



Available online at:
<http://www.udead.org.tr/journal>
**International Association of Research
in Foreign Language Education and Applied Linguistics**
ELT Research Journal
2015, 4(1), 43-55
ISSN: 2146-9814

Examining the role of context in the implementation of CLT in Turkey

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Abstract

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been a major source of influence on foreign/second language teaching since 1970s (Richards, 2006). Despite the popularity of CLT, there have been opposing views on the appropriateness and feasibility of implementing it worldwide due to the particularity of each language-teaching context. The present study aimed to find out the current factors that may promote and/or hinder the effective implementation of CLT by Turkish EFL teachers working in state and private schools. Data collected through interviews with 6 EFL teachers indicated that while teachers' understanding of CLT and students' willingness to communicate in English were positive aspects in the implementation of CLT, factors such as assessment focusing on students' knowledge of English rather than use of English, crowded classes and insufficient teaching resources had a negative effect on the implementation of CLT in Turkey.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), EFL, Teacher views, Turkish context

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Introduction

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been a major source of influence on foreign/second language teaching since 1970s (Richards, 2006). While earlier views of language teaching, such as Direct Method and Audiolingual Method, focused on learners' mastery of grammatical competence, CLT has shifted attention to communicative purposes for language use and it made 'communicative competence' (Hymes, 1972) the goal of language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Accordingly, considerable human and monetary resources have been used around the world to provide effective language teaching for the communicative needs of learners (Savignon, 2002). Turkey became one of those countries with the introduction of CLT for the first time in foreign language teaching curriculum in 1997 (Kırkgöz, 2008). For the nationwide implementation of the new curriculum, the Ministry of National Education (MNE) has provided in-service training for English teachers and collaborated with foreign associations such as the British Council and United States Information Agency to update teachers' classroom practices (Kırkgöz, 2007).

Among the commonly cited dimensions of CLT are its learner-centered, experiential view of teaching and emphasis on contextualized language. Activities that are compatible with CLT involve learners to complete tasks while negotiating meaning and exchanging information through the medium of target language. Consequently, CLT redefined teachers' roles. Its principles and procedures require teachers to move away from a teacher-centered practice to learner-centered practice. CLT teachers are also expected to act as facilitators, group process managers, needs analysts and counselors (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Despite the popularity of CLT all over the world, there have been opposing views on the appropriateness and feasibility of implementing it due to the particularity of each language-teaching context (Bax, 2003); and there have been various constraints on the adoption of CLT in non-Western contexts mainly due to the local culture of teaching and learning (Hu, 2002; Hiep, 2007). For this reason, this paper aimed to examine English teachers' views of CLT within the local culture of teaching and learning in Turkey, as a non-western context, to uncover the factors that have not only negative but also positive impact on the implementation of CLT by focusing on two teaching contexts, private and state secondary school.

Literature Review

Regarding the implementation of CLT in EFL contexts, research studies conducted in various countries including Turkey, have identified 'teacher' and 'teaching context' related reasons for the failure of effective CLT implementation. (Bataineh, Bataineh & Thabet, 2011; Cimen, 2008; Hunutlu, 2011; Ozsevik, 2010; Rahimi & Bahram, 2010; Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006; Sato, 2002; Shawer, 2013; Wong, 2012).

Focusing on the 'teacher' factor, Razmjoo and Riazi (2006) aimed to explore high school and institute teachers' attitudes toward CLT and the extent to which the teachers of these two institutions reflect their attitudes in their teaching practices. A questionnaire consisting of five main factors including group work, quality and quantity of error correction, the place and importance of grammar, the role and contribution of the learners, and the role of the teacher, was administered to 100 teachers who were also observed by the researchers to

see whether and how their practices reflected their stated beliefs. The data indicated that Iranian teachers had a high and positive attitude toward CLT and its principles, but most of them attached no importance to CLT and very few of them gave room for CLT in real practice. A similar study conducted by Cimen (2008) in Turkey, examined senior and junior English language teachers' awareness of CLT principles. He found that the senior language teachers lacked theoretical background of CLT compared to junior language teachers and he concluded that, although the senior language teachers started to work in the very middle of the impact of CLT in Turkey, they were not cognizant enough of CLT theory.

In another teacher-focused study, Bataineh et al. (2011) used a 25-item diagnostic true/false test to assess 172 teachers' knowledge of CLT and observed 47 teachers to learn about their classroom practices. They found that although Yemeni teachers were knowledgeable of the principles of CLT, their classroom behaviors did not always reflect this knowledge and they had a tendency to resort to structure-based practices. Similarly, Wong (2012) explored the relationship between second language educators' perceptions and their implementations of CLT by examining six instructors teaching Spanish in the United States. The results indicated that the majority of the teachers did not understand what exactly CLT meant, but agreed that a communicative approach could facilitate students' learning.

Taking teacher-factor into account, Shower (2013) investigated why CLT fails to develop students' communicative competence in certain contexts and hence examined two adult educators' practices. The results of the study indicated that teachers' misapplications of CLT principles were the cause of failure. Shower commented, "Although it was noncommunicative teaching that failed..., researchers mistakenly accuse CLT. Indeed, CLT did not fail. It was the teachers ... who made it fail and it was the teachers who actually failed." (p.25). Despite due to the limited number of participants its results may not be generalizable to other contexts, this study also pointed to the teachers' potential impact for CLT failures. Shower (2013) recommended that in-service teacher training programs should offer communicative training that mixes and balances theory and practice.

With a similar focus, Sato (2002) investigated Japanese high school English teachers' understanding of CLT and the communicative orientation of their lessons. The results indicated that the teachers' instruction was mostly focused on grammar teaching and translation, and they refused to implement CLT in their teaching because they lacked support to develop their knowledge of teaching communicatively. It was suggested that CLT teachers need continued education about how to implement CLT.

Ozsevik (2010) dealt with the difficulties and challenges that Turkish teachers faced in the implementation of CLT practices. Data were collected from sixty-one EFL teachers teaching at primary and secondary levels through an online questionnaire, and semi-structured and informal interviews. The results showed that in implementing CLT, teachers faced with many difficulties stemming from four sources: the teacher, the students, the educational system, and CLT itself. Moreover, despite showing keen interest in change and being eager to identify with CLT, Turkish teachers were not optimistic about the complete adoption of CLT. Similarly, 111 Turkish teachers in Hunutlu's (2011) study indicated that despite holding positive beliefs about CLT, they could not implement CLT effectively. Teachers in the study reported that they had a number of difficulties in the use of communicative activities such as deficiency of suitable textbooks, materials and equipment, and limited teaching hours.

Along the same line, Mowlaie and Rahimi (2010) examined the differences between what Iranian teachers think they did in their classrooms regarding CLT principles and they actually did. A questionnaire was administered to 100 EFL teachers who were randomly selected from among 600 teachers in 12 different branches of a language school in Tehran; and 30 of the teachers were observed in their teaching environment and 25 teachers were interviewed later. The results showed that the correlation between what the teachers believed about CLT principles and what they believed they did in their classrooms regarding those principles was quite high. In contrast, the class observation of the teachers showed that they did not apply some of CLT principles. Teachers stated in the interview that they welcomed CLT but they had their own reasons to depart from those principles: Iranian context, teachers' limited proficiency in CLT and grammar-based university entrance exam.

Taking both the factors that promote and hinder CLT implementation into account, Chang's (2011) study aimed to incorporate Taiwanese teachers' voices in adopting communicative language curriculum. The participants were 8 teachers from two universities in Taiwan; and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. The results of the study showed that while factors such as teachers' professional training on CLT, students' willingness to participate in class, appropriate curriculum, sufficient teaching resources and modified exams promoted the implementation of CLT, inadequate teacher training, students' low level of English proficiency, test-oriented teaching, large classes and limited teaching hours were found as the factors having negative effect on the implementation of CLT.

The studies presented above have to some extent displayed the common problems that were experienced during the implementation of CLT in different teaching contexts. However, a comparison of teachers working at state and private schools in terms of their CLT practices has not been a concern for many studies. Considering circumstances in Turkey favoring private over state schools such as the number of English teaching hours per week and availability and variety of teaching resources, such comparison seemed to be a relevant undertaking as previous research had indicated that limited teaching hours and lack of appropriate resources appear to be among the major challenges in effective implementation of CLT. Thus this study aimed to discover and compare factors that promote and hinder CLT implementation of Turkish EFL teachers working at state and private schools.

According to the research aim, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What factors promote the implementation of CLT by state and private secondary school Turkish EFL teachers?
2. What factors hinder the implementation of CLT by state and private secondary school Turkish EFL teachers?

Methodology

Participants and research settings

The present study focused on EFL teachers who worked at two different settings, namely state and private secondary schools. In the state school setting, one male and two female teachers (SST1, SST2, SST3) teaching at different grade levels (6th, 7th, 8th respectively) were asked to participate in the study. The ages of the teachers ranged between 25 and 27. All teachers had BA degrees in Foreign Language Education; one of them was

pursuing her master degree in ELT. They were teaching English between 24-29 class hours per week. The teaching experience of the participants ranged from three to five years. In each grade, there were four English classes every week, conducted with three different textbooks chosen by the MNE. The assessment system consisted of written exams prepared by the class teachers and a standardized test that was administered nationwide by the MNE once per semester.

The second research setting was a private secondary school from which three female EFL teachers (PST1, PST2, PST3) participated in the study. The participants' ages ranged between 24 and 27 and they all had BA degrees in ELT; one was doing her masters in sociology while another one had DELTA certificate. Additionally, the teaching experience of all three participants ranged from two to five years. Each teacher was teaching at a different grade level (6th, 7th, 8th respectively) and each of them was teaching 21 to 24 hours every week. In each grade, there were eight English classes every week and different series of the same textbook, *Activate!*, were being used. The students were assessed for each core language skill separately.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data for the study were collected through semi-structured interviews. The purposes behind the use of interview as the method of data collection are that it allows the interviewer to pursue in-depth information related to the topic and probe follow-up questions. It also allows capturing both verbal and non-verbal cues, and clarifying respondents' interpretations of questions.

In the interview, mainly two open-ended questions were used to understand interviewees' perspectives regarding the factors that affect the implementation of CLT positively or negatively in their teaching context. These two broad questions were prepared with the aim of tapping into teachers' views without leading or limiting them. A secondary purpose was to discover teachers' understanding of CLT as revealed by their comments.

The interviews were conducted in Turkish, which was the preference of all interviewees. Interviews were conducted individually and took approximately 25 minutes. Interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of the participants. The data then was transcribed and translated into English by the researchers. To ensure reliability and accuracy, the researchers asked each participant to review and approve the transcripts.

To establish reliability in data coding, transcribed data were analyzed by the researchers through the framework developed by Miles and Huberman (1994). The model has three stages for qualitative data analysis. First stage is 'data reduction' which refers to eliminating irrelevant information and coding the raw data into conceptual categories. Second stage, 'data display', is the representation of the data in form of a table or chart and the last stage, 'conclusion drawing', is ensuring the validity of the results through referring to field notes and developing conclusions about the study. Following this model, the first step in the analysis of the data in the present study was the study of the transcriptions to identify and classify the comments as negative or positive factors in the application of CLT principles in the classes. Raters were the two researchers in this study, who individually completed this process and had a meeting to compare their classifications. With the classified instances, the agreement rate among the raters was over 90%. Then, each rater examined the relationships

between different codes carefully and placed the codes with a similar nature into major categories, as demonstrated in Table 1. The major categories were adopted from Chang's (2011) study, in which the researcher categorized his findings basing on Li's (1998, as cited in Chang, 2011) factors influencing implementation of CLT. He categorized the factors as *teacher factors* (e. g. *teachers' professional training*), *student factors* (e.g. *students' need to use English*), *educational system factors* (e.g. *school support*) and *CLT factors* (e.g. *lack of English environment*). An interrater reliability analysis using the Cohen's Kappa statistic was performed to determine consistency among the raters. The analysis showed that interrater agreement was substantial, with Kappa=0.81 ($p<.001$). Finally, each pattern was reexamined to ensure whether it truly reflected the nature of its supporting data.

Table 1
Categories, Emerging Themes and Codes

	Key categories	Key themes	Main codes
Positive factors	Teacher Factors	Teachers' knowledge of CLT	CLT supports a more creative approach
			The students have to use language productively
	Student Factors	Students' willingness to communicate Students' willingness to participate in classroom activities	CLT emphasizes interaction
			Students learn better when they are active
			Providing real communication chances
			Students should express their ideas in English
			The easiness of leading communicative activities in English with the students
			Able to do some group/pair work for different tasks
			Pair work is appealing for the students
			The students are eager to take part in activities
CLT factors	Sufficient teaching resources	The students love communication activities.	
		The students have a strong language background	
Negative factors	Educational System Factors	Test-oriented teaching	Helpful textbook and teacher's guide
			The coursebook including activities supporting CLT
			Given importance to memorization techniques for the standardized tests
			Exams testing grammatical competence and vocabulary knowledge
	CLT factors	Insufficient teaching resources	The school management emphasizing students' success in national exams
			Dealing with only grammar topics for the exam
			Limited teaching hours
			Insufficient time to do group work.
CLT factors	Insufficient teaching resources	Insufficient time to correct the errors	
		Crowded classes	
CLT factors	Insufficient teaching resources	Not able to pay attention to the learning needs of each student	

		Impossibility to listen, follow or to correct the mistakes of the whole class
		Some desired activities leading communication can not be achieved easily
		The number of the students in determining of the applicability of the method
CLT Factors	Lack of teaching materials	No materials helping apply CLT in the classes
Student Factors	Students' unwillingness to communicate	Great difficulty in making some students speak Students' lack of confidence to communicate

Results

The present study was conducted to understand the factors that had an impact on the implementation of CLT by Turkish EFL teachers in two different contexts, state school and private school. The results are presented below under each research question together with related quotes of the teachers.

Factors that promote the implementation of CLT in state and private schools

The review of interview texts of state and private secondary school teachers resulted in three categories: *teacher factors*, *student factors* and *CLT factors*.

Teacher factor found in the data, promoting the implementation of CLT was identified as *teachers' knowledge of CLT* (SST1, SST2, PST2). Two teachers from state school and one teacher from private school addressed their knowledge about CLT approach.

SST1: For me; the implementation of CLT in teaching English supports a more creative approach to my teaching techniques. When I apply CLT, I can attract the students' attention easily. Also; the fact that the students in a communicative class have to use language productively and fast in random dialogues or texts is a great attribution to my teaching abilities.

SST2: In my opinion, Communicative Language Teaching emphasizes interaction in foreign language teaching. Because, as English language teachers, we can easily see the fact that students learn better when they are actively involved in language learning. As active learning is more effective than passive learning, the usage of CLT is inevitable for language teachers, especially for primary school teachers.

PST2: I usually try to use authentic materials for English speaking practice as my students are not aware of the importance of communication skills. Making dialogues with authentic topics and materials provides real communication chances. To show the importance of language communication to my students, I organize Skype conferences with the native speakers in English. The students who have really strong grammatical competence in English cannot speak properly. So, they understand why we have to learn communication skills in our lessons. To me, students should be given an opportunity to express their ideas and opinions in the target language. Using English games is another way for me to teach communication skills. Games are important because they have certain features in common with real communicative events.

These comments indicate that teachers associate CLT with student centered teaching, active involvement of students, using authentic materials and games, promoting meaningful purposes for using the target language. Both in state and private schools, teachers are aware of the CLT principles and they have enough theoretical knowledge about CLT, which may help them maintain a practice in harmony with CLT principles.

Regarding student factors promoting the implementation of CLT, the findings related to students were identified as *students' willingness to communicate* (SST3) and *students' willingness to participate in activities* (SST1, SST3, PST1, PST2), *the proficiency level of the students* (PST1).

One of the state secondary school teachers addressed her students' willingness to communicate as a factor promoting CLT in her class. She stated:

SST3: Sometimes, it is easier for me to lead communicative activities in English as it is directly related to students' willingness to communicate. ...Furthermore, I sometimes choose a topic from the unit in the coursebook and want my students to make comments on it focusing on both good and bad sides. For this aim, I prefer interesting topics for the students at that age. That is useful most of the time as they want to make contribution to the class discussion even if they speak a few words.

With regard to students' willingness to participate in activities, four of the interviewees commented that their students showed enthusiasm for participating in communicative activities and were eager to have a part in group/pair work.

SST1: I can do some group/pair work for different tasks. Generally the groups are made up of 2-6 students. I talk to them face to face about their errors. I want them to prepare an advertisement of a product they invented, for example.

SST3: As our classes involve more than 45 students, I apply pair work which is more appealing for them. In these kinds of activities, students feel more comfortable in speaking English with their peers although their speech is limited to a few sentences.

PST1: My students are eager to take part in activities related to vocabulary items that are presented as an introduction to units in the book.

PST2: My students love learning vocabulary in communication activities.

These two themes identified as student factors were positive beliefs of teachers about their students. The willingness of students to communicate and participate in class activities were stated as the factors that help them implement CLT in their classes.

One private school teacher addressed her students' proficiency level as a promoting factor for the implementation of CLT.

PST1: My students have a strong language background that they got in their previous learning experiences and this helped me a lot for applying CLT in my classes. They are good at using the language and they are aware why they need to communicate in English. They were able to understand tasks, instructions and work in pairs or groups to handle the given task.

As a CLT factor, the private school teachers reported *teaching resources* (PST1, PST3) helped them to implement CLT effectively. Two teachers stated:

PST1: The textbook and teacher's guide we use are very helpful for me. We have also videos related to the topics we cover during the units. I can easily organize speaking activities using those videos.

PST3: The course book includes activities supporting me to apply CLT approach.

The comments above show that private school teachers had positive beliefs about teaching resources as they could benefit from them in the implementation of CLT. Teachers from the state school did not mention teaching resources as a positively contributing factor.

Factors that hinder the implementation of CLT in state and private schools

In relation to the second research question, the analysis of data gathered through interviews resulted in three categories that the factors fell into: *educational system factors*, *CLT factors* and *student factors*.

Factors related to the educational system in Turkey, hindering the implementation of CLT reported by the teachers were identified as *test-oriented teaching* (SST1, PST1, PST2, PST3), *limited teaching hours* (SST2, SST3) and *crowded classes* (SST1, SST2, SST3, PST1).

One of the state secondary school teachers and three private secondary school teachers addressed test-oriented teaching as a problem that hinders CLT in their classes. They clearly stated:

SST1: In the educational system of Turkey, it is given much importance to memorization techniques to become successful in the standardized tests like SBS, YGS, and etc. This leads students to do rote memorization rather than being creative in the lessons. As the focus is on multiple-choice tests which measures grammatical knowledge, we have to give importance to grammar-based activities which often ruins the communicative atmosphere in lessons.

PST1: Exams are real obstacles to employ CLT. As you know, in Turkey, English exams test just grammatical competence and vocabulary knowledge. That's why students do not want to study on communication skills. They think that learning communication skills is a waste of time. Especially, eight grade students do not want to make communication practice. I cannot implement CLT in my teaching context.

PST2: The school management always emphasizes that our students should be very successful in national exams and they ask us to prepare students for these tests. This hinders all the activities that I want to plan for my students.

PST3: Sometimes, I have to put our course book aside and deal with only grammar topics for the exam. The secondary school students are very structure-oriented in language learning. For example, one of my students keeps asking me every time I enter the class: Teacher, when are we going to learn Past simple? Teacher, are we going to learn Present Perfect this year?

Two of the state secondary school teachers reported limited teaching hours as a reason for them to avoid the implementation of CLT in their classes. Private school teachers did not mention teaching hours as a limitation to implement CLT.

SST2: Time for the classes is not enough; it is not efficient to do group work. For example we could have more time for evaluating their work, we could talk about them more, and that would contribute more to their learning.

SST3: I do not have enough time to correct the errors, which worries me.

All the state secondary school teachers and one private secondary school teacher pointed at crowded classes as a factor hindering the implementation of CLT.

SST1: As the classes are very crowded, I cannot pay attention to the learning needs of each student.

SST2: The first thing that comes to my mind is the number of the students in classes. For instance, as a classroom activity you use pair-work but it is impossible for you to listen, to follow or to

correct the mistakes of the whole class if you are in a crowded class. Therefore when we look from that point, the CLT method may not seem useful as it becomes a little bit difficult, tiring and time consuming for the language teachers.

SST3: The biggest problem is the crowdedness of classes. There are approximately 50 students in each classroom. In such a crowded class, it is obvious that some desired activities leading communication in English can not be achieved easily. Students sometimes lose their attention during the lesson as there are some distracting students in the class. So, it is difficult to do group work as there may be chaos in the class.

PST1: It is also possible to say that the number of the students in class is another important determiner in the applicability of the method. With 24 students in class, it is difficult to manage the activities and observe the learners during tasks.

All those identified themes in educational system category show that both private and state school teachers have problems in implementing CLT because of the nation-wide assessment system according to which they have to organize their teaching. The number of students and time allowed for classes also hinder implementation of CLT principles by them.

Another hindering factor was identified as *lack of teaching materials* (SST1). One state school teacher mentioned it during the interviews.

SST1: In addition to crowded classes, we do not have materials that will help us apply CLT in our classrooms.

Private secondary school teachers pointed out *students' unwillingness to communicate in English* (PST1, PST3) as a hindrance to their implementation of CLT. Two teachers stated:

PST1: Although I try my best, I have great difficulty to make some students speak in the class. They are very shy.

PST3: Students' unwillingness is the most important hindrance for me. Depending on my observation, many of them do not trust their English knowledge to communicate in English. They are shy while they are speaking.

As the quotes reveal, private school teachers see some students' shyness or reluctance to communicate in English was as a factor that had a negative effect on CLT implementation.

Discussion and Conclusion

The current study aimed to have an understanding of the factors both promoting and hindering the implementation of CLT by Turkish EFL teachers in state and private secondary schools. The results revealed the factors that impacted the implementation of CLT were related to the teachers, students, the educational system, and CLT itself.

In both settings that the present study took place, teachers reported that the factors having a positive impact on their implementation of CLT were teachers and students. The participants thought that they had enough understanding of CLT to implement it in their classes, which is contrasting with the findings of Çimen (2008) and Wong (2012) pointing out teachers' inadequate practitioner knowledge in adapting CLT, but in line with Bataineh et al.'s (2011) study indicating that teachers were knowledgeable of CLT. Due to the interactive nature of language, CLT requires contextualizing the target language by situating the teaching and learning process in authentic language exchanges. The present study revealed that teachers' conceptualization of CLT reflects this key feature, since teachers mentioned students should be actively involved in the learning process, and the aim of language teaching

should be to promote meaningful communication as students primarily learn English to communicate.

There have been questions raised regarding the appropriateness of implementing CLT in non-Western contexts due to the particularity of local educational contexts. Hu (2002), for example, asserted that Chinese model of teaching and learning could not embrace CLT because of preconceived teacher role as the authority being responsible for transmitting knowledge and student role as the one to understand, repeat and memorize the knowledge. The participant teachers' comments do not indicate such traditional role definitions for the Turkish context. The teachers participating in the study reported that CLT was applicable and beneficial for the Turkish context. The teachers' implementation and understanding of CLT appears to be strong since their training is relatively fresh and they received it after CLT methodology and training became well-established in the field. In order to disseminate more effective implementation of CLT, in-service training on CLT should be provided for teachers and iterated periodically so that they refresh their knowledge on the methodology to maintain appropriate class atmosphere to conduct a lesson in harmony with the principles of CLT.

As a contributing factor, teachers in this study also addressed their students' willingness to communicate and to participate in classroom activities. The motivation of the students to use English in the classroom was also reported by Chang (2011) as a positive element in teachers' practices of CLT. Private school teachers pointed out that their students' English proficiency level and availability of teaching resources had a positive impact on the implementation of CLT.

As for the hindrances to the implementation of CLT in their classes, all the participant teachers addressed several factors: educational system in Turkey, students, and CLT itself. Regarding the educational system, there are several issues that need addressing if the MNE expects teachers to implement CLT effectively as set by the MNE National Curriculum standards. Test-based assessment conducted at the national level, which particularly measures vocabulary and grammar knowledge of students, pressurizes both students and teachers to focus on these areas in expense of neglecting communicative oriented teaching. In addition to that, crowded classes and limited teaching hours make teachers' task even more challenging. Clearly, these results indicate that assessment needs modification in terms of incorporating the measurement of students' various language skills than their 'knowledge of the language', teaching hours should be increased to enable teachers to cover the curriculum effectively, and class sizes should be decreased so that teachers can have time to deal with group/pair work.

Student-related hindrance was mentioned by private school teachers who pointed out their students' unwillingness to communicate in English. This finding conflicts with the finding that state school teachers report to have students who are willing to communicate in English, despite their limitations in terms of teaching hours and resources. This reported concern of the private school teachers' may result from their own high expectation from the students in showing enthusiasm to communicate in English.

A CLT-related hindering factor reported by state secondary school teachers was the insufficiency of teaching materials to help them deliver communicative instruction, which echoes the results of the previous studies (Ozsevik, 2010; Chang, 2011; Hunutlu, 2011). State school teachers mentioned dissatisfaction with the current coursebook supplied by the MNE, and need for different kinds of materials, videos etc. that would help them achieve their

communication goals. This result indicates that MNE should address this issue by understanding the weaknesses that teachers identify in the currently available course books and improving the quality and variety of teaching resources accordingly. Another suggestion may be, since private school teachers reported that they had efficient teaching resources helping them apply CLT principles effectively, a professional platform can be set up for teachers working in different schools to be in contact to share and exchange materials and ideas.

There are also some suggestions that can be made within the limitations of the present study. This study was primarily limited by its sample size. A larger sample of teachers from both state and private schools would have benefited our study. Further studies involving more teachers could explore Turkish teachers' perceptions of CLT and whether dissatisfaction with the MNE coursebook, nationwide assessment criteria and the number of weekly hours dedicated to teaching English are common themes. Moreover, as this study had only one data collection tool, interview, conducting further research by collecting data via different tools such as observations and questionnaires are needed. Observational studies can provide insight into Turkish teachers' experiences and actual classroom practices in the implementation of CLT; while survey research can enable a greater number of teachers to express their views regarding the factors that promote and hinder the implementation of CLT. Additionally, since teachers are not the only elements that play a role in the implementation of CLT in Turkey, the voices of administrators, policy makers and especially students should be heard through further studies.

To conclude, the picture of CLT in Turkey appears to be positively shaped by teachers' sound understanding of CLT and students' enthusiasm to communicate to some extent. Teachers in Turkey seem to consider CLT as an appropriate approach for their local context. Although these aspects make the implementation of CLT possible to a certain degree, the limitations in the current situation such as the education system and teaching resources build barriers in serving this aim. Thus, the MNE should review the current assessment system, number of hours dedicated to the formal learning of foreign languages, and resources and try to eliminate these negative factors accordingly.

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