English Language Teachers' Understanding of the Communicative Language Teaching Approach in Public Primary Schools in Tanzania

Philpo John

Languages and Literature, Mkwawa University College of Education (MUCE)

Abstract

Tanzania implements Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach to the teaching of English subject in its primary schools. However, it is not clear whether or not the subject teachers understand the CLT as an English language pedagogical approach. The study employed qualitative research approach and phenomenology as its design to explore the teachers' understanding of the CLT approach. Five public primary schools selected based on the good performance established from their Standard (STD) Seven National Examinations (NECTA) for four years (2013-2016) were involved. Data were generated through interviews with subject teachers, head teachers, Ward Educational Officers (WEOs) and District Education Quality Assurers (DEQAs); and through Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) with STD VI pupils. The findings indicate that teachers teaching English subject, notwithstanding that the subject Syllabus required them to implement CLT principles and techniques, they were not able to associate the principles and techniques stated in the Syllabus with the concept of CLT approach. Although a few subject teachers were able to explain the techniques stated in the subject Syllabus, education supervisors emphasised that teachers still were not able to apply the techniques as required. It concludes that CLT approach was adopted for implementation in public primary schools before teachers had been adequately oriented to it. Thus, when the new approach is to be adopted, teachers should first be adequately trained.

How to cite this paper:

Contact: Department of Languages and Literature, Mkwawa University College of Education (MUCE), Iringa, Tanzania. E-mail: muce.philpojohn@gmail.com

1. Background

Tanzania Education and Training Policy (ETP) (MoEVT, 2014) designates English language as both a compulsory taught subject starting from Standard (STD) III of primary education up to Form 4 of secondary education and a medium of instruction from secondary to tertiary education. However, research has shown that there are problems facing teaching of the English subject in primary schools in Tanzania (Fentiman, Surgue & Wyse, 2014; Rwezaura, 2016; John, 2018b). More importantly, the primary education curriculum (MoEVT, 2013a) and the English Subject Syllabus (MoEST, 2016) that are being implemented emphasise on the use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in teaching the English subject. The major thrust in these documents has been pressed on teachers to implement the CLT approach in achieving the English language *communicative competence* among learners as its learning outcomes (Richards, 2015). The Subject Syllabus (MoEST, 2016, p.vi), states that the overall English subject competence expected of the primary school leaver who attended Standard (STD) III-VI is "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 subject Syllabus (MoEST, 2016, p.34) further states that a teacher teaching English subject should use *communicative techniques* such as debates and group discussion to enable learners to be able to ask and respond to questions orally in various real-life situations. Thus, drawing on the requirements of the English subject Syllabus, it is clear that the teaching and learning of English subject in primary

schools in Tanzania is tailored to implement the CLT approach whose expected learning outcome is *communicative competence* among learners.

On the one hand, CLT is defined by Richards (2015) as an approach whose aim is to make *communicative competence* the goal of language teaching and developing procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication. In other words, CLT is an approach that is based on functional and interactional perspective on the nature of language (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 154). Grognet and Grandall (1982 as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 151), observed that CLT is an approach which is based on performance outline of language tasks that lead to a demonstrated mastery of language associated with specific skills that are necessary for individuals to function proficiently in the society in which they live.

On the other hand, 'communicative competence' is the ability to use language for different communicative purposes (such as giving description, narration, exposition, complaints, apologies, suggestions, etc.); and ability to use language that is appropriate to the context of its use (Richards, 2015, p. 68). A learner who is taught English through CLT is expected to demonstrate *communicative competence* in the areas of discoursal, sociolinguistic, grammatical and strategic competencies (Hymes, 1972). This view draws on both interactive and learner-centered philosophies to support its teaching practices. The difference between more traditional approaches to language teaching and the CLT approach seems to be that grammar is integrated within communicative practices and so is linked to communicative outcomes of a school leaver (Richards, 2015, p.70). This is different from traditional approaches in which the focusing on explicit error correction is dominant (Skinner, 1957). The teachers' understanding of the CLT approach is defined by Grossman and Richest (1988, p.54) in relation to 'teacher knowledge' as a body of professional knowledge that encompasses both general pedagogical principles and skills, and knowledge of the subject matter to be taught. Perhaps, the adoption of CLT approach in the teaching of English subject in primary schools in Tanzania was influenced by the global increasing demand of proficiency in English as exerted by trade, tourism, aviation services and furthering studies abroad.

Studies have also shown that, due to the rise of tourism, aviation, education abroad, business and immigration to English speaking countries more and more students and individuals are feeling the need for a more *communicative competence* of the language (cf. Hajizadeh & Salahshour, 2013, p.165). The demand for English *communicative competence* among users of English has been increasing constantly world-wide making it necessary in schools' curricula in many countries around the World. For example, in many parts of Asia and Latin America, English is generally a required subject in public schools; in China alone, more than 100 million people are currently learning English; in France, 96% of school children are learning English as an elective subject at school (Richards, 2015, p.19). Richards further explains that in Japan, for instance, English language policy has been determined by the Ministry of Education and then disseminated to local school administrators and teachers; and in this regard, the focus of the policy for foreign-language education is on teaching English to cater for the Communicative purposes and the content coverage and entrance-exam preparation are in reality the main focus of practising teachers (p.19).

Literature shows that the history of language teaching approaches and methods, world-wide dates back to early 1900s whereby a reference is closely linked to the theories of language and language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). It is also argued that the choice of any approach or method of language teaching depends on 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 behavioristic 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; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Based on these theories, there are about eight main approaches or methods that are most frequently referred to as twentieth century (20th C) language teaching and learning approaches/methods. These are: Grammar translation, Direct/Natural method, Audio-lingual, Silent way, Suggestopedea, Total physical response, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Communicative Language Teaching approaches (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p.259). Each one of these approaches has its own strengths and weaknesses, when considered independently.

Since each approach has strengths and weaknesses, adopting CLT as a sole approach in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Tanzania primary schools drew an interest to the conduct of the present study. This was because it was not clear whether or not teachers had adequate knowledge in using the CLT approach and overcoming its weaknesses in order to achieve the communicative competence among learners as its learning outcomes (John, 2018a). In this regard, following the weaknesses associated with the use of a single method or approach like CLT, Larsen-freeman (2000) and Mellow (2000), coincidentally coined the term "principled eclecticism" to describe a desirable, coherent, pluralistic approach to language teaching. In their argument, they suggest the use or application of eclectic approach to language teaching which allows the use of variety of language teaching and learning activities, each of which may have very different characteristics and may have been motivated by different underlying assumptions present in a given language teaching context. Larsen-freeman (2000) and Mellow (2000), argued that the use of eclectic approach may be beneficial to language teaching in a given environment or context where a single approach could not fit mainly because of the four features associated with it, which according to them, are: *safety* due to its ability to accommodate variety of ideas and procedures; ability to raise learners' *interest*; its *diversity*-use of different methodologies and *flexibility*.

However, despite the CLT being recommended as a required approach in the subject Syllabus for implementation by subject teachers, most of the teachers teaching English subject in public primary schools in Tanzania were still reported as focusing on developing the student's grammar and vocabulary range in a discrete manner, while ignoring communicative aspect that was essentially required by the subject Syllabus (Fentiman, Surgue & Wyse, 2014; Rwezaura, 2016; John, 2018b). It is also noteworthy to recall that English in Tanzania is practically a *foreign* language and not a *second* language as it may be recklessly claimed. According to Brock-Utne (2004, p.2) a foreign language manifests four important characteristics, which are: 1) it has a limited time of use and is generally confined to school; 2) it has highly selected and structured input; 3) a teacher plays a major role with little or no peer-learning; and, 4) usually emphasis is on written skills and test-taking ability; and oral skills are less important as there is little or no opportunity to practise. Learning from how English subject is taught and used in Tanzania public primary schools, it

plausible to state that in Tanzania public primary school contexts English is taught as a foreign language (EFL). Inherently, when English is taught as a foreign language, the adoption of CLT as a sole approach might be even more problematic as the target English is not available outside classroom for authentic communication.

The available empirical studies reviewed on English language subject among primary school pupils in Tanzania indicate that majority of the public primary school leavers still complete primary education without the expected communicative competence in the use of English language in real life situations (Fentiman, Surgue & Wyse, 2014; USAID, 2014; John, 2015; Uwezo, 2015; Hakielimu, 2015; Rwezaura, 2016; John, 2018b). Consequently, it is evident that English proficiency among public primary school leavers was below the expected learning outcomes (cf. NECTA, 2017; 2018) suggesting that teachers' understanding and effective use of the CLT approach as required in the curriculum documents is questionable. Of course, there might be other variables leading to undesirable acquisition of the English proficiency, but at least when other factors remain constant, the teacher's pedagogical and subject competence have a great influence on the learner's acquisition of the target language proficiency (Shulman, 1986). Moreover, in teaching career, teacher's conceptual understanding of a given pedagogical approach is considered as one of the most important determining factors in realising the subject's expected learning outcomes among learners (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Richards, 2015).

2. Research questions

The study aimed to answer one main question: *What do the English language teachers in Tanzania public primary schools understand about the CLT approach?* Specifically, the study sought answers to the following three questions:

i. *What conceptual meaning and understanding do teachers teaching English subject have in mind about the CLT approach?*

ii. *What do teachers know about the English language curriculum intentions for primary education in relation to CLT approach?*

iii. *What CLT techniques do teachers teaching English subject know?*

3. Theoretical foundation

The study was informed by the socio-cultural interactionist theory as developed by Vygotsky (1978). The proponents of this theory believe that knowledge is constructed through dialogue and interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf, 2006;

Wertsch & Cole, 2007). 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 (cf. 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, p. 57). Thus, drawing on perspectives from Vygotsky's (1978; 1986) theory which was later advanced by his followers (Lantolf, 2000, 2006; Wertsch & Cole, 2007) and teacher cognition researchers (Borg, 2006, 2009; Woods, 1996), the field of language teaching has arrived at a new understanding of how teachers learn to teach; how their knowledge, skills and attitudes are formed and how they might be altered in real situations.

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. 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 amongst themselves and with others. This view suggests that teachers' professional growth is not about a mere mastering a set of formally acquired skills and applying them in practice, but rather the building and refinement of teachers' existing knowledge and skills. In this regard, Richards (2008, p. 164) 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 present 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 through interaction with others (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 were assumed to have been influenced by not only formal training at colleges but also the workplace environments embodied in the teacher's collaborative activities such as peer coaching, mentoring, peer observations, team-teaching as well as in-service training (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Ben-Peretz, 2011).

4. Methodology

The nature and character of the research problem and the research questions of the study called for a qualitative approach and phenomenology design for its data generation as they are concerned with aspects of human behaviour (i.e., experiences and actions). On the one hand, Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 3) emphasise that qualitative researchers 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. On the other hand, since the study focused on exploring teachers' understanding on the use of the CLT approach in EFL classroom context, the perspectives from hermeneutic-phenomenology epistemology were considered relevant and consistent with the study problem. Hermeneutic phenomenology is a philosophical construct that focuses on subjective experiences of individuals and groups as it attempts to unveil the world as experienced by the subjects through their life world stories (Kafle, 2011, p.186).

Data were generated from participants who were selected from five (5) public primary schools in Kasulu and Nzega Town Council in Kigoma and Tabora regions respectively. The five (5) schools were selected based on their overall consistent good performance established from their Standard Seven National Examinations for four years (NECTA results review for 2013-2016 periods) as they consecutively appeared in green band when ranked by school, despite the average resources they received from the government. The aim was to learn what these schools were doing in implementing the recommended CLT approach in the teaching of English subject. As such, it was considered plausible to learn the CLT instructional practices from good performing public schools rather than poorly performing ones. The latter were expected to learn good practices from good performing ones when any extraordinary practices pertinent to CLT implementation could be found from these schools.

Table 1: Studied Schools in Kasulu and Nzega Town Councils

S/No.	Pseudo-names	Codes
1.	Kazuramihunda P/S	School A (SA)
2.	Kizizi P/S	School B (SB)
3.	Nyakamoko P/S	School C (SC)
4.	Kitongoni P/S	School D (SD)
5.	Nyantwe P/S	School E (SE)

Source: Field Data (2018)

The researcher conducted interviews with 15 subject teachers, 5 head teachers, 3 Ward Educational Officers (WEOs) and 2 District Education Quality Assurers (DEQAs) who made an aggregate of data for the study at a saturation point of 25 participants as selected purposely for interviews. To triangulate the findings, Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) with 25 Standard VI pupils, five (5) from each school randomly selected for increasing credibility of findings were also conducted. Thus, the study involved a total of 50 participants. Categories of participants involved and their codes are presented in table 2:

Table 2: Study Participants

S/No	Participants	Total (50)	Codes
1.	3 Teachers per school teaching English Subject in the five selected schools	15	T1SA, T1SB, T1SC, T1SD, T1SE, T2SA, T2SB, T2SC, T2SD, T2SE, T3SA, T3SB, T3SC, T3SD, T3SE
2.	Head teachers	05	HTSA , HTSB, HTSC, HTSD, HTSE
3.	Ward Education Officers	03	WEO_Muru, WEO_Nya, WEO_Nzega
4.	District Education Quality Assurers (DEQAs)	02	DEQA_KT; DEQA_NZT
5.	Standard VI Pupils (5 focused group discussions)	25	FGD_STDVI_SA; FGD_STDVI_SB; FDG_STDVI_SC; FDG_STDVI_SD; FDG_STDVI_SE;

Source: Field Data (2018)

In addition, documents analysis of the Subject curriculum; Subject Syllabus, Teacher's lesson plans, and NECTA schools performance over four years (2013-2016) was conducted. The aim was to understand whether or not the CLT techniques were well understood for implementation by classroom teachers.

The data from interviews and FGDs were analysed qualitatively using thematic analysis method. In this way, data were transcribed concurrently in verbatim manner while in the field then coded, patterned and finally categorised into themes for analysis. In the course of analysis, voices of the participants from interviews and FGDs were transcribed translated and the relevant narratives were developed to support the study themes.

5. Findings of the study

The findings were presented in response to the three research questions. In particular, it presents; first, teachers' conceptual understanding of the CLT as an English language pedagogical approach; second, teachers' understanding about the English subject curriculum intentions for primary education (subject curriculum content); and third, teachers' understanding of the use of CLT principles and techniques.

5.1 . Teachers' conceptual meaning and understanding of the CLT as an English language pedagogical approach

Under this question, teachers teaching English subject in the public primary schools were asked through interviews to express the extent to which they understood the CLT approach as the English language pedagogical approach. On this aspect, most of the teachers had the following about on CLT:

> Personally, I have never learned about the CLT approach anywhere and I know nothing about it (T1SA, STD III).

> I have neither heard nor learned what you call CLT approach (T3SA, STD V).

> I have never heard this approach you call CLT; that sounds new to me (T3SB, STD V).

> I have never heard about that approach and I know nothing about it, the CLT (T1SE, STD V).

The evidence in the voices above indicate that, although these teachers were using the Syllabus that required them to implement CLT approach, they were not in position to conceptually explain what the CLT as an English pedagogical approach was all about.

It was also noted that some teachers had participated in either pre-service or in-service training that in one way or another mentioned the concept of participatory teaching methods. However, none of these sources of teachers' understanding had anything to offer specifically for CLT as an approach. Example of the training that these teachers attended focused on the teaching of 3Rs conducted by Tanzania Institute for Education (TIE) to improve the Kiswahili 3Rs in standards I and II of primary education. The following are what teachers had to express:

> I remember when we attended Grade "A" we were taught about participatory teaching methods with the use of question and answers. However, I remember

> this was taught to all student teachers, both language and science candidates. We had no special class or stream for language teaching methods. (T1SA, STD IV).

> I heard about participatory teaching methods, but not the CLT approach especially when I participated in the 3Rs training conducted by TIE in 2017 in its effort to enabling teachers to implement the new Syllabus (T1SB, STD IV).

This implies that if teachers had adequate exposure to learning about CLT, they would be in a better position in explaining what CLT was about and this could probably give them ability to tell what techniques were required to implement the CLT in order to realise the English learning outcomes expected of the learners taught through CLT.

5.2. Teachers' understanding about CLT and the English subject curriculum intentions

Teachers interviewed to give out what they knew about the subject curriculum intentions showed to understand what the new curriculum desired. These teachers struggled to meet the demands stated using their own insights though it was difficult for them to master the new techniques stipulated and implemented. Teachers said the following on the change of the curriculum intentions:

> It is, more often upon us we teachers and on our own insights to struggle as sometimes we are forced to know these new pedagogical techniques which are being stipulated in the new Syllabus, though it is really hard (T3SA, STD V).

> I have never ever attended any training about the CLT techniques, but when I use the new Syllabus I see the techniques stated are participatory and the techniques need pupils to learn more by doing (T1SE, STD V).

> The teaching techniques have been changed and so that requires us to change too. We should be trained more for us to be able to teach the subject according to the new techniques. Most of us, teachers still teach by using traditional lecturing methods; these new aspects are difficult and they are not yet implemented (T3SC, STD IV).

The evidence above suggests that there are teachers who were dedicated to the teaching profession and so they take it as a life learning career. This group of teachers, when the curriculum and the subject approach were changed, took responsibility to learn to understand the curriculum demands and intentions. This learning desire can be achieved through teacher's collaborative activities such as the desire to analyse critical incidents and doing action research.

5.3. Teachers' understanding of the CLT principles and techniques

Under this theme, teachers were expected to demonstrate understanding of their roles as needs analysts, group processor managers, facilitators of learning and monitors of the learning actions when they knew the principles of the CLT approach. They were also expected to point out debates, discussion, group or homework, conversation in pairs, role-plays, simulations and use of games as important techniques of the CLT approach (these were also listed in FGDs guide). To understand whether or not the teachers were familiar with these CLT principles and techniques, the subject teachers and their supervisors were interviewed. In this regard, pupils were also involved in FGDs to confirm the teachers' actions on use of the CLT techniques. The study indicated that a few teachers could be aware of the principles and techniques underlying the CLT approach as they had partly encountered the techniques during their pre-service training, while majority others could not. The following are the voices of the participants who were aware and so they could explain the CLT techniques:

> I heard of these techniques about Communicative Language Teaching approach when I was doing my Diploma in education which I did in 2011/13 (T2SB, STD VI).

> I have sense of some of the CLT techniques that takes me back to when I was doing my Diploma in education. Other participatory techniques were shared to us by our fellow teachers who attended training on the implementation of this new curriculum (T2SB, STD VI).

> I think teachers use the CLT techniques, though there seems to be a great challenge on how the techniques can be effectively implemented. You know before 2015, English subject was taught starting from pre-primary education. This is different from the current designation where the subject is taught starting from STD III as an academic subject; and when pupils get out of the class or after the lesson they use Kiswahili and sometimes their Ethnic Community Languages (ECLs).With this designation, teachers face a lot of linguistic and contextual challenges in enabling children to acquire English communicative competence that can be used to communicate in real-life situations (HTSA).

The findings imply that, at some point, some teachers have had CLT training through their pre-service training at college especially those who had Diploma in education. However, the training could not be adequate to make them fully understand and implement the CLT techniques. The study also presents that there appeared a challenge on how a teacher can be able to achieve the English communicative

competence to a beginning child into the foreign language at STD III, and this essentially touches on an issue related to policy in education.

Again, apart from teachers who had insights about CLT techniques as encountered through diploma pre-service training, the interviews also revealed that there were teachers who had neither exposure nor skills of CLT at all. These participants had the following on the understanding of the CLT approach:

> I, as the subject target, I tried to request the school management to help me to change the teaching subject. I was very clear and open about the difficulty I was encountering teaching this English subject using the new Syllabus. I told the academic master that I won't be able to teach this subject, unless I continue using the old experiences. This is because teaching using these CLT techniques won't be possible for me as I have no knowledge about the new techniques stated in the Syllabus (T3SC, STD IV).

> Truly, without lying, it is only a few teachers who try to use these participatory techniques. Majority of teachers still use traditional lecturing, and the situation is worse in the teaching of English subject (WEO_Muru).

> I am not sure whether the CLT techniques are being implemented. What I know and what I can say about our teachers is that many teachers at primary school level do not like English subject; most of them perceive it as a difficult subject" (DEQA_NZT).

It was also indicated through interviews that there is lack of understanding among teachers about classroom teaching techniques and strategies in such a way that one teacher considered the use of extra-period time as one of the techniques underlying the CLT principles. This teacher said:

> Personally, the other techniques I use is when I note that my pupils have not understood well the lesson, I tell them to follow me in the office, one after another, after the lesson period is over (T2SC, STD VI).

This presents a huge gap of the teacher's knowledge on what it takes by the CLT techniques implementation; and this may also question the relevance of both pre-service and in-service training for language teacher professional development. When STD VI pupils were asked to point out from a list of the key CLT principles and techniques in the FGDs guides as may be used by their teachers in classroom contexts, they had the following to comment:

> When we are in the classroom, we are neither given opportunity to speak in English nor being led into the discussion using the language. In most cases, the teacher enters the class with one book and writes notes on the chalkboard for us to copy (FGD_STDVI_SC).

> Sometime, when the teacher enters for teaching, he comes with a book; he reads a story for us and then gives an exercise which is even unclear. And when we tell her that we don't understand the exercise, she says you just do it if you get it wrong, I will make corrections (FGD_STDVI_SC).

Drawing on the findings, it is clear that CLT as an English pedagogical approach was adopted for implementation without teachers being adequately trained. This, again, suggests that lack of adequate training on CLT had an impact on the Syllabus implementation by the subject teachers.

6. Discussion

The findings have shown that although subject teachers were required to implement the CLT approach, most of them were unable to understand what it was all about. This may have a far-reaching negative impact on the teachers' effectiveness in teaching of the English subject in primary schools in Tanzania when English communicative competence among the learners was a goal. Grossman and Richert (1988, p.54) defined teacher knowledge as a body of professional knowledge that encompasses both knowledge of general pedagogical principles and skills and knowledge of the subject matter to be taught. Teacher knowledge or rather teacher's understanding empowers teachers in fulfilling their central roles which are basically teaching the subject matter domains using appropriately pedagogical principles and skills. Similarly, Kassing (2011) argued that an effective English language teacher plays two central roles at the same time. These are teaching the English, and making the teaching and learning process as interesting as possible in order to engage students in learning. Thus, teachers' lack of conceptual understanding of the CLT techniques and principles was most likely expected to undesirably affect the CLT implementation in classroom context, and so largely the realisation of the subject's learning outcomes.

In addition, the study has shown that even in-service training offered did not specifically address challenges pertinent to CLT approach. Finley and Furguson (2000, p.17) argue that sources of teacher's understanding about both subject matter and the respective pedagogical competencies can be categorised into two, namely; teacher's source of knowledge as transmitted through formal teacher education at

college (through presentation or lecture, traditionally referred to as Didactic), or teacher's source of knowledge as constructed within an environment through which a teacher can interact with others through in-service training at work station and teachers' collaborative activities such as workshops, mentoring, co-teaching, peer observation, peer-coaching, etc. (seeking knowledge and find personal meaning in that knowledge, functionally, referred to as Facilitative). Lack of the CLT relevant training at work station had an implication on the English subject teachers' conceptual understanding of the CLT as an English language pedagogical approach.

The findings further revealed that, there appeared to be teachers who were dedicated to the teaching profession and so they had to spare time to learn about changes that occur in the subject Syllabus to overcome the pressing challenges. Richards and Farrell (2005, p.113) define the term 'critical incidents' as an unplanned and unanticipated event that occurs during a lesson and that serves to trigger insights about some aspects of teaching and learning. They further explain that critical incident analysis involves the documentation and analysis of teaching incidents in order to learn from them and improve the practice. Advantages identified as associated with analysing critical incidents are that: it can create a greater level of self-awareness; it can encourage teachers to pose critical questions about teaching; it can bring beliefs to the level of awareness; and, more importantly, it can create opportunities for action research (Richards and Farrell, 2005, p.117). Moreover, teacher's understanding of the curriculum intentions: contents, aims, goals and objectives is of utmost importance as it promotes the realisation of the subject's learning outcomes. Likewise, Richards (2001, p. 42) argues that curriculum development and design should not attempt to place teachers on the receiving end of a process controlled and directed by others, but rather teachers and language teaching professionals should be placed at the centre of the planning and decision-making process in order to build their capacity in analysing the existing documents that are available in form of policy, syllabuses, tests, teaching materials, teaching programmes, textbooks, and the teaching and learning acts.

According to Elliot (1994, p.49), the curriculum, as the language of education, not only refers to things in the world, i.e., its contents, but also marks the stance the teacher has to adopt and implement curriculum instructions towards realisation of the learning outcomes in the classroom context. This implies that a subject teacher

needs to be conversant with the curriculum intentions to be able to effectively implement the recommended teaching approach and its techniques. Stenhouse (1980 as cited in Elliot, 1994, p.55), observed that the view of teaching children to learn through discovery involves inducting them into various forms of social discourse which have evolved in our culture to address significant questions about our experiences of the natural and social environment. In this way, teachers need to understand all the subject pedagogical issues to implement the curriculum effectively. Stenhouse (1980) further argued that curriculum should specify not only contents, aims and pedagogical principles, but also an action-research programme to support teacher reflection and discussion about the aims and principles and the problems of realising them in forms of appropriate action. Thus, drawing from the findings it is evident that although the English subject curriculum for primary education was changed to implement CLT approach in Tanzania primary schools, still the curriculum intentions and competencies expected of the learners were not yet well understood by the implementing teachers, basically for lack of adequate training or participation in designing of the course programme (John, 2018a).

The study also indicates that there appeared to be a few teachers who went through the CLT training at diploma level, though the training could not be adequate to make them understand fully the CLT principles and techniques pertinent to English subject teaching in realising communicative competence among learners as its learning outcomes. Lack of adequate training on CLT for many teachers in Tanzania public primary schools has had a huge implication on the teachers' understanding of the CLT as an English language pedagogical approach. Richards and Farrell (2005, p.1) observed that teacher education development refers to how teachers can continue with their professional development as language teachers once their period of formal training is over. They further argue that because of the importance of teacher professional development, opportunities for in-service training are crucial to the long-term development of the teachers as well as for the long-term success of the programmes in which they work.

Benedict (2013, p.111) in his study on supervisory roles of principals in enhancing teachers' professional development in schools in Kitui west district, Kenya, found that educational supervisors such as principals played a vital role in encouraging, motivating and availing resources to teachers to attend professional development

programme. The study further reports that the principals' supervisory activities to teachers were such as checking of teachers' professional records, classroom visit, collegial supervision (team teaching), and sometimes supervisory activities were delegated to heads of departments, Subject heads and Deputy principals. Indeed, in-service teacher, apart from formal pre-service training can also be engaged in wide range of the teacher development activities. Richards and Farrell (2005) present activities available for in-service teacher professional development which can be individual, one-to-one, group-based and institutional as shown in table 3 below.

Table 3: Activities for Teacher Development

Individual	One-to-one	Group-based	Institutional
• Self-monitoring • Journal writing • Critical incidents • Teaching portfolios • Action research	• Peer coaching • Peer observation • Critical friendships • Action research • Critical incidents • Team teaching	• Case studies • Action research • Journal writing • Teacher support groups	• Workshops • Action research • Teacher support groups

Source: Richards & Farrell (2005, p. 14)

Thus, since the exposure of teachers to the CLT approach was inadequate in the studied schools, the good performance of the English subject and the attainment of communicative competence as its learning outcomes were not yet achieved, despite the presence of teachers who had some exposure on CLT through diploma training and the schools being described as good performing. The English subject was not making part of the schools' good performance; English was still poorly performed (NECTA, 2018).

The study further revealed that majority of teachers in the studied schools had no exposure on the CLT as an English language pedagogical approach. This implies that CLT approach was adopted for implementation without teachers being adequately trained. Teacher training refers to activities directly focused on a teacher's present responsibilities and is typically aimed at short-term and immediate goals; it also involves understanding basic concepts and principles as a prerequisite for applying them to teaching and the ability to demonstrate principles and practices in the classroom (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p.3). The goals of training can be: learning on how to use effective strategies to open a lesson; learning to adapt the textbook to match the class; learning how to use group activities in a lesson; learning to use

effective questioning techniques; learning to use classroom aids and resources (e.g., video); and learning the techniques for giving learners feedback on performance (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Hervie and Winful (2018) report that poor performance of teachers was due to lack of frequent in-service training, lack of teaching and learning materials, lack of incentives and motivation, and improper supervision. Hervie and Winful (*ibid*.) further suggest that education service organs should improve upon their in-service training (INSET) and development policy to be consistent with the needs of teachers. This was important because, training works as a catalyst which provokes a significant change in a teacher as an individual as it redefines role, broadens vision and, more importantly, it enhances the attributes of an effective teacher in classroom context (Kazmi, Pervez & Mumtaz, 2011).

According to Ong (1993), in-service training is a totality of educational and personal experiences that contribute towards an individual being more competent and satisfied in an assigned professional role and its primary purpose is to enable teachers to acquire new understanding and instructional skills. Ong (1993) further explains that INSET focuses on creating learning environments which enable teachers to develop their effectiveness in the classroom. Similarly, Omar (2014) reports that INSET is important for teachers to face new challenges and changes in the education world and it was also found to be a fundamental aspect to improve teacher professionalism. The study further shows that effectiveness of the INSET is important as teachers can apply the knowledge acquired in teaching and learning. In addition, Omar (2014) presented four factors that contribute towards the effectiveness of INSET. These: the role of administrator, attitudes of teachers, identification of the training needs, and strategies used in conducting in-service training. Thus, lack of INSET on CLT for teachers teaching English subject in Tanzania primary schools had a negative impact on the implementation of the curriculum pedagogical demands in realising its learning outcomes.

In effect, the training on CLT techniques could basically equip teachers teaching English subject with at least the five key characteristics or principles of the CLT approach which, according to Richards and Rodgers (2014, p. 89), are that:

    i.   Language is a system for expression of meaning;

ii. The primary function of language is to allow interaction and communication;
iii. The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses;
iv. The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse; and,
v. Communicative competence entails knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions as well as the following dimensions of language knowledge*:*
   a. Knowing how to vary use of language according to the setting and the participants (e.g., knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication);
   b. Knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts (e.g., narrative, reports, interviews, conversations, etc.)
   c. Knowing how to maintain communication, despite having limitations in one's language knowledge (e.g., using different kinds of communication strategies).

The effective teaching of these key skills in language teacher education in Tanzania could make teachers improve not only their pedagogical skills in realising communicative competence among learners, but also improve fluency as they would attempt to use it in different communicative contexts.

7. Conclusion

The study has shown that; first, teachers teaching English subject in the studied area cannot associate the techniques stated in the Syllabus with the CLT as an English language pedagogical approach, despite the curriculum emphasis. Second, it has revealed that although some teachers were able to explain the changes that occurred in the new subject Syllabus, they expressed that they needed more training in order to effectively implement and achieve the subject curriculum intentions. In addition, the exposure of these few teachers to CLT gained during their diploma courses could not yield better results on the performance of English subject, though the selected schools were described as doing well, but only comparably in subjects other than English. Third, it has shown that most teachers were not conversant with the techniques stipulated in the subject Syllabus. Thus, the study concludes that CLT approach was adopted for implementation; however, teachers teaching English subject were generally not yet adequately oriented to it.

References

Benedict, U. (2013). "Supervisory role of principals in enhancing teachers' professional development in secondary schools in Kitui west district, Kenya". (Unpublished) M.A Dissertation, The Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

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.

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.

Brock-Utne, B. (2004). English as the language of instruction or destruction-how do teachers and students in Tanzania cope? *Series in a General & Theoretical Paper No.598*. Essen: LAUD.

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th Ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand   Oaks, CA: Sage.

Elliott, J. (1994). The teacher's role in curriculum development: an unresolved issue in English attempts at curriculum reform. *Curriculum Studies*, 2(1), pp. 43-69.

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.amazoaws.com/accredible-   card_attachments/64042/original

Grognet, A.G., & Grandall, J. (1982). Competency-based curricula in adult ESL. *ERIC/CLL New Bulletin* 6, pp. 3-4.

Grossman, P. L., & Richert, A. E. (1988). Unacknowledged knowledge growth: a re-examination of the effects of teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 4(1), pp. 53-62.

Hajizahdeh, N. & Salahshour, N. (2013). Characteristics of effective efl instructors. *Procedia: Social and Behavioural Sciences,* 70, pp. 163-173.

Hakielimu. (2015). Will the '2014 education and training policy' prepare Tanzanian children to face challenges of the 21st century? In: Suleiman Sumra (Ed.) *Hakielimu Position Paper on the Education and Training Policy 2014.* Dar es Salaam: Hakielimu. Retrieved on 18th March 2016 from: http://www.hakielimu.org/files/publications/HakiElimu_Education_Postitio nPaper_2014.pdf

Hervie, D.M & Winful, E. (2018). Enhancing teachers' performance through training and development in Ghana education service: A case study of Ebenezer senior high school. *Journal of Human Resource Management*, 6(1), pp. 1-8.

Hymes, D. H. (1972). On communicative competence. In: Pride, J. B., & Holmes, J. (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics*. Baltimore, USA: Penguin Education, Penguin Books Ltd, pp. 269-293.

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*. Dar es Salaam: Mkuki & Nyota, pp. 99-116.

John, P. (2018b). English language teaching and its literacy acquired by standard seven leavers in Tanzania public primary schools: A case of Iringa district. A paper presented at All Lake Zone English Language Teachers' Conference on 5th – 7th July 2018 as prepared by TELTA in collaboration with U.S Embassy and British Council at SAUT, Mwanza

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), pp. 60-72.

Kafle, N.P. (2011). Hermeneutic phenomenological research method simplified. *An Interdisciplinary Journal,* 5, pp. 180-200.

Kassing, R. B. (2011). *Perceptions of motivational teaching strategies in an EFL classroom: The case of a class in a private university in Indonesia.* Victoria University of Wellington

Kazmi, S.F., Pervez,T., Mumtaz, S.(2011). In-service teacher training in Pakistan schools and total quality management (TQM). *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 2, pp. 238-248.

Lantolf, J. P. (2000). Introducing socio-cultural theory. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.) *Socio-cultural theory and second language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-26.

Lantolf, J. P. (2006) Socio-cultural theory and second language development: State-of-the-art. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition,* 28 (1), pp. 67-109.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000).*Techniques and principles in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Marble, S., Finley, S. & Ferguson, C. (2000). *Understanding teachers' perspective teaching and learning: A Synthesis of work in five study sites*. Austin: SEDL.

Marsh, G.E. & Ketterer, J.J. (2005). Situating the zone of proximal development. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration 8*(2). Retrieved on 2nd January, 2016 from: http://www.westga.edu/distance/ojdla/summer82/marsh82.htm

Mellow, J. D. (2000). Western influences on indigenous language teaching. In: J. Reyhner, J. Martin, L. Lockard, & W. Sakiestewa Gilbert (Eds.), *Learn in beauty: Indigenous education for a new century.* Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University, pp. 102-113.

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

NECTA (2017). Primary school leaving examination results announcement, 20[Th] 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, 20[Th] October 2017. Dar es Salaam: NECTA. Retrievable via: http://www.necta.go.tz/matokeo/2018/psle/psle.htm

Omar, C.M.Z.C. (2014).The need for in-service training for teachers and its effectiveness in school. *International Journal for Innovation Education and Research,* 2(11), pp. 1-9.

Ong, C.Y, A. (1993). Teacher improvement through staff development: Problems and issues, *Prosiding Seminar National Ke-3: Pengurusan Pendidikan*, Institut Aminuddin Baki

Richards, J. C. (2001). *Curriculum development in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richard, J. C. (2008). *Teaching listening and speaking: from theory and practice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J.C. (2015). *Key Issues in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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

Richards, J.C. & Rodgers, T.S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (3[rd]edn). Cambridge: CUP.

Richards, J. C. & Farrell, T.S.C. (2005). *Professional Development for Language Teachers: Strategies for Teacher learning*. Cambridge: CUP.

Rwezaura, P.P. (2016). The Implementation of competence-based English curriculum in Kinondoni municipal primary schools. (Unpublished) Master's Dissertation: OUT.

Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher, 15,* pp. 4–14.

Skinner, B. F. (1957). *Verbal behavior*. Cambridge, MA: B. F. Skinner Foundation

Stenhouse, L. (1980). In J. Ruddock & D. Hopkins (Eds). *Research as a basis for teaching*. London: Heinemann.

USAID (2014). *National baseline assessment for the 3Rs using EGRA, EGMA, and SSME in Tanzania*: study report: Dar es Salaam: RTI International

Uwezo (2015). *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.

Wertsch, J. V., & Cole, M. (2007). *Mediation: The Cambridge companion to Vygotsky*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Woods, D. (1996). *Teacher cognition in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.