An Exploration of English Language Teaching Pedagogy in Secondary Yemeni Education: A Case Study

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Abstract
The teaching of English at the Yemeni public schools has been criticized as ineffective due to the poor level of the language competency of most school leavers though they spend six years studying English whose curriculum, according to Bose (2002), is largely based on the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). In this respect, this paper mainly attempted to: 1) investigate Yemeni English teachers’ classroom teaching practices in secondary schools, (2) Explore the Yemeni teachers’ awareness of CLT, and 3) explore the constraints teachers face while implementing the CLT. The results of the study indicate that the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is the predominant pedagogy practiced by the EFL teachers participated in this study. The use of the mother-tongue, both by teachers and students were noticed to be the prevailing. The meanings of words are given in Arabic and the teachers do not focus on developing students’ fluency rather they focus on grammar. The results also show that the participants do not have a clear cut idea regarding the principles and concepts of CLT and are not clear about what they do in the classroom. The constraints faced by the participants while implementing CLT are also investigated and presented in the paper.

Key words: CLT, GTM, Yemeni public schools, Teachers’ awareness, pedagogy

Suggested Citation:
1. Introduction

It is observed that the issue of teaching English in Yemeni secondary schools is considered, to a large extent, one of the major concerns of the Ministry of Education due to the status of English language locally and internationally. The quality of teaching English in classrooms can really be an influential factor which may affect students’ motivation and attitudes regarding learning English (Al-Sohbani, 1997). It is held that most English teachers seem to use inappropriate methods and techniques of language teaching in general and not implementing CLT, though English text books in Yemeni public schools are based on it. Many ELT scholars (Munby, 1978; Widdowson, 1978; Littlewood, 1981; Johnson, 1982; Brumfit, 1984; Yalden, 1987; Nunan, 1989; Berns, 1990; Lee & VanPatten, 1995; Richards, 2006) have regarded this as an ideal approach.

Al-Shamiry(2000) and Thabet (2002) point out that Yemeni English Language teachers are not aware of EFL methods in general and the principles of CLT, in particular. According to Al-Shamiry (2000), structure-based methods are dominant in Yemeni schools. Similarly, Bataineh, Bataineh and Thabet (2011) report that “Yemeni teachers are more inclined towards structure-based principles than those of CLT” (p.865). They also conclude that the Yemeni English teachers are considerably “knowledgeable of the principles of CLT”; however, they do not reflect that in their classroom practice (p. 859).

Students who enroll in the English Department after graduating from the schools, for example, generally show a vivid poor level of English proficiency. This low level is probably due to various ineffective language teaching methods and techniques such as focusing on language structure and using Arabic etc. Based on the experience of the researcher, it is noticed that the teachers of English deal with students traditionally. This does not help in increasing their interest and inspiration. Thus, it can be said that the teaching English in Yemen is mainly teacher-centered where the teacher seems to do the most talking and always has the whole class under his/her control. With such background, the present study attempts to investigate Yemeni English teachers’ classroom teaching practices in secondary schools focusing on their awareness of CLT and the constraints they experience while implementing the CLT.

2. Related Literature Review

Learning as a foreign language requires taking the language teaching methods into account. Here, it is worthwhile to briefly review the most commonly used methods of language teaching. While doing so, the focus will be on the CLT as it is considered the worldwide ideal approach that should be followed by English language teachers in the globe and due to the fact that it is the method that Yemeni English text books are based on.

2.1 The grammar-translation method (GTM)

According to Hubbard, Jones, Throrton & Wheeler (1983), the Grammar Translation Method "consists of giving the students grammatical rules and paradigms. Paradigms are lists of forms arranged according to a grammatical pattern" (p.23). In this method, students are also given lists of vocabulary together with their translated equivalents in the mother tongue. The students are tested on their knowledge about the facts of the language.
Historically, this method (GTM) was followed by the oral or the natural method called the direct method.

2.2 Direct Method
According to (Hubbard et al. 1983), the direct method developed as a reaction to the grammatical translation method (p. 34). The idea behind this method is that students learn a language by listening first and then speaking. The learners are engaged in conversation. Reading and writing can be developed later. The third one is the audio-lingual method.

2.3 Audio-lingual Method
The word audio-lingual means listening-speaking. This method consists entirely of drilling one form or another.

2.4 Communicative Language Teaching
According to McDonough and Shaw (2003), the Communicative Language Teaching or CLT came as a result of the dissatisfactions with the practices of previous teaching methods. Richards and Rodgers (2001) add that CLT was a response to the language teaching styles of the 1970s, which mainly used to focus on grammar. This perception is similar to that of Larsen-Freeman (2000) who remarks that some educators has observed that the previous language teaching methods had succeeded in engendering students to “produce sentences accurately in a lesson, but could not use them appropriately when genuinely communicating outside of the classroom” (p.121). Similarly, Howatt (1984) argues that "the original motivation for adopting a communicative approach in the early seventies was remedial, an attempt to overcome the inadequacies of existing, structural syllabuses, materials, and methods" (p. 287). This failure led to the development of the CLT. Richards and Rodgers (2001) argue that “the emphasis in the communicative language teaching on the processes of communication, rather than mastery of language forms, leads to different roles for learners from those found in more traditional second language classrooms” (p. 166). The CLT first emerged in the 1970s due to the increase of immigration in Europe as well as the need for workers to communicate with their employers (Savitri, 2010). It was especially applied in Britain, North America, and Australasia, where language learning process took place in small classes through group and pair work and where English teachers were aware of adopting a skill-based, discovery-oriented, collaborative approach to education (Holliday, 1994). Knight (2007: 155) considers CLT “the current dominant methodology” in teaching English as a foreign language. It is acknowledged as a widespread effective method that helps students to be involved in real communication (Cook, 2005) and, according to Kumaravadivelu (1993), it has become the dynamic power that shapes the planning, implementation, and evaluation of English language teaching (ELT) programmers nearly in all parts of the world.

The CLT aims to prepare learners for long term goals, i.e. to develop communicative competence (Hymes, 1972; Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992) rather than with short term goals, the immediate classroom tasks. The communicative competence means to be able to use the language appropriately in a given social context. In the words of Hedge (2000), “it means to know a language and to be able to put that knowledge to use in communicating
with people in a variety of settings and situations” (p.45). For Savignon (1987), communicative competence is:

The knowledge of sociolinguistic rules or the appropriateness of an utterance, in addition to knowledge of grammar rules, the term has come to be used in language teaching contexts to refer to the ability to negotiate meaning- to successfully combine knowledge of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse rules in communicative interactions (p. 235).

This requires the knowledge of the linguistic form, meanings and functions. Students are supposed to be able to manage the process of negotiating meaning with their classmates (Knight, 2007). Thus, negotiating of meaning requires the teacher to create communicative situation that oblige learners to try to make themselves understand “by speaking slowly, for example, or repeating or clarifying their ideas through rephrasing” (Hedge, 2000, p.13).

The CLT is a method which makes students use the target language a great deal through practicing and communicating meaningfully in different contexts and in different roles by being involved in various communicative activities such as group works, pair works, language games, simulations, problem-solving tasks and by encouraging learners first to develop fluency; each of these activities is done with a communicative purpose (Larsen-freeman, 2000). Su (1990), after reviewing research and literature related to CLT, concludes that role-play might be a valuable and valid means for helping students gain communicative competence in the classroom because it provides EFL learners with a close-to-real-life speaking situation conducive to the development of oral communicative skills. Richards (2006: 20) considers carrying out activities in pair and says that the group-work will benefit the learners to:

- Learn from hearing the language used by other members of the group.
- Produce a greater amount of language than they would use in teacher-fronted activities.
- Increase their motivational level.
- Have the chance to develop fluency.

Thus, the learner-centered approach is promoted and fluency is first encouraged. Here learner-centeredness is enhanced by providing opportunities in the classroom where, according to Littlejohn (1985), learners are actively involved and where teacher’s talking time is minimized. In accordance with this view, learners can show considerably remarkable motivation and enthusiasm when a less dominant teacher in the classroom allows learners to become more involved in using the target language as it “is a vehicle of communication, not just an object to be studied” (Larsen-freeman, 2000, p. 132). Fluency, before accuracy, is recommended in the CLT. It is believed that accuracy is developed through fluency. To facilitate the development of fluency, learners’ errors, therefore, are overlooked especially at the initial stages of language teaching and learning. A communicative classroom is regarded as a place where the target language is utilized rather than a place where learners are passive and are required to learn and give correct answers.
The roles of the teacher in the CLT have changed from being an information and rules provider, to being a monitor, stimulator, manager, model, social worker, a friend, communication process facilitator, classroom participant and observer, researcher, needs analyst, a student counselor, and a group organiser (Prodromou, 1991; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Knight, 2007). Brown (2001) also gives six characteristics as a description of the CLT:

- Classroom goals are focused on all of the components (grammatical, discourse, functional, sociolinguistic, and strategic) of communicative competence. Goals, therefore, must intertwine the organizational aspects of language with the pragmatic.
- Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Organizational language forms are not the central focus, but rather aspects of language that enable learner to accomplish those purposes.
- Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use.
- Students in a communicative class ultimately have to use language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom. Classroom tasks must therefore equip students with the skills necessary for communication in those contexts.
- Students are given opportunities to focus on their own learning process through an understanding of their own styles of learning and through the development of appropriate strategies for autonomous learning.
- The role of the teacher is that of facilitator and guide, not an all-knowing bestower of knowledge. Students are therefore encouraged to construct meaning through genuine linguistic interaction with others (p. 43).

Reservation about the concept of CLT, however, has been raised. Richards and Rodgers (2001:172) suggest that CLT “refers to a diverse set of principles that reflect a communicative view of language and language learning”. Similarly, Ellis (1982: 73) argues that the CLT is used to cover a variety of approaches. This might have led Omaggio (2000) to say that “CLT represents a repertoire of teaching ideas rather than a fixed set of methodological procedures, and as such is not easily defined or evaluated”(p. 18). Thompson (1996:10) gives four of the main misconceptions, which led teachers to criticize or reject CLT as follows:

- CLT means not teaching grammar
- CLT means teaching only speaking
- CLT means pair work, which means role-play
- CLT means expecting too much from the teacher.

Thus, problems, with implementing CLT in EFL classrooms, have been dealt with by many concerned educators (Yu, 2001; Liao, 2000; Li, 1998; Ellis, 1996). Kumaravadivelu (1993) attributes such problems to the failure of the teacher trainers to equip teachers with
the skills and techniques they need. Karavas-Doukas (1996) conducted a study on 101 secondary school teachers of English in Greece and concluded that part of the problem was due to instructors’ misunderstanding of the nature of CLT. Nakata (1990) pointed out that the difficulties of the implementation of CLT in Japan were due to reasons such as syllabus design, testing system, communicative incompetence of the teachers, large classes, and cultural inappropriacy of CLT. Hu (2002) listed similar reasons faced while adopting CLT in China such as- “lack of necessary resources, big class size, limited instructional time, teachers’ lack of language proficiency and sociolinguistic competence, examination pressure, and cultural factors” (p. 94). Also, learners’ resistance as well as low English proficiency hinders teachers from implementing CLT (Yu, 2001; Liao, 2003; Liao, 2006; Tsai, 2007).

3. The Present Study

3.1. The Statement of the Problem

Although English text books in Yemeni public schools are, to a large extent, communicatively oriented and students in these schools study English for six years, most of them are unable to use the language for communicative purposes even after graduating from secondary school. This low level is probably due to various ineffective language teaching methods and techniques such as focusing on language structure and using Arabic. Researchers, who experienced learning English in school (Al-Shamiry, 2000; Thabet, 2011). Al-Qahtani (2009), assert that communication, language activities and listening are missing in the classroom. In this regard, exploring what language teaching methods are implemented in the teaching of English in schools seems necessary. Thus, attempt is made to investigate this problem so that the findings of this study may enlighten and provoke the ministry of education represented by supervisors, trainers and so on in order to rethink on this problem.

3.2. Aims of the Study

This paper principally aims to investigate Yemeni English teachers’ classroom teaching practices, i.e., exploring the method(s) and techniques the Yemeni teachers follow in general and CLT, in particular, in public secondary schools. Further more, this paper also aims to explore the Yemeni English teachers’ awareness of CLT and the constraints they face while implementing the CLT.

3.3. Research Questions

The paper attempts to find answers to the following research questions-
What are the Yemeni English teachers’ classroom teaching practices in secondary schools?
To what extent are the Yemeni English language teachers aware of the CLT?
What are the constraints that act against the implementation of the CLT in the Yemeni secondary school context?

3.4. Limitation of the Study

Due to the size of the samples of the teachers as well as the schools, the results of study are limited to the surveyed schools in the selected district, in Ibb governorate, at the
secondary public schools (grades 10-12). However, the findings gained from this study can be taken into account in other similar Yemeni schools.

4. The Methodology
This study is based on the qualitative approach. Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that “qualitative data provide thick descriptions that are vivid, nested in a real context, and have a ring of truth that has strong impact on the reader” (p.10). Guided by Sapsford and Jupp (1996), classroom observation was primarily done and followed by the interviews in order to strengthen the study and to ensure its validity (Creswell, 1998).

4.1. Samples
Three schools were selected from the five schools of a district, in Ibb governorate. One of these schools is mixed, i.e., boys and girls. The second school is a girl school and the third school is a boy school. These schools were chosen as they were appropriate representatives of other secondary schools in such a district in terms of teachers and students. All the teachers of these schools (15 teachers) were observed and ten out of these teachers were interviewed. These teachers have taught English for more than five years. The observations were conducted during the normal teaching classes. Each teacher was observed for three periods (lessons). Each period lasted for 45 minutes.

4.2. Instruments
A structured observation chick list and interviews were primarily prepared by the researcher, who has been teaching and training TEFL in-service teachers as well as undergraduate pre-service teachers in UAE and Yemen for more than 15 years. Then, both instruments were given to four members of the English and educational departments at Ibb University, who are experts in educational research and English education to ensure face and content validity. Guided by their comments and notes, a final draft was developed. The final observation chick list consisted of seventeen items dealing with the teaching of language skills, grammar, functions, using communicative activities, pair and group work and so on (see Table 1). Four-point scale (always, sometimes, rarely and never) was used in order to avoid the subjectivity of the observer and to quantify the data. All the classes attended were observed in full. The interview consists of six main questions (See the appendix). However, during the interviews some elaboration in the questions and answers were allowed.

4.3. Data analysis
Percentages were used to present the data gathered from the observation by calculating the number of observations (3 observations x 15 teachers, i.e. periods =45 observations) to quantify the data guided by four-point scale (always, sometimes, rarely and never). With regard to the interviews, each interview was first carefully reviewed and transcribed verbatim. Then, it was categorized in accordance with the questions and themes of this research tool (See the appendix).

5. Results and Discussion
This section presents the results and discussion in accordance with the order of the aims and questions of the study.

5.1. Yemeni English Teachers’ Classroom Teaching Practices
Table 1 Percentage of the Results Obtained from the Observation Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Observation Statements</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students work in groups/pairs</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>6.6 %</td>
<td>93.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers distribute directions and involve all students.</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>6.6 %</td>
<td>13.3 %</td>
<td>80 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers create realistic situations.</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>6.6 %</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>73.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers use dialogues based on social life.</td>
<td>6.6 %</td>
<td>13.3 %</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>60 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s talk-time is dominant.</td>
<td>93.3 %</td>
<td>6.6 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student’s talk-time is dominant.</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>6.6 %</td>
<td>13.3 %</td>
<td>86.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers focus on linguistic forms (grammar to be learnt).</td>
<td>93.3 %</td>
<td>6.6 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students correct themselves.</td>
<td>6.6 %</td>
<td>13.3 %</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>60 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers focus on all four skills (writing-reading-speaking-listening).</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers use L1 (Arabic).</td>
<td>80 %</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students use L1 (Arabic).</td>
<td>86.6 %</td>
<td>13.3 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers always translate meanings of words, word-for-word.</td>
<td>60 %</td>
<td>33.3 %</td>
<td>6.6 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers use audio-visual aids.</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>6.6 %</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>73.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers focus on fluency.</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>6.6 %</td>
<td>93.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers elicit responses from students.</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>13.3 %</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>66.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers feel that students are motivated.</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>6.6 %</td>
<td>13.3 %</td>
<td>80 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches use a lesson plan.</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>13.3 %</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>66.6 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 1, one can say that the observed teachers do not implement the CLT. Instead, GTM seems to be the main method followed which is pedagogically not appropriate to prepare students to communicate in English. The teachers, as observed mostly, do not create situations and use dialogues based on social life, indicating that CLT in the English classrooms has not been implemented. Teachers use GTM because it is easy to follow as it does not require them to prepare well nor it requires them to be competent in English. Further, the backwash of examinations, which are still traditional and focus on linguistic knowledge like grammar, could have its effect. Hughes (1989) states that “The effect of testing on teaching and learning is known as backwash. Backwash can be harmful or beneficial. If a test is regarded as important then preparation for it can come to dominate all teaching and learning activities” (p. 1). Moreover, studies of Karim (2004) and Liao (2003) have also indicated that teachers followed formal-based instruction in order to help their learners pass the exams. Consequently, teacher-centeredness seems to be dominating which might have negatively prevented students from participating in the class. They appeared to be passive rather than actively involved in learning. They sat still on their chairs while the teacher stood in front
of the class lecturing and directing them mostly in Arabic even for functions that could be simply accomplished in English. Though frequent use of mother-tongue is supposed not to be encouraged in CLT classes and it is allowed only when there is no alternatives, the use of Arabic, both by teachers and students, has been frequent in the Yemeni English language classrooms.

This excessive use of Arabic in the classroom has also been confirmed by the majority of the teachers (7 teachers, i.e. 70%) who participated in the interview. These teachers mentioned different reasons for using Arabic. The most important reasons they pointed out were as to explain grammar rules, show the meaning of new words, to “help the students understand English easily and clearly” (Teacher 1) and to “clarify certain unclear points to the students” (Teacher 6). Two teachers (Teachers 6 & 8) thought that using Arabic motivated students to learn English.

Abbas, Aslam and Yasmeen (2011) claim that CLT develops all four skills. However, as given in Table 1, the statement number nine shows that 100 % of the classes observed have not focused on the skills. That is, students have not been engaged in communication. The attention is paid to teaching grammatical rules only.

The learners have been deprived from listening to English even from teachers to listen to some English because, as illustrated in statement number ten (Table 1), the majority of the teachers were observed using Arabic which could have negatively influenced learners to do the same, i.e., using Arabic. This result leads us to say that the implementation of CLT is missing and could be one of the reasons that caused students’ poor proficiency in English. As seen in the table, 60 % of the observed teachers used word-for-word translation, indicating that other techniques of conveying meaning such as pictures and realia, that facilitates learning, help clarifying for learners meaning, and as a result minimize the use of Arabic, have not been utilized adequately. Statement 13, which shows most teachers of English (73, 3 %) support this.

In short, language skills have been neglected in the classrooms observed. The main focus of the whole teaching process has been noticed mainly to familiarize learners with grammar rather than developing their communicative competence. That is, teachers pay no attention to help students use the language according to the principles of the communicative approach.

5.2. Teachers’ Awareness of CLT

In order to explore the teachers’ awareness of the CLT, they were asked to say what methodology Yemeni English textbooks are based on and to define the CLT. Only four teachers said that CLT is the method which the textbooks are based on, whereas six teachers do not have clear-cut idea regarding the Yemeni texts-books’ methodology. This can be supported by the following excerpts:

Teacher: 5 “It is based on many facilities, but they are not available.”
Teacher: 8 “I think more of them are based on grammar and dialogues and [little] of exercises.”
Teacher: 1 “Reading texts and then clarifying the main idea and discussing the rules of grammar.”
Teacher: 10 “Just learning grammar but not all skills.”
Teacher: 2 “New words, grammar, writing and reading."
Teacher: 9 “I think it is descriptive. It isn’t communicative enough; focusing on grammar.”

These results suggest that the majority of English teachers may not be aware that the CLT is the method which is supposed to be followed, indicating that there has not been adequate training done for such teachers to familiarize them with the nature of the textbooks and require them to practice the CLT under professional trainers. This might have led them to resort to traditional pedagogy. As Li (1998) states the difficulties teachers in South Korea faced to use the CLT were attributed to the lack of appropriate training. According to Sato and Kleinassser (1999) and Thompson (1996), if teachers do not thoroughly understand the CLT, they go to traditional methods of language teaching. The participants have defined CLT differently. The following excerpts, which have been presented verbatim, illustrate this.

Teacher: 6 “CLT method is a modern method in language learning. It depends on new and standard ways, activities, techniques, etc. It stands in giving chances to the students instead being passive.”

Here, this teacher means that one of the CLT goals is to create activities, techniques and so on in which learners are involved in rather than being merely passive and get what is provided by teachers. This sounds good, however, in practice it was observed that all teachers did not implement the CLT, indicating that there is a mismatch between what is said and what is practiced. This seems similar to the result of Fun’ study (1998) which showed that Hong Kong English teachers were theoretically speaking in favour of the CLT, however, in practice they implemented traditional methods. This can be due to the factors discussed above, e.g. examinations’ backwash, and the requirement of the CLT lesson preparation and the practical constraints (See section 2). The following excerpts indicate this-

Teacher 1, “it is very important and the best method in the world, but applying it in the Yemeni class is, to some extent, difficult.”
Teacher: 9 “it is the method which takes care of all main skills that enlarge the students’ minds, but in my opinion the teacher is the main responsible to help students use the language by creating/ giving them a chance to practice, but, unfortunately in our environment it is absent because it is difficult.”

The following definitions also show the differences among the participants regarding their understanding of the nature and concepts of the CLT to support what has been briefly reviewed earlier.

Teacher: 10 “CLT is the method of teaching which is based on practicing English mostly inside the classroom.”
Teacher: 8 “CLT is to teach students how to read, speak and write correctly, and it is to teach students how to communicate with each other by speaking English.”
Teacher: 7 “it is a very important method that makes students use language in communication-in real life.”
Teacher: 5 “It gives the students a big chance to communicate either with the teacher or among themselves.”
Teacher: 4 “how to practice the language or use it in our real life situation.”
Teacher: 3 “I think it is the best way to teach English language, because English is communicative rather than anything.”
Teacher: 2 “CLT is to ask and answer each other in English language by using spoken ..., grammar, reading and writing.”

Based on the definitions, provided above, most teachers seem to have quite adequate knowledge of the CLT. However, practically they do not follow the CLT on one hand, they are not clear, about what they do in the classroom, on the other, supporting what has been noticed during the observation, and at the same time it reveals the misconception among these teachers regarding the principles of the CLT. The excerpts given below may help to understand this-

Teacher: 1 “Learning by comparison to Arabic grammar and meaning. Educating the students of the British culture which relates to language.”
Teacher: 2 “Asking questions about the previous lesson, writing new words in the blackboard, presents the lesson, students work in groups ask the students some questions.”
Teacher: 3 “I make the students participate more. I explain the lesson first and I make students read a lot.”
Teacher: 4 “Arabic translation is most used by me.”
Teacher: 7 “Communicative and grammatical method.”
Teacher: 8 “I always follow the method of reading, writing and answering exercises.”
Teacher: 9 “Discussing and making groups.”
Teacher: 10 “I use posters and sometimes cassettes.”

5.3. The Constraints faced by the teachers while implementing the CLT

Based on the data of the interviews, it was observed that the participants considered crowded classes as the most important factor that made them unable to implement the CLT. This is inconsistent with Farea’ study (2012), aimed to explore the difficulties facing 114 Yemeni English language school teachers, which instead revealed the lack of training as the major factor hindering teachers to implement the CLT. Nevertheless, the finding of the present study are in line with that of Li (1998), Burnaby and Sun (1989) and Hu (2002) who reported that teachers perceive class size as a constraint for implementing the CLT in their schools.

Various other reasons like lack of teaching aids, cassettes, students’ motivation and parents’ encouragement were also mentioned by the participants of this study as obstacles that act against the implementation of the CLT. The teachers see their learners unable to learn English. This can be due to wrong beliefs among such teachers, which leads them consciously, or unconsciously, to implement ineffective teaching techniques such as using
Arabic and following spoon-feeding approach. According to Pajares (1992) teachers’ lessons planning, their decisions and their classroom teaching practices were greatly influenced by their beliefs. Similarly, Barcelos and Woods, as cited in Mills (2011), suggest, “beliefs play a prominent role in many aspects of teaching with their influence on teaching performance and instructional choices” (p. 62).

Learners’ social problems, limited use of English in Yemen, the short time of the period, the absence of labs and modern technology and the design of the textbook have been also reported as some other constraints that according to the participants hinder them from implementing the CLT.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

It was observed that the Yemeni teachers’ pedagogies are mainly traditional, grammar-oriented; teacher-centered that might have been affected by their experience as learners and examinations, which are grammar based. That is, group/pair works were not used and the four language skills were not practiced. The use of mother tongues, both by teachers and students, were noticed to be the prevailing. The meanings of words were given in Arabic, the teachers did not focus on developing students’ fluency rather they focused on grammar, and their talking time was found to be dominating.

Further, it is revealed that the participants do not have clear-cut idea regarding the principles and concepts of the CLT and are not clear about what they do in the classroom. Crowded classes were considered as the most important constraint, which hinders the implementation of the CLT, followed by lack of teaching aids, cassettes, students’ motivation and parents’ encouragement.

It is also important to note here that the results of this case study are based on a limited number of samples. Therefore, conducting a further research can be recommended elsewhere in Yemen and with a large number of samples, which may result in clearer and different results.

However, it can be said that a professional development program should be established with the aim of familiarizing Yemeni English language teachers with textbooks, updating their knowledge of the CLT pedagogies and providing them with opportunities for the practical application of such pedagogies in the Yemeni context. If this is done, then, most of the prevailing problems, which hinder the implementation of the CLT pedagogy in the Yemeni English language classrooms, can be over come and help in achieving the real aims and objectives of teaching English in Yemen.

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Appendix

Interviews Questions
1-Do you use Arabic when you are teaching English in the EFL classroom? For what Purpose/s?
2- Do you think the use of Arabic increase your students’ motivation positively toward learning the language?
3-What methodology Yemeni English Textbooks is based on?
4-What are the main methods do you follow in the classroom?
5-Please define in your own words Communicative Language Teaching?
6-What are the difficulties which face Yemeni English language teachers to follow the CLT?