

Classroom Activities for Enhancing Pupils' Competence in Spoken English in Kiswahili Medium Primary Schools in Tanzania

***Jalia Mohamed Muna**

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-1647-1447>

Department of Land Management and Valuation, Ardhi University-Tanzania

E mail: munajalia@gmail.com

Erasmus Akiley Msuya, PhD

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9649-6009>

Department of Foreign languages and Linguistics, University of Dar es Salaam-Tanzania

Email: msuyaerasmus@gmail.com

***Corresponding Author:** munajalia@gmail.com

Copyright resides with the author(s) in terms of the Creative Commons Attribution CC BY-NC 4.0.
The users may copy, distribute, transmit and adapt the work, but must recognize the author(s) and the
East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences

Abstract: This study intended to explore how classroom activities are being used by teachers in order to enhance primary school pupils' spoken competence in Kiswahili Medium Primary Schools in Tanzania. A case study design was employed to obtain diverse and depth of information in natural settings. Data was collected from Singida and Mtwara Districts as well as from Dar es Salaam City through non-participant observation and teacher interviews. Some schools were conveniently sampled and purposive sampling obtained teachers to be involved in the study. Data was analysed thematically. Findings indicated that question and answer, read aloud and discussion were the most frequently used activities across the schools. Planning and teachers' presentation of the activities resulted in minimum interaction of learners in class. The study recommends that teachers who teach English should carefully plan and employ activities which will engage learners in meaningful interactions.

Keywords: CLT; communicative activities; English; speaking skills, Kiswahili Medium Primary Schools, Tanzania

How to cite: Muna, J. M. and Msuya, E. A. (2024). Classroom Activities for Enhancing Pupils' Competence in Spoken English in Kiswahili Medium Primary Schools in Tanzania. East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences 5(5), 59-72. **Doi:** <https://doi.org/10.46606/eajess2024v05i05.0405>.

Introduction

In Tanzania, English is taught as a subject in primary and lower levels of secondary school. Moreover, it is the medium of instruction in secondary schools as well as in colleges and in universities. It is used in trade and business and in communication with people from different nations who do not speak Kiswahili. As such, to be able to speak English for primary school learners is necessary. However, there is a concern that most English learners in different levels of education cannot communicate in the language even after studying it for several years. Mwakapina (2020) explains that most of university students in the country have weak communication

abilities in English. Moreover, Paschal (2017) and Vedasto (2018) described that in secondary schools, students fail to learn effectively through English because they cannot express themselves in the language, hence, their participation in the lesson is lessened. In primary schools, Mugo and Malusu (2019) and Hasani (2023) reported that some primary school learners cannot make a simple expression in English.

Globally, some scholars (Šolcová, 2011; Gudu, 2015; Sadeghi and Richards, 2015) argue that majority of English language learners cannot communicate properly in English; even those who score high

marks in written examinations and even bright learners fail to express themselves orally in English. From a conversation with students, Šolcová (2011) reported that majority of students do stress that they are poor speakers of English language and therefore they need to improve their spoken production. This observation is concurrent with Sadeghi and Richards (2015) that in Iran, most of the learners feel the need to improve their spoken production. One would ask why these learners are not able to communicate well in English even though they studied it for some years. Thornbury (2005, p. 28) highlighted that one of the reasons for learners' inefficiency to speak English is "lack of genuine speaking activities." Therefore, this study sought to examine if activities used in teaching spoken English can instil into learners the ability to communicate in the language.

Literature Review

This section presents the literature reviewed regarding various aspects in the paper.

Significance of English Speaking Skills

English speaking skills are fundamental. They instil into learners the ability to convey ideas clearly and confidently, exchange ideas with other people, express feelings, beliefs, desires and knowledge. The skills help a learner to carry out a conversation in English, which, according to Burkart and Sheppard (2004), is a measure of success for someone who is learning English. In fact, people form judgements about English language competences from speaking proficiency rather than any form of other language skills (Kitundu, 2012). In the globalized world, and where people migrate to various destinations, being competent in spoken English connects learners with people who have different ideas and viewpoints, hence, they build networks and learn new things such as business skills from others.

Rationale for Teaching Speaking Skills

Primary school English language learners in Tanzania need to be able to speak English language because if they lack oral proficiency, they might have problems of accessing the curriculum, especially the language-associated tasks. They may also face deficiency in interaction and social skills (Kitundu, 2012). English language learners also need to be taught speaking skills since their learning involves construction of knowledge, which is attained through active participation in the learning process. If a student is able to think but fails to express his/her ideas, this becomes a barrier to learning (Vedasto, 2018). This,

if prolonged, may adversely affect the acquisition of knowledge and the learners' future career. For example, teachers who experienced lack of proficiency may fail to explain concepts and resort to reading notes without clarification (Kitundu, 2012). Furthermore, knowing how to speak English well enhances learners' career as it is the quality which is valued by employers within Tanzania, Africa and beyond. Tanzania, being a member of international, regional and sub-regional organisations receives employment opportunities for her people but one of the requirements is that they have to be competent in speaking English (Swilla, 2009).

Rationale for Communicative Activities

It has been noted that most of the Tanzanian primary school learners have low proficiency of the English language, and cannot use the language for communication (Hasani, 2023). As a strategy to improve the English language proficiency in general, the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) has been updating the English syllabus in order to enable primary school learners to communicate in English. In 2005, TIE issued a competence based English syllabus to replace the structure-based syllabus. The syllabus underscores competence in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes. It emphasizes the development of competence to learners in all four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). The main target is to produce competent learners who are able to communicate in English (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2016). Communication competence has to be attained using an appropriate teaching method, which in foreign language education, it is communicative language teaching (CLT) (Králová, 2017). Furthermore, the adoption of CLT tallies with the global paradigm shift in teaching English witnessed since early 1970s (Nunan, 2003). One of the distinctive points of CLT is the focus on communicative activities. Nunan (1989) defines communicative activity as a piece of classroom work involving learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is on meaning as opposed to form.

Categories of Communicative Activities

Scholars provide categories of communicative activities that are appropriate for teaching speaking skills in English. The first one is one-way and two-way information exchange activities (Long, 1980). One-way and two-way activities are information

exchange activities that are distinguished in terms of whether one person holds the information or more than one person have the information. In one-way activities, the person with the information has a major role in completing the activity successfully although other participants may contribute by demonstrating whether they comprehend or not. In two-way activities, all participants take part in order to complete the activities (Ellis, 2003). Both comprehension and production of language are important for one to interact and eventually learn the language (Vygotsky, 1978). In a study, Long (1981) found that two-way information gap activities promoted more linguistic conversational adjustments than one-way activities. Conversely, Foster (1998) reports that regardless of the fact that an activity is one-way or two-way, students were involved in the interaction.

The second category is provided by Nunan (1989). The author explains that activities are categorized as real world and pedagogic. Real world activities enable learners to practise and acquire language skills, which are important in daily life. Examples of these activities are buying stationery items in a shop or participating in selection of the appropriate class representative. Pedagogic activities help learners to acquire language although they do not have direct application to common language functions.

Moreover, Pica (1989) categorises activities depending on who holds and who communicates information, who requests and who provides feedback on information, the direction of information flow, the number of possible solutions for the activity and the need for and accuracy of information presented. Furthermore, both/all learners need to pose information to communicate one another in order to develop their spoken ability. When information is held by one learner, chances for interaction are minimised. However, Ellis (1991) reported that different activities contribute to oral development in different ways. One activity may not necessarily be effective than another because they all elicit varied responses and promote learning in various ways. The important consideration to be made by teachers is that they have to select an activity which is intrinsically more communicative or may lead to more communication (for example games and simulations) in order to enhance learners' speaking skills in English. Examples of these activities are elaborated below.

Examples of Communicative Activities

Communicative Language Teaching uses communicative activities to maximize language effective production. The teaching of speaking skills is fostered when teachers involve learners in interactive activities, which result in effective production. Examples of communicative activities for enhancing learners' oral fluency are provided below.

Information Gap Activities

Information gap activities require learners to use the language to exchange some information and get their meaning across (Ismaili & Bajrami, 2016). In these activities, the teacher may provide some information to one learner, which should be conveyed to others who do not have it (Pica, 1989). Learners will be required to interact because they need to complete the activity by giving each other a clue to the activity (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). When learners participate in these activities, their spoken competence are likely to increase because they need to understand or provide information in order to complete an activity. Provision of information and obtaining information from others results in interaction, which is desirable in improving speaking skills. In their study, Ismaili and Bajrami (2016) sought to understand if information gap activities enhance learning of language. Results indicated that information gap activities provide a relaxed atmosphere to promote the use of target language in the classroom and students' speaking skills were improved.

Jigsaw Activities

In jigsaw activities, each of the learners has to give and receive information. The teacher divides the class into groups and each group provides required information to complete activities. According to Pica et al. (1993), jigsaw activities generate opportunities for learners to comprehend and produce language and so, they are very effective for enhancing spoken abilities. Hoerunmisa and Suherdi (2017) studied the effectiveness of jigsaw activities in improving students' comprehension of language. Results show that these activities are effective and students with low capabilities get assistance from their fellows with higher capabilities. Moreover, Nanthaboot's (2012) study investigated the effect of communicative activities (describing and drawing pictures, mapping dialogues, information gap, playing jigsaws and spotting the difference) in developing English speaking ability.

Discussion

Discussion activities lead learners to reach a consensus by choosing between specific alternatives to provoke discussion among them. In these activities, learners are encouraged to find solutions to the problem and they take responsibility to justify their opinions in front of other students. The advantage of discussion activity is that learners get chances to speak about things they are interested in and therefore, interaction is maximised. Moreover, a learner learns how to justify opinions and it sparks critical thinking abilities (Putri, 2022).

Simulation and Role Play

Daniastuti (2018) defined role play as a technique that allows students to explore realistic situation by interacting with other people in a managed way in order to develop experience. In simulation, pupils act out a real-life experience, such as family meetings. In role play, pupils take part in real life experiences by being given roles, ideas and feelings. In simulation and role plays, students rehearse real life situations and therefore, they are encouraged to interact more. The more they interact, the more they are likely to improve their spoken competence.

Games

Games are fun design activities (quizzes, guessing, competition) intended to stimulate learners' interaction in the classroom. Because of being fun, learners engage more in playing them while at the same time, they practise speaking skills. English language games engage children and teach them through play (Upadhayay, 2022).

Opinion Exchange

Opinion exchange activities require learners to exchange information although it is not necessary to get a common solution (Pica, 1989). In these activities, learners are motivated to communicate verbally in order to air their opinion and preferences while at the same time, they need to convince their partners that they have the best idea to the matter discussed. As a result, interaction is stimulated in class, which may result in enhancing learning of spoken English. Soleimani and Dastjerdi (2021) investigated the effect of information gap and opinion exchange on second language learners' willingness to communicate. Results indicated that learners were willing to communicate when they were taught with these activities and their spoken fluency were improved.

Problem Solving

The problem-solving activity exposes learners to a problem in which they have to work and agree on a single solution. Learners need to work in groups in order to cooperate in finding a solution. In these activities, learners ask what they need to know (Pica, 1989). Through asking questions and providing information, learners get the chance to interact. Al-garni and Almuhammadi (2019) did a quasi-experimental study to find out the effect of using interview, problem solving and role-play to 21 female learners of English as a second language in Jeddah. Results indicate that the experimental group scored higher than the control group after they were taught through the mentioned communicative activities.

There are a lot of communicative activities that teachers could use to develop the learners' spoken competence. This list is not exhaustive. Many other activities, such as drama, debates, songs or questionnaires could still be used by teachers. The teacher needs to be creative and careful in designing appropriate activities for the learners.

The Role of Teachers in CLT

Richards and Rodgers (2001) identified the roles of teachers as they teach in CLT in which communicative activities are the heart of the process as (i) need analyst who identifies and addresses the language needs of the learners; (ii) counsellor who is responsible to ensure that misunderstandings are clarified whenever they happen among learners in order to maximize communication, (iii) manager with the responsibility of managing the ongoing group participation in the classroom for maximum communication, (iv) resource who provides assistance and knowledge as required by learners. As such, the teachers' role is to address the needs of learners by making sure that they prepare activities and materials for meaningful interaction in the classroom.

Knowledge Gap

Admittedly, studies on communicative activities have been done. For example, Soleimani and Dastjerdi, (2021), Ismaili and Bajrami (2016) and Gudu (2015) conducted studies highlighting the communicative activities used by teachers and their impact to learners. However, in the Tanzanian context, studies that highlight how classroom activities are used by teachers in order to enhance primary school pupils' spoken competence in English are rare. Teachers' selection and appropriate use of the activity influences the success of it

(Hasani, 2023). Therefore, it was considered necessary to carry out this study in order to explore teachers' use of the classroom activities in enhancing primary school pupils' competence in spoken English. In the Tanzanian context, it is in the primary school that the pupils' foundation in English is laid. Again, in the Tanzanian context, studies on Communicative Approach (Sane & Sebonde, 2014; Lyimo & Mapunda, 2016; Ndulila and Msuya, 2017) are confined to analysing the implementation of CLT in developing the four English language skills in secondary schools while the present study has focused on developing one English language skill (speaking) in primary schools specifically those of Kiswahili medium of instruction (KMPS).

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (SCT), which asserts that knowledge is social and is created via participation in social situations and through participant collaboration, interaction and communication (Nassaji & Swain, 2000). Accordingly, when learners do activities with the help of other learners or the teacher, they internalize how to perform the activity by themselves (Ellis, 2003). In this case, interaction facilitates learning. In order for the learners to be competent speakers of a language, personal efforts alone are not enough. Other people have to participate in the struggle.

The primary constructs of SCT as introduced by Vygotsky (1978) are Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), scaffolding, mediation, internalisation and verbal thought. Vygotsky introduced the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is defined as the distance between the actual developmental levels as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers. In ZPD, Vygotsky emphasized the importance of interaction, collaboration and support to acquire language. He also emphasized the importance of teacher's support for the learner to attain the ZPD.

The second construct is scaffolding, which is interpreted as social assistance (Bruner, 1986). Teachers scaffold by using appropriate language which matches with the learners' level of knowledge and through their actions of providing communication opportunities in the classroom. Teachers also provide assistance by structuring

activities from simple to complex. For example, provision of simple activities, such as self-introduction to complex ones, such as participation in debate, which will enable the learners to progress in learning language. As learners participate in activities, teachers may provide helpful hints in order to assist the learners in understanding and completing the activities successfully. Scaffolding is expected to develop new abilities into learners, which will enable them to accomplish similar activities on their own. When learners are able to perform activities on their own, the assistance of the teacher is minimised or withdrawn (Yildiz & Celik, 2020).

The third construct is verbal thought. In this construct, Vygotsky suggested three steps for the formation of an utterance: the motive, the thought and its transformation into inner speech and external speech. To start with, a verbal utterance ordinarily begins with its motive. To produce any utterance, a human being needs to have a motive to speak something to someone else. The motive (also known as motivation) is the most fundamental in the formation of an utterance. It also triggers an activity and produces demand to speak (Zhang, 2014). Teachers have to present activities and use materials that appeal to learners' curiosity so that they become interested in the activities they are going to engage with. Teachers should also present background knowledge in order to enable learners to link the goals and content of the lesson, which will trigger the learners' motive. Having been motivated, the second stage is the thought of an utterance. Then follows the third stage in which a thought is coded into an utterance. At this stage, the inner speech is recorded into external speech.

Then follows mediation, which states, "knowledge is developed using socially created psychological tools which are shared between individuals" (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p.193). The concept of mediation clarifies the importance of using tools, such as a book or a computer to accomplish an activity. Moreover, human beings mediate one another to grasp an object. For example, the interaction between teachers-pupils and pupils-pupils enhances acquisition of speaking skills.

Lastly, internalisation, which is a psychological construct that explains the connection between the experience we get from the outside world and our self-consciousness (Lantolf, 2000). Internalisation originates from human activities and it is mediated

by language (Vygotsky, 1978). This highlights the importance of the teacher to engage pupils in activities that will encourage them to speak using the target language. Use of the target language will help pupils to get used to speaking it.

Methodology

Design

Research design is a systematic procedure for collecting, analysing and interpreting data and reporting findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Research design bridges research questions and implementation of chosen strategy in order to obtain results that are credible. In this study, case study design was used. According to Yin (2003, p.13), "case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life contexts." The design was chosen because it provided an opportunity to go deeply into studying the use of communicative activities by teachers in order to obtain a diverse and depth of information in a natural setting.

Population and Sampling

This study was conducted in Kiswahili Medium Primary Schools in Singida and Mtwara Districts and Dar es Salaam City in Tanzania. The criterion, which guided the selection of the three sites, is geographical location. In Tanzania mainland, there are eight zones, which are central, eastern, lake, southern, southern highlands, south west highlands, western and northern zone (United Republic of Tanzania, 2018). Three zones were chosen randomly. The chosen zones are the Eastern Zone, Central Zone and the Southern Zone.

From each zone, the researchers purposively selected one district to be studied (Eastern Zone- Dar es Salaam City; Central Zone- Singida District; Southern Zone -Mtwara District). The criterion used was on whether the area was a typical urban/rural area. The purpose was to balance between urban and rural settings. The three zones were chosen in order to study the trend of the use of communicative activities by teachers. CLT was opted to be used throughout the country and so, like all other districts in Tanzania, it was expected that teachers would be using communicative activities when teaching English (MEST, 2016). The total number of Kiswahili Medium Primary Schools in the three districts were 278 (URT-PO RALG, 2021).

In order to get schools for the study, three schools from each district were conveniently sampled. In

Mtwara and Singida districts, accessibility to the districts was through gravel roads with limited transport service. In this case, the schools had to be easily accessible to the researcher for smooth data collection. In Dar es Salaam city, the researchers chose schools based on their centrality, in terms of location, believing that these schools would be easily accessible and they are examples of best standards in terms of teaching. There were 35 teachers who taught English in the nine schools. In order to get teachers to be involved in the study, purposive sampling was done. Only teachers who taught English in Standard Six were involved.

Data Collection Instruments

The study used two instruments in data collection, namely interview and non-participant observation.

Interview

Interviews were held with teachers who taught English in Standard Six before observation in order to collect information about the types of activities used to teach spoken English. Standard Six classes were involved in the study because it was expected that learners in this class had acquired a wide range of vocabulary and language structures listed in the syllabus that are important for engaging in basic communication activities, considering the fact that they had learnt English for over five years.

Non-participant Observation

Non-participant observation occurs when a researcher observes a classroom and examines learners' interactions without being an active participant (Given, 2008). In the present study, a total of nine classes were observed and each class was observed four times when English was taught. Each observation took 40 minutes and the researchers observed activities which were used by teachers to teach English, time taken to accomplish the activity, the interaction resulted by doing such an activity and how learners were motivated to participate in the activity. In addition, the researchers used a voice recorder to audio record the lesson and wrote some notes to enrich the analysis process. Results obtained from observations were used to confirm and compare with information obtained during interview sessions.

Data Analysis

Interview and observation data were analysed thematically. Regarding observation data, the activities used in the classroom were identified and

time taken to accomplish each activity was noted. The Valcarcel *et al.*, (1991) system of activity types was adopted in order to identify the activities. Moreover, the interaction resulted by doing such an activity and how learners were motivated to participate in the activity was also noted. Then, each lesson was transcribed in full and themes were developed. Regarding the interview data, they were transcribed into a document for easy manipulation. Then, transcripts were organised to get sets of data. Finally, themes were identified and examples of responses for a particular theme were provided.

Results and Discussion

To start with, this study intended to find answers to the question 'what are the classroom activities which are used by primary school teachers to teach English speaking skills' In order to find answers for this question, the researchers interviewed teachers who teach English to Standard Six in KMPS. In addition, 38 classroom observations were made, where the activities were identified. Table 1 presents teachers' responses from the interview. Table 1 presents responses of interviewed teachers. Responses show that the most frequently used activities were question and answer, discussion and

read aloud. Moreover, drill, songs, story sequencing and storytelling were moderately used.

The rest of the activities were least used. Teacher interviews were followed by classroom observations. A summary of the activities observed is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 presents activities as observed in the classroom. The most frequently used activities were question and answer, drill, read aloud, vocabulary work and pronunciation. Moderately used activities were matching, songs, story sequencing and presentation. Dialogue and speech were least used activities. The use of drama, storytelling and puzzle was not evident although they were mentioned by the interviewed teachers. Presentation, although not mentioned in the interview, was moderately used. However, in some schools with many learners in class, only five groups and sometimes less than that were able to present. It was a tendency for teachers to employ at least two activities in class. For example, when discussion was used, it was followed by presentation where learners presented what they were doing in their groups/pairs.

Table 1: Teachers' Responses on Classroom Activities Used to Teach English Speaking Skills

Most Frequently used Activities (89% and above)	Moderately used Activities (22-88%)	Least used Activities (11% and below)
Question and answer	Drill	Drama
Discussion	Song	Puzzle
Read aloud	Story sequencing	Vocabulary work
	Story telling	Speech
		Pronunciation activities
		Dialogue

Table 2: Observed Activities

Most Frequently used Activities (89% and above)	Moderately used Activities (22-88%)	Least used Activities (11% and below)
Question and answer	Matching	Dialogue
Drill	Songs	Speech
Read aloud	Story sequencing	
Vocabulary work	Presentation	
Pronunciation activities		
Discussion		

In order to enhance learners' competence in spoken English, teachers need to use activities which necessitate learners to interact. According to Richards (2006), spoken communication in English is best taught through information gap and jigsaw activities. These activities create the need to speak

as one will need to communicate in order to obtain the missing information. Moreover, Cook (2008) proposed that activities appropriate for children are simulation and role play as they are fun and they motivate learners to speak. Nilsson (2020) insists that children are best taught spoken English through

games and songs. These activities help primary school learners to be active because these learners usually have shorter attention span. They also reduce boredom and raise motivation to speak. However, the interview and observation data indicated that teachers hardly used activities which sparked interaction in the classroom. The most frequently used activities as shown in Table 2 resulted in limited interaction between a teacher and learners and among learners themselves. As a result, it was difficult for learners to learn spoken language and attain their ZPD. Low chances for use of the language also limited learners to internalise the language (Vygotsky, 1978). These findings are similar to Rwezaura (2016) who observed that the most frequently used activity for teaching English in primary schools in Kinondoni Municipal was question and answer. The teachers asked questions and learners had to respond to such questions.

Moreover, learners need activities of different nature for them to pick different skills. Krashen (1982) explained that what helps learners in the mother tongue environment is the variety and amount of input which is available for them to pick. A variety of activities will arouse learners' motivation in speaking and cater for different learning styles and their abilities. In addition, motivation is an important factor, which determines the effort which the learner is ready to exert to participate in the activity. However, as indicated in Table 2, only 6 activities were most frequently used while there are other various types of activities as presented in this paper, which can be used to teach English and enhance the spoken ability of the learners. These findings are similar to the findings of Bulbula et al. (2021) that teachers in their study presented grammar and vocabulary related activities, they did not present various types of speaking activities. The use of these activities by teachers denies learners chance to interact and internalize the language.

This study also intended to explore how classroom activities are being used by teachers in order to enhance primary school pupils' spoken competence. In order to achieve this objective, 38 classroom observations were made. Two activities from the two categories (most frequently used and moderately used activities) of the observed activities were presented to indicate how these activities were used. From the most frequently used activities, one lesson in which the teacher used discussion and another lesson in which question and

answer activity was used, were taken as examples while in the moderately used, presentation and story sequencing were taken as examples. To start with, as indicated in Table 2, discussion was one of the most frequently used activity. The following extract of a lesson shows how the teacher used this activity.

The lesson started by greetings, followed by a song (*If you are happy and you know clap your hands....*). Then, pupils were asked to work in small groups of six pupils each. The teacher provided three examples to illustrate how to go about doing the activity. Thereafter, one learner would provide the sentence and the second learner would re-state the sentence using "used to."

T – *'Sio kila mmoja anaandika kivyake, mmoja anatoa wazo, mnajadiliana, mnatunga sentensi halafu mnaisema kwa kutumia used to, sawa?' (Not everyone writes individually, one gives an idea, you discuss it, you compose a sentence and then you say it using 'used to', okay?)*

P - *'Ndiyo' (Yes)*

T- *'Kwa mfano, mmoja akisema ten years ago I lived in Dodoma but now I live in Singida, mwingine atatumia used to na atasema ten years ago she/he used to live in Dodoma but now she/he lives in Singida' (For example, if one says 'Ten years ago I lived in Dodoma but now I live in Singida' another will use 'used to' and will say 'Ten years ago she/he used to live in Dodoma but now she/he lives in Singida').*

Although the teacher provided this example, learners were quiet for two minutes, the teacher intervened:

T- *'Make discussion please, fanyeni majadiliano namna ya kuandaa hizo sentensi halafu mnatengeneza sentensi tano, mmoja anazitamka wengine mnachangia mawazo namna ya kuzisema kwa kutumia 'used to' ('Make discussion please, make a discussion on how to compose those sentences and then you make five sentences, one pronounces them and the rest you share ideas on how to say them using 'used to').*

This is an example of a discussion activity in which the teacher wanted learners to discuss sentences in groups. He encouraged them to participate in the discussion. However, learners did not discuss, they were writing sentences individually in their exercise books.

Besides, the exemplified discussion activity was a grammatical drill and not a discussion activity as it provided learners with limited chances to engage in the discussion. Moreover, learners' opportunities in utilising their linguistic and communicative resources to seek for information and use of stretches (sentences or several sentence responses) as well as the ability to listen to one another's language in order to accomplish the activity, were limited. In SCT, collaboration through discussion helps learners to move from their current level of knowledge to the next (Vygotsky, 1978). The learners' listening and production of language in discussion activities are essential in learning spoken English.

Again, the discussion activity did not aim at enhancing learners' spoken ability. That means, the teacher failed to design a discussion activity because it was intrinsically not communicative and learners hardly interacted. Interaction is necessary because through it, learners get input (Krashen, 1982) as they hear language spoken by others; they also get chances of speaking. Again, Morgan-Short and Bowden (2006) contended that the learner's primary source of information for communication is communicatively embedded comprehensible input. Learners who are supposed to communicate must show complete comprehension of the language.

In addition, Vygotsky (1978) insists that learning is social in nature, taking place as a result of interaction. Through interaction, learners mediate to each other and facilitate understanding of language. Moreover, activities are internally constructed through interaction when learners engage in performing them and hence spoken language is facilitated. The findings that discussion activities are poorly planned are related to the findings of Tilya and Mafumiko (2010), who found that discussion activities were poorly planned and what students were told to discuss were so mundane, too simple and often a waste of time of both students and teachers. In interview, teachers commented that they do not know how to teach speaking skills. These comments underscore the importance of professional development courses to equip teachers with the necessary skills to teach all four English language skills.

Another issue which was observed in relation to discussion activity was the use of Kiswahili. In the example above, the teacher spoke Kiswahili in class except when he gave examples of sentences. This

indicates that teaching of English is done in Kiswahili instead of using the target language. In this case, learners lack authentic situations to practice English language inside the classroom. The problem is exacerbated outside the classroom because in an environment like Tanzania, English is used in very few domains, such as when talking to foreigners. Thus, learners do not get enough exposure to it.

Learners need to get sufficient exposure to English in order to improve their speaking performance, and using the language in classes would increase their exposure to it. Limited opportunities to practise will intensify the problem of not knowing how to speak it, especially when they will be supposed to use it in secondary schools as a medium of instruction. The findings are similar to those by Omulando (2014) and Gudu (2015), who witnessed learners in their studies speak Kiswahili when they worked in groups and teachers did not discourage the practice. Similarly, Tuan and Mai (2015) witnessed learners in Vietnam using their mother tongue in an English lesson. Furthermore, Alharbi (2015) found that Arabic was used in English classrooms, which resulted in decreased motivation of learners to speak and think in English. In these studies (Omulando, 2014; Gudu, 2015; Tuan and Mai, 2015; Alharbi, 2015), learners had acquired other languages before learning English. This could have been the cause for them to fall back into using their first language.

The other most frequently used activity was question and answer. The following extract of a lesson shows how the teacher used this activity. As usual, pupils and the teacher exchanged greetings.

Their interaction was follows:

T- Who has a birthday today? Was anyone born on this date?

P - Silent

T- No one? Okay, do you know the birthday song?

P- Yes.

T- Can you sing it for me? Happy birthday to you...One, two, three start,

P- Singing the birthday song (Happy birthday to you....) following the teachers tune

T- If you have a birthday, what do you do?

P-Celebrate.

T- Okay, celebrate, very good. Celebrate. How do you invite your friends to your celebration?

P- You give them card

T- Good, you give them cards. Okay, last week I told you that everyone must bring a card, an invitation card. Do you remember?

P- Yes.

T- Okay, okay. Show me your cards, all of you show me your cards.

In the question-and-answer activity as shown in this example, the teacher asked questions to learners. Learners answered the questions asked. Therefore, the teacher dominated in the interaction. In Communicative Language Teaching, however, the teacher should not be too dominant. Rather, learners should be active in the interaction (Richards, 2006). The teacher who teaches through Communicative Language Teaching should balance the interaction happening in class by controlling his/her talk and providing more chances for learners to speak. By doing so, teachers will be helping learners to reach the abilities expected of them. Moreover, teachers have to encourage learners to interact because as they do so, some of the learners work hard to generate output, which in turn becomes the source of input to other learners (Vygotsky, 1978). In this way, learners cope with communication challenges.

Secondly, when the teacher used the question-and-answer activity, she did not put learners to work in groups or pairs. The teacher interacted with the whole class. In this case, collaboration and support among peers in order to learn language was missing. In fact, Vygotsky (1978) insists that learners need to interact in cooperation in order to produce elaborated speech. In addition, Richards (2006) suggests that when learners are put to work in pair/group work, they learn spoken language better as they will be able to hear and understand the language of the other learner and produce a greater amount of language as compared to engaging learners in individual activities or in whole class activities controlled by teachers. In whole class activities, chances for developing speaking fluency are limited because learners are less likely to speak. These findings are similar to Gudu (2015), who found out that teachers used discussion, dramatization, impromptu speeches and tongue twisters to promote learners' active participation in

speaking skills lessons. However, during the activity, the teacher led the lesson and therefore, learners' participation in the lesson were limited.

In the moderately used category, one of the activities used was story sequencing (in which learners arranged sentences). The following extract of a lesson shows how the teacher used this activity. The teacher instructed learners to do the activity in groups. Thereafter, the teacher interacted with students in the whole class mode to obtain the answers as shown below.

T-Which sentence should come first?

P- Number four

T- Number four, yes, number four, which is the second?

P- Eight

T-Good, next

P-Six

T- Okay, six, enhe, next (okay, next)

P-Number one

T- Enhe, endelea (okay, proceed)

This is an example of story sequencing activity in which learners were required to sit in groups and arrange sentences in the right order. Having done so, they were asked to present the sentences in the correct order. The pupils presented answers as a whole class in chorus. At this stage, learners were able to interact with the teacher. They produced a word or short phrase in chorus to respond to the instruction. Although learners interacted with the teacher, they interacted in short turns; they did not get chances to engage in spontaneous and extended speech production, which is important for spoken fluency. In fact, research suggests that in order for speaking proficiency to develop, learners need to be given sufficient opportunity to become productively involved in extended speech (Gudu, 2015). By doing so, pupils' fluency would be enhanced. In their study, Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009) managed to enhance young learners' English fluency when they involved them in activities, such as negotiation of classroom rules requiring extended interaction in a group. In the Socio-cultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) extended speech result in internalisation and therefore, teachers in this study could adopt these activities in order to help learners internalise the language.

Likewise, this activity was too simple to be done in groups. It could best be done in an individual mode first in order to trigger the motive to participate in the next activity. The teacher could ask some individuals to present what they have done. Thereafter, learners could work in groups for a different activity. When learners are required to perform an activity, which is too simple, they tend to avoid doing it by engaging themselves in other activities. As a result, they waste time, which is planned for learning and gaining clear knowledge of the skill (Bulbula, 2021). In addition, their chances to think critically are limited. In terms of language development, their chances to engage in production of longer stretches of sentences are minimised and hence the fluency part of communication tends to suffer. These results are contrary to McDonough and Mackey (2000), who used jigsaw (story sequencing, spot the difference) and information gap activities (one learner describes the picture and another one draws) and the learners' conversational interactions were promoted. The use of these activities generated the opportunity for learners to collaborate in doing the activity as well as giving and receiving information. Therefore, teachers should be careful in designing activities that will promote interaction. Moreover, teachers have to be active to monitor learners' performance in order to facilitate speaking skills.

Furthermore, presentation was moderately used. During the lesson in which presentation was used, learners presented answers to grammar and reading comprehension questions, which were done in a group. These activities were taken from the text book and had their answers easily accessible by all learners from the same text book. In addition, few learners had the chance to speak. In this case, learners had less opportunity to practise English for oral communication. Nevertheless, in the Tanzanian syllabus (United Republic of Tanzania, 2016), it is expected that a Standard Six learner should, among other things, be able to participate in conversation, narrate different events happening in various situations and narrate short stories with complex vocabulary. In order to achieve these goals, learners need exposure to activities that do not limit their interaction. They need to be given chance to creatively compose their own sentences. These findings are contrary to the findings of Ozverir, (2017), who assigned learners to collect data related to a problem which had a social significance. Thereafter, they asked learners to write an article

on it to be published in a city newsletter and each group had to present their article. The result was that learners were able to express ideas and opinions, used a range of vocabulary and had multiple opportunities to use the language. However, in the study, the number of learners were few compared to the number of learners in this study. As already explained, big classes were regarded by teachers to be a challenge in applying communicative activities in classes. Therefore, it is essential to equip teachers with necessary skills of teaching big classes in order to maximise learners' interaction for developing speaking skills.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the study concludes that teachers hardly used activities which spark interaction in the classroom and it was difficult for learners to learn spoken language. The communicative activities, such as discussion, presentation and story sequencing were not designed to promote interaction into the classroom and so they had little contribution to the development of oral fluency of the learners.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, it is recommended that teachers who teach English in Kiswahili Medium Primary Schools should employ activities which will engage learners in meaningful interaction. In addition, careful design of the activities may increase the likelihood that learners will be engaged in meaningful interaction. Given the importance of communicative activities in enhancing learners' speaking skills in English, it could be useful to conduct a study similar to the current one in a different environment in order to extend the understanding of how communicative activities are effective in teaching spoken English.

References

- AL-Garni, S. A. and Almuhammadi, A. H. (2019). The effect of using communicative language teaching activities on EFL students' speaking skills at the University of Jeddah. *English Language Teaching*; 12, (6), 72-86.
- Alharbi, H. A. (2015). Improving students' English-speaking proficiency in Saudi Public Schools. *International Journal of Instruction*, 8(1), 105-116.
- Bulbula, D. A., Bulti, T. A, Sada, E.Y. (2021). EFL teachers' practices and implementations of speaking activities in Ethiopian English textbooks. *Education*

- Research International, 2021, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2021/8696278>.
- Bruner, J. S. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press
- Burkart, G. and Sheppard, K. (2004). A descriptive study of content-ESL practices. National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. Downloaded from <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/cal/contentesl/>, accessed on 3rd March, 2022.
- Cook, V. (2008). *Second language learning and language teaching* (4th Ed). UK: Hodder Education.
- Creswell, J.W. and Plano Clark, V.L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Daniastuti, M.A (2018). The effectiveness of simulation and role play technique to teach speaking for high and low motivation students. *Leksika* 12 (1),30-36. DOI 10. 23918/ijsses.v7i3p148
- Ellis, R. (1991). *Second language acquisition and language pedagogy*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Foster, P. (1998). A Classroom perspective on the negotiation of meaning. *Applied Linguistics*, 19, (1), 1-23.
- Given, L.M. (ed) (2008). *The SAGE Encyclopaedia of qualitative research methods*. Volume 1&2. Los Angeles.
- Gudu, B.O. (2015). Teaching speaking skills in English language using classroom activities in secondary school level in Eldoret Municipality, Kenya. *Journal of Education and Practice* 6 (35)55-63.
- Hasani, K.B. (2023). Challenges facing primary school learners in Morogoro municipality when communicative approach is used in teaching English language. *East African Journal of Educational Studies*, 6 (1) 90-102. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.6.1.1072>.
- Hoerunmisa, N. & Suherdi, D. (2017) The effectiveness of jigsaw in improving students' reading comprehension. *Journal of English and Education* 5 (1), 1-12
- Ismaili, M. and Bajrami, L. (2016). Information gap activities to enhance speaking skills of elementary level students. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 232, 612 – 616. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.10.084.
- John-Steiner, V. and Mahn, H. (1996). Sociocultural approaches to learning and development: A Vygotskian framework. *Educational Psychologist*, 31(3-4), 191–206.
- Kitundu, A. (2012). An assessment of teaching and learning of speaking in ordinary level secondary schools in Tanga region. Unpublished M. A. Dissertation, UDSM.
- Králová, Z. K. (2017). Developing communicative competence and the role of course books. Published Diploma thesis, Brno.
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Lantolf, P. J. (ed.). (2000). *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*. Oxford: OUP.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). *Techniques and principles in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Long, M. (1980). Input, interaction, and second language acquisition (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). UCLA, Los Angeles, CA.
- Long, M. (1981). Input, interaction, and second language acquisition. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 379, 259-278.
- Lyimo, D.H. and Mapunda, G. (2016). Do Tanzanian secondary school teachers of English use the communicative approach as required? Lessons from Kilimanjaro Region. *Linguistics and Language in Education*. 10, (2) 78-92.
- Maugo, D. J. and Malusu, J. M. (2019). Strategies used by teachers of English in public schools to enhance pupils' performance on primary school leaving examination in Magu District, Tanzania. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, 8 (4), 155-167.
- McDonough, K. and Mackey, A. (2000). Communicative tasks, conversational interaction and linguistic form: An empirical study of Thai. *Foreign Language Annals* 33, (1), 82-92. DOI:10.1111/j.1944-9720.2000.tb00893.x.
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2016). *English language syllabus for basic education*

standard iii-vi. Dar es Salaam: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Morgan-Short, K. and Bowden, H. (2006). Processing instruction and meaningful output-based instruction: Effects on second language development. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 28, 31-65.

Mwakapina, J.W. (2020). Efficacy of communication skills teaching methods and learning strategies: Enhancing tertiary students' communicative competence in Tanzania. *Journal of Linguistics and Language in Education*, 14 (2), 38-61.

Nanthaboot, P. (2012). Using communicative activities to develop English speaking ability of Mathayomsuksa three students. M.A Thesis, Srinakharinwirot University-Thailand.

Nassaji, H. and Swain, M., (2000). A Vygotskian perspective on corrective feedback in L2: The effect of random versus negotiated help on the learning of English articles. *Language Awareness*, 9 (1), 34-51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658410008667135>.

Ndulila, E. S. and Msuya, E. A. (2017). Tanzanian EFL teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards communicative language teaching (CLT): A case study of secondary schools in Morogoro municipality. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature* 5(9), 51-59. <http://dx.doi.org/10.20431/2347-3134.0509007>.

Nilsson, M. (2020). Young learners' perspectives on English classroom interaction: Foreign language anxiety and sense of agency in Swedish primary school. Published PhD thesis, Stockholm University.

Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. (Ed.) (2003). *Practical English language teaching*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Omulando, C. A. (2014). Teachers' role in the application of communicative language approach in teaching listening and speaking in schools in Lugari District, Kenya. *Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 4 (5), 4-20.

Ozverir, I. (2017). Investigating the effects of authentic activities on foreign language learning: A design-based research approach. *Educational Technology & Society*, 20 (4), 261-274.

Paschal, L. (2017). *Communicative approach strategies to English language teaching in Tanzanian secondary schools: Are they really working?* Published MA-ED dissertation, Mzumbe University.

Pica, T. Holliday, L., Lewis, N. Morgenthaler, L. (1989). Comprehensible output as an outcome of Linguistic demands on the learner. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 11 (1) 63-90. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S027226310000783X>.

Pica, T., Kanagy, R. and Falodun, J. (1993). Choosing and using communicative tasks for second language instruction. in G. Crookes and S. Gass (eds). *Tasks and language learning: Integrating theory and practice*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Putri, V.D. (2022). Teaching and learning speaking by using discussion techniques. Published undergraduate thesis. State University of Raden.

Richards, J. C. and Rodgers, T.S. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language Teaching* (2nd ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rwezaura, P.P. (2016). The implementation of competence-based English curriculum in Kinondoni Municipal Primary Schools. Published M.A dissertation, The Open University of Tanzania

Sadeghi, K. and Richards, J.C. (2015). Teaching spoken English in Iran's private language schools: issues and options. *English Teaching: Practice & Critique*. 14 (2), 210-234. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/ETPC-03-2015-0019>.

Sane, E. and Sebonde, R.Y. (2014). Suitability of communicative approach in teaching English language in Tanzania secondary schools. *Arts and Social Sciences* 5, (2), 1-6. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4172/2151-6200.100074>.

Šolcová, P. (2011). Teaching speaking skills. Unpublished MA thesis: Masaryk University.

Soleimani, M. and Dastjerdi, V. H. (2021). Impact of opinion-exchange and information gap tasks on EFL learners' willingness to communicate. *International Journal of Language and Translation Research*, 1(2), 69-87. DOI: 10.12906/978389966720_004.

Swilla, I. N. (2009). *Languages of instruction in Tanzania: Contradictions between ideology, policy*

- and implementation. *African Study Monographs*, 30 (1), 1-14.
- Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to Teach Speaking*. Harlow: Longman.
- Tilya, F. and Mafumiko, F. (2010). The compatibility between teaching methods and competence-based curriculum in Tanzania secondary school. *Papers in Education and Development*, (29) 37-56.
- Tsiplakides, I. and Keramida, A. (2009). Helping students overcome foreign language speaking anxiety in the English classroom: Theoretical issues and practical recommendations. *International Education Studies*, 2(4), 39-44. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ies.v2n4p39>.
- Tuan, N.H. and Mai, T.N. (2015). Factors affecting students' speaking performance at LE Thanh Hien High School. *Asian Journal of Educational Research*, 3 (2), 8-23.
- United Republic of Tanzania (URT) (2016). *English Language Syllabus for Basic Education Standard iii-vi*. Dar es Salaam: Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Vocational Training
- United Republic of Tanzania (2018). *United Republic of Tanzania administrative zones*, Dar es Salaam.
- Upadhyay, B. (2022). Language games in developing speaking skills. *Rupandehi Campus Journal* 3, 15-22.
- URT-PO RALG, (2021). School CG primary 2020-2021 downloaded from tamisemi.go.tz/singleministers/basic-education-data-2021 accessed on 10th July, 2020.
- Valcarcel, M., Verdu, M., Roca J. and Chaudron, C. (1991). Classroom activity types, tasks, and sequencing. A paper presented at the 25th Annual TESOL Convention, New York, March 26.
- Vedasto, V. (2018). An assessment of English language academic performance in Tanzanian secondary schools: A comparative study of students from English and Kiswahili medium primary schools in Morogoro Municipality. MA-ED dissertation. Mzumbe University.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Yildiz, Y. and Celik, B. (2020). The use of scaffolding techniques in language learning: Extending the level of understanding. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational studies* 7(3) 148-153.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed). London: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Zhang, J. (2014). Activity theory as a framework for designing the model of college English listening. *International Education Studies*, 7, (5), 49-54. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ies.v7n5p49>