

Aspects of Japanese EFL teachers' cognitions on communicative language teaching (CLT)

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Communicative language teaching (CLT) has been promoted since the 1980s as an effective language teaching method, which 'sets as its goal the teaching of communicative competence' (Richards, 2006:2). However, it is still not clear how EFL teachers view CLT or make use of CLT activities in their classrooms. This symposium aims to explore Japanese EFL teachers' cognitions regarding CLT, in addition to providing some insight into the extent to which they are making use of CLT. We begin with a survey study on teachers' awareness of CLT between Japan and Finland. Next, we look closely at Japanese high school teachers' beliefs and practices regarding CLT, introducing data from an investigation of those beliefs and practices within the context of relevant socio-educational factors. A multi-methods approach was used and a path model based on Borg's (2003) conceptual framework of teacher cognition was tested. Findings revealed that the teachers' (B) learning experiences, in-service training, and contextual factors influenced their beliefs and practices. Then, we look at data collected from case studies of learners and teachers who have experienced CLT. The data derived from interviews, discussions, surveys, and class observations. Several cases of college students who learned English in high schools and of high school teachers who participated in a teacher workshop are explored. We finally report on research findings of a qualitative case study of one EFL teacher working in a junior-high school. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore her perception of CLT, and all interviews were recorded and transcribed for data analysis. Data analysis was done using the Grounded Theory Approach (GTA). This symposium can provide ideas of how CLT should be updated for the current EFL context in accordance with the application of contemporary language theories to EFL teaching. We will review the meaning of CLT from language teacher cognition research.

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