A Study on the Roles of Teachers in CLT Classrooms by Metaphor Analysis

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Abstract

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach has been a well-recognized language pedagogy for decades in the world. While most of the research of CLT approach focuses on the nature of teaching and learning, teacher roles in CLT approach are less discussed and examined in the literature. The present study thus intends to look into the roles of teachers in a communicative English course through questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed to a group of 103 university students who had learnt a communicative English course at the university for at least one year. Students were required to use metaphors to indicate how they perceived their English teachers in the CLT course by completing the stem "*While learning the communicative English course, the English teacher of the course is (like) _____ because _____.*" After data were collected and later coded, categorized and analyzed, results showed that the roles of teachers in the communicative English course mainly fell into four groups: the cognitive category of providing knowledge, the affective category of interesting students with authentic learning materials and interactive learning activities, the managerial category of assisting, guiding, monitoring the learning processes as well as designing learning activities for the class, and finally the fourth group of mainly negative perceptions. The researcher holds that the role of providing and transmitting knowledge is a constituent part of the teacher role of CLT approach. Furthermore, the affective category and the managerial category unveil more inherent traits of CLT teacher roles and characterize more intrinsic features of CLT approach.

Key words: CLT; Teacher roles; Metaphor analysis; Cognitive category; Affective category; Managerial category

INTRODUCTION

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is a broad concept that encompasses a wide range of teaching methods and practices (Whong, 2013). It has been a well-established approach of language teaching in the world for several decades. Research shows that CLT has been studied from numerous perspectives and on different levels. Both theoretical discussions and empirical studies have revealed various features of CLT from the perspectives of language teaching, language learning, communicative competence, learners, coursebooks, pedagogies as well as linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and culture diversity (Bao & Du, 2015; Butler, 2005a; Choi, 2000; Ellis, 2003; Huang, 2013b; Leung & Lewkowicz, 2013; Li, 1984; Littlewood, 2007; Long, 1991; Oxford, 1990; Whong, 2013).

Similarly, in China, CLT has been widely adopted in the field of English teaching ever since 1980s (Li, 2001). Later in the 1990s, the Ministry of Education of China introduced the functional syllabus that requires the publication of a series of CLT textbooks and the implementation of CLT approach nationwide. Despite the popularity of the approach, the actual implementation of CLT in classrooms is not without problems and

challenges. Researchers, both at home and abroad have found that teachers, who are supposed to implement CLT approach and are using CLT textbooks in CLT courses, may be giving instructions that are far less than communicative (Anderson, 1993; Li, 1998; Bax, 2003; Butler, 2011; Littlewood, 2007; Carless, 2007; Chowdhury & Ha, 2008; Yu, 2001; Chang, 2011). According to Li (2001), CLT is learner-centered. It should be able to cater for the communicative needs of the learners and it requires the active performance of learners. However, when it comes to the classroom practice, "whether a CLT course can in fact be called a learner-centered one depends almost entirely on what the teacher actually does in the classroom". In other words, teachers do play critical roles in determining the actual language pedagogy in practice. Therefore, it is the purpose of this study to look into the roles of teachers in a communicative English course by examining through questionnaires how students perceived their teachers and what kind of roles the teachers have actually adopted in the communicative English course.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

To study the roles of teachers in communicative language teaching, it is necessary to understand first the CLT paradigms. According to Jacobs & Farrell (2003), "CLT involves a move away from the tenets of behaviorist psychology and structural linguistics toward cognitive, socio-cognitive psychology and more contextualized, meaning-based views of language". The researchers have summarized 10 paradigms of CLT. Among them are:

> *the change from teacher-centered instruction to learner-centered or learning-centered instruction*
> *a shift from product-oriented instruction to process-oriented instruction*
> *To help students to understand the purpose of learning and develop their own purposes*
> *A whole-to-part orientation, from meaningful whole texts to various features such as the choice of words, the organizational structure etc*
> *greater attention on the importance of meaning rather than drills and or other forms of rote learning*
> *A view of learning as a lifelong process, not something done to prepare for an exam.*
> *…*

Obviously, these paradigms are fundamental guidelines that can direct instructors to adhere to the approach in practice. On the one hand, the paradigms explain the nature of language learning and teaching and help practitioners to understand CLT approach better. On the other hand, they also establish the framework for the roles of not only learners but also teachers in CLT classrooms. Since teachers play critical roles in the implementation and realization of CLT approach in classrooms, it is necessary to scrutinize the roles of teachers in CLT courses within the framework of CLT paradigms. According to Li

(2001), Learning can only be done by learners themselves. CLT teachers then should not take over too much from the learners. Learners should read, write listen and speak for themselves. They should work out the meanings by doing all kinds of exercises, tasks and activities. They should be actively involved in learning rather than acting as passive recipients to be filled with words, sentences, expressions and rules that are readily provided by the teacher. In short, "the teacher should curb his teacher's instinct of explaining too much, prompting too much and correcting too much".

In traditional language teaching, teachers, who are supposed to provide the correct answers for every student, are often taken as the absolute authority in the classroom. In contrast, teachers in CLT courses are expected to be more democratic with students. They may shoulder less burden of delivering information and knowledge whereas students may take on more rights and responsibilities for their own learning. In CLT courses, teachers are more of a facilitator and fellow learner alongside the students (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003).

Within the framework of CLT approach, researchers have done some studies to examine the roles of teachers in CLT courses. For example, Mak (2011) conducted a case study to examine a pre-service EFL teacher's beliefs about CLT and her teaching practice through semi-structured interviews, belief-inventory questionnaires, researcher's field notes, classroom observations and stimulated recall interviews. In this study, the researcher identified several roles based on the reports of the teacher who attended a one-year postgraduate teacher education programme in Hong Kong. These roles include:

> t*ransmitting knowledge*
> *managing communicative activities*
> *introducing activities*
> *directing students' work*

The researcher found that the participating teacher made some adaptation to the local learning context even though she was quite confident of the suitability of CLT approach and its implementation. Therefore, the teacher in CLT course, in her eyes, should be able to maximize the opportunities for students talk while in the meantime must take the responsibility to transmit knowledge to students.

In fact, the relevant studies in the field of CLT approach are more often constraint to theoretical discussions and debates (Bax, 2003; Bulter, 2005; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Li, 1984; Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005; Liao, 2004; Long, 1998; Oxford, 1990; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Shrum & Glisan, 2000, Hedge, 2001). Only a limited number of empirical studies have examined CLT teacher roles by way of metaphor analysis (Wan et al., 2011; Zapata & Lacorte, 2007; Lin et al., 2012). In recent years, metaphors have been taken more as a research tool than merely as the research object. By analyzing metaphors

produced by the participants of the study, the researchers may have an insight into the underlying feelings and understandings which the participants may not be able or willing to express consciously. Metaphor analysis is a means of helping researchers to understand the participants' unconscious motives or reasons for action. It can reveal the hidden feelings or attitudes behind the actions (Cameron & Maslen, 2010). As a result, metaphors have been adopted as a research method by researchers to probe into the beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of the participants in numerous areas including teacher roles (Alger, 2009; Huang, 2013a, 2013b; McGrath, 2006; Guner, 2009; Guerrero & Villamil, 2002; Pitcher & Akerlind, 2011; Saban, 2010).

For instance, Wan et al (2011) studied both university teachers and English major students to examine their beliefs of the roles of teachers. Questionnaires with the metaphor prompt "*An English teacher is (like) _____ because _____*" were distributed to the participants and follow-up interviews were conducted in the study. Based on the metaphors and the entailments (the reasons provided by the participants) collected, the researchers generalized eight conceptual categories of teacher roles. These categories include provider, nurturer, devotee, instructor, culture transmitter, authority, interest arouser and co-worker. With much insight into how students have perceived their teachers and how the teachers have functioned in English classes, the researchers concluded that metaphor analysis seemed to work well in investigating teacher's and students' beliefs of teachers' roles. Metaphor analysis was regarded as quite reliable since most participants have successfully associated their classroom experiences and personal analogical statements with the roles of teachers via the metaphor elicitation prompt.

As a result, the present study intends to examine by way of metaphor analysis how students perceive the roles of their English teachers in a communicative English course. Thus the research questions addressed in the present study are:

(a) What are the roles of the English teachers in the communicative English course in students' views?

(b) How do the roles of the English teachers in the study relate to the CLT approach?

2. THE STUDY

2.1 The Context of the Study

The study was conducted in a communicative English course at a university in Southern China. The communicative English course is designed for English majors for two academic years of four semesters. This course is named CECL, same as the name of the coursebook used in the course, i.e., *Communicative English for Chinese Learner*. As the pioneer of CLT in China, CECL coursebooks were compiled in 1979 and first published in 1985. Then the second edition was published in 2001 and the third edition in 2016 (Li, 2001, 2016). It is a typical communicative learning material that has neither focal texts nor mechanical language drills but a wide range of communicative tasks and activities. In other words, the course is designed to be a communicative one and the coursebook in use is a typical example of communicative textbook. Consequently, it is necessary and worthwhile to examine students' perceptions of their teachers and to find out what kind of roles the teachers had taken in the communicative course. It is hoped that the study may help to gain some insight on the roles of teachers in the communicative English course and reveal something about the nature of CLT approach.

2.2 Participants

Participants in the present study are 103 students in the English and Education Department at a university in South China. The participants had studied the same communicative English course for at least one year at the university. Whereas, they were taught by different English teachers in different classes. As they were of the same major in the same department of the university, the students were similar in their ages and the proficiency level of English.

Before the investigation, the researcher introduced to the participants the nature and purpose of the academic study. Those who agreed to join in were then given the questionnaires. Consequently, these students were all random sample subjects who voluntarily participated in the research.

2.3 Instrument

The present study used the metaphor prompts to examine how students perceived their teachers in the communicative English course. Students were required to complete the stem "*While learning the communicative English course, the English teacher of the course is (like) _____ because _____.*" Researchers claim that metaphor functions as a powerful cognitive tool in gaining insights into people's' beliefs, attitudes and perceptions (McGrath, 2006; Wan et al., 2011). The classical view of metaphor as a product of language has yielded to the modern understanding of metaphor as the way new concepts are processed and articulated. It is believed that the central mechanisms in metaphoric thought may define the human form of ideation and metaphors include a series of mechanisms to process and integrate patterns as in making correspondences or finding the familiar in the unfamiliar (Aragno, 2009). Metaphor is a bridge between the unarticulated and the graspable image (Modell, 1997). It is not a mere linguistic device but also a way of thinking (Camron & Maslen, 2010). Therefore, metaphors are supposed to help students to articulate their attitudes towards

their teachers. Besides, the reasons and explanations that follow the metaphors may be also revealing if the students feel that the metaphors alone may not be wholly transparent or complete.

2.4 Data Collection and Analysis

To ensure that the responses to the questionnaires are fair and objective, the students were assured that the questionnaires were anonymous and the research was conducted only for academic purpose. After the students finished the questionnaires, the data were all collected and then input in the computer for analysis later.

The data analysis generally consists of four steps: a) naming / labelling, b) sorting (clarification and elimination), c) categorization and d) analyzing the data. First the metaphors were coded and then analyzed to identify three elements of the topic (the teacher), the vehicle (the term which the teacher is compared to) and the ground (the relationship between the vehicle and the topic). Based on students' responses to the metaphor prompts, four main conceptual categories were generalized according to the similarities and differences of the metaphors and their entailments (Huang, 2013a; McGrath, 2006; Wan et al., 2011).

3. FINDINGS

Based on the data collected, the present study tried to categorize the metaphors (along with their entailments) into four main groups: The first group concerning the cognitive aspects of teaching, the second group related to the affective aspect of teaching, the third group relevant to the managerial aspect of teaching and finally the fourth group of mostly negative opinions of the teaching (Huang, 2013; Coppola et al., 2002). Table 1 below shows the categorization of all the data into the four basic groups.

Table 1
The Categories of the Metaphors That Show Students' Perceptions of Teachers in a CLT Course

Conceptual categories	Exemplar metaphors	Examples of entailments (because …)
1. Cognitive	Encyclopedia (3)	Knowledgeable, provide knowledge for the students, capable of solving all problems
	Interpreter (1)	
	Searching engine (1) e-dictionary (1)	
	Reference book (1)	
	Skeleton key (1)	
	Superman (1)	
	Engineer (1)	Helps students to build up logical structure of the knowledge
n of students = 10 *n of different metaphors = 8* *n of different entailments = 2*		
2. Affective	Affectionate mother (2)	Nice, friendly and amiable
	The sun (1)	Beaming all the time
	Friends (6)	Make the class interesting, relaxing, interactive and communicative
	Seasonings (2)	Help to make the class more interesting
	Bartender (1)	
	Magician (1)	
	Host of TV program (1)	
n of students =14 *n of different metaphors = 7* *n of different entailments = 4*		
3. Managerial	Assistant (1)	Provide assistance to the students but not take up the central role in class
	Gardener (1)	Help students to locate and deal with their problems while learning
	Tour guide (19)	Take the students to go around the world and direct them to learn authentic expressions, local customs and cultures
	Ambassador (1) Plane (1)	

Continued

Conceptual categories	Exemplar metaphors	Examples of entailments (because …)
	Plane captain (1)	Coordinate the cooperation of students and guide the learning
	Ship captain (4)	
	Street lamp (1)	Show the direction and guide the students to learn
	Lamp (4)	
	Beacon (5)	
	Guide (9)	
	Guide dog (1)	
	Compass (3)	
	GPS (1)	
	Road sign (1)	
	Map (2)	
	Conductor (2)	
	Counselor (1)	
	Shepherd (1)	
	Leader (1)	
	Pole star (1)	
	Ship navigator (2)	
	Director (4)	Help students to do the activities like role-play, assign the roles, monitor the performances
n of students =68 *n of different metaphors = 24* *n of different entailments = 7*	Computer game designer (1)	Design all kinds of learning activities
4. Others (negative)	Salesgirl (1)	Cram students with unnecessary things of low quality
	Old man (1)	Old-fashioned and outdated
	unqualified guide (1)	Fail to guide the students properly, lack of direction, organization or focus
	Lost lamb (3)	
	Driver of old car (3)	Fail to satisfy the students despite the efforts
n of students =11 *n of different metaphors = 6* *n of different entailments = 5*	A poor talk show (2)	Unable to keep the students interested

Note. The number in the bracket after each metaphor shows the total number of students who produced the same metaphor. For example, encyclopedia (3), 3 means that there were 3 students who produced the same metaphor of "encyclopedia".

As shown in Table 1, the first group consists of a total of 8 different metaphors. These metaphors, according to their entailments provided by the participants, were classified in the same group of cognitive category in that they were all somewhat related to the cognitive aspect of instruction. In students' views, teachers gave instruction related to providing knowledge as well as the mental processes of learning, information storage, reasoning, and thinking etc. (Alvarez et al., 2009). For example, participants used metaphors such as "encyclopedia", "interpreter", "searching engine", "e-dictionary", "reference book", "skeleton keys" and "superman" to emphasize that they regarded their teachers as the source of knowledge, the authority and the expert. In the entailments, participants clearly stated that their teachers were able to provide them with the knowledge in various fields and were capable of solving all problems. Then the metaphors of "ambassador of culture" indicated that the teachers were not only the provider of knowledge in all fields but also acted as the source of native and standard

expressions in English. Finally, "engineer" was used to reveal that the teacher helped the students to analyze the knowledge, which also falls into the category of cognitive role (Coppola et al., 2002).

In the second group, 7 different metaphors were used to reveal students' perceptions of their teachers in terms of the affective aspect. According to the researchers (Coppola et al., 2002), different instruction in class may influence the relationships between the teacher and the students as well as the classroom atmosphere. Such aspect of instruction by teachers fall into the category of affective role. In the present study, metaphors such as "affectionate mother", "the sun", "friends" were used by the students to describe the manner and attitudes of teachers towards the students, indicating a very positive relationship between the teacher and the learners. Six students their teachers were like friends to them because the teacher had made the class interesting, relaxing, interactive and communicative. In the meantime, another four metaphors (seasonings, bartender, magician and host of TV program) made by five other students delivered similar message that their teachers had made the class more appealing to them. Obviously, the second group of the seven metaphors all centered around the instructor-learner relationship as well as the classroom atmosphere, suggesting that these students were quite positive about the teacher and the instruction in the communicative English course. It also proved that teacher-learner interaction and learner-learner communication were both witnessed in class.

The third group of managerial category includes 24 different metaphors, the greatest number among the four groups. These metaphors ranged from "assistant", "gardener", "tour guide", "captain of a plane or a ship" to "director" and "computer game designer". Among them, "tour guide" was one of the most frequently-produced metaphors. It was used by a total number of 19 students to suggest that their English teachers were like tour guides who led his group to go around the world of English. The students were exposed to the authentic materials and were encouraged to use English in authentic or semi-authentic learning activities. One student also used "plane" to express the same idea.

Then another 15 different metaphors were used to reveal that the teachers did not seem to take up the central role in the communicative English course. These metaphors include "lamp", "street lamp", "lighthouse", "compass", "GPS" to "map" and "road sign" etc. It seemed that the teachers in the communicative English course often facilitated students to go through the learning processes rather than taking over the whole learning and leaving to students only the final products of learning.

Similarly, metaphors like "assistant", "gardener" were also used to show that teachers stood aside and provided only assistance to the students in class. Students mentioned that the teachers had helped them to discover

and then deal with whatever problems appearing during learning. In addition to facilitating and assisting learning, the English teachers also coordinated the cooperation of the students. This was illustrated by metaphors like "plane captain" or "ship captain". Data revealed that communicative learning activities that are characterized by interaction and cooperation among the students existed in the class. Students confirmed that the English teachers had designed various learning activities, assigned the roles to the students and monitored their performances. Such roles of the teachers were compared to "director or computer game designer" by the students.

As a whole, the third group comprises 24 different metaphors that elicited 7 different entailments. These entailments all centered around the managerial aspect of the instruction of the English teachers in the CLT course. They helped the researcher to understand what the teachers had done to manage, supervise and monitor the communicative class. Therefore, these metaphors along with their entailments were classified as the managerial category of teacher roles in the CLT course (Coppola et al., 2002).

Finally, the fourth group of metaphors seemed to reveal some negative opinions of students to their teachers. Altogether 6 different metaphors were collected in this group. These metaphors included "salesgirl", "old man", "unqualified guide", "lost lamb", "driver of old car", and "a poor talk show". The entailments elicited by the metaphors suggested that these students were quite dissatisfied with the instruction by the teachers for several reasons. Some thought that the teacher had taught them useless or unnecessary things (salesgirl) or outdated knowledge (old man). Others held that the teachers neither guided the students properly nor maintained the attention of the students in class (unqualified guide, lost lamb, driver of old car, a poor talk show). It seemed that there is still room for further improvement even though the teachers had tried hard to make the class basically communicative and had implemented the CLT approach quite well.

DISCUSSION

So far the findings of the study reveal that the roles of English teachers in the communicative English course mainly fall into four groups: the cognitive category, the affective category, the managerial category and the negative category. Such findings will then be discussed in relation to the previous studies in the field of metaphor analysis and under the framework of CLT.

In the first group, both the metaphors and the follow-up entailments reveal that the teachers acted as the provider of not only the linguistic knowledge but also the world knowledge. They helped students to establish logical relation and network while learning. These findings correspond with many previous studies. In Mak's

study (2011), the researcher found that the teacher, while implementing CLT approach in the class, also played the role of transmitting knowledge through the academic year. However, the role of teacher as the provider of knowledge is not limited to CLT approach but actually shared in common English education. For instance, Wan et al. (2011) conducted a metaphor analysis of students' beliefs of EFL teachers and found that teachers were also regarded as the provider of knowledge and conveyed knowledge to students. Lin et al. (2012) and Guerrero & Villamil (2002) studied the roles of either EFL or ESL teachers by way of metaphor analysis and had identified similar role of teacher as the provider of knowledge as well.

As a matter of fact, this role of teacher's transmitting knowledge does traverse different instructional contexts. An example of this is in online learning context where the role of teacher to provide and transmit knowledge to students is commonly recognized (Alvarez et al., 2009; Baran et al., 2011; Coppola et al., 2002). Indeed, the role of transmitting knowledge should be taken as the most fundamental role of teachers probably in all fields no matter what approach is adopted and what subject matter is instructed. Therefore, the findings of this study and the previous studies indicate that the traditional role of transmitting knowledge is likely to be an indispensable part of teacher roles in all pedagogies including CLT approach. The cognitive category of the teacher role as the provider of knowledge has in fact a part-to-whole relationship rather than an either-or relationship with the teacher role in CLT approach.

Compared with the cognitive category of CLT teacher roles, the affective category appears more intrinsic to CLT approach. In the second group of the metaphors, 14 students produced a total number of 7 different metaphors that elicited 4 different entailments. Data revealed that most of the students thought that their teachers played a role in making the class more interesting and appealing to them. The teachers were like friends with the students so that they could and did interact and communicate with each other in the communicative English course. Literature in the field shows that only a few studies managed to identify similar role. One of these examples is the study by Wan et al. (2011). Their study found similar role of EFL teacher: The teacher acted as the "entertainer" who made the class interesting and encouraged students' engagement.

The affective role of teacher within the framework of CLT approach has not been adequately discussed on theoretical level either. CLT approach emphasizes a move from teacher-centered instruction to learner-centered or learning-centered instruction and holds that teachers are co-learners with the students (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003). In other words, teachers in CLT class are expected to be more equal to students and less authoritaty as an expert. As Li (2001) has put it, teachers in CLT approach should "step down from their pedestal" as both teachers and students

are human beings and genuine communication cannot occur except between human beings. Moreover, students tend to communicate more and better in a friendlier and more relaxing and interactive atmosphere. Therefore, it is worthwhile for the teachers in the communicative English course to create a lively atmosphere to bring about interaction and cation, which is essential to CLT.

One of the essential features characterizing teacher role in CLT approach probably lie in the third group of metaphors, which are classified as the managerial category. This is also the subarea where a much greater number of students, metaphors and entailments clustered. A total of 68 students produced altogether 24 different metaphors that elicited 7 different entailments in this category. Table 2 below shows the comparison of all the data among the four groups. The fact that managerial category boasts much greater data over the other three categories probably indicates that this is the most significant feature of teacher role in CLT approach. Indeed, the characteristics revealed by the follow-up entailments of the metaphors in the managerial category correspond to the findings of the previous studies in the literature and match well with the CLT paradigms.

Table 2
Comparison of Data Among the Four Categories

Conceptual categories	Number of students	Number of different metaphors	Number of different entailments
Cognitive category	10	8	2
Affective category	14	7	4
Managerial category	68	24	7
Negative category	11	6	5
Total number	103	45	18

Previous studies of metaphors analysis turned out similar findings of managerial category even though the same group of metaphors and traits have often been named with different terms. For example, in the study of Lin et al. (2012), metaphors like "director, tour guide, ship captain, conductor, navigator" etc. were reported and categorized as "cooperative leader". With these metaphors, students meant that the EFL teachers provided the scaffolding and direction for learning, which resembled those metaphors in managerial category in this study. Likewise, Wan et al. (2011) also grouped metaphors like "lamp, lighthouse, beacon" etc. into the category of "instructor". This role of "instructor" reveals that the teachers take the responsibility of finding the right track for the students and providing necessary assistance. A third example is Guerrero & Villamil's study (2002). Metaphors such as "director, guide, conductor" were also classified as the same group again with a different term of "co-operative leader".

In the present study, the entailments of the metaphors in managerial category indicate that the teachers provided assistance, direction, guidance, coordination in class and designed activities, assigned roles as well as monitored students' performances in the communicative English course. Despite that only a few empirical studies have revealed similar traits, these characteristics of managerial category have been well-discussed on theoretical level both in English learning environments and across other instructional contexts.

According to researchers (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003; Li, 2001), the role of teachers should be decentralized in CLT approach to highlight the role of learners in class. Since CLT approach is characterized by learner-centered and learning-centered instruction. The role of teachers is thus weakened in different ways such as by enhancing learner autonomy and by focusing more on learning processes instead of learning product etc. Most of the theoretical discussions of CLT approach emphasize the nature of the learning and elaborates much on what kind of activities exist in CLT class (Whong, 2013; Ritzau, 2015, Guest editorial, 2016). On the contrary, what teachers can do to make such learning happen is seldom explained. Since learning is taken as a process rather than merely a product, which parts of the process should teachers get involved and which parts should be taken only by learners? What exactly do teachers need to do or not to do in a CLT class? The findings of the present study offer a glimpse into these questions. Instead of taking over the overall learning processes, teachers in CLT class should provide assistance, guidance and direction for learning (Li, 1984). In other words, it is the learners, not the teachers, who should analyze the learning materials, make generalization and synthesis, look for the logical structure and network of the knowledge, seek the focus and the difficulties of the learning materials, find out their own problems, analyze the problems and look for possible solutions. If learning is a journey of discovery, it is the learners who should go through the journey rather than only the teachers. What the teacher needs to do is to ensure this process happens and offers help, advice and feedback during the whole process.

In order to make this happen, teachers do need to design various learning tasks and activities to facilitate interaction and communication and eventually to elicit the learning processes (Ahmadian, 2016). They may probably help the students to assign the roles in group activities, monitor their performances while students are doing the activities and also coordinate the students while they are cooperating with each other. These roles are very disparate from those of the traditional grammar teaching (Ritzau, 2015). In grammar teaching, teachers mostly provide for the students only the products of learning—the final interpretation of the learning materials, the answers to questions, and the solutions to problems.

Prior to even forming their own questions and problems, students are already given the answers, the solutions and the explanations by the teachers. The focuses of learning materials are highlighted and the difficulties are overcome. Students act as a passive empty receptacle to be crammed with rather than a human being who can think (Whong, 2013). In that case, it is the teachers, not the learners, who actually learn.

In the present study, the traits revealed by the metaphors and their entailments indicated that teachers in the communicative English course have not taken the place of the learners in the learning processes and have only stayed aside in class to provide necessary assistance, guidance and direction for the learning. These findings, on the one hand, show that the teachers have made the English course generally communicative. On the other hand, they help to unveil the characterizing features of teacher roles that fit the CLT approach on a more practical level.

Finally, the fourth group gathers all the negative opinions of students towards their teachers in the CLT course. Altogether 11 students produced 6 different metaphors to elicit 5 different entailments. These metaphors and their entailments reveal the weaknesses of the teachers and their instruction in class. These weaknesses ranged from providing inappropriate learning materials, either unnecessary or outdated, lack of guidance, direction or organization, to failure of interesting students. Corresponding to the former three categories, students' dissatisfaction with their teachers also fall into similar subareas: cognitive category (inappropriate learning materials), affective category (failure of interesting students) and managerial category (lack of direction). It seems that improvement is still needed even though the teachers have basically implemented the CLT approach in the course.

CONCLUSION

This study examined learners' perceptions of their teachers in a CLT course through questionnaires, which used metaphor prompt like "*While learning the communicative English course, the English teacher of the course is (like) _____ because _____.*" The overall findings suggest that the teachers have implemented CLT approach in the course. More importantly, the metaphors produced by the students, along with their entailments, did reveal some of the features characterizing CLT approach in relation to the roles of teachers. These characterizing traits of teacher roles in CLT approach include the cognitive category of providing knowledge for students, the affective category of interesting students with authentic learning materials and interactive learning activities as well as the managerial category of assisting, directing, guiding and monitoring learning.

Among them, the cognitive category of providing knowledge, a common teacher role probably shared by most instructional contexts, is found to be part of the teacher role in CLT approach as well. The findings of this study show that the role of transmitting knowledge is something to be included as a constituent part of CLT teacher role rather than something to be discarded as irrelevant. Furthermore, the affective category and managerial category unveil more inherent traits of CLT approach in relation to teacher roles. It is necessary for the teachers in CLT classes to design various learning activities and create appropriate atmosphere so as to make learning processes happen and to enable the students to go through the learning processes. It is also important for teachers in CLT classes to stay aside, to facilitate, to assist, to direct and to monitor the learning processes. Such findings are thought to be beneficial for both researchers and instructors in the field.

Despite the implication in classroom practice, the study is not without its limitation due to the nature of metaphor analysis. First, the interpretation of the metaphors differs not only across individuals but also from one culture to another. Different connotations carried by metaphors make another significant problem for the research (Cameron & Maslen, 2010). Then it is the categorization of the metaphors. Although the follow-up entailments are quite helpful, there are a few cases of overlapping and confusing entailments that have indeed made the categorization rather challenging (McGrath, 2006).

As the study only targeted at the perceptions of students, naturally the number of teachers involved is rather limited. Besides, it is also necessary to include the attitudes of teachers towards their own roles in CLT class. Future studies may thus include teachers as the sample subjects for the survey and may employ more research methods like classroom observation or questionnaires with more items of questions that are capable of generating quantitative data to triangulate the research.

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