of English education in average. Yet, despite all these years of instruction, such students in Turkey fail to reach a level of proficiency at which they can clearly express themselves in the target language. The respondents, therefore, felt the urge for positive changes in English teaching in Turkey. Gokhan suggested that the government invest more on English teaching and learning by allocating more money to schools in order to improve the current English teaching and learning conditions.

> First of all, there should be a big financial source. The number of schools should be increased and the number of students in each class should be lowered. As a natural consequence, the number of teachers should be increased. Also, English teaching materials, computer hardware, technological software, and LCD projectors should be provided (Gokhan, January 10, 2010).

Tugba emphasized the importance of increasing students' interpretation skills, enabling them to develop their creative thinking skills, as well as getting rid of memorization as a teaching and learning strategy.

> Students should be provided with a learning environment in which they can acquire higher-order skills and exercise their creative thinking abilities. Also, memorization should be limited to a minimum level. We should make sure that students be productive in English classes. Our students are not accustomed to producing new things. Thus, we should encourage them to be independent and productive in English lessons (Tugba, December 26, 2009).

The dominant role memorization plays in Turkish education system, as well as the causes of lack of creativity and productivity in students were traced to the nation-wide grammar-based examinations by the respondents. Tuncay blamed the standardized entrance examinations as the ultimate reason behind ineffective English teaching in Turkey. Hence, he suggested that those exams be either eliminated from the Turkish education system or cease to be the only or biggest criterion in the selection and placement of students.

> We should terminate the YDS or SBS. There should be no such exams…They should not be the only valid criterion to select students. Alternatively, each university can apply their own entrance exam. I should be graduating my students with a free mind. They should be able to prepare for the schools of their choice outside the class. It should not be my primary concern. The exam can take another form, too. For instance, there can be oral interviews, or some projects to submit to each school…students' GPAs should be given more weight in placing them to colleges. Teachers' recommendation letters and extracurricular activities can be used as valuable criteria in addition to all those I have mentioned. Only then we can give English the importance it really deserves in our education (Tuncay, December 28, 2009).

In addition, another interview respondent, Ulku stressed the magnitude of a well-defined teaching philosophy. He further stated that it was necessary to establish strong connections among the various units of the whole body to ensure the effectiveness of the educational system.

> …a good EFL teaching starts with a well-defined philosophy. Therefore, we need to define every element of our teaching very clearly. What your aims are, what the students' needs are, what methodologies you need to use to achieve these aims, etc. All these questions should be answered carefully at the institutional and national level. Then comes the communication of this philosophy to the parties involved in teaching and learning of English. Only then can you structuralize the units involved in teaching English. In Turkey, as I witness, the most important problem is the inability to systematize the functioning and structure of an institution. An institution is like a whole body, thus the functioning of the whole body is affected if an organ is failing. Thus, the most prominent issue is to establish strong teaching philosophy and teachers play a vital role in this matter (Serhat, January 5, 2010).

It was important to see that the participants showed a genuine interest in creating positive changes in English teaching in Turkey. Their conversations demonstrated their rich experience in teaching English in Turkey, along with their deep thinking and understanding of language teaching. However, the evident constraints such as the large class size, inadequate number of teachers, limited time and resources, high-stake grammar-based examinations, etc., prevented the teachers to uphold their belief in their English classrooms.

4.4 UNDERSTANDING OF CLT AND ITS POTENTIAL FOR ENGLISH TEACHING IN TURKEY

One of the questions in the survey intended to elicit teachers' perceptions regarding the general principles of CLT. This question involved 10 items, some of which are descriptive characteristics of CLT, and the others are common misconceptions about CLT that have been

reported in the literature. Responses to this question demonstrate Turkish teachers'

understanding of what is involved in CLT.

Most frequently selected items by the survey participants as characteristics of CLT are:

- CLT is student/learner-centered approach (95.1%)

- CLT emphasizes communication in a second language (L2) (91.8%)

- CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy (83.6%)

- CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening skills (73.8%)

The items selected most frequently as "Not true", i.e., as not characteristics of CLT are:

- CLT involves teaching speaking only (90.2%)

- CLT involves no grammar teaching (83.6%)

- CLT involves only group work or pair work (63.9%)

It is notable that the participants showed a clear variation in their response to the item that

stated that *CLT requires teachers to have a high proficiency in English***.** 49.2% of the

respondents indicated that this statement was "True" while some 39.3% of them chose "Not

true" as their response. A similar trend was seen for the item stating that *CLT requires higher*

knowledge of the target language culture. Even though 49.2% of the participants expressed that

this conception was "Not true", 44.3% of them maintained that it was "True." Table 7

summarizes the participants' responses with regard to the general principles of CLT.

Table 7. Survey participants perceptions about CLT

What is involved in CLT methodology in your view?	True	Not true	Don't know	Total responses
CLT is student/learner-centered approach.	58	2	1	61
CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy.	51	10	0	61
CLT emphasizes communication in a second language (L2).	56	3	2	61
CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening skills.	45	12	4	61
CLT requires teachers to have a high proficiency in English.	30	24	7	61
CLT involves only group work or pair work.	15	39	7	61
CLT requires higher knowledge of the target language culture.	27	30	4	61
CLT involves no grammar teaching.	6	51	4	61
CLT involves teaching speaking only.	6	55	0	61
CLT is basically an ESL methodology, not EFL.	8	28	25	61

On the whole, teachers' identification of the major principles involved in CLT and those that are not involved in CLT, which are commonly held as misconceptions about CLT, demonstrated that the teachers in this sample had generally a clear understanding of the attributes of CLT.

Finally, it is relevant to point out that the respondents differed in their perceptions about the feature that *CLT is basically an ESL methodology, not EFL.* While forty one percent of the respondents chose "Don't Know" as their response, 45.9% of them picked "Not true" as an answer. Only 13.1% of the teachers thought CLT was basically an ESL methodology, not EFL. The results of this question demonstrated a visible uncertainty on part of the participants regarding this feature of CLT.

The interview data also proved that the teachers showed a lucid understanding of CLT. The interview participants highlighted the importance of meaning over form, the ability to use

the language for communicative purposes, and the use of real, authentic materials in language teaching. Ulku defined communicative language teaching as follow:

> CLT is the approach in which the main goal is defined as getting the students to communicate meaning across and the ability to deliver the intended message effectively, using both formal and sociolinguistic capabilities. Here, the main aim is interacting effectively, I think (Ulku, December 30, 2009).

Serhat, in his definition of CLT, emphasized the centrality of meaningful situations in language classroom as an important principle of CLT.

> CLT is a communicative approach which aims at providing learners with meaningful situations that they will experience outside of the class and also engaging learners in communication which will help them grasp the language and learn it through communication (Serhat, January 5, 2010).

The participants were convinced that CLT, as the most recent language teaching methodology, has a great deal to offer to English teaching in the Turkish context. The majority of them were positive about the possible contributions CLT could make for improving English teaching in Turkey. This was verified by the questionnaire data. When asked whether they have tried using CLT in their classes, 85.2% of the questionnaire participants responded with a positive answer while the remaining 14.8% of them said that they never used CLT in their classrooms (Table 8).

Table 8. Survey participants' experience in using CLT

Have you ever tried using CLT in your classes?	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	52	85.2
No	9	14.8
Total	61	100

Tuncay stated that CLT already raised awareness about the way language teaching is perceived in Turkey. In his views, even students want to do communicative activities when there is too much recognition level activities in the lesson plan.

Furthermore, he believed that in Turkey language was predominantly learned as grammar rather than a means for engaging in real communication. He expressed that CLT could make it possible to shift this existing attention from teaching structures as isolated items to teaching how to use the language for communication.

> In Turkey, the knowledge of the grammar of a language used to be the only criterion that determined the knowledge of a language. Some people still think of it this way. However, if we can successfully implement CLT in our English classrooms, giving more emphasis on the use of language in real communication, then I am sure any student who graduates from a high school can fluently and comfortably communicate with an American or any native speaker of English (Tuncay, December 28, 2009).

Abdullah expressed that CLT helped him realize how important oral skills in language teaching and learning were. He further stated that students should be exposed to spoken English at all proficiency levels and that they should experience speaking in order to improve their speaking skills.

> CLT helped me realize that the primary focus was on using communicative skills. Speech comes first, you know. When you are doing an activity, you focus on students' ability to express themselves in the target language. So, you base your activities around it. I give them tasks where they need to contact other people, communicate with another student in the classroom in the target language; whether it is a beginner class or an advanced class, it does not matter. You give them tasks; arrange group and pair work that will actually force them to use the language orally (Abdullah, January 2, 2010).

The next section mainly lays out the difficulties and challenges that the participants encountered in their attempts to use CLT in English classrooms.

4.5 DIFFICULTIES AND CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING CLT IN TURKEY

Although most participants have tried using CLT in their classrooms and agreed that it is essential to utilize CLT to improve the effectiveness of English teaching practices in Turkey, they felt that there are many difficulties and challenges that they face in their attempts to implement CLT, given the current teaching conditions in Turkey. Reported difficulties in the use of CLT were varied. For practical reasons, I have used Li's (1998) categorization in analyzing the data pertaining to the constraints in employing CLT practices in the Turkish context. Accordingly, they involved difficulties caused by the teacher, the students, the current educational system in Turkey, and ultimately communicative language teaching itself.

4.5.1 Teacher-related Difficulties and Challenges

In this category, the questionnaire data, which were later confirmed with the interview results, revealed five major constraints related to the teachers themselves. These reported difficulties involved: teachers' deficiency in spoken English, lack of knowledge about the appropriate use of language in context; few opportunities for teachers to get training in CLT; little time for developing materials for communicative classes; and teachers' misconceptions about CLT.

4.5.1.1 Deficiency in spoken English

The questionnaire data showed that twenty-seven of them reported their own deficiency in spoken English as a challenge while twenty-one of them considered this as a major challenge constraining them in applying CLT in their classrooms. Only four respondents thought that this

was not a challenge at all; yet, nine of them considered it as a mild challenge (Figure 9). Considering the earlier information stating that CLT requires fluency on the part of the teacher, this stands as a big challenge in the effective use of CLT in Turkey.
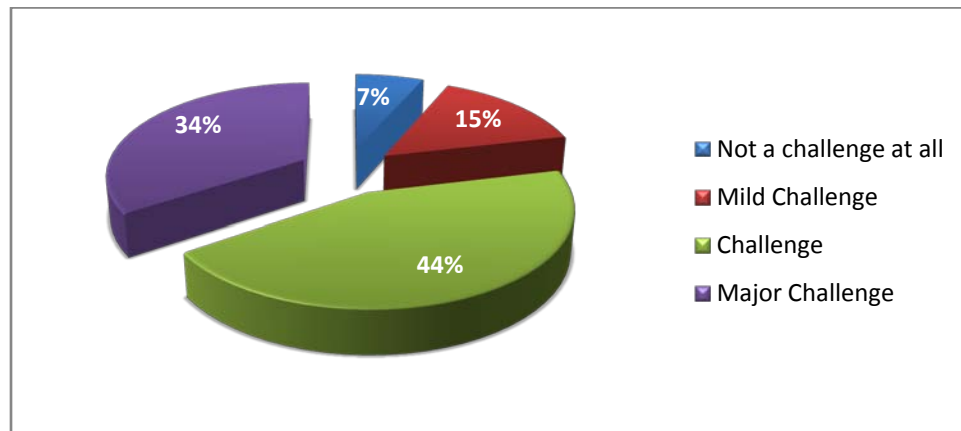
Figure 9. Teachers' deficiency in spoken English

One of the main reasons for the teachers' deficiency in spoken English can be attributed to the traditional ways of learning English. The interview participants reported that they had few opportunities to practice English as they were learning it. Abdullah expressed that they always had grammar tests and drills in English lessons, but no interaction.

> I learned English at a public school. What we did all the time was solving grammar tests and having drills. There was little interaction, if any, and almost no speaking activities. The result was perfect grammar knowledge but no speaking abilities. I used to enjoy it at the time; but now I regret it (Abdullah, January 2, 2010).

The questionnaire data also demonstrated that the majority of the participants predominantly experienced the Grammar Translation method as they were learners of English. 70 percent of the participants – 43 of them stated that they either "often" or "always" experienced the Grammar Translation Method as they were students of English. On the other

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hand, 61 percent of the respondents – 37 of them explained that they either "rarely" or "never" experienced the practices of CLT in their English classes when they were students.

The following chart illustrates the respondents' experience with these language teaching methodologies (Figure 10):
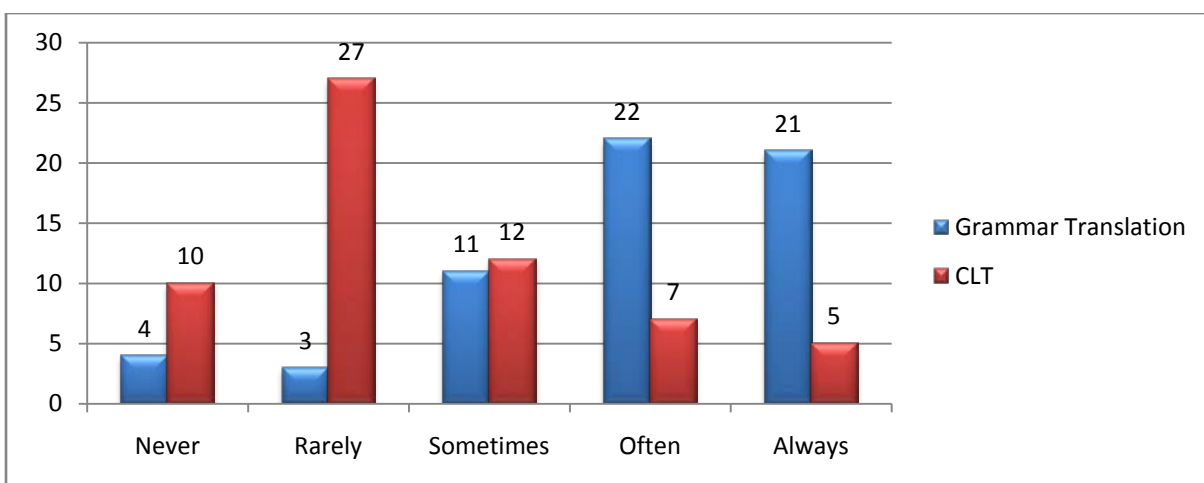
Figure 10. Participants' experience with language teaching methods as language learners

Another important reason for the teachers' deficiency in spoken English can be traced to their study/work abroad experience in an English-speaking country. It was shown that the majority of the participants – 52 of them – have had no study-abroad or work-abroad experience in an English-speaking country. Only nine of them have had such an experience in an English-speaking country and their experience were mainly listed as short-term summer work (Table 9).

Table 9. Study/work abroad experience of survey participants

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	9	14.8
No	52	85.2
Total	61	100

4.5.1.2 Lack of knowledge about the appropriate use of language in context

The survey participants testified that their limited knowledge of the strategic, as well as sociolinguistic aspects of the language served as barriers to implementing CLT in their classes. Twenty-seven of the respondents named this as a challenge while some twenty-three believed that this was a major challenge. Only one respondent stated that this was not a challenge at all. This was most likely due to the fact that she spent about five years in the US and that she was very familiar with the target language culture.
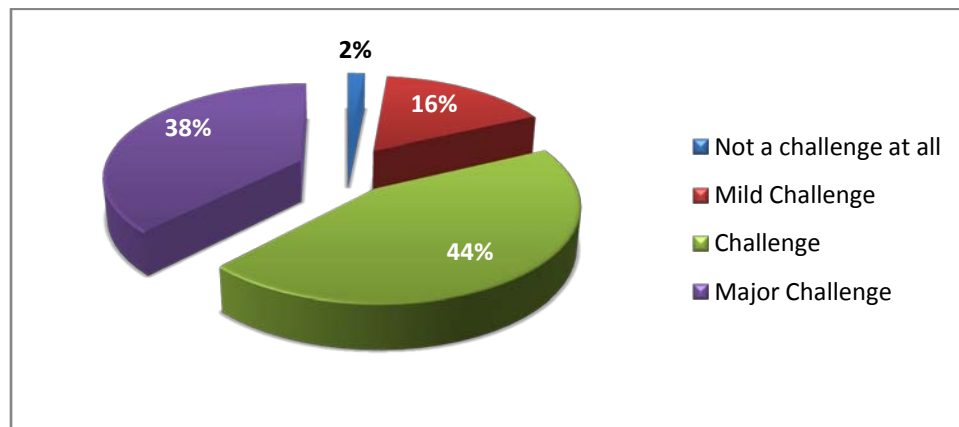
Figure 11. Teachers' lack of knowledge about the appropriate use of language in context

One interview participant explained that she was feeling worried that she would not be able to answer her students' questions regarding the correct use of language in different contexts because she was not familiar with the target language culture, and also she had low sociolinguistic competence.

Our course book has a lot of cultural elements in it and it is really difficult for the teacher to figure out the use of English in these cultures. When I make use of communicative activities, I am feeling worried since all of my students can ask very challenging questions about the use of English in various contexts. I really feel incompetent, especially when they ask me about the different uses of idioms and informal phrases. I

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always find it easier to shift the attention to grammar points since I feel competent on grammar (Tugba, December 26, 2009).

4.5.1.3 Lack of training in CLT

The participants differed in their responses to the question regarding the opportunities they had for training/retraining in CLT. Twenty-one of the teachers considered this as a challenge; twenty of them thought it was a mild challenge while sixteen labeled it as a major challenge. Only four participants assumed that getting training in CLT was not a challenge at all.
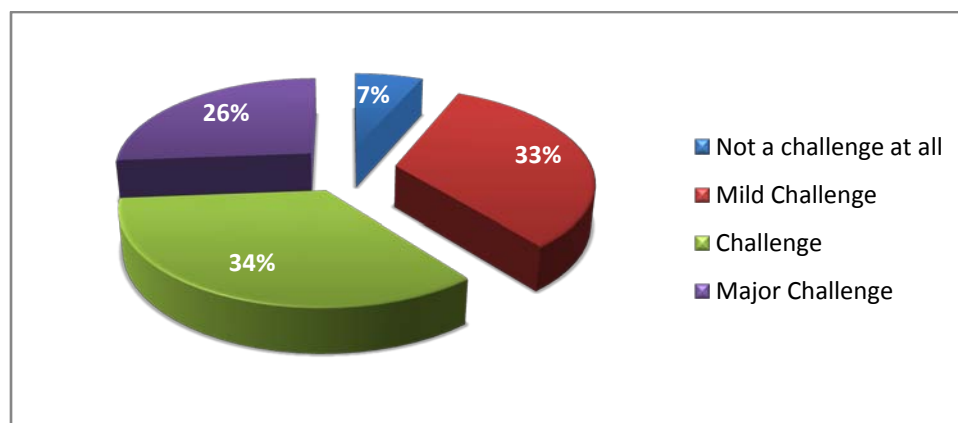
Figure 12. Lack of training in CLT

It was noteworthy that twenty-one of the respondents participated in at least one training program devoted to CLT. However, forty of them had no training in CLT at all. This variation in the participants' responses became clear after the interviews. Five of the interview participants expressed that there were opportunities for them to get training in CLT. Nevertheless, Tugba reported that most teachers either were not notified of the training programs, there was limited number of seats, or traveling most often created financial burden on the teachers.

We have conferences, seminars, and workshops on CLT. For example, British Council organizes some. The Ministry of Education also organizes seminars on CLT. However,

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not many teachers can participate in them because there are always a limited number of seats. I think these trainings would be really helpful if there were many of them. Unfortunately, most of the time, such conferences are not advertised to us. Besides, most of these trainings are organized in big cities, and thus traveling becomes a burden for the teacher. Most teachers also don't want to spend money on them (Tugba, December 26, 2009).

Abdullah, in expressing his views of training opportunities in CLT, highlighted an interesting point. He stated that young teachers are keener on participating in such training programs than are the mid-career teachers.

If you are interested you can go to seminars and conferences organized by state or private universities. The Ministry of Education also has in-service training courses where they work with organizations like British Council or Turkish-American Association. I think teachers have the chance to improve themselves if they want to. I guess, age is an issue for English teachers. The younger the English teachers, I mean the young generation; the eager they are to train themselves about CLT and implement it in their classes. Yet, when age becomes higher, they just want to stick with the more conventional ways of teaching, and so they don't want to join such seminars and workshops (Abdullah, January 2, 2010).

4.5.1.4 Lack of time for developing communicative materials

The respondents also felt that they lacked time for developing materials for communicative classes, which in turn became a constraint for them to use CLT. It was reported that primary level course books are communicative in nature since they were recently published by experts in the field. However, the respondents stated that secondary level course books are highly structural and the units are based on the various grammar points. Thus, they felt that they had to develop extra materials and design their own activities in order to use CLT in their classrooms.

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According to the questionnaire data, twenty-nine of the respondents considered their lack of time as a major challenge facing them in their efforts to develop communicative materials. Nineteen of them thought this was a challenge while nine saw it as a mild challenge. The remaining four did not regard it as a challenge at all (Figure 13).
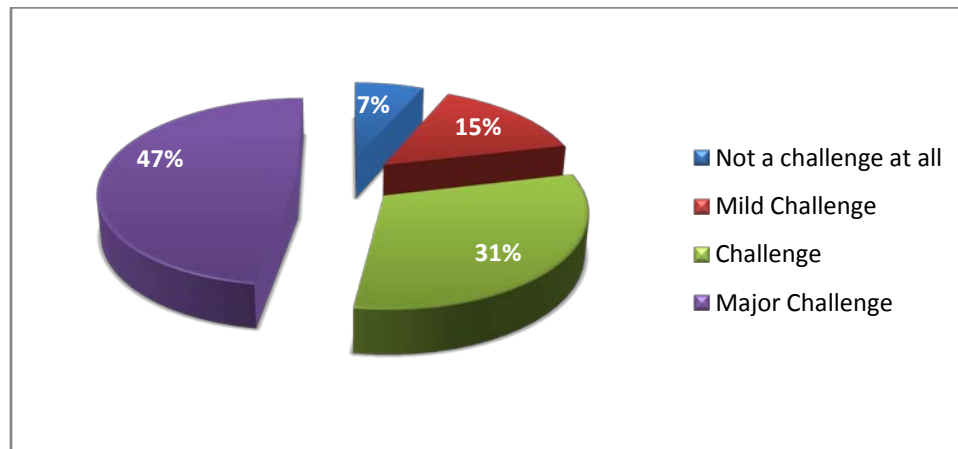
Figure 13. Lack of time for developing materials for communicative classes

The main reason for the majority of the teachers to see this as a major challenge is their heavy workload. It was reported as part of the discussion on the concerns over problems in English teaching in Turkey, teachers in Turkey have a heavy workload (See section 4.2.2). Likewise, Serhat pointed out that he had too much work to do at school which prevented him to spend time on developing extra materials for communicative classes.

> I start work at 8:00 in the morning and stay at school until 5:00 in the afternoon. I teach more than 30 hours of class a week. I teach five different classes. Besides, I have to come to school on Saturdays for tutoring sessions. I have duties during lesson breaks. I have papers to grade, reports to write, not to mention the meetings. We have too many meetings that we are supposed to attend to. It seems almost impossible to devote any time on preparing extra communicative teaching materials. I just can't (Serhat, January 5, 2010)!

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4.5.1.5 Misconceptions about CLT

The questionnaire data revealed that teachers mostly had strong perceptions regarding what was involved in CLT (See Section 4.4). Even though there were some uncertainties with regard to a few items, the greater number of the participants appeared to be well aware of the general principles of CLT. Hence, the majority of the teachers confirmed that misconceptions about CLT were not truly obstacles for them to make use of communicative activities in their classes. Twenty-two of the respondents believed that misleading notions about CLT served only as a mild challenge. Further, nineteen teachers indicated that they were not a challenge at all. The remaining twenty respondents noted that those misconceptions about CLT were serious barriers to implement CLT successfully in English classes (Figure 14).
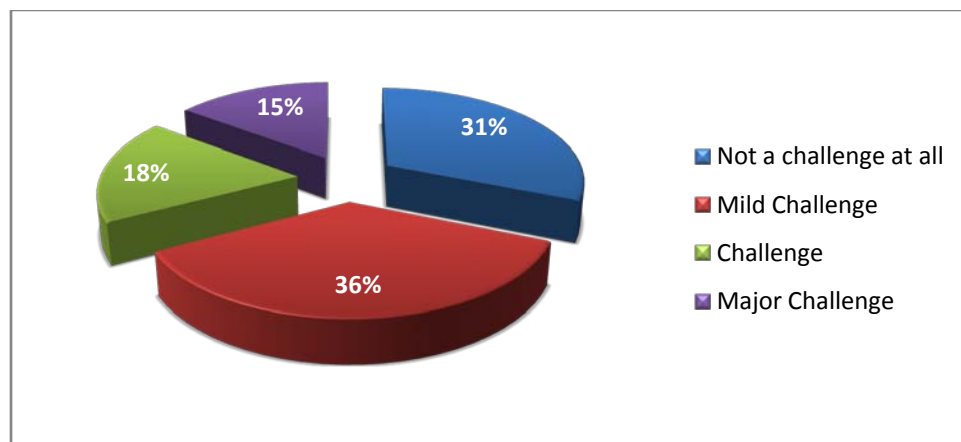
Figure 14. Misconceptions about CLT

4.5.2 Student-related Difficulties and Challenges

The second major category of constraints was associated with the students. These concerns consisted of the students' low English proficiency in general, the students' passive style

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of learning, the students' resistance to participate in communicative classroom activities, and their lack of motivation for developing communicative competence.

4.5.2.1 Low English proficiency

The survey data demonstrated that students' low English proficiency on the whole were one of the principal obstacles for the teachers to use CLT in English classrooms. Thirty-two of the survey participants admitted that their learners' low English proficiency was a major challenge. Some fourteen participants, in addition, named this as a challenge. There were merely five participants who believed that this item did not constitute any challenge at all (Figure 15).
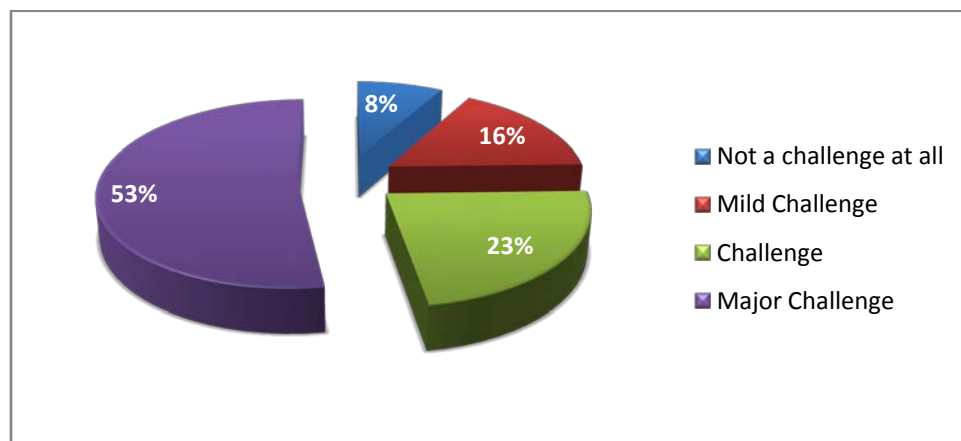
Figure 15. Students' low English proficiency

The interview respondents highlighted that although, with the latest modifications to the English curriculum, English lessons in the primary schools were increased from two to three hours per week starting from the fourth grade upwards, this is not sufficient for the students to acquire certain level of English proficiency to be able to speak the language. It was reported that due to limited hours of instruction per week, students' progress was too slow, and they could only know some 150-200 English words when they finish the primary school. Consequently,

using CLT, as complained by the respondents, would be difficult to utilize as students' lack

speaking abilities in English.

> My students' have a very limited knowledge of English. They think that they cannot form
> an appropriate sentence, and so they just don't want to talk at all. They just don't want to
> participate. In order to use CLT in my classes, students need to have a certain level of
> English proficiency. I believe that they should be able to understand and speak the
> language to some extent. Otherwise, using CLT becomes meaningless. Students should
> receive too much input to be able to benefit from CLT; but, teachers' input is just not
> enough for them to develop their speaking skills. They need to hear English outside the
> class, too (Tugba, December 26, 2009).

This situation appeared to be not much different at the secondary level. Abdullah, who is

a secondary school teacher, commented that deficiency of his students in spoken English and

limited command of English structures creates difficulty for students to carry out a

communicative task, which ultimately leads to frustration on part of the students.

> My students enjoy communicative activities. However, they have great difficulty to
> communicate with each other in English. The reason for this, I guess, is their lack of
> spoken English skills. When this is the case, they just cannot accomplish the tasks given
> to them. They feel frustrated after some point and lose their curiosity to speak English
> (Abdullah, January 2, 2010).

It seems, therefore, crucial for the teachers to create a supportive learning environment

that will inhibit the potential affective filters in order to motivate learners to communicate in the

target language with their limited English proficiency.

4.5.2.2 Passive style of learning

It was remarkable to see that a great majority of the survey respondents found students'

passive style of learning as a serious obstacle that prevented them from implementing CLT in

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their English classes. Thirty-four respondents expressed that this stood as a major challenge. Also, twenty-two respondents regarded this as a challenge while three chose mild challenge as a response. Only two respondents considered students' passive style of learning as not a challenge at all (Figure 16).
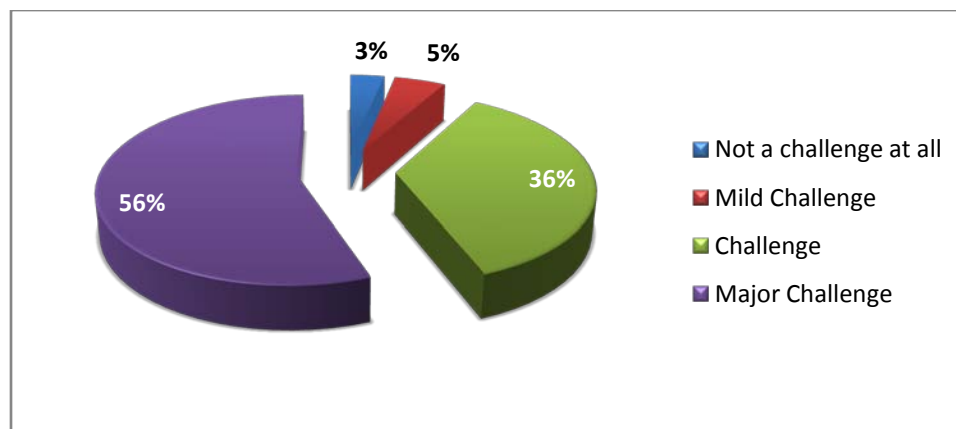
Figure 16. Students' passive style of learning

The interview data differed from the questionnaire data with respect to this item. Five of the respondents did not think that their students had a passive style of learning. Only one of the respondents mentioned that his students' passive style of learning could become a constraint to using CLT.

> Sometimes at first they feel a little bit shy, they feel uncomfortable when they are asked to speak in English. They feel reluctant to speak in front of the whole class; but I make them speak within pairs or groups before asking them to speak in front of the whole class. When my students get used to doing it, they start enjoying it (Serhat, January 5, 2010).

It should be noted here that according to the interview respondents this complication could be easily handled with some encouragement from the teacher.

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4.5.2.3 Resistance to participate in communicative activities

Students' resistance to participating in communicative class activities was reported as another significant limitation to utilizing CLT in English classes in Turkey. Except for seven respondents, who thought that their students did not resist participating in communicative activities in general, most of the survey participants – fifty-four of them unveiled that their students reluctance to engage in communicative class activities emerged as a serious challenge in their attempts to apply CLT (Figure 17).
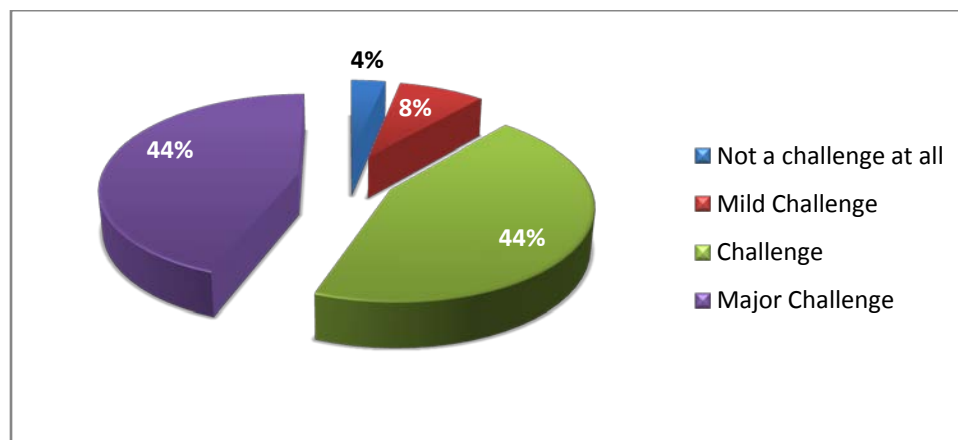
Figure 17. Students' resistance to participate in communicative class activities

The interview respondents emphasized that the principal reason for the students' to show such a resistance against communicative classroom activities arouse from the pressure that they feel from the grammar-based entrance examinations.

> When I try to implement any innovative communicative activity in my class, the first question that my students ask is: Will we have any question on this in the SBS? When they learn that this communicative activity will not benefit them in the test, they just lose their interest in it. They feel that they waste their time with such an activity which has no value in the SBS test. So, they refuse to participate in it (Gokhan, January 10, 2010).

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It was demonstrated that the students are so focused on preparing for the standardized entrance exams that when they realize they will not be tested on a communicative language skill that they work on in their English class, they resist taking part in such a communicative class activity.

4.5.2.4 Lack of motivation for developing communicative competence

Students' lack of motivation for developing communicative competence was also referred to by the respondents as a significant constraint for them to make effective use of CLT practices. Thirty participants labeled this as a major challenge while some twenty-one asserted that it was a challenge. Moreover, seven teachers considered this point as a mild challenge as three of them judged that it was not a challenge at all (Figure 18).
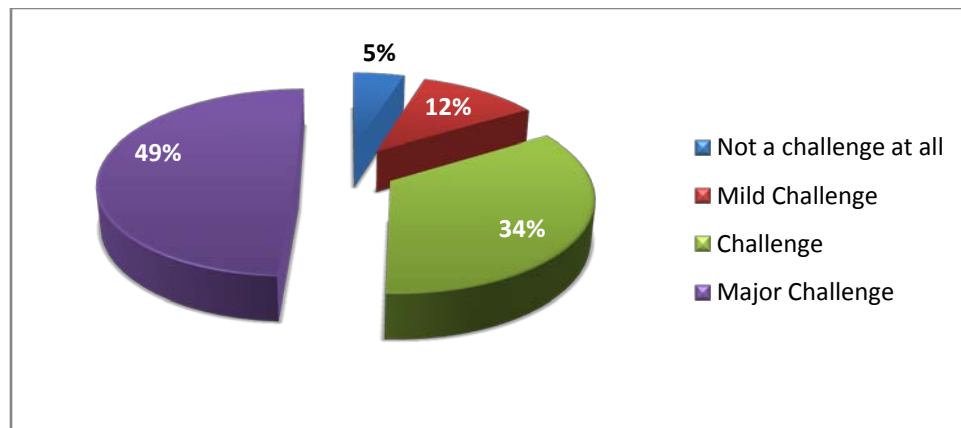
Figure 18. Students' lack of motivation for developing communicative competence

It appears that there are an increasing number of people in Turkey who have realized how important it is to be able to speak English, given the efforts to join the European Union, which will require proficient speakers of English to be able to communicate with other Europeans. Nonetheless, most students in Turkey, not seeing any practical value of communicative abilities,

still care much more about English grammar than being able to speak the language. As reported by the interview respondents, the reason for the ever-existing popularity of grammar is traced back to the issue of English teaching led by grammar-based examinations again. Students in Turkey have to complete a number of exams so that they can continue their study at a further level. Primary school students need to sit SBS (National Entrance Exam for Primary Students) to enter high schools, high school students have to sit OSS/YDS (National Entrance Exam for Higher Education) to be admitted to universities. English is specified as one of the subjects for SBS. For the university entrance exam, OSS involves no English questions while YDS is the test of English proficiency taken by the students who wish to study at foreign languages departments of the universities. The English questions asked in these exams mostly assess structural knowledge of the language, which accordingly direct students to work on English grammar rather than develop their communicative competence. Ulku expressed his views on this matter in the following way:

> I don't think CLT, as a methodology, can solve all the problems in English education, it can be useful to some extent; but it will not be enough on its own, particularly in Turkey. In our context, it is almost impossible to use CLT effectively because the goals and the actual practices are totally different. The goal is not communication; it is only grammar. The only aim is to score high on OSS. Exam is everything here (Ulku, December 30, 2009).

4.5.3 Difficulties and Challenges Related to the Educational System

The third chief category of difficulties and challenges is related to the current Educational system in Turkey. Within this category, four key constraints were listed: lack of support, lack of authentic materials, large classes, and finally grammar-based examinations.

4.5.3.1 Lack of support

According to the questionnaire data, lack of support was one of the biggest challenges that the Turkish EFL teachers had to deal with in their attempts to incorporate CLT into their teaching. More than half of the teachers – 32 of them deemed lack of support as a major challenge. At the same time, eighteen teachers regarded this as a challenge. Lack of support was thought to be a mild challenge by seven respondents whereas the remaining four believed that it was not a challenge at all (Figure 19).
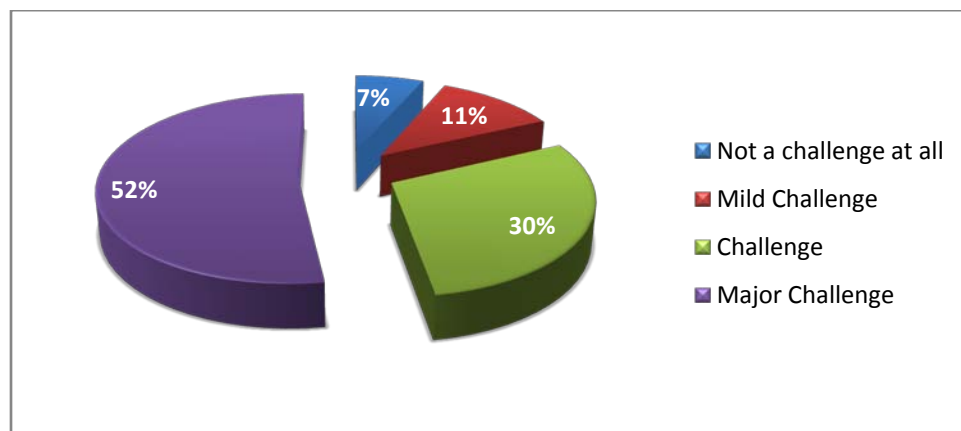
Figure 19. Lack of support

A similar tendency was seen in the interview participants' responses, too. Gokhan was concerned that many Turkish EFL teachers were not in favor of using CLT in their classes because they felt they did not know much about CLT as a methodology. He further commented that most of those teachers need training in CLT, in particular those who have been teaching English for long years.

> Firstly, I believe many English teachers in Turkey are against the use of CLT. I can argue that they don't have sufficient knowledge with regard to CLT. They should receive intensive training about CLT themselves. Perhaps, new teachers, maybe the ones who

graduated from colleges in the last five or six years, are well-informed about the communicative approach; but teachers with 20-25 years of experience are still obsessed with traditional grammar-oriented lecturing. They don't really know what CLT really is. In order to make use of CLT in Turkey, we should feel the hunger for CLT and receive much CLT training (Gokhan, January 10, 2010).

In addition, four of the interview respondents mentioned that they were experiencing lack of administrational support. Tugba explained that her administrators were only interested in the students' SBS scores. In her views, it was frustrating that no one cared about whether students were able to speak English.

Even though the new primary curriculum supports the use of CLT, the administrators in my school don't encourage me to utilize CLT because the principal is only concerned with the SBS scores of our students. He deals only with issues like why the students scored low in the exam and whatnot. I mean, no one really cares about whether these kids can speak English or not. What matters to the administrators is the schools' overall success only. So, I don't have enough support from them about using CLT (Tugba, December 26, 2009).

Another related issue was the lack of financial support. The respondents pointed out that they need certain equipment and facilities to be able to make effective use of CLT. They needed financial support to obtain extra resources and materials for communicative activities.

We cannot create an environment for our students that will encourage them to receive natural input and speak the language. We ask them to watch English channels and movies, but they don't have satellite in their homes. We need to encourage them to read authentic books; they don't have the money to buy them and even the place that sells them. We, as the school, need to provide these; yet, we don' receive any financial support from the Ministry to do so. They think that the course books are more than enough to teach English (Tuncay, December 28, 2010).

4.5.3.2 Lack of authentic materials

Lack of authentic materials was reported as another serious barrier for the teachers that prevented them from utilizing CLT in Turkey. The questionnaire data revealed that forty respondents found this as a major challenge. Likewise, sixteen respondents thought that it was a challenge. It was surprising to see that only one respondent believed that lack of authentic materials was not a challenge at all (Figure 20).
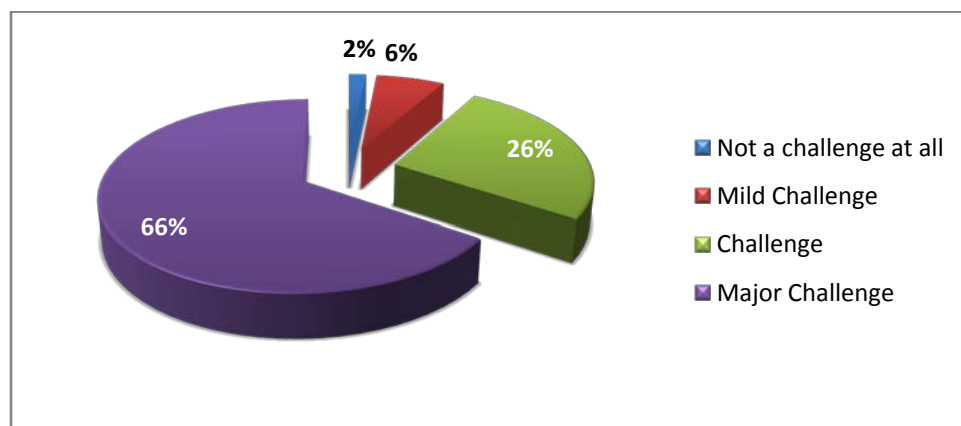
Figure 20. Lack of authentic materials

Interview respondents differed in their responses regarding the authentic materials. The teachers that worked for a private school or that worked in an urban setting did not think they were short of authentic materials to use in their classes. Abdullah noted that he made use of a variety of authentic resources in his classes.

> I generally make use of songs because it is easier to bring to the class when you have an MP3 player and speakers and you hand out the worksheets, it is much easier. Watching a movie is also an enjoyable activity. It is good for it helps learners to hear some authentic English, too. When it comes to magazines, I make use of them with my senior students. Our department is subscribed to a couple of magazines such as Time, The Economist. Using tourists helps, too. Although the number of the tourists visiting my city is few, I try

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to bring them to the classroom so that my students can ask them questions and speak with them (Abdullah, January 2, 2010).

Gokhan, on the other hand, complained about the deficiency of authentic resources to create a communicative classroom. He acknowledged that working for a public school at a rural setting placed him at a disadvantage in terms of access to extra resources.

> We have course books that have listening activities, but we don't have the CDs in our hand. The school's infrastructure is really bad. We don't have any LCD projector, TV, or such equipment. I don't have access to any authentic magazines, books, or DVDs. I even have to pay from my pocket when I need to make copies for my students. In short, I only have a blackboard and chalk. That's it (Gokhan, January 10, 2010)!

4.5.3.3 Large classes

As it was discussed earlier in this study, having large classes is one of the key problems in the Turkish educational system in general (See section 4.2.1). The questionnaire data revealed that the high number of students in classes was also a serious concern in the use of CLT in English classes. While twenty-one respondents considered this as a major challenge, some twenty-four checked it as a challenge. There were only seven respondents who did not think that large classes acted as a barrier preventing them from implementing CLT in English classes (Figure 21). This might be due to the fact that the majority of those teachers were working for a private school, where the average number of students in a class is much smaller than that of public schools.
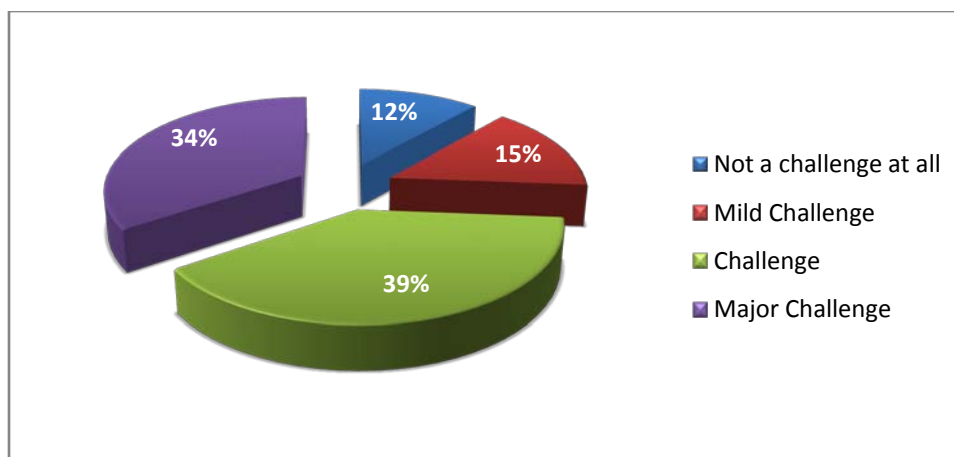
Figure 21. Large classes

The interview data confirmed these results. Four of the interview respondents, those working for a public school, referred to the size of their classes as a major obstacle for them to utilizing CLT in their classes. They stressed that in order to succeed in applying CLT in Turkey, the classes need to be much smaller than they actually are. Tugba, for instance, were very much concerned with the students' little talk time in English classes due to the large number of students in her classes.

> In order for CLT to successfully work, the classes should be smaller. There should be maximum 15 – 20 students in a class so that students can have dialogs and effective communication. However, the number of students in a class in most schools here is about 35 – 40. Considering that we have 40 minutes in a lesson, 10 minutes is spent on roll call and such. Then, we should check homework and perhaps review the previous topic. We have only 20 minutes left. When you have 40 students in the class, each student gets half a minute to express themselves in the class. So, it seems really difficult to make use of CLT in such a situation (Tugba, December 26, 2009).

Tuncay, on the other hand, felt that when he intended to use communicative activities in his classes, classroom management would be a problem.

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Since our classes are over-crowded, classroom management becomes a problem most of the time. When having group work in class, for example, student may become too active and managing the class can be difficult. What's more, some administrative staff or other teachers may not be knowledgeable about English teaching, so they might think you are having a classroom management problem when there is some noise during a communicative activity (Tuncay, December 28, 2009).

As commented by Tuncay, it was interesting to see that being unfamiliar with CLT, the administrators or fellow colleagues would be bothered by the potential noise in communicative classrooms.

4.5.3.4 Grammar-based examinations

Grammar-based examinations were considered to be an important hindrance that disallowed the teachers to implement the CLT practices in English teaching in Turkey. As demonstrated by the questionnaire data, twenty-five respondents thought that grammar-based exam types were a major challenge for them while some twenty-three believed this was a challenge. Also, ten respondents reported that such exams were a mild challenge whereas the remaining three did not see them as a challenge at all (Figure 22).
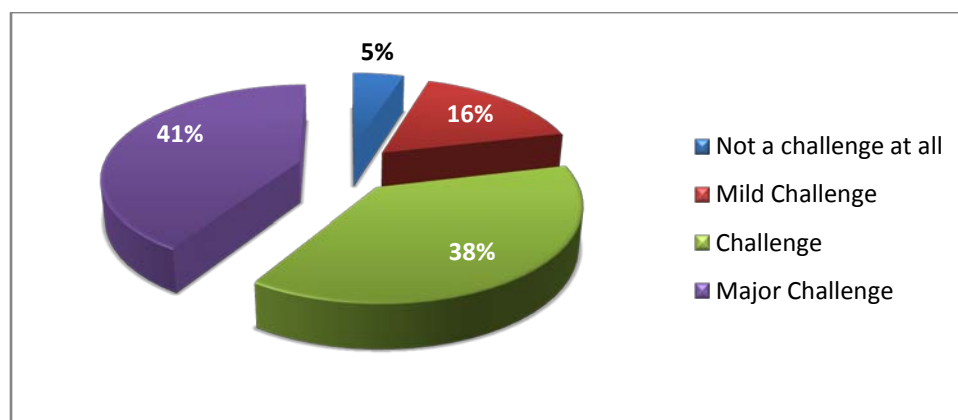
Figure 22. Grammar-based examinations

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As reported earlier, English teaching led by grammar-based examinations allow little, if any, room for interactive and communicative English classes. This concern was repeatedly pointed out by the interview respondents, too. Tuncay mentioned that there is an exam-oriented education system in Turkey that puts students in a fierce competition with each other. According to him, this system promotes an individual style of learning, allowing no room for cooperative group work. He further added that it was impossible to focus on developing communicative competence when the students' ultimate aim was to succeed in a multiple-choice entrance exam in which they had to answer grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and translation questions only.

> Since there is an exam-oriented education in Turkey, students are always in a competition with each other. This is reflected in my English classes, too. Especially in senior classes, students stop being concerned with improving their communicative competence. Our education imposes on our students individual work habits because they will be alone in the entrance exams, fighting with the questions themselves. They don't really want to work in collaborative groups. What they demand is only to be able to develop their test-taking skills (Tuncay, December 28, 2010).

4.5.4 CLT-related Difficulties and Challenges

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

4.5.4.1 Lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments

Lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments was identified by the questionnaire respondents as one of the difficulties pertaining to CLT. However, the majority of the respondents – twenty-nine of them revealed that this was a rather manageable problem. Another twenty of them noted that this was a challenge. It was noteworthy that only four respondents regarded this issue as a major challenge whereas the remaining eight thought this was not a challenge at all (Figure 23).
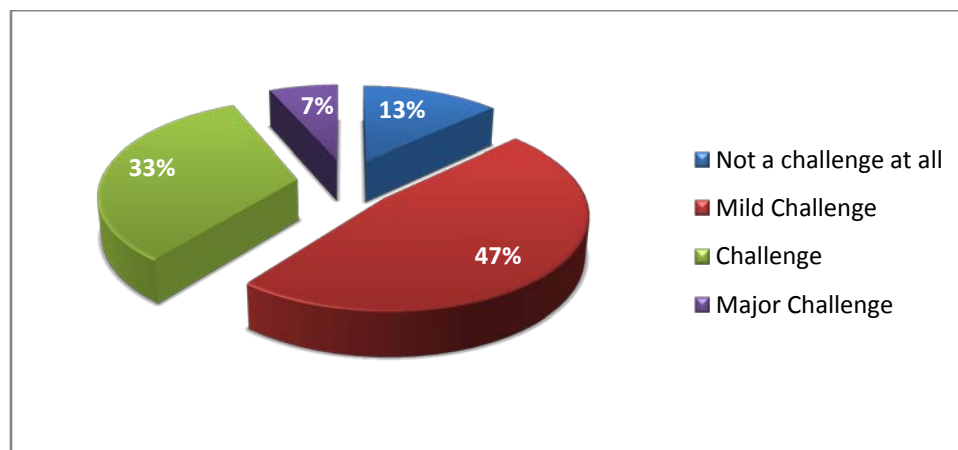
Figure 23. Lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments

The interview respondents showed variation in their responses to this matter. The teachers who were working at primary schools articulated that they were not really experiencing much difficulty with regard to effective tools to assess communicative language skills. Tugba elucidated that the primary English teaching curriculum provides clear descriptions of assessment tools that evaluates communicative competence of students, and thus can be potentially used in communicative classrooms. She further stated that they were supposed to assign students performance homework and group projects so that the students could demonstrate their communicative language skills. Yet, she noted that some teachers did not

follow the assessment guidelines portrayed in the curriculum since such an assessment was time-consuming, requiring extra work for the teacher. As a result, many teachers use discrete-point testing of grammar knowledge because it is easier to apply and grade as opposed to those testing communicative competence.

> In terms of the assessment, primary English teachers are lucky because our curriculum lays out very detailed guidelines as to how to effectively incorporate assessment tools that test communicative competence into our English teaching. Actually, we are supposed to give our students performance homework after the units covered in the class, as well as large-scale pair and group projects. They are supposed to assign equal roles to each group member and create some product to present to the class. It can either be a PowerPoint or poster presentation; or any other communicative project. However, these assignments are considered to be time-consuming by many teachers. So, they choose the easy way by giving out traditional grammar tests to assess students' language abilities (Tugba, December 26, 2009).

Those teachers who were working at secondary schools found this lack of effective and efficient assessment tools as somewhat serious problem in their teaching context.

> One other important difficulty in using CLT activities in Turkey relates with the exam types the students have. No matter where you study and at what level, most of the exam types do not lend themselves to reinforcing the use of CLT in classes. There was a term for it; I guess positive backwash or something. It is not achievable in Turkey. Except for very few really professional places, people do not know how to prepare and employ CLT-based listening and speaking exam items.

Most other respondents shared Ulku's view that the exam types applied in Turkey would not create positive washback effect on English education.

4.5.4.2 Inadequate account of EFL teaching

The survey participants expressed that CLT failed to give an adequate account of EFL teaching. According to the great majority of the respondents – forty-eight of them, CLT's inadequate account of distinctive features of EFL teaching contexts produced a significant challenge in terms of the implementation of CLT in Turkey (Figure 24).
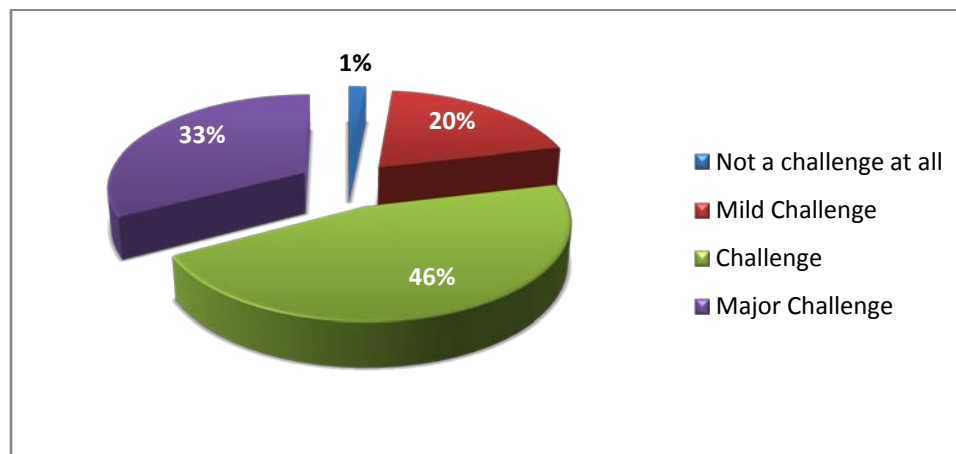
Figure 24. CLT's inadequate account of EFL teaching

Five of the interview respondents emphasized that there were important differences between teaching in an ESL environment and teaching in an EFL environment. The first major difference, in interview respondents' views, was the language learning environments. They claimed that EFL learning contexts did not provide an input-rich environment for the learners because English classroom is usually the only place where students can receive input in EFL environments. In addition, due to lack of native-speaking English teachers, the quality of the input is generally rather low. Moreover, the availability of authentic materials in an EFL environment is limited. However, students at an ESL context are fortunate in that they are exposed to constant input inside and outside the English classroom, and thus they feel the necessity to speak the language.

In my opinion, CLT fails to address issues specific to EFL teaching contexts. In an EFL learning environment, such as our case, students do not need to speak the language because their teachers are Turks, their friends are Turks, and everybody around them is Turks. I encourage them to speak the language, but they don't see the point of it. The environment doesn't motivate them to communicate in the target language. Also, lack of native speaker teachers and authentic materials are still important problems. Our students get English input within the class only; but this is really troublesome, too. Most of the time, their peers speak Turkish in the class, teachers speak Turkish to manage the class. That is, there is definitely not a motivating environment here to promote communication skills (Serhat, January 5, 2010).

Another significant difference identified by the respondents was the difference in the learners' purposes of learning English. One respondent stated that students in Turkey predominantly learn English to pass certain exams. Therefore, what they really need is to improve reading and writing skills. On the contrary, ESL learners have a much greater need to develop their oral language skills.

I am a native speaker of Turkish, and so are my students. Well, it would not be all too big a deal if both my students and I did not know that more than 80 percent of my students do not intend to and will never go abroad where they will need the knowledge of these contexts. The students are mostly learning English for academic purposes and their purposes do not include continuing their education abroad as yet. All they want is to pass the proficiency test and continue their education. In their higher education, they will mostly need reading and writing abilities. In an ideal world, they would also need speaking and listening, but it is obviously not the case here (Ulku, December 30, 2009).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter is composed of three major sections. The first section presents a discussion vis-à-vis the responses of the questionnaire and interview respondents. Then, a discussion of the consistency between the results of the study and the literature is offered. In the final section, research questions are revisited.

5.1 INCONSISTENT DIFFERENCES IN THE TEACHERS' RESPONSES

The participants of this study are sixty-one Turkish teachers of English that are working at two different educational levels: primary and secondary. These teachers are teaching different grades at both public and private institutions that are located in either urban or rural settings. Nevertheless, their responses about EFL teaching in Turkey did not show as much variation as I had presumed.

It was noteworthy that the majority of the questionnaire and interview respondents seemed to share similar perceptions pertaining to the difficulties and challenges they had to face in implementing CLT in their classrooms. The differences in their responses are really subtle. The first difference was in their perspectives on students' motivation to learn spoken English in contrast to grammar. Teachers who were teaching senior classes at both primary and secondary levels, i.e., 7-8th grades and 11-12th grades, felt that their students showed no interest in developing their oral language skills. It was only possible to concentrate on developing communicative skills of students at the early grades of primary and secondary education, i.e., 4-

5-6th grades and 9-10th grades respectively. Students in these grade levels were reported to have the motivation and energy and the time to spend on improving their speaking skills.

Another difference is to do with the size of the class. The majority of the teachers working for public schools had more than thirty students in a class on average. On the contrary, most teachers who were working for private schools had fewer numbers of students in their classrooms. This might be due to the intense competition that private schools in Turkey have. These schools generally attract upper-class families by offering small classes, and thus individual attention to each student. This being so, it seems to be relatively easier to implement CLT in private schools. Yet, teachers working for private schools typically shared the opinion that there were many other challenges that they needed to overcome, and thus, the advantage they had in regard to the class size was insignificant considering all the other challenges they were facing. Of the fourteen teachers that taught in a private school, none had more than twenty-five students in their classrooms. The majority of those teachers – eight of them – had typically 16 to 20 students in a classroom. The following figure shows how public and private school teachers' perceptions differ as to how much difficulty that the large classes pose in the use of CLT in Turkey (Figure 25):
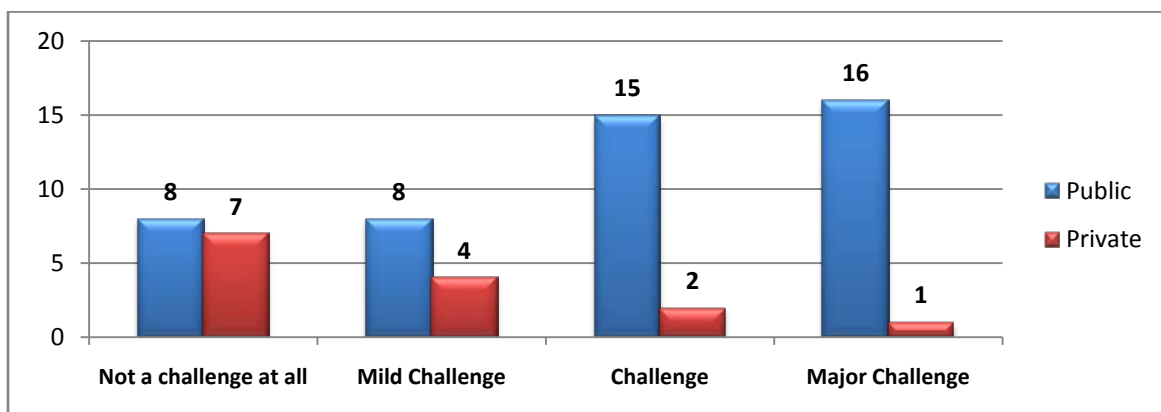
Figure 25. Teachers' perceptions of the size of class and its effects on the use of CLT

The third difference is related to the lack of resources and funding. The majority of the teachers, both in public and private schools, felt that they had adequate facilities and equipment such as computer classrooms, LCD projectors, audio-visual resources, and photocopiers available for use, which plays an important role in terms of the effective integration of CLT into English teaching. Two interview respondents, Gokhan and Tugba, in contrast, expressed that their schools lacked some of those facilities and resources. Yet, the issue turns out to be more complicated when it comes to the distribution of these sources and funding. Teachers at private schools had no issues concerning the availability of and access to these resources. There were no mentions of the lack of resources and funding from both the survey and the interview respondents that worked for a private institution. The teachers working for public schools at urban settings appeared to have many such resources available, yet they had slight difficulties in their access to those resources. Both of the two interview respondents, Abdullah and Tuncay, who worked for an urban public school, reported that they encountered difficulties accessing some of the resources available at their schools. When this is the case, some of those teachers held the opinion that lack of resources compounded the difficulty of using CLT in their classes.

This study has demonstrated that the participants generally share the concerns and difficulties in EFL teaching in Turkey, and particularly in their endeavors to use CLT in their English classrooms. In brief, it was found out that the Turkish EFL teachers were somewhat consistent in their understanding of particular EFL teaching in Turkey, as well as the difficulties and challenges that they were facing in implementing CLT in the Turkish EFL context.

5.2 CONSISTENCY BETWEEN THE RESULTS AND THE LITERATURE

The findings of the current study seem to show consistency with what has been covered in the relevant literature so far. It is reasonable to argue that teachers working in other EFL

teaching countries have similar difficulties and challenges in the implementation of CLT. Such difficulties as highly-centralized grammar-based examinations, over-crowded classes and heavy teaching load of teachers, fewer opportunities for teacher retraining, students' lack of motivation to develop communicative skills, and CLT's inadequate account of EFL teaching have been largely reported in the literature, as well.

In their studies, Hiep (2007), Incecay and Incecay (2009), Li (1998), Li (2004), Rao (2002), and Wu (2001) reported that *centralized grammar-based exams* had negative washback on the teachers' classroom practices. Similarly, this was repeatedly mentioned by the respondents in this study as one of the major difficulties that prevented them from using CLT in their English classrooms.

Large classes and teachers' heavy workload was another major difficulty reported in this study that was vastly mentioned by other authors, too. Burnaby and Sun (1984), Holliday (1994), Hui (1997), Li (1998), Li (2004), and Rao (2002) demonstrated in their studies that this issue was a significant institutional constraint that hindered the effective implementation of CLT in EFL classrooms.

In the literature, *fewer opportunities for retraining in CLT* was referred to as another key challenge in using CLT in EFL contexts (Campbell & Zhao, 1993; Hui, 1997; Li 1998; Penner, 1995; Wu, 2001). In the same vein, it was confirmed that the responses of the teachers in this study aligned with what was suggested by those authors in general.

In addition, *students' low motivation for communicative competence* was identified in the literature as a further significant challenge that needed to be overcome to use CLT. Hiep (2007), Li, (1998), Li (2004), and Rao (2002) pointed out that students felt that they primarily needed to learn grammar, and thus they did not have much motivation to develop their spoken English for

communicative purposes. As reported by the teachers in the present study, learners of English in Turkey feel exactly the same way.

Lastly, the Turkish EFL teachers heavily emphasized *CLT's inadequate account of EFL teaching* as a major constraint in utilizing CLT in English classrooms. This was recursively argued as a major difficulty by other researchers in the literature, as well (Hiep, 2007; Li, 1998, Li, 2004). These researchers noted that there are considerable differences between EFL and ESL teaching such as the purposes of learning English, learning environments, teachers' English proficiency, and the availability of authentic English materials.

5.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS REVISITED

Four research questions were used as the guide for the present study. It is essential to re-examine these questions and discuss the findings of the study in order to suggest ideas for solutions to the reported problems in the implementation of CLT in Turkey.

5.3.1   What Problems Are Inherent in English Teaching in Turkey?

It should be noted that Turkey has made great achievements with regard to English teaching over the years. The educational reform that took place in 1997 has been a cornerstone in EFL teaching in Turkey. Since then, English has started to be offered from the 4th grade upwards and CLT has been officially adopted in the English curriculum proposed by the MONE – Ministry of National Education. In addition, while the ratio of MONE's budget in GNP – Gross National Product – was 1.74 percent in 1997, this ratio was doubled to 3.40 percent in 2007 (MONE, 2008). These innovations in Turkey are well worth celebrating.

Yet, there are still many problems in Turkish English teaching. The inherent problems of EFL teaching in Turkey were reported as: large classes, teachers' heavy workload, heavily-

loaded program, mismatch between the curriculum and assessment, students' poor communicative abilities, and students' low motivation.

The issue of large classes is a major concern in Turkey. Although there has been a huge increase in the money allocated to formal education in Turkey, this is still insufficient, and thus most classes in public schools are over-crowded. The low number of English teachers makes this issue even more complicated. When this is the case, it becomes difficult for the teachers to give individual attention to each learner. Also, due to the difficulty of managing such large classes, pair and group work may turn into a potential chaos in the English classrooms.

Teachers' heavy workload is another key issue in Turkey. This is directly related to the shortage of English teachers in Turkey. Even though the number of English classes has been increased starting from 1997, the number of English teachers has not been enlarged at the same ratio. Therefore, teachers have had to take on extra load of work. Given that their income is not encouraging for demonstrating hard work, many teachers tend to lose their motivation to teach English in most effective ways.

A third chief problem in English teaching is considered to be the heavily-loaded English program at schools. As pointed out by the participants, there are too many topics to cover in English classes at each level, which seems to force the teachers to rush in order to complete the assigned syllabus, thus they skip various activities in the course books since they are assumed to be time-consuming. Those activities are generally listening, speaking, and writing, which are essential for students to develop a high command of English language.

This issue is tied to students' poor communicative abilities, which is another major concern in English teaching in Turkey. Feeling obliged to cover all the grammar points in the syllabus, teachers give up on communicative activities that are essential in developing students'

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spoken English abilities. Unfortunately, even after years of English instruction, students have too much difficulty to communicate in English.

A related problem in Turkish English teaching is the mismatch between the curriculum and assessment practices. Despite the fact that the curriculum dictates the use of CLT in English teaching, students are predominantly tested on grammar in their formal assessment. As reported earlier, grammar-based English examinations have huge impact on English teaching in the formal education. Since these exams are given the ultimate priority in assessing students' overall success, teachers feel obliged to make their students achieve high scores, and thereby tend to organize their classroom activities so that they align with the questions asked in those exams. That is, in Turkish schools, everything is decided by examinations and everything is done for examinations.

A further problem is students' low motivation to learn English. This is a general problem for secondary education in Turkey. Students in high schools are asked questions on all the mainstream subjects in the university entrance examination except for English unless they would like to pursue a career in English language teaching, translation and interpretation, and Western languages and literatures in college. It is very ironic that together with Mathematics, English consists of the highest number of class hours in high school syllabi. Students appear to lose their motivation to learn English after 9th and 10th grades as they heavily concentrate on preparing for the entrance examination after the 10th grade, and thus underestimate the importance of English for their future.

5.3.2 What Can Communicative Language Teaching Contribute to English Teaching in Turkey?

The participants in the study shared the belief that teaching methodology is a significant factor to ensure satisfactory outcomes with regard to English teaching in Turkey. Communicative language teaching, in their views, can address some of the problems in Turkish English education. The majority of the teachers believe that the purpose of language learning is being able to communicate in the target language and therefore *communication* should be given foremost importance in English teaching. It is affirmed that learners of English should be given more opportunities to use the language. Also, more emphasis should be laid upon the development of students' communicative competence. Moreover, the focus on grammar should be shifted towards a focus on meaning. Furthermore, Turkey's ever-increasing efforts to gain full membership to the EU has created an escalating demand for competent English-speaking personnel in the country as the result of more economic, social, cultural, and diplomatic exchanges established with other European countries. In this respect, it is obvious that CLT can contribute much in helping develop more proficient speakers of English.

5.3.3 How Feasible Is Communicative Language Teaching in Turkey?

The study revealed that the respondents are by and large positive about incorporating CLT into English teaching in Turkey. However, given the current conditions in Turkey, the majority of the respondents feel that it is too difficult to make effective use of CLT in formal education. The main hindrance to the use of CLT appears to be the grammar-based examination system. The respondents share the belief that for the most part, other problems in English teaching are either directly or indirectly connected to the issue of examination system in Turkey. It is agreed that the successful integration of CLT into English teaching in Turkey will only be

possible if the examination system is amended in a way that will give the development of communicative skills the importance that it deserves.

5.3.4 What Are the Difficulties That Turkish EFL Teachers Face in Their Attempts to Use CLT? Can These Difficulties Be Overcome? If Yes, How, and to What Extent?

The difficulties and constraints that hindered the teachers' attempts to adopt CLT in Turkey were divided into four main categories: teacher-oriented difficulties, student-oriented difficulties, difficulties on the part of to the educational system, and CLT-oriented difficulties.

First, many Turkish EFL teachers are deficient in spoken English, and therefore find it difficult to lead their classes in English. In addition, they are incompetent with respect to the appropriate use of language in context due to their lack of sociolinguistic and strategic competence in English. Unpredictably, a majority of the Turkish EFL teachers have a good knowledge of CLT and its principles. Yet, they have difficulties as to how to put into practice the premises of CLT either because there are not ample retraining opportunities or they are not encouraged to attend the available programs. Last of all, Turkish EFL teachers lack the time and expertise to develop communicative classroom activities and materials which discourages them from utilizing CLT.

Regarding the difficulties on the part of the students, first reported constraint is the students' low English proficiency in general. This generally makes it hard for teachers to communicate to the students what they are expected to do in class, as well as for the students to communicate with their fellow classmates. Students' passive style of learning is another challenge against the use of CLT. Moreover, students show resistance to participate in communicative classroom activities, and they lack the motivation to develop communicative

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competence. This is essentially due to the fact that students, in aiming to succeed in the grammar-based examinations, prefer grammar over other language skills in class instruction.

Third, a number of difficulties related to the educational system served as barriers against the adoption of CLT in English classrooms. Lack of support from administrators and colleagues, as well as insufficient funding from the ministry is regarded as a big challenge for teachers who would like to employ CLT in their classrooms. Pertaining to the lack of financial support is the shortage of authentic language teaching and learning materials which is another depressing factor that inhibits the effective implementation of CLT effectively. Besides, over-crowded and large classes in Turkey place too much difficulty on teachers in giving their students individualized attention and effectively monitoring their students. Finally, the main culprit – grammar-based examinations – draws English grammar to the attention of all the involved parties, namely students, teachers, parents, and school administrators. This fundamentally makes it impractical to employ CLT in Turkish schools.

CLT itself is considered to add to the difficulties in using CLT within the Turkish context. Two major problems are identified in this category: first, there is a lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments in the formal school-based situations. Currently, there is no obvious means of assessing students' communicative competence in Turkey. What is worse, there is no debate as to the need for such an assessment tool. Additionally, since CLT was in essence developed as an ESL methodology, it is thought to give inadequate account of EFL teaching. That is, adjustments must be in place in order for it to be adopted in EFL settings. Despite the recent drastic changes in English teaching policies, it can be argued that this has not taken place successfully in the Turkish EFL teaching framework.

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The following chapter contains implications of the study, suggestions for overcoming the reported difficulties, as well as the limitations of the study. It, then, ends with recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This chapter begins with the implications that this study holds for English teaching in Turkey, laying out suggestions for overcoming the difficulties and challenges in the implementation of CLT in Turkey. Then, it details the limitations of the study. Finally, the chapter is concluded with recommendations for further research.

6.1 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

As seen in the study, a number of constraints have made it difficult for CLT to be integrated into English teaching classrooms in Turkey. One of the main reasons is that teachers lack the time and energy to devise communicative teaching materials and activities due to their heavy workload. Thus, the first implication of the study is that teachers' heavy workload should be decreased, and thus their work conditions should be improved.

It has been found that Turkish EFL teachers have too many hours of classes to teach, which leaves little room, if any, for creating authentic and communicative classroom materials. Also, the salaries of the teachers in Turkey are low compared to similar other professions. Teachers are too much concerned with their financial problems, looking for extra sources of income to improve their living conditions. A great many teachers, for instance, spend most of their free time on private tutoring, in which they prepare learners of English for entrance examinations. All of these factors bring about teachers showing little interest in the quality of work that they put into practice at their schools.

It is urgent that the government address this issue of teachers' heavy work conditions and low income in order to bring teachers' potential into full play. Since the solution of other problems regarding the improvement of English teaching in Turkey is contingent upon the betterment of teachers' treatment in general, improvement of teachers' work and living conditions should prioritized in government's policy-making.

Another implication of the study is that English teaching in Turkey needs to be better planned. This study has shown that English is one of the core subjects in both primary and secondary levels of education. However, the resources available are not sufficient to meet the needs of such a huge program. Given that there are too many students who need to learn English but not enough number of teachers, students are placed, particularly in public schools, into large English classrooms. Accordingly, English instruction is mostly limited to traditional large-group instruction where grammar is given a high significance while oral skills such as listening and speaking are neglected. This being the case, students learning English for many years at school cannot communicate effectively and efficiently with English speakers.

It is evident that Turkey should reassess its language teaching policies. Turkey's efforts to gain a full membership to the EU have made the knowledge of English even more essential recently since English is considered to be the *lingua franca* in today's world. Thus, the prospect of the EU membership requires a great many numbers of civil servants with good communication skills in English. It is imperative that the large size of the English classes be reduced, and more English teachers be recruited in Turkey so that teachers can concentrate more on developing the learners' communicative competence.

Another change needed in Turkey is a reform on the current examination system. As revealed by this study, there is too much reliance on grammar-based examinations in Turkey, and

thus English teaching practices are shaped according to the skills tested in these exams, which are mainly grammar, vocabulary knowledge, translation, and reading skills. Attention should be shifted towards other language skills such as listening, speaking, and writing. For that purpose, more research should be conducted on how to assess learners' listening and speaking skills in the Turkish context. It might be worthwhile to consider that large-scale summative examinations should not be relied too much as the sheer criterion in the selection and placement of students for future education. Rather, formative examinations should be incorporated into English education in Turkey. From this perspective, students' communicative abilities can be more effectively represented in the selection and placement instruments. Similarly, such a reform would result in positive changes in both teachers' and students' motivation towards teaching and learning English through CLT.

Furthermore, in the process of effective integration of CLT into English teaching in Turkey, special attention should be paid teacher training. Markee (2001) puts forward that teachers can more easily change their values and help bring about deeper changes if they understand why there is the need to change (p. 120). Therefore, the most imperative and effective way to implement CLT is to provide in-service teachers with opportunities to retrain themselves in CLT. When the teachers better understand the principles of CLT, as well as explore how it works in English language classrooms, they can meet the demands of CLT more effectively and feel motivated to overcome the potential constraints in the use of CLT. Within this framework, it is crucial that teachers not be lectured about CLT in teacher training programs. Rather, they should be demonstrated how CLT actually works. Moreover, in these programs, teachers should be provided with opportunities to gain some hands-on experience, along with confidence in using CLT. As a final note, it might be advisable to include a language improvement component in

teacher training programs. The present study confirmed that Turkish EFL teachers are weak at speaking and listening skills. Thus, a special emphasis on these skills would be valuable for the teachers.

6.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are a number of limitations of this study. The first limitation is related to the sample size. It should be noted that the sample size is not large enough to draw generalizable conclusions. The themes and patterns emerged in this study should be considered as hypotheses to be tested in future studies conducted with larger groups.

Another limitation pertains to the data collection procedure. The present study may have yielded more reliable results with multiple data sources incorporating a survey questionnaire for teachers, a survey questionnaire for students, classroom observations, and in-depth interviews with the teachers observed. The analysis of the data was limited since the students were neither questioned nor interviewed. Had it been possible to discover students' perceptions of and reactions to classroom activities, the study may have provided a better understanding of teachers' perceptions of CLT, as well as their implementation of communicative activities in English classrooms. Using data from multiple sources would allow triangulation, and thus benefit the overall results of this study.

A further limitation of this study can be attributed to the subjectivity of the teachers' perspectives. It should be noted that teachers may have been subjective in their responses. Therefore, their actual classroom practices may be dissimilar to the principles they reported in the questionnaire and the interviews.

Finally, as the investigator of the current study, my interpretation of the data gathered may diverge from what the respondents actually thought during the processes of prompting, note-taking, translating, categorizing, and coding. Attending to some of these limitations in the study would make it possible to conduct a more reliable larger-scale study in the future.

6.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study confirmed that the teachers working in EFL settings felt that their concerns, questions, and English teaching issues pertaining to EFL contexts are not sufficiently addressed in the existing literature. The participants of this study highlighted their disadvantages of teaching English as a foreign language. Hence, more attention should be paid to research which primarily deals with the special features of English learning and teaching in EFL situations.

As the present study was carried out, it became evident that there were many relevant questions that remained unanswered, which could potentially serve as research questions for related studies. Some of these questions are listed below as recommendations for further research:

1. What are the characteristics and learning styles of Turkish students learning English and English teaching in Turkey? Gaining better knowledge on these aspects can help to develop English teaching methods which will better address the unique issues in EFL classrooms and thus can more readily fit into the EFL teaching.

2. What are students' perceptions of communicative and non-communicative activities in EFL classrooms in Turkey? The answer to this question can offer important information for teachers and pedagogues, and help them better understand the needs

and interests of learners so that they can make informed decisions in implementing a communicative approach in their classrooms.

3. What are the perceptions of administrators regarding teaching methodologies utilized in Turkish EFL classrooms? The answer to this question can suggest a clear understanding of the perceptions and expectations of administrators who run language institutes.

4. How can Turkish EFL teachers balance grammar instruction and communicative competence in their language classrooms? The answer to this question is crucial to provide more direct assistance to classroom English teachers since Turkish EFL teachers feel and believe that grammar instruction is necessary for Turkish teachers. Yet, they are not well informed as to how to balance grammar teaching with that of communicative abilities.

5. What are the possible alternatives for written examinations as a selection and placement mechanism? How can the current grammar-based English examinations be modified so that they will better test the communicative skills of English learners? Answers to these questions are worthwhile since English teaching is led by grammar-based examinations in Turkey, and thus Turkish EFL teaching has been focusing too much on grammar instruction and neglecting the development of learners' communicative competence.

6. What are teachers' and students' perceptions of CLT at the tertiary level? This can bring further information into the field of CLT in EFL settings. In addition, it can suggest interesting sources of comparison between EFL teaching at the tertiary level and EFL teaching at the secondary and primary levels.

7. How do demographic factors (i.e., age, gender, years of experience), as well as the school settings (i.e., public vs. private, urban vs. rural) affect teachers' perceptions and practices of CLT in their English classrooms? Answers to these questions are useful since this research did not extend the analysis to determine how much demographic factors and school settings affect teachers' perceptions and use of CLT in the Turkish context.

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ABOUT THE SURVEY:

This survey questionnaire is designed for Turkish EFL teachers teaching in public and/or private schools in Turkey. This survey aims to explore the appropriateness as well as the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the Turkish context.

This survey is composed of four parts. Part I asks for personal information. Part II asks for information about your school and the classes you are teaching. Part III asks questions pertaining to English teaching methods, and Part IV asks for your opinions with regard to the perceived difficulties in implementing CLT as a methodology. It will take you 20-30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. There is no correct or best response to the questions. Please answer them based on your thinking at this time.

Part I – Personal Information:

1. What is your name:……………………………………………………………
2. What is your e-mail:…………………………………………………………..
3. What is your age?
   a. ☐ 21 – 29   c. ☐ 40 – 49
   b. ☐ 30 – 39   d. ☐ 50 or more
4. What is your gender?
   a. ☐ Female   b. ☐ Male
5. What is the highest academic degree you earned?
   a. ☐ Bachelor of Arts (BA),
   b. ☐ Master of Arts (MA),
   c. ☐ Master of Education (M.Ed.),
   d. ☐ Doctorate Degree (PhD),
   e. Other:…………………………………

6. Which university and department did you graduate from?

……

7. How many years have you been teaching English?

……

8. Have you ever studied/worked in an English-speaking country?

……

9. If yes, where, when, and how long did you study/work? (If your answer is NO to the previous question, skip this one.)

……

10. Have you ever taken a test of English (such as TOEFL, KPDS, IELTS)?

……

11. If yes, which test was it and what was your score?

……

Part II – School Information:

12. What type of setting is your school located at?

a. ☐ Urban   b. ☐ Rural

13. Are you working for a public or private school?

a. ☐ Public School   b. ☐ Private School

14. What type of school are you working for?

a. ☐ Primary School

b. ☐ General High School

c. ☐ Anatolian High School

d. ☐ Science High School

e. ☐ Vocational and/or Technical High School

f. ☐ Other: ………………………………………….

15. What grade(s) are you presently teaching?

……

16. How many classes are you teaching this year?

……

17. How many hours of class do you teach a week?

………..

18. What is the average number of students in your class?

a. Less than 10

b. 10 – 15

c. 16 – 20

d. 21 – 25

e. 26 – 30

f. 31 – 35

g. 36 – 40

h. 41 or more

Part III – Questions pertaining to language teaching methodology, particularly CLT:

For more information about the teaching methods listed in this section, visit the following website: http://www.ozsevik.com (Read the article titled "Second Language Teaching Methods & Approaches" on the front page.)

19. What teaching methods are you implementing in your classes? (Please specify how frequently you are using a particular method.)

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Audio-lingual Method					
Communicative Approach					
Direct Method					
Grammar-translation					
Natural Approach					
Silent Way					
Total Physical Response					

20. What methods did you experience as a language learner? (Please specify the degree to which you experienced a particular method.)

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Audio-lingual Method					
Communicative Approach					
Direct Method					
Grammar-translation					
Natural Approach					
Silent Way					
Total Physical Response					

21. Have you tried Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in your classes?

    a. Yes   b. No

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

……..

……..

23. If you have tried CLT, how did you like using it in your classroom? (If you haven't tried CLT, skip this.)

………

……..

24. Have you ever participated in any kinds of programs such as workshops, special training programs devoted to CLT?

    a. Yes   b. No

25. If yes, when:……….

Where: ……….

How long: ……

26. How did you benefit from the program? What did you learn from it?

……

……

27. How do you define CLT in your own words?

……..

……

28. What is involved in CLT methodology in your view? (*Please check one.*)

a. CLT is student/learner-centered approach. True ☐ Not True ☐ Don't know ☐

b. CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy. True ☐ Not True ☐ Don't know ☐

c. CLT emphasizes communication in a second language (L2) True ☐ Not True ☐ Don't know ☐

d. CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening skills. True ☐ Not True ☐ Don't know ☐

e. CLT requires teachers to have a high proficiency in English. True ☐ Not True ☐ Don't know ☐

f. CLT involves only group work or pair work. True ☐ Not True ☐ Don't know ☐

g. CLT requires higher knowledge of the target language culture. True ☐ Not True ☐ Don't know ☐

h. CLT involves no grammar teaching. True ☐ Not True ☐ Don't know ☐

i. CLT involves teaching speaking only. True ☐ Not True ☐ Don't know ☐

j. CLT is basically an ESL methodology, not EFL. True ☐ Not True ☐ Don't know ☐

Part IV – Questions pertaining to perceived difficulties / challenges in adopting CLT:

The following are some difficulties that other EFL teachers encountered in adopting CLT. Did you come across these difficulties or do you think they might be difficulties for you in implementing CLT in Turkey?

Please indicate how big an issue these challenges are by circling the following response scale:

4 = Major challenge

3 = Challenge

2 = Mild challenge

1 = Not a challenge at all

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29. TEACHER-RELATED DIFFICULTIES & CHALLENGES

    i.   Teachers' proficiency in spoken English is not sufficient.

                        4   3   2   1

    ii.   Teachers lack the knowledge about the appropriate use of language in context.

                        4   3   2   1

    iii.   Teachers lack the knowledge about the target language (English) culture.

                        4   3   2   1

    iv.   There are few opportunities for teachers to get CLT training.

                        4   3   2   1

    v.   Teachers have little time to develop materials for communicative classes.

                        4   3   2   1

    vi.   Teachers have misconceptions about CLT.

                        4   3   2   1

30. STUDENT-RELATED DIFFICULTIES & CHALLENGES

    i.   Students have low-level English proficiency.

                        4   3   2   1

    ii.   Students have a passive style of learning.

                        4   3   2   1

    iii.   Students resist participating in communicative class activities.

                        4   3   2   1

    iv.   Students lack motivation for developing communicative competence.

                        4   3   2   1

31. DIFFICULTIES & CHALLENGES RELATED TO EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

    i.   There is a lack of enough support from administration.

                        4   3   2   1

    ii.   Teachers lack authentic materials such as newspapers, magazines, movies etc.

                        4   3   2   1

    iii.   Traditional view on teachers' and learners' role is not compatible with CLT.

                        4   3   2   1

iv.   Classes are too large for the effective use of CLT.

$$4 \qquad 3 \qquad 2 \qquad 1$$

v.   Grammar-based examinations have a negative impact on the use of CLT.

$$4 \qquad 3 \qquad 2 \qquad 1$$

32.   CLT-RELATED DIFFICULTIES & CHALLENGES

i.   There is a lack of effective and efficient instruments to assess communicative competence.

$$4 \qquad 3 \qquad 2 \qquad 1$$

ii.   CLT doesn't take into account the differences between   EFL and ESL teaching contexts.

$$4 \qquad 3 \qquad 2 \qquad 1$$

iii.   Western educational assumptions are not suitable within Asian contexts.

$$4 \qquad 3 \qquad 2 \qquad 1$$

33.   Please list any other potential problems and difficulties you might encounter in adopting CLT in Turkey.

………

………

End of questionnaire!

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

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Important Notice:

Should you have any questions concerning research subject's rights, you can contact the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office (217-333-2670; irb@uiuc.edu). The web address of IRB is http://irb.illinois.edu

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

General Instructions: This interview is principally composed of open-ended questions addressing the various issues related to the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and the use of it in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, particularly in Turkey. The participating teachers will be asked to review the questions briefly before the interview.

The interviewer can ask some additional questions based on the responses given by the particular interviewee on the previously posted online questionnaire. Moreover, some further questions may emerge in the course of the interview depending on the interviewee's responses to the interview questions. It will be made clear to all participants that they have all the rights not to answer any question(s) that they feel uncomfortable with.

Sample Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself. How did you become an EFL teacher? Why did you choose this profession?
2. When and where were you trained as an English teacher?
3. Which school are you working for? (Private vs. Public., Urban vs. Rural, Primary vs. Secondary etc.)
4. What problems are there inherent in English teaching in Turkey?
5. What problems are there in your own teaching or classroom?
6. What do you think CLT is? Define it in your own words.
7. How do you define communicative competence?
8. How do you feel about using CLT in your classroom?
9. What can CLT contribute to English teaching in Turkey?
10. Do you feel that CLT fails to address issues specific to EFL environments? Explain your views.
11. What is your attitude towards CLT?
12. Do you think it's possible to adapt the theories and methodology of CLT into an EFL classroom? How would you accomplish that? How feasible is CLT in Turkey?

13. In your opinion how do students like CLT activities?

14. Do you feel that teachers in Turkey are encouraged to use CLT?

15. What are some of the difficulties you have faced personally when attempting CLT in your classroom?

16. Do you think those difficulties can be overcome? If yes how and to what extent?

17. Do you feel that students in Turkey would benefit from CLT?

18. Are you given opportunities for retraining and for workshops?

19. What teaching method(s) did you experience as a learner?

20. Do you have suggestions for improving EFL teaching at secondary (or primary) level in Turkey? If so, what are they?

APPENDIX C:

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a research study that investigates the Turkish EFL (English as a foreign language) teachers' understanding of English teaching, predominantly the difficulties and challenges they face in the implementation of CLT practices in the Turkish context.

This study is conducted by Dr. Randall Sadler and Zekariya Ozsevik, MATESL graduate student at the Department of Linguistics. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a Turkish EFL teacher working in Turkey. You will be one of 50-100 participants chosen to participate in this study.

Please note that any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. There are no known physical, psychological, social, or legal risks in this study beyond those of ordinary life. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. There is no cost to you for participation in this project. Participation in this study will cost you only time and you will not receive money to participate. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relations with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, or with the investigators.

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. By checking YES option below, you indicate that you have read and understood the information provided above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time after signing this form, should you choose to discontinue participation in this study.

☐   Yes (I agree to participate.)
☐   No (I don't agree to participate.)

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