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Communicative Language Teaching Method (CLT) and Final Examination of Iranian EFL Learners

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Abstract

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) aims at improving students' abilities to communicate in a foreign language that has been accepted and employed by numerous EFL teachers. The current research attempted to probe the effectiveness of CLT method as a communicative approach on EFL learners' achievements in the final examination. It also aimed at exploring the EFL learners' attitudes towards the use of CLT method in their language classes. A total number of 60 female students of elementary level was selected based on convenience sampling. A pre-test was administered to the participants at the beginning of the term to ensure that they had the same language background. Then, they were randomly assigned as experimental and control group (30 students in each group). Communicative activities were employed with the experimental group while control group was exposed to traditional, non-communicative teaching method. The research lasted a term approximately six weeks. At the end of the experiment, a post-test (final exam) was assigned to both groups to determine whether CLT method had positively affected the EFL learners' achievement in final examination. In the last session, CLT questionnaire was published among experimental group to explore their views (positive or negative) towards CLT method. By conducting this study, it was found that CLT method had a positive effect on the students' achievements in final examination. The experimental study has also illustrated the positive students' attitude toward this communicative teaching method.

Introduction

One of the most accepted trends in the field of foreign language teaching is the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which was introduced in the 1970s. CLT applicability to English as a foreign language (EFL) context has recently been debated extensively. The emergence of CLT occurred at the time when language teaching was looking for a change. Due to the unsatisfactory traditional syllabus that failed to improve students' ability to use language for communication, linguists attempted to design a syllabus to achieve the communicative goals of language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Based on Taylor (1983), a communicative classroom requires an atmosphere which encourages students to exercise their own initiative in communicating and in which communication can take place comfortably. Communicative activities have an important role in creating opportunities for learners to use the language for communicative purposes. Totally, communicative activities are "fluency-based activities" (Trait, 2001, p.1) which encourage meaningful and purposeful interaction between students, where they bridge an information or opinion gaps, ask for or give real information and find out the other students' ideas (Harmer, 2003). Since CLT was first introduced with the purpose of engaging learners in authentic communication to improve their communicative competence, those students play a decisive role in determining the level of success CLT may achieve (Chung & Huang, 2009). Understanding the beliefs, preferences, attitudes and needs of the next generation is inevitable if EFL instruction is really behind empowering students culturally and linguistically (Savignon, 2007). Seeking learners' attitudes and views of CLT as a widespread framework in shaping current definitions of the goals set for EFL teaching is quintessential to help students attain these objectives (Savignon & Wang, 2003). Additionally, some scholars (Horwitz, 2006; Wenden, 2008) agreed that an investigation of students' attitudes can lead to more effective in- and out-of-class language learning behaviors as well as greater self-knowledge and autonomy. Nonetheless, students' perceptions toward and beliefs about communicative language teaching have not received the due attention especially since "most studies look at students' attitudes about language learning in general; few focus on students' attitudes about instructional practices in particular" (Savignon, 2007, p. 225). Therefore,

by implementing CLT method in a language institute, the present work sets to explore Iranian EFL learners' attitudes towards the results of final examination.

The goal of communicative approach lies in activities which aimed at developing students' ability to use language to interact with people in real situations. Regarding its noticeable effectiveness, the communicative syllabus has recently been adopted in Iran (Riazi & Razmjoo, 2006). However, due to the unsatisfactory traditional syllabus that failed to facilitate learners' ability to use language for communication, linguists attempted to design a syllabus to achieve the communicative goals of teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Also, it is evident that activities done in pair and group maximize students' interaction and facilitate students' contribution to each other's learning, and if these types of activities are done appropriately, they decrease difficulties of implementing CLT (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Although many teachers are convinced of the importance of being able to communicate in a language as an important part of language learning, it is also supposed that they may find it difficult to rationalize the use of CLT in a final test preparation. Furthermore, inappropriate teaching methodology and poor resources has negatively impact learners' achievement. The students need to have time to apply their knowledge practically rather simply than memorize it, and be able to demonstrate what they have learned in real life situations. That is, taking final exams to understand learner's achievements should be so designed that to prepare them for real life. In order to do this, it is important that language teachers teach English communicatively in English as much as possible (Mowlaie & Rahimi, 2010). It should be noted that the teachers should provide students with many chances to exchange and negotiate ideas about the test contents, with the teacher as a facilitator promoting their communication. More importantly, finding easier and better method of teaching as CLT, and making learners motivated and interested in EFL classes would be worthwhile.

Focusing on teacher-centered methods and paying too much attention to language forms may lead teaching reading in low efficiency. Unfortunately, in the majority of classroom interactions, teacher is decision-maker about what kind of activities should be performed. Also, in most classes the teacher is mainly the decision-maker and has the right to teach grammar and vocabulary, thus students have no opportunity to practice what has been taught in the class or to learn sub-skills via communicative activities (Biria & Tahririan, 2001). In many language classes, teachers use their own methods to teach, which may incorporate a variety of teaching methods from the Grammar-

Translation to the Audio-Lingual, but none are Communicative. As it can be seen, most of the Iranian English learners, even after graduation, have problems in the appropriate use of grammar and vocabulary (Avanaki & Sadeghi, 2013). The problem of the study was further supported by the findings of some related studies as Rahimi and Naderi (2014), Anani Sarab, Monfared, and Safarzadeh, (2016) which emphasized the fact that communicative methods are neglected in the secondary classes, which leads to the observable shortage in EFL students' ability to communicate. In fact, lack of using communicative activities cannot improve students' achievement and leads to students' failure in final evaluation (Vaezi & Abbaspour, 2014). To come to a closer identification of the mentioned problems, the researcher implemented CLT method and communicative activities which provided students with a plenty of chances to exposure to communicative tasks in order to examine the effectiveness of the method upon the students' achievement in final examination. Employing such a new method of teaching and learning may provide a solution to the mentioned problems of lacking effective communication. To state specifically, this paper investigated the effect of CLT method as a communicative approach on EFL learners' achievements in the final examination. It also aimed at exploring the EFL learners' attitudes towards the use of CLT method in their language classes.in order to meet the research objectives, the following research questions have been formed.

RQ1. What is the effect of CLT method on EFL learners' achievements in the final examination?

RQ2. What is the EFL learners' attitudes towards the use of CLT method in EFL learners' language classes?

Review of Literature

Ozsevik (2010) investigated sixty-one Turkish teachers of English teaching at primary and secondary levels by conducting a series of semi-structured and informal interviews and an online questionnaire. The results revealed that Turkish EFL teachers, while aware of the achievements, observe many difficulties in implementing CLT in their classrooms. The results also suggest that despite showing keen interest in change and being eager to be identified with CLT, Turkish teachers are not rather optimistic about the complete adoption of CLT, and thus feel that only by overcoming the difficulties from those four sources, and by establishing more favorable conditions for the implementation of CLT can teachers truly benefit from CLT in their English classrooms.

In other study, Asassfeh et al., (2012) addressed 1525 EFL school learners' attitudes and perceived implementation of traditional Form-Focused Instruction (FFI) and communicative Meaning-Oriented Instruction (MOI) of English. The data were collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and referential statistics. Results showed that students' preferences associated with MOI were relatively higher. Female learners held relatively higher preference and reported significantly higher exposure to MOI. Compared to private-school learners, public-school learners held higher preference for and more involvement MOI. Low-proficiency learners reported higher preference to, and more practice of, FFI. These results were discussed, and recommendations were set accordingly. Along the same line, Rahimi and Naderi (2014) investigated the relationship between EFL teachers' attitudes towards CLT and perceived difficulties of implementing CLT in language classes. The results of the descriptive statistics showed that EFL teachers had positive attitudes towards CLT in general and group work in communicative classes in particular. Further, while EFL teachers generally did not find much difficulty in implementing CLT in language classes, they found the difficulties the educational system creates as a major obstacle to use CLT. Moreover, CLT attitudes and perceived difficulties of CLT implementation were not found to be related; however, when subscales of CLT attitudes and perceived difficulties questionnaires were considered, three correlations were found to be statistically significant. Moreover, Humphries and Burns (2015) showed that there are some barriers to the implementation of CLT as an ELT curriculum innovation in Japan. They believe that the main barriers to the implementation of CLT as an innovative curriculum are related to (a) minimizing the importance of the expectations and beliefs of the teachers (b) not providing opportunities for teachers to understand CLT principles underlying the textbooks and (c) not developing opportunities for problem-solving meetings between teachers and school managers.

Anani Sarab et al., (2016) have investigated Iranian teachers' perception of CLT principles and practices through a survey of 75 secondary school teachers in the context of the newly introduced English language curriculum developed based on CLT principles. Based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative data using a semi-structured questionnaire supplemented with interviews with a smaller group of teachers, the results of the survey revealed that a change in classroom arrangements is required before CLT can be practiced in secondary school English classes in Iran. The results also showed that the employment of CLT procedures at

the local level is at its beginning stages and might take time to take root. The conclusion is that for the suggested changes in the curriculum to be implemented and realized in English education in Iran, the findings of more comprehensive surveys complemented with observation of teachers' instructional practices is required to inform the change implementation. In a more recent study by Aalaei (2017), the effect of the implementation of CLT method analyzed on speaking and listening skills of Iranian third year secondary students. A quantitative study was conducted on two randomly selected intact classes as experimental and control group. Different communicative activities were used with the experimental group while the control group used traditional method such as the audio-lingual method. At the end of the experiment, a post-test was assigned to both groups to determine whether the CLT had positively affected the students' speaking abilities. A final self-report questionnaire invited participants to evaluate their perception towards CLT. The students have to rate each item according to their opinions. It was found that the CLT had a positive effect on the students' listening and speaking skills. This was proved through the higher mean scores that the experimental group obtained in the post-test. Also, most of the students of the experimental group indicated their positive views on the CLT.

Method

Research Design

According to Mackey (2006), quantitative research starts with an experimental design in which a hypothesis is followed by the quantification of data and some sort of numerical analysis is carried out. In the present study, the effectiveness of CLT method was analyzed through the scores of students' final exam in terms of numerical data. The study is an experimental one, therefore, quantitative method was chosen for the design of this research to answer the research questions. The dependent variable of the study is the students' achievement in final examination, and the independent variable is using CLT method, a device to engage the learners of the experimental group in communicative activities.

Participants

The population of the study was composed of 60 female students of elementary level. They have already passed starter level. The age of the learners varied from 13 to 15. They were studying in

four classes of a Language Institute in Kerman. All the participants were native speakers of Persian that participated in the class for 4 hours a week. Based on Dörnyei (2007), sample is a group of participants whom the researcher examines to determine the result of any particular study. Convenience sampling method was used to select the participants from four intact classes. Convenience sampling is a type of nonprobability sampling in which people are sampled simply because they are "convenient" sources of data for researchers.

Instrumentation

Three instruments were employed in this study; language proficiency test as a pre-test, final exam as a post-test, and a related questionnaire on CLT method.

Pre-Test (Language Proficiency)

Before the treatment session began, all of the participants took part in Basic Oxford Test of elementary level. It is a standardized, reliable and valid test. It was used to check the homogeneity of the students in terms of their language proficiency level. The test was comprised of grammar, vocabulary and two short passages of reading comprehension questions with multiple-choice format. Out of 65 students, 60 of them whose scores on the language proficiency test fell within ±1 standard deviation of the mean score, labeled as the elementary EFL learners and attended in the present project. It is worthy to note that, the students' scores of this test were written by the researcher and considered as the pre-test scores too. As mentioned above, the test covered all the parts of final examination as grammar, vocabulary and passages of reading comprehension, so it could be regarded as the pretest. Also, both tests were presented with the same format of multiple-choice questions.

Post Test (Final Exam)

To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher used a posttest as final exam to collect the data. The posttest administered for both the Experimental Group (EG) and Control Group (CG) to investigate the students' achievement in final examination. Posttest was extracted from the students' textbook; American English File 1 (elementary level) which was standard and valid test. The format of posttest was as same as the pre-test, included 20 questions of grammar and

vocabulary with three reading comprehension passages (20 questions). Totally, the test was comprised of 40 multiple-choice questions and the scores were calculated out of 20. The purpose of the pre-test was to identify the two groups' level before using the treatment, and the aim of post-test was to compare the results of the pre-test with the results of the post-test after the treatment (Implementing CLT Method).

Questionnaire

After carrying out the treatment, a standardized questionnaire adopted from Komol and Suwanphathama (2020) was distributed to the experimental class. The questionnaire consists of 20 close-ended items in this questionnaire. The questionnaire explored the students' views towards CLT and implementing communicative activities (e.g., the use of role-play, pair work, group discussion activities and language video) for improving students' grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension skill. The students were asked to rate the matters based on a five-point scale ranging from 5 (Strongly agree) to 1 (Strongly disagree). It should be noted that the questionnaire was made valid and reliable by the researcher, and the reliability of the questionnaire was analyzed through Cronbach's Alpha which is reported as .79. It is worthy to note that, the original English questionnaire was translated into Persian to ensure that the participants easily follow its items and then it was translated back into English to ascertain that the translated one had the same interpretation. In addition, validity, just like reliability, is a positivist requirement. It means that a valid instrument should gather what it supposed to gather or it is actually measuring what it is intended to measure. For validity of the questionnaire, two experienced professors as the experts in this field observed the items before it was administered, and they did not report any irrelevant points. They have also reported high validity in fulfilling the research objectives.

Data Collection Procedures

For conducting this study, at first four intact classes of 65 students of elementary level were chosen by the researcher from the language institute where she was teaching English for some years. During Covid-19, the students were able to receive virtual learning, also they were allowed to participate in the class by observing all the protocols. Fortunately, all the students preferred to attend in the class. The students had already finished starter level. Then, the students participated

in Basic Oxford Placement Test for homogenizing. Regarding the obtained scores, 60 of them were selected. In other words, among 65 EFL learners, 60 of them were chosen by researcher based on the mean of scores. It should be noted that the scores of this test were also regarded as the pre-test scores. So, the papers were corrected carefully and the scores were recorded by the researcher. After that, the researcher randomly put them in two groups as the control and experimental groups. Treatment as one of the most important steps of the present work, started after the completion of the pre-test. The treatment implemented in 16 sessions (one term) and the timing of each session was 90 minutes. As mentioned before, one group consisted of 30 students served as the experimental group benefited from CLT techniques. The researcher modeled the strategies for the students of the experimental group and gave them enough practice on how to use them in the language class.

The CLT method targeted students' grammar and vocabulary as sub-skills along with their reading comprehension skill. In experimental class, the students practiced the mentioned sub-skills and reading skill according to the principles of this communicative method. For teaching vocabulary, communicative activities and materials engaged students in the classroom communication included games, discussions, stimulating pictures and role play. In fact, role-play is to create the presence of a real-life situation in the classroom. It gives students an opportunity to practice communicatively in various social contexts and in different social roles. The language applied in this activity is varied, regarding the students' status, attitudes, mood, and different situations. For teaching grammar, games such as cue cards and personalization as name of characters in the role-play were applied. Cue cards used in simple activities as students work in pairs. The teacher prepared 10 cards for them and gave the students guidance as to the sort of questions they should ask and the students work in pairs. First, the students put the cue cards on the table and looked at the pictures for two minutes. Second, the teacher turned the cards face down and shuffled them. Third, the first student took a card and looked at it, without showing it to her partner. Then, the partner had to guess which picture it is by asking questions, and finally the winner would be the one who guessed the most pictures. These activities provided supplementation to the traditional exercises and made a lesson more relaxed and memorable. When playing the game, students practice forms unconsciously by way of communication. A successful

communicative activity helps to generate the target language unconsciously but at the same time makes students enjoy what they are doing.

The researcher adopted communicative activities as discussion and group work for teaching reading comprehension skill. Group Work promotes learner autonomy by allowing students to make their own decisions in the group without being told what to do by the teacher. It also increases the number of talking opportunities for each individual student (Harmer, 2007). In the reading classes these steps in group-work activities were followed. The teacher placed the students of the experimental group into pair groups. At first, there was a warm-up about 6-8 minutes for students as warm-up activities are essential in the English classroom. It served to review language from a previous lesson and prime the class for a new topic. it was the activity used to encourage students' involvement and permeate the development of the whole lesson. The teacher then asked the student pairs to work together to answer the questions from the reading texts. After that, the representative student from each group gives the answers orally and also writes them down on the white board. Finally, the teacher checked their answers and corrected if they were not true. As mentioned above, the other group regarded as the control group and received no treatments, but they participated in pre and posttests. However, in this group, the researcher followed the traditional method of teaching. In fact, teacher-centered training was applied in the control group and the communicative activities were ignored completely. In each session, the teacher read the new text and then several students were asked to read each paragraph of the text again. At the end of each paragraph, meaning of the new words was identified by the teacher. Also, the teacher explained the grammar points directly and wrote down all the points on the board. After that, the students had to do the activities and exercises of the text individually. Finally, the students read their answers to the class, and if they were incorrect, the teacher would correct them directly and the students took all the notes.

The other group which consisted of 30 students, was regarded as the control group and received no treatment. In fact, the researcher followed the ordinary grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension teaching in this group. Fortunately, none of the students were absent during the treatment, and this factor would increase the reliability of the results. After the treatment, the final phase of present research was conducting a post-test, and all of the students participated in it. The format of post-test was similar to pre-test, including grammar, vocabulary and some reading

comprehension parts. Eventually, all the papers were corrected and the scores were written next to the pre-test scores for analyzing and identifying the possible differences between the two tests (pre- and post- tests). In the last session, the translated questionnaire addressed to the experimental group to investigate their attitudes to this strategy. After completing the questionnaires by the students of EG, all the data were gathered for analyzing and interpreting.

Data Analysis

Analysis involves working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others (Zikmund, 2000). In data collection stage, the scores of the tests were taken for analyzing. Actually, after running in pre-test and post-test in both groups, the scores were collected by researcher. To compare the performance of the participants on the post-test, the mean score after the treatment compared through an independent sample t-test to highlight the possible significant difference between the students' achievement in the final examination. Furthermore, the students' attitudes of the experimental group toward CLT method were examined. Therefore, the collected data of the questionnaire were analyzed by SPSS software. That is to say, descriptive statistics, including frequency, mean and percentage were reported to find out the effectiveness of the mentioned method on students' language achievement.

Results

This part aims to provide the results of data analysis based on the proposed research questions. The tables show the participant' responses in detail in terms of frequency, percentage, and mean score.

Examining Pre- and Post-test Results

First, in conducting this study, the students of control and experimental groups took part in basic Oxford placement test examination as a pre-test. After that, the teacher (researcher) employed CLT activities that were listed before, in the experimental group during a term (15 sessions). However, the EFL learners of the control group received no treatment and they were taught by traditional method of teaching, but they participated in pre and post-test. In other words, his group (CG) did not have any experience of CLT method and activities. After gathering the students' scores, sample

t-tests were run to analyze the quantitative data including pre-test and post-test results. Eventually, the differences between the mean scores in the first examination and then, the difference of the second examination were measured. The null hypothesis for testing two independent samples indicated the equality of means, and the opposite assumptions inferred the inequality of the means. The significant level was considered to be 0.05. If ρ value is less than 0.05, it means there is a significant difference between the mean scores of two tests in control and experimental groups.

Analyzing Pre- and Post-tests' Scores

Table 1 displayed the numbers, mean, and standard deviation of all scores of the two groups, control and experimental. Considering careful analysis, in both groups, the mean scores have increased in the post-test. However, the difference between the means of the pre and post-test in the experimental group is remarkable. In fact, the mean score of the post-test in the experimental group has increased more than the mean score of the control group.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of T-Test

		Mean	**N**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**
Paired Samples Statistics					
Control Group	Pre-test	15.25	30	2.180	0.230
	Post-test	15.78	30	2.241	0.310
Experimental Group	Pre-test	15.10	30	2.812	0.478
	Post-test	16.95	30	2.945	0.497

Table 2

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Paired Sample T-test

		Paired Differences						t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
					Lower	Upper				
Con. Group	**Pretest - Posttest**	-0.53	.061	.08	-0.83	0.23	-1.24	29	0.34
Exp. Group	**Pretest - Posttest**	-1.85	.133	.019	-2.48	-1.10	-5.21	29	0.00

After implementing CLT method and activities, the students' scores of the two groups highlighted different mean scores. In other words, the means of pre-test and post-test in the control group are 15.25 and 15.78 respectively (Table 1), so the difference between the two means is 0.53, which indicates a slight difference between two mean scores (Table 2). However, regarding EG, the difference between the mean scores is observable. Based on the careful analysis, the mean of the pre-test is reported as 15.10, and the mean score of post-tests is 16.95 in the experimental group. Therefore, a remarkable difference between the mean scores of the experimental group is obvious, which is 1.58. Furthermore, p-value in control group is 0.34, but in the experimental group is 0.00 which shows the mean scores of the experimental group has changed significantly (Table 2).

Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire

The following table indicated descriptive data analysis of the questionnaire and the results are presented in the form of table.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistic of Questionnaire Items

Item	Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
1. The role-play activities help me to have confidence in using new grammar and vocabulary.	3 10%	4 13.33%	3 10%	12 40%	8 26.67%	3.6	.423
2. The role-play activities allow me to be more creative in using new grammar and words.	2 6.67%	5 16.66%	2 6.67%	13 43.34%	8 26.66%	3.66	.513
3. The role-play activities improve my grammar and vocabulary knowledge.	2 6.67%	3 10%	1 3.33%	15 50%	9 30%	3.86	.562
4. The teacher's instruction is to use new grammar and vocabulary in classroom activities.	4 13.33%	4 13.33%	0 0%	12 40%	10 33.34%	3.66	.585
5. I think group discussion activities help me to learn new grammar and vocabulary.	2 6.66%	5 16.66%	1 3.34%	11 36.67%	11 36.67%	3.80	.558
6. I think group discussion is a useful way to improve reading comprehension.	0 0%	5 16.66%	1 3.34%	14 46.66%	10 33.34%	3.96	.592

7. I think English movies help me get familiar with new words and grammar.	3 10%	8 26.66%	0 0%	9 30%	10 33.34%	3.50	.498
8. The role of the teacher as a facilitator to help us learn new words and grammar is very important.	2 6.67%	3 10%	0 0%	14 46.66%	11 36.67%	3.96	.596
9. Role-play, group discussion, and language video help me to gain improvement in grammar and vocabulary.	3 10%	8 26.66%	1 3.34%	9 30%	9 30%	3.43	.473
10. Role-play, group discussion, and language video improve my confidence to have grammar and vocabulary tests.	4 13.33%	6 20%	3 10%	9 30%	8 26.67%	3.36	.428
11. I think using role-play as a way to promote reading skill, is useful method of learning English.	6 20%	3 10%	0 0%	13 43.33%	8 26.67%	3.46	.445
12. I think using group discussion is very useful to get familiar with the main idea of reading comprehension passages.	1 3.34%	6 20%	0 0%	11 36.66%	12 40%	3.90	.598

13. I hope that the teacher implements this teaching method for learners to learn new words and grammar.	2 6.66%	4 13.34%	0 0%	15 505	9 30%	3.83	.573
14. I prefer to have role-play activities in reading skill.	5 16.66%	1 3.34%	0 0%	12 40%	12 40%	3.83	.586
15. Even though, role-play activities take much more time to comprehend main idea of reading passages, I continue using it.	2 6.66%	8 26.67%	1 3.34%	12 40%	7 23.33%	3.46	.512
16. Even though role-play activities take me a lot of time to comprehend details of reading, I really enjoy them.	10 3.34%	2 6.66%	0 0%	11 36.66%	7 23.34%	3.10	.502
17. Even though, role-play activities take me a lot of time to answer reading comprehension questions, I really enjoy them.	3 10%	5 16.66%	0 0%	10 33.34%	12 40%	3.76	.567
18. I hope that teacher assigns learners to watch videos to improve their vocabulary and grammar.	6 20%	5 16.67%	2 6.66%	9 30%	8 26.67%	3.26	.533
19. It takes me a long time to watch a video about reading comprehension, but I really enjoy doing it.	4 13.33%	4 13.33%	2 6.67%	13 43.34%	7 23.33%	3.50	.564

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20. I prefer to use different activities in reading comprehension to improve my reading skill.	7 23.33%	2 6.67%	0 0%	10 33.34%	11 36.66%	3.53	.572

Data analysis of the first item indicates that more than half of the students (66.67%) mentioned that role-play activities helped them to have confidence in using new grammar and vocabulary, 10% of them had neutral idea, and the rest disagreed on the mentioned item. Based on data analysis of the second item, exactly 70% of the students stated that role-play activities allowed them to be more creative in using new grammar and words, while about 23.5% of them disagreed and 6.67% had neutral opinion on them above item. Descriptive analysis of the third item displays that a high percentage (80%) of the students mentioned that the role-play activities improved their grammar and vocabulary knowledge. However, a low percentage of them (16.67%) disagreed, and just 3.33% showed their neutral perception. Based on data analysis of the fourth item, about 73.5% of the students declared that the teacher's instruction is to use new grammar and vocabulary in classroom activities, and the analysis of item five showed that most of the EFL learners (73.34%) thought that group discussion activities help them to learn new grammar and vocabulary. According to analysis of item six and seven, a great percentage of the respondents (80%) thought that group discussion was a useful way to improve reading comprehension and more than half of the EFL learners (66.34%) thought that English movies help them get familiar with new words and grammar. Analysis of item eight and nine, a great number of the participants (83.33%) agreed that the role of the teacher as a facilitator helped them learn new words and grammar, and exactly 60% of the students mentioned that role-play, group discussion, and language video help them to gain improvement in grammar and vocabulary, but 36.66% disagreed and 3.34% had neutral idea. Also, descriptive analysis indicated that 56.67% of the subjects uttered that role-play, group discussion, and language video improved their confidence to have grammar and vocabulary tests. Whereas, 33.33% of them disagreed and 10% of them showed their neutral opinion towards the item. As seen in table 3, data analysis represents that exactly 70% of the EFL students thought that using role-play as a way to promote reading skill, was useful method of learning, but exactly 30% of them demonstrated their disagreements and nobody had neutral opinion on the mentioned item.

Moreover, data analysis highlights that 76.66 of the respondents thought that using group discussion was very useful to get familiar with the main idea of reading comprehension passages. The above table showed that most of the respondents, exactly 80% of the subjects hoped that the teacher implemented this teaching method for learners to learn new words and grammar. Also, a great percentage of the participants (80%) preferred to have role-play activities in reading skill, and 63.33% of the students believed that even though, role-play activities took much more time to comprehend main idea of reading passages, they continued using it. Based on the analysis of the above item, exactly 60% the participants of experimental group uttered that even though role-play activities took them a lot of time to comprehend details of reading passages, they really enjoyed them. As the above table reveals, 73.34% of the participants said that even though, role-play activities took them a lot of time to answer reading comprehension questions, they really enjoyed them. Besides, more than half of the EFL learners (56.67%) hoped that teacher assigned learners to watch videos to improve their vocabulary and grammar. Also, more than half of the participants (66.67%) in the experimental group announced that it took them a long time to watch a video about reading comprehension, but they really enjoyed doing it. Analysis of the last item reveals that exactly 70% of the respondents preferred to use different activities in reading comprehension to improve their reading skill, 30% of them disagreed and nobody had neutral view on the last item.

In the following part, mean score of each option of the questionnaire is shown. As table 4 indicates, "Agree" with the highest mean score (39) placed in the first rank of the table. Then, "Strongly Agree" puts in the second rank with the mean score of 31.16, and "Disagree" comes in the third rank with the mean of 15.16. Moreover, "Strongly Disagree" and "Neutral" options with the mean score of 10.33 and 2.33 received the fourth and the last rank respectively. Therefore, as it can be seen in the following table, most of the respondents of the experimental group indicated their agreement on the items of CLT questionnaire.

Table 4

Mean Scores of the Questionnaire Options

N	Options	Mean Score	Rank
1	Agree	39.00	1st
2	Strongly Agree	31.16	2nd

3	Disagree	15.16	3rd
4	Strongly Disagree	10.33	4th
5	Neutral	2.33	5th

Discussion

After implementing CLT method and activities, the students' scores of the two groups highlighted different mean scores. As table 1 indicated, in the control group, the mean of pre-test was reported as 15.25 and the mean score of the post-test was 15.78. However, the mean scores of the pre and post-test in the experimental group were achieved as 15.10 and 16.95 respectively. Therefore, a remarkable difference between the mean scores of the experimental group is remarkable, which is 1.58. Moreover, p-value in the control group was 0.34, but in the experimental group was 0.00 which shows the mean scores in the experimental group has changed significantly. This study also focused on the participants' attitude through CLT questionnaire and a great number of the participants (80% and more) agreed that the role of the teacher as a facilitator was very important to help them. They preferred to have role-play activities in reading skill and stated that these activities improved their grammar and vocabulary knowledge. In their views, group discussion was a useful way to improve reading comprehension, and they hoped that the teacher implemented this teaching method for learners to learn new words and grammar. Additionally, a high number of students (70% and more) thought that using group discussion was very useful to get familiar with the main idea of reading comprehension passages and also helped them to learn new grammar and vocabulary. They really enjoyed role-play activities and such activities allowed them to be more creative in using new grammar and words. Based on their views, using role-play activities was useful method of learning. They preferred to use different activities in reading comprehension to improve their reading skill. Furthermore, data analysis of the questionnaire indicated that most of the students (60% and more) agreed that role-play, group discussion, and language video help them to gain improvement in grammar and vocabulary and they really enjoyed them. They also uttered that role-play activities helped them to have confidence in using new grammar and vocabulary, and they thought that English movies help them get familiar with them. They preferred to continued using such activities. Finally, more than half of the EFL learners (50%) mentioned that role-play, group discussion, and language video improved their confidence to have grammar

and vocabulary tests. They hoped that teacher assigned learners to watch videos to improve their vocabulary and grammar.

It is worthy to note that findings of the present study are compatible with a number of studies that were reviewed earlier. For instance, Aalaei (2017) measured the effect of the implementation of CLT method on speaking and listening skills of Iranian students and it was found that the CLT had a positive effect on the students' listening and speaking skills. Also, most of the students of the experimental group indicated their positive views on the CLT. Moreover, in a study by Rahimi and Naderi (2014) on exploring the relationship between EFL teachers' attitudes towards CLT, EFL teachers showed their positive attitudes towards CLT in general and group work in communicative classes in particular. Furthermore, Riazi and Razmjoo (2006) compared the overall attitude of English teachers in high schools and private institutes and the results revealed that both groups of teachers hold a highly positive attitude towards the premises of CLT. Similarly, in a study by Alkhayyat (2009) which explored the extent to which EFL teachers are aware of some characteristics of CLT and their implementation level of these characteristics, using a questionnaire and classroom observation. The results revealed that the study participants had good knowledge in different degrees of the characteristics addressed despite the hindering obstacles EFL teachers had in CLT implementation. Besides, findings of Karim's (2003) study revealed that teachers hold a positive attitude towards the use of communicative activities as well as principles of CLT. Another study conducted by Matsuura et al., (2001) explored the beliefs of students and English teachers about CLT instruction. The researchers reported that students tended to consider functions, speaking, grammar, listening, cultural differences, reading, non-verbal cues, pronunciation, and writing as important for learning communicative English. However, the results of this study are not supported with a study by Humphries and Burns (2015). They showed that there are some barriers to the implementation of CLT which are related to minimizing the importance of the expectations and beliefs of the teachers, not providing opportunities for teachers to understand CLT principles and not developing opportunities for problem-solving meetings between teachers and school managers. Also, Ozsevik's (2010) study indicated that Turkish EFL teachers observed many difficulties in implementing CLT in their classrooms. The results suggest that despite showing keen interest in change and being eager to be identified with CLT, Turkish teachers are not rather optimistic about the complete adoption of CLT, and thus feel that only by

overcoming the difficulties from those four sources, and by establishing more favorable conditions for the implementation of CLT can teachers truly benefit from CLT in their English classrooms.

Conclusion

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method is one of the latest humanistic approaches which emphasizes on the language use and provides more opportunity to students to practice the target language in spite of its limitation (Thamarana, 2014). As mentioned before, the currents study probed the effectiveness of CLT method on EFL learners' achievements in their final examination. It also explored the students' attitude towards the use of this method in their language classes. As Gorsuch (2000) noted, the best way to understand the most effective ways of implementing CLT is doing more research to understand teachers' and students' attitude toward it. By conducting this study, it was found that the CLT method had a positive effect on the students' achievements in final examination. This was proved through the higher mean score that the experimental group obtained in the post-test. Additionally, the experimental study has illustrated the positive students' attitude toward this communicative teaching method. As the outcomes suggest, Iranian EFL students have a general positive attitude towards CLT, they know what the group work is and what benefits it offers. That is to say, the findings affirmed that students considered CLT classroom activities useful as supplement instruction. In fact, the participants preferred to employ communicative activities in language classes. More importantly, they agreed that a wide variety of classroom activities helped them to learn new grammar and vocabulary as well as improved their reading comprehension. All the students strongly agreed with the use of CLT for improving their reading skills. Obviously, the CLT method has changed the experimental class atmosphere to be better than before, as the students felt comfortable and enthusiastic during the teaching-learning processes using the CLT activities. This study could be an attempt to contribute to the Iranian educational reform process, encouraging an effective implementation of the CLT method in Iranian educational system. Some changes need to be taken, and the most important one refers to reform the examination system in Iranian educational system.

Some implications emerged from the findings of the current study. It should be noted that the teachers have a significant role in implementing effective classroom activities to improve learning

environment. More importantly, the students should be aware of using the classroom activities in learning English in order to gain the advantages from the effective classroom activities. Also, teachers should clearly provide students with the reasons for applying such communicative method as CLT, and how this method helps them. In fact, the use of effective classroom activities is a reality and will become increasingly important. Maybe the possibility to completely replace the traditional language classes with the communicative one is doubtful, but the results of this work would be beneficial for language teachers and learners to use such activities to practice and learn English language in their classes. On top of that, in order to be effective in using the communicative activities in the EFL classes, teachers must remove themselves from the classroom attention, and focus on the students more, as the nature of the CLT is student-centered learning. More importantly, some factors need to be considered when it comes to implementing CLT activities in the EFL classes. Most of the educational system still follow the traditional way of teaching and focus on book-based teaching method particularly for the beginners. However, it is important to consider other methods of teaching in order to change the teaching style in the language classes. Teachers should be encouraged to employ CLT activities in the classroom to find out whether students prefer this type of teaching or not. Also, they can conduct a needs analysis to discover what type of communicative activities students are comfortable to participate in. The administration of educational institutions is required to provide teachers with suitable materials to be able to implement CLT effectively in the classes, they also need to provide teachers with training sessions on how to conduct these activities efficiently. These training sessions would be helpful to remove their concerns towards applying teacher-centered methods. More importantly, knowing about the possible challenges related to the communicative method and adjusting the new roles, may help teachers who plan to use CLT method in their instruction. In order to prevent some problems which may result from the difficulties in adapting new roles, both teachers and students may be given training on CLT method. In these training sessions, they may be informed about how to work effectively and how they can handle some possible difficulties. In light of the above discussion, some recommendations can be made as; a shift should be made from less communicative to more communicative context of ELT, the educational policy-makers should regard the applicability of the CLT method in Iranian educational system, EFL teachers should receive training in applying CLT principles and techniques, EFL learners should be encouraged to

speak English with their classmates, and ELT textbook authors should work and model more communicative activities.

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