Implicit Teaching of English Grammar and its Implications forthe Building of Communicative Competence in Tanzania

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and

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Abstract

There have been various paradigms in the teaching of grammar globally and in Tanzania in particular. In Tanzania, English grammar teaching was previously done using a content-based approach whereby grammar was taught directly by explaining explicitly the pertinent rules and principles. Currently, following the adoption of the communicative language teaching approach, grammar is taught implicitly by subjecting students into various communicative tasks. This paper examines teachers' instructional practices in teaching English grammar using the communicative language teaching approach. The paper discusses the findings of a study which adopted a qualitative approach and which involved eight teachers from four public secondary schools in southern Tanzania. The paper shows that many teachers still use traditional instructional practices in teaching English grammar which involve memorising grammatical rules and facts, instead of teaching the language in a communicative manner. There are also certain challenges in teaching English grammar using CLT. They include questioning the place of grammar in the EFL context, the discrepancy between the syllabus and assessment, a lack of grammar-teaching materials and teachers' incompetence in grammar.

Keywords: *Communicative language teaching approach, communicative competence, English grammar, grammatical competence, grammar teaching*

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Introduction

The teaching of grammar in a second or foreign language context has been a contentious issue for over 50 years (Pawlak, 2021). Grammar is regarded as the heart of a language (Larsen-Freeman, 2014a; Wong, 2010). Without grammar, there can be no meaningful or effective communication. Crystal (2021) states that grammar is the skeleton of a language. It provides speakers with possible structures to organise words and thoughts in a meaningful way (Alghanmi & Shukri, 2016). No language can exist without its grammar (Kusumawardani & Mardiyani, 2018). Grammar helps people to communicate clearly (Shakir & Jabbar, 2021). The knowledge of grammar is necessary for an individual to become a proficient language user (Malova, 2016) as it enables him or her to organise phrases and messages for effective communication. The ability to communicate freely in a foreign language is one of the key competencies an educated person of the 21st century needs (Roberts & Liszka, 2019).

Ellis (2006) asserts that grammar occupies a central place in language instruction. Grammar teaching enhances students' ability to communicate skilfully, appropriately and meaningfully. It incorporates diverse instructional practices that draw students' focus to certain components of grammar that are useful during communication (Zhang, 2014; Larsen-Freeman, 2014a, 2012). The teaching of grammar has passed through different eras in the realm of language teaching (Richards and Rogers, 2010). The main objective in language teaching and learning was the acquisition of knowledge of grammatical rules that was heavily credited to the presentation, practice and production (PPP) approach (Larsen-Freeman, 2015; 2012). Traditional approaches such as the PPP emphasised the teaching of grammar through rule memorisation, frequent controlled practice and error correction. Students were subjected to technical vocabulary items which were useful in daily communication (Ellis, Basturkmen & Lowen, 2002). However, this traditional approach did not enable learners to communicate, thus contributing to the shift to communicative approaches in the period from the 1970s to 1980s.

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach aims to enhance students' communicative competence (CC) (Huang & Yang, 2018). CC targets speakers' ability to comprehend messages or information, convey meaning and make well-structured sentences (Kusumawardani & Mardiyani 2018). Communicating effectively and appropriately is the main goal in learning a language. CLT avoids explicit grammar teaching. Learners acquire grammar implicitly and vocabulary is learnt by doing functional and situational tasks such as information-gap activities, role-play, story-telling, and discussion (Çiftci & Özcan, 2021; Ali, Joshi & Hareesh, 2018).

How grammar should be taught in the context of CLT has been a subject of interest for many scholars. The advent of CLT led to a number of misconceptions among researchers and language professionals regarding the teaching of grammar (Tichachart, 2020; Moe, 2019). Thornbury (1999:18-19) notes that the controversy on the role of grammar, especially in CLT, can be solved by referring to ways of including grammar in the CLT approach; the shallow-end approach - based on the thought that, in order to make a learner use language in a communicative situation, it is necessary for the learner to first learn grammatical rules and then apply them in a communicative situation. It would be useless to teach grammar explicitly. The English language syllabus in Tanzania does not explicitly address the teaching of grammar. Instead, it focuses on appropriate use of English to communicate in a variety of settings (MoEC, 2005). Hence, it could be argued that Tanzania has adopted a deep-end CLT approach whereby grammar is taught by learners doing communicative activities.

Tanzania introduced a competence-based curriculum in ordinary-level secondary education in 2005, and so the CLT approach was emphasised in teaching the English language (William & Hamaro, 2018; Sane & Sebonde, 2014). Thus, teachers are required to use various communicative tasks such as role-play, simulations, debates, oral presentations, dialogue, interviews and discussions (John, Vuzo & Mkumbo, 2021) to develop students' communicative competence. Despite CLT being emphasised in English language

teaching, there are still complaints from professionals and other stakeholders that Tanzanian students and graduates have poor knowledge of English grammar (William and Hamaro, 2018). Students still use improper tenses, struggle to put simple sentences together and have problems with prepositions and irregular verbs. Their communication discourse also contains a number of spelling errors and incorrect pronunciation, and lacks semantic agreement, which results in lack of clarity. This has certain negative implications for their communicative competence, academic performance and future careers (William & Hamaro, 2018; Mwakapina, 2016, Komba et al., 2012).

Examination of Grammar Instruction: Explicit vs. Implicit Instruction

Nan (2015) asserts that grammar teaching under the communicative language teaching approach is more meaning-making than the memorisation of a closed set of linguistic rules. Under CLT, language teaching is learner-centred. The approach uses real world assessment tasks and emphasises individual and collaborative language learning (Renandya, Lee, Wah, & Jacobs, 1999). Bancole-Minaflinou (2018) adds that the teaching of grammar using the communicative language teaching approach is more interactive and dynamic. Aslan and Thompson (2017) say that, in CLT, grammar should be taught functionally, not by adhering to rules. Students should learn the rules on their own during communication. Thus, there should be integration of grammar elements with communicative activities. This was actually the concern in Tanzania, that is, rather than teachers teaching grammar in isolation, they need to ensure that grammar is taught functionally to enhance students' communication ability. Good communication skills are promoted by good grammatical skills. The issue is whether English grammar is taught functionally to promote the building of communicative competence.

Teachers' practices in teaching English grammar using CLT in Tanzania are not known. Mwakapina (2016) did a non-experimental study to find out whether the grammar courses

taught in undergraduate classes in Tanzania help students to write well. The findings showed notable changes when students were taught grammar. William and Hamaro (2018) studied students' grammatical weaknesses by designing materials to enrich their grammatical competence; it was shown that both English language teachers and learners benefited from the designed materials. Generally, globally and in Tanzania in particular little is known about how teachers actually teach grammar.

Empirical studies on how teachers teach grammar using the CLT approach are said to be inadequate globally (Ellis, 2002). Research has also been done globally on direct and indirect teaching of grammar. Ciftci and Ozcan (2021) conducted a comparative study that compared traditional grammar teaching and CLT in the teaching of English grammar and vocabulary. They found that students who had learnt English grammar using the grammar translation method produced more vocabulary and made fewer mistakes in both their written and oral productions than those who had learnt the language through CLT. Likewise, Bancolé-Minaflinou (2018) conducted a study that explored the teaching of communicative grammar in Benin to support the use of language in competence-based situations. This study revealed that many teachers do not instruct their students in communicative grammar and their students end up with a hazy knowledge of grammar. In Japan, Shirav and Nagai's (2022) study on second-year students recommends combining both, that is, teaching simple grammatical structures inductively and teaching complex ones deductively.

Theoretical Perspective

The study was guided by Vygotskian socio-cultural theory. The theory stresses the notion that interaction is fundamental for language development, particularly when interlocutors engage in socially structured events (Vygotsky, 1978). Socio-cultural studies investigate the way an activity is executed by students with assistance from a teacher and the manner in which the process of fulfilling organised activity might contribute to language acquisition (Ellis, 2000). Globally, language teaching approaches

advocate much the use of learner-centred instructional strategies, which associated with the Vygotskian socio-cultural perspective. The study was informed by the mediation tenet of the theory. In order to operate at a high level of intellectual activity, the mind must be socio-culturally mediated. There are three forms of mediation in socio-cultural theory: mediation by others, mediation by the self and mediation by artifacts (Lantolf, 2000). These forms of mediation are heavily dependent on language and are sociocultural in origin and nature. In that case, teachers are the mediators in CLT responsible for enabling students to be grammatically competent. Moreover, learners mediate themselves by practising using grammar in communicative contexts, while teaching and learning materials play the role of mediation by artifacts.

Language teachers are advised to use instructional practices that enhance students' interactions and language use (Zhao, 2016). Under the socio-cultural theory of teaching and learning, students have an opportunity to do various interactive activities (Mutekwe et al., 2013). Therefore, the theory is appropriate for examining teachers' instructional practices used in teaching English grammar and the challenges encountered.

Methods and Procedures

The study on which this paper is based employed a qualitative research approach, specifically the case-study design, and a variety of data collection techniques (Cresswell, 2014; Yin, 2016). This enabled the researchers to compile in-depth data on teachers' instructional practices during the teaching of English grammar using the CLT approach as well as related barriers. The research was carried out in Mtwara Region in Tanzania. Mtwara is among the poorly resourced regions in the country in terms of teaching and learning facilities (MoEVT 2021: 156-170). This region was chosen because it is a disadvantaged region in terms of the teaching and learning context, which implies that the set educational objectives are very difficult to attain in the region. Moreover, Mtwara Region has consistently ranked lowest in the national Form Four examinations in the past four years. Number 20 out of 25 regions in

2017, number 25 out of 31 in 2018, and number 24 out of 31 in 2019 (National Examinations Council of Tanzania, 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020)..This performance is reflected in all the subjects, including English.

The study involved eight English language teachers, who were selected purposively from four public secondary schools because they were teaching Form Two students at the time of the research. Form Two has a higher percentage of grammar-related themes than any other class as per the present English language syllabus for Forms I–IV. The schools were selected on the basis of performance, with two performing well and another two performing poorly in the national Form Four examinations in the region in 2021.

Semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and document reviews were used to gather data. A saturation point was reached after observing 32 grammar lessons; every teacher was observed four times to see how he or she taught English grammar using the CLT approach. The data were analysed thematically by following the procedures proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). They are data familiarization, coding, theme identification, theme review and reporting findings by making a written presentation of the data gathered and analysed.

Findings

Teachers' Instructional Practices

The findings from the classroom observations and interviews showed that the teachers frequently employed various instructional practices in teaching English grammar using the CLT approach. The instructional practices used are divided into two types: traditional and communicative instructional practices.

Traditional Instructional Practices

The findings from the classroom observations showed that closed questions, a rule-based strategy, substitution tables and drills were the instructional practices commonly used by the teachers in teaching English grammar. The findings showed that the teachers

used a rule-based strategy when teaching the 'past continuous aspect'. Such teachers began by presenting a rule that informed the construction of utterances in the past continuous aspect, as shown in Excerpt 1.

> Excerpt 1
>
> Teacher: What is the formula for forming the past continuous aspect?
>
> Students: [Silent]
>
> Teacher: The construction of any expression begins with knowing the formula.
> [She writes on the chalkboard]. Rules

$$\left\{\begin{array}{l} \text{He} \\ \text{She} \\ \text{It} \end{array}\right\} + \text{was} + \text{verb(ing)} + \text{object}$$

$$\left\{\begin{array}{l} \text{You} \\ \text{They} \\ \text{We} \end{array}\right\} + \text{were} + \text{verb(ing)} + \text{object}$$

> Teacher: Students, these are linguistic rules, which will help you in constructing different sentences in the past continuous aspect. I am going to explain each formula so that you can understand how it works ....

The observations made in other classes show that the teachers drew substitution tables on the blackboard and asked the students to practise the pattern indicated on the board. In the lessons there was frequent repetition in the construction of sentences. The teachers in such classes guided the students so that they could follow what was written on the board and consistently corrected the errors they committed.

Furthermore, the findings from the interviews conducted with the teachers showed that traditional instructional practices such as a rule-based strategy, drills and substitution tables were employed in teaching English grammar. One of the teachers asserted:

> I often use a principle-oriented strategy in teaching communicative grammar. I begin working with the rule. I explain the rule behind the formation of a sentence or phrase regarding the component of grammar to be taught. I tell the students how the rule works in various contexts. Understanding the rule means the learner is close to the answer.

The teachers asserted that the teaching of English grammar using the CLT approach is all about dealing with language principles, which are mastered by adhering to a certain rule or formulae, which are useful in sentence construction. Thus, the teaching of English grammar is done in an isolated manner and is not integrated with the aspects of grammar and communicative tasks.

Communicative Instructional Practices

The findings revealed that other teachers used group discussions, accompanied by oral presentations, questions and answers, in teaching English grammar. The classroom observations made depicted that the teachers used the question-and-answer strategy in teaching grammar. Excerpt 2 shows a teacher who regularly employed this strategy when teaching. Specifically, she was teaching personal pronouns.

Teacher: What do you understand by personal pronouns?
Students: [Silent]
Teacher: These pronouns stand for the name of a person or people.
Teacher: What are the examples of personal pronouns?
Students: [Putting up their hands]
Teacher: Yes, our school time-keeper.
Student 1: They are playing football. They is a personal pronoun.
Teacher: Class, is he right?
Students: [In chorus]. Yes.
Teacher: Any other examples of personal pronouns?
Student 2:   We go to school every day. We is a personal pronoun.
Student 3:   She is cooking ugali. She is a personal pronoun.
Student 4: That is my pen. That is a personal pronoun.
Teacher: Class, is he correct?
Students: [In chorus]. No

Correspondingly, during the interviews the teachers asserted that they used the practices to provide opportunities for students to participate in the lessons so that they could learn using grammatical principles in daily communication. One of the teachers explained:

> I normally employ discussion to teach English grammar. It facilitates the students' classroom interactions, which provide an opportunity for idea sharing on a particular grammar topic. Students discuss in groups or pairs and make presentations. After that, the whole class participates in the discussion by asking questions, making clarifications and correcting errors.

Other teachers contended that they normally used questions and answers in teaching English grammar using the CLT approach. The strategy was said to give equal chance to every member of the class so that they could participate in the lessons. It cultivated classroom interaction, which is key to the acquisition of the target grammatical principles.

Barriers to the Teaching of Grammar through CLT

The findings from the classroom observations and interviews with the teachers showed that grammar teaching using CLT was impeded by several barriers.

The Place of Grammar in the CLT Approach

The findings from the interviews with the teachers indicated that they questioned the place of grammar in the communicative language teaching approach. This influenced the teachers' actual classroom practices. One of the teachers explained that:

> The current communicative approaches in language teaching de-emphases the teaching of grammar. More attention is given to speaking and listening skills which, in turn, affect actual teaching of grammar. The topics stipulated in the syllabus do not address grammatical issues. So, it is difficult to teach something that is not clearly presented in the CLT framework.

It can be deduced from the above quote that the teachers are of the view that the current language teaching approach, CLT, puts much emphasis on listening and speaking skills at the expense of grammar, which seems to affect the teaching of grammar in the classroom context.

Discrepancies between the Syllabus and Assessment

It was revealed that the assessment of grammatical aspects in examinations appears to be done in a traditional way (that is, content-based language teaching), rather than being more communicative, as indicated in the syllabus. In this regard, a teacher explained:

Surprisingly, most of the grammar questions in our national examinations are in traditional format, which contradicts with the syllabus and the goal of teaching foreign languages. Examinations do not integrate grammar and communicative activities, as demanded by the syllabus.

In addition, the teachers argued that some grammatical aspects such as the active and the passive voice, as well as direct and indirect speech were not in the syllabus, but still they appeared in national examinations. This provided evidence of a critical mismatch between examinations and the syllabus. This mismatch made the teachers pay much attention to examinations, as a guide, rather than the syllabus, since examinations are more definitive than the syllabus is.

Furthermore, the findings from the document review done revealed that school-based examinations presented grammar without integrating it with any communicative activities, as the syllabus demands. The following extract is from a school-based examination:

1.) Choose the correct answer for the following sentences.

   i.   We ....go to school on Saturday morning. (a) Aren't (b) Not (c) Don't (d) Doesn't.

   ii.   The villagers ....a lot of maize last year. (a) Growed (b) Grow (c) Grew (d) Grown

   iii.   Why .... the earth go around the sun. (a) Do (b) Doing (c) Does (d) Did.

   iv.   Students who come late to school ....punished. (a) Are (b) is (c) Aren't

   v.   We .... good results last year. (a) Have (b) Has (c) Had (d) Haven't.

2.) Put the verbs in brackets into the past simple tense.

   i.   Yesterday I ....my homework then I ....a football match (finish, watch).

   ii.   Mwajuma .... a new car last year (buy).

   iii.   Our school board .... for the meeting last July (sit).

   iv.   We .... the presidents of Tanzania in 2020 (elect).

   v.   Simba FC .... with emirates of Sudan last year. (play)

3.) Construct two sentences for each of the following words.

   (i)   injure (ii) Rush (iii) Scream (iv) Survive (v) Unconscious.

4.) Write ten (10) sentences about what you plan to do next holiday.

5.) Put the verbs in brackets into the appropriate form to or ing .

   (i)   He likes .... (cook).

   (ii)   What does like.........................at the weekend? (do)

   (iii) He hates ....by boat because he can't swim (travel).

   (iv) I enjoy ....Dar-es-salaam, but I don't like ....there (visit, live)

   (v)   Joyce has a lot of CD, s. She likes ....to music (listen).

Figure 1.1: A Sample of a School-based Examination Assessing Grammar

Figure 1.1 shows the type of questions intended to assess grammar. The questions require students to supply appropriate verb(s) and tense(s) in the constructions given. Questions 1, 2 and 5, for example, were intended to assess students' ability to identify/ supply appropriate tenses, rather than assessing their ability to communicate by observing subject-verb agreement in the whole communication discourse. The syllabus integrates aspects of tense into communicative tasks, which is contrary to the questions in Figure 1.1. Grammar is assessed in isolation from words and sentences, contrary to the principles of CLT.

This was also noted in the 2019 national Form Four English

language examinations that included some grammatical aspects, which are not recommended in a communicative syllabus. Figure 1.2 is illustrative.

5. Future expression can be presented in a number of ways. Construct one sentence under each of the following ways to illustrate their use.
    (a) The use of "will" or "shall"
    (b) The use of the verb "be" + "going" + "to infinitive".
    (c) The use of the "present continuous form".
    (d) The use of the verb "be" + "about to"

6. Suppose you are sent to a shop to buy some food stuff. How would you communicate with the shopkeeper using the given question guides in (a-d)?
    (a) How would you start the conversation?
    (b) How would you ask for the item you want to buy?
    (c) How would you ask for the price?
    (d) How would you ask for the quantity of the item you want?

7. Consider that you have witnessed a serious accident on your way to school. Use the following words to construct a sentence for each to describe the accident.
    (a) Bad
    (b) Injured
    (c) Terrible
    (d) Horrible

Figure 1.2 A Sample from the 2019 National Form Four English Language Examinations

Figure 1.2 shows the questions that were intended to assess grammar in written form. Question 5 required the candidates to construct a sentence following the grammatical rules given. This examination question shows grammatical rules that are explicitly contrary to what is recommended in CLT. This question shows that the candidates were expected to remember the rules governing the construction of sentences used to express the future. In CLT, explicit grammatical rules are not acceptable. This illustrates the traditional approach to language teaching.

The Grammatical Incompetence of Teachers and Learners
The interviews showed that the teachers were not competent in grammar, which hindered actual grammar teaching in a communicative manner. One teacher argued that:

> Teachers are not good at English grammar. They don't know how to apply correctly certain grammatical elements during

communication in either spoken or written form, and yet they are 'English language teachers'. They cannot teach grammar appropriately.

This suggests that English language teachers are incompetent in grammar; hence, they are incapable of teaching grammar.

Lack of Grammar Teaching Materials Using the CLT Approach

The classroom observations and interviews showed that the schools lack materials that incorporate the CLT approach in the teaching and learning of English grammar. This made teachers depend largely on traditional grammar books, which do not reflect communicative English, but which present linguistic aspects and facts like grammar directly. In this regard, a teacher explained:

> I frequently use grammar books in teaching English grammar. The books contain deep English and have all the basic aspects of grammar. So, I derive some examples, exercises and explanations on a particular grammatical aspect from the grammar books. This helps my students to master grammatical structures.

Influence of the Learners' Mother Tongue

The teachers claimed that learners tended to incorporate first language grammatical patterns into English, which led to the acquisition of wrong target language grammar. They explained that learners transferred negatively their mother tongue grammatical elements into English and, as a result, they could not use correct grammar in English. But the majority of teachers could not correct such grammar. One teacher said:

> Many students have been affected by their mother tongue grammar. They transfer grammatical aspects from their mother tongue into the target language. The most noticeable negative transfers are associated with sentence construction patterns, intonation, pitch and stress.

Discussion

Overall, the teachers adopted various instructional practices in teaching English grammar using the CLT approach. Most of the instructional practices aligned with the traditional perspective of teaching grammar and few with the communicative perspective. The traditional instructional practices included a rule-based strategy, drills and substitution tables. It seems that English language teachers are aware of grammatical rules and assume that they need to teach their students the rules. The teachers involved in the present study argued that students' knowledge of grammatical principles is vital for the construction of English sentences. As a result, students have grammatical rules but cannot use them in actual communication. Omari (2020) and Bancole-Minaflinou (2018) assert that the teaching of grammatical rules makes learners memorise linguistic patterns, but this is usually not beneficial in actual communication.

Moreover, most of the lessons observed were teacher dominated and mechanical. This diverges from the CLT approach and the requirements of the syllabus. According to Larsen-Freeman (2015), the use of grammatical formulae is prohibited in the communicative approach; the attention now is on learners' learning of grammatical competence, which is integrated with communicative undertakings. The use of overt grammatical principles in teaching grammar is not recommended in the contemporary approaches to language teaching as they promote the learning of grammatical rules rather than communicative competence. Rahman, Singh and Pandian (2018) observe that memorising rules and listing vocabulary items do not develop students' communicative competence. Likewise, Uysal and Bardacki (2014) note that many teachers in Turkey favour the use of traditional strategies in teaching grammar. It seems that teachers are well versed in and find it easier to teach grammar directly rather than through communication.

The teachers who used communicative instructional practices in teaching English grammar used mainly questions and answers intended to ensure effective participation of every student in

a lesson. Since most of the questions were teacher initiated and required the students to respond either in a word or a sentence, they did not really promote the building of communicative competence in English. These questions affect learners' creativity and deny them space to practise grammar as it is used in real-life situations. They are, instead, turned into passive recipients of orders and commands from teachers. This is contrary to the theoretical framework adopted in this paper. Omari (2020) argues that teacher-initiated questions are not recommended in CLT because they diverge from the basic principles of the approach and perpetuate teachers' control over lessons; hence, the autonomy of language learners is eroded. Such questions replicate old-fashioned grammar teaching. The learners were asked to conceptualise certain linguistic terms and produce English constructions which do not show that grammar is being used communicatively. Instead, learners need full control and power on all the activities done in the classroom; they should initiate questions and demonstrate their creative use of the language. This implies that the teachers had little knowledge of teaching English grammar using the CLT approach, particularly the use of interactive questions and answers that affect their actual instructional practices.

Secondly, the teachers used discussions and oral presentations. This strategy was intended to make the students participate in the sessions, to give them a chance to express multiple ideas and to make grammar lessons more enjoyable and fruitful. However, it was noted that the teachers did not supervise their students and, therefore, only a few students participated in the lessons. As a result, the target grammatical competence was not attained. This situation made few learners dictate the entire group. In order to teach grammar communicatively, Bancole-Minaflinou (2018) says that teachers should involve language learners in short discussions using clinical supervision. In all 32 lessons, the activities given to the students to do emphasised traditional grammar teaching, which involved transforming sentences, changing a certain type of tense into another and constructing sentences related to the rule given. These activities were traditional. The teaching of English grammar

was similar to that recommended by the content-based syllabus, which considers the sentence to be more important than grammatical competence. Furthermore, the classroom presentations showed that the students were not making presentations; instead, they were reading from the pieces of paper prepared during the discussion. Consequently, the students did not develop any presentation skills. They memorised linguistic facts and patterns, instead of using grammar creatively for communication purposes.

The teaching of English grammar using the communicative language teaching approach faces a number of challenges. First, teachers claim that the position of grammar in CLT is questionable because the approach does not explicitly promote the teaching of grammar. This claim has been reported by several other researchers, including Tichachart (2020), Jia (2017) and Wong (2010). Wong (2010) sees the claim as constituting the 'misconceptions behind grammar instruction in the era of communicative language teaching approach'. Teachers think that grammar has no role to play in language teaching and that communication is, instead, the focus. Secondly, the focus of CLT, communicative competence, draws learners' attention to communication, not other skills as well. Their views were also informed by the nature of the content in the syllabus, which emphasises communication rather than grammar. Such misconceptions are compounded by the lack of relevant training in the use of the CLT approach in teaching the English language. This has a serious effect on actual classroom practices such as neglecting the teaching of grammar, which prevents learners from acquiring the desired grammatical competence. Dos Santos (2016) observes that, although various foreign language teachers attempt to use the CLT approach in their teaching, most of them lack a clear understanding of how the approach should be used. Appropriate use of communicative instructional practices enables students to use grammatical forms accurately, appropriately and meaningfully during communication (Larsen-Freeman 2015; Nan, 2015; 2012; Canh, 2011). However, this seems not to be the case where the present study was conducted.

Teachers' teaching of English grammar is informed by examination practices.

There are discrepancies between what is stipulated in the syllabus and what is found in national examinations. The examinations include some grammatical aspects, which are not outlined in the syllabus. There is a tendency for teachers to be informed by high stakes examinations such as the Certificate of Secondary Education Examination. The English language examinations still use traditional ways by examining grammar to assess the rules and principles, instead of examining communication in context. Therefore, teachers teach grammar directly to meet the demands of examination questions. Students are, therefore, required to memorise rules, patterns, vocabulary items and linguistic terms; hence, competence-based language teaching remains in theory. Examination-oriented teaching and learning is said to be a worldwide challenge in the teaching profession (Bancole-Minaflinou, 2018; Rahman, Singh & Pandian, 2018; Uysal & Bardacki, 2014). Examinations form the major factor influencing teaching and learning globally. Bancole-Minaflinou (2018), for example, shows that in Benin the teaching of grammar is largely examination based. Hence, grammar is taught through the PPP model in alignment with what usually appears in examinations.

There are also inconsistencies between grammar teaching materials and contemporary language teaching approaches, as also noted by (William and Hamaro, 2018). As a result, teachers rely on traditional grammar books. The books are not authentic and do not promote communication. Students, as a result, struggle to master inputs, which are not comprehensible as they do not apply them in communicative contexts. They end up memorising linguistic rules, terms and facts, rather than being able to communicate in English.

The nature of students, the grammatical incompetence of teachers, the size of classes and the influence of mother tongue grammar were the factors that affected effective teaching and learning of English grammar. Generally, given these circumstances, most of

the teachers preferred teaching grammar directly, rather than using the CLT approach.

It is important to contextualise the most suitable and actual teaching and learning methods to enhance learning (Miguel & Santos 2020). Given the Tanzanian context, where English is a foreign language, using CLT as the only approach to language teaching contributes to learners' failure to build communicative competence, especially grammatical competence, as this paper has shown. It is, thus, recommended that traditional and current language teaching approaches should be used together in appropriate contexts. Ulrich (1994) says that the three components of language (structure, meaning and use) should be emphasised and learnt so that learners use grammar and other aspects of English appropriately to meet their communicative needs.

Conclusion

Although grammatical competence is the building block in the development of communicative competence, Ali, Joshi and Hareesh (2018) argue that teachers' instructional practices used in teaching English grammar using the CLT approach do not enhance students' acquisition of the desired grammatical competence. Globally, research shows that, although CLT is emphasised in different areas, there are still some setbacks in teaching grammar using the CLT approach. Heng (2014) recommends using an eclectic approach; vital constituents of various approaches to language teaching are extracted and used in relation to the relevant setting. The approach enables students to acquire the expected grammatical competence and teachers to align their lessons with the demands of the syllabus. It is important to emphasise what Enesi, Strati and Trifoni (2023) assert, that is, the teaching of grammar should be contextualised to give learners an opportunity to understand the function of language and improve their communicative competence.

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