Arabic Instructors' Attitudes on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

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Abstract

This is a study on Arabic instructors' perceptions on some aspects of communicative language teaching. The data were gathered through an attitude scale and some focus group and one-on-one interviews in a major foreign language institute involving 96 Arabic instructors. The survey included a) the significance of grammar; b) error correction; c) pair and group work; and d) student and teacher roles dimensions of communicative language teaching. Discussion of the survey results in relation to these four constructs is followed by the discussion of emergent themes in these four areas in the interviews. We argue that the results of the study are revelations of teachers at certain time in their career, and more professional development could come true through carrying out action research projects.

Introduction

Teaching students to communicate in a second language has been a general philosophy to design foreign language curriculum and classroom teaching materials ever since the development of language learners' communicative competence was set to be the main goal in language teaching in the 1970s (Hymes, 1979). Over the last 30 years, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has evolved as the most prevailing approach in language teaching, with a considerable amount written and discussed on its philosophy and implications (e.g., Paulston, 1974; Canale & Swain, 1980; Breen & Candlin, 1980; Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Savignon, 1983, 1991; Larsen & Freeman, 1986; Sheils, 1988; Nunan, 1991). Despite

the lack of consensus on its theoretical foundations and a universally accepted model of CLT (Savignon, 1983; McGroarty, 1984; Nattinger, 1984; Mitchell 1994), it has been adopted not only by teachers of English, but also by teachers of other most commonly taught languages in public, private, and government schools all over the world.

Despite the popularity of CLT among language teachers, various difficulties encountered by teachers who adopted its innovations to teach mostly English in their own contexts raised the question of cross-cultural applicability of this "Western" language teaching method in other contexts with different cultural norms and inspired many attitude studies. However, the attitudes of the teachers adopting communicative principles while teaching one of the "less commonly taught languages" like Arabic had very little attention in the literature. Unlike all the other attitude studies in CLT in which the target language has been English, generally in a non-English speaking context, this research project aims to investigate the attitudes of Arabic teachers who teach their own language in the context of a military language institute in California where Arabic is taught as a foreign language (ASFL). For this purpose, we begin by exploring the CLT innovations and reviewing the studies investigating teachers' attitudes towards CLT and what determines their attitudes in different contexts. Next, we elaborate on Arabic instructors' beliefs in language teaching and how ASFL is taught in a military setting.

Communicative Language Teaching

Definitions of CLT and Its Innovations

The Council of Europe Project No. 12 (Sheils, 1988) defines CLT as a learner-centered view of language teaching that promotes the use of meaningful and realistic tasks to improve learners' communicative ability and their willingness to use target language in an appropriate and accurate manner. The prior aim is to improve comprehension, negotiation and expression of meaning, which is facilitated by the learning of language structures and vocabulary (Breen & Candlin, 1980; Sheils, 1988).

For the achievement of this aim, CLT requires a considerable amount of exposure to target language and a communication-oriented language instruction based on the learner's language learning needs in a supportive, non-judgmental and non-threatening classroom atmosphere. In such an atmosphere, learners are provided with practice and experience in language used in real communication situations through the use of authentic materials (Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Nunan, 1991; Little et. al, 1994). They are not exposed to grammar to learn about the language, but they are allowed to discover grammar first by being exposed to language use in a comprehensible context (Thompson, 1996). Since CLT is mainly concerned with process (what learners do to produce and understand, for example moving from easier to more difficult practices in learning a language) rather than the product (what learners actually do, their speech sample), the language mistakes are considered to be the natural outcomes of the development of communication skills (Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Morrow, 1994). As the initiators of most interactions in these activities, learners share their knowledge, experience, feelings and reactions with their classmates and accept correction from their peers as well as teachers, who are independent participants oscillating between the roles of facilitator and director-transmitter (Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Sheils, 1988; Harmer, 1991).

Studies on Attitudes Towards CLT in Different Contexts

Studies on CLT are mostly carried out in English-speaking contexts where it is taught to the speakers of other languages as a second language (ESL) or in non-English speaking contexts where it is taught as a foreign language (EFL). CLT was found to be favored especially by teachers in ESL contexts. In a survey study in Canada, Libben & Rossman-Benjamin (1992) investigated teachers' attitudes towards language teaching methods and the factors affecting their methodological preferences. The participants of the study expressed very favorable attitudes towards communicative techniques, but very unfavorable attitudes towards the grammar-translation approach and its techniques like the use of translation and students' first language in ESL classrooms. The most significant factor that determined their

methodological attitudes was found to be the cultural norms and values of the ESL community. Similarly, in studies conducted by Nunan (1988) and Eltis & Low (1985 cited in Nunan, 1988), ESL teachers favored communicative activities more than traditional activities.

However, the success of CLT in EFL contexts has always remained a controversial issue (Anderson, 1993; Sun & Cheng, 2000). When communicative innovations were first exported to EFL contexts, some issues like sociocultural, educational and political differences between EFL and ESL contexts were raised, and the effects of these discrepancies on the implementation of communicative practices in these contexts became the main concern of CLT studies. While few of the accounts strongly suggested the use of CLT in EFL context (Li, 1984; Prabhu, 1987), the majority of the studies emphasized the difficulties encountered by EFL teachers in adopting communicative principles. In some studies, CLT was reported to be difficult to use owing to EFL teachers' perceptions of their own deficiency in English competence, especially sociolinguistic and strategic competence (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Anderson, 1993; Li, 1998), and in the knowledge of the target culture (Liao, 2000). Burnaby & Sun (1989) reported that Chinese teachers found CLT more suitable for ESL contexts and cited the context of the wider curriculum, class sizes and schedules, lack of resources, and the low status of teachers who teach communicative rather than analytical skills as the main constraints on implementing CLT. Anderson (1993) reported other obstacles in Chinese context, such as lack of teachers properly trained in CLT and students not being accustomed to interactive classroom activities. Chinese students who tended to associate communicative activities with entertainment avoided expressing their opinions in group and pair work activities for the fear of losing face or offending others (Liao, 2000).

Discouraged by their deeply-rooted cultural traditions, Egyptian students also avoid expressing their views in the classroom for the very same reason (Gahin and Myhil, 2001). In the EFL context of Egypt, where traditional student-teacher roles are defined by cultural values, teachers have a prophetic image strengthening their authority

in the class that does not match with the roles of communicative teachers.

While learners' resistance to active participation in communicative classes formed an important obstacle to the introduction of CLT in Pakistan (Shamim, 1996), in Moroccan context, where curricular innovations are not welcome, teachers themselves refused to use group and pair work activities in their classes (Nolasco & Arthur, 1990). Working in pairs and small groups was also disliked by Japanese students who are used to working with the teacher in whole class activities (Hyde, 1993) and by South Korean learners who prefer traditional settings in which they can sit motionless and take notes while the teacher lectures (Li, 1998). South Korean teachers complained about the lack of CLT experts who could offer them professional help while managing communicative classes.

The lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments in CLT (Li, 1998), the examinations in which the students are evaluated through grammar, reading comprehension and translation questions in South Korea (ibid), Vietnam (Ellis, 1994) and Turkey (Eveyik-Aydin, 2003), and the lack of exposure to authentic materials (Ellis, 1994) were also reported to be among the main obstacles in the successful implementation of CLT in these contexts.

These attitude studies in CLT have revealed the importance of the nature and diversity of contexts in language teaching by unveiling a possible conflict between what a language teaching method demands in order to be successfully implemented and what the contexts can provide. Second, they have shown the importance of teachers' perceptions of the feasibility of curricular innovations and their educational attitudes towards them. Teachers' educational attitudes and beliefs have important roles in the implementation of curricular innovations, as the success of innovative methods and approaches depends on the cooperation and involvement of teachers to a great extent (Stern & Keislar, 1977). They come to class with their own values and attitudes about learning and teaching that shape their language teaching behaviors and teaching styles (Savignon, 1976; Johnson, 1995; Gayle 1979). When these attitudes are inconsistent with the theories of the new approaches, teachers might face difficulties in

the implementation of innovations, and the reasons for these difficulties may be revealed by the investigation of their attitudes.

Teaching Arabic

Although Arabic is an important world language spoken by more than 200 million people as a native language, it is one of the less commonly taught languages in the West and in the United States (Ryding, 1994). Since the Foreign Language Assistance Act of 1985, it has been considered by the US government to be critical to US security (Kuntz, 1996). Despite its role in the international affairs involving the Arab world and the high demand for people who can communicate proficiently in that language, teaching ASFL has not made progress due to the negative images of Arabs in the Western world and the linguistic complexity of Arabic caused by its script, directionality (reading from right to left), phonology, grammar structure and vocabulary that are dissimilar to western language systems. Another problem in teaching Arabic stems from "diglossia," i.e., its "high forms" used in reading and writing and "low forms" used in everyday spoken communication (Ryding, 1994). The high form remains the same for centuries while the low-form undergoes some changes in vocabulary and grammar in time. This situation increases the gap between the written and spoken forms of Arabic and makes the achievement of full communicative competence in Arabic more difficult for its learners who need to learn different varieties of the same language. When students are taught to speak Arabic at the Defense Language Institute, they learn Modern Standard Arabic first, which is used in the media and on television all the time. However, as students get much more proficient in the language, the low form, colloquial forms, dialects are introduced gradually. Therefore, the Arabic instructors are required to choose the most appropriate authentic materials and the teaching methodology that will help learners reduce their learning anxiety.

Given the difficulties of teaching and learning Arabic, the studies on ASFL have mainly focused on the beliefs held by the students and instructors of Arabic in search of more effective ways to teach this language. In 1996, Kuntz compared the underlying belief

structure for beginning students of Arabic to that of the students of commonly taught languages (CTLs). The responses given by both groups of students differed significantly on the statements related to the perception of the difficulty of the language they are learning. Although the students of Arabic recognized the difficulty of Arabic, they believed that they had an aptitude to learn it, and they study the language to learn more about the culture, politics, and economic systems of the target language countries.

Kuntz & Belnap (2001) investigated the beliefs held by the teachers and students of Arabic about language teaching in two language programs in Yemen and Morocco. They found that, while the students of Arabic expressed their interest in developing conversational abilities, the teachers indicated significantly stronger agreement on the teaching of grammatical structures and the necessity of error correction with an inclination to favor structural methods over the communicative approaches.

In another study in 1996, Hammoud surveyed 40 Arabic teachers on their language teaching practices in Arabic classes. 90% of these teachers reported their familiarity with the general principles of CLT such as the contextualized input, use of target language, simulations and role-plays, and use of authentic materials. However, instead of implementing CLT techniques all the time, their results revealed that they make a conscious choice to integrate the effective elements of several methods into their teaching. For example, although the majority of teachers reported that they use simulation and role play activities and let their students deduce the grammatical rules on their own, 52% of them provide different correction techniques, but instead prefer correcting the errors themselves as they occur. 42.5% sometimes prefer more structural approach while 25% rarely favor grammar-based materials. Besides, because of the lack of effective teaching aids, especially pictures and visual support in the textbooks, 30.5% of teachers use pictures all the time but 42% use them only sometimes.

Teaching Arabic in a Military Setting: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC)

The Defense Language Institute (DLI) was established in 1941 as a school to provide immediate language instruction on the eve of World War II. It has gone through many changes throughout out the years and today it is in full operation, with nine different schools, offering intensive practice in speaking, listening, and reading comprehension in 32 different languages (DLIFLC Fact Sheet-2003). DLI has been accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges as a community school, and it has been recently authorized by Congress and the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges to grant quantified students an Associate of Arts Degree in Foreign Language (Stephen Payne, personal communication, May 8, 2002)

The Department of Defense (DOD) Training Authority is the general office that determines the learning objectives for students entering professional fields in intelligence. The major role of DLI Foreign Language Schools is to teach students to communicate effectively in the language that they are learning. The National Security Agency (NSA), together with the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), set what the final learning objectives (FLOs) should be for general intelligence purposes (Final Learning Objectives, 1997). These FLOs describe not only tasks, knowledge, conditions and standards, but they put them in a real-world context to help faculty and staff understand why they are needed. The language skill areas that are tested at the end of each basic language program are speaking, listening, and reading through a test called Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT). The passing score for each skill has been determined as level 2 according to the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) proficiency standards. Although the students are not considered to be professional at the end of the basic course (since they have not reached level 3 and above), the basic course objectives aims at producing individuals who can carry out a free-flow conversation, transcription of material, translation of the transcription, summarizing conversations, reading handwriting, and similar activities that would make an indi-

vidual operate linguistically successfully in an expected situation (Final Learning Objectives, 1977)

Teachers are employed all year long to teach less commonly taught languages. The instructor pool changes according to the needs of DOD. Depending on current events, new languages were added to the curriculum. Today there are 32 languages being taught at the center, one of which is Arabic. The DLI's history provides a vast background of information on how the perceptions on teaching a foreign language have changed. In a recent article written for the *Globe*, a retired Arabic instructor indicates that there were not even textbooks when the Arabic language was first introduced. The mode of learning was audio-lingual, with a lot of emphasis on students' memorizing and repeating the dialogues (Britton, 2001; p. 36). Contrary to this philosophy of learning, the whole attitude towards teaching a language has changed over the years. Emphasis on repetition has been mostly replaced with learning the language for meaningful communication through creation and with an emphasis on teaching the real language as real people use it in the real world (p. 37). One of the deans at DLI explains, "During the 1960s, students had mechanical language drills with lots of memorization. This changed to a communicative approach, where the goal was effective communication in the language" (Britton, 2001, p. 36). Similarly, a chairperson of the Korean Department in one of the Asian Schools indicated that teachers use authentic materials in order to reach the expected proficiency levels established by the National Security Agency (NSA) (Britton, 2001, p. 36)

Upon graduating from an intermediate or advanced level foreign language course, individuals in the military can be employed as military language instructors (MLI) at the Defense Language Institute. These individuals need to perform level 3 according to the ILR scale in reading, listening, and speaking in order to be considered as an instructor at the institute. After they are selected as an instructor, MLIs are invited to be in the pre service training and to take the instructor certification course, which is a four-week program that involves both theoretical and practical components of a short foreign language education. These MLIs, as nonnative speakers of the target language that they teach, are considered to be very good role models

for military students since they have proved that a certain professional level (level 3) can be achieved.

The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) has a three-part mission, which is to Train, Evaluate, and Sustain linguists in target languages and dialects for the Department of Defense and other Federal agencies. The most challenging languages to be taught are Arabic, Japanese, Chinese, and Korean, which take 63 weeks to reach the expected proficiency level. Languages like French, Italian, and Spanish, on the other hand, last only 25 weeks. There are more than 1,000 civilian instructors teaching all these different languages and approximately 200-220 of them are teaching Arabic. Yet, there is still a need to hire more Arabic instructors this year, especially because, after 9/11, there has been an increase in the number of students who are enrolled into Arabic classes (Christine Campbell, personal communication, May 16, 2002). As of March 2003, 836 out of 3754 current students are taking Arabic classes, which are 229 more than on 9/11. This number corresponds to a 27.4 % increase in the enrollments (DLI Fact Sheet, 2003). Each instructor has a maximum class size of ten so that each student can get individual attention.

Team teaching is used in teaching a group of 30 students at DLI. Each class would have maximum of 10 students, and 6 instructors rotate teaching three classes of 10 students. MLIs are considered part of the team, and they not only teach lab hours but regular languages classes as well.

There are many universities in the United States that offer less commonly taught languages, however, the intense nature of the courses offered at DLIFLC is not comparable to the "slow pace" of the courses offered in the civilian sector. Since Arabic is one of the more difficult languages to learn at the DLIFLC, military students are required to enroll in classes for 64 weeks. The instruction takes place from 7:55 am until 3:30 pm every day (6 hrs.) and five days each week. So, this comparison shows us the intensive nature of the language courses taught in the institute. Similarly, the number of hours taught in these 64 weeks, when compared to the civilian university foreign language curriculum, shows us the drastic difference in number of contact hours for civilian and military students in two different

institutions. For example, last year, Arabic as the highest-demand language in the institute was taught 124,986 hours, whereas it was offered for 682 hours in Georgetown University, which is known as the largest university program in the country for Arabic. Not only does the number of hours a language is offered differ, but also the focus of the course and the materials used and tailored for military students are different. (The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center General Statement).

Pre-Service Training: Instructor Certification Course (ICC)

Each language instructor at the DLI is exposed to an 80-hour (two weeks) instructional program called the Instructor Certification Course (ICC), which aims to promote the awareness of teaching as a process so that the participants become aware of the relationship between "process" and "content." Also, the role of process and content relationship in the teaching and the learning processes is emphasized through workshops. In fact, the pre-service training has four weeks and includes a week of pre-ICC, two weeks of ICC and a practicum week. When we refer to ICC in this paper, we mean the whole four week pre-service program. The pre-ICC serves as an orientation to the institution and includes the examination of the following topics: History of DLI and code of ethics, American classroom and students, teaching in an American context. The actual ICC takes place in the following two weeks, during which the participants become aware of basic elements of proficiency and communicative language teaching: teaching reading, listening, speaking, creating tasks, integrating language and culture, ILR scales, testing versus teaching issues, and materials design. During these two weeks, ICC participants get a chance to observe several demo lessons and analyze them in terms of proficiency. They are also trained on a variety of topics including the universal elements of learning, language learning history, second language acquisition, language teaching methodologies, final learning objectives, teaching skills, error correction, testing, textbook and materials adaptation, learner styles and strategies, academic counseling, class observation skills, lesson planning and cross-cultural communication. Participants are required to provide 30-minute demos in which they

teach listening, reading or integrated skills. Finally, during the fourth week of the pre-service training, which is called the practicum, the participants are given three chances to display what they have learned in the second and third weeks. They prepare lesson plans and are observed three times by a faculty developer in an actual class offered at the DLIFLC. Faculty developers provide feedback to the lesson plans and help instructors get ready to teach an actual class. For example, Arabic instructors who are enrolled in the practicum will be observed teaching a regular class in one of the Middle East Schools. So, these four weeks can be considered as a crash course on teaching a foreign language. Since DLI gets a variety of applicants who would like to teach foreign languages, individuals with different backgrounds, for example, a person who holds an M.A. in foreign language teaching will be taking the same ICC workshops as those who do not have any background in teaching at all. Thus, the ICC workshops provide a lot of professional and teacher development support for an individual who is a new foreign language instructor. Workshop participants are encouraged to keep in touch with the Faculty and Staff Development (FSD) through taking additional workshops or just by calling on the division whenever they need professional help in their teaching. Upon completing the ICC workshops, the participants start teaching in their respective department and are invited to apply to FSD within one to three months to complete the certification process. They need to be observed formally by a faculty developer, and if their teaching includes major components of proficiency oriented teaching, they are granted a certification of pre-service training.

The Study

The following research questions are investigated in this study:

1) How does the length of teaching experience affect instructors' attitudes towards CLT?
2) What is the relation between the instructors' attitudes towards CLT and country of origin, military or civilian status, age, gender, and their educational background?

3) What are the difficulties facing teachers in teaching Arabic communicatively in a military language institution?

Teachers' Attitudes towards CLT
Data Collection

In this study, data were collected using three main methods. The first part of data collection was compiled through a Communicative Language Teaching Attitude Scale (COLTAS) during the ten months from May 2002 to February 2003. There were approximately 230 teachers at two Middle East schools at the DLIFLC. The researcher informed each Arabic instructor in each office in both Middle East schools about the study, and the participants who participated in the study were self-selected. The researcher visited each teachers' office at ME I and ME II in order to encourage participants to participate in the study. The researcher told them that they needed to fill out a survey, and self-selected participants were also invited to be in a focus group interview.

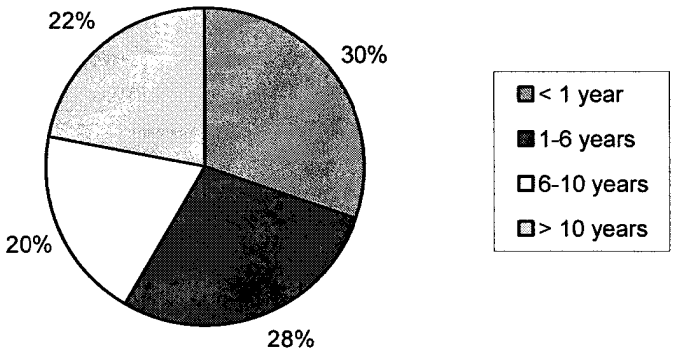
Participants
(Survey Participants)

There were 96 self-selected Arabic instructors with various years of teaching experience from two Middle East schools at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) who participated in the study. Instructors were divided into four different groups with respect to their length of teaching experience. There were 29(30%) instructors who had less than a year teaching experience at DLI. There were 27 (28%) instructors with 1–6 years of teaching experience, 19 (20%) instructors who had 6–10 years of teaching experience and 21 (22%) of the instructors were teaching more than 10 years at DLI. Fifteen participants were American, non-native-speaker Arabic instructors, and out of these 15, 13 were military language instructors and two were civilian instructors. There were 37 female instructors and 59 male.

In this study, the participants were divided into four different groups in terms of their length of teaching experience at DLI. At the time of the study, 29 (30%) participants were instructors who had

less than a year of experience; 27 (28%) instructors had 1–6 years of teaching experience; 19 (20%) had 6–10 years of teaching experience; and 21 (22%) participants were teaching at DLI more than 10 years when the data was collected.

Figure 1: Teaching Experience at DLI (in years)

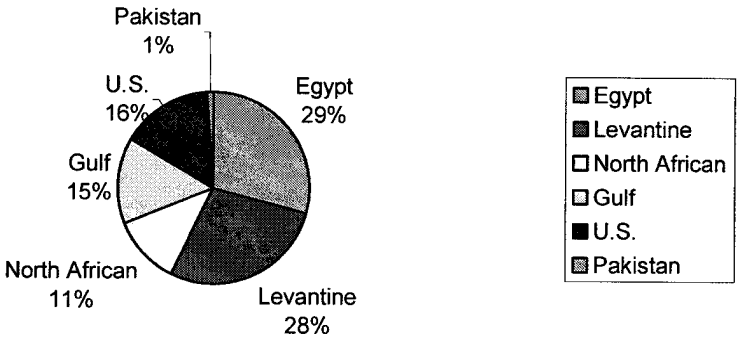


Similarly, the mean age of instructors who had less than a year of teaching experience at DLI was 44. Instructors who had 1–6, 6–10, and more than 10 years of teaching experience at DLI had mean ages of 44, 48, and 47, respectively. The mean age of instructors was 47.

Arabic instructors were from a variety of countries with a variety of educational backgrounds. 28 (29%) instructors were from Egypt; 27 (28%) were from Levantine countries (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine); 11 (11%) were from North African countries (Sudan, Chad, Morocco); 14 (15%) were from Gulf countries (Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, etc.); 15 (16%) were from the U.S.; and there was only one (1%) instructor from Pakistan. Seven of the instructors had M.A. degrees in Teaching English as Second/Foreign Language, and only two had a degree in teaching Arabic as a Foreign

Language. There were 20 PhD holders, but none were specifically in foreign language education.

Figure 2: Dialect/Region of Arabic Instructors



Instrument (COLTAS)

COLTAS is a five-point Likert type attitude scale with 36 statements developed to investigate teachers' attitudes towards some aspects of CLT (Eveyik, 1999). Likert type scales have been used most frequently for the measurement of attitudes, as they are cost-effective, relatively easy to construct and administer and tend to yield more reliable results compared to other scaling techniques (Oppenheim; 1966; Gardner & Smythe; 1981). Although COLTAS was formulated by the perceptions of Turkish instructors, it was thought by the researchers that it would provide more meaningful data if we compared the results with those of the participants who took it in Turkey. Since the survey yielded high reliability and validity, it was perceived as a good example of data collection in this study as well. When reliability statistics calculations were done on the Arabic instructor group, it yielded .73 as the reliability.

Data Analysis

Data collected through COLTAS from 96 teachers were processed by SPSS/8.0 statistical package for reliability studies. Be-

fore the score of each subject on each item was entered into the program, it was decided that a high score obtained on the scale would mean a favorable attitude towards the domains of CLT, whereas low scores would reveal an unfavorable attitude. Therefore, the positive items of the scale were scored 5 for "strongly agree" down to 1 for "strongly disagree," while the negative items were reverse scored by giving 1 for "strongly agree" up to 5 for "strongly disagree." Thus, the highest and lowest scores that could be obtained on this scale were 180 (36X5) and 36(36X1), respectively. After the data were entered, the co-researcher checked the data entry for accuracy and confirmed the other researcher's results.

Since these scores were the indicators of participants' positive and negative attitudes, their answers were tabulated to display the scores. The scores between 180 and 144 (36X4) showed the most favorable attitudes towards CLT, while the scores between 36 and 72 (36X2) showed the least favorable attitudes, with a mid score of 108 (3X36) that reflected neutral attitudes. Thus, scores between 109 and 143 showed favorable attitudes, while the scores between 73 and 107 revealed unfavorable attitudes.

The Findings of the Attitude Scale

Scores obtained by 96 instructors who participated in the study ranged from 96 to 167, with a mean score of 117.48.

Figure 3: CLT Total Score

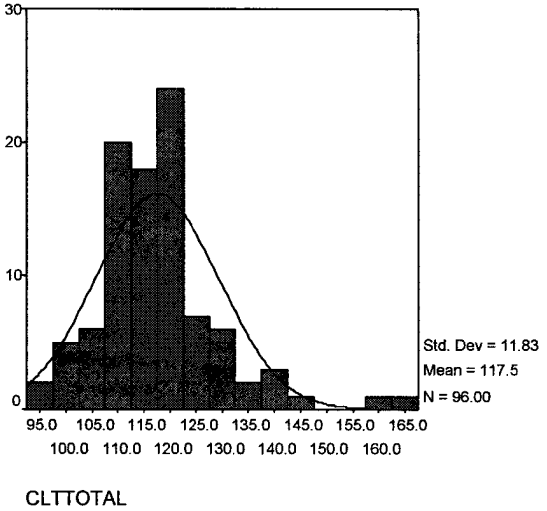


Table 1

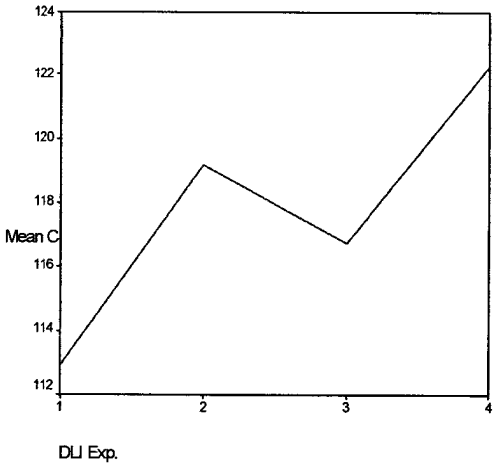
Distribution of the scores obtained by 96 Arabic instructors on COLTAS and their descriptive statistics

Scores	180–144 most favorable attitude	143–109 favorable attitude	108 uncertain attitude	107– 73 unfavor-able attitude	72–36 least favorable attitude	Total
N (%)	3 (3%)	76 (79%)	4(4%)	13 (14%)	0	96
Mean	157.66	119.13	108	101.46	0	117.47
Median	159.00	118.00	108	101.00	0	116.50
Mode	147.00	111.00	108	101.00	0	111.00
S.D.	10.06	7.50	_	3.07	_	11.83

The results showed that three scored between 144-180 and indicated very favorable attitudes towards CLT (of those Arabic instructors, 66.7% had 1–6 years of teaching experience; 33.3% had more than 10 years of teaching experience). The majority of the Arabic instructors (76), on the other hand, scored between 109-143 (of those Arabic instructors, 27.6% were surveyed before completing a year of teaching experience; 26.3% with 1–6 years of teaching experience; 21.1% with 6–10 years of teaching experience; 25% with more than 10 years of teaching experience). However, only three Arabic instructors had a score of 108 indicating an uncertain attitude towards CLT (of those 50% had less than a year of teaching experience and the other 50% with 6–10 years of teaching experience). The rest of the Arabic instructors, 13 had scores ranging from a low of 73 to 107, indicating an unfavorable attitude towards CLT (of those instructors 46.2% had less than a year of experience, 38.5% with 1–6 years of teaching experience; 77.7% with 6–10 years of teaching experience, and 7.7% with more than 10 years of teaching experience).

As shown in Figure 4, instructors who had less than a year of teaching experience at DLI had relatively high score towards CLT, with a mean score of 112.93. The mean score of Arabic instructors who had 1–6 years of teaching experience was raised to 119.19 compared to that of the first group. Surprisingly, the mean score towards CLT drops to 116.73 for instructors with 6–10 years of teaching experience, not as low as the first group of instructors but still a drop in the score. Surprisingly, instructors who have had more than 10 years of teaching experience scored 122.23, displaying a big difference between them and the instructors with less than a year of experience. The difference in mean scores between the first group of Arabic instructors with less than a year of teaching experience, the second group of instructors with 1–6 years of teaching experience, and the last group of instructors who had more than 10 years of teaching experience at DLI is statistically significant.

Figure 4: Mean of CLT Total Scores



1---- < than 1 year of teaching experience.
2----1-6 years of teaching experience.
3---- 6-10 years of teaching experience.
4----- > than 10 years of teaching experience.

Teachers' attitudes were also analyzed in terms of the four domains: error correction, the place of grammar, teacher/student roles, and pair/group work.

The analysis (Table 2) revealed that the way grammar was taught (non-explicit and more emphasis on function rather than form) was the most favored by all kinds of Arabic instructors since it received the highest mean scores. The high mean scores indicated that most Arabic instructors believe that grammar rules should not be taught explicitly and the emphasis in learning a language should be language use rather than learning mastering grammar rules. Peer/ teacher correction and pair/group work were also favored, but not as highly as the role of grammar. However, student/teacher roles received the lowest mean score from all instructors. Among the four types of instructors, those with 1–6 years of teaching experience and those with more than 10 years of teaching experience were more communicatively inclined. When we think of teaching as developmental process, teachers tend to adopt an attitude that shows more communicative ways of teaching languages and less emphasis on rule-oriented teaching as they get more experience in teaching. The results also indicated that Arabic instructors showed less favorable attitudes

towards student/teacher roles; in other words, they were less communicatively-oriented when thinking of student-centered classes.

An independent t-test was done to see if there was a difference between military and civilian instructors' attitudes towards CLT. The test result yielded a significant degree of difference between two groups; the civilian instructors were more inclined to have positive attitudes towards CLT.

Table 2
Mean Scores of Teachers with Different Years of Experience and Their Attitudes Towards Each Domain

Experience Domains	< 1 year teaching exp. (29)	Between 1-6 years teach. exp. (27)	Between 6-10 years of teach. exp. (19)	> 10 years of teach. exp. (21)	Total (96)
Grammar	31.90	33.00	33.42	34.38	33.05
Error Correction	27.69	30.66	28.10	31.90	29.53
Pair/Group Work	26.59	27.96	27.31	27.48	29.67
Student/teacher Roles	22.44	23.29	23.52	24.14	23.27

Ethnic background, gender, age, and education were independent variables; they caused no significant differences in instructors' attitudes towards CLT in the statistical analysis.

Focus Group Interview Participants

Volunteers for the focus group interviews were gathered from the instructors who had completed the survey. Since it was difficult for instructors to be gathered for focus interviews, one-on-one interviews were utilized to gather data whenever necessary. Twenty seven participants were involved in six focus group and three one-on-

one interviews before they took the pre-service training; however, only 11 participants were involved in two focus-group and two one-on-one interviews after the pre-service training. Four military instructors were interviewed in a focus-group interview. One interview was done with an instructor with five years of teaching experience; only two instructors were invited to have a one-on-one interview in order to provide information on the beliefs of instructors who had 6-10 years of teaching experience. Consequently, three one-on one interviews were done with instructors who had more than 10 years of teaching experience at DLI as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3
Focus-Group and One-On-One Interviews

	Pre-ICC	< 1 year	1-6 years	6-10 years	> 10 years	MLI
Focus Group	(4) 6	9 (2)	____	____	____	4 (1)
Interview	3	2	1	2	3	____

The Findings of the Focus Group Interviews: Themes that Emerged

The purpose of the study was to investigate the attitudes of Arabic instructors towards CLT. Instructors were asked four main questions related to the four domains of this study (teacher/student roles, grammar, error correction, pair/group work) in both the focus group and individual interviews. The instructors with a variety of teaching experience were also asked about the difficulties that they had in implementing CLT. All focus-group interviews were held on the school campus in Faculty Development workshop classes. The purpose of focus group interviews is not to generalize, but to provide

the spectrum of perspectives and insights on this particular phenomenon that are available in the real world (Krueger, 2000). All were audio recorded and lasted for 35–45 minutes. The analysis of the data was based on the careful transcription of the interviews. Content analysis, as explained by Merriam (1998), is a "simultaneous coding of raw data and the construction of categories that capture relevant characteristics of the document's content" (p. 160). In this kind of analysis, the researcher will try to find "themes" and "recurring patterns of meaning" (p. 160) in the content of the interviews. The individual interviews were analyzed in a similar fashion. All quotes are verbatim. The researcher has transcribed all the statements without correction for grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. A native speaker of English randomly checked each type of focus group and one-on-one interview audio recording for accuracy of transcription and was satisfied. The accuracy was based on whether the statements were transcribed word by word correctly. After analyzing the themes that emerged in a variety of focus group and one-one interviews, the investigators grouped the emerging themes according to the aspects of CLT investigated in this study; namely the role of grammar, error correction, and pair/group work, and student/teacher roles. The results are presented in this order in the paper. These constructs have been explained in the beginning of the paper. Since the teaching of grammar received the highest mean score from the participants, the analysis of themes will start with the explanation of this theme. After each explanation, the length of teaching experience of the group is indicated in parenthesis.

Teaching of Grammar

Complicated Grammar Structure/Coincidental Way of Teaching

Grammar is perceived by all MLIs as very important; however, there is a general tendency to explain the structure briefly whenever a new grammar point is introduced. In the weekly schedule, there are not specific grammar sessions, but some one or two hours of grammar clinic. Most instructors observed explain the grammatical point on the board by providing examples. The examples usually come from the textbook, but could be supplemented by drills. Some MLIs said that giving many drills to students to work on the

grammatical structure would be the best way to teach grammar. (Military Language Instructors)

Grammar is Difficult and Should be Taught Indirectly

Arabic grammar being difficult yet important is a theme that was reiterated throughout the narratives of Arabic instructors. Arabic instructors with less than a year of experience believe that Arabic grammar is difficult, but should be taught indirectly by example sentences, thus allowing the students to see how it is used in sentences. Explanation of the grammar is in a sentence or two which follows example sentences. However, according to some instructors interviewed, in reality "most instructors are not experts in [Arabic] grammar and there is usually a grammar expert in each team. Grammar is taught explicitly and very little; a lot of translation, a lot of uses of English [occur] and [are] decontextualized" (less than 1 year of teaching experience).

Grammar is Very Important but Should be Taught as it Appears in Reading Passages

Just like most of the other types of instructors, these post-service instructors mentioned that grammar should be taught *not in too much in detail* [italics added], but just enough for students to get it. Instruction in class should provide the right kind of information. One instructor made the following analogy: "We're teaching these students how to drive a car or vehicle, but not be a car mechanic. If there is something wrong with the car, they won't fix it" (More than 10 years of teaching experience).

Grammar Should be Taught in a Covert Way

Most teachers believe that grammar should be explained on the board through several short examples, and then practiced with drills after the explanation. Grammar should be introduced in an authentic text, for example, students will see how the passive voice is used.

Grammar Could be Taught in a Comparative Manner

Another group of instructors believes that, if students see how a new grammatical structure is used in their own language and compare it with the way it is used in the target language, this comparison would make the learning much more meaningful.

Peer/Teacher Correction

Error Correction Should not Interfere with the Train of Thought

The theme of avoiding immediate error correction emerged again in this group. However, this time instructors said that the students needed to be corrected for a variety of mistakes; it depends on the nature of the mistake, but if they're not corrected then there will not be any improvement. These post-service teachers seemed to have much less tolerance than the others for not correcting no matter what the nature of the mistake. (Instructors with less than a year of experience and who have not gone through ICC yet.)

Delayed Error Correction

Most instructors believe that correcting mistakes by interrupting students would be pedagogically wrong. Instructors favor the technique of waiting for the student to finish making a sentence or finish a task and then correcting most common mistakes. But students should be corrected in a "gentle" and "encouraging way," "with a smile." They also felt that, as the students' proficiency levels go up, then correction becomes more of a crucial issue in the Arabic class. As students' proficiency levels go up, they should be corrected for different types of mistakes (1–6 years of teaching experience).

The Dictionary as a Good Source for Correction

For most instructors, the use of an Arabic dictionary could be very challenging since students need to know the root of the word. One instructor said, "I actually think it depends on the situation, but if he is speaking, maybe, he will get lost if I correct him. So, let him speak, and after that, maybe you can ask his colleagues to correct him. If they fail, you can correct them" (6–10 years of teaching experience).

Peer-to-Peer Correction is Embarrassing

Some instructors believe that peer correction could be a source of embarrassment, granting that if the instructor lets students correct each other, it will not be an effective way of learning the answer. An alternative way, self correction, would be to check with the dictionary. Looking up the word in the dictionary would be very appropriate. Another reason for not urging peer-to-peer correction is embarrassment. If students correct each other's mistakes, it might be embarrassing since the peers are also students (Less than a year of teaching experience).

Correction to Avoid Fossilization

Most instructors correct their students, but some errors that keep accruing and inhibit communication should be brought to the attention of students. Some students want to be corrected immediately without knowing that this will diminish their fluency. If there is an incorrect pattern that is developing, then the instructor should jump in and correct the students (Instructors with more than 10 years of teaching experience).

Pair/Group Work Activities

Most instructors in general believe that pair/group work is very useful, especially for oral practice in Arabic classes. However, for instructors who have less than a year of experience, it could be a waste of time.

Pair/Group Work is Useful in Oral Practice

The general opinion among instructors about pair/group work was very positive. They feel that in group/pair work activities students learn from each other and enjoy the activities. Students can be put in role play situations and the teacher can show them that the grammar and vocabulary are correct. However, the following theme was also expressed in the interviews (1–6 years of teaching experience).

Pair/Group Work is Hard to Monitor/Creates a Lot of Noise (Difficulties in Implementing Pair/Group Work)

Some instructors believe that these activities are hard to control because of students' need of supervision while engaged in pair work and that their mistakes should be corrected. So, they should be "used as fun activities after the classes are over." Some instructors also believe that there will be a lot of noise in the classroom and that there will not be any supervision. One instructor voices his opinion, "Where would I gonna be? With what group? With this group? Or with that group? I'm not gonna say this group first work and I'm gonna stay with them and then I move to the second group. That is wasting time also" (less than a year of teaching experience).

Pair/Group Work Should be Used with Caution

This theme is a pivotal cautionary statement for most instructors. It is useful to put students in pairs and groups and have them work together, but instructors wanted to send a message to new instructors about the practicality and logistics of using pair work. Sometimes students don't want to work in groups or pairs. Instructors should be flexible enough "to give student some time to observe the material by themselves" (More than 10 years of teaching experience).

3 Rules for Pair/Group Work

Instructions should be clear; level of difficulty, appropriate; participation, equal. Students might contaminate their pronunciation if they hear each others' wrong pronunciation (More than 10 years of teaching experience).

Student and Teacher Roles

For most Arabic instructors, facilitation means providing guidance to students through examples. Students need good examples in class, and the teacher is there to provide explanations and examples. A good instructor should have the capacity to walk students through an activity and provide clear explanations.

Teacher as Information Provider and Facilitator

When asked the major role of the Arabic instructors, most of the non-pre-service training instructors expressed the need to provide information to the students not as the only aim but as a starting point for future learning. They felt that students should not only feel important but be satisfied by the amount of information provided by the course.

> Well, I think. The instructor is the source of the knowledge in the classroom. He must, ... his duty to give the info to the students. This is the goal, at the end of the session; the student should leave the class with a lot of knowledge from that professor or instructor. And also, the student should feel that he is very important, all the attention is directed to him.

The same opinion is revealed by another instructor about the cultural expectations:

> Generally speaking teacher is the source of knowledge in the classroom and that comes because Arabic teachers as foreign Arabic speakers, they grew up in the Middle East and the role of the teacher is always there. Someone who is profound and someone who was prophetic, someone almost to the level of a prophet, almost, somebody who has a lot of information to give to students.... A lot of teachers feel that it is their job ... to tell students, to explain the grammar, to tell them about the listening or the reading.

However, some instructors, who perceived Arabic instructors as facilitators, still believed that instructors should have the "locus of control": if the control of the class is not handled well, then students will not be able to learn.

> Facilitator does not mean that he is just watching and passing on information, he is also controlling the process. But controlling is very important; it is not letting everything go underneath his supervision and without any interference. He should lead step by step to the goal, and that is a very important role.

Facilitator as Guide/Information Giver/Who Makes Students Work

Arabic teachers believe that students will not learn in an efficient way if the teacher lectures all the time, *especially if English is not used* [italics added]. Instructors see themselves as facilitators who would help students to learn Arabic. However, when instructors explain what "facilitator" means to them, they tend to visualize a situation where a teacher is in control of the class explaining grammar, and students are paying full attention to the instructor. The meaning that these teachers attach to the word "facilitation" is closely related to the role of the teacher in a guiding activity in which students are given pieces of information little by little to answer some question posed by the instructor. The teacher becomes a person who would explain sentences on the board or read texts out loud and have students read again; or in a grammar class, the teacher would have students construct sentences similar to a sentence provided on the board. Most of these Arabic instructors believed that if the teacher does not make the student work, then learning does not happen. So, the general truth for them was: Teachers should create activities to make the students participate in the lesson.

Information Provider/Material Provider and Facilitator (Teachers Without Pre-Service Training)

The two main functions that were highly attached to the function of the instructor in class were information presenter and facilitator. Instructors acknowledged that the teacher was the manager of the class who had good classroom management skills. In organizing pair/group work, an instructor should know which two students to pair. It seems like instructors at this stage, after the pre-service, had a more realistic picture of what happens in the classroom. After students receive information and get more experienced and advanced in learning the language, then teachers can mainly be facilitators. Most instructors feel that an instructor cannot escape the role of information provider. One instructor who had taken the pre-service training recently says, "The teacher cannot be only a facilitator in class. He must provide knowledge, he must present it, and you cannot say the class should be student-centered because he must give this information.... He must explain the material, but after a while, or

during another session for speaking, reading, or listening, he can use another method or several methods." However, some expressed the idea of instructors' having to have the right skills to make the class an interactive learning environment.

Flexibility

Most instructors believe that teachers should be flexible enough to change their approaches to the needs of the students. Teachers should help students to learn whatever it takes them to achieve expected proficiency in the 63-week program. They believe that students don't need to be motivated and that they are here to learn. One instructor believes that methodology used in the classroom is not as important as the outcome of students' performance at the end of the course:

> I'm not going to come to class and say ohh you started with the Audio Lingual Method, and then you shifted to communicative and then you went back to Silent way, and then you went back to whatever, use whatever it works. Because the product is what of essence, let the way. If I see your student perform listening, reading, speaking, writing, halleluiah, this is all I need. I'm not going to argue with you about the method. I'm going to argue with you about the outcome, and the outcome is already underlined, posted everywhere. We need 2, 2, 2, 100%. ... Give yourself a helicopter ride way up there and look at the total picture and work based on that; don't be afraid, be innovative, be proactive, put keep your eyes on the prize and the prize is 2, 2, 2 for 100%.
>
> (Instructor with more than 10 years of teaching experience)

Teachers as Agents of Change/Counselor

Some instructors believe that, since students are in the Arabic Basic Course for a long time (63 weeks-Category 4 Language), they change over that period of time. A teacher is more than just someone who lectures or conducts oral drill practices, but should be there to change attitudes and mentalities and expand the horizons of the students. An instructor could be considered someone who aims to improve students' perceptions of the outside world. So, sometimes the teacher needs to be a counselor, also at the same time a psychol-

ogist. Indeed, instructors are expected to do some counseling if the student is not doing well in classes (Teachers with more than 10 years of teaching experience).

The Eclectic Approach (Teachers with More than 10 Years of Teaching Experience)

Instructors are aware of the differences among students, and they know that this asks them to have an eclectic approach when teaching languages. Teachers believe that they need to watch students and read their students well enough so that they'll be able to tailor their classes according to the students' reactions. Analytical students need much more step by step supervision; however, global learners are more independent.

Students are sometimes not intrinsically motivated. Some instructors want to make them responsible for their own learning. When students don't have the motivation, they are reluctant to take risks and get out of their comfort zones. Teachers need to get such students practicing in the language. Most instructors believe in "less preaching, less narrative, and less lecturing" to provide more interactive opportunities for students (Teachers with more than 10 years of teaching experience).

Teacher is Textbook-Bound

Military language instructors' (MLI) perspective on the role of the teacher is similar to those of instructors who have not gone through the pre-service training. Some of the MLIs perceive Arabic instructors as textbook-bound because they think that the instructors play an important role in the classroom. For them, the instructor's role is that of a reference guide. Arabic instructors are there to help students with their pronunciation, listening skills, etc. As one MLI said, "Words could be very close in meaning, it is difficult for students to just pick a dictionary and or a book and learn." MLIs also are aware of the fact that most instructors are trapped by the curriculum. They need to cover the book at a certain rate of speed. They have, however, much more flexibility to use a variety of materials in the third semester. Another instructor believes that most classes are teacher-centered. He says, "I think a lot of instructors stick very

much to the curriculum so they play a passage, have the students answer the questions and then stick to the questions ... mostly I see a very teacher-centered classroom. A lot of instructors giving information, playing tapes for CDs, having students answer questions" (Military Language Instructors).

Absorbing Language and Teacher Input as Much as Possible

Since the Arabic program is one of the longest programs, (63 weeks) at DLI, students work very hard to achieve a certain level of proficiency. But they are seen as individuals who can absorb about anything that is poured on them.

Students should be very responsible in studying their lessons, and they are usually seen as sponges. They are there to just absorb the information and very rarely do they actually interact, do anything on their own or study with the curriculum they have (Military Language Instructors).

Observations

There were two classroom observations conducted for each different type of instructor, and six classroom visits were done with instructors who had just gone through the pre-service training. The observation results showed that most of the CLT elements were observed in the certification process where the observer had more input in the way the class is taught. Most proficiency elements, as described in the observation criteria, such as meaningful information-gap tasks, target language use, contextualization, teacher-centered classroom were all present in those classes.

Some Challenges/Difficulties to Include CLT Elements All the Time in the Classroom

The challenges expressed by the instructor could be categorized under the following headings:

The eclectic approach: As expressed in the interview, instructors will do anything to help students achieve a certain proficiency level,

even if it takes the grammar-translation method or some such approach. So, blindly advocating the supremacy of CLT does not make any sense for most instructors.

CLT has its roots in languages other than Arabic: Some experienced instructors believed that the ideas embedded in CLT are based on research studies done in applied linguistics and teaching English as a second and foreign language. So, what could be successful and well working in another language could not be applied to teaching Arabic.

Formal Spoken Arabic, an option: When instructors were asked if there were any difficulties about implementing CLT, there was a consensus on the artificiality of offering Modern Standard Arabic (MSA); however, most of them wished that after 47 weeks of MSA, Formal Spoken Arabic (FSA) could be offered as the "lingua franca" for the remainder of the course. As Arabic is considered "diglossic," teaching MSA is not realistic. Arabs use regional dialects for everyday communication (Ryding, 24). All broadcast media and published books use MSA.

Using CLT takes more time: Most instructors pointed out that teaching for proficiency would take longer than planned using CLT. If we need use the CLT all the time in class, students need to have three years to reach the expected level of proficiency.

Teacher as the person in control: Some misunderstandings can be observed in classes. For example, teacher-centered is not fully understood by some instructors. Although they put students in pairs/ groups and have them exchange information, the flow of information exchange goes through the instructor and has to be monitored by the instructor. The monitoring happens by assigning specific questions to each student and by being present in the exchange as a teacher.

Textbook: Most instructors also mentioned that the textbooks did not provide much opportunity for implementing CLT, except in the third semester materials.

Limitations

An important limitation of the first phase of the study stems from the difficulty of attitude measurement. It must be noted that such direct methods of measurement are conducive to some influences, which might change the results. The subjects, consciously or unconsciously, might tend to give socially desired answers in order to show themselves more prestigious or more up-to-date and hence, their responses may not elicit their real attitudes (Triandis, 1971; Baker, 1988). In other words, what they report may not always coincide with what they actually do, as seen in Karavas-Doukas' (1996) study. This problem can be eliminated through the careful wording of the items in the scale (Oppenheim, 1966) or keeping a record of what teachers really say and do in the classroom (Kagan, 1990, Woods, 1996). In the present study, the items were carefully selected based on the evaluations of the judges.

When teachers were observed, the classes were observed based on proficiency-based criteria such as use of different types of communicative and meaningful tasks, integration of language and culture, and consistent use of the target language. The limited number of observations showed that what the instructors say might not correspond with the classroom practices. It should also be noted that the results of the study are more reflective of an intensive program in a government-based school and, therefore, should not be generalized for all the schools or universities that offer Arabic language courses. We would like mention that the study made it possible to capture Arabic instructors' belief at one time in their professional development. Since teaching as a profession is a developmental process, we cannot make generalizations for all the instructors in the field. We believe that, as teachers grow professionally, there will be some classroom practices which will be abandoned and new ones which will be adopted.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to gather information about Arabic instructors' attitudes towards CLT, in order to provide in-

sights into pre-service and in-service programs. The results of this study suggest that the attitudes towards CLT among four types of instructors are similar; however, there are some differences.... Instructors' attitudes reach a peak after going through a pre-service training and getting some experience teaching Arabic at DLI, which indicates that most instructors have more of an idealistic notion of a communicative class; however, the interviews reveal ideas that are much more conservative. The slightly increased, positive attitudes of in-service instructors are influenced by the time spent in the institution. These instructors, after having established a sense of what works and what does not work in the department, and after knowing the details of testing and curricular issues, come to grips with the reality of classroom instruction and feel much more comfortable in acknowledging more positive attitudes towards CLT. This phenomenon shows that, as the instructors get much more experienced with the curriculum and feel much more comfortable using the textbooks, as in the case of instructors of more than 10 years of teaching experience, they reach a certain level of a more positive understanding and appreciation of CLT. They also get much more familiar with the pedagogical issues in the department, they get to know American students much better, and they have a clearer idea what works and what does not work in the classroom. MLIs, on the other hand, display less favorable attitudes towards CLT than the civilian instructors. We assume that their proficiency level might inhibit their attitude towards CLT.

After getting certified in the pre-service program, language instructors' professional development is under the jurisdiction of chairs and sometimes academic specialists. In order to maintain that positive spirit, faculty development could keep up with the continual mentoring role to sustain success in the classroom.

As we prepare foreign language instructors to teach, we need to take into consideration that the teaching profession is an ongoing, developmental process. In this study, we tried to capture their reality at one point in time, and we cannot be very sure how much their attitudes will change towards CLT in the future. Based on this argument, we cannot make any groundbreaking generalizations of what their future orientation will be, but what we have provided is an example of

what we have been able to capture about their thought system at certain intervals of their career.

Teachers do what make sense to them in the classroom. As a group of Arabic instructors teaching at a certain institute, these individuals form "a community of practice" and (Freeman, 1995, p. 182) "a community of explanation" (Freeman, 1995, pp. 180–196). In other words, the instructors teach Arabic and engage in a common task to prepare military students to function in real life situations. When they teach what they do in the classroom and how they perform their teaching are all based on their understanding, beliefs, perceptions, and their common ways of reasoning about how "good" teaching are considered. Because of the continual support both from the Faculty and Staff Development Division and the Chair persons in each department, we believe that there is more of an optimistic outlook towards CLT as teachers grow professionally in their field of expertise. Although the qualitative data did not completely match with the attitude profiles that these Arabic instructors displayed in the interviews, we believe that doing action research projects of their own classroom and of their own teaching and attending professional teacher education seminars will shape their perceptions more towards effective ways of teaching foreign languages in the future.

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Appendix: COLTAS for Arabic[1]

Please indicate your degree of agreement on the following statements
a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly Disagree

1.	Language classes should be student-centered; not teacher centered. .....
2.	Pair work activities should be avoided as it is difficult for teachers to monitor each student's performance.
3.	Teacher correction should be avoided when it interrupts the flow of communication via student interaction.
4.	An orderly teacher centered class in necessary for students to get maximum benefit from teacher input in Arabic.
5.	Students need to have immediate teacher feedback on the accuracy of the Arabic they produce.
6.	Pair work develops oral conversational skills in Arabic. .....
7.	Group work creates a motivating environment to use Arabic. ....
8.	Teachers should allow opportunity for student-student correction in Arabic.
9.	The major role of teachers is to transmit knowledge about language to students through explanations rather than to guide them for self-learning.
10.	Teacher feedback should be mainly focused on the content of the activity not on the form of language.
11.	It is of great importance that student responses in Arabic be grammatically accurate.
12.	Teachers should be the initiators of most interactions in Arabic in the class.
13.	To develop communicative skills, explicit grammar teaching is not necessary.
14.	Emphasis should be on language use rather than language rules while teaching Arabic in the class.
15.	Pair work provides a greater amount of student involvement than a teacher-led activity.
16.	Group work helps those students who are not willing to speak in front of a full class.

[1] The instrument used in this study was adapted from the original COLTAS developed for English. Negative items of the scale are shown underlined here. However, no such designation was provided on the original instrument while collecting data.

17.	Focus on communicative competence produces linguistically inaccurate speakers of language.
18.	Teachers should make an analysis of student needs in order to design suitable tasks and activities in Arabic.
19.	Group work causes a noisy classroom atmosphere which prevents meaningful practice in Arabic.
20.	Teacher feedback should be mainly focused on the appropriateness of the student responses rather than the linguistic accuracy of the forms.
21.	Teachers should not tolerate mistakes in Arabic forms.....
22.	Meaning focused activities are more effective to develop communicative ability than form-focused activities.
23.	Students' attention should be drawn to the linguistic system of Arabic through direct teaching of the structures.
24.	Group work cannot increase the amount of Arabic practice because the students tend to use their native language while working in groups.
25.	Teacher correction should be provided only when it is required for effective communication.
26.	Pair work is not an effective means of improving communication skills in Arabic.
27.	Helping students develop the use of context-appropriate language should be the primary goal of language teaching.
28.	Students' language performance should be primarily judged by their grammatical correctness.
29.	To learn how to communicate effectively, a considerable amount of time should be spent on grammatical explanations.
30.	Since students have little information about the language, they should not be allowed to correct their peers' mistakes.
31.	Most of the interaction in the class should be from students to students; not from teachers to students.
32.	A teacher-directed class will motivate students to work productively with Arabic.
33.	Grammar teaching may be included in a lesson as a means of communication, not as the main goal of teaching.
34.	Group work increases the quantity of oral/aural language practice. .....
35.	Correction should be mainly focused on the mistakes in language structures.
36.	Pair work cannot create a motivating environment to use Arabic.