



Exploring Teachers' Beliefs and Their Practice Towards CLT In EFL Classroom

Nadaa Putri Alyndra¹, Salsabila², Meszalunna Zafira Huda³, Atik Yuliyani⁴, and Haryanti⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5} Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta

Corresponding E-mail: nadaaalyndra@gmail.com

Received: 2025-12-15 Accepted: 2025-12-31

DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v13i2.8867

Abstract

Research in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has consistently shown that teachers' classroom practices are influenced by their pedagogical beliefs, although alignment between beliefs and practices is not always evident. This study explores junior high school teachers' beliefs about Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and examines the extent to which these beliefs are reflected in their classroom practices. Using a descriptive qualitative design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The findings reveal a clear misalignment between teachers' stated support for CLT principles, such as student-centered learning, and their actual classroom practices, which remain largely teacher-centered with frequent use of the mother tongue. This gap is primarily attributed to students' low English proficiency, low motivation, and limited technological resources. These constraints compel teachers to adapt their practices in ways that contradict their beliefs. The study highlights that mismatches between CLT beliefs and practices stem more from contextual limitations than from a lack of conceptual understanding. Practically, the findings suggest the need for context-sensitive CLT implementation, targeted professional development, and institutional support to help teachers enact communicative approaches more effectively in constrained EFL settings.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT); EFL Classroom; Teacher beliefs; Teaching practices.

Introduction

Teachers play a crucial role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction because their pedagogical choices directly influence the learning environment and students' academic achievement. Teacher beliefs can be defined as judgments people make about assertions or opinions, which are inferred from their speech, actions, and intentions (Pajares, 1992, as cited in Wesely et al., (2024)). Teacher beliefs function as internal filters that often exert a stronger influence on

instructional decision-making than pedagogical knowledge or curriculum guidelines (Clark & Peterson, 1986, as cited in Lazdina & Daga-Krumina, (2023)). Similarly, perceptions of language, education, and teaching shape how knowledge is interpreted and applied in classroom practice (Garcia-Ponce & Tagg, (2020)). Therefore, understanding teachers' belief systems is essential for improving the quality of language teaching (Aksoy (2015)).

Despite the acknowledged importance of teacher beliefs, the relationship between beliefs and classroom practices is not straightforward. Research indicates that this relationship is often complex, dynamic, and context-dependent rather than linear or predictable (Tamimy, (2015)). While some studies report consistency between teachers' stated beliefs and their instructional practices, a larger body of research highlights discrepancies or a "fragile relationship" between the two (Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004, as cited in Tamimy, (2015)). These inconsistencies raise important questions about how pedagogical beliefs are enacted in real classroom settings, particularly when teachers face contextual constraints.

Within the field of EFL, teachers' beliefs are widely recognized as a central element shaping the teaching and learning process. These beliefs encompass teachers' views on language, learning, and teaching strategies, influencing lesson planning, instructional implementation, and assessment practices (Pusparini et al., (2021)). Teaching, therefore, is not merely a technical activity but a reflective practice informed by teachers' personal theories and belief orientations (Pusparini et al., (2021)).

One pedagogical approach closely linked to teachers' beliefs is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). As an approach in EFL and ESL contexts, CLT emphasizes interaction between teachers and learners to achieve meaningful and authentic communication in the classroom (Anderson, 1993; Noveriana Chang, (2020)). CLT represents a shift from viewing language as a set of grammatical rules toward understanding language as a tool for social interaction. Savignon (1987) conceptualizes communicative competence as the integration of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse abilities, highlighting the importance of meaning negotiation in real communicative contexts. Consequently, CLT requires a redefinition of the teacher's role from knowledge transmitter to facilitator of interaction and meaning-making.

CLT has been widely promoted and adopted across many EFL and ESL contexts, its implementation has faced significant challenges worldwide. Studies conducted in Taiwan and Iran identify insufficient teacher training aligned with CLT principles as a major obstacle (Vaezi & Abbaspour, 2014; Noveriana Chang, (2020)). Similarly, research in Bangladesh and Vietnam reveals that traditional teaching practices, exam-oriented curricula, misalignment between curriculum and assessment, and teachers' low income hinder the effective implementation of CLT (Hiep, 2007; Tarannum, 2010; Sultana, 2014; Biswas, 2013; Ansarey, 2012 in Rahman et al., (2018)). These challenges often result in a gap between

communicative goals and classroom realities, limiting students' opportunities to develop speaking and interactional skills.

In the Indonesian EFL context, the relationship between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices becomes even more complex due to policy demands, curriculum constraints, and school conditions. Too and Saimima (2019) report that EFL teachers in Eastern Indonesia frequently struggle to balance their personal beliefs about effective teaching with school-based curriculum instructions that restrict their choice of materials and teaching strategies. As a result, teachers often adapt their instructional practices pragmatically rather than fully enacting their pedagogical beliefs, highlighting the importance of institutional support.

Empirical studies further reveal both convergence and divergence between Indonesian teachers' beliefs and practices. Setyaningrum (2018) found that while Indonesian professional teachers often hold strong beliefs in CLT principles such as the use of real-world contexts and learner autonomy their classroom practices frequently deviate from these ideals. This divergence is particularly evident in the tension between fluency and accuracy. Although teachers theoretically endorse the CLT principle of prioritizing fluency, classroom practices tend to revert to accuracy-focused instruction.

Additionally, Noveriana Chang (2020) identifies pragmatic constraints in Indonesian secondary schools, including heavy administrative workloads and limited time for material development. These constraints often force teachers to rely heavily on textbooks, even when they believe in student-centered and communicative learning. As a result, classroom instruction may shift back toward teacher-centered practices, despite teachers' conceptual understanding of CLT.

Although previous studies have contributed valuable insights into teachers' beliefs and CLT implementation, much of the existing research relies heavily on self-reported data or examines isolated factors influencing teaching practices. There remains a lack of in-depth qualitative research that systematically investigates how Indonesian EFL teachers' beliefs align or misalign with their actual classroom practices, particularly through direct classroom observation. Consequently, the complex interaction between belief systems, contextual pressures, and instructional decision-making remains underexplored.

To address this gap, the present study aims to:

1. Examine Indonesian secondary EFL teachers' beliefs toward Communicative Language Teaching and analyze how these beliefs are reflected in their classroom practices.
2. Identify areas of alignment and misalignment between teachers' beliefs and their actual instructional practices in the Indonesian EFL context.

To achieve these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are Indonesian secondary EFL teachers' beliefs toward Communicative Language Teaching and how are these beliefs reflected in their instructional practices?
2. In what ways do teachers' beliefs and practices align or misalign in the Indonesian EFL context?

This study hoped to contribute to the field by providing a nuanced, in-depth exploration of the factors shaping the belief-practice relationship in the EFL classroom. By employing a qualitative methodology that combines teacher interviews with direct classroom observation, this research moves beyond simply identifying inconsistencies to explaining the contextual pressures and cognitive tensions that cause them (Aksoy, (2015)). The findings are expected to offer valuable insights for teacher education programs, curriculum designers, and school administrators, highlighting the need to address real-world constraints and provide targeted support to help teachers bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Method

This study used qualitative descriptive approaches to investigate teacher beliefs and how those beliefs show up in their teaching practices in class. Without changing the variables, qualitative methods provide detailed, exact, and relevant information about phenomena (Cresswell 2014, cited in Ishtiaq, (2019)). The research design combines two instruments, which are a semi-structured interview and classroom observation. The participants consisted of three EFL teachers from a private junior high school in Depok, Indonesia. The school serves students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, with English taught as a compulsory subject at the beginner proficiency level.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, based on predefined criteria: (1) a minimum of three years of teaching experience, (2) active involvement in classroom instruction, and (3) experience teaching English at the junior high school level. This sampling strategy was chosen to ensure that participants possessed sufficient pedagogical experience to reflect meaningfully on CLT beliefs and practices. The instruments that researchers used to gather data are semi-structured interviews and classroom observation.

Semi-structured interview guidelines help one explore the teacher's beliefs about Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), their understanding of CLT principles, and their opinions about its benefits and challenges when implementing CLT. The semi-structured interviews were adopted from study by Karavas-Doukas, (1996) then adjusted to the research questions of this study. Interview guide consisted of open-ended questions addressing key CLT dimensions, including teacher and learner roles, fluency versus accuracy, classroom interaction, error correction, and contextual constraints.

Examples of interview questions are provided in the Appendix. Each interview was conducted individually and privately, lasted approximately 15–20 minutes, and was carried out in Indonesian to allow participants to express their views comfortably and accurately. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and later transcribed verbatim for analysis.

The Interview Question list

No	Question	Answer
1	What does Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) mean to you, and how are these principles reflected in your teaching?	
2	How do you balance accuracy and fluency in English language learning activities?	
3	Can you give examples of classroom activities that encourage students to actively communicate in English?	
4	What is your view on the use of group work or pair work in learning? What are the benefits and challenges?	
5	How do you handle student errors during speaking or communication activities?	
6	How do you see the role of the teacher in a communicative classroom, is it more as a facilitator, guide, or director? Why?	
7	In your opinion, what should be the role of students in communication-oriented learning?	
8	What types of teaching materials do you use to support communicative learning, and how do you adapt them to the needs of your students?	

9	What factors support or hinder you in implementing the CLT approach in the classroom?	
10	To what extent do you think your teaching practices are in line with your beliefs about communicative learning?	

Then, the second research instrument is the Observation Checklist. The observation checklist is a tool that assists in documenting various aspects of a teacher's behavior, interaction patterns, teaching and learning activities, and strategies for managing the classroom. The observation checklist was adapted from study by Lőrincz (2023) also this observation checklist reflects the five principles of CLT according Richards & Rodgers, (2001). These instruments are used to see if the teacher's beliefs and the actual practice are the same or different.

The Observation Checklist

No	CLT aspects that have been implemented	Yes	No
1	Activities simulating real-life communication should prevail in the lessons.		
2	The teacher should use activities that resemble real-world tasks.		
3	The teacher should supply learners with additional materials apart from course books based on students' individual needs.		
4	The teacher should use authentic materials (e.g., advertisements, travel brochures, menus) in teaching English.		
5	Using games and role-plays simulating real-life Communication is essential for language learning.		
6	Pair and small group work facilitate genuine communication and increases learners' speaking time. It should be a regular part of a lesson.		
7	Students should use English to communicate with one another and the teacher.		

8	The teacher should speak English rather than the learners' mother tongue in the lesson.		
---	---	--	--

In addition to the interviews, classroom observations were carried out in three different classes for each of the three teachers. These observations were conducted to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of how the teachers' stated beliefs were reflected in their actual teaching practices. Observing multiple classes for each teacher also helped ensure the accuracy, consistency, and credibility of the data collected. Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, data collection procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used, and all identifying information was removed from transcripts and reports.

The data gathered then are examined using methods of thematic analysis according to the six steps proposed by Braun & Clarke (2012). This process includes familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing potential themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the report. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was achieved, indicated by the recurrence of patterns and the absence of new themes across interviews and observations. With this approach, researchers can identify recurring patterns and main themes related to the discrepancies between teachers' beliefs and their classroom instruction.

Results

The findings presented in this section draw on the five principles of Communicative Language Teaching outlined by Richards & Rodgers (2001), which serve as the thematic framework for analysing the classroom practices and stated beliefs of the three participating teachers. By combining data from classroom observations and interviews, the analysis provides a holistic picture of how these teachers interpret, apply, and sometimes struggle to enact CLT in their everyday teaching. Each theme highlights how their beliefs align with or are misaligned from their actual instructional practices, offering insight into the complexities of implementing communicative pedagogy in the Indonesian EFL context.

1. Learners learn a language through using it to communicate Teachers' Beliefs.

All three teachers strongly emphasized the importance of communication as the core of English learning. teacher 1 explicitly defined CLT as an approach that prioritizes student interaction in English, stating:
"Penerapannya itu untuk menekankan komunikasi siswa dalam bahasa

Inggris, dari interaksi antar guru dan siswa, seperti salam sapa dan kegiatan komunikasi langsung menggunakan bahasa Inggris."

Similarly, teacher 2 viewed CLT as essential for making learning more meaningful and accessible: *"CLT membuat pembelajaran lebih real dan akan lebih gampang diterima oleh siswa, karena setelah pembahasan siswa langsung mempraktekkan."*

Teacher 3 associated communicative learning with student-centered interaction, emphasizing responsiveness: *"Kalau siswa merespon pertanyaan guru, berarti sudah student-center, karena siswa dilibatkan dalam pembelajaran."*

Observed classroom practices

Despite these beliefs, observations indicated limited communicative use of English. In all three classrooms, Bahasa Indonesia dominated classroom discourse, with English largely restricted to scripted dialogues or teacher-led questioning. In two classrooms, students consistently relied on their first language during peer interaction. In one observed instance, when a student attempted to respond in English, several peers laughed, which led the student to stop speaking English and back to Bahasa Indonesia. This classroom reaction appeared to reinforce students' reluctance to use English orally. Teacher 3 acknowledged this gap candidly: *"Saya sendiri juga kadang masih sering ngomong bahasa Indonesia, karena terbiasa, jadi speaking siswa juga masih kurang."*

Teacher 1 further explained that English use was often conditional: *"Kalau siswa tidak mengerti, baru kita jelaskan."*

Although one teacher attempted to establish communicative routines by requiring students to use English for simple classroom functions, such as asking permission to go to the toilet, observation notes indicated that this practice was difficult to sustain. When reminders were not explicitly given, students tended to revert to their first language. Meanwhile, another teacher did not reinforce such routines, allowing Bahasa Indonesia to dominate everyday classroom exchanges. Teachers attributed these patterns to affective barriers, particularly students' low confidence and fear of making mistakes in front of their peers.

Alignment analysis

These findings reveal a clear misalignment between teachers' belief in communicative language use and actual classroom interaction, largely constrained by students' limited confidence and teachers' reliance on L1 as instructional scaffolding.

2. Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities

Teachers' beliefs

Findings regarding authentic communication showed a mix of approaches. However, teachers consistently expressed that communicative activities should reflect real-life contexts. Teacher 2 emphasized practicality: *“CLT itu fokusnya ke siswa, mereka bisa belajar lebih real dan natural.”*

Observed classroom practices

Two of the three teachers were observed implementing specific activities designed to simulate real-life communication. One of these teachers utilized digital tools (like “Wordwall” and “Quizizz”) and realia to demonstrate daily processes, while the other implemented a “promoting a product” activity to engage students in persuasive language.

In contrast, one teacher’s classroom practice focused mainly on rote memorization of vocabulary without media or communicative tasks, despite having the intention to use pictures and stories. Even among the teachers who implemented authentic tasks, limitations were evident. One teacher noted that the product promotion activity lacked supporting materials and thematic vocabulary, making it surface-level.

Alignment analysis

Although authentic tasks were intended, limited scaffolding, low student confidence, and time constraints reduced their communicative impact, resulting in partial alignment with CLT principles.

3. Fluency is an important dimension of communication

Teachers’ beliefs

All teachers recognized the importance of fluency. teacher 2 explicitly stated that fluency and accuracy should be balanced: *“Accuracy itu dengan tugas terstruktur, sementara fluency bisa berupa dialog dan presentasi.”*

Observed classroom practices

In classroom practices, two of the three teachers showed a strong tendency to prioritize accuracy over fluency. These teachers either prioritized grammatical instruction before communicative tasks or intervened immediately to correct errors during speech, which interrupted the flow of communication. Consequently, fluency-oriented activities like spontaneous speaking were largely absent in their classes.

However, one teacher demonstrated a different approach by explicitly separating accuracy and fluency tasks. This teacher successfully implemented role-play activities in two classes where students were given uninterrupted speaking time, effectively shifting the focus to fluency. This suggests that while accuracy remains a dominant focus for most, successful fluency practices are possible when teachers consciously structure tasks to allow for errors.

Alignment analysis

These practices indicate that although fluency is valued in principle, classroom interaction remains accuracy-driven, limiting uninterrupted communicative flow.

4. Communication involves the integration of different language skills

Teachers' beliefs

Interview data revealed that teachers did not uniformly believe that all language skills should be integrated equally. Instead, they tended to prioritize specific skills based on their pedagogical assumptions. Teacher 2 explicitly stated that grammar should be prioritized as the foundation of learning, explaining, "*Kalau saya lebih pada grammar dulu.*"

In contrast, Teacher 3 emphasized vocabulary development over grammatical accuracy, arguing that lexical knowledge is a prerequisite for sentence construction: "*Kalau saya sih lebih mengutamakan vocabulary ya, karena untuk membuat suatu kalimat kita harus banyak vocabulary-nya.*"

These beliefs indicate that teachers conceptualized language learning as a process that begins with mastering discrete components rather than integrating multiple skills simultaneously.

Observed classroom practices

Classroom observations were consistent with these stated beliefs. Two of the three teachers were observed conducting lessons in which one skill dominated to the exclusion of others. In one classroom, instruction heavily emphasized listening and speaking activities, while reading tasks were minimal and not extended beyond short segments. In another classroom, the lesson focused primarily on teacher explanation and reading aloud, with almost no opportunities for student language production.

Regarding reading instruction specifically, one teacher clarified that reading activities were used mainly to check pronunciation rather than to develop comprehension, reflecting a narrow interpretation of reading as a supportive tool for oral accuracy. Although two teachers mentioned using technology and varied materials to support skill integration, observations showed that such tools were used sparingly or were constrained by technical limitations. Consequently, opportunities for skills to reinforce one another within a communicative context were limited.

Alignment analysis

The findings indicate a clear alignment between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices, as both reflected a prioritization of specific language skills rather than an integrated approach. However, this alignment stands in contrast to the CLT principle, which emphasizes the interdependent development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing through meaningful communication.

Thus, while teachers implemented instruction that was consistent with their pedagogical beliefs, the resulting practices did not fully reflect the communicative integration of language skills advocated by CLT. This suggests that the challenge lies not in inconsistent implementation, but in a conceptual interpretation of language learning that diverges from CLT principles.

5. Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error

Teachers' beliefs

All teachers expressed a shared belief that group work plays an important role in reducing students' anxiety and fostering greater confidence in using English. Teacher 1, for instance, explained that collaborative learning creates a less threatening learning environment, allowing students to feel more comfortable when expressing themselves orally. She stated: *"Kalau berkelompok, mereka lebih berani karena tegangnya berkurang."* This belief reflects the teacher's assumption that emotional safety is a prerequisite for active participation in communicative activities.

Similarly, Teacher 2 emphasized the pedagogical value of peer collaboration, particularly for students with lower proficiency levels. She highlighted that group work enables peer tutoring, in which more proficient students can support their classmates' learning process. As she explained, *"Siswa yang lebih pintar bisa menjadi tutor sebaya."* According to this view, collaborative learning is not only beneficial for affective reasons but also serves as a form of instructional scaffolding within the classroom.

Observed classroom practices

The principle of learning through trial and error was the least visible in practice. All three teachers struggled to provide opportunities for exploratory, student-centered learning. Two of the three teachers conducted classes that were largely individual or text-focused, with observation data showing virtually no collaborative group work or opportunities for students to experiment with language.

One teacher did attempt group work in one session but found it ineffective because passive students did not contribute, hindering the trial-and-error process. Even when role-plays were used by one teacher, students relied on pre-prepared scripts, which removed the element of creative construction. While the teachers believed in the value of group work for building confidence, the practical challenges of classroom management and student passivity prevented this principle from materializing.

Alignment analysis

Although all teachers expressed strong beliefs in the value of trial-and-error learning and viewed collaborative activities as effective means of reducing students' anxiety and encouraging participation, these beliefs were not fully reflected in classroom practice. Classroom observations indicated that opportunities for creative language use were limited, as most activities remained highly structured, script-based, or dominated by a small number of active students, while others remained passive. While teachers' beliefs and intentions were internally consistent with their instructional decisions, the enacted practices provided limited space for exploratory learning, leading to a clear misalignment with the CLT principle that views language learning as a process of creative construction through trial and error.

Table 1. Alignment between Teachers' Beliefs, Classroom Practices, and CLT Principles

CLT Principle	Teacher	Teachers' Beliefs (Interview)	Observed Classroom Practices	Belief-Practice Alignment	Alignment with CLT
Communication through language use	T1	Believes communication should be emphasized through dialogue and daily interaction	English used mainly in greetings and scripted dialogue; L1 dominated peer interaction	Aligned	Misaligned
	T2	Views CLT as meaningful communication after explanation	Communication occurred after explanation but remained controlled	Partially aligned	Partially aligned
	T3	Defines CLT as student participation and	Student responses minimal; English	Aligned	Misaligned

		response	limited to routines		
Authentic and meaningful communication	T1	Believes real-life context supports communication	Picture-based Q&A with memorized responses	Aligned	Partially aligned
	T2	Emphasizes real and natural communication	Group work and presentation with limited scaffolding	Aligned	Partially aligned
	T3	Associates engagement with communicative learning	Presentations with minimal student voice	Aligned	Misaligned
Fluency as a dimension of communication	T1	Prioritizes accuracy before fluency	Grammar taught first; frequent correction	Aligned	Misaligned
	T2	Separates accuracy and fluency tasks	Dialogues and presentations after structured tasks	Aligned	Aligned
	T3	Values fluency but stresses pronunciation accuracy	Immediate correction during speaking	Aligned	Misaligned
Integration	T1	Prioritizes	Reading	Aligned	Misaligned

of language skills		grammar as foundation	and explanation dominated lesson		
	T2	Supports partial integration	Multiple skills used but not interdependently	Aligned	Partially aligned
	T3	Prioritizes vocabulary over grammar	Reading for pronunciation; limited production	Aligned	Misaligned
Trial and error in learning	T1	Believes group work builds confidence	Script-based group work	Aligned	Misaligned
	T2	Views peer collaboration as scaffolding	Group work with uneven participation	Aligned	Partially aligned
	T3	Supports experimentation in theory	Passive students avoided risk-taking	Aligned	Misaligned

Discussion

Based on the findings, this study found that the five fundamental principles of CLT were not fully implemented during the teaching and learning process, making this answer research question number two that there is often a misalignment between what teachers believe and what actually occurs in teaching and learning activities in the classroom, and in this study, it is found within the context of secondary schools in EFL classroom in Depok, Indonesia. The gap between theoretical principles and actual practice was caused by several significant barriers.

Through data analysis, the researchers have classified these inhibiting factors into three distinct categories: students' low proficiency, low motivation, and

technological constraints. These constraints force teachers to compromise their pedagogical beliefs, resulting in the observed misalignment between their theoretical understanding and actual classroom practices. Rather than viewing these factors merely as obstacles, the following sections will discuss how these three factors specifically emerged within the local socio-cultural context.

Socio-cultural Analysis of Inhibiting Factors

The emergence of students' low proficiency, students' low motivation, and technological constraints as primary barriers on implementing CLT is deeply rooted in the socio-cultural and economic context of this study. The students' silence in the classroom is influenced by the cultural tradition of "saving face", which common in Asian educational contexts. As supported by Rahmi (2024), students often resort to silence to avoid embarrassment of making mistakes in front of their fellow peers. Second, the low motivation of students is linked to the dynamic of the classroom, specifically the fear of being judged by their classmates. From findings it is known that students who attempted to speak English were often teased by their friends, creating a psychological barrier where the risk of ridicule outweighs the desire to learn. Third, technological constraints highlight the digital divide in developing countries due to limited infrastructure, in this study context is a moderately resourced private school in Depok, Indonesia.

Students' Low Proficiency

One of the main issues identified in this study is students' poor English language ability, which hinders the use of CLT concepts in practical settings. The results relating to Principles 1 and 5 show that students continuously depended on their native language and displayed passivity during collaborative assignments due to affective barriers including lack of confidence and fear of embarrassment. This passivity is not merely only because lack of skill but a defensive strategy to protect their self esteem. These results are in line with earlier research by Armnazi & Alakrash (2021), who discovered that a passive learning style and a lack of competency in particular were major obstacles to the application of CLT. They suggest that pupils who are categorized as having lower proficiency levels frequently lack the drive to engage in active communication and have low self-esteem.

In the same way, Qasemi & Quvanch (2024) recognize that students' inability to understand instructions and effectively communicate expectations to their peers is a major obstacle caused by a lack of English language skills. Additionally, Setyaningrum (2018) discovered that passive learners can make CLT strategies less successful or difficult to sustain because they are frequently conditioned by a traditional teacher-centered background. In this study, the teachers tolerate the

excessive use of the first language (L1) as a necessary tool to keep interaction going even if it does not fully follow CLT principles.

Students' Low Motivation

From the findings of this study, it was found that low student motivation was a significant obstacle, preventing teachers from realising and implementing their beliefs about Communicative Language Teaching practices in EFL classrooms. Even though teachers clearly express their support for communicative principles like meaningful interaction, the use of authentic tasks, fluency development, skill integration, and learning through trial and error, this belief often does not translate into practice because students often lack enthusiasm, confidence, and the willingness to actively participate creating unsupportive social environment. The results of this study are consistent with Nurman et al., (2024), who observed that even when teachers hold CLT-aligned beliefs, consistency is difficult to maintain when students are unmotivated. Similarly, Diouani (2020) identified lack of learner motivation as a significant barrier.

In class observations, students seem to shy away from communicating in English, displaying a lack of engagement during speaking activities, and they prefer memorization over exploring the language. A critical factor contributing to this is the fear of negative evaluation where students are afraid of being joked by their friends. This pattern aligns with Hiep's research in Vietnam (2007 as cited in Wei, et al (2018)), which indicates that a lack of motivation acts as a personal barrier, causing students to be reluctant to participate in active and independent learning, ultimately hindering the achievement of communication goals outlined in CLT.

The same thing is also seen in schools in Syria, where Armnazi & Alakrash (2021) say that students often lose interest because they find English difficult. This makes them keep to themselves and not join in with activities where they have to talk. This study reveals a similar pattern, with teachers explaining that unmotivated students often choose not to participate when communication tasks require initiative and the courage to speak up. This lack of enthusiasm also reinforces teachers' tendency to revert to teaching methods that focus on accuracy, a pattern that aligns with Qasemi and Quvanch (2024) research in the EFL context in Afghan.

This research indicates that low motivation, passive attitudes, and a lack of willingness to take risks hinder the effective implementation of communicative activities. Overall, evidence from various studies shows that low motivation is not just a minor emotional hurdle, but a fundamental issue that affects whether the principles of CLT can be applied or not. When learners lose motivation, they tend to refuse to communicate, avoid collaboration, hesitate to try new languages, and engage only minimally in real tasks.

This causes teachers who believe in CLT to have difficulty creating an interactive learning atmosphere, as the success of this method is highly dependent on the readiness, involvement, and active participation of students. To counter this,

teachers can utilize small group work or pair work, where teachers can mitigate the fear of public failure and peer teasing mentioned earlier. This strategy also creates a safer psychological space, potentially boosting motivation and willingness to communicate among insecure learners.

Technological Constraints

The findings also revealed that teachers encountered considerable infrastructural barriers that prevented the effective integration of technology into classroom practice. Limited access to stable internet connections, insufficient multimedia equipment, and the absence of projectors collectively constrained teachers' capacity to design and implement technology-enhanced communicative activities. Consequently, instructional delivery often reverted to conventional text-based methods, with technology functioning merely as a supplementary rather than a transformative pedagogical tool.

These results are in line with earlier research by Mahmoud Fallatah, (2021) observation that inadequate technological infrastructure, particularly unreliable internet access, remains a persistent obstacle for teachers, especially those working in under-resourced or rural educational contexts. In such environments, the disparity in access to digital facilities further amplifies inequalities among students from differing socioeconomic backgrounds, thereby influencing the extent to which communicative and interactive learning can be achieved.

However, the lack of digital technology does not render CLT impossible, as shown from the observation findings of one of the teachers using realia to implement CLT in the classroom. Successful adaptation of CLT in a technology constrained environment can involve low tech communicative tasks like using realia, cards, and classroom-based roleplays that don't require internet access and teachers can also focus on the core principle of interaction. The findings of this study reveal a consistent gap between the teachers' stated beliefs about Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the instructional practices they implemented in the classroom.

Although the participating teachers expressed agreement with key CLT principles, such as providing meaningful communicative opportunities, promoting the use of the target language, and creating learner-centered interaction, their actual classroom practices demonstrated a different orientation. Teaching remained highly structured, teacher-centered, and dominated by explanation and correction. The frequent use of the first language to clarify concepts and the emphasis on form-focused feedback indicate that their beliefs did not fully materialize in their daily instructional decisions.

This mismatch illustrates the complexity of teacher cognition, in which firmly held beliefs do not always translate into practice due to contextual pressures and practical classroom challenges. These findings closely align with previous studies that investigated the relationship between teacher beliefs and the implementation

of CLT. Rahman et al., (2018) reported that teachers continued to rely on the native language and corrective feedback even though they supported CLT principles in theory, demonstrating a similar discrepancy. Audil & Mustafa, (2024) also found that, despite teachers' theoretical understanding of CLT, their classroom practices remained traditional and focused primarily on grammar and vocabulary.

Diouani, (2020) identified the same pattern, noting that teachers were knowledgeable about CLT but did not apply it communicatively in the classroom because of factors such as learners' limited proficiency, insufficient understanding of how to implement CLT, inappropriate textbooks, and low learner motivation. Further evidence is provided by Nurman et al. (2024), who showed that only one of the observed teachers successfully aligned beliefs with practice, while another struggled due to unmotivated students. In addition, Nyamayedenga & de Jager, (2020) confirmed that teachers' pedagogical beliefs often diverged from their implementation of CLT. Collectively, these studies support the conclusion that the misalignment observed in the present research reflects a broader trend in EFL settings, where the enactment of CLT principles is shaped and often limited by pedagogical, contextual, and institutional factors.

Implication for Policy and Practices

To address the misalignment found in this study, it is important to move beyond a perspective that based on shortcomings. the findings imply that a weak or contextualized version of CLT is more viable than a rigid following to the western based communicative principles. Successful implementation in the Depok, Indonesia context requires a pedagogical compromise. Teachers should integrate explicit grammar instruction where necessary (Scaffolding) and utilizing mother tongue strategically (Translanguaging). Furthermore, from policy perspective, school administrators, staffs, and curriculum must recognize that CLT can't be simply implemented without considering local constraints. Teacher training programs should explicitly train teachers in adaptive strategies rather than only focusing on the ideal CLT theory that assumes every classroom is well resourced and highly motivated.

Conclusion

Conclusion

This study shows a clear gap between EFL teachers' beliefs about Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and what actually happens in the classroom. Although the teachers understood and supported the main principles of CLT, such as using English for communication, developing fluency, integrating language skills, and encouraging learning through trial and error, these principles were not fully applied in practice. Classroom teaching was still mostly teacher-centered, focused on grammar and accuracy, and relied heavily on the use of the first language.

The findings suggest that this gap is not caused by teachers' lack of knowledge about CLT. Instead, it is mainly influenced by contextual factors, including students' low English proficiency, low motivation, and limited access to technology. These factors, together with students' fear of making mistakes and being judged by peers, made it difficult for teachers to maintain communicative activities. As a result, teachers often returned to more traditional teaching methods to manage the classroom and support student understanding.

This study also highlights that when teachers' beliefs and classroom practices are aligned, they are not always aligned with CLT principles. In several cases, teachers consistently focused on certain skills, such as grammar or vocabulary, based on their beliefs, but this focus limited the integration of language skills promoted by CLT.

Implications and Limitations

The findings indicate that CLT needs to be adapted to local classroom conditions rather than applied rigidly. Teachers should be encouraged to use grammar instruction and the first language strategically as learning support, while teacher training programs and school policies should focus on practical ways to apply CLT in classrooms with limited resources. This study is limited by the small number of participants and the focus on one school context. Future research should involve more schools, longer observations, and students' perspectives to better understand how CLT can be applied effectively in similar EFL settings.

Suggestions

It would be beneficial for future studies on teacher beliefs toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and its influence on teaching practices in EFL classrooms by employing more comprehensive methodological design. One relevant direction is the application of triangulation by including an analysis of teachers' lesson plans to complement interviews and observations. Lesson planning documents can provide additional insight into how teachers' beliefs are translated into concrete instructional decisions.

Additionally, the time aspect is also important. This study was conducted over a relatively short period, so variations in teaching routines and the application of teachers' beliefs may not have been fully captured. Studies conducted over a longer period of time could provide a more stable picture, even allowing researchers to observe small changes that emerge over several learning cycles.

Furthermore, a more varied research context needs to be considered. As this study was conducted in private secondary schools, further research could be directed towards state schools to see how institutional conditions, policies, and resource availability affect teachers' beliefs and the implementation of CLT. This cross-context comparison will help broaden our understanding of the dynamics of CLT in various educational environments.

References

- Aksoy, K. (2015). What you Think is not what you do in the classroom: Investigating Teacher's Beliefs for Classroom Management in an EFL Classroom. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 199, 675–683. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.597>
- Armnaazi, M., & Alakrash, H. (2021). Factors Affecting the Application of Communicative Language Teaching CLT in Syrian Schools. *TESOL and Technology Studies*, 2(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.48185/tts.v2i1.143>
- Audil, A. F., & Mustafa, H. R. (2024). From Theory to Classroom: Examining Communicative Language Teaching Practices in Iraq. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 13(4). <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i4/23809>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol 2: Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological*. (pp. 57–71). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-004>
- Chang, A. N., & Suparmi, S. (2020). The Implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Factors Hindering Teachers from Implementing it in High School. *Al-TA'DIB: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Kependidikan*, 13(1), 46. <https://doi.org/10.31332/atdbwv13i1.1598>
- Diouani, A.-E. (2020). Communicative Language Teaching in the Moroccan Classroom: Perception, Practices, and Difficulties. *Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Learning*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.18196/ftl.5251>
- Garcia-Ponce, E. E., & Tagg, C. (2020). Role of EFL teachers' beliefs in speaking practice: The case of a Mexican university. *System*, 95, 102376. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102376>
- Ishtiaq, M. (2019). Book Review Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. *English Language Teaching*, 12(5), 40. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v12n5p40>
- Ismayanti, D., & Syam, A. T. (2022). The Community Manipulation through Big Brother's Tyranny in George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 10(2), 1556–1569.
- Karavas-Doukas, E. (1996). Using attitude scales to investigate teachers' attitudes to the communicative approach. *ELT Journal*, 50(3), 187–198. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/50.3.187>
- Lazdina, S., & Daga-Krumina, E. (2023). Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching and Learning: Why is It Still a Challenge? *To Be or Not to Be a Great Educator*, 272–291. <https://doi.org/10.22364/atee.2022.17>
- Lórinicz, M. (2023). EFL Student Teachers' Beliefs about Language Teaching Approaches and Instructional Practices. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language*

- Teaching*, 20(2), 167–192. <https://doi.org/10.56040/mlrc2024>
- Masruddin, M., Amir, F., Langaji, A., & Rusdiansyah, R. (2023). Conceptualizing linguistic politeness in light of age. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language*, 11(3), 41-55.
- Mahmoud Fallatah, R. (2021). A Sociomaterial Perspective of the Challenges of Implementing the Communicative Approach in Saudi State Schools. *Arab World English Journal*, 12(4), 302–316. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no4.20>
- Nurman, N. H., Mahmud, M., & Salija, K. (2024). *Analisis Keyakinan dan Praktik Guru dalam Mengajar Bahasa Inggris Menggunakan Pengajaran Bahasa Komunikatif (An Analysis on Teachers' Beliefs and Practices In Teaching English Using Communicative Language Teaching)*. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>
- Nyamayedenga, M. S., & de Jager, L. (2020). Teachers' beliefs about the implementation of communicative language teaching at primary school level in Zimbabwe. *Per Linguam*, 36(0). <https://doi.org/10.5785/36-1-888>
- Pusparini, R., Widiati, U., & Susanti, A. (2021). Pre-service teachers' beliefs about English Language Teaching and Learning in EFL classroom: A review of literature. *JEES (Journal of English Educators Society)*, 6(1), 147–154. <https://doi.org/10.21070/jees.v6i1.1212>
- Qasemi, A. S., & Quvanch, Z. (2024). Afghan EFL Teachers' Perceptions Toward Challenges They Encounter in Implementing CLT in Their Classes. *Sprin Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(1), 35–40. <https://doi.org/10.55559/sjahss.v3i1.193>
- Rahman, M. M., Singh, M. K. M., & Pandian, A. (2018). Exploring ESL Teacher beliefs and Classroom Practices of CLT: A Case Study. *International Journal of Instruction*, 11(1), 295–310. <https://doi.org/10.12973/iji.2018.11121a>
- Rahmi, R. (2024). Students' Silence in EFL Classroom: Contributing Factors and Identities. *Linguists : Journal of Linguistics and Language Teaching*, 10(1), 149. <https://doi.org/10.29300/ling.v10i1.4633>
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2001). Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. In *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (pp. vii–x). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511667305.001>
- Savignon, S. J. (1987). Communicative language teaching. *Theory Into Practice*, 26(4), 235–242. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405848709543281>
- Setyaningrum, T. (2018). Teachers' Beliefs about Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Implementation in Classroom Practices. In *Jurnal Pendidikan Humaniora* (Vol. 6, Issue 4). <http://journal.um.ac.id/index.php/jphpISSN:2338-8110/eISSN:2442-3890>
- Tamimy, M. (2015). Consistencies and Inconsistencies Between Teachers' Beliefs and Practices. *The Qualitative Report*. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2249>

- Too, W. K., & Saimima, E. J. (2019). TEACHER BELIEF AND PRACTICE IN A SCHOOL-BASED ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM IN EASTERN INDONESIA. *Journal of Nusantara Studies (JONUS)*, 4(1), 211. <https://doi.org/10.24200/jonus.vol4iss1pp211-231>
- Wei, L., Lin, H.-H., & Litton, F. (2018). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in EFL Context in Asia. *Asian Culture and History*, 10(2), 1. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ach.v10n2p1>
- Wesely, P. M., Vyn, R., & Neubauer, D. (2024). Teacher beliefs about instructional approaches: Interrogating the notion of teaching methods. *Language Teaching Research*, 28(1), 29–51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168821992180>