

**Contextual and Pedagogical Challenges Facing English
Language Teachers in Using Communicative Language
Teaching Approach in Tanzanian Primary Schools**

Philpo John¹, Mwajuma Vuzo² and Kitila Mkumbo³

¹Mkwawa University College of Education, Faculty of Education
Department of Educational Foundations Management and Lifelong
Learning Iringa, Tanzania
E-mail: muce.philpojohn@gmail.com

²University of Dar es Salaam, School of Education
Department of Educational Foundations Management and Lifelong
Learning
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
E-mail: mvuzo@yahoo.co.uk

³Ministry of Industry and Trade
Dodoma, Tanzania
E-mail: kitilam@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper presents contextual and pedagogical challenges facing implementation of the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach in Tanzanian primary schools. Qualitative research methods were employed and five public primary schools were involved. The study employed phenomenology design with a total of 25 participants. The study revealed that there were: lack of subject specialisation and mastery among teachers; inadequate time for CLT implementation; inadequate teaching and learning resources; lack of regular in-service training for English teachers; and the presence of crowded classes. The study concludes that, although CLT is theoretically apt, the plan for its adoption in Tanzanian primary schools did not consider the existing contextual and pedagogical constraints that inherently hinder the effective implementation of CLT.

Keywords: *communicative approach, context, English Language teaching, in-service training (INSET)*

Introduction

Evidence from the available studies on English Language Teaching (ELT) in Tanzania as reviewed from 1980s through 2018, shows that although English has been taught as a compulsory subject in Tanzanian primary schools, its proficiency as acquired by children leaving primary schools has been reported as declining. Reasons accounting for this decline include teacher's lack of the subject mastery and its pedagogical competencies (Fentiman, Surgue & Wyse, 2014; John, 2015; Rwezaura, 2016; NECTA, 2017; John, 2018a).

Literature also shows that the history of language teaching approaches and methods, world-wide dates back in early 1900s whereby a reference is closely linked to the theories of language and language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Indeed, the choice of any approach or method of language teaching depends on the beliefs of the language teaching and learning material developers. If developers believe in language as a structural system, text books and the curriculum will be informed by behaviouristic theories of learning (Skinner, 1957), whereas a belief in a language as a functional system, materials would be informed by cognitive; constructivist and social interactionist theories of learning (Chomsky, 1965; Vygotsky, 1978).

In 2005, Tanzania adopted a major curriculum change to attain competence-based learning outcomes (Domician, 2008; MoEVT, 2005).

This change required classroom teachers to be able to create teaching and learning environment that is interactive, engaging, interesting, task-based and learner-centered to impart learners with skills as opposed to the traditional teacher-centered teaching and learning that was dominant with behaviouristic approaches of stimulus-response-reinforcement (S-R-R) models in 1950s (Skinner, 1953; 1957). The adoption of the changed curriculum in Tanzania primary schools is evident in the Education and Training Policy (MoEVT, 2014), primary education curriculum (MoEVT, 2013a) and the primary school English Subject Syllabus (MoEST, 2016) currently being implemented. A thrust in these documents on language subjects and English, in particular, has been pressed on the use of CLT approach, principles and techniques by classroom teachers in order to achieve the English language communicative competence among learners as its learning outcomes.

The English language Syllabus for Basic Education, Standard III-VI (MoEST, 2016) that is being implemented was improved to emphasise on classroom teachers to use CLT approach, principles and techniques in order to produce school leavers who are communicatively proficient over the use of English language. The Subject Syllabus (MoEST, 2016) states that the overall English subject competencies expected of the primary school learners from Standard III-VI pupils are “to show ability in communicating effectively in the English language orally and in writing.” In its objectives, the Syllabus (MoEST, 2016, p. vii), indicates that the objectives of teaching and learning the English language subject at primary education in Tanzania are to:

- i. enable pupils to express themselves appropriately using English in a given situation;

- ii. develop the pupil's basic skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing through English language;
- iii. enable pupils acquire and use vocabulary through the four language skills;
- iv. enable pupils to acquire and apply correct English grammar; and,
- v. provide the pupils with a sound base for higher education and further personal advancement through English language use.

The Syllabus requires teachers teaching English subject to use the CLT techniques such as simulations, discussion, role plays, videotapes and conferencing; dramatising, debates and use of real objects or situations. Desai (2015) comments that activities used when implementing CLT approach include dramas, role plays and games. Thus, the CLT underlying principles, techniques and intentions were stipulated in the primary education curriculum documents (MoEVT, 2013a; MoEVT, 2014; MoEST, 2016); however, it was not clear whether the classroom context and the teachers' pedagogical training were geared towards improving the implementation of the CLT approach.

Theoretical basis

The study was informed by the socio-cultural interactionist theory as propounded by Lev Vygotsky to guide the study. Vygotsky believes that knowledge is constructed through dialogue and interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978). The theory postulates that the use of language between individuals in an environment is an inter-psychological space that is central to the learning process and any successful learning is said to result in an internal dialogue as an intra-psychological tool that can be used in the future across varying situations (Marsh & Ketterer, 2005). The major

theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of the child's cognition and learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

According to proponents of the Socio-cultural-Interactionist Theory, teacher learning is viewed as a social cognitive process situated in physical and social contexts, and distributed across persons, tools and activities (Vygotsky, 1978). In this way, teachers are central agents in their own learning because a professional learning is not about something that is done for teachers by others, but rather something that teachers do among themselves and with others. Richards (2008) explains that it is about the construction of knowledge and theory through participating in real teaching and learning contexts and engaging in activities and processes that relate to everyday teaching practices. The theory is relevant to the study as it assumes that a teacher can acquire knowledge and skills about the subject matter either through formal training (pre-service) or through teacher professional development (in-service training) (Marble, Finley & Ferguson, 2000). Socio-cultural-interactionist Theory is also relevant as the present study involved in-service teachers whose English subject-specific pedagogical competencies can be influenced positively or negatively by the workplace contextual environment embodied in the teacher's collaborative activities such as peer coaching, mentoring, peer observations and team-teaching (Ben-Peretz, 2011; Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Methodology

The study employed qualitative research approach and phenomenology design as they are both concerned with the aspects of human behaviour

that is experiences and actions. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that qualitative researches study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them. This means that qualitative research approach, as Bryman (2012) explains, involves the epistemic stance of the interpretivist paradigm. Again, phenomenology as a research design is a philosophical construct that focuses on subjective experiences of individuals and groups as it attempts to unveil the world as experienced by the subject through their life world stories (Kafle, 2011). The main aspect of phenomenology is to understand the essence of the experience that participants share within a common ground; and as such, it is important to understand that participants within phenomenological epistemology bring out subjective and objective experiences reflecting their lived world (Padilla-Diaz, 2015). In this way, participants' lived experiences on the use of CLT as a study problem were expected to unveil both contextual and pedagogical challenges facing teachers in implementing the CLT approach.

Data were generated through interviews with 15 subject teachers, 5 head teachers, 3 Ward Educational Officers (WEOs) and 2 District Education Quality Assurers (DEQAs) as selected from five public primary schools in Kasulu and Nzega Town Council in Kigoma and Tabora regions respectively. The five schools were selected based on their consistent good performance established from their Standard Seven National Examinations for four years consecutively (NECTA, 2013-2016) despite the average resources they received from the government. Data were collected through interviews, classroom observations and the analysis of the relevant documents. Data collected were transcribed verbatim concurrently while in the field, coded, patterned and finally categorised into

themes for analysis. The data were were analysed qualitatively using thematic analysis method.

Findings

Six key themes regarding the contextual and pedagogical challenges hindering the CLT implementation in Tanzanian primary schools context were identified from the participants' voices as follow:

Lack of subject specialisation for primary education

It was reported that primary school teachers were required to teach all subjects taught at primary education level, regardless of whether a teacher had attended or not attended the subject's specialised training (MoEVT, 2013b). On this theme, one of the participants from school B said:

In my opinion, the practice that requires primary school teachers to be ready to teach all subjects in primary schools affects not only the subject's curriculum realisation of the learning outcomes, but also it denies teachers an opportunity to develop competencies in their areas of interests. If a teacher specialises in the subject area and receives relevant training in that subject, he or she becomes more effective in teaching that subject. Thus, teachers teaching English subject need to have been trained in the subject-specific competences (T1SB, STD IV).

Another participant put it clearly that, it is not only about teachers' lack of the subject relevant pedagogical skills, but also teachers themselves were not adequately trained to master the subject contents:

The largest percent of we teachers has no good command over English. Many teachers do not like this English subject. They are either fearful of it or they do not have requisite skills necessary for teaching it. Thus, teachers themselves are not confident to speak in English (T1SE, STD V).

It was also pointed out by one of the head teachers in the sample schools that:

In Tanzanian primary schools, there is no subject specialisation. When you are employed in primary schools, you will be supposedly considered as a master of all subjects, including English even if you were not trained into such specialisation. It is; thus, difficult for us as head teachers when allocating subjects to the newly employed teachers, especially when we say that teacher X will teach English subject or Maths at STD VII. When we get at this point, some of the teachers do refuse to take-up the subject. And most of these teachers refuse to take up the English subject (HTSB).

Another participant who was an educational quality assurer at district level also expressed:

The student teachers who are pursuing grade 'A' Certificate course programme in education have been receiving training on general pedagogy. Even though, as of now, there are initiatives which are being implemented to ensure that English pedagogy and English academic content are made part of the teacher education curriculum at the certificate level in order to improve the teachers' language proficiency (DEQA_NZT).

Another participant from school C also disclosed that:

The teachers' morale, interest and the subject competence are critical. Currently, there has been a complaint of a total decline of teachers' morale and the subject competence. Sometimes, it is common to find that a teacher is forced to teach English subject even if he/she has no interest and had not attended specialised training on how to teach the subject (T1SC, STD III).

Drawing on the aforementioned evidence, it is clear that lack of specialised competencies in English language affected not only the teachers' teaching effectiveness, but also the realisation of communicative competence among learners.

Inadequate time for CLT techniques implementation in classroom context

Participants reported that a 40 minute time allocated to a single English subject teaching period in Tanzanian primary schools was not sufficient given the activities that come with the CLT approach as commented by this participant:

Challenge is on the time allocated. A 40 minute period is not sufficient at all for effective implementation of the CLT techniques. It should be understood that classes are too large and so it requires more time to guide pupils to do different relevant activities in groups for better learning (T1SD, STD V).

It was also observed by one of the head teachers in the study that:

The CLT techniques are faced with problem of the short time allocated for its periods in class. A 40 minute time is too short for a teacher to fully accomplish activities as required by the subject Syllabus in classroom (HTSB).

Another participant who was also a head teacher in one of the sample schools pointed out that:

Time allocated for English subject is also a problem. And this is due to the notion that a period like a 80 minute can be allocated for subjects like Science and Mathematics only as it is believed that only these subjects require more time because they have many activities and exercise (HTSB).

The findings above suggest that time allocated for English subject lessons in primary schools in Tanzania was not sufficient for effective implementation of the CLT as an English language pedagogical approach because CLT required learners to be engaged into a range of activities to ensure that learner's communicative competencies are achieved.

Inadequate teaching and learning materials

Inadequate textbooks, story and grammar books, and teaching media were reported as a problem inhibiting effective implementation of CLT in Tanzanian primary schools. One of the participants wondered:

First of all, English itself is not available; it is very rare. Sometimes, we may have teaching resources, but where will the children be practising the language? The primary school English teaching and learning environment is generally unconducive and hard to use the CLT techniques which require learning by using it (T2SC, STD IV).

Another participant made a rejoinder:

We do not have teaching aids such as computer, video, etc. In our school, we don't have electricity. So, in such an environment, it is hard to implement the CLT techniques as required. Sometimes, we teach the language depending on the available resources in our environment (T1SB, STD IV).

The participant below also commented that:

CLT techniques are good; however, their use is mainly hampered by inadequate teaching and learning materials. Textbooks and other story books is a big challenge; they are always insufficient due to the large number of pupils we have. For example, while each pupil was supposed to have his or her own textbook being used in class so that he or she can participate fully in learning, you may find a class having only five books for that particular subject (T1SC, STD III).

Effective implementation of the CLT approach requires availability of teaching and learning materials for teachers and pupils to interact meaningfully. As observed from the sample schools, it is evident that the principles underlying CLT might be faulted and for that matter not be achieved as classroom environments were not conducive to accommodate the CLT techniques. Under such situations learners were struggling to share textbooks in the class, instead of each learner having his/her own copy.

Inadequate in-service training (INSET) for English language teachers

Participants expressed their concerns on lack of INSET specifically for teachers teaching English subject. They said that some of the reasons why English learning outcomes were not fully attained were that teachers were not given opportunity to attend relevant trainings even when the curriculum was changed. One participant complained: “I have never attended any training seminar specifically for English subject since I started the teaching job and this is my 22nd year of the experience now” (T2SA, STD V).

Another participant who was a head teacher put it clearly that:

What I see, English subject will continue to be a problem in Tanzanian primary schools. We insist on teachers teaching English subject to be given training and seminar for them to be able to implement the new English pedagogical techniques stated in the Syllabus because as far as I know, since the beginning of the new curriculum implementation in 2015 there hasn't been any training conducted specifically for teachers teaching English subject (HTSD).

Similarly, a district education quality assurer remarked:

The other challenge I see, is the way teachers are being selected to participate in the training when it happens. You find when a few teachers are selected for training; those who participated in training will always strive to use the techniques in their lessons as they were taught, while others who did not participate still use old teaching experiences. When you ask them why you still use old teaching methods? They say those who went for the seminar did not take it seriously (DEQA_KT).

The evidence above suggests that teachers were required to implement the CLT as an English pedagogical approach. However, the relevant CLT training had not been offered yet. This had implication on subject teaching

effectiveness and realisation of communicative competence among learners.

Question of English language teacher education

It was revealed that, while language teaching methodology had changed from traditional lecturing to focus on achieving communicative competence among English learners as the CLT learning outcomes in schools, teacher education colleges in Tanzania especially at the certificate level had maintained traditional training for which language subject specific pedagogical skills were not forming part of the curriculum. In this regard, a head teacher disclosed:

Borrowing from my own experience as a head teacher, I even consider the availability of the teachers themselves as a big challenge. This is because those who are interested in teaching English subject are few and majority teachers run away from teaching English subject as most of them have no interest in the subject (HTSA).

Another head teacher added:

The other thing is the curriculum content of the teachers' training colleges and universities. Sincerely speaking, these curricula need to be improved in order to meet the current demands posed upon the teaching of English subject in Tanzanian primary schools. Currently, most teachers produced to teach English subject are irrelevant and overly incompetent (HTSC).

The evidence from the participants suggests that language teacher education programmes in colleges or universities were felt ineffective as they could not address the relevant pedagogical demands at classroom level. This means that there existed a mismatch between what is offered at teacher education and what was required at actual classroom level.

Large classes with uncondusive teaching and learning environments

Large number of pupils and their conditions were among the challenges observed in classrooms of the sampled primary schools. Classroom observation revealed that teachers could not be able to divide learners into manageable groups mainly for lack of space. Inability to divide learners into groups affected the interaction between learners and the teacher and among learners themselves. For instance, it was such a challenging situation for the teacher to move across the classroom rows to provide support to needy groups. This scenario suggests that interactive learning through group discussions which is a key for teaching English using CLT could not be possible when a class had poor facilities and characterised with large number of pupils in one room. One participant disclosed:

CLT techniques are needed, except that they are not in line with the current classroom teaching and learning environments. Certainly, a large number of pupils in class, and insufficient teaching and learning resources act as an obstacle to implementing CLT techniques. Again, English itself is an issue. For example, how can a child beginning to learn English, a foreign language at STD III be able to use it in role plays for authentic communication? (T1SB, STD IV).

Still commenting on large class size, a head teacher complained:

A large number of children in one classroom is a big problem and it negatively affects the implementation of the CLT approach. I think what is needed is that the government should strive to increase infrastructure such as buildings to expand the learning space. Instead of 150-200 children sitting in one room, children can then be able to sit 45 per class in streams as per the requirements of an ideal class (HTSB).

It is difficult to imagine how the CLT participatory techniques can be applied to a class with a large number of children ranging from 200 - 300

in the effort to enable each learner to develop speaking which can help him or her to speak English, within the prescribed 40 minutes of the lesson. Thus, in general, it was difficult to implement CLT techniques, make follow-up and attend needs of each learner in a class with such large number of children.

For sure, the problem associated with the implementation of CLT is mainly due to large number of pupils in class. This makes it difficult for a teacher to make follow-up of each learner. When you look at the class, you find a crowd of more than 200 children. Thinking of dividing them into manageable groups becomes very difficult (WEO_Nya).

The problem of learning space which was largely due to the large number of children in schools was also admitted by several participants including the education quality assurer at district level. By and large, implementation of the CLT as an English pedagogical approach was not as smooth as expected.

Discussion of the Findings

The study has shown that most teachers who were teaching English subject lacked specialised training in the subject they taught. This was evident through interview where teachers reported lack of specialized training as a serious problem. This may be true because the ability to teach a language effectively is fundamentally determined by having adequate knowledge about it, both content and pedagogical competencies. A study conducted by Dincer, Goksu, Takkac & Yazici (2013) on common characteristics of an effective English language teacher, reviewing over 30 studies that focused on teaching English as foreign language, revealed that an effective English language teacher had four main characteristics, as named under each of the following

categories: socio-affective skills, pedagogical knowledge, subject-matter knowledge and personality characteristics.

In this case, factors under *socio-affective skills* included a wide range of items such as ability of a teacher to motivate learners, sparing time for learners when they ask for help, being enthusiastic for teaching, having positive attitudes towards learners, responding to learners' needs and providing a stress-free classroom atmosphere (Cheung, 2006; Shishavan & Sadeghi, 2009). Aydın et al. (2009) define *pedagogical knowledge* as what teachers know about teaching their subjects. They further report that learners prefer their teacher to have the knowledge of how to teach. On that, they argue that, in order for a teacher to deliver the content in the best way, an effective teacher needs both field - specific knowledge and knowledge on how to present it (Aydın et al., 2009). This implies that without pedagogical knowledge, teachers cannot convey what they know to their learners.

About the *subject - matter knowledge*, Buchman (1984) argues that the use of subject - matter knowledge in different phases of educational process such as using target language effectively in class; integrating lessons based on learners' backgrounds and preparing effective lesson plan are crucial abilities for an effective English teacher in EFL contexts. In addition, knowledge and skills of the subject matter basically enable teachers to make use of the teaching and learning materials such as audio-visual materials where necessary; guide learners to get some learning strategies, teach a topic in accordance with learners' proficiency levels, and watch and inform learners about their progress in language learning (Werbinska, 2009). On the last characteristic feature of an effective EFL teacher, which is *personality qualities*, Malikow (2006) lists

the personality qualities that an EFL teacher should have and these are: being challenging and having reasonably high expectations; having sense of humour; being enthusiastic and creative. In addition, other studies added being tolerant, patient, kind, sensible and open-minded, flexible, optimistic, enthusiastic, having positive attitudes toward new ideas, and caring for learners as characteristics necessary for an effective teacher (Cheung, 2006; Shishavan & Sadeghi, 2009; Werbinska, 2009). Thus, teachers teaching English in Tanzanian primary schools not only need to specialise in the subject content and pedagogical skills, but also to be trained in the relevant subject teacher education that would enable them to teach EFL effectively.

The study also found that the 40 minute teaching period allocated for English subject was not sufficient for effective implementation of the CLT techniques in classroom context. This is because teachers needed more time that could be used to create situations in which English language can be used to bring about real or authentic communication. In Kenya, Maryslessor, Barasa & Omulando (2012) on challenges teachers face when implementing CLT approach revealed that, teachers were constrained by the time of 40 minutes given for a lesson as this prevented a meaningful interaction among learners because most of the activities could not be accomplished due to time constraint. Also, In Turkey, Coskun (2011) revealed that the major challenges in the implementation of CLT as experienced by teachers were large class size, traditional grammar-based examinations and the little time available to prepare and use the communicative materials. The goal of CLT is to teach the target language by using it in different real- life situations. Thus, time allocated for teaching a foreign language like English subject in Tanzanian primary

schools was considered as a problem and so compels for curriculum developers to think considering compulsory double periods for English subject in order to accomplish key activities that could focus on not only on promoting fluency among learners but also achieving *communicative competence* which is a goal of the CLT approach.

Inadequacy of teaching and learning materials was also found to be a serious pedagogical challenge. It should be understood that, while a subject textbook provides content for a target learner at a given level, story books serve to give a learner an opportunity to read while increasing his or her level of vocabulary content, intake and uptake. According to Wen-Cheng, Chien-Hung and Chung-Chieh (2011), in their study on 'thinking of the textbook in the ESL/EFL classroom' in China, availability of the textbooks provide novice teachers with guidance in the course and activity design; it assures a measure of structure, consistency and logical progression of content in a class; it meets a learner's needs or expectations of having something concrete to work from and take home for further study; most importantly, it provides multiple resources for quality teaching such as tapes, CDs, videos and self-study workbooks. Zeng and Takatsuka (2009) also report that textbooks provide an opportunity for the learners to assist one another in attending to language forms through collaborative dialogue, which consequently enhances their language learning and especially when the textbooks are available for each learner in a class.

Availability of textbooks and other reading materials are crucial in classroom context as they promote *communicative competence* among learners through meaningful interaction while using the target language. Hymes (1971) argues that CLT places *communicative competence* at the

centre of language teaching and so builds on all four skills in order to tighten the bonds of language and communication. In their study conducted in Spain on several upper secondary English textbooks, Criado and Sánchez (2009) found 50-80% of the content in the textbooks comprised communicative activities; and, interestingly, teenager textbooks as opposed to those designed for adults were found to have the most communicative materials. Again, the availability of reading materials promotes interaction among learners. Richards (2006) also reports that a common expectation of reading is that reading activities should be designed based on negotiation of meaning, being appropriate for interactive nature of communication, and fostering functional language ability. Thus, lack of textbooks, story and grammar books in classroom for integrated learning of language skills deprives learners not only the right to learn the content of the subject in a meaningful way, but also the teachers teaching the language subject with CLT face difficulties in realising its goals mainly for lack of the language exposition.

It was also revealed that there was little or no training offered specifically for teachers who were teaching the English subject. This challenge was also reported in the previous studies, that teachers teaching English subject were not given opportunity to be oriented through training for effective implementation even after the curriculum reforms of year 2015 (Rwezaura, 2016). This laxity on offering the CLT in-service training implies that the teachers' understanding of what was expected of them in implementing the CLT approach was uncertain while making the realisation of the CLT learning outcomes difficult (John, 2018b; NECTA, 2017; 2018). According to Ngala, Oriosky and Odebero (2010), when other factors held constant, there exists a positive correlation between teacher

training and student academic achievement in their final examinations. In this study as carried out in Rift Valley and Nyanza provinces in Kenya on staff development programmes as it relates to teacher effectiveness, it was discovered that teachers in high - performing schools took more interest in staff training programmes compared to their colleagues in the average - and low - performing schools. Welsh Government (2010) also maintains that, teachers who are well trained are able to have strong knowledge and understanding of the subject content they are teaching. As such, these teachers incorporate various teaching methods, thus, improving their content delivery in the classroom.

Previous studies have also reported that teachers who received adequate training are more effective in the subject delivery and methods than those who did not. For example, Killion and Shulman (1999) noted that teachers who are well prepared and trained are more effective teachers in the classroom and, thus, they have great influence on the students' achievement. Therefore, an effective implementation of the CLT approach in Tanzania primary schools could be a result of the adequate provision of the INSET for English subject teachers. However, studies show that in-service training for teachers needs to be conducted right in the school environment or compounds in order to improve the teacher retention and teaching effectiveness. A study by Peter (2012) on the influence of teacher training on the performance of learners in Kenya recommends that teachers should be professionally trained to enhance their productivity. It further emphasises that training must not necessarily be at university and college levels, but just in schools as teacher retention in a particular school is also necessary because frequent movement of teachers away from school destabilises the flow of studies for learners.

The study also found that the content tailored to prepare a primary school teacher was either irrelevant or inadequate as evidence indicated that it could not fully address the English subject teaching and learning challenges on the ground. Similarly, Rwezaura (2016) reports that majority of teachers who were teaching English in Tanzanian primary schools were immensely incompetent to teaching the subject. This implies that their English subject academic abilities were low. More previous studies also showed that even teachers who supposedly said to have gone through language subject training at diploma or degree levels were still incompetent in the teaching English subject (Allen, 2008; Bryne, 2006; Fentiman, Surgue & Wyse, 2014; John, 2015). Thus, there is a need to reorganise the teacher education programme offering to ensure that teachers who graduate from different levels of teacher education in Tanzania are competent, both pedagogically and in the language subject content they teach.

Large or crowded class coupled with unconducive environment was again found as a serious pedagogical challenge as it hampered effective learning of the English subject in classroom. However, the notion of large class may be different depending on the context and the level of technological development in the certain area. In this regard, scholars vary in terms of their views on the definition of what needs to be considered as 'a large class'. In extant literature, it is not surprising to read that there is nothing like 'a large class'. The 'large class' can be perceived as only something in the mind of the conventional teacher. Variation is mainly on the number. Some say: 'a large class' is one with more learners than available facilities can support the learning, while others consider it as a class which has more than 100 learners enrolled (Onwu, 1999). A

definition of 'a large class' can sometimes depend on the discipline and in this perspective. For example, a smaller number may be required for engineering, science and medicine, whereas a large number may be apposite for arts, humanities, and social sciences.

Ur (1996, p.302) on a *large class* definition, specifically proposes that "the exact number does not really matter: what matters is how you, the teacher, see the class size in your own specific situation." This perspective is also in line with Baker and Westrup (2000, p.2) who suggest that "a large class can be any number of learners, if the teacher feels there are too many learners for them all to make the progress". The same thinking is advanced by Todd (2006, p.1) who adds that "what is taught influences teachers' judgments of the size of class" which later on can influence their definition of 'a large class'. Mulryan-Kyne (2010), in this regard, offers a different view by emphasising the importance of taking into consideration the nature of the course and resources and the facilities available. Writing from an African context, Onwu (1999, p.126) defines a large class as, "one where the majority of characteristics and conditions present themselves as inter-related and collective constraints that impede meaningful teaching and learning." According to this definition, the factors which can affect the learning environment (Onwu & Stoffels, 2005, p.79) include the following:

- lack of physical space for learning moment due to overcrowding;
- diminished opportunities for all learners to participate actively in the learning process;
- the impersonalising of teaching;
- teachers resorting to predominantly lecture and teacher demonstrations;

- excessive workload, and a long homework assignment turnaround; and,
- the limited opportunities to meet individual student needs for self-activity and inquiry, motivation, discipline, safety and socialization.

Indeed, factors highlighted in the definition by Onwu (1999) were exactly what were referred to when participants in the present study pointed out the sense of a 'large/crowded class' as a problem for effective implementation of the CLT approach in Tanzanian public primary schools classroom context.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has shown that challenges facing teachers in the implementing of CLT approach in Tanzanian public primary schools were lack of English subject specialisation for primary education; inadequate time allocated for teaching English subject through CLT approach; Inadequate teaching and learning facilities such as CDs, Videos, textbooks for authentic communication; the question of relevance of English language teacher education; crowded classes and poor teaching and learning environments. Based on the study findings, the study concludes that CLT approach was adopted and required for implementation by teachers in primary schools in Tanzania while teachers, who are the key implementers of the curriculum, were not yet either oriented to or adequately trained about the CLT approach. Thus, the Tanzania Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) needs to have concerted efforts for addressing the contextual and pedagogical challenges that teachers face in implementing

the CLT approach in order to realise the English language communicative competence among the school leavers.

References

- Allen, K. (2008). Primary school teachers and the problems faced with teaching the English language. *Oxfam conference paper*. Retrieved on January 7, 2016 from: <http://www.kiliproject.org/newsletters-and-documents/Kat-Allen-Paper-Oxfam-Conference-Aug-08.pdf>.
- Aydın, B., Bayram, F., Canıdar, B., Çetin, G., Ergünay, O., Özdem, Z., & Tunç, B. (2009). Views of English language teachers on the affective domain of language teaching in Turkey. *Anadolu University Journal of Social Sciences*, 9(1), 263-280.
- Ben-Peretz, M. (2011). Teacher knowledge: What is it? How do we uncover it? What are its implications for schooling? *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27, 3-9. Retrieved on 19th May 2018 from: <http://edu312spring13.pbworks.com/w/file/64649993/Ben-Peretz.pdf>.
- Borg, S. (2006). *Teacher language education: cognition and research and practice*. London: Continuum.
- Borg, S. (2009). English language teachers' conceptions of research. *Applied Linguistics*, 30 (3), 358–388. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Available through: doi:10.1093/applin/amp007
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th edn). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Buchman, M. (1984). The priority of knowledge and understanding in teaching. In: R. L. Katz. (eds). *Advances in Teaching Education*, 1, 29-48. Norwood, NJ: Ablex

- Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Coskun, A. (2011). Investigation of the application of communicative language teaching in the English language classroom – a case study on teachers' Attitudes in Turkey. *Journal of Linguistics and Language Teaching*, 2(1). Retrieved on 29th March 2019 from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED513910.pdf>.
- Criado, R., & Sánchez, A. (2009). English language teaching in Spain: Do textbooks comply with the official methodological regulations? A sample analysis. *International Journal of English Studies*, 9(1), 1-28. Retrieved on 31st March 2019 from: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ878410.pdf>.
- Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Desai, A.A. (2015). Characteristics and principles of communicative language teaching. *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(7), 48-50 Retrieved on 19th May 2018 from: https://raijmronlineresearch.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/10_48-50-ankitabena-a-desai.pdf
- Dincer, A., Goksu, A., Takkac, A. & Yazici, M. (2013). Common characteristics of an effective English language teacher. *The International Journal of Educational Researchers*, 4 (3), 1-8. Retrieved on 29th March, 2019 from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED574883.pdf>
- Domician, I. (2008). *A Study of the implementation of the 2005 English curriculum: A case of*

resourced and better resourced secondary schools in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma Regions. (Unpublished) M.A Linguistics Dissertation. University of Dar es Salaam

- Fentiman, A., Surgue, C. & Wyse, D. (2014). Pedagogy and leadership in a Tanzanian primary school: a whole school approach exploring classroom realities in an urban setting. *Paper presented on the 1st International Conference on Literacy & Numeracy*, July 2015 at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Retrieved on 6th January, 2016 from: http://s3.amazonaws.com/accreditable-card_attachments/64042/original.
- Hymes, D. (1971). Competence and performance in linguistic theory. In: R. Huxley and E. Ingram, (Eds), *Language Acquisition: Models and Methods*. London: Academic Press.
- John, P. (2018a). English language teaching in Tanzania and the question of communicative language teaching approach: evidence from literature. In: .Brock-Utne, M. Ismail & M.Vuzo (eds), *Transforming Education for Development in Africa*, 99-116. Dar es Salaam: Mkuki & Nyota.
- John, P. (2015). Primary school leavers' English skills and their adequacy for knowledge acquisition at secondary school: the case of Iringa municipality. *Journal of Linguistics and Language in Education*, 9 (2), 60-72. Dar es Salaam: Inter Press of Tanzania Ltd.
- Kafle, N.P. (2011). Hermeneutic phenomenological research method simplified. *An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 5, pp. 180-200. Retrieved on 20th April, 2019 from: http://kucc.ku.edu.np/bodhi/vol5_no1/11.
- Marble, S., Finley, S. & Ferguson, C. (2000). *Understanding Teachers' perspectives on teaching and learning: A synthesis of work in five study Sites*. Austin: SEDL. Retrieved on 30th May 2018 from:

<http://www.sedl.org/pubs/teaching07/UnderstandTeachersPerspectives.pdf>

Maryslessor, A.O., Barasa, P. L., & Omulando, C.A. (2012). Challenges teachers face in the

use of the communicative language teaching approach in the teaching of listening & speaking lessons in Ligrari district, Kenya. *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)*, Vol. 3 (9), 83-91

MoEST (2016). *English language syllabus for basic education standard III – VI*.

Dar es Salaam: TIE.

MoEVT. (2014). *Education and training policy*. Dar es Salaam: MoEVT.

MoEVT (2013a). *Mtaala wa elimu ya msingi*. Dar es Salaam: TIE

MoEVT. (2013b). *Curriculum for certificate in teacher education programme in Tanzania*.

Dar es Salaam: TIE.

Mulryan- Kyne, C (2010). Teaching large classes at college and university level: Challenges

and opportunities. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 15 (2), 175-185.

NECTA (2017). Primary school leaving examination results announcement, 20th October 2017. Dar es salaam: necta. Retrievable via:

<http://www.necta.go.tz/matokeo/2017/psle/psle.htm>.

NECTA (2018). Primary school leaving examination results announcement, 20th October 2017. Dar es Salaam: NECTA. Retrievable via:

<http://www.necta.go.tz/matokeo/2018/psle/psle.htm>

- Ngala, F., Oriosky, N. and Odebero, S. (2010). Teachers' perceptions of staff development as it relates to teachers' effectiveness: A study of rural primary schools in Kenya. Nairobi: *Education Research and Reviews*.
- Nzima, I. (2016). *competence-based curriculum (cbc) in tanzania: tutors' Understanding and their Instructional Practices*. Doctoral dissertation, Linnaeus: Linnaeus University Press.
- Onwu G.O.M. (1999). Inquiring into the concept of large classes: Emerging typologies in an African context. In: Savage M & Naidoo P (eds). *Using the local resource base to teach Science and Technology: Lesson from Africa*. AFCLIST. October 1999.
- Onwu, G. & Stoffels, N. (2005). Instructional functions in large, under-resourced science classes: Perspectives of South African teachers. *Perspectives in Education*, 23(3), 79-91.
- Padilla-Diaz, M. (2015). Phenomenology in educational qualitative research: Philosophy as science or philosophical science? *International Journal of Educational Excellence*, 1(2), 101-110. Retrieved on 10th March 2018 from: http://www.suagm.edu/umet/ijee/pdf/1_2/padilla_diaz_ijee_1_2_101-110.pdf
- Peter, M. (2012). *Influence of teacher training on the performance of learners in mixed secondary schools in gem district, Kenya*. (Unpublished) M.A Dissertation, University of Nairobi. Retrieved on 31st March 2019 from: <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/13049>
- Richard, J. C. (2008). *Teaching listening and speaking: from theory and practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Richards, J.C. & Rodgers, T.S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in Language Teaching* (3rdedn).Cambridge: CUP.
- Rubagumya, C. (1991). Language promotion for educational purposes: the example of Tanzania. *International Review of Education* 37(1), 67-68.
- Rwezaura, P.P. (2016). *The implementation of competence-based English curriculum in Kinondoni municipal primary schools.* (Unpublished) master's dissertation: OUT.
- Skinner, B. F. (1957). *Verbal behavior*. Cambridge, MA: B. F. Skinner Foundation.
- Skinner, B.F. (1953). *Science and human behavior*. New York: McMillan.
- Todd, R. W. (2006). Why investigate large classes? *KMUTT Journal of Language Education*, 9, 1-12.
- Trappes-Lomax, H.R. (1985). English Language Teaching: A colloquium. *Utafiti*, VII (2), 11-24. Retrieved on 30th September 2019 from: <http://pdfproc.lib.msu.edu/?file=/DMC/African%20Journals/pdfs/Utafiti/vol7no2/aejp007002003.pdf>
- Ur, P. (1996). *A course in language teaching: Practice and theory*. Cambridge University Press.
- Uwezo (2014). *Are our children learning? Literacy and numeracy 2014*. Dar es Salaam: Uwezo East Tanzania.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1986). *Thought and language*. In: A. Kozulin (Ed.). Cambridge: MIT Press.

- Welsh Government (2010). *Welsh-medium education strategy annual report 2010–11*. Bedwas: Walsh Government. Retrieved on 31st March 2019 from: <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4247/7/110720wmesannualreport1011en>
- Wen-Cheng, W., Chien-Hung, L; & Chung-Chien, L. (2011). Thinking of the textbook in the ESL/EFL classroom. *English Language Teaching*, 4 (2), 91-96. Retrieved on 31st March, 2019 from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1080671.pdf>
- Werbinska, D. (2009). A profile of effective teacher of English: A qualitative study from Poland. *Haccetepe University Journal of Education*, 36, 306-315.
- Zeng, G., & Takatsuka, S. (2009). Text-based peer–peer collaborative dialogue in a computer-mediated learning environment in the EFL context. *System*, 37, 434-446.