

Is the learner-centred approach indeed adopted in the teaching-learning of French in O-level state secondary schools in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania?

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Abstract

This paper addresses the application of the learner-centred approach (LCA) in the French language teaching (FLT) in O-level state secondary schools. The study aimed at finding out the extent to which French language teachers put into practice the LCA which was adopted in 2005 in the FLT. Particularly, the study envisioned ascertaining teaching techniques that teachers use in the FLT, the roles the teachers play in the FLT, and how the teachers organise learning tasks in the FLT. The study was conducted in Dar es Salaam region from March to May 2014 covering 50% of state O-level secondary schools found in Ilala district. Data were collected through questionnaires, classroom observation and documentary methods, and interpretive content analysis was used with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Guided by constructivist and multiple intelligence theories, this study found that the teachers largely used the teacher centred approach (TCA) as they encountered transitional challenges such as insufficient instructional materials, overcrowded classes, and poor proficiency of French which seemed to prevent them from effectively applying the LCA. Besides, it was found that, although many teachers had received training in the LCA, their actual understanding of the approach was questionable. The study recommends that the government should ensure effective training to its teachers; availability of relevant instructional materials and language laboratories, the teacher-student ratio should be restricted to 1:40, and the teachers and learners should be exposed to the Francophone community for proficiency in French.

Keywords: learner-centred approach, teaching French, O-level; Tanzanian state secondary schools

Introduction

French in the Tanzanian Teaching - Learning Milieu

French is a foreign language in Tanzania (Ministry of Education and Culture [MoEC], 1997) and one of the subjects taught in secondary schools (Tanzania Institute of Education [TIE], 2007). Besides, this third language in Tanzanian learning institutions was first introduced to the University of East Africa – today University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) in 1963; then to secondary schools in 1966 (Swilla cited in Chiwanga, 2014:150). Before the year 2005, the French language teaching (FLT) was guided by the content-based curriculum (CBC)

emphasising explicitly on the teacher-centred approach (TCA) (TIE, 2007). With this curriculum, teachers were placed at the centre of teaching and learning. They were regarded as the only knowledge providers to students and authority over what and how learners were to learn (MoEC, 1995). So, the students were regarded not only passive recipients of the knowledge given but also teacher-dependents. In addition, the curriculum did not yield the expected results for the students (MoEC, 1995). With that regard, the government decided to adopt the learner-centred approach (LCA) in 2005. With this new curriculum, the learners were no longer treated as passive recipients but active participants in the learning process (TIE, 2007). Similarly, the teachers changed their roles

from being knowledge providers to facilitators, resources organisers and guides to learning activities (TIE, 2007). Moreover, to ensure an effective implementation of the curriculum, the government trained its teachers how to effectively use the new LCA curriculum (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training [MoEVT], 2012). This study intended to assess the implementation of this new curriculum. In endeavouring to examine the study, three specific research questions were used: 1. What teaching techniques do teachers use in the FLT? 2. What roles do teachers play in the FLT? 3. How do teachers organise learning tasks in the FLT?

Contextualisation of the Study

In this part the study is contextualised by a brief explanation of the theories underpinning the implementation of the learner-centred approach to the foreign language teaching in Tanzania, then implications of the LCA for the FLT.

Basically, the implementation of the LCA to the foreign language teaching is housed in the Constructivist Theory (CT) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach (TIE, 2007:30). The CT does not regard learning as a process that only takes place inside one's mind, nor a passive development of one's behaviours, but as a process shaped by external forces and that meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged actively in social activities (Duffy, 2006). In other words, the theory views learning as a social process which takes place not only when individuals interact with others and the environment in which they live but also when they are actively involved in the whole learning process (Prawat, & Floden, 1994). Thus, the emphasis turns away from the teacher and the subject towards the learner (Gamoran, Secada, & Marrett, 1998). As such, the constructivist teachers should not act as instructors to students rather they should act as facilitators guiding them to develop individual thinking and problem-solving potentials (Schrenko, 1996:7). According to Audrey Gray (1997, as cited by Wang, 2011), constructivism is a view of learning where knowledge is not regarded as a thing that can be simply given by the teacher to students. Rather, knowledge is constructed by learners. This is done through an active, mental process of development, and learners are the builders and creators of meaning and knowledge. So, a constructivist classroom should be democratic, interactive, learner-centred, and the teacher should provide students with experiences that allow them to hypothesize, predict, manipulate objects, pose questions, research, investigate, imagine, and invent. The teacher's role is to facilitate this process of learning.

This dramatic change of role implies that a facilitator more largely needs to display a totally different set of skills than a teacher. For instance, a teacher tells, a facilitator asks; a teacher lectures from the front, a facilitator supports from the back; a teacher gives answers according to a set curriculum, a facilitator provides guidelines and creates the environment for the learner to arrive at his or her own conclusions; a teacher mostly

gives a monologue, a facilitator is in incessant dialogue with the learners (Rhodes, & Bellamy, 1999).

In addition, the teachers are required to use techniques which enhance and promote learner-centeredness (TIE, 2007:29). In fact, learner-centred teaching methods shift the focus of activity from the teacher to the learners. It consists active learning, cooperative learning, and inductive teaching and learning (Felder, 2017). In the *active learning* students solve problems, answer questions, formulate questions of their own, discuss, explain, debate, or brainstorm during class. However, the *cooperative learning*, as the name suggests, makes students work as a group on problems and projects under conditions that assure both positive interdependence and individual accountability. In the *inductive teaching and learning* students learn the course material in the context of addressing the challenges after they have been first presented with challenges (questions or problems). These methods include inquiry-based learning, case-based instruction, problem-based learning, project-based learning, discovery learning, and just-in-time teaching. Learner-centred methods have repeatedly been shown to be superior to the traditional teacher-centred approach (*Ibid.*).

To supplement the above, the theory calls for the use of continuous assessment, the assessment is urged to be a better approach of assessing true potentials of learners and this differs significantly from conventional tests. In fact, assessment and learning are seen as inextricably linked; not separate processes (Holt, & Willard-Holt, 2000). The CLT is a set of principles about the overall language teaching and learning. The goal of this approach is to teach communicative competence to learners. With respect to this approach, learners learn the language through interaction with users of the language; collaborative creation of meaning; creating meaningful and purposeful interaction through language; negotiation of meaning as the learner and his or her interlocutor arrive at understanding; attending to the feedback learners get when they use the language; paying attention to the language one hears (the input) and trying to incorporate new forms into one's developing communicative competence; trying out and experimenting with different ways of saying things (Richards, 2006:2-5).

As such, the approach should turn away from traditional lesson formats where the focus is on mastery of different items of grammar and practice through controlled activities such as memorisation of dialogues and drills, toward the use of pair work activities, role plays, group work activities and project work. These activities also imply that learners have to participate in classroom activities that are based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning. They are expected to take on a greater degree of responsibility for their own learning, and teachers have to assume the role of facilitator and monitor (Richards, 2006).

Ever since Tanzania started implementing the learner centred pedagogy in state secondary schools in 2005; some empirical studies (such as Mdima, 2005; Msonde, 2006; Gabriel, 2011; Mukaruka, 2011; and Kasuga, 2012) showed that the TCA was still dominant in teaching-

learning in schools. The challenges that restricted for the adoption of the LCA were such as shortage of teaching resources like textbooks and other reference materials, partial training on the LCA, overcrowded classes, lack of in-service training, and insufficiency of teachers. The implementation of the approach in the country had not yielded the expected outcomes. The other studies indicated that many teachers were not aware about the approach in the FLT; consequently, they hardly applied it in the classrooms. The current researchers, however, conducted this study to see if French language teachers encounter similar challenges while employing the approach in the FLT, and if they use the approach, they do so to what extent in the FLT teaching in O-level state secondary schools.

Implications of the Learner-Centred Approach on the French Language Teaching

The framework given above has the following implications for the FLT in O-level state secondary education: First, the approach helps in FLT as teachers take into account students' natural interest and curiosity; try to meet their needs, both physical and mental. It also highlights that the FLT should not be in the form of direct transmission of grammatical and vocabulary knowledge through grammar-translation method. Instead, it should focus primarily on meaning and build on students' existing knowledge and experience closely related to their lives (Richards, 2006). Besides, the approach calls upon teachers to give their students plenty of opportunities to learn French through role-play, pair work, group work, hands-on activities and the like, which can all be built into the learning process as tools to facilitate language learning. Additionally, this approach helps students to learn better in a social and cooperative environment (*ibid.*). In other words, the approach makes the FLT interactive to engage students as individuals and also in group learning.

Moreover, individual students vary in interests, personality, intelligence, learning styles and many other aspects. Thus, teaching by using this approach caters for individual differences. Furthermore, through this approach students as well as their views are appreciated, respected and valued; hence they get confidence in themselves and see themselves as capable to achieve the expected learning goals which can have a strong influence on motivation (Pekrun, & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2012). In connection to this, they put effort into language learning because their beliefs about themselves will influence the quality of thinking and information processing.

As this is not enough, the approach helps learning tasks set at an appropriate difficulty level, relevant to personal interests. Teachers create meaningful contexts in which new forms are met and familiar ones are expanded. Though this approach teachers also provide guiding instructions and timely feedback by observing or interacting with students. Tasks that provide for personal choice and control also enhance the learner involvement and performance (Bowman, 2011).

Lastly, teachers, through this approach, set appropriate standards and expectations, using various assessment

tools emphasising on both the process and product of learning.

Methodology

Research Design and Procedure

The present study was conducted in Dar es Salaam region. The choice for Dar es Salaam as a study area was purposive and was based on the fact that many O-level states secondary schools which offer French are found in Dar es Salaam. As such, it would be much easier for the researchers to conduct the study. From this region, four O-level state secondary schools (50%) were selected and studied out of the eight offering French in the Ilala district. The sampled schools included both common and ward-based secondary schools.

The former are schools which were historically reputed as being well resourced in terms of educational infrastructure (instructional resources, teachers, classrooms etc.). The latter are the newly established schools, also known as community-based schools. Out of the four sampled schools, two were common secondary schools and two were ward-based secondary schools. For the purpose of illustrations, the common schools referred to in this study were Zanaki (Form Three) and Benjamin W. Mkapa (Form Two) while the ward-based ones were Mchikichini and Tandika (Form One each). Form Four were not involved in this study since they were busy with their final national examinations. In Tanzania, the level of French taught to O-level secondary schools is equivalent to A1 as far as the Common European Framework of References for Languages is concerned.

For ethical considerations, the names of the sampled schools were denoted by letters (i.e. A, B, C, & D) and there were no direct correspondence between a letter and a name of any school under the study. The choice for these schools was purposive as the researchers had enough information regarding statuses of all O-level state secondary schools offering French in Tanzania and Dar es Salaam in particular.

Besides, from the four sampled schools, a sample size of 44 respondents was conveniently drawn. Out of the 44 respondents, four were French teachers (all male) drawn from seven and 40 were students (gender balanced with the exception of Zanaki which is Girls School) drawn from 317. It is worth noting that schools B, C, and D were overcrowded with 82, 108 and 102 students respectively; only School A had a reasonable number of 25 candidates - a strong predictor of the TCA. These students were taking French as an optional subject. The respondents were equally selected from the sampled schools. The 40 students were selected from the four schools, each with 10 of them. Out of the 40 sampled students, 10 were Form Three (from School A), 10 were Form Two (School B), and 20 were Form One who were selected equally from Schools C and D). Regarding teachers' education qualifications and teaching experiences, 2 (School B & C) were Diploma holders (in education) and 2 (Schools A & D) were Bachelor's degree holders (in education). The experience of 2 (Schools A & D) was between 1—5 years,

1 (School C) had between 6 —10 years and 1 had more than 10 years working experience.

Data Collection Procedures, Methods and Analysis

Based on the nature of the study, validated questionnaire and class observation methods were used for data collection to measure what was intended (Ary, Lucy, & Sorensen, 2010). The researchers ensured validity on the instrument as follow: First, the researchers had a good experience in the FLT in secondary school and tertiary institutions, thus, they were familiar with the current curriculum guiding the FLT in Tanzania. Also, the researchers sought opinions from education experts on the content validity and their comments helped reshape the instrument. Subsequently, the researchers developed two different questionnaires for the respondents (teachers and students) which were composed of both open and closed ended questions.

Prior to class observations, the researchers explained the overall purpose of the study to all the respondents and assured them that their information would be anonymously used only for this study. All the respondents were happy, comfortable, ready and willing to be observed- something that could not affect the engagement process and the natural classroom dynamics. This is to say, the psychological preparation gave assurance to the researchers that no behavioural change would be expected from the students and teachers studied. The observation schedule was arranged depending on the teachers’ availability. There were two consecutive observation sessions par school, and these sessions were representative of the teachers’ teaching method and pedagogy. The researchers prepared lesson narrative descriptions script for each session. It was expected that information obtained from observations would function as a variable of verification and/or falsification of information obtained from the questionnaires and another minor observation that was done in and outside the class on the availability of teaching facilities.

To start, the researchers provided questionnaires to the respondents to get their views about the FLT. Then, the researchers entered the classrooms and observed the teaching/learning process. In fact, findings obtained from classroom observation were considered to be highly informing the reality of the teachers’ capability of implementing the LCA in the FLT. Quantitative data were coded and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 while qualitative ones were analysed with interpretative approach. This approach allows researchers to treat social action and human activity as text. As such, it provides a means for discovering the practical understanding of meanings and actions (Berg, 2001, p. 239). Thus, the researchers attended French classes, recorded all actions and activities that occurred during teaching and learning process, and then related them to the LCA practices. This helped researchers to determine whether or not the teaching and learning process was done with respect to the LCA.

Results

Techniques Used in the French Language Teaching

Knowing specific techniques used and the extent of the use of each technique in the FLT was to answer the Specific Question One (What teaching techniques do teachers use in the FLT?). By knowing specific techniques used and the extent of the use of each technique, the researchers would be able to determine the extent to which students were actively involved in the teaching. To start, the researchers provided the respondents with questionnaires with a list of teaching techniques which were also recommended in the 2005 curriculum and requested them to select the ones they were using in their classes. The summary of the findings indicated in Table 1A and Table 1B that all the techniques (100%) listed therein were claimed to be used in the FLT.

Table 1A: Students' responses (N=40)

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Questioning	39	11.3	11.3
	Repetition	39	11.3	22.7
	Individual work	36	10.5	33.1
	Group work	35	10.2	43.3
	Discussion	36	10.5	53.8
	Use o songs and music	30	8.7	62.5
	Role play	27	7.8	70.3
	Use of visuals	26	7.6	77.9
	Debate	25	7.3	85.2
	Lecture	20	5.8	91.0
	Use of audio-visual texts	17	4.9	95.9
	Dialogue	14	4.1	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	

Source: Field Data, March-May 2014

Table 1B: Teachers' responses (N=4)

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Questioning	4	9.1	9.1
	Repetition	4	9.1	18.2
	Individual work	4	9.1	27.3
	Group work	4	9.1	36.4
	Discussion	3	6.8	43.2
	Use of songs and visuals	4	9.1	52.3
	Role play	4	9.1	61.4
	Use of visuals	4	9.1	70.5
	Debate	3	6.8	77.3
	Lecture	4	9.1	86.4
	Use of audio-visual texts	2	4.5	90.9
	Dialogue	4	9.1	100.0
	Total	44	100.0	

Source: Field data, March-May 2014

Then, the researcher sought to know the degree of the use of each technique claimed to be used in the FLT. To get the fullest picture of the views by the respondents (i.e. both teachers and students), the researchers used three-scaled answers (Always, Seldom; Never). The findings as summarised in Table 2A and Table 2B indicate, however,

that the degree of the use varied. The findings indicated, for instance, individual work, group work, questioning, discussion, use of songs and music, role play, use of visuals, dialogue and repetition were maximally used at 75% while the rest (i.e. lecture, audio-visual texts, and debate) were used minimally at 25%.

Table 2A: Students' responses (N=40)

S/N	Teaching techniques	Always		Seldom		Never		Total	
		F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	%
1.	Questioning	40	100	-	-	-	-	40	100
2.	Repetition	30	75	10	25	-	-	40	100
3.	Individual work	40	100	-	-	-	-	40	100
4.	Group work	23	57.5	10	25	7	17.5	40	100
5.	Discussion	10	25	14	35	16	40	40	100
6.	Use of songs and music	18	45	2	5	20	50	40	100
7.	Role-play	9	22.5	9	22.5	22	55	40	100
8.	Use of visuals	11	27.5	7	17.5	22	55	40	100
9.	Debate	13	32.5	8	20	19	47.5	40	100
10.	Lecture	7	17.5	33	82.5	-	-	40	100
11.	Use of audio-visual texts	12	30	-	-	28	70	40	100
12.	Dialogue	10	25	-	-	30	75	40	100

Source: Field data, March-May 2014

Table 2B: Teachers' responses (N=4)

S/N	Teaching techniques	Always		Seldom		Never		Total	
		F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	%
1.	Questioning	4	100	-	-	-	-	4	100
2.	Repetition	2	50	2	50	-	-	4	100
3.	Individual work	4	100	-	-	-	-	4	100
4.	Group work	4	100	-	-	-	-	4	100
5.	Discussion	2	50	1	25	1	25	4	100
6.	Use of songs and music	4	100	-	-	-	-	4	100
7.	Role-play	4	100	-	-	-	-	4	100
8.	Use of visuals	4	100	-	-	-	-	4	100
9.	Debate	1	25	2	50	1	25	4	100
10.	Lecture	-	-	4	100	-	-	4	100
11.	Use of audio-visual texts	2	50	-	-	2	50	4	100
12.	Dialogue	4	100	-	-	-	-	4	100

Source: Field data, March-May 2014

Thus, the researchers authenticated these questionnaire findings through classroom observations in which all the 4

schools were observed twice in two consecutive days. As a triangulation, it was found that individual work, lecture,

questioning, repetition, group work, dialogue, use of oral texts, and role-play were the only techniques used during

the FLT as summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of teaching techniques observed in the classrooms

S/N	Schools	Number of observations	Topic observed	Techniques observed
1	A	2 (the 1st lasted for 80 minutes and the 2nd lasted for 40 minutes)	<i>Demander la permission</i> (To ask for permission)	lecture, oral texts, role-play, dialogue, individual & repetition
2	B	2 (the 1st lasted for 80 minutes and the 2nd lasted for 40 minutes)	<i>Parler des activités journalières</i> (To talk about daily activities)	lecture, repetition & individual work
3	C	2 (the 1st lasted for 40 minutes and the 2nd lasted for 80 minutes)	<i>Parler de quelqu'un</i> (To talk about someone)	lecture, repetition, questioning, & individual work
4	D	2 (the 1st lasted for 40 minutes and the 2nd lasted for 80 minutes)	<i>Se présenter</i> (To introduce oneself)	lecture, individual work, questioning & repetition

Source: Field data, March-May 2014

By comparing questionnaire findings with classroom observation findings, it was found that there was a great difference in them. The questionnaire findings indicated that all the techniques mentioned were used in the FLT. Of which, lecture, audio-visual texts, and debate were minimally used at 25% while individual work, group work, questioning, discussion, use of songs and music, role play, use of visuals, dialogue and repetition were maximally used at 75%. However, the classroom observation findings indicated that only lecture, questioning, repetition, individual work, group work, dialogue, role-play, and oral-texts were used in the FLT - equivalent to 66.66% of all techniques as highlighted in the questionnaires (See Table 1A & B). Of which, lecture, questioning, repetition, and individual work were frequently used while group work, dialogue, role-play, and oral-texts were rarely used in the FLT.

Teachers' Roles in the French Language Teaching

For the Specific Question Two (What roles do teachers play in the FLT?), the researchers sought to find out teachers' roles in the FLT. By ascertaining teachers' roles in the FLT, the researchers would also be able to determine the students' roles. To start, the researchers provided the respondents (both teachers and students) with questionnaires seeking to get their views about roles that teachers play in the FLT. In order for the researchers to get clear views expressed by the respondents, a Likert scale with three answers (Always, Seldom, and Never) was used. The findings indicate in Table 3 that, to a great extent, many teachers played their teaching roles with respect to the ideology of the LCA. So, the researchers authenticated the questionnaire findings through classroom observations. During the observations, the following were found as indicated in Table 4.

Table 4: The extent of the teachers' involvement in the FLT (N=4)

S/N	Activities	Always		Seldom		Never		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	I act as lesson designer, organiser, facilitator, participant, guide, and consultant and not just as knowledge provider.	2	50	1	25	1	25	4	100
2.	I serve as resources provider to students.	2	100	-	-	-	-	4	100
3.	I arrange the classroom for communicative interactions.	4	100	-	-	-	-	4	100
4.	I ensure that all the students participate actively in the teaching and learning process.	2	50	2	50	-	-	4	100
5.	I encourage cooperative learning in the classroom.	4	100	-	-	-	-	4	100
6.	I help students develop listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills.	3	75	1	25	-	-	4	100
7.	I accept errors as a natural part of learning.	4	100	-	-	-	-	4	100

Source: Field data, 2014

First, it was observed that, to a great extent, the teacher in School A (25.0%) acted as a facilitator in the classrooms. The teacher ensured that every individual was actively involved in the teaching process. For instance, learners were actively involved by playing roles, conjugating verbs, giving examples, and listening to some oral texts. Also,

the teacher created mutual interactions with the learners and among learners themselves. As such, he acted as a co-participant with learners in the classrooms. As such, the learners developed implicitly interpersonal intelligence. That is, they were able to perceive feelings of other students, understand intentions, and respond

appropriately to them. However, the teachers in Schools B, C, & D (75.0%) acted as knowledge providers. They acted as the only sources of all information learners were to get. Many of their learners received knowledge passively through repetitions and imitations. It was also noted that the teachers were entirely instructing rather than helping to guide learners, manage their activities, and direct their learning. Consequently, the teachers were developing poor communicative interactions with learners in the classrooms.

The teachers were also observed code-switching and code-mixing using Kiswahili as a strategy to make the students understand, though it was also overtly noted that they also did so for lack of competence they had in French. However, this lowered the speed of learning as the cultures of the two languages are completely different. It was also observed that the teachers were always taking charge of all the teaching and learning process. It was estimated that more than 70.0% of the learners were passively involved in the learning. The learners were merely involved in repetitions and copying notes and unfortunately, all the teachers (Schools A, B, C, & D) did not adapt the textbooks to effectively meet learners' needs; they were teaching exactly what were prescribed in the textbooks and syllabus with very little creativity.

Again, Teacher in School A, to some extent, acted as resources provider during the teaching and learning process. For instance, the teacher used to provide some texts and audio materials to learners so as to effectuate the teaching and learning process. On the contrary, Teachers in School B, C, & D (75.0%) did not provide learners with any supporting resources such as pictures, texts, textbooks or multimedia environment for creating meaningful contexts for learning because of scarcity of the learning resources in the class and there was no any language laboratory, and unfortunately the libraries available at the schools had few resources. As such, the teachers were being regarded as the only sources of materials and information for learners to learn.

Additionally, it was observed that Teacher in School A (25.0%) largely participated equally with the learners during the teaching and learning process. Nevertheless, Teachers in Schools B, C & D (75.0%) were always dominating the teaching and learning process. Many learners were only involved in mechanical repetitions and copying some notes.

Besides, it was observed that Teacher in School A (25.0%) encouraged greatly cooperative learning; many of the activities planned and organised were emphasised through group works. He could use diagrams, photos, and enough illustrations to demonstrate the cooperative learning. Conversely, it was observed that Teachers in School B, C, & D (75.0%), to a large extent, did not encourage cooperative learning in their classrooms; there were poor interactions between the teachers and learners; the teachers preferred involving some individuals to actively participate in the learning activities; more often than not, the teachers involved better learners while those who seemed weaker were hardly given close considerations. Through this observation it could seem that the teachers changed their behaviour as they thought

the results might be reported to the higher authorities. However, it was noted that their goal was that, time allocated for a session (40 minutes) was practically not enough to make sure all the students were within the reach. With that regard, those who seemed active strategically were given a lion's share so that at least a few could eventually pass in their final national examination, the key goal of most teachers as per the researchers' experience.

Moreover, it was observed that the teachers differed considerably in dealing with errors learners made during the learning process. For instance, Teacher in School A (25.0%) provided corrective feedback at the end of a lesson and by negotiating with the class while Teachers in Schools B, C & D (75.0%) did it constantly without necessarily involving learners' contributions.

Furthermore, Teacher in School A, to some extent, helped learners to achieve all the four macro linguistic skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. The teacher used audio materials during the teaching which helped to improve learners' listening and speaking skills. Also, the teacher emphasised on reading and writing skills. For instance, the learners were required to copy notes from the blackboard as well as to repeat after the teacher. This could help them develop their listening and speaking skills. However, Teachers in Schools B, C, & D (75.0%) hardly helped their learners to achieve the four skills; learning tasks or activities provided to learners emphasised greatly on achieving reading and writing skills. For instance, learners were always told to imitate the teacher and copy some notes from the blackboard. Again, there were no activities prepared mainly for achieving listening and speaking skills in both sessions conducted.

By comparing the questionnaire findings with classroom observation findings, the researchers noted some differences as well. On the one hand, the questionnaire findings indicated that many teachers were executing their roles basing on the tenets of LCA. On the other hand, the classroom observation results showed that the majority of teachers were executing their roles basing on the principles of the TCA.

Effectiveness of Organising Activities in the French Language Teaching

The specific Question Three wanted investigation on how teachers organised learning tasks in the FLT. Here the researchers sought to determine whether the learning activities had impact on learners' learning and whether learners were actively involved in those activities to reflect real life situations.

The findings were obtained from questionnaires and classroom observations. The researchers started by providing some questionnaires to the respondents (teachers), seeking their views regarding the question. To get the broader picture of the views expressed by the respondents, the Likert scale with three answers (Always, Seldom, and Never) was used as well. The summary of the questionnaire findings, as they are tabulated in Table 5 that all the respondents were always planning and

organising teaching and learning activities or tasks with respect to the LCA.

Table 5: Statistics on reported teaching and learning activities organised in the FLT

S/N	Activities	Total	Always %	Seldom %	Never %
1.	I plan and organise activities for all learners.	4	100.0	-	-
2.	I discuss learning objectives with learners.	4	100.0	-	-
3.	I prepare lessons very carefully	4	100.0	-	-
4.	I prepare teaching tasks by considering learners' prior knowledge.	4	100.0	-	-
5.	I prepare teaching tasks that involve all learners.	4	100.0	-	-
6.	I ensure that learning takes place step by step and there is a natural transition from task to task	4	100.0	-	-
7.	I plan activities that encourage learner's growth from dependence to independence.	4	100.0	-	-
8.	I ensure that there is a balance between teachers' talking time and learners' learning time	4	100.0	-	-
9.	I plan activities that are suitable for the practical	4	100.0	-	-
10.	I encourage participatory activities in the class.	4	100.0	-	-

Source: Field data, March-May 2014

With this regard, the researchers confirmed these findings through classroom observations. During the observations the following were observed. First, Teacher in School A (25.0%) ensured that learning activities or tasks were intended for all learners in the classrooms. The teacher ensured that all the individuals were actively involved in the teaching and learning activities. However, learning activities planned by Teachers in Schools B, C, & D (75.0%) were intended mainly for the best students who were few. The best students were actively involved almost in all learning activities. The rest were only involved in reading and copying notes. Such practice created imbalance among learners though the teachers seemed to have good teaching strategy of making sure that the best students help the weak ones, as noted earlier. The students that were not asked questions were seen happy and relaxed as it seemed they were avoiding crystallisation of mistakes - something that is common to most foreign language learners; not due to the presence of the researchers.

Secondly, the researchers observed that, to a great extent, Teacher in School A planned and organised activities by considering learners' prior knowledge. Since all learners were actively involved in the learning process, the teacher was able to study their individual ability, hence handle all of them accordingly. Nonetheless, the researchers observed that Teachers in Schools B, C, & D (75.0%) could not plan and organise activities by considering learners' prior knowledge; many learners were treated as passive recipients, listened to their teachers who were in authority. As such, tasks or activities being planned and organised considered prior knowledge of 'better ones'.

Thirdly, it was observed that Teacher in School A largely prepared his lessons carefully. The lessons incorporated tasks which related to learners' real-life communicative needs; allowed learners to rehearse, in class, real-world language tasks; required learners to adopt a range of roles, and use language in a variety of settings in and out of the classroom; integrated the four macro skills; provided controlled practice in enabling micro skills (listening, speaking reading, and writing) realised.

Nevertheless, the researchers observed that Teachers in Schools B, C, & D were struggling to plan their lessons; their lessons were limited to reading and writing skills.

Fourthly, it was found that all the teachers tried their best to deliver teaching and tasks step by step so as to provide a complete learning package to their learners. On the contrary, lesson contents of Teachers in Schools B, C, & D were imbalanced as they were grammatically oriented, consequently learners were not exposed to the communicative competence of the language, not only because of the language size which was big and unfortunately the teachers were not trained on how to manage large classes. In addition, the focus on grammar was caused by the strategy of making sure the class passes in the national examinations, which always favour the written discourse, leaving students unable to make use of the oral counterpart.

Fifthly, it was observed that Teacher in School A, to a large extent, organised learning activities at the practical level. For instance, there were role-plays, interactive dialogues, texts, and audio-materials in the classroom. Accordingly, students were able to develop musical, visual, logical, as well as interpersonal intelligences. Contrary to that, Teachers in Schools B, C, & D (75.0%) were planning and organising their tasks or activities merely at theoretical level. The teachers could not create a variety of settings or situations and set some authentic activities for learners. In addition, the activities or tasks planned and organised were mechanically oriented.

Conclusively, it was observed that in School A, there was, to a great extent, a balance between his talking time and his learners'. The teacher ensured that the learners had their portion during the teaching and learning process. Conversely, it was found that there was no balance between the teachers' talking time and their learners' in Schools B, C, and D (75.0%). The teachers were spending much time in 'instructing' rather than guiding their learners in different learning tasks or activities. More often the teachers took charge of all the activities organised in the classrooms. The present researchers estimated that the learners occupied about 30% as participating rate in the classroom activities or tasks.

Discussion

From the data presented and analysed above, it was found that there were great differences between the questionnaire and classroom observation findings. It should be noted that classroom observation findings functioned as a variable of verification and/or falsification of the questionnaire findings. Therefore, in this particular study, the classroom observation findings were considered to be highly informing the reality of the teachers' capability regarding the study. The available findings revealed that many teachers made use of limited techniques in the FLT classrooms.

The findings indicated that lecture, repetition, individual work, and questioning were the most recurring techniques used in the FLT. However, the techniques were scantily organised; they could not effectuate communicative competence in the classrooms. In addition, it was found that many teachers acted more as knowledge providers than as lesson designers, organisers, facilitators, co-participants, guides, and consultants in the classrooms. For instance, many teachers were regarded as the only source of knowledge for the students.

Again, many students received knowledge passively through repetitions, memorisations and imitations. The teachers did not adapt instructional materials to accommodate needs of their students; they always taught exactly what were prescribed in the textbooks and syllabus. Consequently, they became less creative in teaching and acted more as instructors than as facilitators. In addition, they failed acting as co-communicators with their students in the classrooms.

More often than not, the findings indicate that many teachers could not manage to involve all the learners in the learning. They involved the 'better students' in many learning activities and left out 'weaker ones'. In addition, there was minimal interaction among students and between the teachers and students. Jones (2007:5) asserts that the teacher has to arrange students in pairs and groups differently for different kinds of activities, mixing weaker and stronger students (in the hope that the stronger ones will encourage and help the weaker ones), and giving students different tasks according to their strengths and weaknesses.

Additionally, the findings show that many teachers failed to help their students to achieve all the four major language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing) because the tasks or activities they were preparing emphasised exclusively on achieving reading and writing skills leaving aside listening and speaking skills which count a lot in today's business world where face-to-face verbal exchanges sometimes via Skype are highly involved.

Moreover, it was found that all the schools that the study covered had no good learning environment including language laboratory; consequently teaching all the skills especially oral communicative competence was difficulty. This finding is similar to Chiwanga (2011; 2014) who also noted the lack of teaching/learning facilities including language laboratory, and suggests that a language should

be taught with the aid of audio-visual facilities in an artificial environment such as a language laboratory (by using authentic materials especially oral ones, role plays, debates and the like); apart from in and outside classrooms or in actual environment through immersion so as to allow learners to practise it and develop more confidence and competence not only in reading and writing but also in listening and speaking.

Furthermore, the findings disclose that many teachers organised learning activities at the theoretical level; the activities were not only monotonous for the students but also not enriched with a variety of settings or situations. These findings imply that many students were not actively involved in experiencing the language use in a variety of contexts/settings. It was found in the current study that there was no balance between the teachers' talking time and the students' learning time in many classes. Many teachers were spending much time in 'instructing' rather than helping to guide their students in different learning activities or tasks. More often than not, the teachers used to take charge of all learning activities organised in the classrooms.

Lastly, the study found all classes overcrowded with the exception to only one class. The number of students (ranging from 80 to 108) was completely contrary to the time given per class. This finding is in line with previous study by Chiwanga (2011:43) who highlighted that time for teaching/learning French is not enough for practice since a period takes 40 minutes, totalling only 360 hours per year, meaning that there are 38 weeks set for French in state secondary schools, two of which being for tests while 36 weeks are for teaching and evaluation. According to Arias and Walker (2004) small classes hold an advantage over large classes when additional performance criteria such as problem-solving skills and all that the current researchers observed are used.

Conclusions

This article aimed at ascertaining the extent to which French language teachers in O-level statesecondary schools apply the LCA in the FLT. The findings indicated explicitly that 75.0% of the studied teachers were struggling to apply the approach in the classrooms. This implies that many teachers were not empowered enough to apply the approach in the FLT as it has been explained in the results.

Though it is believed the findings in the same country could be homogenous as most teachers get training in the same institutions and teach in stateschools with almost the same teaching environments, the findings of this study should not be generalised since the study was only carried out in Dar es Salaam region, notably Ilala District and only in O-level secondary schools. However, these findings are a base for similar studies within and outside the country. Again, since the French is also taught in other institutions, more studies should be done in other regions and different schools including the private ones, but also in both state and private A-level secondary schools, Teachers' Training Colleges (TTCs), colleges and universities.

Recommendations

The data presented and analysed and the findings made in this study have yielded a number of recommendations for improving the application of the LCA which develops critical thinking, receptive and productive skills in the FLT. In order to improve in the teaching and learning of French in O-level state secondary schools in Tanzania, the following are recommended:

- a) The teachers should be thoroughly and regularly trained on how to effectively apply the LCA. The training should emphasise largely on the practice part of it. This should be in tandem with how to manage large classes which is under constructivist approach. This will help them boost the efficiency and performance of their students in both written and spoken language.
- b) The teachers should be given more exposure in Francophone countries for training and acquisition/learning of the language in question so that they can gain more fluency in the target language.
- c) There should be enough and appropriate facilities and learning materials especially authentic ones in the schools such as multimedia resources, textbooks, and texts and the teachers should be oriented on how to prepare and use them in their classes.
- d) Schools should be equipped with language laboratories to enable the students learn the language in question with ease. The presence of audio-visual facilities including satellite dishes, computers, TV set and the like will motivate both teachers and students in the teaching-learning process.
- e) The FLT should emphasise on achieving all four language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing) as well as the socio-cultural ones; not only the reading and writing skills. There should be both written and oral examinations at the particular schools and at the national level.
- f) Learners opting for the French subject should be given more opportunities to practise and improve their acquired skills. This includes participating regularly in French language occasions such as “Days of Francophone Community” and paying regular study visits to Alliance française and other institutions where they might interact with other fellows to improve their skills.
- g) There should be enough teachers for the subject. That is, the number of learners should correspond to the number of teachers. The ration of 1:40 is recommended for the smooth teaching-learning process.
- h) There should be regular monitoring in schools by school inspectors, National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA), TIE, MoEVT, and School Boards to check whether the subject is taught with respect to the new approach. The regular

monitoring would help them to uncover some gaps and address them.

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