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Rwandan University EFL Teachers' Awareness and Attitudes Toward CLT and their Classroom Practices

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Rwandan University EFL Teachers' Awareness and Attitudes

Toward CLT and their Classroom Practices

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Abstract

This research investigates Rwandan English teachers' awareness of and attitudes toward CLT including their practices in their respective classrooms. Data were collected by means of an online questionnaire that was responded to by 16 practicing teachers. The results revealed that most participants believed that both form- and meaning-based pedagogy were important in the language classroom. The participants also reported that they practiced what they believed in their respective classrooms. With regard to CLT awareness, most of Rwandan university teachers who responded to the questionnaire confirmed that they had learned or heard about CLT, eleven teachers among thirteen who had known it had tried it and recognized how beneficial it was to their learners' language development. Because all the college language teachers are not aware of the CLT approach, the study results suggest that the Rwandan Government, the Ministry of Education, and colleges (1) provide teachers with additional professional development and training, (2) reduce the number of students in a language classroom, and (3) make available authentic CLT-based teaching materials. Furthermore, the study recommends curriculum designers to revise the Rwandan English-language curriculum to include communicative aspects.

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Dedication

To:

My Beloved Jean Bosco Ntirenganya, Ora Anna Ihimbazwe and Amati Ishimo Migisha

My parents and in-laws

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Chapter I

Introduction

In most non-English speaking countries, the classroom environment is the only place where language is learned and practiced. Furthermore, learners' opportunities to practice this second language (L2) are limited due the fact that they are surrounded by people who speak the language that they understand well and feel comfortable to use. Some language-classroom teaching methods and/or approaches are grammar-oriented with little or no speaking and listening instruction. In addition, most questions posed by instructors are display questions that do not allow learners to formulate their responses freely, but require limited responses instead. Some research has proven these classroom models to be inadequate for the development of an L2 (Hendrickson, 1991; Jin, 2012; Nunan, 1987).

Researchers suggest that it is the teachers' responsibility to create situations—*natural-classroom settings*—that facilitate their learners to use the language rules they acquire from grammar communicatively (Hendrickson, 1991; Jin, 2012). Such situations are based on activities that require the learners' active involvement in their language growth through interaction in either pair or group tasks. To make this classroom interaction more successful, teachers are advised to bear in mind that it is better to have students "using the language rather than talking about it" (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 110). In other words, the language-teaching focus should be on meaning rather than only on language features or forms. If the primary language-learning goal is communication, then learning a language means learning to communicate and process language

effectively in all its skills—reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Based on classroom practices, the language-teaching approach that emphasizes both accuracy and fluency is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Richards, 2006). CLT is known as an approach that contributes to successful communication because of the opportunities it gives to learners to interact, negotiate meaning (Jin, 2012), and learn from one another and from the teacher as well. In Savignon's (2002) definition of competence, she refers to the terms "expression, interpretation and negotiation of meaning" (p. 1) which appear to be true matches with CLT. Not only does this definition of competence apply to face-to-face discussions, but it also pertains to reading and writing activities (Savignon, 2002) that require learners to go through those steps. Because CLT involves learners in meaning-based activities and enhances their communicative competence, several approaches are considered to be communicatively oriented, such as *task-based*, *content-based*, *process-oriented*, *interactive*, *inductive*, and *discovery-oriented* (Savignon, 2002, p. 22). In this thesis, CLT refers generally to communicatively-oriented approaches.

Background of the Study

Before the CLT approach, language structure was mostly taught through traditional grammar/grammar translation. After it became obvious that traditional teaching approaches were unable to respond to language-learners' growing demands, CLT was developed. It first appeared in the literature in the early 1970s with *communicative competence theory* at its center (Richards, 2006; Savignon, 2002). This theory was developed in contrast to Chomsky's (1965) *linguistic competence,* which consisted of the prominence of language form and structure over language use and

function.

  Communicative competence, the theoretical center of CLT, evolved gradually overtime as instruction shifted from a focus on grammatical competence to communicative competence, which includes grammatical competence, but also focuses on sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983; Celce-Murcia, 2007) as the goals of language learning. Over time, two additional components—actional competence (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1995) and formulaic competence (Celce-Murcia, 1995 as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2007) have been added to the definition of communicative competence. This focus in the CLT classroom has been widely endorsed by numerous linguists (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Savignon, 1983; Nunan, 1987; Littlewood, 1981).

  Communicative competence was initially developed in reaction to Chomsky's (1957; 1965 as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2007) use of *linguistic competence*—"the rules for describing sound systems and for combining sounds into morphemes and morphemes into sentences" (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 42). Chomsky's definition seemed to exclude social factors from the domain of linguistics, and limited that theory to the abilities enabling speakers to produce grammatically correct sentences in a language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Kim, 2005). As a reaction to the linguistic competence, Hymes (1967, 1972 as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2007) felt the necessity to complement it with communicative competence. In Hymes' view, the knowledge of grammar rules was not sufficient to cover the language knowledge from all the domains language learners should be able to display. For Hymes, learners should be equipped with the abilities allowing them to speak interactively in a *speech community*. Therefore, he added sociolinguistic

competence to linguistic competence.

In 1980, Canale and Swain redefined communicative competence using three dimensions. Linguistic competence was renamed—grammatical competence—whereas sociolinguistic competence was subdivided into sociolinguistic and strategic competence. According to Canale and Swain (1980), *grammatical competence* refers to the structures that concern vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, and sentence constructs. It controls the skills related to the comprehension and accurate expression of the literal meaning of utterances. *Sociolinguistic competence* pertains to language appropriateness that takes into account the choice of the appropriate register and style for each domain of communication. It requires language learners to understand the social contexts in which they communicate, the roles they play as interlocutors, the purposes of their interactions, to name a few. *Strategic competence* refers to the ability to compensate for problems or deficits in communication. Speakers might need to have recourse to communication strategies such as body language or gestures to enhance the communication effectiveness and avoid its breakdown (Canale & Swain, 1980; Kim, 2005; Celce-Murcia, 2007).

Canale (1983) derived yet another dimension from sociolinguistic competence and called it *discourse competence*. This competence involves cohesion and coherence in spoken or written text and consists of the production and interpretation of language beyond the sentence level. That is to say, the message or meaning is interpreted within a broad context related to the entire discourse or text; for example, learners should use transitional phrases, and connectors to organize speech or writing cohesively and appropriately (Canale, 1983; Kim, 2005; Celce-Murcia, 2007).

Later on, Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) suggested *actional competence* as a fifth

component. This competence refers to "the ability to comprehend and produce all significant speech acts and speech act sets" (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 42). Figure 1.1 summarizes the five components and how they evolved.

Chomsky (1957, 1965)	Hymes (1967, 1972)	Canale and Swain (1980)	Canale (1983)	Celce-Murcia et al. (1995)
Linguistic Competence	Linguistic Competence	Grammatical Competence	Grammatical Competence	Linguistic Competence
		Strategic Competence	Strategic Competence	Strategic Competence
	Sociolinguistic Competence			Sociolinguistic Competence
		Sociolinguistic Competence	Sociolinguistic Competence	Actional Competence
			Discourse Competence	Discourse Competence

Figure 1.1 Chronological evolution of 'communicative competence' (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 43)

Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) also changed some terminologies of the dimensions of communicative competence. Sociolinguistic competence became sociocultural competence to involve cultural background information significantly useful for effective language use and interpretation, while grammatical competence was relabeled to the first term—linguistic competence—to more explicitly include the sound system, lexicon and grammar. Furthermore, these authors showed how the dimensions of communicative competence are interconnected, as shown in Figure 1.2.

SOCIO-CULTURAL COMPETENCE

DISCOURSE COMPETENCE

LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE

ACTIONAL COMPETENCE

STRATEGIC COMPETENCE
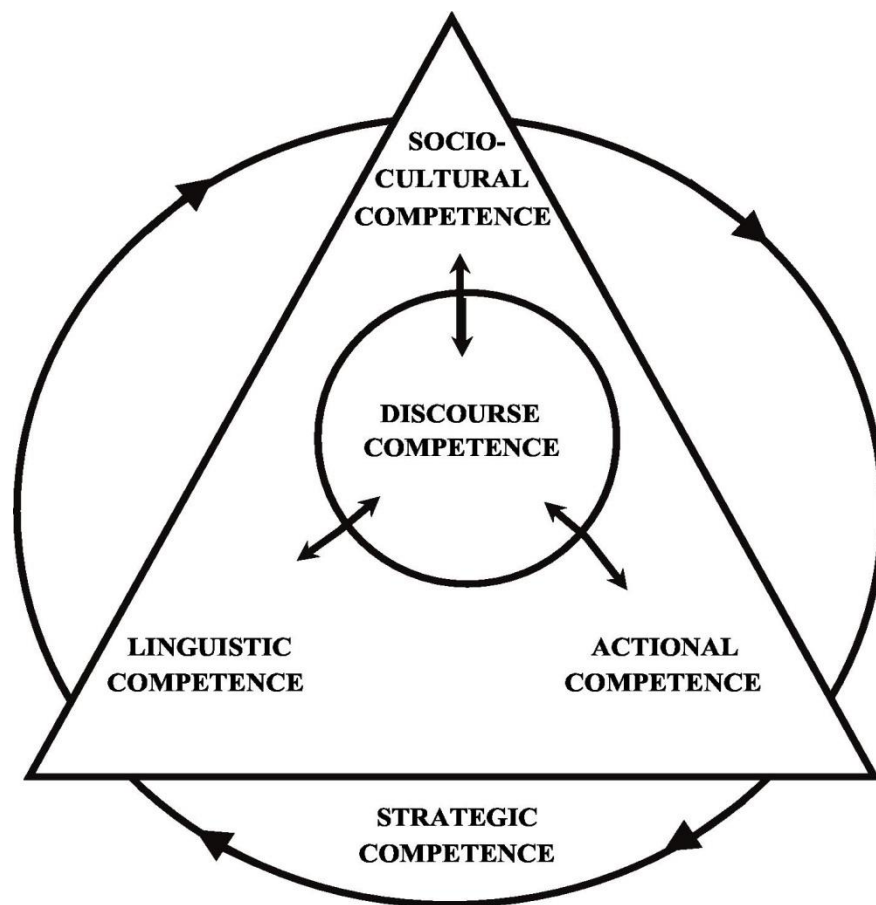
Figure 1. 2 Schematic representation of communicative competence in Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) (as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 44)

Finally, in the same year, Celce-Murcia (1995 as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2007) suggested the revision of the components by including the sixth component that she named *formulaic competence*. This is a counterbalance to linguistic competence and refers to fixed and prefabricated chunks of a language used in daily interactions. Figure 1.3 demonstrates all the six dimensions as well as the changes that were made.
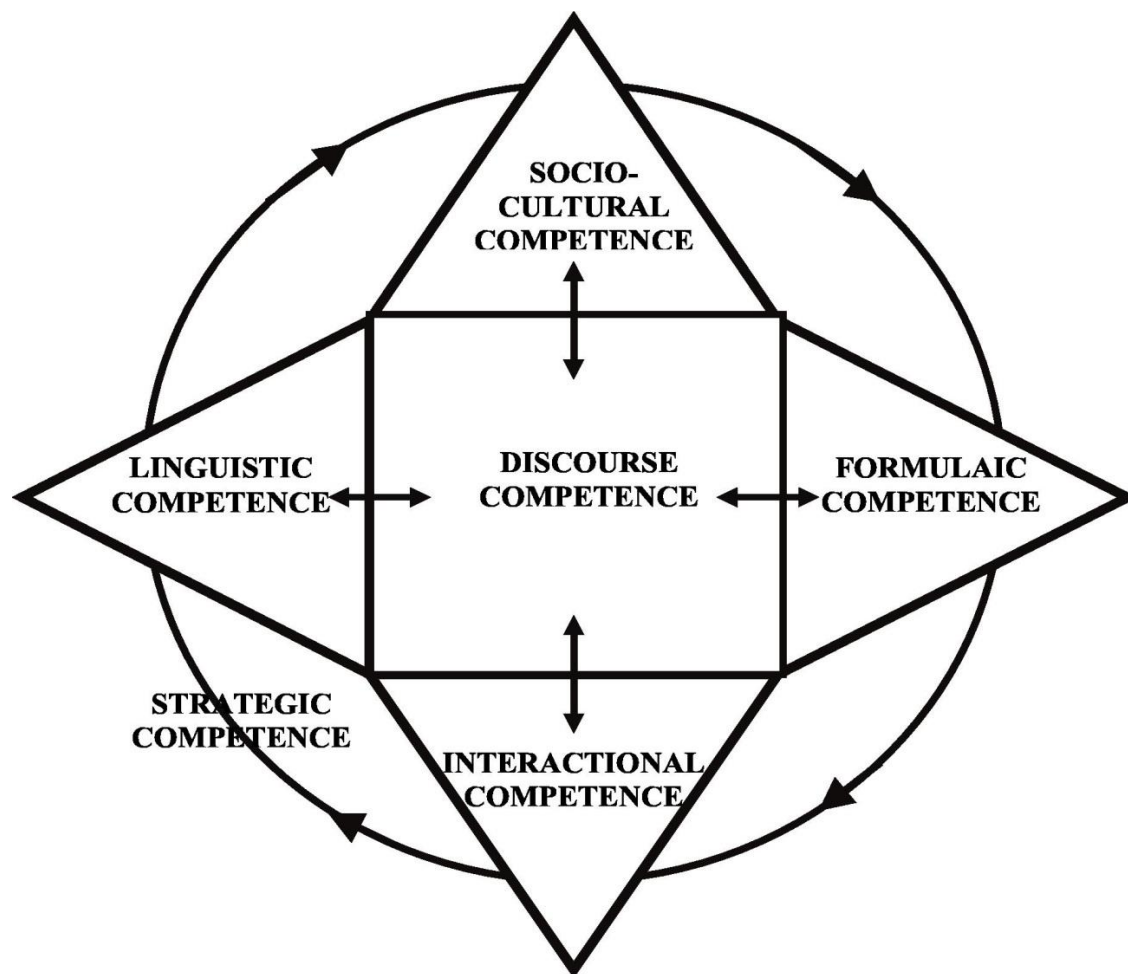
Figure 1.3 Revised schematic representation of 'communicative competence' (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 43)

Thus, the CLT approach concurrently emphasizes and teaches the four language skills and linguistic structures within authentic contexts with the goal of developing communicative competence. Moreover, CLT has become a viable alternative for teachers who want to meet their learners' growing L2-communication needs/demands. Teachers who have adopted this approach have definitely understood that learners need to know what people do with the language, and that language users need to be able to appropriately employ the structural elements in a variety of communicative genres and

settings.

Over time, China, Japan, Hong Kong, Costa Rica, Israel, Taiwan, and the

European Union have adopted CLT (Savignon, 2003) leading to changes in their

curricula, syllabi, materials, and teaching methods to accommodate the new approach.

One of these countries, China, replaced the Grammar-Translation Method with a

communicative method, prompted by the publication of a communicative English

textbook developed in China in 1979. The State Education Development Commission

(SEDC) subsequently changed the national syllabus in 1981 to one that prioritized

language communication (Yu, 2001). However, in other areas of the world, this

development has only more recently been introduced for numerous reasons.

For example, in the Rwandan second-language-teaching situation, there have been

historical, political, and social issues regarding education and language instruction that

needed to be resolved before pedagogy could even be considered. Due to Belgian

colonialism (Byanafashe et al., 2006), French had during the better part of the 20th

century been used as a medium of instruction and taught as a subject at the high school

level. In regard to college level, French was the only medium of instruction. While the

native language, Kinyarwanda, was used in the early grades, French was introduced to

Rwandan students in the fourth grade, and English was taught as a subject for 2 to 6

hours per week at high school and was limited to only those majoring in English at the

university level. Challenges to French-language instruction in Rwanda began in 1994

when a number of Rwandans repatriated from English-speaking countries where they had

been refugees. At that time, there was a great need to have two languages of instruction

depending on the learners' and instructors' backgrounds since there were both

Francophone and Anglophone schools. At this point, language-teaching difficulties

began. At the elementary level; for instance, teachers were obliged to teach both French

and English though they spoke only one international language (Education sector, 2003).

Over time, the Rwandan government felt the necessity to increasingly enhance

English-language proficiency due to its use in the East African job market, international

business, and college entrance in English-speaking countries. Therefore, Rwanda shifted

from French-medium instruction to using English in 2009, despite the fact that most

students were French speakers. At this time, the new teaching system faced significant

challenges as well. Simpson (2012) reports a number of difficulties such as the teachers'

English-language deficiency, the learners' limited exposure to English especially in rural

areas, the lack of materials in English, and the mismatch of textbook level and the

learners' actual language abilities.

In other words, one of the predominant issues was that, due to their limited

proficiency in English, there were no qualified teachers for the mainly content courses

that they were required to teach in English, which certainly had a negative effect on the

learners' English proficiency level. To handle the problem, most elementary and high

school teachers underwent three months of training before starting to teach their own

classes in English, but this was obviously insufficient. All those educational-system

changes generated a lack of stability and mastery of the language teaching

methods/approaches and inhibited or limited the discovery and application of new

approaches that were inaugurated, developed and implemented in other countries.

Consequently, despite the increase in the need for communicative English skills, the same

traditional English-language teaching methods such as grammar translation, drills, audio-

lingualism, and vocabulary memorization lists remained in use, as they were more controllable by less proficient teachers. The students could manage to use the language in reading, writing, and grammar; however, these methods specifically hindered their oral communication once they were expected to produce their own utterances. As Richards (2006) puts it, knowledge of grammar rules does not guarantee effective language use in terms of communication (p. 3), and despite the fact that the Rwandan Ministry of Education realized that the demand for English-language communication had increased, no pedagogical or curriculum change was implemented.

CLT, the teaching approach that takes account of both accuracy and fluency as the language-mastery indicators, has been gauged to be the solution to the communicative problems in many countries around the world (Hendrickson, 1991; Jin, 2012). As a result, it should be seriously considered as a teaching approach to be applied in Rwanda as well. At this point, it would be important to know whether Rwandan teachers are aware of the CLT approach, what importance they attribute to CLT if they know it, and whether they utilize activities that enhance communicative development in their classrooms.

Purpose of the Study

With the intention to scrutinize the presence or absence of the current use of the CLT approach in English-language classes in Rwanda, this study aims to explore the actual and current situation of English-language teaching in Rwanda through the examination of teachers' awareness of and attitudes toward CLT including their practices in their respective classrooms. The findings will be useful in taking prospective measures related to the improvement of the teaching methods and strategies that may result in language enhancement for learners. Furthermore, curriculum designers might realize the

need to revise the English-language curriculum to meet the growing communication needs by including communicative language-teaching features.

To achieve the stated objective, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. Are Rwandan university teachers of English aware of CLT? and

    To what extent is their understanding accurate according to the research?

2. If they are aware of it, what are their attitudes toward CLT?

3. If they are positively disposed toward CLT, do they utilize CLT activities in their classroom practices and in what ways?

Organization of the Thesis

In chapter 2, I review empirical studies related to the characteristics and use of CLT in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Chapter 3 includes a description of the population, the context of the study, the data collection procedures, and data analysis and interpretation methods. The fourth chapter presents the data and interprets the results while the fifth chapter discusses limitations of the study, and presents key results and their implications for improving CLT in Rwanda.

Chapter II

Literature Review

As concluded in Chapter 1, CLT has become a dominant pedagogical approach in both second and foreign language classrooms today in order to push learners toward communicative competence in all four modalities. In order to provide support for language teachers to effectively create and maintain successful CLT classrooms, this chapter reviews (1) the theoretical background for CLT, (2) activities, practices, and curricula of CLT, and (3) the challenges and misconceptions faced while implementing CLT in classrooms.

Theoretical Background of CLT

CLT was initiated by British language teachers in the late 1960s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). At that time, language teaching was based on the Situational Language Teaching Approach in the United Kingdom and the Audio-lingual Method in the USA. British linguists were dissatisfied with the earlier methods that focused on form devoid of meaning and context and from which learners were unable to communicate effectively. They therefore realized the "need to focus in language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 153). As Europe received a large number of immigrants, L2 teaching became a significant challenge due to learners' diverse language backgrounds. To respond to this challenge and the learners' needs, it was necessary to prioritize the development of effective language teaching methods which grew into the communicative approach (Kim, 2005). The functional or communicative definition of language proposed by Wilkins

(1972 as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001) was accepted by the Council of Europe and served as the transition from the traditional methods' syllabus toward CLT syllabuses which started to be used in the 1970s and expanded across Europe and the USA (Brown, 2007b; Kim, 2005). Wilkins proposed a shift from traditional theories that focused on grammar and vocabulary to communicative meanings within two categories: notional categories, such as time, sequence, quantity, location, frequency, etc. and categories of communicative functions, which would include requests, denials, offers, complaints, etc. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In the same vein as Halliday (1970) and Hymes' (1967; 1972) who were concerned with "the interaction of social context, grammar, and meaning" (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 19), the CLT approach bases its learning theories on three principles that promote language learning: the *communication principle*—language is used in communication-based activities—, the *task principle*—learners use the language to complete real-world tasks—, and the *meaningfulness principle*—learners are involved in meaningful and authentic language use (Richards, & Rodgers, 2001).

Because CLT is a broad approach, it is problematic to provide a definition without including the description of its primary characteristics or classroom activities. Moreover, its meanings differ depending on who defines it. While asking language instructors and colleagues what CLT is, Spada (2007) found that CLT was being defined in multiple ways, but with a consensus on its focus as a meaning-based and learner-centered approach to L2 teaching. CLT gives more weight to fluency than accuracy, and the ability to comprehend and produce messages is emphasized over teaching or correcting the language forms. Similarly, Savignon (2003) points out that "by definition, CLT puts the focus on the learner. Learner communicative needs serve as a framework for elaborating

program goals in terms of functional competence. This implies global, qualitative

evaluation of learner achievement as opposed to quantitative assessment of discrete

linguistic features" (p. 56).

Whereas Savignon's definition appears to highlight CLT's curriculum design and

assessment, Richards (2006) includes a broader perspective in his definition. He states,

"Communicative language teaching can be understood as a set of principles about the

goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom

activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the

classroom" (Richards, 2006, p. 2). In the same vein, Brown (2007a) presents four simple,

direct and interconnected CLT characteristics in his definition. For him, CLT can be

described through (1) all the components of communicative competence, (2) pragmatics,

authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes, (3) complementarity of

fluency and accuracy, and (4) productive and receptive use of spontaneous language. In

other words, CLT promotes language growth as it is used in real-world contexts.

Communicative Hypotheses

In addition to the CLT definition consisting of developing all language skills, two

hypotheses have shaped CLT: Krashen's (1982) comprehensible input hypothesis and

Long's (1996) interactionist hypothesis (Spada, 2007). Comprehensible input is

hypothesized to be sufficient to allow learners to move from stage *i* (the current

competence) to *i+1* (the next level). Mitchell and Myles (2004), in commenting on

Krashen's input hypothesis, state that in order for L2 learning to take place: (a) learners

need sufficient exposure to comprehensible input, (b) speaking then results from

acquisition, and (c) grammar is mastered once input is sufficient and comprehensible.

Similar to Krashen's input hypothesis, Long's interaction hypothesis, which prioritizes face-to-face interaction and communication, also focuses on meaningful comprehensible input. However, in this approach, not only do language learners receive input, but they also produce language output and negotiate for meaning whenever the input is not comprehensible or they experience a breakdown in producing their own output. Mitchell and Myles (2004) stated that successful negotiation of meaning results in the increased comprehensibility of input and effectiveness of a learner's language development.

Form vs. meaning. Between the 1970s and 1990s, the centrality of grammar and repetition in language teaching and learning was questioned, and it was realized that the learners' needs were beyond the simple knowledge of language structures. Given that the CLT approach enhances the teaching procedures that prioritize all four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), it has been associated with the L2 learners' communicative needs. Therefore, during this time, language teaching emphasized speech acts, pragmatics, fluency activities through small group work, and the development of skills-based and functional syllabi, as well as the recognition of English for Specific Purposes (Richards, 2006).

While CLT has different meanings depending on whether the language instructor emphasizes both meaning and form, which Howatt (1984; as cited in Spada 2007) distinguishes as the weak version of CLT, or only meaning, which is known as the strong version of CLT, current consensus is on the need for both meaning and form, in which classroom activities that facilitate learner simulation of the target language that reflects real-outside contexts (Nunan, 1987), also bring attention to language form in terms of

explicit instruction, corrective feedback, and provision of negative evidence (Spada, 2007). Explicitly, as Larsen-Freeman (1986) reports, in a CLT classroom, "almost everything that is done is done with a communicative intent" (p. 132). While the strong version of CLT suggests ignoring grammar, Savignon (2002) showed the importance of the focus on form:

> CLT does not exclude a focus on metalinguistic awareness or knowledge of rules of syntax, discourse, and social appropriateness. Focus on form can be a familiar and welcome component in a learning environment that provides rich opportunity for focus on meaning; but focus on form cannot replace practice in communication. (p. 22)

The fact that the main goal of CLT is to focus on meaning and learners' ability to communicate may give the impression that grammar does not have any value in language learning; however, as the language develops through participation in various communicative activities, it calls for attention to language form.

Theoretical Background of CLT and Communicative Hypotheses in Rwanda

As stated in the introduction, language teaching in Rwanda has primarily utilized more traditional approaches to language teaching, such as Grammar Translation, Oral Approach/Situational Language Teaching, and Audio-lingual methods. These methods contributed much to English language-learning enhancement even though the element of actual classroom communication was lacking. As an illustration, until 2000, high school students majoring in languages had four courses in translation: English-French, Kinyarwanda-French, French-Kinyarwanda and Swahili-Kinyarwanda. Skills such as reading and writing were theoretically addressed but rarely practiced. With regard to

listening and speaking, these were almost ignored due to the fact that grammar was taught intensively.

CLT, a teaching approach that appears not to be a well-known language teaching approach in Rwanda, would be a solution to questions related to the lack of communication skills development. These skills would be boosted through particular characteristics of CLT that prioritize the exposure to the target language and face-to-face interaction. Normally, when CLT is implemented, learners receive input in a natural way in which they are exposed to a variety of natural and abundant language samples from the target language with a focus on understanding meanings: no concern "with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding" (Krashen, 2002, p. 1). This way of learning the language and its natural use applicable to settings outside of the classroom does not require learners to memorize lists of vocabulary or grammatical rules. Also, with CLT implementation, the use of in-class pair and group work become frequent, allowing students to practice their learning. In the same way, display questions are replaced by or mixed with referential questions. For display questions, the teacher already knows the answers. They are asked in order to check if the learners know, understand or remember the answers. Referential questions have no one specific answer, and are therefore used to instigate genuine communication (Tsui, 1995; Thornbury, 1996; Thompson, 1997). Posing referential questions initiates the use of more natural language, since in real life people never ask questions to which they already know the answers. From this perspective, learners' language becomes more spontaneous and interactive which enhances their communicative skills needed for further education, the job market, and for Rwanda's success on the international market.

CLT Classroom Activities, Practices, Roles, and Curricula

This section encompasses CLT classroom activities. It makes a distinction between communication and accuracy tasks, presents scaffolding activities: mechanical practice, meaningful practice, communicative practice, and small group work, and details communicative task types. It also discusses how these classroom practices change the roles of teachers and learners and influence the development of new curricula.

Focus: Communication or accuracy. As CLT emphasizes the four language skills without ignoring the structural aspects of a language, its classroom activities promote both fluency and accuracy. According to Richards (2006), fluency enables learners to interact meaningfully, keep communication understandable, and continue communicating in spite of the speakers' communicative competence limitations. To enhance fluency, teachers set activities that engage learners in negotiation of meaning, use of communication strategies, correction of misunderstandings, and avoidance of communication interruptions. With regard to accuracy, teachers direct students' attention to correct instances of specific language use in context. Richards (2006) describes the difference between fluency and accuracy tasks. In fluency activities, (1) the language is used naturally, (2) communication is the main objective to attain, (3) the language is used meaningfully, (4) communication strategies are utilized, (5) the language is not anticipated, and (6) the use of the language is connected to the real-life context. Conversely, in accuracy activities (1) the language is classroom-oriented, (2) production of correct language examples is the primary goal, (3) the language may be lifted out of context, (4) only limited samples are practiced, (5) communication does not need to be meaningful, and (6) the teacher controls choice of language.

Richards (2006) goes on to state that the activities promoting fluency and accuracy are complementary to each other; in other words, the accuracy practice helps the meaningful communication of fluency be more successful. To attain both accurate and fluent communication, teachers should strive to include a balance of both fluency-based and accuracy-based activities in the classroom. Additionally, to ensure that accuracy is not being ignored, teachers can provide language-use feedback to students as a follow-up on fluency activities.

Scaffolding. Based on how much effort learners make to accomplish the tasks, Richards (2006) categorizes CLT classroom activities into mechanical practice, meaningful practice and communicative practice. *Mechanical practices* are controlled activities accomplished with no comprehension of language use. To clarify that, students do not even have to think very hard to fill in the blanks or choose the correct answer. This is applicable to repetition and substitution drills. *Meaningful practices,* while not requiring full language control, they require meaningful selections or decisions to complete the tasks. That is to say, the practice becomes meaningful when it makes learners think about how to use the language in a given context, even if it might be artificial. *Communicative practices* prioritize activities pertaining to real communicative contexts, with real information, and unpredictable language. In this category, learners struggle to keep communication active; however, when it breaks down, they realize how much language they actually know and can see the gaps they need to fill. Language activities should be interconnected and include all the three practices—mechanical, meaningful and communicative—to allow learners to boost their target language efficaciously.

Moreover, classroom activities in small groups also characterize CLT in the sense that teachers facilitate students to work together in pair or group activities to allow them to collaborate (Richards, 2006) and learn from one another. This is also done to enable students to receive input as well as corrective feedback, not only from their teachers, but also from their peers. An additional benefit of small group collaboration is that, whereas there might be some students who are not willing to participate in the whole class discussion due to their anxiety, the small groups help them practice the language, exhibit their language ability, and produce output comfortably.

Communicative task types. The range of exercise types and activities compatible with a communicative approach is unlimited. As these activities require the use of communicative processes such as information sharing, negotiation of meaning and interaction, they actively engage students in communication and enable them to attain communicative objectives. Depending on learners' levels of proficiency in the foreign language, Hendrickson (1991) states that activities such as interviews, friends and family description, narrations about the past, role plays, communicative language games, storytelling, etc. would be appropriate for learners especially when they are performed in pairs or small groups.

To improve English communicative competence, Jin (2012) suggests CLT activities that he classifies in nine groups including (1) *ask and answer dialogue*—the dialogue can be held between students and a teacher or between students, (2) *situational dialogue*—students role-play imagined situations, (3) *communicative dialogue*—an impromptu dialogue which seeks to improve the learners' spontaneous thinking and speaking, (4) *discussion and debate*—opinion exchange before and after a reading lesson,

(5*) retelling*—students tell the story in their own words, (6) *story telling*—students recite stories they have read during their spare time or invent their own stories, (7) *free talk*—students talk about the topics in which they are interested, (8) *short play and speech contest*, and (9) *English corner*—a platform where students can talk freely. Briefly, Jin's CLT activities include both planned and impromptu tasks that mostly boost learners' speaking and reading skills.

Additionally, Richards (2006) presents some actual types of CLT activities; for instance, (1) i*nformation-gap activities*—students obtain information that they do not possess. The goal is to obtain information by any communicative means necessary (use of vocabulary, grammar and communication strategies) to accomplish the task successfully, (2) *jigsaw activities*—these are similar to the information-gap activities but on a class-wide scale rather than just in pairs or groups. Each student or group of students in the class has a piece of information for the assignment, and has to contribute to or work together with other classmates to complete the whole task, (3) *opinion-sharing activities*—students compare values, opinions, or beliefs. This is done; for example, by ranking different potentials based on the order of importance, *information-transfer activities*—students copy information from one method of presentation and reproduce it in a different form (written form → drawing or graph), (5) *reasoning-gap activities*—by inferring, students are required to derive new information from the information they have previously been provided. Overall, all these CLT activities that Richards presents actively involve learners in communication needed for their daily and future purposes.

Roles of teachers and students. It can be seen from these activity types that the roles of both teachers and students will be quite different in CLT than in more traditional

approaches. Based on the past supposition that teachers were the primary source of all knowledge in the traditional classroom, they played the predominant role using teacher-centered methods providing students with structural input in the form of long lectures on grammatical forms (Yu, 2001). They normally stressed formal language features rather than encouraging learners to use the language functionally. Moreover, mechanical drills, repetitive practice and memorization of grammar rules were the main classroom activities. Consequently, teachers' responsibilities were that of organizers and controllers of the activities and evaluators of the learners' performance whereas learners themselves were regarded as receptacles to be filled with knowledge.

On the other hand, in classrooms where CLT is the primary approach, the methods are learner-centered (Littlewood, 1981). In such classes, both teachers and learners have their new respective roles that differ from the roles in more traditional L2 classrooms. Learners do not simply listen to teachers' presentations or explanations and respond to some display questions posed by teachers. Instead, CLT classrooms require learners' active participation. Because of these changes in expectations, there might be some difficulties at the beginning of the CLT implementation because learners might experience anxiety "undermining their confidence" (Littlewood, 1981, p. 18). Others might feel reluctant to speak. However, as they get used to the kinds of activities and the teaching methods being used, they might gradually enjoy them.

To deal with concerns that might reduce students' learning motivation, CLT teachers are responsible for creating nonthreatening classroom opportunities (Hendrickson, 1991; Jin, 2012). In that vein, Jin (2012) gives four tips for keeping a positive climate in a classroom: (1) Arrange the physical environment of the classroom

(e. g. circle) in a way that reduces learners' anxiety, facilitates participation, and enables effective learning, (2) prepare activities that make learners cooperate rather than compete, (3) create in the power based on mutual respect rather than the power resulting from fear of punishment, and (4) use visual, audio and kinesthetic materials to help all learners with different learning styles.

Apart from creating a relaxed classroom atmosphere for learners, CLT teachers are also responsible for selecting activities with which learners are comfortable (Klippel, 1984). Though learners are more active in CLT classrooms, it does not mean that teachers become passive spectators, but rather their function becomes rather less dominant (Littlewood, 1981). Teachers are facilitators and monitors (Richards, 2006) in the sense that they are always ready to help with extended explanations or scaffolding the task whenever they are needed (Littlewood, 1981; Klippel, 1984). In addition, due to learners' strengths and weaknesses demonstrated during their performances, teachers may need to take notes on common mistakes in order to provide corrective feedback later (Klippel, 1984), and prevent the error from becoming a habit (Littlewood, 1981). While corrective feedback is necessary, practitioners of CLT do not believe this corrective feedback needs to be provided frequently or in the middle of learners' speech. According to Breen and Candlin (1980), teachers, in CLT classrooms, facilitate the communication process between participants in the classroom and assist learners to understand various prompts or tasks. They also play the role of independent participants or co-communicators (Breen & Candlin 1980; Littlewood, 1981). As a final point, they are classroom managers and advisors who coordinate activities and are consulted when needed (Littlewood 1981).

Learners are more responsible for their own learning in CLT than in previous

teaching approaches (Breen & Candlin, 1980). Unlike in the traditional Grammar-Translation Method in which teachers seemed to dominate in class and learners were more passive participants, who simply listen and copy down information delivered by the teacher, in CLT classrooms, learners play a central role in communication and interaction. They are responsible for cooperating and avoiding "individualistic" behavior (Richards, 2006; Breen & Candlin, 1980). In so doing, they participate in the group or pair discussion, listen, respect their peers' opinions and learn from them. Furthermore, they experience autonomy of their learning and undertake all the management of their group tasks in a mutual exchange of ideas. As L2 learners, group discussions are good opportunities to listen to a variety of language features without simply relying on teachers as their only models, to negotiate their meaning with one another, and to provide feedback to one another. As this has not previously been the case, teachers may need to train students in the expectations and protocols for group work as part of the curricula.

CLT curricula. The CLT approach differs from other earlier approaches, so its curricula should also be different from theirs. For example, grammatical curricula consist of a finite set of rules to be taught or learned one by one until the whole structure is accumulated. In the CLT approach, language learning is not linear; it involves language use from real-life experience. Therefore, the curriculum or syllabus would be analytic (different from synthetic) in order to meet the learners' needs and reflect the language-learning process appropriately (Nunan, 1988).

In any teaching program, after the theorists and the practitioners have agreed upon its necessity and implementation, the following step is to work on the curriculum, syllabus, textbooks and assessment system. This is done in order to achieve the goal of

using oral and written language in meaningful ways and in various contexts for the benefit of learners. With CLT's goals in mind, many curricular innovations were developed all around the world, and methodologists abandoned traditional teaching strategies and opted for an emphasis on meaning and activities that engage learners interactively.

Savignon (1987, 2002, 2003) suggested five components to include in a communicative curriculum: (1) *Language Arts*—related to formal accuracy, (2) *Language for a Purpose*—use of different strategies to develop language competence, (3) *My Language is Me: Personal English Language*—involving learners' affective and cognitive domains, (4) *You be …, I'll Be…: Theater Arts*—playing a variety of impromptu roles involving listening, observation, movement, games, use of gestures, facial expression, etc. in this world considered to be a stage, and (5) *Beyond the Classroom*—depending on learners' interests. She also suggests that the above-mentioned components should not be taught in isolation; on the contrary, they should overlap and be blended through various classroom activities.

Helt (1982) presents an example of CLT implementation as it occurred in Germany. The committee in charge of syllabus change decided on communicative topics and selected grammatical items to include or keep for the new syllabus. Most utilized materials were textbooks, filmstrips and corresponding audio clips. Regarding the activities, the objectives favoring communication were set even for grammatical items; for example, the activities pertaining to the comparison and description of drawings. These activities focus on grammatical features (adjectives) but they require learners to use real-life language. Additionally, one-on-one oral practice was another opportunity for

learners that rarely existed or did not exist in previous curricula. Finally, the testing and

evaluation system of both accuracy and fluency was harmonized. This case of CLT

implementation in Germany could be a useful example for Rwandan curriculum

designers who would incorporate communicative aspects in curriculum based on

available language-teaching materials.

Summary and situation of language classroom activities, practices and

curricula in Rwanda. Larsen-Freeman (1986) describes a CLT classroom as a place

where every activity is done communicatively and in an appropriate language-use

context. Learners need to be familiar with their target language through exposure to real-

life communication. For that reason, a CLT classroom is expected to be a solution to the

common problems that L2 learners encounter acquiring the four language skills. Teachers

are responsible for creating real-life-classroom situations through role plays, simulation

of real-life interactions, and performance of other various communicative activities.

These activities are carried out in small groups (either pair or group) to allow learners to

communicate, express their opinions, interpret messages and negotiate meaning in real-

world interactions. Moreover, CLT promotes the use of authentic materials to help

learners develop strategies for understanding the target language in the way native

speakers use it.

As stated previously, Rwandan teachers appear to have limited knowledge of the

theoretical underpinnings of CLT. Likewise, most classroom activities tend not to be

communicative; that is, they have a tendency toward either mechanical or meaningful

practices that do not reflect real-world settings, and seem to be restricted to accuracy

improvement rather than fluency. Generally, scaffolding and group work are very rare

because learners do not need special assistance or have much to discuss during mechanical practice activities. Communication strategies (problem-solving) and negotiation of meaning are only occasionally addressed because of large class sizes. Similarly, the use of authentic materials is limited due to different aspects such as shortage of teaching technology: computers, projectors, loudspeakers, document cameras, smart boards, permanent electricity or internet connection, to name a few. Therefore, the above-mentioned problems hinder teachers from developing, or at least utilizing, communicative teaching techniques.

In Rwanda, teachers still play a dominant role in their classrooms. Whereas teachers control all the activities and evaluate learners, students wait for what teachers provide them, and do not take responsibility for their own learning. Surprisingly, it might even seem awkward and strange to frequently organize the language classroom around discussion. In other words, before implementing CLT in Rwanda, school administrators, teachers, and learners should be informed of the switch to a new language teaching approach in order to avoid misunderstandings. If not, some administrators and students might conclude that teachers have ignored their tasks of lecturing once they start CLT practices before they are informed.

Regarding CLT curricula in Rwanda, one might wonder whether Rwandan educators are aware of CLT or whether they avoid it due to the circumstances listed above. Since there are no national curricula, textbooks, syllabuses and standardized tests reflecting CLT features of the classroom activities, it is still problematic to identify which is the problem, or whether there are teachers who are aware of it and implement it to some extent in their respective classes. Furthermore, the national tests that learners take

after the sixth, ninth and twelfth grades are always grammar-based exams. For that reason, teachers may tend to satisfy the short-term needs of learners so that they do well in the national examinations. However, the problem still exists that classroom activities should focus on both fluency and accuracy to train effective communicators for further education, the job market, and for Rwanda's success on the international market.

CLT Constraints and Misconceptions

CLT constraints. Due to the wide-spread use of and learner engagement offered by CLT, most language teachers come to enjoy it and want to make it part of their daily teaching approaches through a partial adoption or a complete shift. However, this does not mean that it is always welcomed openly by all teachers or that its implementation is automatic; it certainly has encountered challenges in many settings. For example, at a German conference, as described by Helt (1982), some attendants realized the necessity for using approaches that would lead to communicative competence, but identified obstacles to its implementation: (1) large class sizes and the "impersonality of foreign language programs," (2) lack of and appropriate "instructional environment," (3) supervisors' doubt and resentment toward execution of new approaches, and (4) a "shortage or complete lack of materials and equipment to enhance communicative learning" (p. 255). That is, CLT implementation in Germany faced challenges related to classroom size, instructional environment, administration understanding and materials. However, since that time, they have managed successfully to change their teaching approach despite these constraints.

Additionally, Sato and Kleinsasser (1999) conducted a study of 10 teachers: one native Japanese speaker and nine native-English speakers from Australia who were

teaching English in Japan. The teachers were characterized by different teaching experiences, different professional preparation, and different experiences with Japanese culture. Using three data collection instruments—interview, observation and survey—, the research findings revealed that most of the teachers understood that language should be taught communicatively though some of them were unable to effectively deliver CLT lessons because of their language-proficiency levels, the class size, etc.

More recently, the problems of introducing learner-centered teaching have been documented in China (Yu, 2001; Xiongyong & Samuel, 2011). According to Yu (2001), CLT implementation was initially blocked due to (1) lack of understanding of the importance of CLT compared to traditional methods, (2) extreme teaching loads carried by low-wage teachers, (3) class sizes of around sixty students, (4) negative perceptions of learner-centered teaching methods in that it was seen to deprive teachers of their central position in the class, and (5) lack of qualified teaching staff proficient in all four language skills (Yu, 2001). Xiongyong and Samuel (2011) also found that large class sizes and the teacher's lack of self-confidence in learner-centered teaching (in this case task-based) were the main reasons that some of them avoided using more communicative-oriented approaches.

Even more recently in Iran, Kalanzadeh, Mirchenari and Bakhtiarvand (2013) surveyed 50 high school English teachers to identify the probable constraints on CLT application there. Based on responses provided by the participants, they classified the challenges to CLT application into four categories: (1) problems caused by the teacher: these include teachers' "misconceptions about CLT, deficiency in spoken English, few chances for retraining in CLT, deficiency in sociolinguistic and strategic competence, and

lack of enough time for materials development," (2) problems created by the students: "low English proficiency, resistance to class participation and lack of motivation for communication," (3) those occurring due to the educational system: which include "lack of budget, crowded classes, insufficient support, and grammar-focused exams", and (4) problems related to CLT itself: "lack of efficient assessment instruments and inadequate account of EFL teaching in CLT" (p. 5-7). In brief, Kalanzadeh et al. realized that problems impeding CLT implementation could be associated with teachers, learners, the educational system, or CLT itself.

Despite the above-mentioned constraints, some teachers were found to have positive perceptions of CLT and were willing to put it into practice. For example, in Xiongyong and Samuel's study (2011), they found that the Chinese teachers had a high level of understanding of task and task-based language teaching (TBLT), as well as expressing positive attitudes toward TBLT implementation. In addition, 83% of the teachers claimed to have opted for TBLT because of its motivating features such as enhancing learners' intrinsic motivation, promoting their interactive strategies, facilitating a peer to peer learning environment, among others. For Helt (1982) CLT is a way of combating large class sizes since it uses pair or group work in some or most activities. In fact, pair or group work enables language learners to learn and benefit from one another and be responsible for their own learning while teachers grade fewer papers and provide general feedback. Therefore, CLT minimizes constraints in order to achieve a standard level of communicative competence.

Woods and Cakir (2011) have identified similar positive understanding in Turkey as well. They explored what six teachers knew theoretically and practically about CLT.

These teachers had recently graduated from the same university, and were either teaching

or pursuing their masters' courses at the time of the study. The participants responded to

a survey questionnaire and an individual interview about the development of teachers'

abstract knowledge of communicativeness in language teaching. Then, they watched and

evaluated the videos of the Canadian instructors they had previously observed. The

findings exhibited that some of the theoretical and impersonal (objective/universal/true)

knowledge of the teachers did not match with their practical and personal

(subjective/idiocratic/colored by personal biases) knowledge attained from the

experiences. Most of the participants believed that the grammar activities were delivered

uncommunicatively to students, but they were surprised to see how communicative they

actually were after watching the videotaped materials. This surprise came from the

common generalization stereotyping that grammar is never taught communicatively. In

summary, CLT constraints are varied, but could be put into three categories: problems

caused by the teacher, problems created by the students, those occurring due to the

educational system and problems related to CLT itself (Kalanzadeh et al., 2013).

Misconceptions of CLT. Despite that CLT seems to be a globally well-known

approach, misconceptions about the approach may still exist which could lead to

resistance to implementation. Therefore, Rwandan teachers, students, and administrators

might have similar misconceptions of CLT that would prohibit its implementation.

Presenting them would help take related measures once the implementation starts in

Rwanda. Already discussed above is the misconception that CLT means an exclusive

focus on meaning and does not include grammar teaching. Other misconceptions

discussed by Spada (2007) and Thomspson (1996) include (1) *CLT means listening and*

speaking practice, (2) *CLT means teaching only speaking*, (3) *CLT means pair work, which means role play*, (4) *CLT means avoidance of the learners' L1*, (5) *CLT means learner-centered teaching*, (6) CLT *means expecting too much from the teacher*, and (7) *CLT means no explicit feedback on learner error*.

The first 3 misconceptions appear to have a focus on oracy skills to the exclusion of literacy skills. To start with, *CLT means listening and speaking practice*: this myth was prioritized during the audio-lingual period and does not fit in CLT in which all the skills have weight in language teaching (Spada, 2007). Second, *CLT means teaching only speaking*: reasons for this misconception come from the fact that the primary focus of CLT is to encourage learners to communicate effectively in different contexts, which meets the needs of those who consider the main purposes of a language to be simply oral. They think they will use the language when they meet a speaker of that language in their own country or travel abroad where the language is spoken. Therefore, when some teachers understand that CLT concentration is effective communication, they immediately think of speaking and listening skills. The second reason for the misconception about speaking regards the reduction of teacher talking time (TTT) in favor of student talking time (STT) in class through group and pair discussion activities. Due to this TTT reduction, some teachers conclude that CLT means providing plenty of time to learners for their language practices in oral skills. On the other hand, effective communication occurs through both spoken and written mediums (Thompson, 1996). Every communication involves two sides—the sender who encodes the message and the receiver who has responsibility for decoding it. The processes for both oral and written skills are similar. So, while reading the text, the readers seem to talk with their absent

interlocutors through written words. Such type of communication is not to be left out. Third, *CLT means pair work, which means role play*: this misconception does not concern the pair group itself, but the role play which is given the weight of being a useful technique to employ in developing learners' communicative competence. By the fact of practicing meaningful language simulated to authentic contexts reflecting the real-world, some teachers think it leads to language learning success. However, pair or group work is not limited to role play; it may involve other communicative activities asking learners to help one another in solving a problem, analyzing a passage, preparing a group presentation, making up a story, designing a questionnaire, to name a few (Thompson, 1996).

The next set of 4 misconceptions is related to the misunderstanding of the role of the teacher. First, *CLT means avoidance of the learners' L1*: this happened during the direct method as well as the audio-lingual method while replacing grammar translation. The use of L1 might be helpful, but it is necessary to consider how much it is needed depending on the learners' exposure to the target language (Spada, 2007). Second, *CLT means learner-centered teaching*: it is better to combine learner-centered and teacher-fronted methods to allow learners to interact in their pair or group work and get the opportunity to receive feedback (Spada, 2007). Third, *CLT means expecting too much from the teacher*: according to Medgyes (1986 as cited in Thompson, 1996), CLT requires much more from teachers than other language teaching approaches do. Teachers are responsible for listening to learners, interacting with them, managing skills and balancing the language skills to achieve successful communication. In CLT classrooms, teachers need to be more proficient than in other approaches—for instance grammar

translation—so that they direct the classroom discussion activities and foster the learning

(Thompson, 1996). Fourth, *CLT means no explicit feedback on learner error*: whereas

some instructors prefer to ignore feedback provision, recast is proven to be the most

common type of feedback though some learners do not recognize it as feedback on their

form (Spada, 2007).

      Summary of CLT constraints in Rwanda. Although CLT has not been

officially implemented in the Rwandan educational system yet, various constraints

revealed by different studies are already apparent in Rwandan school settings. Because

some language classrooms under the Education for All program might have up to 100

learners, class size could be seen as a problem. If one believes there is a need to monitor

all student interaction, then it can easily be seen that teachers might avoid using CLT.

Also, lack of teaching aids, i.e. the shortage of teaching materials has been an issue even

with grammar-based instruction. Teachers who would like to print or make copies to use

in their classrooms would be prevented by the shortage of printers/photocopying

machines and document cameras or projectors in case they have one physical or soft copy

to use for the whole class. Classroom equipment also may not facilitate CLT practices as

some of the furniture is not movable, and the classroom organization might not be

favorable for small group work. Moreover, teachers' English-language deficiency, mostly

caused by an abrupt shift to teaching English instead of French as both a content area and

a medium of instruction, has an impact on their teaching. In other words, some teachers

might not be confident to use English in order to lead CLT activities. Furthermore, the

form-based exams encourage teachers to avoid communicative skills because they are

required to focus on grammar to prepare their students to take different national

examinations. In short, challenges to CLT implementation or application in Rwanda seem to be numerous though they are not yet officially identified.

Summary of the situation of L2 teaching/learning in Rwanda. Due to lack of documentation about L2 teaching approaches/methods in Rwanda, it has been supposed throughout this discussion that English is taught utilizing Grammar Translation, Oral Approach/Situational Language Teaching and Audio-lingual methods. In the past, L2 learning has consisted of text/paragraph/word translation, vocabulary memorization, and explicit grammar rule instruction, which excluded interactive and group work activities. These methods have perhaps equipped Rwandans with skills in accuracy, but communication has not been seen as the focus. From the perspective of this discussion, it appears that communicative skills were not prioritized simply because the lack of knowledge of this teaching approach from both its theoretical—communicative competence, input and interaction hypotheses—and practical perspectives..

From a practical perspective, the dominant tendency toward classroom activities seems to be form-focused with mechanical or meaningful practices at the center. Such activities do not reflect real-world, social, or communicative language functions. Scaffolding, group work, communication strategies, and negotiation of meaning also seem to be infrequent. Likewise, as there is a lack of teaching technology, the use of authentic materials is also limited. Consequently, the teachers' and learners' roles could be affected: teachers may dominate their classrooms, retain control of the activities, and evaluate learners while the latter may expect teachers to provide them with input without taking responsibility for their own learning.

Classroom activities and practices are assumed based on the fact of not having

CLT curricula, textbooks, syllabuses, or standardized tests reflecting CLT features. Because of this, teachers may be required to follow a form-based program to respond to their learners' short-term needs related to the national examination they take after the sixth, ninth and twelfth grades. Besides these CLT challenges, a number of its misconceptions identified in different countries might characterize Rwandan teachers, students, and administrators as well.

Despite the form-focused assessments that ultimately appear to steer current teaching methods, it is possible for learners to gain form-focused competence within a CLT learning environment (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Richards, 2006), as well as give students the communicative competence (Richards, 2006; Savignon, 2002) that the Ministry of Education has implied they need for Rwandan students', and ultimately Rwanda's economical success. Due to the lack of clarity about L2 teaching/learning in Rwanda, the current study is designed to examine Rwandan EFL university teachers' awareness of and attitudes toward CLT, as well as their classroom practices, and it seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. Are Rwandan university teachers of English aware of CLT? and

   To what extent is their understanding accurate according to the research?

2. If they are aware of it, what are their attitudes toward CLT?

3. If they are positively disposed toward CLT, do they utilize CLT activities in their classroom practices and in what ways?

In order to answer these questions, Chapter 3 develops the procedures used in participant recruitment, data collection methods, and data analysis. Once the data are reported in Chapter 4, the answers to the above research questions will be discussed.

Chapter III

Methodology

While much research has been conducted about CLT, the review of the literature showed that no study has been done in the context of Rwanda. Therefore, there is a great need to complement those theories and empirical studies by additional investigations about CLT in Rwanda. This chapter presents the process in which this research was conducted in order to search and obtain information pertaining to Rwandan EFL university English teachers' awareness and attitudes, as well as their classroom practices regarding the use of the CLT approach. It first describes the methodology used in the sampling procedure and then explains the data collection methods and techniques, as well as the instrument. Finally, it gives details of procedures used in analyzing, presenting, and interpreting the data.

Research Design

In order to produce findings that would be generalizable to all teachers of English in the whole country, the participants were chosen from universities of different backgrounds and locations across Rwandan territory. In addition, those institutions would likely have different facilities due to the fact that some were established in the early 1960s (e.g. National University of Rwanda: 1963), whereas others were recently inaugurated in the late 2000s (e.g. Institut Polytechnique de Byumba: 2006). This wide range of features allowed the teachers from the selected universities to provide data that would show a representative image of language teaching in Rwanda.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

In the present study, the population was composed of instructors that shared the characteristic of teaching the English language at Rwandan universities and colleges. Rwanda has 29 institutions of higher learning: 8 public universities, 12 private universities, and 9 public colleges. Due to the fact that it seemed to be impractical to obtain data from the entire population, it was my main responsibility to select a sample that represented the total population under study (Nunan, 1992; Cohen & Manion, 1994). As most of the institutions appeared to share common features based on their geographical placements (the characteristics required for them to form a population) (Jaeger, 1988; Fowler, 2009), it was decided to narrow down the possible sites. To increase the representativeness of the sample, this study attempted to balance the institutions by considering two sample universities—public and private—from each of the five Rwandan geographical regions—Southern Province, Northern Province, Eastern Province, Western Province and Kigali City. However, as there were no main universities or colleges in the Western province, it was necessary to consider secondary campuses in the Western province that are connected to main universities located in another province. The total number of all the universities selected for this research was ten, and two teachers of English per selected university were expected to participate in the study.

Participants. The total desired sample of the target population was twenty teachers of English from Rwandan public and private institutions. To select the participants, a purposive sampling approach was decided. This approach consists of handpicking the informants based on the researcher's judgment of the individuals' "typicality" (Nunan, 1992, p. 142; Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 89). As Cohen and Manion

(1994) confirm, the respondents selected using the purposive sampling technique form an accurate sample that attains the study objectives.

Table 3.1 Sample and questionnaire returns

N^o	Institutions	Province	Legal Standing	Sample	Returns (question-naire)
1	National University of Rwanda (NUR)	Southern	Public	2	2
2	Université Catholique de Kabgayi	Southern	Private	2	2
3	Tumba College of Technology	Northern	Public	2	2
4	Institut Polytechnique de Byumba	Northern	Private	2	2
5	Umutara Polytechnic	Eastern	Public	2	2
6	Institute of Agriculture, Technology and Education of Kibungo	Eastern	Private	2	2
7	Kigali Health Institute: Nyamishaba Campus	Western	Public	2	2
8	Université Libre de Kigali: Gisenyi Campus	Western	Private	2	0
9	Kigali Institute of Education	Kigali City	Public	2	2
10	Institut Laïque adventiste de Kigali	Kigali City	Private	2	0
	Total number of participants			20	16

A total of ten Directors of Centers for Languages from ten Rwandan Universities were contacted by email (See Appendix A) and asked to provide a list of teachers of English teaching at their respective universities. However, two of them (both from private institutions located in Western Province and Kigali City) did not respond to the request.

From the list of each institution, I handpicked two teachers, and asked them to respond to my online questionnaire. It should be noted that, at this time, I was still waiting for the lists from the two directors who finally did not reply to my email. Therefore, responses from sixteen teachers rather than twenty were received. To contact participants, I emailed them with an explanation of the objectives of the research as well as the survey procedures. This email (See Appendix B) also asked those selected teachers whether they were willing to participate in the study. The same email also contained a link directing them to instructions as well as the questionnaire itself.

Instrument for data collection. In order to obtain information to answer the research questions—teachers' perceptions and beliefs toward CLT and their in-class practices, I decided to survey the participants using an online questionnaire. This was chosen over observational procedures for its advantages: (1) getting information from many participants at one time and in an economic way (Jaeger, 1988; Perry, 2011), (2) reaching people in unreachable areas or at long distances between the researcher and the participants, (3) no need for professional interviewers, and (4) time allotted to respondents to think or change their answers (Perry, 2011).

Questionnaire. For the present study, the questionnaire (See Appendix D) was comprised of four parts: (1) demographic information about the participants, (2) their beliefs about English language teaching pedagogy, (3) their classroom teaching practices, (4) and their familiarity with CLT. It should be noted that the last three parts correspond to the three research questions of this study. The first part of the questionnaire included the following demographic topics: age, gender, status of institution, highest academic degree, major/field of study, year of graduation (highest degree), and teaching

experience. The second part of the questionnaire contained statements about language learning to which the participants answered using a 5-point Likert scale on their level of agreement (strongly disagree, disagree, neither disagree nor agree, agree and strongly agree). Additionally, the second part included a question that asked the level of focus the teacher placed on the four language skills, grammar, and vocabulary. Part three consisted of close-ended questions about practice that fell into two categories: form-based and meaning-based, though the categories were randomly mixed in the questionnaire. The form-based items regarded the explanation and practice of grammatical rules, vocabulary drills, sentence repetition, in-class L1 use, error correction, and pronunciation. The meaning-based questions were composed of questions that involved the use of different communicative functions. Again, the participants responded using a 5-point Likert scale, this time on the frequency with which they used the specific strategies. The fourth part of the questionnaire encompassed 2 close-ended questions, 3 open-ended questions and 2 questions requiring ranking and true-false statements. All the questions/statements were related to whether the participants knew CLT, defined it appropriately, tried it in their classrooms, enjoyed using it, distinguished its principles from misconceptions, and recognized the required roles of CLT teachers.

This questionnaire was adapted from three different previous studies. The first questionnaire used by Savignon and Wang (2002) investigated learner attitudes toward teaching methods used in their classes. Of their 72 items, 20 statements about teachers' beliefs toward language teaching/learning and 11 questions concerning their classroom practices were selected and adjusted to fit the Rwandan questionnaire. While Savignon and Wang used a 7-point scale, I used a 5-point scale to narrow the analysis and

interpretation. Moreover, I adapted the questionnaire further by adding open-ended questions from Ozsevik's (2010) questionnaire on teachers' perceived difficulties in CLT implementation in Turkey, and from Nishino's (2008) examination of secondary school teachers' beliefs and practices of CLT in Japan. Although it is easy to gather responses through closed-ended items and analyze them, open-ended questions provide more and valuable information that best reflect the real feelings, understandings and reactions of the participants (Nunan, 1992). Therefore, open-ended items were incorporated into the questionnaire to allow respondents to extend their answers or develop complex issues that might not have been elicited by closed-ended questions. However, to maximize returns, more closed-ended questions that seemed to be easy for the informants to respond by selecting an appropriate response from an existing list (Fowler, 2009) were included.

Before distributing this modified questionnaire to the actual participants, it was pilot-tested by two Rwandan teachers of English studying at U.S. and U.K. universities. According to Jaeger (1988), pilot testing enables one to "predict accurately the effectiveness of survey instruments, plans for distribution and receipt of survey materials, the proportion of a target sample that will participate in a survey, and the time necessary to complete the survey" (p. 323). The survey revisions took account of the feedback provided by those volunteer teachers regarding the clarity of both the instructions and the questionnaire items, as well as the time it would take the respondents to complete the whole survey instrument. The questionnaire was distributed to the study participants by means of an online survey program (http://www.qualtrics.com). Completing the questionnaire took respondents approximately 30 minutes. After sending out the email containing the consent form (See Appendix C), instructions and the link that would direct

the respondents to the questions once they chose to participate, I simply waited for their

data to get into my account at the qualtrics.com website.

Methods of data analysis. The data retrieved from Qualtrics were already

organized into the four major sections outlined above. The demographic data were then

analyzed question by question in terms of percentage (except *age* and *teaching*

experience that included the mean and the standard deviation (SD) while the mode and

the median were added to *year of graduation* data presentation), and summarized in a

table presented at end of the section. Depending on the nature of the question, some

individual responses were grouped for ease of interpretation. The statements/questions in

sections 2 and 3 were then separated into form-based and meaning-based groups. The

Likert-scale items were analyzed in terms of percentages so as to produce descriptive

statistics used to present an overall picture of Rwandan teachers and attitudes/beliefs

toward CLT and their classroom practices. The scales were combined for ease of

interpretation. Results were therefore presented according to whether participants had

positive perceptions (*strongly agree* and *agree*), negative perceptions (*strongly disagree*

and *disagree*) or took a *neutral* position for statements in section 2 while responses of

section 3 were grouped in terms of *always/often, sometimes* and *rarely/never*. In each of

the two sections, each individual statement/question was addressed in turn, followed by

the results of the whole section. Moreover, tabular forms and charts were used to enable

the readability of closed-ended question results.

The 21st statement (section 2) that examined how important the four language

skills, grammar and vocabulary are in the learners' language development was analyzed

differently as it did not consist of agreeing or disagreeing. Rather, a 6-point Likert scale

(*not at all important*, *very unimportant*, *somewhat unimportant*, *somewhat important*, *very important*, and *extremely important*) was used to explore the importance that survey participants attributed to speaking, listening, reading writing, grammar and vocabulary.

In section 4, individual responses were organized in a similar order as the questionnaire, and there were no grouped items. Two closed-ended questions were presented in charts while two other questions (ranking and true-false questions) were presented in tables. The ranking question included 8 criteria ranked from one to eight levels. The highest frequency or percentage was obtained from attributing the participant's selection/rank to the corresponding level of the criteria. That is, 2 people could give the criteria the first rank while 8 gave it the last rank; therefore, the rank selected by many participants was considered and reported in the results chapter. The true-false question encompasses ten items. Some of those items describe CLT main characteristics and others are related to common misconceptions about CLT that have been reported in the review of the literature. Regarding the open-ended questions, these were downloaded and interpreted qualitatively, independently of the quantitative data. Each item was analyzed separately and presented using summaries, paraphrases and direct quotes of the participants' responses. In addition, all the responses to open-ended items were summarized and reported (See Appendix H). Then the demographic, closed-ended question responses and the qualitative data were compared and contrasted in the discussion. Chapter 4 presents and discusses the results.

Chapter IV

Findings of the Study

This chapter describes the results obtained from the sixteen participants' answers to the questionnaire. It presents the data grouped on the basis of the main parts of the questionnaire: teachers' demographic traits, teachers' beliefs about English-language pedagogy, their classroom-teaching practices, and their familiarity with CLT.

Teachers' Demographic Information

This section includes 7 items: age, gender, status of institution, highest academic degree, major/field of study, year of graduation (highest degree), and teaching experience. The items are analyzed individually with some grouped categories within themselves depending on the nature of the question. In this section, the *I* in front of the number stands for *item*.

I1. Age. With regard to the age range, it is extended from 27 and 43 years. Specifically, 62.5% were 27 to 35 years old while 37.5% were aged between 36 and 43. The participants' age mean was 35.06 and the SD of their age was 4.34. This SD showed that the participants' age was spread out over a large range of values.

I2. Gender. Among the sixteen Rwandan EFL university teachers who partook in this study, fourteen (87.5%) of them were males while only two (12.5%) were females. This indicated lack of equilibrium of gender among the participants, which would likely be the general case in Rwanda.

I3. Status of participants' institutions. Taking a look at the information related to institutions status, 62.5% of the survey participants were working at public institutions

while 37.5% worked at private ones.

I4. Highest academic degree. As for the highest academic degrees earned by the participants, 50% of them were master's holders, 43.75% held bachelor's degrees and only 6.25% had a doctoral degree.

I5. Majors/fields of study. The survey participants had studied different majors. Some of them were connected to language teaching (62.5%)—Culture and Teaching Languages, French-English with Education, English Curriculum Development and TESOL—, general English (25%) or general education (6.25%). However, one of the participants (6.25%) attended a different field (MBA).

I6. Year of graduation. According to the participants graduation dates, more than a half (68.75%) of them reported to have graduated after 2010. A total of 25% finished their academic studies in 2004-2009, and one participant (6.25%) graduated between 1998 and 2004.

I7. Participants' teaching experiences. The participants' teaching experiences ranged from two to twelve years. To be specific, 37.5% of the participants had 2-6 years of teaching experience while 62.5% had been teaching for 7-12 years. The mean of the participants' teaching experiences was 6.56 while the SD was 2.90. This seemed to demonstrate that the teaching experiences of the survey participants is close to the mean of the data. Table 4.1 summarizes all the participants' demographic information.

Table 4.1 Demographic information

Variables	Percentage / Frequency	Percentage
Age		
27-35	10	62.5
36-43	6	37.5
Gender		
Male	14	87.5
Female	2	12.5
Status of Institution		
Public	10	62.5
Private	6	37.5
Highest Academic Degrees		
Bachelor's Degree	7	43.75
Master's Degree	8	50
Doctoral Degree	1	6.25
Major/Field of Study		
General Education	1	6.25
Culture & Teaching Languages	1	6.25
General English	4	25
English-French with Education	4	25
TESOL	4	25
English Curriculum Development	1	6.25
MBA	1	6.25
Year of graduation		
1998-2003	1	6.25
2004-2009	4	25
After 2010	11	68.75
Teaching experience		
2-6 years	6	37.5
7-12 years	10	62.5

Number of Participants = 16

Furthermore, the participants' highest academic degrees classified in three categories—PhD, master and bachelor—were associated with the data pertaining to year of graduation, teaching experience, age and majors/fields of study. Also, the mode and the median were calculated for year of graduation while the mean and the SD were calculated for both teaching experience and age.

Table 4.2 Summary of demographic information based on participants' highest degrees

Highest Degree		Year of Graduation	Teaching Experience	Age	Major/field of study
PhD	1	2012	7 years	30 years old	• TESOL
Master	8	**7** (2010-2013)	2-12 years	32-38 years old	• General Education • Teaching Languages • MBA
		1 (1999)	11 years	43 years old	• General English
Bachelor	7	**3** (2010-2012)	6-7 years	31-42 years old	• General English • Teaching Languages
		4 (2006-2007)	2-9 years	27-40 years old	• General English • Teaching Languages
	N = 16	Mode = 2011 Median = 2011	Mean= 6.56 SD= 2.90	Mean= 35.06 SD= 4.34	

Teachers' Beliefs about English-Language Teaching

This section comprises the data from the 20 items that were analyzed quantitatively using a 5-point Likert scale between *Strongly Agree* and *Strongly Disagree*. While each is presented independently, they are grouped by the teacher belief measured: form-focus and meaning-focus. Twelve of the statements (numbers 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 18, and 20 on the questionnaire) pertain to form-based teaching and

learning, and eight of the statements (3, 5, 8, 10, 13, 16, 17, and 19) regard meaning-based pedagogy. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 show the results of this analysis arranged in order from highest agreement to highest disagreement. (See Appendix E for the complete results of the survey).

Form-based teaching and learning. The survey findings demonstrated that more participants agreed than disagreed with the following statements:

- S12. The formal study of grammar is essential to mastering English (87.5%)

- S18. Grammar rules should be explicitly explained in class (75%)

- S2. English learning through sentence drilling is effective (75%)

- S11. It is important for the teacher to correct students' errors in class (75%)

- S15. I believe learners' English improves most quickly if they study and practice grammar (50%)

- S14. A person's pronunciation is a good indicator of general English ability (50%)

- S1. Learning English is learning its grammar rules (43.75%)

S12. The formal study of grammar is essential to mastering English.

The survey results demonstrated that 87.5% of the participants agreed with the statement saying that the formal study of grammar is essential to mastering English while only two participants (12.5%) neither disagreed nor agreed with it.

S18. Grammar rules should be explicitly explained in class.

The majority of the survey participants (75%) endorsed the statement that encourages teachers to explicitly explain grammar rules in their classes while 12.5% of them rejected the statement and 12.5% answered neutrally.

S2. English learning through sentence drilling is effective.

Learning English through sentence drilling appeared to be sufficiently endorsed according to the findings. Three-fourths of the participants (75%) agreed with the statement, 18.75% disagreed with it, and 6.25% neither disagreed nor agreed.

S11. It is important for the teacher to correct students' errors in class.

As far as error correction is concerned, most of the participants (75%) supported its necessity in their English-language classes. Only 25% neither agreed nor disagreed.

S15. I believe learners' English improves most quickly if they study and practice grammar.

The results of this study revealed that 50% of the participants believed that their learners' English improves quickly if they have them study and practice grammar. 31.25% disagreed with the statement whereas 18.75% neither agreed nor disagreed.

S14. A person's pronunciation is a good indicator of general English ability.

With respect to pronunciation, 50% of the survey participants believed that the pronunciation indicates the person's general proficiency level in English. 31.25% opposed the view, and 18.75% were undecided.

S1. Learning English is learning its grammar rules.

The results indicated that the respondents (43.75%) supported the statement, 31.25% rejected the opinion and 25% chose a neutral position.

More survey respondents disagreed with the following statements:

- S6. I believe the more grammar rules one memorizes, the better he/she is at using English (50%)

- S20. A good language learner usually pronounces words perfectly (56.25)

- S7. I believe it is important to avoid making errors in the process of learning

English (75%)

- S4. I believe Kinyarwanda should be frequently used in English class for students' better understanding of the lessons (75%)
- S9. It is not essential to speak English in the classroom to learn the language (93.75%)

S6. I believe the more grammar rules one memorizes, the better he/she is at using English.

Half of the participants did not support the argument that correlated the memorization of grammar rules with the ability to use English. The total of respondents supporting the statement was 31.25% whereas 18.75% answered neutrally.

S20. A good language learner usually pronounces words perfectly.

The results displayed that the majority of the survey participants (56.25%) did not consider perfect word pronunciation as an indicator of a good language learner. 25% of them did not decide which side to take while only 18.75% thought that perfect pronunciation is a characteristic of a good learner.

S7. I believe it is important to avoid making errors in the process of learning English.

According to the results, most teachers (75%) believed that the process of English-language learning involves error making. However, 25% thought that it is essential to avoid errors while learning a language.

S4. I believe Kinyarwanda should be frequently used in English classes for students' better understanding of the lessons.

A close look to the results demonstrated that the participants (75%) disagreed with the opinion of using the native language (Kinyarwanda) in their English classes to allow their learners to understand the lessons better. On the other hand, 12.5% would like

Kinyarwanda to be used for that purpose, and 12.5% did not take any side.

S9. It is not essential to speak English in the classroom to learn the language.

To the above-mentioned statement, almost all the participants declared that the necessity to speak English in the classroom in order to learn it was a must. That is to say, 93.75% rejected the opinion that was presented in a negative form "it is not essential", so for them it is essential to speak English to learn it. On the other hand, one person (6.25%) strongly agreed that learning English does not require learners to speak it in the classroom. Figure 4.1 compiles all the results related to Rwandan teachers' beliefs toward form-based pedagogy.
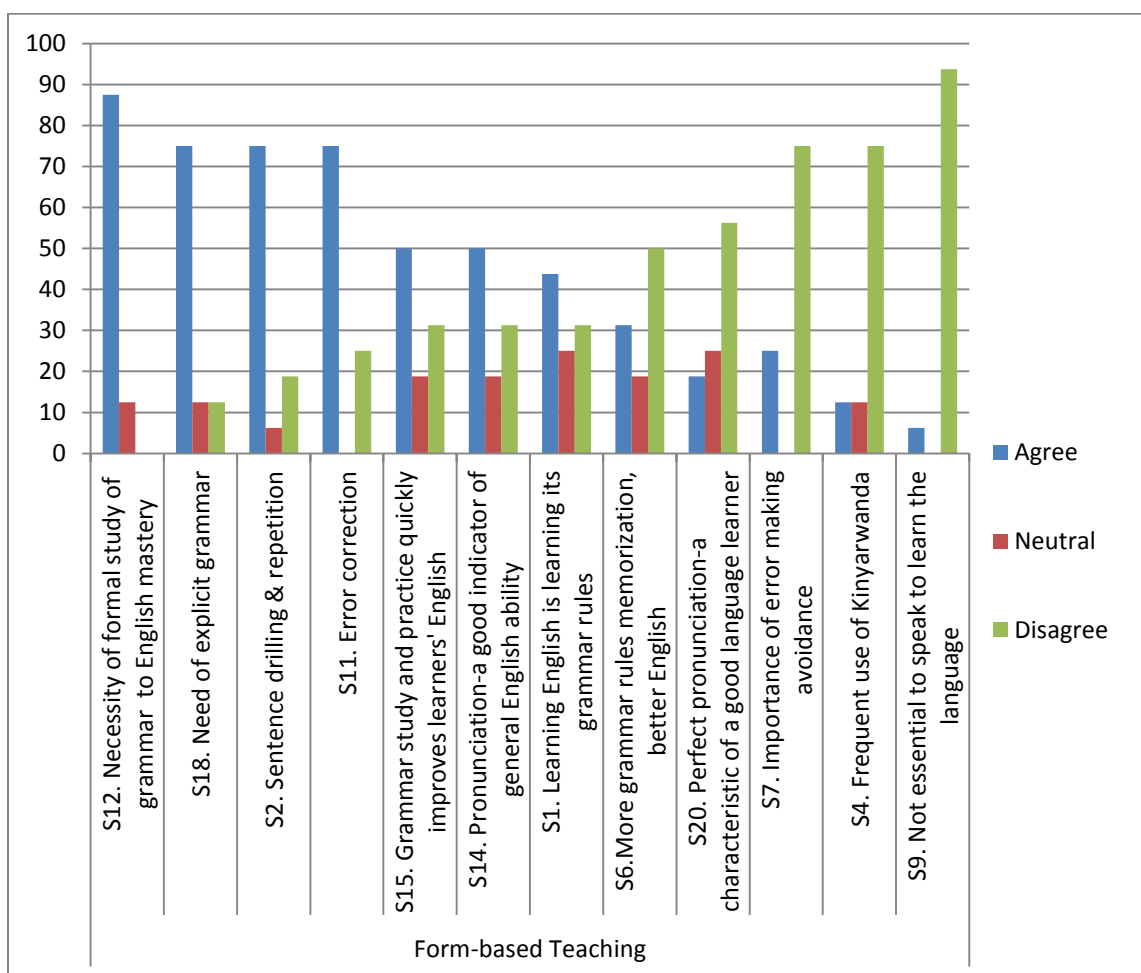
Figure 4.1 Rwandan teachers' beliefs toward form-based teaching

Overall, the results revealed that form-based teaching is still endorsed in Rwanda. They showed that the respondents were generally clear in their beliefs about the teaching of grammar. They generally believed that explicit grammar-focused instruction was important, even to the extent of sentence drilling, but they also believed that it is essential to speak English and to use little L1 in the classroom, and that errors as well as their correction are part of learning. The respondents were more mixed in their responses to the role of grammar in the ultimate attainment of English, however, as evidenced in their answers to S1, S6, S14, and S15.

Meaning-based teaching and learning. Like in form-based category, the data are ordered in Figure 4.2 in terms of the highest agreement and highest disagreement (See Appendix F for the complete results of the survey). Overall, the findings summarized in Figure 4.2 show that the vast majority of the participants supported all of the statements about meaning-based teaching and learning, demonstrating that the Rwandan teachers had positive understandings of the meaning of communicative classroom teaching. For example, 100% of the participants believed that:

- *S13. A teacher should create an atmosphere in the classroom to encourage interaction as a class or in groups.*

- *S17. A communication-focused language program often meets the learner's needs.*

- *S19. Learning English by practicing the language in communicative activities is essential to eventual mastery of a foreign language.*

Only 1 participant strongly disagreed with each of the following:

- *S3. A language classroom should be communication-focused.*

- *S10. I believe making trial-and-error attempts to communicate in English helps students to learn English.*

Two participants strongly disagreed with the following:

- *S5. It is important to practice English in real-life or real-life-like situations.*

Two participants strongly took a neutral position with the following:

- *S16. Learning English is learning to use the language through practicing the four language skills (speaking, listening, writing and reading).*

While 81.25% of the informants agreed with the following statement, 3 participants (12.5%) disagreed, and 1 participant was neutral.

- *S8. Languages are learned mainly through communication, with grammar rules explained when necessary.*
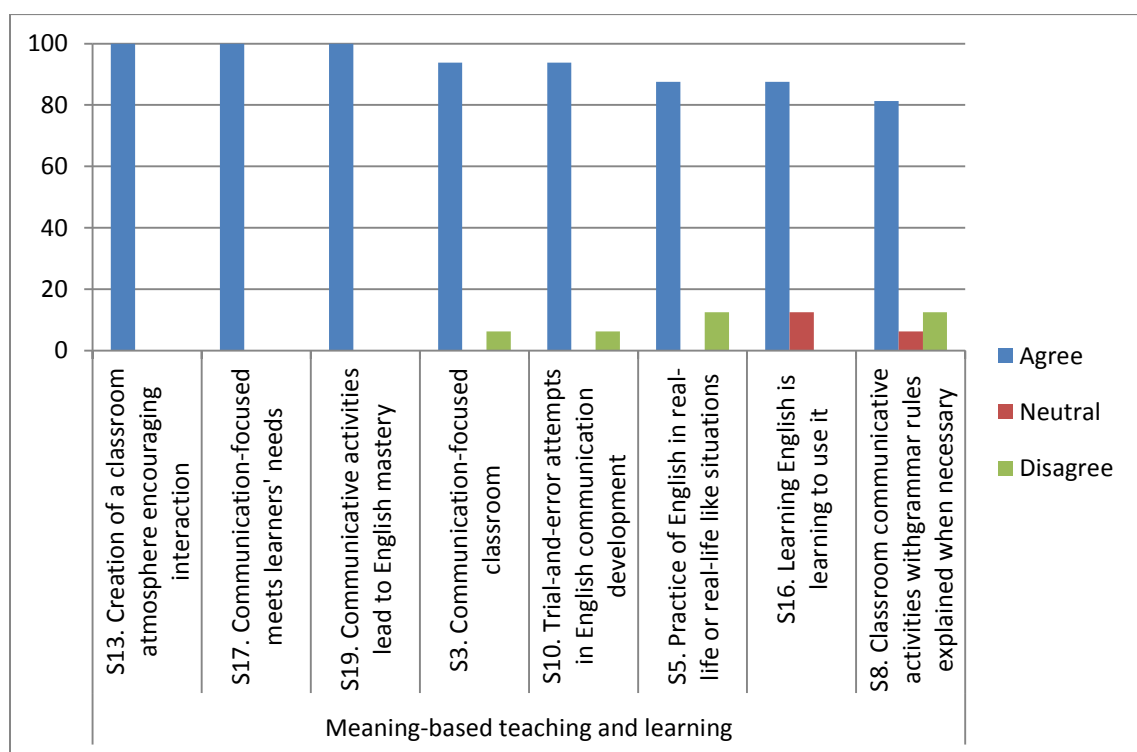

Figure 4.2 Participants' beliefs toward meaning-based English-language teaching and learning

These findings illustrate that the survey participants' beliefs as a group were more positive toward meaning-based pedagogy, than their beliefs about grammar-based teaching. The participants understood that language teaching implies the creation of a classroom atmosphere conducive to encouraging interaction, the trial-and-error attempts to communicate, the practice of the language in communicative activities in life-like situations, and through practicing the four language skills. They also believed that a language classroom focusing on communication meets learners' needs and includes limited explicit grammar instruction.

The results of the present survey demonstrated the strong endorsement of the participants toward both form- and meaning-based instructions. They appeared to understand that an English-language classroom should include language structure, as well as communication purposes to allow learners to acquire all the skills that complement each other.

Focus on the four language skills, grammar and vocabulary. The last question in this section, *In your opinion, how important are the following areas for your students to learn English?,* was intended to elicit teachers' perceptions about where instruction should be focused: speaking, listening, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary. Figure 4.3 indicates the importance participants attributed to the four language skills, grammar and vocabulary in order to boost language learning. The results revealed that participants perceived all of the above-mentioned skills as important; however, the four modalities significantly out-rated grammar and vocabulary in terms of *extremely important*, with speaking rating significantly higher than all of the other categories. The results are presented from the highest *extremely important* to the highest *very important*:

- Speaking (81.25% extremely important, 18.75% very important)

- Writing (56.25% extremely important, 43.25% very important)

- Reading and Listening (50% extremely important, 43.25% very important, 6.25% somewhat important)

- Vocabulary (31.25% extremely important, 68.75% very important)

- Grammar (18.75% extremely important, 56.25% very important, 18.75% somewhat important, 6.25% somewhat unimportant).

Taking into account the responses of the two highest scaling categories (very important and extremely important) together, a 100% of the participants selected speaking, writing and vocabulary. Reading and listening were considered at 93.75%, while grammar came last with 75%. Note that grammar is the only skill regarded to have negative importance albeit only from one participant.
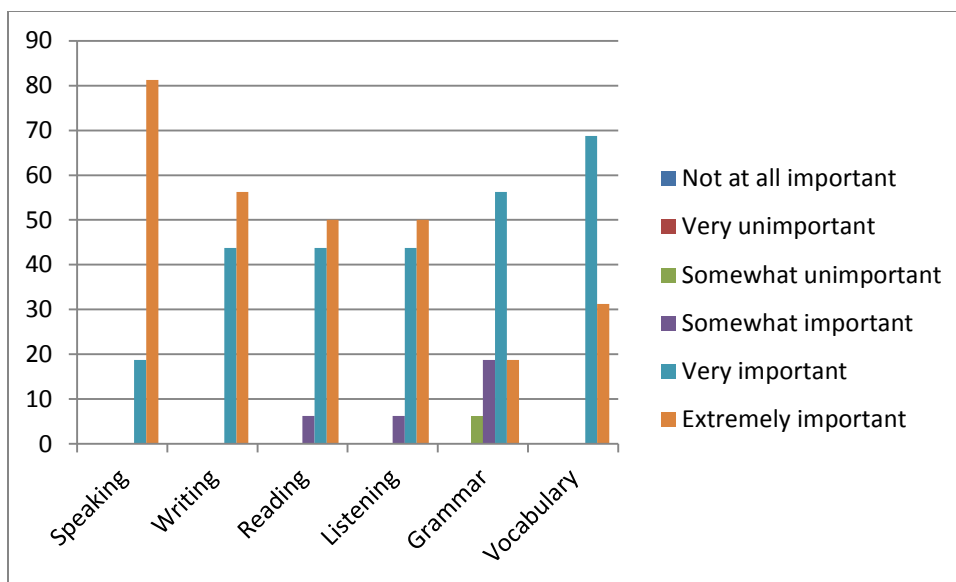
Figure 4.3 Importance attributed to four language skills, grammar and vocabulary

Generally, Rwandan university teachers who responded to the survey of the

present study had clear and positive beliefs about form- and meaning-based pedagogy.

Moreover, they seemed to value all the components of language starting with speaking,

writing, reading, listening, vocabulary and grammar. According to the survey results, the

survey participants seemed to understand that, in addition to creating opportunities

favoring learning, they needed to balance all the four language skills, grammar and

vocabulary with the focus on communicative activities, though grammar seemed less

important to the group than any of the other skills.

English-Teaching Practices in the Classroom

This section covers the next 11 questions from the survey regarding the

participants' teaching practices.

Form-based teaching and learning. Figure 4.4 shows the data according to how

much teachers perceive they utilize certain classroom practices; that is, *always/often*,

sometimes, and *rarely/never*.

Q9. Do you often correct students' errors in class?

The most utilized in-class technique was error correction. One third of the survey

respondents (62.5%) *always/often* provided corrective feedback to their students, while

31.25% *sometimes* and 6.25% *rarely/never* did it. From here the use of form-based

instruction was more mixed.

Q8. Does English teaching in your classroom mainly explain and practice grammar

rules?

Regarding the question that aimed to explore whether English classes in Rwanda

mainly focused on grammar rules explanation and practices, the survey the informants

(37.5%) chose *always/often* as their response, 37.5% *sometimes* explained grammar and

gave activities about its rules, while 25% *rarely/never* provided explicit grammar explanations and exercises.

Q1. Is English teaching in your classroom grammar-focused?

Responses to this question revealed that a total of 25% of the survey respondents *always/often* used grammar-focused teaching methods in their English classrooms, 50% reported to use it *sometimes*, and 25% claimed that the English teaching in their classrooms was *rarely/never* grammar-focused.

Q4. Do you often ask students to do sentence drilling and repeating sentences after you?

Of 16 participants 12.5% selected the option *always/often* as the answer to the question asking how often they had their learners drill or repeat sentences after them, 43.75% *sometimes* asked their learners to drill or repeat sentences after them, and 43.75% *rarely/never* used that teaching technique in their classrooms.

Q6. Is the language used in the classroom mostly your native language?

To the question above, 18.75% of the respondents reportedly said that they *sometimes* allowed their learners to speak Kinyarwanda in the classroom while 81.25% *rarely/never* let them to use L1 in the classroom speeches. Figure 4.4 summarizes the teachers' classroom practices with focus on form-based teaching.
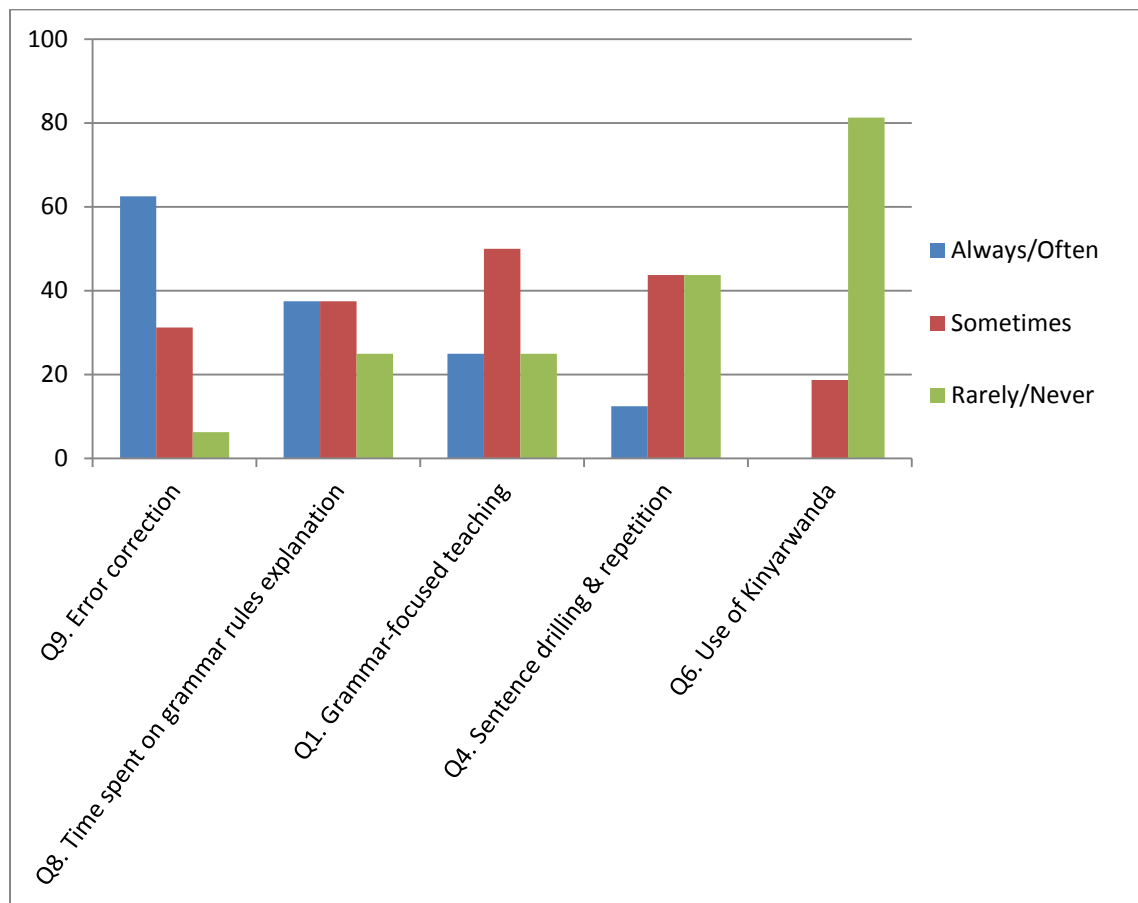
Figure 4.4 Teachers' classroom practices (Form-based teaching)

To summarize the form-based teaching items presented in Figure 4.4, most of the participants agreed that they *always/often* provided corrective feedback to their learners (62.5%)*, sometimes* dealt with grammar-focused teaching (50%), and *rarely/never* allowed learners to use the native language (81.25). While the use of sentence drilling and time spent on the explanation of grammar rules were mixed.

Meaning-based teaching. The item results given in Figure 4.5 are presented on the basis of the most to least utilized techniques. This time, however, *rarely* and *never* are not combined since all of the participants utilized these techniques to some extent. At least two-thirds of the respondents to this questionnaire used all of the techniques *always*

or *often*.

Q11. Do you often create an atmosphere in the classroom to encourage students to use English?

In the same line of examining whether the survey participants created a classroom atmosphere that allowed learners to experience the use of English, 81.25% of them replied that this type of atmosphere was *always/often* created in their classrooms while 18.75% claimed to *sometimes* make favorable language-learning environment for their learners.

Q7. Do you allow your students to engage in trial-and-error attempts to communicate in English?

Many of the respondents (75%) reported that they *always/often* favored activities involving language learners in trial-and-error attempts for their communicative skills development, 18.75% *sometimes* permitted them to try to communicate despite errors, while 6.25% *rarely* engaged them in those attempts.

Q3. Do your students often speak English in the classroom?

The results indicated that 68.75% of the respondents confirmed that their learners *always/often* spoke English in the classroom, whereas 31.25% said that their students *sometimes* used English in class.

The survey participants responded similarly to the following questions (2 and 10): *Do you focus on communication and explain grammar only when necessary?; Is English teaching in your class communication-based?* Most of the participants (62.5%)) reported that their English teaching was *always/often,* that they focused on communication and explicitly taught grammar only when necessary, 31.25% of them *sometimes* dealt with

class communication-based teaching, emphasized communicative tasks and reduced grammar explanations while 6.25% *rarely* oriented their attention to communication and considered communication as the priority to grammar.

Q5. Do you often design activities to have students interact in English with peers?

The findings revealed that 62.5% of the participants approved that they *always/often* designed activities encouraging learners to interact with their peers in English while 37.5% claimed to *sometimes* organize their classroom activities around peer to peer interaction.
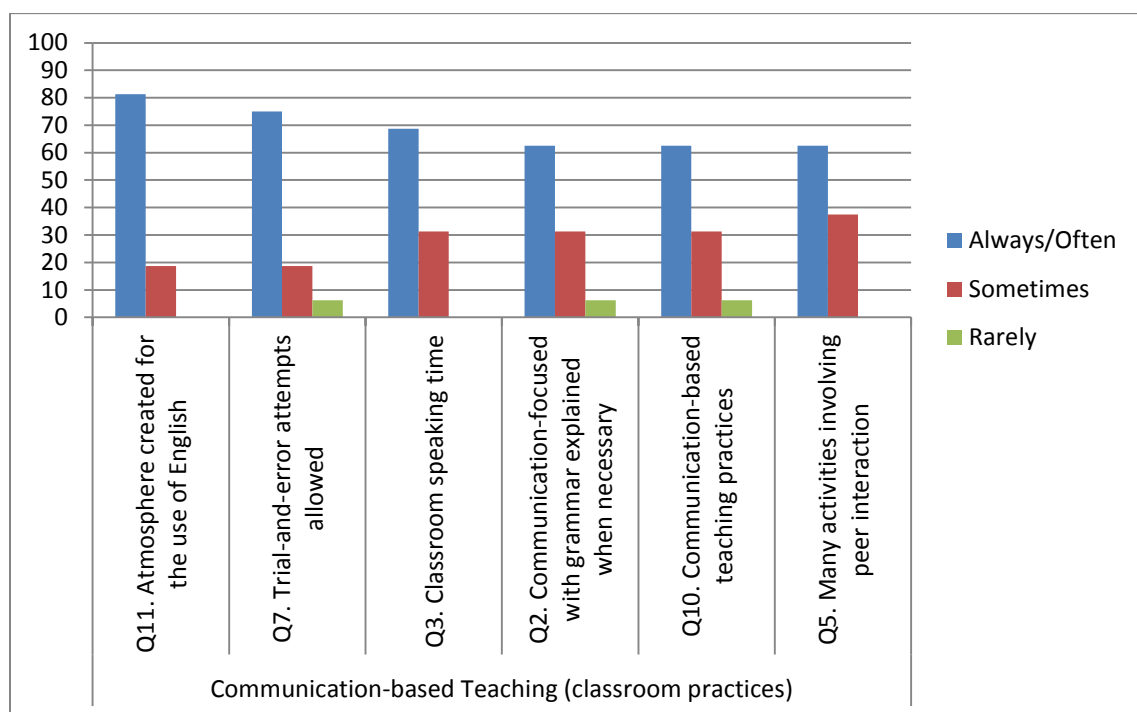
Figure 4.5 Teachers' classroom practices (communication-based)

Overall, responses related to teachers' classroom practices demonstrated that most of the Rwandan teachers had a good understanding of and prioritized communication-based teaching in their day-to-day English-language pedagogy. There were three items— *trial-and-error*, *communication over grammar,* and *use of CLT practices*—that were

rarely used by two different survey participants.

In this section, the majority of the participants confirmed that their language classrooms always emphasized communication through various speaking attempts such as peer interactions and class discussions. The results also showed that the participants focused on meaning while they found it necessary to explain grammatical features. A few participants said they *rarely* (1) allowed their learners to try to communicate in the English language in order not to make mistakes, (2) focused on communication while grammar was explained when needed, and (3) utilized communication-based practices.

Teachers' Familiarity with CLT

This section covers the seven survey questions on the teachers' familiarity with using a communicative teaching approach. As this study intended to discover whether Rwandan teachers had some knowledge about CLT, what their attitudes toward CLT were, and the strategies they practiced in their classroom activities, question 1, *Have you ever heard/learned about communicative language teaching (CLT)? (If your answer is "no", please hit submit.)* was posed in order to sort those participants who had any information regarding CLT from those who did not. Of the sixteen participants, 13 (81.25%) responded positively to having heard or learned about CLT, while 3 (18.75%) responded that they did not. Therefore, the remaining questions were answered by thirteen informants only. Figure 4.6 indicates the percentage of teachers who ever heard or learned about CLT.

Have you ever heard/learned about CLT?

3
(18.75%)

13
(81.25%)

■ Yes
■ No
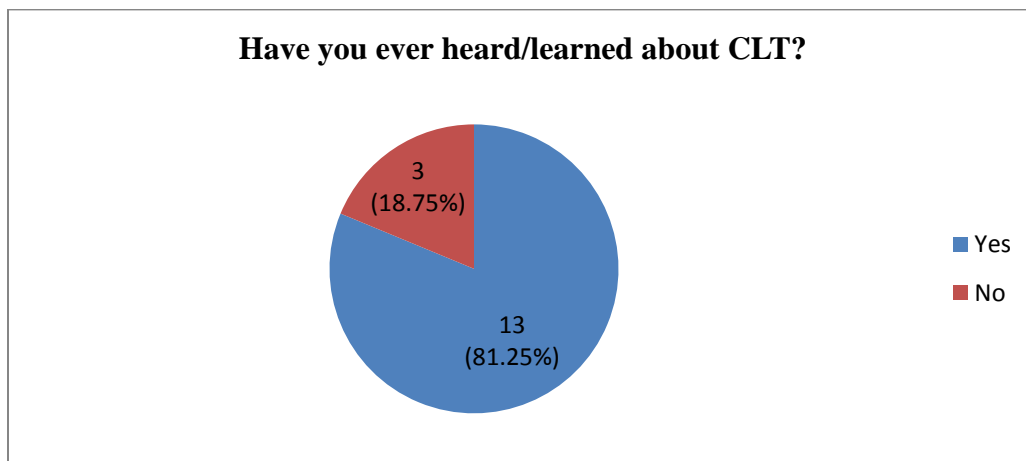
Figure 4.6 Percentage of survey participants' familiarity with CLT

The next question simply asked if they had in-fact used CLT in their classes. This was to distinguish whether they had tried using the knowledge they had claimed in the previous question.

Q2. Have you tried CLT in your classes?

Of the remaining 13 participants, 84.62% of them stated that they had tried some form of CLT, while the 15.38% (2) of them said that they never attempted to use it in their classrooms. Figure 4.7 indicates the percentage of participants who tried CLT and those who did not.

Have you tried CLT in your classes?

2
(15.38%)

11
(84.62%)

■ Yes
■ No
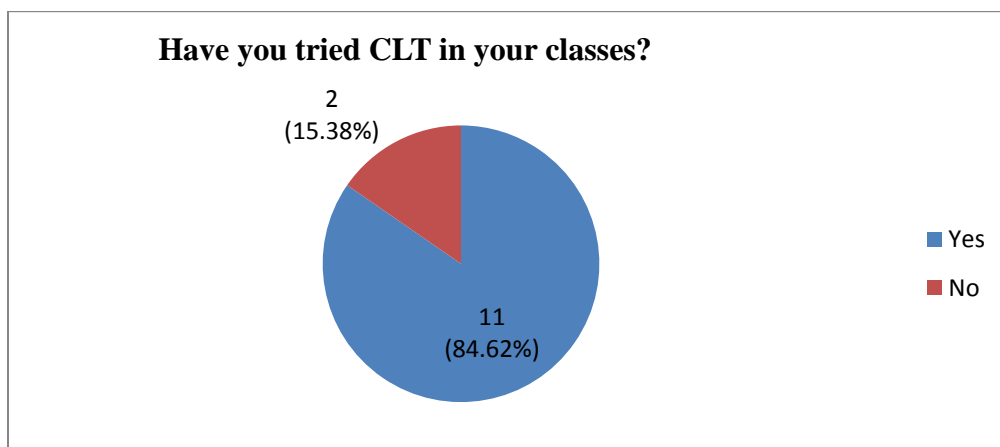
Figure 4.7 Survey participants' experience in using CLT

As a follow-up, I asked the participants *Why did you or why didn't you try CLT?* Of the two participants who had not tried it, one stated that they did not know much about it (although they were aware of its existence) to incorporate it into their daily English-language-teaching approaches. The same person also claimed that they could not use CLT because of their large class sizes and lack of teaching aids. In addition, one of the participants who had tried CLT also stated that they did not frequently use it due to large class sizes. This participant also stated that CLT is a teaching strategy appropriately applied in small classes.

On the other hand, the 11 participants who declared that they had tried CLT in their classes gave reasons that fit in two categories: (1) their description of CLT and (2) the focus and objectives of CLT. Four of the participants described CLT in the following terms: (a) it is crucial, (b) it is one of the best teaching strategies, (c) it is an important topic for discussion among teachers, which leads to its application in class, and (d) if is an interesting and pleasant teaching strategy to use with mature students. In his/her own words, one of these four participants stated "Students are mature enough and it becomes enjoyable to use CLT with them." Based on these responses, one can infer that these 4 teachers know different language-teaching approaches and judged CLT to be the best in terms of its importance. Moreover, at least one of the teachers takes time to discuss some interesting language-teaching issues with colleagues so those who are uninformed might learn from discussions and start applying what they heard in their respective classes.

Of the participants who provided their responses based on CLT focus and objectives, one declared that they tried CLT because it optimizes critical thinking in English. The others (4) believed that it helps students become effective communicators.

One of the participants explained,

> I tried to use the CLT in my classes because I realized that the traditional
> approaches of language teaching and learning, such as grammar based approaches
> which actually leads [sic] to the master [sic] of the language rules do not help
> students to become effective communicators.

Additionally, Rwandan teachers tried CLT because it links learners' language learning in
the classroom with language activities outside the classroom (1 response), and helps
learners practice speaking English and creates a friendly atmosphere where every student
feels at ease to speak and express themselves by either talking to the teacher or to their
classmates (2 responses).

The following question was answered by those 11 participants who had tried
using CLT in their classrooms.

Q4. If you have tried CLT, how did you like using it in your classroom?

All of those who tried it reported that they liked using it because of the activities it
involves, the objectives it attains, or the skills it develops. Regarding the activities
involved in CLT, teachers liked using (1) pair/group presentations, (2) practice of real-
life (like) learning environment through role plays, (3) class discussions, debates,
storytelling, speeches and other oral exercises. Furthermore, they liked CLT for its (4)
results of enhancing learners' communicative skills and boosting their confidence in
language use, (5) enjoyment and success that go together in a CLT classroom, (6)
development of learners' vividness, (7) recognition of learners' difficulties [needs
analysis], (8) real language use needed for real communication, (9) emphasis and more
opportunity to learn the English language, and (10) progress and improvement in

communication skills.

Another facet within the answers to this question pertained to teachers' and learners' roles. One teacher mentioned that they appreciated the use of CLT in their classes due to the fact that, after their lesson plans were ready, their in-class responsibilities were limited (they were not required to spend hours lecturing). For them, a lot of the work during class was done by the learners, while they facilitated, keeping learners on task and providing assistance when needed.

Although the question did not ask teachers what they did not like while using CLT, a few of them also provided a number of challenges they encountered. Among those difficulties, teachers pointed out the unmovable furniture in the class, pressure to finish the academic program which is not communication-based, and the large class size (this challenge was also mentioned by teachers as one of the reasons that prevented them from frequently using CLT in their classes or trying it all). In the same vein of CLT challenges, one of the participants also reported,

> I really appreciated using CLT in my classes. However, some challenges were observed. First, it is not very easy to apply CLT when students know that they will do the final evaluation (Exam) [which is grammar-based]. They do not put much emphasis on communicative situations, they rather want to have the content of the course and memorise it. Second, most teachers of languages learned using especially grammar translation method which has influence on their teaching practice. This has influences on both sides, i.e. on teaching and learning.

Q5. *How do you define CLT in your own words?*

The participants defined CLT in terms of the importance of meaning over form,

the use of language for communication purposes, and the use of real and authentic material in language teaching. For most of the participants, CLT is (1) a learner-centered pedagogy oriented to effective language learning, (2) an approach in which the focus is on communication rather than language rules learning, (3) an approach of teaching a language that enables learners to communicate effectively, (4) a method in which language learning takes care of itself and learners take ownership in their learning, (5) a way of teaching the language through communication, and (6) a teaching mode which creates an opportunity for learners to use the language in a natural way, or a way that is similar to the natural use of the language.

Some teachers extended their definitions and included other significant characteristics of CLT. Four definitions were randomly selected to be individually reported based on how deep they illustrate the CLT components. The first participant incorporated one of the theoretical bases of CLT—communicative competence— although it was not elaborated. He/she stated that CLT

> …enables learners to acquire a language by focusing on the development of communicative competence. To do this, communicative language teachers should use materials that focus on the language needed to express and understand different kinds of functions.

The second participant highlighted that CLT activities contribute to meeting the language learners' needs. He/she said, "This is a learning technique that puts forth the learner's needs by devising activities to help the learner express him/herself so that he/she gets to be able to use the language in different social situations in and outside class." The third teacher defined CLT based on its focus on the language skills and classroom management

by saying:

> I would define it [CLT] as an approach whereby you teach a language aiming at enabling your students to be able to communicate effectively. The way to achieve this is to create situations where students can talk and you provide assistance where necessary. With this approach, you can teach all the four skills in a communicative way. Students talk a lot and teachers talk less.

The fourth teacher stated, "As for me, I consider CLT as a teaching method that creates interactions among the teacher and students, and most of them (if not all) express themselves freely. They learn English through practice: Learning by doing!" In summary, these four statements presented above demonstrate that some Rwandan teachers who responded to the survey have a deep understanding of the CLT bases—communicative competence, interaction—, its importance of meeting learners' needs, and its capacity to include the four language skills.

The last two questions were not open-ended. The first asked participants to rank order the importance of certain teacher characteristics; the second asked them to select essential methods for utilizing CLT. The teachers' responses to the question that aimed to elicit their knowledge about their roles or contributions in CLT classrooms are shown in Table 4.3. In addition to their ranking for the overall group, the highest frequency and percentage refer to the number of the participants who ranked the characteristic at that level. These data exhibit their clear understanding of CLT, as well as their understanding of what CLT does not require. Being a native speaker of the language in a CLT classroom was ranked last, and showed the most agreement between the participants in that three-quarters of the participants ranked it last.

Table 4.3 Teachers' requirements in CLT classroom (n = 13)

Requirements	Order of Ranks	Highest Frequency	Percentage
To be a facilitator	1	9	69.23
To be a co-communicator	2	5	38.46
To be a communication model	3	8	61.53
To provide material	4	6	46.15
To have native-like accuracy	5	5	38.46
To have native-like fluency	6	5	38.46
To have native-like pronunciation	7	5	38.46
To be a native speaker	8	10	76.92

Participants were also asked if they felt there were other required qualities for a teacher of English in CLT classrooms. Only 6 of the teachers responded to the question listing two categories: (1) teachers' qualifications—making teaching fun, being confident, alert, accurate, relevant and creative by switching teaching techniques, and (2) classroom environment—having relatively small classes and favorable learning environment with enough space and movable chairs. This last item, however, was not a quality of the teacher and is not under the teacher's control.

The last question aimed to elicit Rwandan teachers' perceptions pertaining to their awareness of general CLT principles and components. Again, the responses indicated that Rwandan university teachers had good understanding of what the CLT approach involves (See Appendix G for the complete results of the survey).

The most selected (above 60%) items as characteristics of CLT were:

o   CLT is a student/learner-centered approach (100%)

o   CLT emphasizes communication in a second language (L2) (100%)

- o CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening skills (92%)

- o CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy (77%)

The items selected most frequently as "Not true", i.e., not characteristics of CLT were:

- o CLT involves teaching speaking only (100%)

- o CLT involves no grammar teaching (92%)

- o CLT is basically an ESL methodology, not EFL (84%)

- o CLT involves only group work or pair work (61%)

With regard to the item stating that *CLT requires teachers to have a high proficiency in English,* 54% of the participants agreed, whereas 46% of them did not. Fewer participants agreed that *CLT requires higher knowledge of the target language culture* with 31% of the respondents agreeing, and 54% disagreeing.

Generally, participants who declared to have heard or learned about CLT had a clear understanding of CLT principles because the results showed that some of them selected the option of *don't know* as their response to three items only. It should also be noted that the percentage is not high. The *don't know* results were:

(1) It requires higher knowledge of the target language culture (15%)

(2) CLT involves only group work or pair work (8%)

(3) It is basically an ESL methodology, not EFL (8%)

In summary, the findings from the section about teachers' familiarity with CLT indicated that the majority of participants of this survey were aware of CLT, and tried it in their classrooms. They judged it to be an important language-teaching approach due to the fact that it enhanced their learners' communicative language skills. Also, their

definitions seemed to be relevant and similar to those provided by scholars in the literature. Furthermore, they could effectively identify what requirements of a CLT teacher or CLT classroom were, and distinguish the CLT principles/components from its misconceptions. The demographic information has revealed that this familiarity with CLT is spread among the participants with different age, academic degree, majors/ fields of study, year of graduation, and teaching experience.

Discussion of the Results

This section focuses on the findings of the study in relation to the research questions and the previous research in order to suggest solutions to the reported problems pertaining to English language teaching in Rwanda in general, and CLT implementation in particular.

Are Rwandan university teachers of English aware of CLT? And to what extent is their understanding accurate according to the research? Contrary to the hypothesis assumed prior to the data collection that most Rwandan teachers are not familiar with CLT, the results of this study indicated that 13 of the 16 of the Rwandan university teachers of English surveyed (81.25%) had heard or learned about CLT at some point in the past. Additionally, twelve of the thirteen teachers' who claimed prior knowledge of CLT were clearly able to define CLT. For example, one of the survey respondents stated that "[CLT] is a language teaching approach in which the focus is on communication rather than on language rules learning. It is a student-focused approach." Moreover, they mentioned that practicing the language in a naturalistic way (Krashen, 1982) includes all four language skills (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), and focuses on classrooms interaction (Long, 1996). Likewise, they understood the roles of the teacher

being a facilitator, a co-communicator, a communication model, and a material provider as their primary classroom roles (Breen & Candlin 1980; Littlewood, 1981; Richards, 2006). Additionally, they rejected CLT misconceptions; that is, they indicated that they did not believe that CLT was an approach that teaches speaking only, excludes grammar, limits its activities to pair or group work, and appropriately works in ESL contexts only.

However, the results also showed that among 81.25% of teachers who were familiar with CLT, 62.5% graduated between 2010 and 2012 while 50% were new master's-degree holders. To clarify, as there are no graduate schools for language teaching in Rwanda, all those master's-degree holders had gotten their degrees from abroad. The findings also revealed that a few bachelor's degree holders knew CLT and used it in their classrooms. This could imply that CLT had started being addressed in Rwandan classrooms, workshops or among teachers working at the same institution as one of them stated: "I tried it because I had learnt and discussed with colleagues its importance." Furthermore, it should be noted that one of the 3 respondents who reported to lack awareness of CLT had a master's degree earned in 1999. Therefore, one might assume that he learned it and forgot it because he never used it in actual classroom practices, or, depending on the foreign country from which he graduated; CLT might not have been implemented yet. Generally, those who lacked that familiarity of CLT were either older or less educated.

If Rwandan university teachers are aware of CLT, what are their attitudes toward it? Among the 13 teachers with prior knowledge about CLT, 11 (84.62%) had tried to use it in their classroom activities, showing that their take on CLT was positive. In their view, the majority of the teachers in this study believed that EFL learners should

be given more opportunities to use the language through the use of CLT activities. They perceived that communication-based teaching meets language learners' needs. However, when asked why they had tried CLT in their classrooms, 4 of the 11 teachers gave only superficial responses, e.g. "because it's crucial," which may indicate their buy-in without analyzing the outcomes personally.

Interestingly, the survey participants seemed to support both form- and meaning-based pedagogy. While they believed that speaking English in the classroom in order to learn the L2 is essential, they also appeared to demonstrate a conviction that grammar study and practice improves learners' English most quickly. Even though none of the statements in the survey was antithetical to CLT, the same degree of endorsement to both the form- and meaning-focused statements seemed to be unrealistic in terms of practice. In other words, one might wonder how practicable Rwandan university teachers focusing on grammar and sentence drilling will combine with teaching communicatively in their actual classrooms. This raises the question of whether they might have answered in the way they thought the researcher expected.

If Rwandan university teachers are positively disposed toward CLT, do they utilize CLT activities in their classroom practices and in what ways? Of the 16 participants, based on the results of this study, teachers' classroom practices were generally communication-based. That is to say, the survey participants confirmed that they prioritized communicative activities, and explained grammar only when necessary. Most of the remaining of teaching sessions were mostly devoted to various communicative activities in which the classroom atmosphere to use English were conducive. They also claimed that they allowed their learners to communicate with no

fear of making errors in oral production.

More explicitly, among 13 teachers, 12 (92.3%) stated that they liked using CLT in their classrooms because of the activities that are involved in CLT classrooms. They also gave examples of such activities: pair or group projects and presentations, practice of real-world language through role plays, class discussions, debates, storytelling, to name a few (Richards, 2006; Hendrickson, 1991). Also, two participants who did not use or rarely used CLT in their respective classes provided number of challenges that had been a barrier. Some of the challenges they mentioned were: large class sizes, lack of teaching aids, classrooms with fixed chairs or long benches, etc., and that demonstrated that the participants were aware of what was required in CLT classrooms. Those difficulties significantly matched those in Kalanzadeh, Mirchenari and Bakhtiarvand (2013) and Helt (1982).

All in all, the majority of Rwandan university teachers who took part in the survey demonstrated their prior knowledge of CLT, positive attitudes /beliefs toward CLT and affirmed to utilize its activities in their daily teaching practices. Chapter 5 concludes the thesis, addresses the implications of the findings for teaching that came from the results of the discussion, identifies limitations in the research design, and suggests some questions for further research.

Chapter V

Conclusion

This chapter gives the conclusion of the study, the implications of the findings, identifies limitations in the research design, and suggests some questions for further research. The present study was designed to explore the actual and current situation of English-language teaching in Rwanda through the examination of teacher awareness of and attitudes toward CLT including their teaching practices in their respective classrooms. The participants of this study were 16 Rwandan teachers from eight universities. Thirteen of them had heard or learned about CLT while 3 of them had not. Among those thirteen, only two of them had never tried to use CLT in their classrooms, while eleven had tried it, and most of them realized its benefits through language-skill improvement observed in their learners' communication.

The analysis of this study demonstrated that the majority of teachers who responded to the survey had strong knowledge of, positive attitudes toward, and used CLT in their day-to-day pedagogy. From this perspective, most of the teachers supported communication- and form-based pedagogy with a few rejected statements related to grammar-based instruction. In brief, as opposed to the hypothesis, I found that newly graduated MA and a few bachelor's degree holders are actually using CLT, what would be a good reason for more teachers to be educated whether through studying abroad or professional development.

Although none of the questions explicitly asked teachers to provide or discuss the challenges they encountered trying CLT in their respective classrooms, a few teachers

discussed them in the survey. They reported that they tended to teach second languages in the way they learned them despite their knowledge and appreciation toward CLT, because they did not have much knowledge of CLT and lacked teaching aids. Also, their statements showed that the curriculum they followed as well as the nature of the language tests students are required to take were designed on the basis of form-based instruction. Therefore, learners were not motivated to learn a language through communicative topics or activities, since their goal was to score well on the exam. Since these constraints appeared to be a barrier for the incorporation of CLT into English-language-teaching programs in Rwanda, some recommendations are addressed to the Rwandan Ministry of Education, curriculum planners, and colleges.

This study has shown that, even when teachers have an understanding of CLT, some do not integrate it into their teaching because of the lack of resources available, such as textbooks, computers, printers, movable chairs, etc. So, in order to promote effective language learning, there is a great need to furnish such materials to facilitate CLT application. Additionally, not all college teachers are aware of the CLT approach. In fact, the study indicated that teachers who had gotten their degrees in Rwanda were unfamiliar with CLT. Unfortunately, the number of teachers educated abroad is still limited, and there are many teachers of English at college, elementary, and high school levels who are not educated with a TESL program, and who may never have experienced CLT activities. Thus, the Rwandan government should give opportunities to teachers to go for further studies to be trained in different current topics not covered at the undergraduate level. The government should also open MA programs in Rwanda to allow many Rwandan teachers to access them. As a result, teachers who graduated from

different colleges outside Rwanda would contribute and train their fellow teachers in order to have sufficient qualified teaching staff. Additionally, training sufficient teachers would be a solution to the related issue of having too many students in one class. Moreover, the Ministry of Education could encourage colleges to organize workshops on effective teaching topics, such as CLT, so that all teachers have the same opportunity of understanding them.

Since Rwanda appears to need proficient speakers of English for their economic future, the language curriculum and exams should be revised to include communicative aspects that enable learners to be successful in and outside the classroom context. Other language skills such as listening, speaking, and writing should also be taught and assessed. For that purpose, the examinations should be integrated to test the language the way it is used in real-world contexts. Teachers should be trained in effectively teaching and assessing these skills.

Limitations of the Study

This study has a number of limitations. The first limitation pertains to sample size and the representation of the population. Although the study findings demonstrated that this group of Rwandan university EFL teachers had overall positive perceptions and beliefs toward CLT and seemed to practice it through their classroom activities, the sample size is not large enough to draw generalizable conclusions beyond this group. The themes and patterns that emerged in this study should be considered to be hypotheses to be tested in future studies with larger groups. Additionally, the participants of this study were represented by a large number (62.5%) of newly graduated teachers (2010-2012) who were familiar with CLT principles and use, and were mostly master's-degree

holders. However, this CLT familiarity appeared to be also applicable to some of those who graduated before 2010 and did not have master's degrees.

The second limitation regards the recruiting procedure. The present study employed a sampling procedure that consists of self-identified and self-selected as the essential features. Therefore, Rwandan university teachers of English who participated in the study willingly selected to respond to the online questionnaire. Because participants were chosen on the basis of their typicality, the sample does not represent the entire population of Rwandan teachers of English. Future studies should utilize a random or stratified random sampling procedure that would increase the probability so that the obtained results would be representative of the target population.

The third limitation is associated with the questionnaire. In fact, the survey questions seemed to lack validity because of the problematic issue of *social desirability bias*. This relates to the problem that people do not always provide true answers about themselves as they try to present themselves in a good light and/or provide answers that they think the researcher is expecting. In addition, certain question items were quite leading which might have increased this *social desirability bias* effect. To combat or minimize this effect, questionnaire items could have been worded differently.

The fourth limitation concerns the data collection procedure. The present study would have gathered more reliable information if multiple data collection instruments such as classroom observations and interviews had been combined with the survey questionnaire. In fact, it seems impossible to know if participants actually did what they said; in other words, their actual classroom practices might be dissimilar to the principles they reported in the questionnaire. Moreover, the teachers themselves probably were not

aware of the amount of time they spent on one type of activity over others, as well as how much and what kind of feedback they actually gave during speaking tasks. Therefore, classroom observation would have shown how their classrooms are really managed. Likewise, the analysis of data might have been limited since learners were not questioned, interviewed or given a survey questionnaire to complete in order to discover learners' perceptions of and reactions to classroom activities. As a result, based on students' responses, the study might have shown a better understanding of accurate teachers' perceptions of CLT, as well as their implementation of communicative activities in their English classrooms.

Suggestions for Further Research

The present study was an investigation to explore Rwandan EFL university teachers' awareness of and attitudes toward CLT, as well as their classroom practices. After reviewing related literature on CLT and realizing that no published studies in CLT have been conducted in Rwanda, it has become apparent that there were many questions left unanswered which would serve as research questions for related studies:

1. What are students' perceptions of communicative and non-communicative activities in EFL classrooms in Rwanda? The answer to this question would provide valuable information for teachers and assist them to have better understanding of learners' needs and interests in order to decide how to implement a communicative approach in their classrooms.

2. What are Rwandan university EFL teachers' perceived problems in implementing CLT? The answer to this question would reveal the challenges, their severity and how they hinder the implementation of CLT toward language learning in general.

Therefore, it would provide adequate information allowing teachers to take appropriate measures for the case.

3. What are the perceptions of administrators pertaining to teaching methodologies utilized in Rwandan EFL classrooms? The answer to this question will provide a clear understanding of the perceptions and expectations of administrators who are responsible for language institutes.

4. How can the current grammar-based English examinations be modified to better test the communicative skills of English learners? The answer to this question would be valuable since English teaching is led by grammar-based examinations in Rwanda, and thus Rwandan EFL teaching has been focusing too much on grammar instruction and neglecting the development of learners' communicative competence.

5. What kind of guidance and training should be provided to teachers at English workshops, conferences, and seminars in Rwanda? The information from this question would help access teachers' needs, fix the lack of awareness of CLT principles and provide important solutions for existing limitations of such training sources.

In conclusion, chapter five presents the study results that demonstrated that the participants seemed to have positive beliefs and claimed to practice all their beliefs pertaining to both form-based and meaning-based instruction. In addition, the participants' responses revealed that the majority of Rwandan university teachers had clear awareness of, attitudes and beliefs toward CLT and practiced CLT activities in their English classroom. Based on these findings, implications for change in policy and

curriculum design were offered. The chapter also discusses the study limitations related to the sample size and the representation of the population, the recruitment and the data collection procedures. Finally, some research questions were suggested for further studies to complement this study.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Sample E-mail Template (Directors/Deans)

Dear Dean,

Center for Languages,

I am sending this email to request names and contacts of the teachers of English in your institution. I am a graduate student in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) graduate program at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I am conducting a research examining the "Rwandan EFL university teachers' awareness and attitudes toward communicative language teaching (CLT) and their classroom practices."

Should you have a question about the research, do not hesitate to contact Dr. Karen Lybeck at Karen.lybeck@mnsu.edu, or Gaudence Uwamahoro at gaudence.uwamahoro@mnsu.edu.

Sincerely,

Gaudence Uwamahoro

Appendix B

Sample E-mail Template (Participants)

Dear participant,

Thank you for taking the time to review this email. My name is Gaudence Uwamahoro and I am a graduate student in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) graduate program at Minnesota State University, Mankato. You have been selected to participate in a research project that investigates the classroom practices of Rwandan University EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers. Note that your participation is voluntary. However, if you choose to take part in this research, rest assured that your responses will be anonymous. The survey will take between 20-30 minutes to complete. Here are two URL/ web addresses: (1) https://mnsu.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6R840bCl4MOKxyR (this opens the whole survey) and (2) https://mnsu.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_3mCkhDGXoyLXQsR (the additional link contains only one question that asks you the name of your institution). This is for insuring that your responses will be completely kept anonymous.

I would like to thank you for your consideration to participate and time you devote to completing the survey and look forward to learning more about your teaching experiences.

Sincerely,

Gaudence Uwamahoro

Appendix C

Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study that investigates the classroom practices of Rwandan University EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers.

This study is conducted by Dr. Karen E. Lybeck and Gaudence Uwamahoro, MA TESL graduate student in the Department of English at Minnesota State University, Mankato, USA. You were selected as a participant in this study because you are a Rwandan EFL teacher working in Rwanda. This questionnaire is expected to take between 20 and 30 minutes to complete. You will be asked to answer questions related to your beliefs about English-language-teaching pedagogy, your classroom teaching practices and your familiarity with CLT (communicative language teaching).

Please note that any information that is obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous, and that information regarding your institution will be used for demographic purposes only and will not be associated with the other answers you provide. The results will be kept on a secured laptop. However, as the data collection will use online technology, there might always be the risk of compromising privacy, confidentiality, and/or anonymity. For more information about the specific privacy and anonymity risks caused by online surveys, contact the Minnesota State University, Mankato Information and Technology Services Help Desk (507-389-6654) and ask to speak to the Information Security Manager or email servicedesk@mnsu.edu.

The risks of participating are no more than are experienced in daily life. Your

participation in this study is strictly voluntary. There is no direct cost or benefit to you for

participation in this project. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect

your future relations with the Minnesota State University - Mankato, or with the

investigators. If you have any questions regarding the treatment of human participants

and Minnesota State University, Mankato, contact the IRB Administrator, Dr. Barry Ries,

at 507-389-2321 or barry.ries@mnsu.edu. The IRB (Institutional Review Board) case

number for this project is 524592-3.

If you choose to participate, clicking the link below will indicate that you have read and

understood the information provided above and have decided to participate. You may

withdraw at any time after starting or completing the questionnaire. Should you choose to

discontinue participation in this study, simply log out without completing the

questionnaire or contact one of the investigators to request your data not to be included in

the study.

Please do not hesitate to print a copy of this page for your future reference.

Should you have any questions about the research, feel free to contact Dr. Lybeck at

karen.lybeck@mnsu.edu or Gaudence Uwamahoro at gaudence.uwamahoro@mnsu.edu.

Appendix D

The Online Survey Questionnaire

About the questionnaire

This survey is designed for Rwandan teachers of English teaching in public and private universities in Rwanda. It aims to explore your teaching beliefs and classroom practices, as well as your awareness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the Rwandan context.

This survey comprises four parts: (1) information about you, the participant, (2) your beliefs about English-language-teaching pedagogy, (3) your classroom teaching practices, and (4) your familiarity with CLT. Note that there is no correct or best response to the questions. Please answer honestly and based on your beliefs and understanding at this time as only this will guarantee success of the investigation. Your answers will be strictly kept confidential and you do not even have to write your name on the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your help!

Part I – Participants' personal information

1. Age: _____

2. Gender: ⭕ Male   ⭕ Female

3. Status of the Institution: ⭕ Public   ⭕ Private:

4. Highest academic degree: ⭕ Bachelor's Degree ⭕ Master's Degree   ⭕ PhD
 Degree

5. Majors/field of study: _____

6. Year of graduation: _____

7. How long have you been teaching English? (Provide your response in years) _____

Part II – Teachers' beliefs about learning English

Please select the response that best reflects your view for each item.

1. Learning English is learning its grammar rules.

      Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

2. English learning through sentence drilling is effective.

      Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

3. A language classroom should be communication-focused.

    Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

4. I believe Kinyarwanda should be frequently used in English classes for students' better understanding of the lessons.

    Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

5. It is important to practice English in real-life or real-life like situations.

    Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

6. I believe the more grammar rules one memorizes, the better he/she is at using English.

    Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

7. I believe it is important to avoid making errors in the process of learning English.

    Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

8. Languages are learned mainly through communication, with grammar rules explained when necessary.

    Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

9. It is not essential to speak English in the classroom to learn the language.

    Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

10. I believe making trial-and-error attempts to communicate in English helps students to learn English.

    Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

11. It is important for the teacher to correct students' errors in class.

    Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

12. The formal study of grammar is essential to mastering English.

    Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

13. A teacher should create an atmosphere in the classroom to encourage interaction as a class or in groups.

    Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

14. A person's pronunciation is a good indicator of general English ability.

    Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

15. I believe learners' English improves most quickly if they study and practice grammar.

      Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

16. Learning English is learning to use the language through practicing the four language skills (speaking, listening, writing and reading).

      Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

17. A communication-focused language program often meets the learner's needs.

      Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

18. Grammar rules should be explicitly explained in class.

      Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

19. Learning English by practicing the language in communicative activities is essential to eventual mastery of a foreign language.

      Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

20. A good language learner usually pronounces words perfectly.

      Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly agree

21. In your opinion, how important are the following areas for your students to learn English? (Select the response that best describes the degree of importance that you attach to the item on the left.)

Importance	None	Little	Slight	Somewhat	Important	Very Important
Reading	0	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	0	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	0	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking	0	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	0	1	2	3	4	5
Vocabulary	0	1	2	3	4	5

Part III – English practice in the classroom

Please select the number that best reflects your view for each item.

1. Is English teaching in your classroom grammar-focused?

      Never   1   2   3   4   5   Always

2. Do you focus on communication and explain grammar only when necessary?

     Never   1   2   3   4   5   Always

3. Do your students often speak English in the classroom?

     Never   1   2   3   4   5   Always

4. Do you often ask students to do sentence drilling and repeating sentences after you?

     Never   1   2   3   4   5   Always

5. Do you often design activities to have students interact in English with peers?

     Never   1   2   3   4   5   Always

6. Is the language used in the classroom mostly your native language?

     Never   1   2   3   4   5   Always

7. Do you allow your students to engage in trial-and-error attempts to communicate in English?

     Never   1   2   3   4   5   Always

8. Does English teaching in your classroom mainly explain and practice grammar rules?

     Never   1   2   3   4   5   Always

9. Do you often correct students' errors in class?

     Never   1   2   3   4   5   Always

10. Is English teaching in your class communication-based?

     Never   1   2   3   4   5   Always

11. Do you often create an atmosphere in the classroom to encourage students to use English?

     Never   1   2   3   4   5   Always

Part IV – Teachers' familiarity with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

1. Have you ever heard/learned about communicative language teaching (CLT)? (If your answer is "no", please hit submit.)

                       ○ Yes   ○ No

2. Have you tried Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in your classes?

                       ○ Yes   ○ No

3. Why did you or why didn't you try CLT?

_____

_____

4. If you have tried CLT, how did you like using it in your classroom? (If you haven't
   tried CLT, skip this.)

_____

_____

5. How do you define CLT in your own words?

_____

_____

6. What do you think is required for teachers in CLT classrooms? Use numbers (1-9) to
   show which requirement comes first and which comes last.

_____ to be a native speaker

_____ to have native-like pronunciation

_____ to have native-like fluency

_____ to have native-like accuracy

_____ to provide material

_____ to be a facilitator

_____ to be a communication model

_____ to be a co-communicator

_____ others

(_____

_____)

7. In your view, what is involved in CLT methodology? (Please check one.)

   a. It is a student/learner-centered approach.

   ○ True   ○ Not True   ○ Don't know

   b. It emphasizes fluency over accuracy.

   ○ True   ○ Not True   ○ Don't know

   c. It emphasizes communication in a second language (L2).

   ○ True   ○ Not True   ○ Don't know

   d. It relies heavily on speaking and listening skills.

   ○ True   ○ Not True   ○ Don't know

e. It requires teachers to have a high proficiency in English.

          ○ True   ○ Not True   ○ Don't know

f. It involves only group work or pair work.

          ○ True   ○ Not True   ○ Don't know

g. It requires higher knowledge of the target language culture.

          ○ True   ○ Not True   ○ Don't know

h. It involves no grammar teaching.

          ○ True   ○ Not True   ○ Don't know

i. It involves teaching speaking only.

          ○ True   ○ Not True   ○ Don't know

j. It is basically an ESL methodology, not EFL.

(Here, the acronym ESL is used to talk about teaching English to people who do not speak English but in an English-speaking country whereas EFL refers to teaching/learning English in a country where English is not spoken natively.)

          ○ True   ○ Not True   ○ Don't know

Appendix E

Teachers' beliefs toward English language learning/teaching

No.	Item	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither disagree nor agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	Grammar-based										
1	Learning English is learning its grammar rules.	7	43.75	-	-	4	25	3	18.75	2	12.5
2	English learning through sentence drilling is effective.	1	6.25	11	68.75	1	6.25	2	12.5	1	6.25
4	I believe Kinyarwanda should be frequently used in English class for students' better understanding of the lessons.	1	6.25	1	6.25	2	12.5	7	43.75	5	31.25
6	I believe the more grammar rules one memorizes, the better he/she is at using English.	1	6.25	4	25	3	18.75	6	37.5	2	12.5
7	I believe it is important to avoid making errors in the	1	6.25	3	18.75	-	-	9	56.25	3	18.75

	process of learning English.									
9	It is not essential to speak English in the classroom to learn the language.	1	6.25	-	-	-	-	4	25	11	68.75
11	It is important for the teacher to correct students' errors in class.	5	31.25	7	43.75	4	25	-	-	-	-
12	The formal study of grammar is essential to mastering English.	11	68.75	3	18.75	2	12.5	-	-	-	-
14	A person's pronunciation is a good indicator of general English ability.	2	12.5	6	37.5	3	18.75	4	25	1	6.25
15	I believe learners' English improves most quickly if they study and practice grammar.	-	-	8	50	3	18.75	5	31.25	-	-
18	Grammar rules should be explicitly explained in class.	3	18.75	9	56.25	2	12.5	1	6.25	1	6.25

20	A good language learner usually pronounces words perfectly.	-	-	3	18.75	4	25	8	50	1	6.25
	Communication-based										
3	A language classroom should be communication-focused.	9	56.25	6	37.5	-	-	-	-	1	6.25
5	It is important to practice English in real-life or real-life like situations.	11	68.75	3	18.75	-	-	-	-	2	12.5
8	Languages are learned mainly through communication, with grammar rules explained when necessary.	6	37.5	7	43.75	1	6.25	1	6.25	1	6.25
10	I believe making trial-and-error attempts to communicate in English helps students to learn English.	9	56.25	6	37.5	-	-	-	-	1	6.25
13	A teacher should create an atmosphere in the	12	75	4	25	-	-	-	-	-	-

	classroom to encourage interaction as a class or in groups.									
16	Learning English is learning to use the language through practicing the four language skills (speaking, listening, writing and reading).	6	37.5	8	50	2	12.5	-	-	-	-
17	A communication-focused language program often meets the learner's needs.	7	43.75	9	56.25	-	-	-	-	-	-
19	Learning English by practicing the language in communicative activities is essential to eventual mastery of a foreign language.	10	62.5	6	37.5	-	-	-	-	-	-

Number of Participants=16

Appendix F

Rwandan teachers' English language classroom practices

No.	Item	Always		Most of the time		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	Form-based										
1	Grammar-focused English teaching	1	6.25	3	18.75	8	50	3	18.75	1	6.25
4	Sentence drilling and sentence repetition	1	6.25	1	6.25	7	43.75	4	25	3	18.75
6	Kinyarwanda used most of the time	-	-	-	-	3	18.75	7	43.75	6	37.5
8	Most time spent on grammar rules explanation and practices	1	6.25	5	31.25	6	37.5	3	18.75	1	6.25
9	Teachers practices regarding in-class error correction	-	-	10	62.5	5	31.25	1	6.25	-	-
	Communication-based										
2	Communication-focused with grammar explained when necessary	3	18.75	7	43.75	5	31.25	1	6.25	-	-
3	In-class English language speaking time	3	18.75	8	50	5	31.25	-	-	-	-
5	Many activities involving communication	2	12.5	8	50	6	37.5	-	-	-	-
7	Trial-and-error attempts allowed	3	18.75	9	56.25	3	18.75	1	6.25	-	-
10	Communication-based teaching practices	6	37.5	4	25	5	31.25	1	6.25	-	-
11	Atmosphere created for the use of English	6	37.5	7	43.75	3	18.75	-	-	-	-

Number of Participants=16

Appendix G

Survey participants' perceptions about CLT

What is involved in CLT methodology in your view?	True	%	Not true	%	Don't know	%	Total responses	%
a. It is a student/learner-centered approach.	13	100	-	-	-	-	13	100
b. It emphasizes fluency over accuracy.	10	77	3	23	-	-	13	100
c. It emphasizes communication in a second language (L2).	13	100	-	-	-	-	13	100
d. It relies heavily on speaking and listening skills.	12	92	1	8	-	-	13	100
e. It requires teachers to have a high proficiency in English.	7	54	6	46	-	-	13	100
f. It involves only group work or pair work.	4	31	8	61	1	8	13	100
g. It requires higher knowledge of the target language culture.	4	31	7	54	2	15	13	100
h. It involves no grammar teaching.	1	8	12	92	-	-	13	100
i. It involves teaching speaking only.	-	-	13	100	-	-	13	100
j. It is basically an ESL methodology, not EFL.	1	8	11	84	1	8	13	100

Number of Participants=13

Appendix H

Summary of Responses to Open-Ended Items

Question 3: Why did you or why didn't you try CLT?

I tried CLT because:

1. it is crucial (1 response)

2. it is one of the best teaching strategies (1 response)

3. it is an important topic for discussion among teachers, which leads to its
   application in the classroom (1 response)

4. it is an enjoyable teaching strategy to use with mature students (1 response)

5. it optimizes critical thinking in English (1 response)

6. it helps students become effective communicators (4 responses)

7. it links learners' language learning in the classroom with language activities
   outside the classroom (1 response)

8. it helps learners practice speaking English and creates a friendly atmosphere
   where every student feels at ease to speak and express themselves by either
   talking to the teacher or to their classmates (2 responses)

I did not use CLT frequently because:

1. Engaging every student in big classes (more than 25 students) is often challenging
   (CLT= teaching strategy for small classes).

I did not try CLT because:

1. I did not know much about it (1 response)

2. I taught large classes (1 response)

3. I lacked teaching aids such as books, computers, printers, projectors and so on (1 response)

Question 4: If you have tried CLT, how did you like using it in your classroom?

I liked using CLT in my classroom because it involves:

1. pair/group presentations (1 response)

2. practice of real-life (like) learning environment through role plays (1 response)

3. class discussions, debates, storytelling, speeches and other oral exercises (1 response)

I liked using CLT in my classroom because it:

1. enhances learners' communicative skills and boosts their confidence in language use

2. stimulates enjoyment and success that go together in a CLT classroom (1 response)

3. develops learners' vividness (1 response)

4. helps in recognition of learners' difficulties [needs analysis] (1 response)

5. utilizes real language needed for real communication (1 response)

6. emphasizes and provides more opportunity to learn the English language (1 response)

7. progresses and improves communication skills (1 response)

8. reduces in-class lecturing (1 response)

I really appreciated using CLT in my classes but:

1. students do not focus on communicative opportunities because the final evaluation is grammar-based (1 response)

Most teachers of languages do not try CLT in their classes because:

1. they learned using especially grammar-translation method which has influence on their teaching practice (1 response)

Question 5: How do you define CLT in your own words?

CLT is:

1. a learner-centered pedagogy oriented to effective language learning (2 responses)

2. an approach in which the focus is on communication rather than language rules learning (2 responses)

3. an approach of teaching a language that enables learners to communicate effectively (development of communicative competence) (3 responses)

4. a method in which language learning takes care of itself and learners take ownership in their learning (1 response)

5. a teaching mode which creates an opportunity for learners to use the language in a natural way, or a way that is similar to the natural use of the language(1 response)

6. an approach of teaching that uses materials that focus on the language needed to express and understand different kinds of functions (1 response)

7. a learning technique that puts forth the learner's needs by devising activities to help the learner express him/herself so that he/she gets to be able to use the language in different social situations in and outside class (1 response)

8. a teaching approach that creates situations where students can talk while teachers provide assistance where necessary. With this approach, one can teach all the four skills in a communicative way. Students talk a lot and teachers talk less (1 response)

9. a teaching method that creates interactions among the teacher and students, and most of them (if not all) express themselves freely. They learn English through practice: Learning by doing! (1 response)

Question 7: If there are other requirements (for CLT teachers) not provided, mention them as well as their orders in the box below:

A CLT teacher should be:

1. able to make teaching fun (1 response)

2. confident, alert, accurate, relevant and creative by switching teaching techniques (2 responses)

A CLT classroom should be:

1. relatively small classes (1 response)

2. favorable learning environment with enough space and movable chairs (1 response)