

The Attitudes of Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers towards Communicative Language Teaching

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Abstract: *Since the introduction of communicative language teaching (CLT) in the late 1970s, different definitions and interpretations of the communicative approach to second language (L2) instruction have existed. Most descriptions of CLT emphasize the communication of messages and meaning; however there is disagreement as to whether CLT should include a focus on the analysis and practice of language forms. The Turkish Ministry of Education has recently initiated curricular changes intended to reflect a more communicative approach to English Language Teaching in Turkey. The purpose of this study is to reveal the attitudes of the pre-service and in-service language teachers towards the Communicative Language Teaching. This study also investigates if there exist some significant differences within each group with regard to their age, experience, educational background, future plans etc. It is a descriptive study with a quantitative approach, which means that there is no experimental manipulation. 102 pre-service teachers at Dokuz Eylul University, ELT Department and 40 in-service teachers working at different schools in İzmir, Buca completed the questionnaire. The data were collected via the Attitude Scale for Communicative Language Teaching developed by Karavas-Doukas (1996). The questionnaire was a Likert-type scale consisting of 24 items (14 positive and 10 negative items). SPSS packet program was used for the analysis. The results suggest that the pre-service and in-service teachers have slightly positive attitudes towards the Communicative Language Teaching.*

Keywords: *Attitude, Communicative Language Teaching, in-service teachers, pre-serviceteachers.*

I. Introduction

Most second language educators are of the opinion that CLT is undergoing a transformation- one that includes increased recognition of and attention to language form within exclusively or primarily meaning-oriented CLT approaches to second language (L2) instruction (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Larsen-Freeman, 1991; Lightbown&Spada, 1999; Williams, 1995). However, while many studies report on teachers' perceptions in implementing communicative language teaching, few have looked at the attitudes of teachers and pre-service teachers with regard to their classroom practices.

1.1. Research Questions

1.1.1. What are the attitudes of the pre-service and in-service teachers towards the Communicative Language Teaching?

1.1.2. Do the attitudes of the pre-service and in-service teachers towards the Communicative Language Teaching vary significantly in terms of:

- a. their being an in-service or pre-service teacher,
- b. their gender,
- c. their knowing a foreign language other than English,
- d. their having been to an English-speaking country or not?

II. Method

This study aims to find out if there exist some differences between pre-service teachers and teachers who are currently working at some institutions with regard to their attitudes towards CLT. This study also investigates if there exist some significant differences within each group with regard to their age, experience, educational background, future plans etc. It can be considered as a descriptive study with a quantitative approach. The purpose of a descriptive research is to specify or describe naturally occurring phenomena without experimental manipulation which often leads a quantitative style (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). Such type of research tends to construct statistical models and figures to explain what is observed and makes use of tools such as questionnaires, surveys, measurements and other equipment to collect numerical or measurable data (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010).

1.2. Data Collection Instrument

In this study, the data were collected via the Attitude Scale for Communicative Language Teaching developed by Karavas-Doukas (1996). The questionnaire was a 5-point Likert-type scale consisting of 24 items: 14 positive and 10 negative items measuring the attitudes of pre-service and in-service teachers. The participants were expected to decide to what extent they agreed with each item on a 5-point scale: (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neither agree nor disagree, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly agree.

1.3. Participants

The attitude scale was given to 102 pre-service teachers at Dokuz Eylul University, ELT Department and 40 in-service teachers working at different schools in Buca, İzmir.

1.4. Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequencies and means were used to analyze single items. Moreover, some other statistical tests such as Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance were carried out in order to find out whether the learner beliefs varied in terms of the pre-determined factors like their gender, shift, etc.

III. Findings

The findings of the study are presented in terms of the four research questions: What are the attitudes of the pre-service and in-service teachers towards the Communicative Language Teaching? The mean of the attitude scale is (X) 2.33 and the standard deviation is 0.28. This indicates that the participants were slightly positive towards the CLT. Therefore, it can be concluded that they tend to be rather indecisive about the advantages or disadvantages of this method. Do the attitudes of the pre-service and in-service teachers towards the Communicative Language Teaching vary significantly in terms of :

- a. their being an in-service or pre-service teacher,
- b. their gender,
- c. their knowing a foreign language other than English,
- d. their having been to an English-speaking country or not?

TABLE 1. KOLMOGOROV-SMIRNOV TEST RESULTS FOR THE ATTITUDE SCALE

| Values | | TheAttitudeScalefor CLT |
|----------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| N | | 142 |
| Normal Parameters | \bar{X} | 2.33 |
| | SS | .289 |
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z | | .082 |
| p | | .022 |

*p<0.05

As can be seen in TABLE 1, the distribution of the data is not normal (p = .022) which requires the use of non-parametric tests for the analysis of the data.

Table 2. Mann-Whitney U Test Results For The Attitudes Towards Clt In Terms Of Their Being An In-Service Or Pre-Service Teacher

| Groups | | MeanRank | Sum of Ranks | U | p |
|----------------------|----|----------|--------------|-------------|-------|
| In-service teachers | 0 | 74.70 | 298.70 | 00 1912. | 0.561 |
| Pre-service teachers | 02 | 70.25 | 7165.00 | | |

*p<0.05

As can be seen in TABLE 2, there is no significant difference in the scores for in-service teachers and pre-service teachers (p = .561).

Table 3. Mann-Whitney U Test Results For The Attitudes Towards Clt In Terms Of Their Gender

| Groups | | MeanRank | Sum of Ranks | U | p |
|--------|----|----------|--------------|-------------|-------|
| Male | 9 | 72.56 | 2830.00 | 00 1967. | 0.849 |
| Female | 03 | 71.10 | 7323.00 | | |

*p<0.05

As can be seen in TABLE 3, there is no significant difference in the scores for males and females (p = .849).

Table 4. Mann–Whitney U Test Results For The Attitudes Towards Clt In Terms Of Their Knowing A Foreign Language Other Than English

| Groups | | MeanRank | Sum of Ranks | U | p |
|-------------------------------------|---|----------|--------------|----|-------|
| A foreignlanguageotherthan English | 6 | 67.51 | 5130.50 | 50 | 0.214 |
| No foreignlanguageotherthan English | 6 | 76.10 | 5022.50 | | |

*p<0.05

As can be seen in TABLE 4, there is no significant difference in the scores for the teachers knowing a foreign language other than English and the ones not knowing a foreign language other than English (p = .214).

Table 5. Mann–Whitney U Test Results For The Attitudes Towards Clt In Terms Of Their Having Been To An English-Speaking Country Or Not

| Groups | | MeanRank | Sum of Ranks | U | p |
|--|----|----------|--------------|----|-------|
| Beento an English-speakingcountry | 8 | 65.80 | 1842.50 | 50 | 0.451 |
| Neverbeento an English-speakingcountry | 13 | 72.29 | 8168.50 | | |

*p<0.05

As can be seen in TABLE 5, there is no significant difference in the scores for the teachers having been to an English-speaking country and the ones not having been to an English-speaking country (p = .451).

Do the attitudes of the pre-service teachers towards the Communicative Language Teaching vary significantly in terms of:

- the type of high school they graduated from,
- their future plans?

Table 6. Kruskal–Wallis One-Way Analysis Of Variance Results For The Attitudes Of Pre-Service Teachers Towards Clt In Terms Of The Type Of High School They Graduated From

| The type of high school they graduated from | | S ² ra Ort. | D | ² | p |
|---|---|------------------------|---|--------------|-------|
| General High School | 0 | 59.25 | | .212 | 0.157 |
| Anatolian High School | 9 | 52.80 | | | |
| Anatolian Teacher Training High School | 1 | 49.31 | | | |
| Other | | 8.50 | | | |

*p<0.05

As can be seen in TABLE 6, there is no significant difference in the scores of the pre-service teachers in terms of the type of high school they graduated from (p = .157).

Table 7. Kruskal–Wallis One-Way Analysis Of Variance Results For The Attitudes Of Pre-Service Teachers Towards Clt In Terms Of Their Future Plans

| Plans after graduation | | S ² ra Ort. | D | ² | p |
|-------------------------------|---|------------------------|---|--------------|------|
| Working for MEB | 9 | 50.71 | | .766 | .779 |
| Working for a private school | | 61.00 | | | |
| Working for a university | | 56.44 | | | |
| Doing an academic career | 6 | 47.13 | | | |
| Working in a different sector | 1 | 44.32 | | | |

*p<0.05

As can be seen in TABLE 7, there is no significant difference in the scores of the pre-service teachers in terms of their future plans ($p = .779$).

Do the attitudes of the in-service teachers towards the Communicative Language Teaching vary significantly in terms of:

- their teaching experience,
- The type of school they work for,
- The program they graduated from?

Table 8. Kruskal–Wallis One-Way Analysis Of Variance Results For The Attitudes Of In-Service Teachers Towards CLT In Terms Of Their Teaching Experience

| Teaching experience | | S □ra Ort. | D | ² | P |
|---------------------|---|------------|---|--------------|------|
| 0-5 years | | 16.50 | | .138 | .710 |
| 6-10 years | 0 | 23.20 | | | |
| 11-15 years | 0 | 18.35 | | | |
| 16-20 years | 0 | 18.15 | | | |
| 21 and more years | | 23.75 | | | |

* $p < 0.05$

As can be seen in TABLE 8, there is no significant difference in the scores of the in-service teachers in terms of their teaching experience ($p = .710$).

Table 9. Kruskal–Wallis One-Way Analysis Of Variance Results For The Attitudes Of In-Service Teachers Towards CLT In Terms Of The Type Of School They Work For

| The type of school they work for | | S □ra Ort. | D | ² | P |
|----------------------------------|---|------------|---|--------------|------|
| Elementary school | | 29.50 | | .095 | .213 |
| Secondary school | 0 | 21.60 | | | |
| High School | 6 | 18.69 | | | |

* $p < 0.05$

As can be seen in TABLE 9, there is no significant difference in the scores of the in-service teachers in terms of the type of school they work for ($p = .213$).

Table 10. Kruskal–Wallis One-Way Analysis Of Variance Results For The Attitudes Of In-Service Teachers Towards CLT In Terms Of The Program They Graduated From

| The program they graduated from | | S □ra Ort. | D | ² | P |
|---------------------------------|---|------------|---|--------------|------|
| English Language Teaching | 6 | 20.33 | | .578 | .134 |
| English Language and Literature | 0 | 25.45 | | | |
| American Culture and Literature | | 10.00 | | | |
| Other | | 7.00 | | | |

* $p < 0.05$

As can be seen in TABLE 10, there is no significant difference in the scores of the in-service teachers in terms of the program they graduated from ($p = .134$).

IV. Conclusion

The pre-service and in-service teachers have slightly positive attitudes towards the Communicative Language Teaching. In addition, the attitudes of the pre-service and in-service teachers towards the Communicative Language Teaching do not vary significantly in terms of their being an in-service or pre-service teacher, their gender, their knowing a foreign language other than English, their having been to an English-speaking country or not. What is more, The attitudes of the pre-service teachers towards the Communicative Language Teaching do not differ significantly in terms of the type of high school they graduated from and their future plans. Finally, there is no significant difference in the attitudes of the in-service teachers towards the

Communicative Language Teaching in terms of their teaching experience, the type of school they work for and the program they graduated from.

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