In-Service EFL Teachers’ Views of Form-Focused Instruction (FFI) and Communicative Meaning-Oriented Instruction (MOI): The Case of Jordan

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Abstract
Understanding EFL/ESL teachers’ awareness of how language learning/teaching should be ideally carried out has become a major theme in investigations addressing a context that has recently been dominated by the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach. CLT has nurtured some other language teaching approaches adopting the same philosophy, among which meaning-oriented instruction (MOI), as opposed to form-focused instruction (FFI), is one. This study aimed at investigating 300 Jordanian EFL teachers’ attitudes toward, beliefs about and actual implementation of, MOI and FFI using a modified version of Savignon and Wang’s (2003) questionnaire and interviews. The results indicated an insufficient shift from FFI experienced under traditional approaches toward a more communicative type of instruction among Jordanian EFL teachers. Whereas teachers' practice of FFI was comparable to their beliefs about it, there was a gap between teachers' positive beliefs toward MOI and their low practice frequency of it. Teachers' years of experience were not in favor of CLT adoption, nor were their higher academic qualifications. Private school teachers held higher positive beliefs about MOI and reported higher use frequency. Accordingly, the study suggests that urgent modifications be made at the level of pre-service and in-service training programs.

Keywords: EFL instruction, Form-Focused Instruction, Meaning-Oriented Instruction, EFL Teachers’ Beliefs

1. Introduction
One prevalent theme in applied linguistics and EFL/ESL instruction theory has been the recognition of the significance of exploring teachers’ cognitive aspects of how the language learning/teaching process should ideally take place (McDonough, 2002). Emancipating from this is the study of not only teachers’ thoughts, judgments, and decisions but also how these influence their actual implementation
of language instruction (Johnson, 1992). According to Thompson (1992), teachers’ beliefs, implicit assumptions about students’ learning, teachers’ roles, subject-matter knowledge, and curriculum depend to a great extent on experiences shared within their culture and are not easy to change. According to Pajares (1992), some assumptions are basic in studies addressing teachers’ beliefs. These include that beliefs vary in their incontrovertibility; they are established as soon as a student gets to college, they are subject to minimal change in later stages, and they play a major role in determining how teachers go about teaching.

Whereas the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and practices could be consistent, it shouldn't be neglected that although teachers attempt to implement their beliefs in class, the complexity of sociocultural and institutional factors such as the teachers’ life experiences, school contexts, and economic and political policies might constrain their practices. Therefore, classroom practices do not necessarily mirror teachers' beliefs about language instruction, for theory and practice are often at odds (Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999, Savignon, 2003) due to a variety of intervening factors that include, among others, the EFL exam policy, lack of time, support and resources, mismatch between teacher purposes and students’ expectations and needs, and large class size (Abdelhafez, 2010).

At the time, CLT is prevalent not only as it is cited as the source of guiding methodology in a plethora of course books and other teaching resources but also as it has nurtured some other language teaching approaches that adopt the same philosophy (Richards, 2006). Especially at an era of globalization, EFL teachers are under an increasing demand to equip students with the communicative competence deemed necessary for efficient communication. This, in turn, requires teachers to not only hold strong, positive beliefs and develop positive attitudes toward communicative language teaching (CLT) but also put its principles into actual implementation. Despite the paramount significance of CLT and putting its principles into practice, prominent scholars in the area of language pedagogy (e.g., Savignon, 2007) state that communicative competence "continues to represent a concept that attracts researchers and curriculum developers, offering a study framework for integrating linguistic theory, research, and teaching practice" (p. 261). Savignon (2007) adds that still there is noticeable confusion among both EFL learners and teachers pertinent to what CLT means.

In 1971, Hymes, motivated by Chomsky's ideal native speaker's linguistic competence, introduced the term communicative competence to denote the socially contextualized use of language (Savignon, 1991). The latter term was used by Savignon (1972) to represent the ability of classroom language learners to engage in speaking and meaning-making as contrasted to rote-learning and memorization of dialogues or to perform on tests based on grammatical knowledge. This was an invitation for learners to take risk through coping strategies that involve asking for information, seeking explanations, and whatever (linguistic or non-linguistic) tools they may have at their disposal towards negotiation of meaning. These strategies led to Canale and Swain's (1980) strategic competence that later constituted a benchmark in extending language teaching methodology beyond the sentence-level orientation promoted by Audioingualism. Grammatical (linguistic) competence, sociolinguistic (rules of usage) competence, strategic competence, and, later in 1983, discourse competence were identified as the components of communicative competence (Savignon, 2007).

Building on CLT principles, Renandya et al. (1999) distinguish between a form-focused traditional instructional (FFI) paradigm and a meaning-oriented instruction (MOI) communicative one. The first is characterized by the following eight characteristics: (a) focus on language, (b) teacher-centeredness, (c) isolated skills, (d) focus on accuracy, (e) discrete-point tests, (f) traditional tests, (g) emphasis on product, and (h) individual learning. In contrast, the current communicative paradigm is represented by a different set of characteristics: (a) focus on communication, (b) learner-centeredness, (c) integrated skills, (d) focus on fluency, (e) holistic tests, (f) authentic assessment, (g) emphasis on process, and (h) cooperative learning. CLT, therefore, emphasizes learning how to communicate in a language through ample interaction in that language, adopting authentic materials, providing the learner with an opportunity to focus on the language as well as on the learning process, enhancing the learners' personal experiences as integral components of the classroom learning, and linking both the
classroom language learning and the off-classroom activities (Nunan, 1991). So said, CLT, as has been misperceived by many, is not limited to face-to-face communication, nor is it confounded to oral communication; it applies to reading and writing as well, as long as learners are involved in meaning expression, interpretation, and negotiation. It does not also aim to dictate specific procedures or a particular type of activities (Savignon, 2007). Additionally, unlike form-focused, grammar-oriented teaching, CLT has at its heart developing students' communicative competence (Richards & Rogers, 1986).

Effective implementation of CLT principles in EFL instruction has been debatable during the last few years due to setting-mandated factors. Hip (2007), for example, introduces the example of Vietnam where English language students, who share the same mother tongue, lack the immediate need to use English in the classroom, which also extends to outside the classroom. Such scenario necessitates that EFL teachers create an environment that invokes students' acquisition through in-class activities that compensate the shortage of authentic communication outside the classroom boundaries. So understood, the teacher's role lies not in finding a better method as much as it lies in identifying the instructional practices, strategies, and activities that would better fit the immediate, local context of that teacher and learners.

2. Literature Review
Research addressing the extent to which CLT principles are carried out in EFL settings suggests some discrepancy between what teachers prefer and actually apply in their instruction. For example, Wong (1998) used both surveys and follow-up interviews to explore the implementation level of CLT principles and the hindering factors against such implementation among a sample of 114 EFL teachers representing 12 secondary schools in Hong Kong. The results revealed that despite EFL teachers' reported preference of CLT, their instructional practices leaned more toward traditional teaching methods. Outdated syllabi, Wong pointed out, may not be in favor of CLT implementation. Similar findings were reported by Xiaoqing (2003) following an exploration of Chinese EFL teachers' attitudes toward, and implementation of, CLT. Xiaoqing reported that despite teachers' positive attitudes toward CLT, only one of four teachers who claimed following the CLT approach in their classrooms proved to be using its weak version, while the other three failed to do so due to misconceptions of CLT and situational constraints (e.g., grammar-based textbooks imposed on teachers students' low language proficiency level). Li (1998) also reported that EFL teachers' low English proficiency, lack of adequate training, misconceptions about CLT, and deficiency in strategic and sociolinguistic competences are among the difficulties encountered in Korea.

In the same vein, Doukas (1996) surveyed 14 Greek English language teachers’ attitudes toward CLT and compared these with their observed actual instructional practice. The findings showed significant discrepancy between teachers’ beliefs, which agreed with CLT principles, and their actual practice, which deviated from CLT prescriptions; both communicative and non-communicative teaching practices were implemented with dominant FFI. These findings are comparable to those of Razmjoo and Riazi's (2006) study that targeted both beliefs and practices of two EFL teacher groups; namely those of high schools and institutes. The results showed that despite the fact that both teacher groups reported holding positive perceptions toward CLT, their actual observed implementation revealed that whereas high school teachers rarely committed themselves to CLT principles, institute counterparts’ performance represented "quasi-CLT" instruction. Sato and Kleinsasser (1999) also documented inservice Japanese L2 teachers' views and practices of CLT in Australia. The findings showed over-reliance by these teachers on their personal experiences, rather than on the extant literature or their education, in developing their evolving notion of CLT, and so did their instructional practices.

Coskun's (2011) case study of two EFL teachers’ attitudes in Turkey toward, and the application of, CLT indicated a discrepancy between reported attitudes and actual classroom practices.
The main challenges in CLT implementation, the teachers reported, stemmed from large student numbers, traditional grammar-based examinations, and the little time for communicative materials preparation.

Additionally, Nazari (2007) carried out a qualitative study on three public, high-school Iranian EFL teachers to explore the extent to which those teachers were aware of the difference between Chomsky’s and Hymes’ linguistic competence and Dubin’s ideological communicative competence in terms of both perceptions and practice. The results showed those teachers had indistinct views about communicative and non-communicative language teaching, which extended to their actual in-class teaching practice. This was evident in adopting traditional teaching practices, which requires, according to Nazari, raising EFL teachers’ awareness toward a broader meaning of communicative competence that addresses not only a linguistic view but, more importantly, an ideological communicative one.

Bataineh, Bataineh, and Thabet (2011) used a diagnostic questionnaire and classroom observations to assess 172 Yemeni EFL teachers’ knowledge of CLT. Their findings suggested that despite these teachers’ fair knowledge of CLT principles, their observed instruction was, for the most part, structure-based. CLT, the researchers noted, was minimally embraced “but not so much as a result of hypocrisy or lack of inclination as of fairly limited teachers’ knowledge of the theoretical principles of the approach” (p. 865).

At a more local level, Alkhayyat (2009) used a questionnaire and classroom observation to explore the extent to which Jordanian EFL teachers are aware of some characteristics of CLT and their implementation level of these characteristics. The results revealed that the study participants “had good knowledge ... in different degrees” (p.399) of CLT characteristics despite the hindering obstacles EFL teachers had in CLT implementation. Significant differences were reported in association with (a) the teaching experience, in favor of above-15-year-experience teachers and (b) gender, in favor of male teachers. Alkhayyat recommended that “Similar survey research in other parts of Jordan” be carried out (p.410). Al-Afeef (2002) also examined Jordanian EFL teachers’ attitudes toward, and the implementation of, CLT in their instruction in Jerash District. The results revealed that the surveyed sample reported fairly favorable attitudes and "nearly almost" use frequency of CLT characteristics. Using Wang’s (2009) Teacher Beliefs questionnaire, Abu Qbeita (n.d.) investigated the beliefs held by 100 EFL kindergarten teachers about early childhood English education in a southern Jordanian governorate, Ma’an. Results showed that teachers held "low" beliefs, and these beliefs varied significantly according to teachers’ experience (in favor of more experienced teachers) and school type (in favor of private-school teachers). No differences were associated with variability in teachers' qualifications.

The educational system of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the setting where this study is carried out, has not been independent of the evolution EFL teaching methodology has undergone all over the globe. Especially recently, there has been an increasing awareness in the Jordanian society of the importance English has as an international language (Alkhawaldeh, 2010) learning which can bring economic, educational, and sociocultural benefits (McKay, 2008). English is also viewed by Jordanians as the future language whose mastery would better individuals' opportunities in education, business and trade. Learning English is also viewed by Jordanian undergraduates as an inevitable duty at a national level to protect Jordan from cultural backwardness (Al-Haq & Al-Masaeid, 2009).

3. Research Problem
Despite Jordanian citizens’ increasing awareness that lack of English communicative competence may influence their lives negatively, resulting in reduction of employment quality, communication, and general employment (Bani Abdo & Breen, 2010), which is reflected in attempts to transit from the 1960s’ traditional approaches and the 1970s’ structural approaches toward a CLT approach since the mid-1980s, recent findings of research studies suggest that EFL instruction in Jordan is not without
limitations. Thus, besides learner-related constraints manifest in lack of exposure to English by native speakers, preference to the use of Arabic in the EFL classroom, lack of motivation, and inappropriateness of EFL curricula used in academic institutions (Jdetawy, 2011), the teaching methods adopted are not of great effectiveness. As has pointed out by Bani Abdo & Breen (2010), a major challenge to effective EFL instruction in Jordan is the fact that “many EFL instructors are not sufficiently educated, equipped, and/or prepared to accommodate and understand the unique linguistic learning styles of some native Jordanian students” (p. 41). And the presumption, they add, that teachers would easily be able to exercise effective pedagogical strategies with learners from their own country is hardly true since the struggle some Jordanian students have in learning English is attributed partially to failure in applying effective EFL teaching methods.

This failure seems to be the result of either insufficient planning manifest in lack of clear understanding at a national level of where the problem lies, or inadequate interventions on behalf of the Ministry of Education. Towards an analysis of the status quo, a principal legitimate question, which might extend to some other EFL settings as well, addresses who can become an EFL teacher, and how prepared that person for fulfilling the assumed role that person is. The plan in Jordan was that faculties of education prepare undergraduates to become teachers through enrollment in programs that cover both knowledge of the language and knowledge of teaching methodology principles. English departments, according to this plan, are not prepared solely for becoming teachers, but they might upon obtaining an educational degree, i.e., higher Diploma in Education. During the last decade, however, EFL teacher-preparation programs were cancelled, justified by findings suggesting that such programs graduated teachers who could master neither the language nor the teaching methodology aspect. Therefore, those filtering into the EFL teaching career are BA holders in English Language, English Language and Literature, or Applied Linguistics. The fact is that some English undergraduate programs have none of the English language teaching methodology courses as a core (or obligatory) course. It is questionable, therefore, whether their command of English qualifies them to be effective “EFL teachers.” Thus—regardless of why—the Ministry of Higher Education, through the program offerings especially at the undergraduate level, is of little help to the Ministry of Education. The cycle continues when those graduates start their teaching profession. The only training they undergo is the newly-appointed teacher training workshops, which, unfortunately, offer general effective teaching principles regardless of the school subject taught. EFL teachers, in conclusion, have to make do with what they get from these workshops. Within this context, it is beneficial to understand how EFL teachers conceive of CLT as an influential framework in guiding their practice.

Thus, this study investigated Jordanian EFL teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and instructional practice associated with FFI and MOI. It also addressed whether there are statistically significant differences (alpha=.05) in teachers' beliefs and actual instructional practices associated with the two instruction types according to some teacher variables (qualification, experience, school type (public or private), and school level taught (basic, secondary, or both)).

4. Research Method

4.1. Participants

The participants of this study were 300 (59% female and 41% male) EFL teachers selected randomly from public (57%) and private (43%) schools in two central cities in Jordan. 70% of the participants had a B.A. and 30% had higher academic qualifications. 47% of the participants had taught English for five years or less, 28% for six-ten, and 25% for eleven years and more. In terms of the grades taught, 37% of the participants had taught English at the basic level, 40% at the secondary level, and 23% had taught both levels.
4.2. Instrument

This study used a mixed method design; a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Due to its comprehensiveness to the different domains associated with CLT instruction, a modified version of Savignon and Wang’s (2003) questionnaire was used in this study for data collection. Using this instrument was also intended for yielding comparable findings since it was adopted in other EFL settings. Given that Savignon and Wang administered the original questionnaire in Chinese and translated it into English, and since the current study targeted EFL teachers, it was believed that there would be no ambiguity resulting from administering the questionnaire in English.

Some modifications were made to the original questionnaire, however (see the Appendix). Thus, whereas responses in the original questionnaire used a 7-point Likert format, the current study adopted a four-point Likert scale format (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, and 4=strongly agree) in order to avoid any ambiguity that would arise in interpretation since the original 7-point format was devoid of labels indicating what the values 2-6 stood for, in addition to avoiding negative values in the possible responses. Besides, whereas the original questionnaire had a huge number of items (the same items associated with beliefs, attitudes and practices were repeated to yield responses from Senior high school or Junior high school), towards avoiding repetition the questionnaire in the current study asked teachers to indicate the grade level(s) each taught as an independent variable. Additionally, in addition to addressing students, as Savignon and Wong (2003) did, the instrument in the current study was adapted to suit EFL teachers.

To ensure validity of the questionnaire and appropriateness for the Jordanian setting, an adapted version was presented to a panel of three professors with expertise in EFL/ESL instruction, two experienced English language supervisors and two English teachers. To ensure reliability, the adapted questionnaire was distributed to 40 teachers who were later excluded from the study sample. Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated yielding the following values: FFI practice (.66), MOI practice (.79), FFI attitudes (.73), MOI attitudes (.77), FFI attitudes (.83), and MOI attitudes (.80). The questionnaire was administered to, and collected from, teachers in their schools. Filled-up questionnaires were collected and analyzed using SPSS. Analyses were carried out using both descriptive (mainly mean and standard deviation values) and referential statistics (t-tests and ANOVA). Additionally, based on information collected using the questionnaire, which covered aspects pertinent to teachers’ beliefs and reported practice, yet falling short behind giving full explanations for the questionnaire results, 10 EFL teachers were assigned for semi-structured interviews.

5. Results
5.1. Teachers’ Views about FFI and MOI

This study addressed EFL teachers’ beliefs about, attitudes toward, and practice of two instruction types: MOI and FFI. The results of paired samples t-test showed that the mean difference in teachers’ responses pertinent to each of their beliefs, attitudes, and reported practice of the two instruction types was statistically significant in favor of MOI instruction, as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Paired Samples Test for FFI and MOI in terms of attitudes, beliefs, and practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S. D.</td>
<td>Std. Error Mean</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>FFI - MOI Attitudes</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>FFI - MOI Beliefs</td>
<td>-.44</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 3</td>
<td>FFI - MOI Practice</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
A look at teachers’ mean responses (Table 2) indicates that they held stronger beliefs, more positive attitudes, and more practice associated with MOI compared to FFI. The sharpest contrast in teachers’ views relevant to the two instruction types lied in beliefs. Teachers believed strongly that language classroom should be communication-focused, rather than grammar-focused. They also believed that languages are learned mainly through focusing on the communicative aspect as opposed to memorization of grammar rules and practice of sentence drilling. Students’ trial-and-error attempts to communicate in English, the teachers believed, help in learning English in contrast to frequent use of L1 (Arabic) in the English class for better understanding of lessons. These preferences in beliefs were relatively mirrored in teachers’ attitudes and frequent practice of MOI.

Table 2: Teachers’ attitudes, beliefs, and practice associated with MOI and FFI according to descending order.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Mean/4.00</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about Meaning-Oriented Instruction</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice of Meaning-Oriented Instruction</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward Meaning-Oriented Instruction</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice of Form-Focused Instruction</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward Form-Focused Instruction</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about Form-Focused Instruction</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whereas a comparison between teachers’ responses associated with the two instruction types is clear in favor of MOI, a look at their responses associated with each instruction type independently can be beneficial. Noticeably, there is a clear gap between teachers’ beliefs about MOI, on the one hand, and their practice of, and attitudes toward, the same instruction type. That is, whereas teachers believed strongly that MOI instruction is more effective, their practice did not reflect their strong beliefs. On the other hand, teachers’ practice of the other type of instruction, FFI, was relatively higher than their beliefs and attitudes. More precisely, whereas the mean responses associated with FFI ranged between 2.68 (practice) and 2.64 (beliefs), there was a relatively higher difference between teachers' beliefs about MOI (M= 3.08, SD=.65) and practice of it (M=2.92, SD=.58). This invited the researchers to run paired samples t-test to see whether the difference between teachers’ beliefs about MOI and their practice of it was statistically significant. The results were confirmatory i.e., the difference was statistically significant, t (299) = -9.459, p < .001, in favor of beliefs.

Teachers’ responses on individual items indicate that the most common practices reported were allowing students' trial-and-error attempts to communicate in English (M= 3.03, SD=.92) and focus on communication with the introduction of grammar explanations when necessary (M= 3.02, SD=.86). Lower mean values were associated with asking students to do sentence drilling or repeat sentences (M=2.57, SD=1.02) as well as using Arabic in the classroom (M=2.46, SD= 1.11). Whereas the most frequent instructional activities the teachers reported lean more toward MOI, they still reported that their English instruction was not independent of grammar focus (M=2.85, SD=.94) or Arabic use.

The highest positive attitudes teachers held were associated with creating an atmosphere that encourages students to use English in class (M=3.06, SD=.87) and carrying out communicative activities so that students could interact with peers in English (M=3.03, SD=.83). Lower attitudes were associated with passive learning in which students are not allowed to assume an active role in their learning (M= 2.64, SD=.98), asking students to practice sentence drilling and repeating sentences (M=2.60, SD=.92), and spending much of the class time in explaining and practicing grammar rules. (M=2.59, SD=1.06).

5.2. Teacher Qualification

The impact of teachers’ qualification (BA compared to Higher Diploma and above) on their reported beliefs, attitudes and practice associated with each of the two instruction types individually was tested
using $t$-test. The two teacher groups reported comparable beliefs, attitudes and use frequency associated with MOI. Nonetheless, pertinent to FFI, the results suggested statistically significant differences in teachers’ beliefs, $t (298) = -2.12$, $p=.03$, and attitudes, $t (298) = -2.10$, $p=.03$. Teachers with qualifications higher than BA ($M= 2.81$, $SD=.62$) held stronger positive beliefs than did BA holders ($M= 2.60$, $SD=.62$), and their attitudes toward FFI ($M=2.81$, $SD=.55$) were more positive than BA holders' ($M= 2.62$, $SD=.58$). Amazingly, however, when it came to practice, those teachers with qualifications higher than BA reported noticeable lower, though non-significant, use frequency of FFI than did BA holders ($M=2.62$, $SD=.79$, $M=2.69$, $SD=.57$, respectively). These results suggest that there seems to be an agreement among teachers on MOI in terms of attitudes, beliefs, and practice regardless of their qualification. However, there seems to be little agreement associated with FFI.

5.3. School Type

The results of independent sample $t$-test indicated that there were statistically significant differences associated with the school type in teachers’ beliefs about MOI, $t (298) = 4.167$, $p<.001$, attitudes toward MOI, $t (54) = 3.585$, $p<.001$ and reported practice of MOI, $t(298) = 4.018$, $p<.001$ in favor of private school teachers. There was no significant difference associated with FFI in attitudes, beliefs, or practice. The mean response for teachers’ attitudes toward, beliefs about, and practice of MOI by private school teachers were: $M=3.04$, $SD=.51$; $M=3.25$, $SD=.54$; $M=3.07$, $SD=.51$ compared to $M=2.80$, $SD=.62$; $M=2.94$, $SD=.68$; $M=2.80$, $SD=.60$, respectively.

5.4. Teaching Experience

The results of ANOVA indicated there were differences in teachers’ attitudes toward each of FFI, $F (2, 297) = 12.98$, $p<.001$, and MOI, $F (2, 297) = 3.629$, $p=.03$. This extends to their beliefs about FFI, $F (2, 297) = 4.380$, $p=.013$, as well as to their practice of MOI, $F (2, 297) = 3.742$, $p=.03$. The results of multiple comparisons, using Bonferroni, revealed that teachers with an experience of 11 years and above ($M= 2.94$, $SD=.63$) held significantly stronger attitudes toward FFI than did teachers with 5-year experience or less ($M=2.53$, $SD=.56$). Teachers with long experience also reported stronger beliefs about FFI ($M= 2.80$, $SD=.56$) compared to novice teachers ($M=2.50$, $SD=.60$). On the other hand, novice teachers ($M= 2.82$, $SD=.63$) reported significantly higher use frequency of MOI than experienced teachers ($M= 3.00$, $SD=.50$). Interview results support these differences, with a novice teacher reporting a mismatch between his and experienced teachers’ views about CLT, “You’re just beginning to teach English. As time passes, you will realize the difference between what works and what doesn’t. More importantly, you will realize that you can’t change the educational system to really use CLT.”

5.5. Grade Level Taught

The results of ANOVA indicated statistically significant differences in teachers' attitudes toward MOI, $F (2, 297) = 5.40$, $p=.005$, and their practice of this instruction type, $F (2, 297) = 13.40$, $p<.001$. Post hoc analysis, using Bonferroni, revealed that basic-school teachers reported significantly lower attitudes toward MOI ($M=2.77$, $SD=.56$) compared to both secondary school teachers ($M=2.97$, $SD=.58$) and teachers who taught both levels ($M=3.08$, $SD=.64$). This extends to practicing MOI as well where basic school teachers ($M=2.71$, $SD=.57$) reported significantly lower use frequency than did secondary-level teachers ($M=3.04$, $SD=.53$) and teachers of both levels ($M=3.08$, $SD=.64$).

6. Discussion

6.1. Teachers’ Views about FFI and MOI

The results of this study indicate that there is an insufficient shift from FFI English instruction experienced under traditional approaches toward a more communicative type of instruction among
Jordanian EFL teachers. This reflects that the efforts made by the Ministry of Education aimed at encouraging EFL teachers to adopt more contemporary approaches in their instruction have been slim and short of developing teachers’ adoption of CLT. As the results show, the widest gap in teachers’ responses pertinent to the two instruction types associated with their beliefs hints clearly to an area where further intervention is sought. That is, there is a clear need for work on helping EFL teachers implement the principles of CLT especially since their beliefs about it sharply contrast those associated with FFI. This finding goes in accordance with the findings of other studies (e.g., Asassfeh et al., 2012) addressing learners’ beliefs and practice of CLT showing that whereas EFL teachers’ actual instructional practices associated with FFI were close from meeting learners’ preferences, the gap was much wider when it came to fulfilling students’ needs associated with MOI. Thus, whereas teachers strongly believe that the language learning experience should be characterized by communicative-focus, their actual practice falls short behind reflecting such belief; still there is a good amount of focus on grammar, rote learning, and L1 use in the target language classroom. This finding goes in congruence with what other researchers (e.g., Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999, Savignon, 2003) have suggested: theoretical beliefs and practice are not necessarily in concordance. And even though EFL teachers express their appreciation for CLT, they resort to traditional teaching methods when it comes to actual implementation (Le, 2000). An important task for educators, accordingly, lies in identifying reasons that impede materializing beliefs, especially when such beliefs are in the positive direction.

As has been pointed out above, EFL teacher interviews in the current study suggest that practicality is a core factor to consider. Clearly, in a centralized educational system, like Jordan’s, where teachers have little to say in terms of what content to cover during a specified period of time, they find themselves under time pressure, which they report, invites them to adopt more traditional teaching approaches and avoid communicative activities. As one of the teachers puts it, “Why should I waste my students’ time and mine helping them infer a grammatical rule when I can introduce it in seconds and save some time for them to practice it?” Such response goes in line with what others (e.g., Coskun, 2011; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999, p. 508) have reported. According to Sato and Kleinsasser (1999), "it appeared that the lack of availability of CLT activities (or time to create them) caused these teachers practically to ignore them. Time was not what these teachers had, so CLT activities were not a priority. This low priority was apparent in the scarcity of CLT activities (of any kind) seen during observations" (p. 508).

Testing steering teaching proves itself true in this scenario; the time pressure teachers perceive necessitates that they cover the content in preparation for tests at the expense of CLT implementation. Their rule-based instruction, characterized by teaching-to-the test, dictates that focus be on what counts for the purpose of helping learners pass. The argument goes on suggesting that whatever that does not filter into students’ paper-based assessment is unnecessary. And since paper-based exams are the common measurement and assessment tool, fallacy of inadequate development of learners’ communicative competence is undisputed.

At another front, Al-Shidhani (2008) has noted that “It would be interesting to explore how teachers reach conclusions about what their learners prefer and what impact on recently teachers’ practices their views about their learners’ preferences have” (p. 189) with results suggesting “possible tensions between what teachers of English feel is desirable in practice …, what their learners prefer, and what happens in the classroom” (p.190). Thus, another factor behind EFL teachers’ low level of commitment to MOI principles, our interviewees suggested, lies in their (probably unqualified) presumptions that: (a) learners have low integrative motivation; they are not interested in learning the language for communicative purposes as much as they are motivated by heuristic and instrumental factors; and (b) learners, even the few ones with an integrative motivation, are incapable of meeting the requirements of CLT whose implementation requires active involvement in the learning process, self expression, and negotiation of meaning. Yet a careful look at these assumptions reveals that the challenges that encounter CLT implementation at a conceptual level are no less important than those at a procedural one. EFL teachers probably have not been made fully aware of the fact that teaching a
language is drastically different from teaching a school subject such as math or physics. Communication, the target of EFL instruction, is itself the tool towards the target.

EFL teachers’ proficiency level can be an additional factor behind their reluctance to adopt CLT principles. According to AL-Mekhlafi (2007, p. 3), EFL teachers, particularly in countries where English is a foreign, rather than a second, language “lack the adequate competencies in language proficiency skills, grammar, linguistics, culture and literature.” They, as has been described by Savignon (2007) lack both competence and confidence. One of our interviewees is a case in point; a teacher of English, about to earn the Master’s degree, reported failing the TOEFL test many times.

6.2. Teacher Qualification

It should be recalled that the two teacher groups reported comparable beliefs, attitudes and use frequency associated with MOI, yet there were significant differences in teachers’ beliefs and attitudes toward FFI in favor of teachers with qualifications higher than BA.

An association seems to exist between the impact of teachers’ qualification and teaching experience on their reported responses. Contrary to our expectations, teachers with higher qualifications and more experience held stronger beliefs and more positive attitudes toward FFI. This finding is interpretable in light of findings (e.g., Abu Qbeita, n.d.; Bataineh, Bataineh, & Thabet, 2011; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999) suggesting that regardless of their qualifications or training received, EFL teachers’ long history as being brought up according to FFI traditions plays a detrimental role in shaping not only their attitudes and beliefs but also their practice of FFI. As Bataineh, Bataineh, and Thabet (2011) have reported about EFL teachers in Yemen, teachers are more inclined toward structure-based than CLT’s principles, especially knowing that many of these teachers had started their career before the advent of CLT in some EFL contexts. Abu Qbeita (n.d) also reported that there were no significant differences in Jordanian kindergarten teachers’ beliefs about CLT in early childhood English education attributed to teachers’ academic qualifications. This stated, the effectiveness of higher study programs, regretfully, falls short behind shaping and enhancing teachers’ skills and experiences, which extends to in-service training programs that, when available, seem to play a minimal role in achieving their target as they do not emphasize good and effective teaching techniques (AL-Wreikat & Bin Abdullah, 2010), which in turn necessitates an investigation of the adequacy of such programs.

6.3. School Type

The results pertinent to the impact of school type showed private-school teachers held stronger positive beliefs and attitudes and reported higher use frequency of MOI, with no statistically significant differences associated with the second instruction type. These results could be justified on two grounds. First, it is not unfair to say that private school teachers’ professional future is linked to the financial status and reputation of the schools they serve. One factor they count on in keeping students’ enrollment high is through developing students’ foreign tongue backed up by the fact that families are pro-foreign language learning. So said, these schools are more likely to adopt approaches and methods that would enable them to achieve their goals, CLT being the state-of-the-art in this arena. Additionally, private-school teachers seem to feel they are at a more stake; unless they meet the requirements, they will not get their pay checks. This is not intended to suggest that public-school teachers lack motivation as much it suggests that they enjoy a higher level of job security. Furthermore, the decision-making-and-taking cycle in private schools is much shorter than its equivalent in public schools. Decisions related to improving teaching methods, strategies, techniques, and activities are made and taken at the spot, which could play a facilitative role in opening a wider room for private schools towards CLT adoption.
6.4. Teaching Experience

The results pertinent to teachers’ experience in the current study draw a complex picture; experienced teachers had higher preference to FFI, and novice teachers reported higher use frequency of MOI. Experience, according to these results, does not buy any in favor of CLT. Several possibilities might stand behind these results. The first probably lies in what Pajares (1992) suggests, namely that beliefs vary in their incontrovertibility; they are established as soon as a student gets to college; they are subject to minimal change in later stages; and they play a major role in determining how teachers go about teaching. Accordingly, the majority of experienced teachers had probably graduated at a time when CLT had not gained the popularity it enjoys nowadays. Those teachers, in light of this possible explanation, did not have sufficient exposure to CLT in their college education, and, worse, probably were not taught as school learners according to the type of instruction that integrates CLT principles. This explanation seems plausible especially given facts from experienced administrators in the Ministry of Education suggesting that the only in-service training EFL teachers are subjected to is that targeting newly appointed teachers, which, unfortunately, addresses general educational issues with the target audience in those sessions being all newly appointed ones regardless of the school subjects they teach. A legitimate question, accordingly, amounts to the institutionalized source(s) of knowledge to which EFL teachers have access. Second, a line can be drawn between years of service and experience. Clearly, in a case where, as described by Sato (2000), teachers have insufficient exposure to new teaching practices due to emphasis on teaching the existing curriculum in much the same way for the common test and to maintain classroom management, teachers hardly perceived the need for professional development or coming up with innovative instructional practice. It is implicit in Sato’s findings that time does not buy that much experience when the teaching practice is repetitive, lacking exchange of knowledge and experience. In absence of reflective practice, years of service become distinct from experience. Second, the result that novice teachers reported a higher level of adoption to CLT, MOI principles, can be interpreted in light of research findings (e.g., Xiaoqing, 2003) suggesting a possible discrepancy between EFL teachers’ reported practice and observed instruction. One limitation in the current study is dependence on teachers’ reported practice and lack of observation. Additionally, it is probable that the experienced teachers’ stronger beliefs about FFI are due to their lack of faith in MOI because of the test-based system they serve in. They realize first hand that the system does not host CLT practices—a fresh lesson graduates have probably not yet confronted. These findings about the role of experience, it should be noted, contradict Alkhayyat’s (2009) finding suggesting that EFL Jordanian teachers “had good knowledge ... in different degrees” (p.399) of CLT characteristics with of 15-year-experience teachers possessing more knowledge about CLT principles than those with a smaller number of teaching years, a contradiction that is interpretable in light of understanding that Alkhayyat’s operational definition of CLT was a general one.

6.5. Grade Level Taught

The results showed that EFL teachers who taught at the secondary level and those who taught at both basic and secondary levels held significantly stronger positive beliefs about MOI and reported higher use frequency of this instruction type compared to basic-school teachers. Although it would look logical for secondary school teachers to focus on FFI in preparing their students for the General Secondary School Certificate Exam (tawjihi in Arabic), the results of this study suggest otherwise. One plausible interpretation is the teachers' possible belief that the frequent repetition of grammatical forms and rules during earlier years of teaching helped in developing the learners' grammatical competence ending up in saving more time for MOI in their classes. Additionally, given the learners' accumulative knowledge about the linguistic system of English, secondary grade teachers, compared to their fellows teaching basic grades, feel at more ease following MOI guidelines and implementing CLT principles. Sato and Kleinsasser (1999), for example, suggest that basic-school teachers focus on form and
discipline, shying away from CLT activities, relegating them to more advanced language learning levels.

7. Summary and Concluding Remarks
Research emphasizes the importance of understanding teacher’ beliefs and its relationship with their actual instructional practice, on the one hand, and the prevalence of CLT as an internationally recommended approach in language instruction, on the other hand. This study investigated Jordanian EFL teachers’ attitudes, beliefs and implementation of FFI and MOI revealing that the slight shift towards CLT is insufficient for enabling those teachers to meet students’ communicative needs. Variability in teachers’ academic levels did not count as a decisive factor in shaping their beliefs about, or implementation of, CLT, nor did variability in their years of teaching. Private school teachers seem closer to CLT both conceptually and procedurally. Secondary school teachers showed higher preference to, and more adoption to CLT guidelines. These findings suggest that much has to be done towards more beneficial EFL teaching experiences, yet a systematic analysis of the status quo is of more necessity before an action is made. A call is urgent for Colleges of Education to take the role they have been founded for. Clearly, if these colleges do not contribute to preparing teachers, their whole existence, in principle, is questionable. It makes no sense that such colleges delegate the entire responsibility of preparing EFL teachers to English departments. English departments, by the same token, should realize the fact reality imposes; tomorrow’s EFL teachers are today’s college students whose preparation programs constitute a major component of the teacher-production cycle. This necessitates reshaping and restructuring the English undergraduate programs at public and private Jordanian universities to equip undergraduates with the knowledge, competencies, and skills deemed necessary for enabling them to carry out their future career responsibilities professionally. These departments should assess their program designs, effectiveness, content, type of instruction, and assessment, particularly when a BA holder in English language and literature is viewed as possessing the credentials that qualify him/her to be a teacher despite the fact that the curriculum in the majority of such undergraduate programs (at least in Jordan) hardly incorporate any courses that are related to EFL teaching methodology. More urgency is perceived due to the fact that there is a clear lack of any screening criteria prior to a teacher’s appointment; thus what determines who can become a teacher is solely the academic qualification when there is evidence that some EFL teachers have not managed to pass the TOEFL test. And it is not redundant to say that the socio-economic status of teachers, at least from those teachers’ view, is a case in point; teachers in Jordan went on a strike during the last few weeks demanding a salary raise.

This extends to in-service training programs that are inevitable for EFL teachers’ professional development whose content should be geared toward teachers’ actual instructional needs. Modeling sessions by experienced supervisors can be of great help for teachers, especially those preoccupied with the misconception that, as an experienced EFL teacher puts it, MOI is “nice to talk about, but impossible to implement.” Especially in a country like Jordan whose major capital and main investment lies in the human element, it is time for a national educational movement that helps stakeholders fulfill their aspiration to communicate English effectively at an era where English is expanding as a lingua franca. The Jordanian human capital can hardly continue competing regionally and internationally without fulfilling the requirements of effective communication skills. Put metaphorically, it is time for the localized Jordanian bird to continue flying internationally.

Finally, given this study findings related to the variability in teachers' years of service and academic qualifications and their impact on EFL teachers' beliefs about, and practice of, CLT, there seems a clear need for further research. This stated, observation of actual classroom instructional practice is important in supporting or refuting these findings.
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References


