Conceptualizing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the EFL Context: Ethnographic Experiences of CELTA and Non-CELTA Holders

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Abstract

Communicative language teaching (CLT) has become the favourite teaching approach of many English teachers because of its focus on communication (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). A number of researchers have investigated EFL teachers' perceptions and implementation of CLT in Saudi tertiary level education. Some researchers reported on how CELTA training affects EFL teachers' perceptions and implementation of CLT. However, there is a gap in the literature with regard to the lived experiences of how non-native English speaker teachers (NNESTs) who do or do not have a CELTA qualification understand and apply CLT in Saudi tertiary level EFL education. Therefore, this mixed-methods ethnographic research focuses on filling this gap. Data were collected through three research tools, namely a survey, vignettes and classroom observations. All the participants were teaching EFL at the Saudi tertiary level. Twenty-six CELTA holders and forty-four non-CELTA holders participated in the survey about their perceptions and implementation of CLT. Four CELTA holders and three non-CELTA holders wrote a number of vignettes on how they conceptualize and apply CLT. Classroom observations were conducted for two CELTA holders and two non-CELTA holders. The statistical survey data were analysed using SPSS, and the vignettes and classroom observations were examined thematically. The findings revealed that both CELTA and non-CELTA holders have a reasonable understanding of CLT. However, they also showed that the teachers only implement CLT to some extent, suggesting that more training on applying communicative activities and group- and pairwork is needed in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: CLT, CELTA, Saudi, EFL, NNESTs

1. Introduction

The field of English language teaching (ELT), as a foreign (EFL) or second language (ESL), has been evolving for many years. With regard to teaching English, many methods and approaches are used, such as the grammar-translation method, the audiolingual method and the communicative language teaching approach. There is a growing need to develop language learners' communicative abilities in English. As a result, communicative language teaching (CLT henceforth) was developed after the audiolingual method was observed as failing to enhance learners' communicative abilities (Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

CLT refers to standards that emphasize not only what language aspects teachers teach but also the way they teach them (Harmer, 2001). These standards govern the language teaching goals, the language learning process, the activities that support learning in the classroom and the positions of teachers and learners in the language classroom (Richards, 2006).

Helping learners to communicate in the new language is one of the goals of CLT. Richards (2006) stated that the aim of CLT is to develop language learners' communicative competence. Communicative competence refers to learners being able to use the language in accurate, appropriate and flexible ways in different contexts (Yule, 2014). Recently, language teachers have been aiming to improve learners' communicative competence in the new language.

The learning process that language learners go through has changed in the last 30 years because language learning previously focused solely on developing grammatical competence (Richards, 2006). In CLT, learners

are exposed to the language and provided with opportunities to use it in real and communicative contexts (Harmer, 2001). Language teachers applying CLT provide their learners with opportunities to authentically practise using the language through communicative activities. Foreign language teaching aims to provide learners with more communicative situations to practise the language without worrying about linguistic accuracy (Littlewood, 2002).

Language teachers and material designers have been on a quest to develop learning activities based on the standards of CLT (Richards, 2006). Teachers applying CLT in their language classrooms will not only use communicative activities but also some other exercises that help learners to perform communicative activities. Littlewood (2002) described such activities as "pre-communicative" in the sense that language learners learn and appropriately practise some linguistic forms. Alternatively, communicative activities will help leaners to incorporate these linguistic forms into meaningful and authentic contexts. Littlewood (2002) clarified that these activities can give learners opportunities to participate in "whole-task practice", motivate them to communicate, make the learning process more natural and create a supportive learning context.

When applying CLT in their EFL classrooms, teachers need to take a different role in the language learning process to that with which they were familiar when they learned English. Teachers implementing CLT take the roles of "facilitators", "monitors" (Richards, 2006) and "co-communicators" (Littlewood, 2002) in their EFL classrooms. Instead of seeing teachers as the language source, students will feel relaxed while interacting with their classmates in pair and group activities, and they will take part in learning the language (Richards, 2006).

CLT has been adopted in many professional development programmes, including CELTA. CELTA stands for "Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages" (Rowland, 2019). It is a widely recognized and popular qualification for teaching English, and it is targeted at both native and non-native English speaker teachers (NNESTs) who have some or no experience in the field (Rowland, 2019). The CELTA programme is conducted in a number of countries, including Saudi Arabia. It is widely accepted as an English teaching qualification in Saudi Arabia.

There is a notable gap in the literature about CELTA and non-CELTA holders' ethnographic (lived) experiences of conceptualizing and implementing CLT in the Saudi EFL context. Therefore, our research project provides profound insights into how Saudi NNESTs who do or do not have a CELTA qualification conceptualize CLT in the actual EFL setting. It is unique in the sense that it explores the ethnography of understanding and applying CLT in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, it provides policy makers and other EFL teachers with relevant data on how effective CELTA training is in terms of conceptualizing CLT in the Saudi EFL context. It gives curriculum designers a clear picture of how effective CLT is in terms of enhancing students' communicative competence.

1.1 Research Questions

Our research project seeks to answer the following two questions:

1) How do CELTA and non-CELTA holders perceive CLT in their EFL classrooms?
2) How do CELTA and non-CELTA holders implement CLT in their EFL classrooms?

2. Literature Review

Several researchers have investigated EFL teachers' perceptions of CLT in various teaching contexts in many different countries (see e.g. Hossen, 2008; Lee, 2014; Wong, 2012). Furthermore, some researchers have studied CLT in the EFL context at the Saudi tertiary level of education (see e.g. Albahri et al., 2018; Asmari, 2015). While CLT is common in the Saudi EFL context, NNESTs perceive and apply CLT in different ways in their EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia.

2.1 NNESTs' Perceptions and Implementation of CLT in the Saudi EFL Context

A large and growing body of literature has investigated NNESTs' perceptions of CLT in the EFL context in Saudi Arabia. Abdulkader (2016) examined how Saudi EFL teachers perceive the CLT approach in their teaching contexts in Saudi Arabia. She collected data from Saudi EFL teachers undertaking an MA or PhD at Newcastle University. She used two instruments to collect data: semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire. She found that most of the participants understand the importance of CLT, but they do not implement this approach in their EFL classrooms (Abdulkader, 2016). However, this study was limited with regard to data on what is really happening inside these teachers' EFL classrooms concerning the conceptualization of CLT.

Alqahtani's (2020) qualitative case study investigated how EFL teachers perceive and implement CLT in their classrooms in Saudi public secondary schools. He used classroom observations, interviews and the analysis of documents and records to collect data from EFL Saudi high school teachers. He found that teachers varied in

terms of understanding and applying the CLT approach (Alqahtani, 2020). Nevertheless, his study only focused on conceptualizing CLT in the EFL context at the Saudi public secondary level.

Siddiqui and Asif (2018) investigated how teachers perceive the use of CLT in their EFL classrooms at a Saudi university with regard to the problems students face, including those involving reading, writing, vocabulary and grammatical concepts. The authors collected data from 35 participants—EFL teachers at the King Abdulaziz University English Language Institute. They collected data using semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire. The findings showed that participants have mixed perceptions and views of CLT and its implementation at this university (Siddiqui & Asif, 2018). However, this qualitative research did not tackle NNESTs' lived experiences of conceptualizing CLT in the EFL context after completing a CELTA qualification. The data are limited in the sense that they investigated the understanding of a teaching approach—CLT—without performing classroom observations. Mackey and Gass (2005) explained how classroom observation can provide the researcher with extensive data about many kinds of events happening inside a classroom, such as the teaching process (as cited in Paltridge & Phakiti, 2018). Siddiqui and Asif (2018) stated that there is a need for more teacher training on the appropriate use of CLT in the EFL context. Nevertheless, neither they nor the above-mentioned researchers shed light on the effects of professional development programmes (e.g. Cambridge CELTA) on teachers' conceptualization and implementation of CLT in the Saudi EFL context.

Noticeably, a literature gap has been found in terms of how Saudi NNESTs conceptualize CLT in their EFL classrooms after completing a CELTA qualification. Moreover, all these previous studies did not examine CELTA and non-CELTA holders' current practices (ethnography) regarding the conceptualization of CLT at the Saudi EFL tertiary level. Spada and Lightbown (2006) refer to ethnography as the process through which an observer extensively notes teaching practices, learning activities and interaction patterns in a real classroom. Consequently, there is a need to fill this gap by investigating the ethnographic experiences of CELTA and non-CELTA holders when conceptualizing CLT in the tertiary EFL context.

2.2 The CELTA Programme and Its Effects on NNESTs' Conceptualization of CLT

CLT is the teaching approach promoted in the Cambridge CELTA programme (Anderson, 2020). A number of studies have investigated how EFL teachers perceive CLT after finishing the CELTA programme. Anderson (2020) investigated the effects and changes seen concerning experienced EFL NNESTs' "self-reported classroom practices and related beliefs" after completing a CELTA qualification. He used a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data from 29 experienced Egyptian EFL teachers. He found that there is a strong variation in self-reported communicative practices based on participants' teaching contexts and challenges as well as the constraints they faced, suggesting that the CELTA-promoted communicative language teaching methodology needs to be appropriately adapted to teachers' relevant teaching contexts (Anderson, 2020). He also identified that participants reported changes towards more communicative and student-centred practices (Anderson, 2020). Nevertheless, the author of this qualitative research acknowledged a limitation and recommended carrying out classroom observations to get deeper insights into the changes in teachers' understanding and application of CLT after completing a CELTA qualification.

Tang (2020) examined 3 experienced NNESTs' perceptions of how useful their CELTA training is and the implementation of the CELTA teaching method (CLT) in their current practices. The research used only interviews to collect qualitative data from NNESTs working in different EFL contexts. The findings indicated that participants perceive the CELTA teaching practice as of high value for different reasons, namely in terms of gaining practical skills and becoming more familiar with CLT (Tang, 2020). While this qualitative study focused on how NNESTs understand the CELTA teaching approach (CLT), it did not capture their actual conceptualizations of CLT in their EFL classrooms.

There is a significant gap in the literature about the lived experiences of CELTA holders in conceptualizing CLT in Saudi tertiary level EFL education. Therefore, our proposed project seeks to fill these gaps by investigating the real experiences of CELTA and non-CELTA holders with regard to their perceptions of CLT at the tertiary level of EFL education in Saudi Arabia.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Given the nature of our proposed research, we adopt a mixed-methods design. This will provide me with accurate insights into the topic being investigated. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods provides the researcher with "a more complete picture" of the subject matter being examined (Greene, 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007, as cited in Paltridge & Phakiti, 2018). Moreover,

the answers to our complex research questions require the examination of both qualitative and quantitative data, based on a sequential quantitative to qualitative mixed-methods design. we started by collecting quantitative data using a survey, and then we gathered qualitative data using vignettes and by carrying out classroom observations.

3.2 Ethnographic Qualitative Research

Spada and Lightbown (2006) refer to ethnography as the process through which an observer extensively notes teaching practices, learning activities and interaction patterns in a real classroom. Ethnographic research comes under the umbrella of qualitative research and investigates things in their "natural settings" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3, as cited in Paltridge & Phakiti, 2018). It can provide the researcher with data from a real classroom. Moreover, ethnographic qualitative research can draw deep insights about the language learning process from the actual context in which it is taking place (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2018). Therefore, it can provide enormous datasets about the understanding and application of the CLT of CELTA and non-CELTA holders in real teaching contexts.

3.3 Participants

In our proposed project, we investigate Saudi and non-Saudi NNES CELTA and non-CELTA holders' conceptualization of CLT in their tertiary EFL classrooms. Therefore, we collected data from CELTA and non-CELTA holders teaching at different Saudi universities. The participants were both female and male EFL teachers.

3.4 Instruments and Procedures for Data Collection

We examined the ethnographic experiences of CELTA and non-CELTA holders in relation to perceiving and implementing CLT in the Saudi EFL context. Thus, we used classroom observations, vignettes and a survey to collect qualitative and quantitative data from participants. Most previous studies did not use vignettes or classroom observations as qualitative research instruments. Consequently, the qualitative data that we collect from vignettes and classroom observations will provide the literature with deep insights into participants' lived experiences of understanding and implementing CLT in the EFL context.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Revisiting the Research Questions

4.1.1 How Do CELTA and Non-CELTA Holders Perceive CLT in Their EFL Classrooms

According to the findings from the survey and vignettes and in terms of answering the first two research questions, both CELTA and non-CELTA holders have a reasonable understanding of CLT. More than half of both CELTA and non-CELTA holders demonstrated their understanding of some CLT principles in the survey section on perceiving CLT. Furthermore, they showed evidence of their conceptualization of CLT through their definitions of it. The themes emerging from their definitions revolved around three concepts that are related to CLT, namely interaction, practising and using the language and engaging in communication. According to Scrivener (2005), CLT is about allowing learners to master the language through engaging in "meaningful communication".

4.1.2 To What Extent Do CELTA and Non-CELTA Holders Implement CLT in Their EFL Classrooms

According to the findings of the survey, vignettes and classroom observations, the answer to the third and fourth research questions is that both CELTA and non-CELTA holders implement CLT to some extent. According to the survey results, approximately half of the participants stated that they apply CLT to some extent. However, when we asked them about the teaching approach they use in their EFL classrooms, nearly three quarters of the CELTA holders and more than half of the non-CELTA holders answered that they apply the CLT approach.

The findings of the vignettes indicated that both CELTA and non-CELTA holders focus on developing students' communicative competence, which is the main focus of CLT. The goal of CLT is developing learners' communicative competence (Richards, 2006). This is consistent with what we observed in their classrooms. The classroom observations indicated that all the participants aim to develop their students' communicative abilities through pre-teaching and teaching useful vocabulary and phrases, asking students to brainstorm ideas and encouraging their students to communicate their ideas.

Non-CELTA holders reported that their students should talk more than they (the teachers) talk, and CELTA holders believed their role should be one of a "facilitator" in their EFL classrooms. According to Richards (2006), CLT imposes new roles for teachers as "facilitators". Furthermore, both CELTA and non-CELTA holders support their students in using and communicating in the target language by directly and indirectly correcting

their mistakes. This is consistent with their actual teaching practice as they were very supportive of their students' use of language through indirectly correcting their mistakes.

The classroom observations indicated that both CELTA and non-CELTA holders apply CLT in their EFL classrooms to some extent. Most participants focused more on giving their students pre-communicative activities, but they did not provide them with communicative practice. This is inconsistent with the CLT approach. Littlewood (2002) made a distinction between language activities in CLT in terms of pre-communicative and communicative activities. According to Littlewood (2002), pre-communicative activities are "subordinate", and their aim is to "prepare" students for communicative activities in which they fluently use the language.

5. Results and Discussion of the Survey

5.1 Perceiving CLT

5.1.1 CELTA Holders' Perceptions of CLT

The participants were asked to use a scale to report their perceptions of 19 statements on CLT. The following scale was used: 1) Not at all, 2) I don't know, 3) To a limited extent, 4) To some extent and 5) To a great extent.

Table 1. CELTA holders' perceptions of CLT. Analysis of the first dimension of the survey

#	Item		1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Level
1	One goal of CLT is to help students communicate in English.	Frequency	0	2	2	3	19	4.50	0.95	6	High
		Percent	0	7.7	7.7	11.5	73.1				
2	The goal of CLT is to develop students' communicative competence.	Frequency	0	1	0	5	20	4.69	0.68	3	High
		Percent	0	3.8	0	19.2	76.9				
8	CLT involves using authentic materials in the classroom.	Frequency	0	2	5	5	14	4.19	1.02	12	High
		Percent	0	7.7	19.2	19.2	53.8				
9	Teachers applying CLT are facilitators of the learning process.	Frequency	0	0	2	6	18	4.62	0.64	4	High
		Percent	0	0	7.7	23.1	69.2				
15	CLT is a student-centred approach.	Frequency	0	0	1	5	20	4.73	0.53	2	High
		Percent	0	0	3.8	19.2	76.9				
17	CLT involves maximizing the student talking time and minimizing the teacher talking time.	Frequency	0	0	0	6	20	4.77	0.43	1	High
		Percent	0	0	0	23.1	76.9				

Table 1 shows the 6 of the 19 statements where the CELTA holders allocated the highest percentage to them describing CLT to a great extent. As clear from the table, statements 2, 15 and 17 each received the highest percentage of 76.9%.

5.1.2 Non-CELTA Holders' Perceptions of CLT

The participants were asked to use a scale to report their perceptions of 19 statements on CLT. The following scale was used: 1) Not at all, 2) I don't know, 3) To a limited extent, 4) To some extent and 5) To a great extent.

Table 2. Non-CELTA holders' perceptions of CLT. Analysis of the first dimension of the survey

#	Item		1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Level
1	One goal of CLT is to help students communicate in English.	Frequency	0	1	1	7	35	4.73	0.62	2	High
		Percent	0	2.3	2.3	15.9	79.5				
2	The goal of CLT is to develop students' communicative competence.	Frequency	0	0	1	11	32	4.70	0.51	3	High
		Percent	0	0	2.3	25.0	72.7				
3	CLT means providing students with real and communicative situations to practise the language.	Frequency	0	0	1	10	33	4.73	0.50	1	High
		Percent	0	0	2.3	22.7	75.0				
4	CLT means providing students with authentic practice of the target language.	Frequency	0	1	1	16	26	4.52	0.66	5	High
		Percent	0	2.3	2.3	36.4	59.1				
8	CLT involves using authentic materials in the classroom.	Frequency	0	1	1	11	31	4.35	1.00	9	High
		Percent	0	2.3	2.3	25.0	70.5				
12	CLT means no grammar teaching.	Frequency	0	1	2	15	26	2.82	1.19	19	Medium
		Percent	0	2.3	4.5	34.1	59.1				

Table 2 shows the 6 of the 19 statements where the non-CELTA holders allocated the highest percentages to them describing CLT to a great extent. As clear from the table, statement 1 received the highest percentage of 79.5%.

As seen in the two tables, more than half of both CELTA and non-CELTA holders showed a great understanding of CLT. Moreover, no participants chose option 1, that is *not at all*, and that entails that all participants demonstrate different perceptions of CLT.
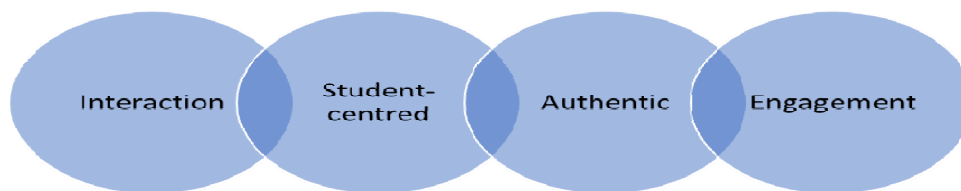

Figure 1. Emerging themes from the CELTA holders' survey

Figure 1 represents four prominent themes that emerged from the survey statements. The themes of engagement and interaction are included in statements 1, 2 and 17. The student-centred theme is contained in statements 9 and 15, and statement 8 encompasses the authentic theme.
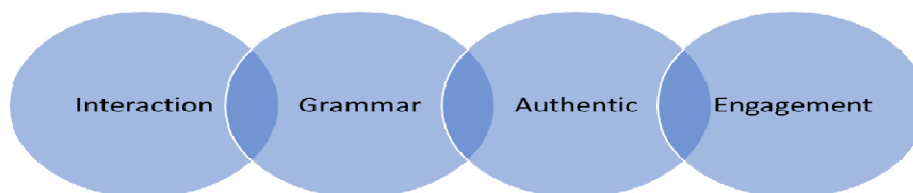

Figure 2. Emerging themes from the non-CELTA holders' survey

Figure 2 represents four prominent themes that emerged from the survey statements. The themes of engagement and interaction are contained in statements 1, 2, 3 and 4. Statement 12 encompasses the grammar theme, and the authentic theme is included in statement 8.

It is clear from the above two figures that both CELTA and non-CELTA holders share three themes: interaction, engagement and authentic. However, they differ with regard to two themes: student-centred for CELTA holders and grammar for non-CELTA holders. One explanation is that CELTA holders are trained to make their classrooms student-centred during the CELTA course. This finding is similar to what Abdulkader (2016) found in her survey. She found that 82.9% of participants reported that CLT is a student-centred approach.

Non-CELTA holders showed some varying perceptions on teaching grammar in a communicative classroom. This is consistent with what Alqahtani (2020) found when he interviewed some EFL teachers about the perfect way to teach grammar. He found that participants have different perceptions of teaching grammar and that two participants reported that grammar is effectively taught in a communicative way, while the other two believed that students need some explicit grammar explanations (Alqahtani, 2020). Nevertheless, this finding is different from what Abdulkader (2016) found in her survey. She found that only 2.9% of participants reported that CLT means no grammar teaching (Abdulkader, 2016).

I asked both groups of participants to define CLT in their own words. They differed in their definitions of CLT. A number of themes were generated from these definitions.

5.1.3 CELTA Holders' Definitions of CLT

CELTA holders defined CLT differently. Eight participants defined CLT as involving interaction in the new language, eight defined CLT as involving communication in the new language, and another eight defined CLT as an approach that allows students to practise and use the target language.
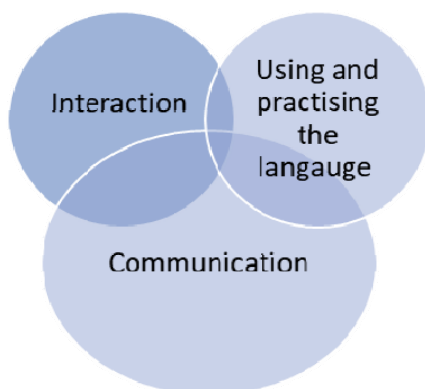

Figure 3. Themes that emerged from CELTA holders' definitions of CLT

Three themes emerged from the participants' definitions of CLT. Interestingly, there is one common theme between their definitions and perceptions of CLT: interaction.

5.1.4 Non-CELTA Holders' Definitions of CLT

Non-CELTA holders varied in their definitions of CLT. Nine participants defined CLT as involving interaction in the classroom. Moreover, 20 participants described CLT as involving communication in the classroom. Seven participants defined CLT as allowing students to practise and use the language, five of whom characterized CLT as providing students with real and authentic situations to practise it.
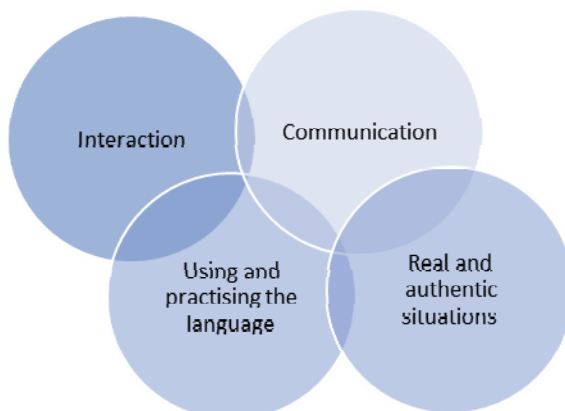

Figure 4. Themes that emerged from non-CELTA holders' definitions of CLT

Four themes emerged from the participants' definitions of CLT. Interestingly, there is one common theme between their definitions and perceptions of CLT: interaction.

Both CELTA and non-CELTA holders included four common themes in their definitions of CLT, and they only differed with regard to one theme, as is clear from the two figures. All the themes they mentioned are actually related to CLT, which means that they demonstrated a great understanding of CLT. This is surprising as we did not expect non-CELTA holders to show such a high level of understanding of CLT. Nevertheless, the theme of communication is similar to what Alqahtani (2020) found when he asked his participants to define CLT. He observed that two participants viewed CLT as focusing on "oral communication" and that one viewed it as concentrating on communication skills (Alqahtani, 2020).

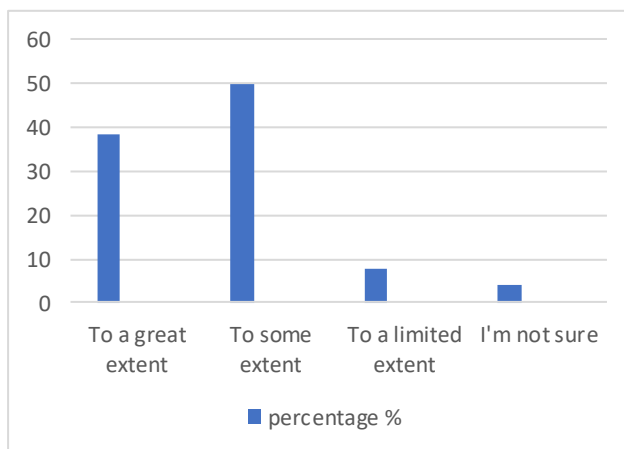*5.2 Implementing CLT in the Tertiary EFL Classroom*

Figure 5. The extent to which CELTA holders implement CLT
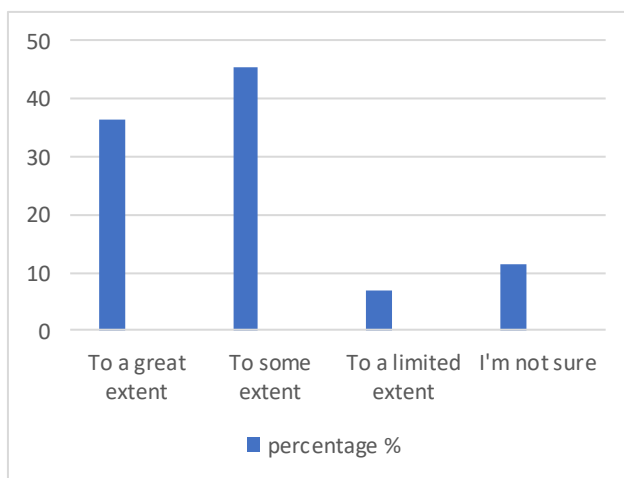
Figure 6. The extent to which non-CELTA holders implement CLT

Figures 5 and 6 show that nearly half of both CELTA and non-CELTA holders apply CLT to some extent. When asked which teaching approaches they use in their classrooms, 76.92% of CELTA holders and 63.64% of non-CELTA holders responded that they use the CLT approach.

This finding is inconsistent with what Abdulkader (2016) found in her survey. She found that 62.9% of her participants implement CLT to a limited extent (Abdulkader, 2016). Nevertheless, this finding is similar to what Anderson (2020) found in his research. He found that most CELTA holders reported changes in their teaching towards "more communicative, learner-centred practices" after taking a CELTA course (Anderson, 2020).

5.3 CELTA and Non-CELTA Holders' CLT Practices

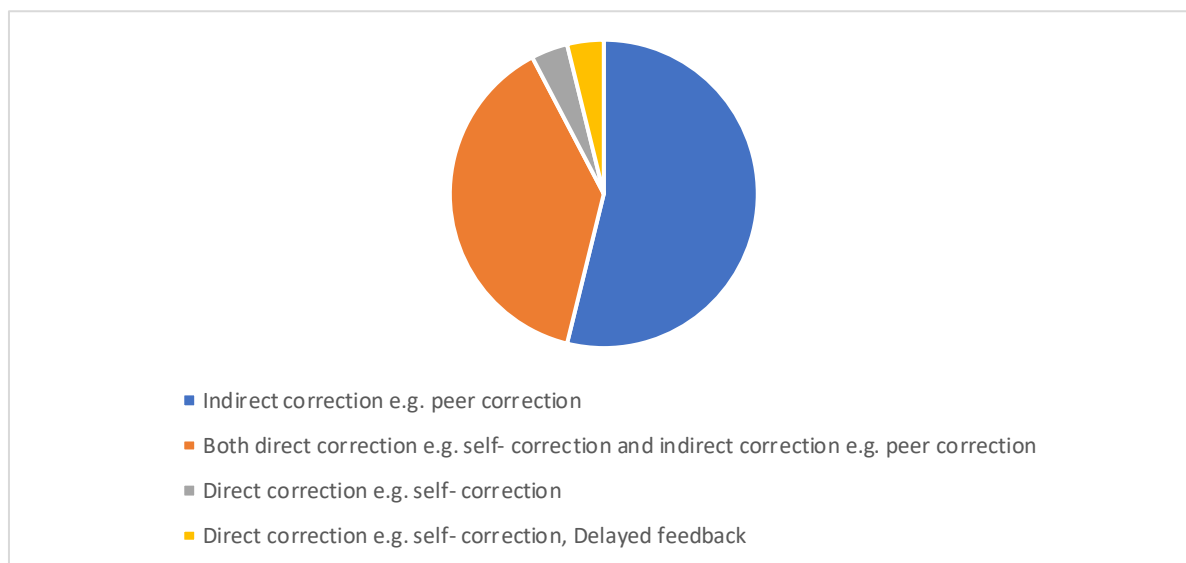Figure 7. Error correction types that CELTA holders apply when addressing their students' errors
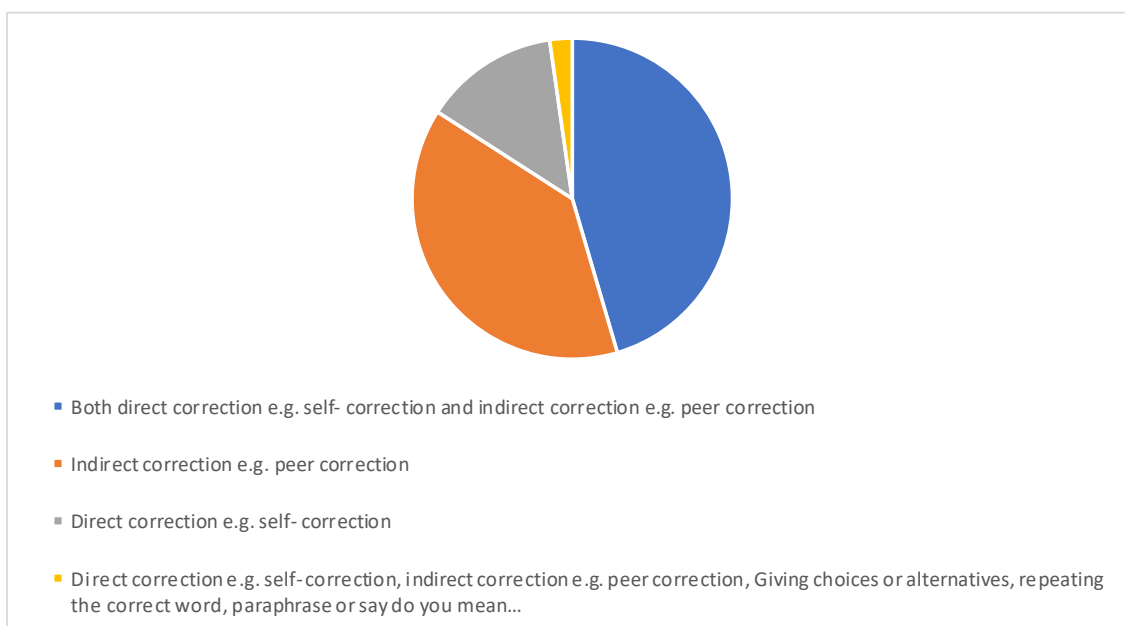
Figure 8. Error correction types that non-CELTA holders apply when correcting their students' errors

Figures 7 and 8 present the CELTA and non-CELTA holders' error correction practices. There is variation in the error correction types they apply when correcting students' mistakes. More than half of the CELTA holders respond with indirect error correction, while nearly half of the non-CELTA holders use both direct and indirect error correction.

Self-correction can help students to be more aware of the language they are using (Scrivener, 2005). According to Scrivener (2005), the teacher can allow other students to help correct a student's error. Therefore, both direct and indirect error correction practices are appropriate in a communicative EFL classroom.

5.3.2 Developing Students' Communicative Competence

Both groups of participants were asked to use a frequency scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often, always) to demonstrate the practices they use in the language learning process.

Table 3. CELTA holders' practices of developing students' communicative competence

#	Item	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Level
		Frequency								
1	Is your classroom a student-centred classroom?	7	16	3			4.15	0.61	3	Sometimes
2	Do you focus on developing students' language fluency?	13	10	3			4.38	0.70	2	Always
3	Do you focus on developing students' language accuracy?	8	11	7			4.04	0.77	4	Sometimes
4	Do you focus on only teaching grammar?	1	2	7	8	8	2.23	1.11	5	Rarely
5	Do you focus on improving your students' communicative competence?	14	10	2			4.46	0.65	1	Always
	Average						3.85	0.77		Sometimes

Table 3 illustrates CELTA holders' practices in terms of developing students' communicative competence. Approximately half of the CELTA holders responded that they focus on improving this skill. This finding implies that half the participants apply the CLT approach. CLT's main focus is on developing students' communicative competence (Harmer, 2001).

Table 4. Non-CELTA holders' practices with regard to developing students' communicative competence

#	Item	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Level
		Frequency								
1	Is your classroom a student-centred classroom?	4	17	19	4		3.45	0.82	4	Sometimes
2	Do you focus on developing students' language fluency?	21	15	7	1		4.26	0.82	2	Always
3	Do you focus on developing students' language accuracy?	12	20	11	1		3.95	0.83	3	Sometimes
4	Do you focus on only teaching grammar?		6	19	14	5	2.57	0.90	5	Sometimes
5	Do you focus on improving your students' communicative competence?	20	18	6			4.27	0.85	1	Always
	Average						3.76	0.84		Often

Table 4 illustrates the non-CELTA holders' practices with regard to developing students' communicative competence. Nearly half of the non-CELTA holders responded that they focus on developing their students' language fluency. This finding implies that half the participants apply the CLT approach. CLT focuses more on fluency and less on accuracy in communication (Harmer, 2001).

5.4 The Language Learning Process

Of the CELTA holders, 23 responded with "yes" to the question of whether they are "co-communicators" and "facilitators" in the language learning process, and 25 participants responded "yes" when asked whether they are "monitors" in the learning process. Furthermore, 33, 36 and 37 non-CELTA holders responded with "yes" to the question of whether they are "co-communicators", "monitors" and "facilitators", respectively, in the language learning process. More than half of the CELTA holders affirmed that their talking time is less than their students' talking time. However, more than half of the non-CELTA holders recognized that their talking time is longer than their students' talking time.

Both the CELTA and non-CELTA holders showed evidence of performing communicative roles in their EFL classrooms through being "co-communicators", "facilitators" and "monitors". Nevertheless, this finding shows that there is a variation in the talking time of both CELTA and non-CELTA holders during the language learning process. The CELTA holders were trained to maximize their students' talking time and minimize their talking time during the lesson to provide students with more opportunity to practise the language (Tang, 2020). This is similar to what Anderson (2020) and Tang (2020) found. Tang (2020) found that two participants reported changes in terms of minimizing their talking time and making their classes more student-centred.
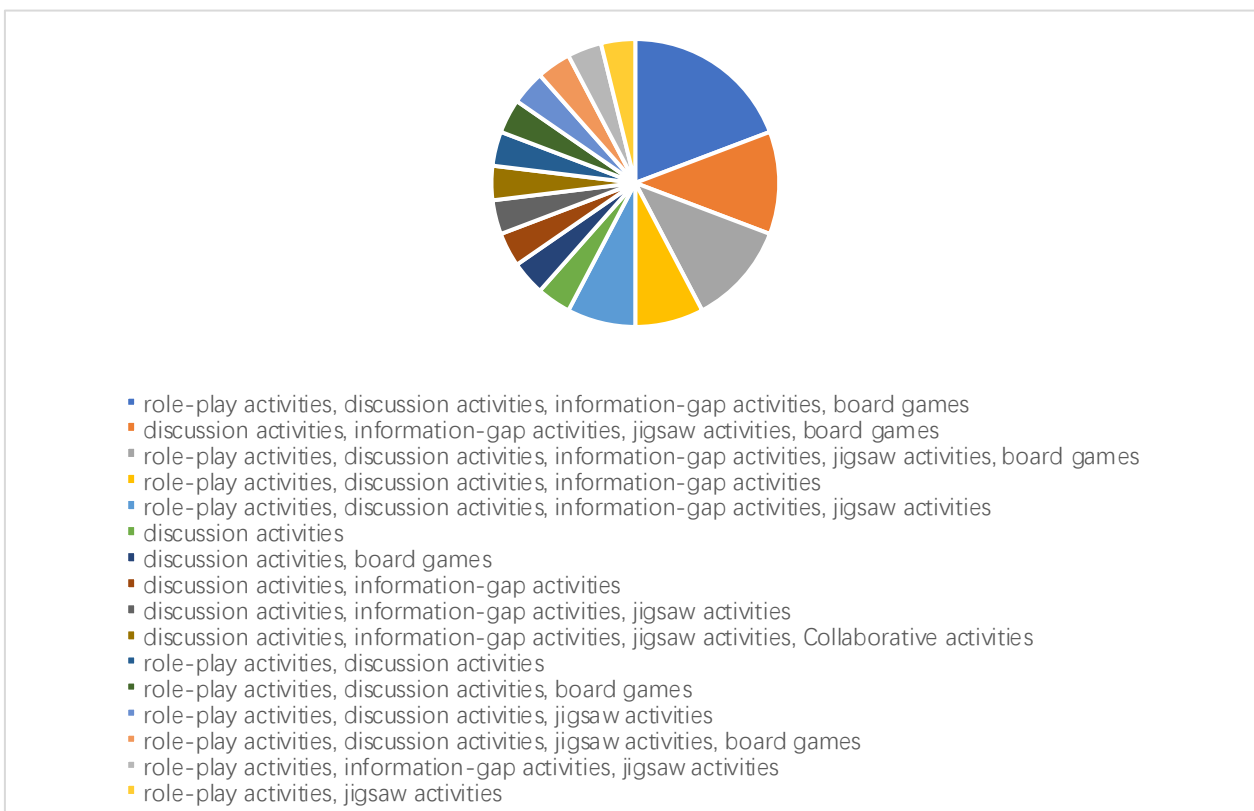
5.5 Communicative Activities

- role-play activities, discussion activities, information-gap activities, board games
- discussion activities, information-gap activities, jigsaw activities, board games
- role-play activities, discussion activities, information-gap activities, jigsaw activities, board games
- role-play activities, discussion activities, information-gap activities
- role-play activities, discussion activities, information-gap activities, jigsaw activities
- discussion activities
- discussion activities, board games
- discussion activities, information-gap activities
- discussion activities, information-gap activities, jigsaw activities
- discussion activities, information-gap activities, jigsaw activities, Collaborative activities
- role-play activities, discussion activities
- role-play activities, discussion activities, board games
- role-play activities, discussion activities, jigsaw activities
- role-play activities, discussion activities, jigsaw activities, board games
- role-play activities, information-gap activities, jigsaw activities
- role-play activities, jigsaw activities

Figure 9. Communicative activities CELTA holders use in their EFL classrooms

- discussion activities, information-gap activities, board games
- role-play activities, discussion activities
- role-play activities, discussion activities, information-gap activities
- discussion activities, information-gap activities
- role-play activities, discussion activities, information-gap activities, jigsaw activities, board games
- discussion activities, board games
- role-play activities, discussion activities, board games
- role-play activities, discussion activities, jigsaw activities
- discussion activities
- discussion activities, information-gap activities, board games, Online games
- discussion activities, information-gap activities, jigsaw activities
- discussion activities, information-gap activities, jigsaw activities, board games
- information-gap activities, jigsaw activities, board games
- role-play activities, discussion activities, information-gap activities, board games
- role-play activities, discussion activities, information-gap activities, jigsaw activities
- role-play activities, discussion activities, jigsaw activities, board games, Movie scenes, videos
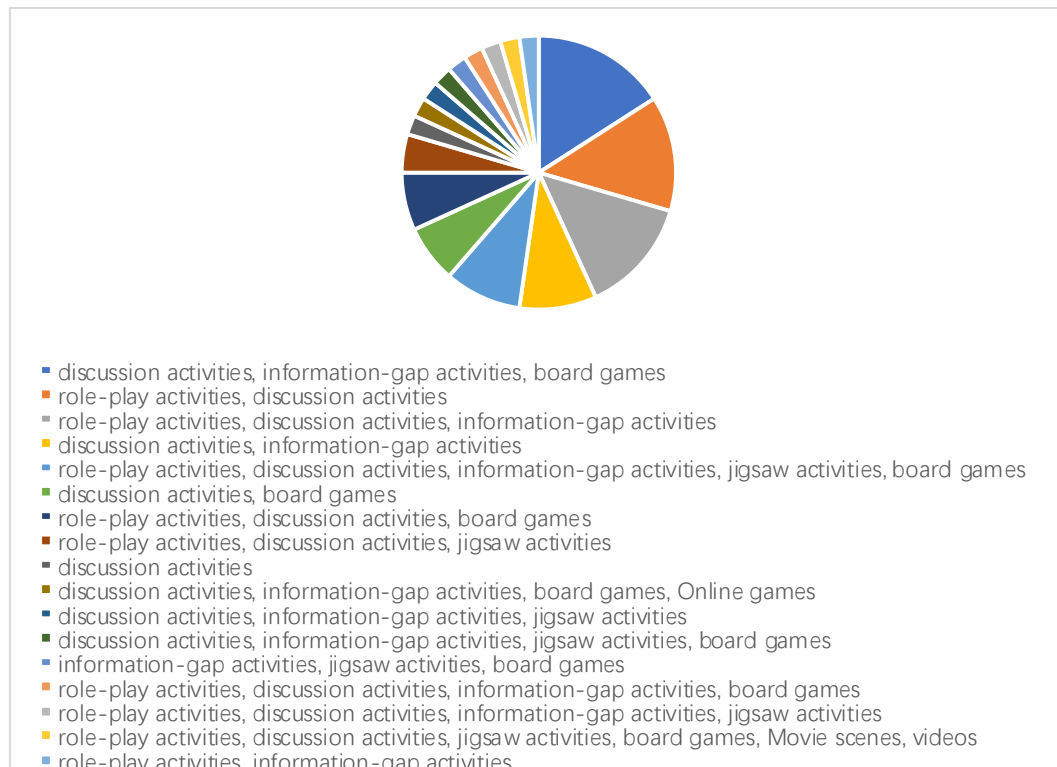- role-play activities, information-gap activities

Figure 10. Communicative activities non-CELTA holders use in their EFL classrooms

The two pie charts above illustrate that most of the participants recognized that they use discussion activities with their students. According to Harmer (2001), there are many activities that come under "the communicative end of the communication continuum" in CLT. Discussion activities are an example of communicative activities. Therefore, this finding provides further evidence that both CELTA and non-CELTA holders apply CLT in their EFL classrooms.

6. Results and Discussion of the Vignettes

A number of themes and sub-themes emerged from both the CELTA and non-CELTA holders' vignettes.

Theme 1: Developing students' communicative competence

I asked the CELTA and non-CELTA holders about how to develop students' communicative competence. All the CELTA holders reported that they apply CLT to develop this skill.

- "I concentrate on CLT as the teaching methodology ..."
- "Task-based language teaching is a student-centred approach to second language instruction."
- "I rely on communicative methods, which make the learner a positive and active participant towards what he/she learns."
- "I try to implement the communicative approach in all my lessons as the main focus is on students using the target language (TL)."

This finding is consistent with what Abdulkader (2016) observed in her interviews. She found that most participants positively responded that CLT helps improve students' communicative competence (Abdulkader, 2016).

According to three of the CELTA holders, applying a student-centred approach is helpful for developing students' communicative competence.

- "… while taking a step back as a facilitator and not as the centre of the class …"
- "It is a branch of the communicative approach, wherein activities focus on having students use the actual target language that they might encounter in the real world."
- "I found that the best way to teach is to adopt a student-centred approach and its interests ..."

This finding is also similar to what a participant reported in Abdulkader (2016). She observed that CLT develops students' communicative competence and leads to a more student-centred approach (Abdulkader, 2016). Furthermore, this finding is similar to what Anderson (2020) found. He identified that CELTA holders reported changes in their teaching practices towards a more student-centred approach (Anderson, 2020).

Three CELTA holders mentioned that it is useful for students to participate in group and pair activities to develop their communicative abilities.

- "… brainstorming ideas alone, then they work in pairs and after that they share their ideas in groups …"
- "Put the students in pairs and allow them to have a timely discussion about the question you posted."
- "... activities students love are as follows: small groupwork, role play, presentations, projects and classroom discussions."

This is also consistent with what Anderson (2020) and Tang (2020) found, in that CELTA holders reported "a movement towards" using group or pair activities.

Two non-CELTA holders reported how they ask questions to encourage students to communicate.

- "I change a question in the book to address the students and encourage them to communicate more with me about the subject."
- "I ask open questions such as what if ...? to encourage students to use the language to convey their answers."

Three non-CELTA holders reported that they use games and activities that encourage students to communicate.

- "I use games and activities that encourage students to talk and share their opinions."
- "If an activity is about festivals, or parties, I directly ask them about their own personal ideas, party preferences and give them my own examples related to the topic. Point out the similarities and differences and help them share as many ideas as possible."
- "Also, many activities use platforms for speaking."

Similarly, Alqahtani (2020) found that all four participants used many kinds of activities, including communicative ones.

Theme 2: Teaching grammar

I asked the CELTA holders to report on how to teach grammar according to their CELTA training. we also asked the non-CELTA holders to describe how they teach grammar in a more communicative way. All the CELTA holders explained how they use pre- or main tasks based on reading or listening before teaching grammar.

- "I always introduce grammar after a pre-task for context. It may also be introduced after a main task, such as a listening or reading activity."
- "... Pose a direct question related to the context. Give an example … Let the students discuss. Put the students in pairs and allow them to have a timely discussion about the question you posed."
- "Most of the time after a CELTA round, I use the first method, especially since it links the linguistic context, concepts and ideas to the grammar itself, which gives meaning to what the student learns instead of abstracting the language and dividing it into parts .I take care to clarify the form, pronunciation and meaning of the target language through examples and contexts ..."
- "According to Riddell, when teaching grammar, students need to understand the meaning within the given context. For higher levels, my grammar lessons can be presented using texts or recordings."

Three CELTA holders reported how they clarify the meaning, form and pronunciation when they teach grammar.

- "After the activity, I ask plenty of concept checking questions (CCQs) while explaining the form, meaning and then the pronunciation."
- "I take care to clarify the form, pronunciation and meaning of the target language through examples and contexts ..."
- "… students need to understand the meaning within the given context. They need to know the natural pronunciation of the language. They need to know how to form the language (how it is constructed). This is often referred to as MPF."

These two findings are consistent with the CELTA training. The technique of clarifying the meaning, form and pronunciation reported by CELTA holders is different from what Tang (2020) found. She observed that one participant explained how he has used this technique since before taking the CELTA course (Tang, 2020).

Two non-CELTA holders communicated how they provide students with real-life situations when teaching grammar.

- "Usually, what I do for grammar lessons is place students in real-life situations."

- "I ask them about what they do every day or to tell me how they spend their days. Thus, students normally use the present tense naturally."

This is similar to what Alqahtani (2020) found when interviewing participants. He identified that the responses of participants provide students with everyday language situations, which are helpful in acquiring the language (Alqahtani, 2020).

Two non-CELTA holders responded by describing how they write examples on the board and explain them to their students when they teach grammar.

- "Put example sentences on the board, and make students help me act them out."

- "I write their sentences on the board; then, I explain that the tense is used to talk about habits and facts and demonstrate the rule for forming a grammatical sentence ..."

This is also similar to what Alqahtani (2020) illustrated in his research findings. He found that two participants reported that teaching grammar explicitly is effective (Alqahtani, 2020).

Theme 3: Teachers' roles in the language learning process

I asked the CELTA and non-CELTA holders to describe their roles as teachers in their EFL classrooms. Three CELTA holders mentioned how they take the role of a facilitator in the language learning process.

- "In my class, my role is that of a facilitator, to monitor the learners while they work in pairs or groups."

- "This is one of the lessons I learned from the wonderful CELTA course, based on which my role became that of an advisor and a facilitator for the students instead of one involving being dominant at the time of the lecture."

- "My role is definitely that of a facilitator to help students communicate in the target language."

According to Richards (2006), CLT imposes new roles for both teachers and students. He explained that teachers take the role of a "facilitator" rather than being a role model with regard to the correct use of the language (Richards, 2006).

Two non-CELTA holders wrote about teacher talking time and student talking time. They believe that students should talk more than their teachers.

- "I believe in having a teacher talking time (TTT) vs student talking time (STT) of 20:80, or at least that's the goal. I only get involved when there needs to be some engagement initiated through CCQs, eliciting and concept creation."

- "I still use teacher talking time more that student talking time to try to explain and clarify meanings for the students based on the level I am teaching. 'A' level students help me increase student time to make them more involved in the teaching process."

Interestingly, this finding related to non-CELTA holders is similar to what Anderson (2020) and Tang (2020) observed about CELTA holders. They found that most CELTA holders reported that they minimized their own talking time and maximized their students' opportunities to talk by providing them with communicative activities.

Theme 4: Error correction practices

I asked the CELTA and non-CELTA holders to describe their error correction practices during a productive task. All the CELTA holders reported how they correct their students' mistakes in an indirect way.

- "If an error is made by most of the students in the class, then I teach it again, making sure to highlight the error."

- "I use indirect correction, repeating back what the student has said with the correct use of grammar and pronunciation."

- "It is possible for me to intervene indirectly by giving examples similar to the information produced by the student, asking the student to compare between the error-free model and his/her model and to correct himself/herself as well."

- "I do not immediately correct students' mistakes during fluent speech. When students finish a productive task, I write down any mistakes (sentences) made by the learners on the board (with no names included) and ask the students to find the mistakes in each sentence."

Three CELTA holders described now they correct students' mistakes directly.

- "I use direct feedback to help students correct their errors by providing the correct linguistic form."

- "For the direct method, it is better to rely on an error correction code agreed upon with the students to help them discover each error by putting a line under it; the student should try to notice it on his/her own or with the help of the rest of his/her peers". As for wrong attempts resulting from a student's lack of knowledge, it is my role to explain to him/her the correct model before attempting a direct method ..."

- "As for correcting written work, I provide learners with appropriate written feedback."

Two non-CELTA holders reported how they allow peer error correction, which is an indirect error correction practice.

- "I also have higher level students do peer error correction."

- "… or let them exchange their writings and let their peers try to correct them."

Both direct and indirect error correction is helpful when giving students feedback on their use of language. According to Richards (2017), "positive feedback" can help learners to communicate and can facilitate the learning process. It is clear from these findings that teachers support their students' use of the language and provide them with the necessary feedback to help them communicate appropriately in the target language.

7. Results and Discussion of the Classroom Observations

There are seven themes and sub-themes that are common between participants when observing their classrooms. Regarding the first theme, we found that most of the students communicated and responded through the chat box. Only a small number unmuted themselves and spoke through the microphone. This might be because of the lack of motivation from teachers or the unfamiliarity of online learning. Moreover, interaction patterns were limited to those between the teacher and the students for all the observed teachers. They did not give their students any pair- or groupwork in the lessons we observed, although Blackboard Collaborate, an LMS platform, is equipped with a breakout rooms feature. Nevertheless, all the observed teachers tried to facilitate the language learning process for students and co-communicate with them. Students communicated their ideas through the chat box and sometimes through the microphone.

Concerning the second theme, we found that all the observed teachers provided their students with pre-communicative activities to practise the language, namely filling gaps and matching and joining sentences. However, we observed that most of them did not provide students with communicative situations to practise the language as they mainly focused on pre-communicative activities. Although there are many communicative activities in the coursebooks, the teachers just skipped them or only explained them very quickly. Only one teacher, a CELTA holder, conducted discussions with the students about some topics and allowed them to practise the language.

As for grammar teaching, we noticed that all the teachers taught grammar through either a reading text or a listening text. Interestingly, they did not report teaching grammar through a reading or listening context, but they were observed to do so in their classrooms. Therefore, they taught grammar through a context that is consistent with the CLT approach. Furthermore, we noticed that all the observed teachers corrected students mistakes indirectly.

I found that all of them shared the same teaching goal of developing students' communicative competence. All the teachers pre-taught their students some important vocabulary before listening or reading to increase their vocabulary reservoirs. All of them asked the students some questions to brainstorm with regard to the ideas in the lessons. Moreover, most of them taught some vocabulary or useful phrases for talking about a specific topic in the lessons. All of them encouraged the students to communicate their thoughts and share their ideas.

One CELTA holder's teaching practice was consistent with what she reported in her vignette. The other CELTA holder's teaching practice was consistent with what he reported in his vignette, except for not providing students

with communicative activities. In his classroom, students were not engaged despite his continuous encouragement and efforts. He used some motivating activities and games, such as Kahoot and pictures of local festivals. The reason for the students not being engaged might have been due to their level of English. The CELTA holder who was consistent in terms of her actual and reported teaching practice was teaching English to EMI (English as a medium of instruction) students. They were engaged and motivated to learn during the whole lesson because they needed English for their majors. However, the other CELTA holder was teaching English to non-EMI students.

The non-CELTA holders' teaching practices were inconsistent with what they reported in their vignettes regarding developing students' communicative competence. During classroom observations, they did not provide students with communicative activities to practise the target language. It is clear from these inconsistencies that non-CELTA holders need more formal training on applying CLT in their EFL classrooms.

The findings of the classroom observations were inconsistent with what Alqahtani (2020) found in his research. Alqahtani (2020) observed that three out of four EFL teachers were consistent in terms of what they reported and what they practised in their EFL secondary classrooms. The findings of his study are different from those of the current one because the participants in this study are teaching in a different context. Also, the participants in this research are CELTA and non-CELTA holders. Non-CELTA holders' inconsistencies between what they do in their classrooms and what they report might be a result of the lack of training on applying CLT.

8. Conclusion

This research project focused on investigating the lived experiences of NNESTs who do and do not have a CELTA qualification in terms of conceptualizing and implementing CLT in the Saudi tertiary EFL context. The findings showed that both CELTA and non-CELTA holders demonstrated a reasonable understanding of CLT but that they only implement CLT to some extent.

9. Limitations

This research project has encountered a number of limitations. Firstly, this research project was conducted in a short period of time that resulted in only performing one classroom observation for each participant. Secondly, the number of CELTA and non-CELTA holders whose classrooms were observed was limited to four teachers. The reason behind this is that the other participants whom we planned to observe had finished their courses early because of the Royal Decree to conclude the second semester before Eid. We were only able to contact four teachers and observe one class of each. Thirdly, the vignette writing was limited to seven participants, four of whom were CELTA holders, and three of whom were non-CELTA holders. One of the non-CELTA holders withdrew from writing a vignette, and we could not replace him because of the limited time available for our research project.

10. Implications and Recommendations

Our research project provides some deep insights into how Saudi and non-Saudi NNESTs who have or have not completed a CELTA qualification conceptualize CLT in an actual EFL setting. It draws profound understanding from their reported and lived practices of perceiving and applying CLT. Moreover, it shows policy makers and other EFL teachers how effective the CELTA training is in terms of conceptualizing and applying CLT in the Saudi EFL context. Nevertheless, it reveals how non-CELTA holders demonstrate their understanding of often fail to successfully implement CLT.

Classroom observations showed that most CELTA and non-CELTA holders do not provide their students with communicative activities in terms of the language despite the coursebooks being filled with them. Therefore, this indicates that both CELTA and non-CELTA holders need more training sessions and encouragement to apply communicative activities in their EFL classrooms. Furthermore, the classroom observations illustrated that none of the participants gave their students group- or pairwork, which indicates that they need more training on including such activities in their online classes.

Our research project also provides curriculum designers with a clear picture about how effective CLT is in terms of enhancing students' communicative competence. The vignettes and classroom findings showed how both CELTA and non-CELTA holders focus on improving their students' communicative abilities through applying the CLT approach in their classrooms.

Some topics for further research have emerged from our research project. It would be beneficial to conduct gender-based research on EFL teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding the usefulness of the CELTA training in terms of conceptualizing and applying CLT. Moreover, investigating how effective the CLT approach is in relation to developing students' communicative competence is worthy of further study.

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