

Curriculum materials as a barrier to the use of communicative approach to English language teaching in EFL context: examples from Tanzania

John Misana Biseko¹

Majuto Manyilizu²

Joshua Mwaipape³

Daud Nyinge⁴

Adriano Utenga⁵

College of Humanities and Social Sciences
University of Dodoma, United Republic of Tanzania^{1,4,5}
College of Informatics and Virtual Education
University of Dodoma, United Republic of Tanzania²
College of Education University of Dodoma, United
Republic of Tanzania³

email: john.biseko@udom.ac.tz¹

email: majuto.manyilizu@gmail.com²

email: andililejoshua@gmail.com³

email: nyinged@gmail.com⁴

email: adrianoutenga@gmail.com⁵

Abstract - This paper examines how curriculum materials act as a barrier to implementation of communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. It has been noted that several studies report some challenges of CLT in English language teaching. Consequently, some authors conclude that CLT is useless while others observe that the reported challenges are external weaknesses caused by users of the approach. In light of this debate, this study was conducted. Two questions were the focus of the study: how do curriculum materials respond to CLT? How does the actual use of the developed curriculum materials respond to principles of CLT? Drawing on the data obtained, authors of this study argue that curriculum materials are missing essential tasks which would facilitate a smooth implementation of CLT. Consequently, features of the traditional methods are dominating the practices. Authors advocate that it is unfair to argue that CLT is useless in EFL context but we have failed to design for it. Following the noted weaknesses, researchers recommend the adoption of task-based curriculum material design to ensure rich communicative activities in textbooks and classrooms as well.

Keywords: communicative language teaching, English as a foreign language, English language teaching, curriculum materials, primary school, Tanzania

1. Introduction

In today's globalised world, English language has emerged and takes its position as a lingua franca, which facilitates communication among the people from diverse geographical and linguistic backgrounds. Nevertheless, the historical journey of the language for centuries has determined the current status of the language in the world. Graddol (1997) links the dominance of English in the global communication to the lingering of British colonial activities in 17th – 19th centuries and the emergence of the US as a superpower nation in the 20th century. In fact, in the 17th – 19th centuries, Britain facilitated the wide spread of the language through implanting it in its colonies. Coming into the 20th century, the economic, technological and cultural influence of the US over other nations facilitated the wide spread of English. Further, in the 21st century English kept on being promoted by the power of the modern globalization in which modern technology has ensured the link among people of all corners of the world.

The ubiquitous spread of English both geographically and functionally is well described by Kachru (1990) and Crystal (1997). On the one side, Kachru provides a geographical picture on the spread of English. Using his three-circle model of world Englishes, he shows that, English is not only used in native speakers' countries neither in former colonies; but, the language is also serving as a foreign language in countries like Russia, China and Japan which do not hold historical attachment to English. On the other side, Crystal illustrates that the language dominates several functional domains including international political domain, business, safety, communication, entertainment, the media and education.

It is important however, to note that this ubiquitous spread of English language is always accompanied with power and this power is always unequal among different groups in the community that uses the language. Therefore, English as a lingua franca is not a neutral medium of international communication. For example, it provides unequal power to commodity owners (say native speakers or the centre in Gultung's language) and commodity users (non-native speakers or peripheral countries in Gultung's language). Within the peripheral countries, the power that accompanies the language provides sweet and bitter rewards to different groups. Therefore, Tollefson (2000) cited in Pennycook (2016) views that English favours those who know it in terms of social, economic and political development while creates barriers of development to people who do not know it. This is to say, while English opens doors to some, it simultaneously closes the same to others. In that sense, the language is used as a miraculous key that is necessary for opening the doors of success.

As it is in most of the peripheral countries, in Tanzania English language is the key to education for it determines the fate of students' achievement in examinations; particularly, in post primary education where the language is used as the medium of instruction (Cripper and Dodd, 1984). It is in this context, I get the meaning of the words made by Neke (2015) who tries to equate English and blood which distributes oxygen in the bodies of human beings; thus, if some people have less blood they automatically die and only those with enough blood do survive. Definitely, the language in Tanzania hinders some students from getting their right to education despite the fact that each citizen is guaranteed that right as per the Tanzania's constitution (1977) art.11 as it reads:

(2) Every person has the right to access education, and every citizen shall be free to pursue education in a field of his choice up to the highest level according to his merits and ability.

Besides the above, in his study *English in Tanzania an Anatomy of Hegemony*, Neke (2015) found that English in Tanzanian symbolises an educated person. Therefore, the ability to speak the language depicts how educated one is and this goes together with social respect of an individual in the community. Further, the language is considered as a highway to success, English is considered as synonymous to knowledge, it is considered as advancement, gateway to social – economic rewards and empowerment language. So far, Ismail (2007) asserts that English is considered as the most important language and therefore is perceived to be the passport to most peoples' future. She goes on saying that English has been used to make important decisions about peoples' lives and their future careers.

The fact that English is enormously rewarding has made it an important commodity and thus; it is widely taught as both a second and foreign language in different places of the world. Crystal (1997) observes that English is the chief foreign language taught in schools, normally displacing other languages previously considered important. For example, in 1996, English replaced French as the chief foreign language in schools in Algeria (a former French colony) while in 2008, English replaced French in Rwanda as a medium of instruction. In this situation, English is becoming like a weapon that every citizen of the global village would like to arm with. Consequently, Crystal (1997) views English language teaching (ELT) as one of the fast-growing business industries around the world.

Since ELT continues to gain popularity among non-native speakers' countries, a number of questions surrounding the teaching and learning of the language have dominated debates in the field. These questions include: why do people learn the language? What should be taught to meet the purpose for which a language is taught? Who is the ideal teacher of the language? What is the ideal method/approach in teaching the language? What is the ideal age for learning the language? Does the first language have the role to play in learning English as second language (ESL)/English as a Foreign Language (EFL)? Indeed, all these questions are important for effective ELT in second/foreign language contexts. Nevertheless, this paper limits itself on one of these questions; the approach for ELT in a foreign context, in this case Tanzania as a case study. The paper focuses at identifying the challenges facing English language curriculum materials in relationship to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach and identifies how such challenges can be tackled. In particular, this paper answers two research questions (1) how do curriculum materials respond to principles of CLT?; (2) How does the actual use of the developed curriculum materials respond to principles of CLT?

Communicative Language Teaching: Historical Review

Communicative language teaching is an approach that focuses on enabling learners to develop communicative competence (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Several scholars may define the term in different words. Nevertheless, the essence of CLT as an approach to language teaching is to facilitate language learners to use the target language for actual communication in different situations. Advocates of this approach do consider language in view of Firth (1957), Austin (1962), Searle (1965) and Halliday

(1967) who viewed language as a social tool whose main function is to facilitate communication among members of a particular speech community. In this view, language learning is incomplete if learners can not use the target language for carrying out communicative transactions (Roberts, 2004).

The origin of this bandwagon approach to language teaching is traced back to 1970s and it has kept on changing at least in practices though the aim has remained the same (Roberts, 2004). According to Celce-Murcia (2007), the evolution of the approach has its roots in the works of Dell Hymes (1967 and 1972) that was reacting against Noam Chomsky's work i.e. Chomsky (1957). According to Chomsky, language acquisition is an innate process and he considers that any consideration of social factors was outside the domain of linguistics. As a reaction therefore, Hymes (1972) considers that in addition to linguistic competence, an individual should be competent in sociolinguistics for him/her to be able to communicate appropriately in social contexts. Further, Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) respectively added that Communicative competence requires strategic competence and discourse competence. In the view of Canale (1983) therefore, communicative competence should be regarded as a four dimension competence that includes *linguistic/grammatical competence* (including the ability to use grammar rules and vocabulary), *Sociolinguistic competence* (including the ability to use language differently basing on the prevailing social context/variables), *Strategic competence* (i.e. the ability to compensate for problems or deficits in communication) and *Discourse competence* (including the ability to connect a number of ideas together). In that way, CLT should enable learners to develop these competences; and that is why CLT is different from previous methods, like grammar translation and the like which focused on enabling learners to develop linguistic competence alone.

Since CLT's goal for language learning is different from the previous methods, it calls upon practitioners to change some practices on teaching of any target language. According to different literature, these changes are hereunder categorized into five groups. They include: A goal of language teaching/learning, nature of the curriculum materials, roles of the teacher, roles of the learner, and classroom activities.

Table 1 A Summary of Changes Suggested by CLT

Changes	Elaborations
A goal of language teaching/learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teaching/learning in CLT focuses at promoting learners' communicative ability in all important aspects required in communication including grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic and discourse competences (Canale, 1983). ● Fluency is encouraged over accuracy basing on the truth that, errors are signs which show that a learner is learning (Selinker, 1972).
Nature of the Curriculum materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Authentic materials are encouraged. These are resources useful for teaching /learning which were not specifically prepared for pedagogical purposes. The materials include but not limited to written texts, photographs, video, announcements, conversations and discussions taken as extracts or as a whole from radio and television broadcasting, real-life telephone conversations, and messages left on answering machines (Richards, 2006).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of situation, function and notions as a basis for organising topics instead of grammatical items (Richards, 2006). • Coverage of both meaning and forms (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).
Roles of the learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners are supposed to be active participants in learning. They are doers whose role is to practice language use in negotiation of meaning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). • Language learning is a social activity that lies in interaction with others (Richards, 2006). In this view, learners are required to work together in small groups while negotiating meaning.
Roles of the teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the teachers is to guide learners and not to teach them. A teacher just prepares environment for learners to interact and thereafter, s/he constantly observes them and assists them where possible (Richards, 2006).
Classroom/textbook activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be communicative activities, which require learners to use the language by speaking, listening, reading and writing. What matters is learners' maximum involvement in a learning process (Moss & Ross-Feldman, 2003). Paulston (1972) shows a continuum of language activities, which clearly differentiates communicative activities and non-communicative activities. At the one end of the continuum, there are mechanical drills for manipulation of grammatical forms, followed by meaningful drills and at the other end, there are communicative activities. According to Littlewood (1981), communicative activities range from Functional communication activities and Social interaction activities. In this dichotomy, the former comprises activities like comparing sets of pictures and noting similarities and differences, following directions, and discovering missing features in a map or picture. In contrast, the later includes conversation and discussion sessions, dialogues and role plays, simulations, and debates. Further, Moss and Ross-Feldman (2003) identifies activities like class survey, conversation grid, line dialogue, information gap, language experience approach, and the use of games.

Despite the fact that Communicative approach to language teaching is praised for compensating the weaknesses noted in previously used language teaching methods, it has several challenges in realizing the language learning goals. Several researchers from different parts of the world have communicated these challenges in different studies. Authors of this study reviewed twelve research papers which had examined the challenges of CLT in different countries. These works include: the research by Hiep (2007) CLT challenges in Vietnam, Chang and Goswami (2011) CLT challenges in Taiwan, Adnan et al. (2012) CLT challenges in Malaysia, Daisy (2012) CLT challenges in India, Kalanzadeh et al. (2013) CLT challenges in Iran, Ju (2013) CLT challenges in China, Ridge (2013) CLT challenges in South Africa, Sane and Rafiki (2013) CLT challenges in Tanzania, Maryslessor et al. (2014) CLT challenges in Kenya, Borti (2015) CLT challenges in Ghana, Lyimo and Mapunda (2016) CLT challenges in Tanzania and Nyinondi (2017) CLT challenges in Tanzania. A lesson learned from all these studies is that challenges facing implementation of CLT can be categorized into

six groups, ranging from challenges on the part of teachers like misconception and incompetence of using the approach, challenges on the part of learners including willingness to participate and inadequate level of language proficiency, challenges related to culture, challenges on the part of the curriculum materials, challenges on mismatch between the curriculum philosophy and nature of examinations, and lastly challenges on the part of school situation including availability of materials and number of students in classes.

From the challenges above, previous researchers' conclusions are divided into two views. On the one hand, some argue that CLT is irrelevant and thus it should be abandoned (see Sane and Rafiki, 2013) while others are of the opinion that CLT is still needed given its focus and the goal of English language teaching/learning (See Hiep, 2007; Borti, 2015; Nyinondi et al., 2017). In trying to understand this dispute, Adnan et al. (2012) conducted a study to examine whether the challenges associated to CLT are due to its internally inherited or externally associated weaknesses. In their conclusion, authors of that study conclude that, "in some respects, CLT has suffered due to misconceptions about its implementation in classrooms and this should not be used as a reason to simply reject the approach". The present study supports the second conclusion that CLT as an approach is needed in EFL context. To this end, the debate should not be whether CLT is needed or not but the focus should be on answering two questions: (1) where do we fail to take advantage of CLT? (2) How do we get out of the trap? This is the concern of this paper.

English Language Learning in Tanzania's Primary Schools

The teaching of English as a foreign language in Tanzanian primary schools dates as far back as the colonial days (Wohlgemuth, 1987). Although Kachru (1985) lists Tanzania among the countries which make the outer cycle, the domains of use of English language in this country is too limited compared to other countries in this Kachru's group. Biseko (2016) shows that the language is used in very limited domains of use but important ones. According to him, the language plays some social roles such as in education, where it is the medium of instruction in post primary school levels. It is also the language of the high court, and the language used by some few media. Politically, the knowledge in English is important for international politics and negotiations; and economically, the knowledge of English language is essential for international trading, particularly in this era of globalization.

Since its introduction, English has been one of the subjects taught in primary schools though several changes have happened from then on. In particular, these changes includes the changes of textbooks, syllabus, approach of teaching and the changes of when to begin teaching/learning the language. According to Wohlgemuth (1987), the first English language textbooks during the British colonial era were from England and they were published by Oxford. It is argued that the textbooks were prepared to save all schools in British colonies and thus; they did not take into consideration the cultural milieu of Tanzania (Wohlgemuth, 1987). From that time, several changes in textbooks have taking place and today we have textbooks made by the Tanzania Institute of Education. These books are focusing on teaching learners through the communicative approach framework. Another change in primary school English language teaching is on when English is introduced to pupils. During the British colonial rule, English was first introduced at class five as a subject and a medium of instruction at class six to eight and later to seven. Later, in 1970s, English was

introduced at class I and in 1980s at class III, in all cases as a subject. Currently, English is introduced in standard three as a subject to public primary schools but from class I as a medium of instruction among the private schools.

Despite its significance in social, political and economic aspects, studies show that there is a problem of learning and acquisition of English language among Tanzania's students. A study by UWEZO (2010) for instance shows that only 8% of class III learners, 15% of class IV learners, 25% of class V learners, 35% of class VI learners and 51% of class VII learners passed the class II level English language test. This statistics shows among other things that there is a problem in the learning of this language among Tanzania's learners. However, the government has been making several efforts to promote the education standard and English as a subject is not excluded. The more recent effort is the change of the curriculum materials for English language learning and these new materials are the subject of this paper.

There are many studies which have been conducted to examine the challenges facing CLT approach in teaching English in both second and foreign language contexts. Nevertheless, most of these studies have been examining such challenges as a whole. This approach of studying challenges does not allow researchers to dig deep and provide detailed information on a single challenge; thus, more information related to the identified challenges has yet to be discovered. This study is therefore dedicated to examining one of the identified challenges; namely, the challenges facing English language curriculum materials in relationship to CLT approach. Focusing on a single challenge in this way enabled researchers to have in-depth examination and unveiled more important challenges of the curriculum materials.

The focus of this study was to examine how CLT principles are reflected in the curriculum materials and later implemented in actual classroom practices. To accomplish this task, the theoretical framework was built on CLT principles in view of Richards (2006, p. 2). Richards observes CLT as a set of principles consisting of five key elements, namely: the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, the role of teachers and the role of learners in the classroom". In consideration of Richards' view on CLT, it was possible to examine how these elements of CLT principles are integrated in the developed curriculum materials and how they are implemented in the classroom level. In particular, the figure below shows how the variables in the study interact to one another. The diagram shows explicitly that CLT philosophy and principles should influence curriculum material development which in turn affects the five key elements identified by Richards (2006) and these elements must influence day to day classroom practices. Therefore, to find answers for the research questions in section 1 above, this framework guided researchers to examine and analyse the presence/absence of features of the five CLT principles in both curriculum materials and teachers' interview responses.

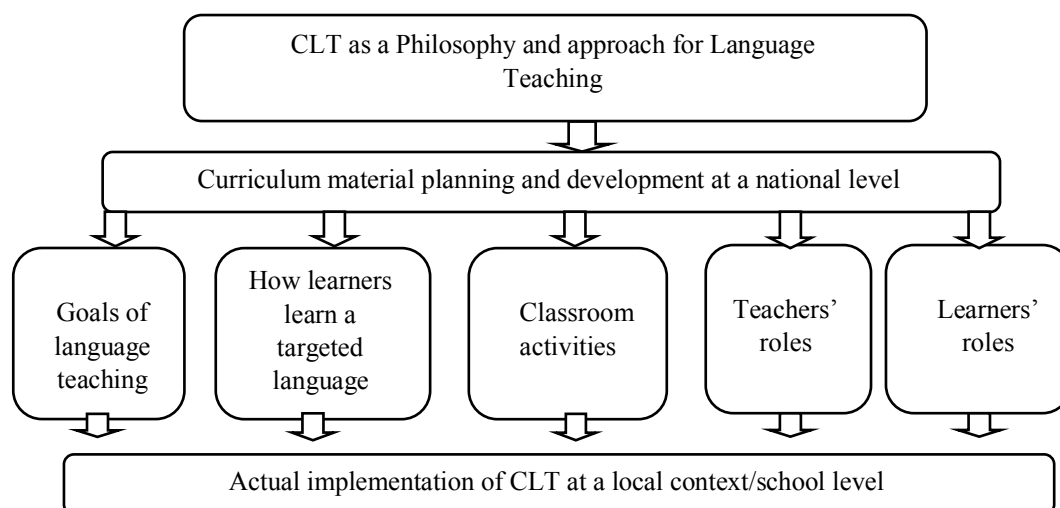


Figure 1 The Relationship of Variables in the Present Study (Source: Researchers, 2019)

2. Method

The study employed descriptive design and adopted qualitative research approach. Descriptive design was selected for it systematically describes a situation or phenomenon in a targeted population. The study used two methods of data collection. The methods were documentation and interview. Documentation checklists, tape recording and interview guides were used as data collection tools. To obtain the data for research question number 1, researchers documented English language syllabus, standard three textbook and teacher's guide; all three documents were published by Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE). Furthermore, interview and documentation of teachers' lesson plans were used to collect data for question number 2. The targeted population was standard three teachers. Therefore, standard three related curriculum materials were used for documentation and only standard three teachers were interviewed.

The sample of this study was a composition of four schools from two different districts and eight standard three teachers, two from each school. The selection of the two districts was purposive and based on the criteria that these districts were representing urban/rural locations. It was important to consider these two districts to see how geographical locations would have influenced practices in language teaching. Further, the selection of teachers in the sample was also purposive because only standard three teachers were sampled for the study. The fact that standard three was chosen as a case in this study based on the reason that it is a class where English language is taught for the first time. Thus, it was thought to be a stage where students should be involved to a number of activities for a better understanding of this new subject. In general, the collected data were thematically analysed.

3. Results and Discussion

Results for this study are presented in a series which reflects the two research questions presented in section 1 above. In particular, these questions aimed at examining how curriculum materials respond to principles of CLT; and how does the actual use of the developed curriculum materials respond to principles of CLT.

3.1 Curriculum Materials and CLT Principles

As it has been explained in the methodological part, the data for question number 1 were collected through documentation of syllabus, standard three textbook and teacher's guide. Further, the main activity during the analysis of data was to identify the presence/absence of the key elements of CLT as identified in the conceptual framework in section 5 above. In that way, each curriculum material in the sample was analysed using the identified five key elements as lenses that helped to reveal the reality. Following this analysis, below is a presentation of the findings.

As far as the language-teaching goal is concerned, the data show that the syllabus explicitly declares that the teaching and learning of the language is communicatively based. EXTRACT 1 below justifies the claim.

Extract 1

The teaching of English language subject aims at developing the four language skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. It bases on the communicative approach in language teaching and learning (TIE, 2016).

The claim above is supported by the data on the nature of the syllabus which shows that it is built on the Competency-Based Language Teaching (hereafter CBLT) which is one of the CLT paradigms (Richards, 2006). The data documented from the syllabus show that the teaching of the language focuses at achieving three main competences as the data below depict.

Table 2 Competences for Standard III

Main Competences		Specific Competences
1.0	Comprehend oral and written information	1.1 Listen and comprehend information presented orally 1.2 Listen and comprehend phonemic symbols 1.3 Listen, pronounce and read phonemic symbols
2.0	Communicate orally and through writing	2.1 Communicate simple ideas through speaking 2.2 Communicate simple ideas through writing
3.0	Acquire and use vocabulary through the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing)	3.1 Develop and use appropriate vocabulary through listening and when speaking 3.2 Develop vocabulary through reading 3.3 Use appropriate vocabulary when writing

Source: TIE (2016)

Furthermore, analysis of the topics contained in the textbook also depict that the teaching of the language is CLT-focused because they are written in terms of the functional and notional expressions. This textbook consists of eighteen units whose titles are: *greetings, introductions, the alphabet, things around us, insects, comparing things and people, family members, colours, locating things, numbers, everyday activities, months of the year, polite requests, simple orders, shopping, best wishes, personal information and stories in picture*. Therefore, with regard to language teaching goals, both the syllabus and topics of the textbook justify that English language teaching for primary schools, in this case standard three in Tanzania follows the CLT.

On the side of how learners learn a targeted language, CLT principles suggest that for successful language learning to happen, learners must be engaged in meaningful and purposeful interaction while negotiating meaning among themselves or with an

interlocutor. The assumption therefore is that the curriculum materials would have a number of tasks, like role-play, information gaps and games which call for learners' interaction and use the language communicatively. Nevertheless, the data from both the syllabus and textbook do neither show explicitly how nor provide exercises and activities that would subject learners to interactive use of the language. On top, some data from the teacher's guide show that learners are exposed to imitate what teachers say in classrooms and therefore required to learn through mechanical drills. Extract 2 is the data taken from teacher's guide to exemplify the matter.

Extract 2

Activity 3 and 4: Greetings in the afternoon

- (a) Use warm up activities for greeting in the afternoon.
Good afternoon class.
 - (b) Present to pupils orally greeting and response to greeting in the afternoon several times. Say:
Good afternoon, Asha.
Good afternoon Ashura.
 - (c) Ask pupils in pairs to imitate greeting each other in the afternoon several times
 - (d) Guide pupils in pairs to practice greeting in the afternoon.
- Source: (TIE, 2018a: 2)

From the data above, it is obvious that such kind of a teacher's guide has not been prepared to support interaction among the learners and their interlocutors. With regard to classroom activities, CLT principles assume that communicative activities should consist of tasks which require learners to negotiate meaning, use communication strategies, correct misunderstandings, and work to avoid communication breakdowns (Richards, 2006). In this study, the analysis of this aspect made use of the three types of language learning activities as suggested by Paulston (1972) and Richards (2006). According to them, language learning activities exist on a continuum of three types.

These include: mechanical activities, which refers to controlled learners' tasks that can be carried without necessarily understanding the language they are using; meaningful activities, which are controlled but a learner is required to comprehend the stimulus in order to carry out an exercise; and communicative activities, which are tasks that provide a learner with a room to practice/use the language communicatively. Thus, the above continuum moves from activities which are non-communicative by nature to activities which are communicative ones at the other hand. Therefore, to understand the nature of activities contained in the standard three textbooks, all units of the textbook were documented and all tasks within were categorised into one of the three types of activities above.

The data from documentation show that the syllabus took note of the importance of learners' participation in carrying communicative activities as it presents:

Extract 3

Teaching and learning emphasises on pupils' ability to perform **tasks** by applying all four aspects of any language. The outcome of the process foresees a learner who is able to communicate simple ideas through speaking and writing, while comprehending oral and written information (TIE, 2016: 4).

In spite of the above note by the syllabus, the data from the textbook do not show enough communicative tasks which would enable learners to use the four language skills. The data show that the content of the textbook is divided into two sub sections: ACTIVITIES and EXERCISES. Activities in this book are texts which describe the notion in focus while exercises are tasks, questions or challenges for learners' use of language. The whole textbook has a total of fifty-nine (59) tasks which are titled 'exercise'. The data show that most of the exercises in this textbook are meaningful and mechanical based. This means, communicative activities are very scarce and this imply that the textbook do not give learners opportunities to practice language communicatively. Table 3, EXTRACT 4 and 5 below depict the nature of learners' language activities.

Table 3 Types of Learners' Activities Contained in a Textbook

Unit No	No of exercises	Mechanical	Meaningful	Communicative
1	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0
3	4	2	2	0
4	3	1	2	0
5	2	1	1	0
6	3	1	2	0
7	2	1	1	0
8	5	3	2	0
9	4	1	3	0
10	7	4	3	0
11	6	1	5	0
12	6	2	4	0
13	2	2	0	0
14	1	0	1	0
15	2	2	0	0
16	4	1	0	3
17	5	0	5	0
18	3	0	3	0
TOTAL	59	22	34	3

Source: Documented data from TIE (2018b)

Extract 4: One of The Mechanical Activities

Exercise 1

Fill in the blanks with the words in the box

red, green, black, grey, skirt

1. Mariam is wearing adress and ashoes.
2. She is looking at a.....
3. She hashair.
4. The shopkeeper is wearingdress.

Source: TIE (2018a)

Extract 5: One of The Meaningful Exercises

Exercise 3

Look at your school surroundings and fill in the blanks.

Example: A car is fast but a bicycle is slow
is long butis short
 is big but is small

Source: TIE (2018a)

As for the roles of teachers and learners are concerned, the data show that neither the syllabus nor textbook have explicit information on the role of these two participants in the learning process. However, the data from the teacher's guide show that traditional practices of language teaching still exist where learning is teacher-centred and learners are mere listeners, and imitators who learn through practicing mechanical drills. Extract 2 above justifies.

3.2 The Actual Use of the Developed Curriculum Materials and CLT Principles

As presented in the methodology section in 6 above, the data for the second research question were collected through interviewing standard three teachers and documenting their lesson plans. The data from these sources in relation to the 5 CLT principles in our conceptual framework revealed some important issues as far as the present study is concerned.

The first CLT principle that was examined was the goals of language teaching/learning. The data from teachers' interview revealed that teachers are aware of the goal of the curriculum in use as it is justified in the words of the following two teachers below.

Lengo la kuwafundisha wanafunzi wetu kwa mujibu wa mtaala ni kuwawezesha wanafunzi waweze kuandika, kusoma, kuongea hata kama siyo sentensi ndefu mfano, anaishi wapi.....lakini pia umahiri katika kuheseabu...mwanafunzi aweze kuandika vitu vinavyomzunguka (Mwalimu Dodoma Jiji)

The goal of teaching our learners as per the curriculum is to enable pupils to be able to write, read, and speak regardless the length of the sentences; for instance, s/he should be able to say where is s/he living....further competency in countinga learner should be able to write things that surround him/her (A teacher in Dodoma city)

Mtaala wa sasa unamtaka mwalimu ajielekeze kuwafundisha watoto stadi za kusikiliza, kuandika, kusoma. Japo speaking, hata speaking wanajifunza. Unapowaambia neno wanafatisha, ndio speaking (Mwalimu wilaya ya Chemba)
The current curriculum requires the teacher to focus on teaching listening, writing and reading skills. Even speaking, they are learning speaking as well. When you pronounce a word and they imitate that is speaking (A teacher at Chemba district).

Besides good explanation of teachers on the goals of English language subject as per the current syllabus, the data collected from teachers' lesson plans do not reflect

what they said in interview. It is important first to note that, a lesson plan is a teacher’s written plan on how he/she implements the goals of the curriculum in his/her own classroom. This is to say, the success of the national curriculum goals depends largely on how a teacher plans to implement the same in the class. The documented *specific objectives* from teachers’ lesson plans showed that teachers’ always focus on enabling learners to achieve answering given exercises in a textbook and these exercises are not communicative in nature as per Table 3 above. In this way, it is hardly to believe that CLT is targeted neither it will be achieved. Below are some of the specific objectives which were taken from teachers’ lesson plans.

At the end of forty minutes, each pupil should be able to pronounce 8 words given (A teacher at Chemba district)

Within 80 minutes, each pupil should be able to answer eight questions of activity five on page 14-15 (A teacher at Dodoma city)

Within forty minutes, a pupil should be able to attempt exercise 2 effectively (A teacher at Chemba district)

At the end of 40 minutes, each pupil should be able to change the vocabulary in opposite and plural form (A teacher from Chemba district)

With regard to how learners learn, the data inform that the expected interactive learning is hardly practiced. The data from interview show that interactive learning is not done and one of the reasons why it is impractical is the number of students in classrooms as it was observed by this teacher hereunder:

Tunaambiwa tuwape watoto nafasi ya kuzungumza lakini darasa langu lina watoto 130. Hata nikiwapa kila mmoja nafasi ya kuzungumza hata kwa wiki nzima bado kuna wengine watakosa nafasi (Mwalimu Dodoma jiji)

We are told to provide opportunities for learners to speak, but my class has a total of 130 students. Even if I provide an opportunity for each to speak for the whole week, still some will not get that opportunity (A teacher at Dodoma city)

Further, the data from teachers’ lesson plans show that classrooms are still dominated by teachers’ presentations as opposed to interactive conversations; grammatical patterns are still presented deductively as opposed to inductive presentation required by CLT; accuracy is still a focus as opposed to fluency; drills and imitations are still dominating as opposed to information gaps activities; and the PPP (Presentation, Practice and Production) model is the common feature of English language teaching as opposed to “fluency-first” pedagogy (Brumfit, 1984). Table 4 below justifies these claims.

Table 4 Lesson Development Stages

Stages	Time	Teaching activities	Learning activities	Indicators of learning
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Introduction	5	To introduce simple present with its rules	To listen	To listen
Competency Development	15	To show examples on how to use simple present tense	To listen and repeat after the teacher	To listen effectively
Competency use	15	To guide pupils to make correct sentences as many as they can	To make correct sentences	To make correct sentences
Conclusion	5	Guide pupils to do exercise 2 at page 84	To write exercise 2 at page 84	To do it effectively

Source (Documented Data from a teacher's lesson plan in Dodoma city)

As far as classroom activities are concerned, the data show that students are still learning through drills and imitation (refer Table 4 above). On top, it was learnt that a textbook was the only book that was mentioned by teachers as their reference book (see interview data below). Since the analysis of a textbook in Table 3 above has shown that it lacks communicative activities, it is obvious that these learners lack activities that could help them to promote their communicative ability. The following teachers' responses to interview questions reveal the situation.

Ninavyoona mimi kuna mismatch kati ya syllabus na kitabu cha mwanafunzi. Kwahiyo, mimi ambacho huwa nakifanya huwa naamua kufundisha yale yaliyo kwenye kitabu yote, nahakikisha ana-cover yote naachana na syllabus (Mwalimu Dodoma jiji)

What I see, there is a mismatch between a syllabus and a textbook. So what I always do, I decide to teach the content in a textbook, I normally cover everything and put aside the syllabus (A teacher at Dodoma city)

Wakati mwingine naweza kusoma muhtasari lakini nashindwa kuelewa ni nini hasa wanataka nifundishe. Nikiangalia kitabu sijui nini kwenye kitabu kina-match na nini kwenye syllabus. Hivyo ninachokifanya naamua kwenda na kitabu naachana na azimio langu ambalo nimetengeneza kutokana na syllabus. Unakuta unatazama kitu unachokifahamu kwenye kitabu unafundisha hichohicho (Mwalimu wilaya ya Chemba)

Sometimes, I read the syllabus and I fail to understand what it needs me to teach. Sometimes, I fail to understand which component of the textbook reflects which one in the syllabus. So, what I normally do is to follow what is in a book and put aside my scheme of work which I wrote to reflect a syllabus. Therefore, you just see what you know in a book and teach the same (A teacher at Chemba district)

Mimi huwa sifati muhtasari badala yake nafata kitabu. Unajua, muhtasari wa sasa unakuambia wakati mwingine watoto wazungumze tu wasiandike. Lakini wakaguzi wakija wanakagua madaftari ya watoto wakiona kuna tarehe hawakuandika unasemwa. Kwahiyo, huwa naangalia mazoezi ya kitabuni nawapa. Wakati mwingine unatazama mazoezi kwenye vitabu vya zamani pia unawapa (Mwalimu Dodoma jiji)

I don't consider the syllabus; instead, I consider the textbook. You know, in some cases, the current syllabus requires learners to engage themselves in speaking and not writing. Nevertheless, when quality assurance officers visit our schools, they peruse learners' exercise books and if they find that there are days that

learners did not write, a teacher is blamed. Therefore, I always give them exercises from the textbook to write and sometimes you find some exercises from previous textbooks (textbooks used before communicative syllabus was adopted- authors' emphasis) and you give them (A teacher from Dodoma City)

On top of that, teacher's responses to interview questions justify that mechanical activities as opposed to communicative activities are common in the textbook; and they influence their classroom practices. The following teachers' words can depict the matter.

Tunawasaidia kujenga stadi mbalimbali. Mfano, unataka mwanafunzi ajenge ujuzi katika ku-spell maneno. Kwahiyo, kwenye kitabu kuna mazoezi kama vile unampa picha ya kitu mfano nyumba na kuliandika neno la kitu hicho na katika hilo neno unaondoa herufi moja ili yeye ang'amue na kuijaza herufi inayokosekana (Mwalimu Dodoma jiji)

We help them to develop different skills. For instance, you may need a learner to develop word-spelling competency. Therefore, in a textbook there are exercises like giving a picture of an object to learner and a word for that picture with a missing letter for a learner to identify a missing letter and therefore fill it (A teacher at Dodoma city)

Lastly, on the role of teachers and learners, the data from documentation of teachers' lesson plans show that a traditional way of teaching/learning that gives power to teachers to dominate a class, a power to be a model of correct speech and responsible to make learners produce error-free sentences is still a common feature as justified in Table 4 above. The data in Table 4 also show that students are listeners and imitators of what teachers say. In that way, learners are not active participants in communicating meaning. The documentation data is supported by the data collected from teachers' interviews as presented here under.

Speaking ni moja ya stadi tunazofundisha. Mwalimu unakuta unatamka wao wana-imitate. Ndio speaking yenyewe. (Mwalimu wilaya ya Chemba)

Speaking is one of the skills that we teach. In this, a teacher speaks and learners imitate. That is speaking (A teacher at Chemba district)

Ujuzi wa kuzungumza tunasisitiza sana japo ni ngumu kwa watoto wetu wa Kitanzania. Tunachokifanya, mwalimu unakuwa unazungumza wao wana-imitate (Mwalimu wilaya ya Chemba)

Speaking competency is emphasised although it is difficult for our Tanzanian learners. What we normally do is that a teacher speaks and requires them to imitate (A teacher at Chemba district)

It is obvious that teachers' roles depicted in this study are not different from the roles of teachers in traditional methods. Correspondingly, the roles that learners play as per the data in this study clearly show that language learning is still considered as a mechanical process that focus to achieve production of correct forms not communication of meaning. The data shows that teachers are still controlling the process of learning and thus, instruction is still teacher-centred.

The findings in section 7 above have revealed a number of issues which thwart the use of CLT in Tanzania. The revealed issues can be used as a springboard towards improving the use of communicative approach in English language teaching as it is desired by the syllabus. In particular, there are two points to note as far as the findings of this study are concerned. The first point to note is that there is a will to use CLT in teaching English language in Tanzania. The data for research question number one have shown that the syllabus explicitly declares CLT as the approach selected for ELT. Further, the data show that the syllabus is built on the competence-based syllabus which is one of the CLT paradigms. On top of that, the data from interview depict that teachers are aware that the syllabus requires them to enable learners to achieve the language skills. Therefore, in respect of Richards' five principles which constitute the conceptual framework of this study, it is fair to argue that principle number one (the goals of language teaching) is achieved.

As far as the second point is concerned, the findings have revealed that there is a very big challenge in the designing of the curriculum materials which reflect the CLT principles. The data show that curriculum materials are lacking unique features of CLT; features like allowing interaction among the learners, collaborative creation of meaning, creating meaningful and purposeful interaction through language, and negotiation of meaning that would help a learner and his/her interlocutor to arrive at a common understanding (Richards, 2006). Instead, the curriculum materials documented are characterised by a number of features which are shown by Richards and Rodgers (2001) and Richards (2006) as features of traditional methods. Such features include non-interactive learning process, the use of mechanical drills, learners' imitation of what teachers say, the use of PPP model in teaching, learners being considered as listeners, teachers' domination of classrooms and dominance of non-communicative activities in both the textbook and classrooms. This is to say, curriculum materials in particular the syllabus, textbook and teacher's guide do not provide enough information to allow teachers to teach communicatively.

The findings of the present study are almost the same to the findings reported by Rubio et al. (2004) and Ko (2014). In their studies, Rubio et al. (2004) found that drills still have a strong presence in the beginner's textbooks. Likewise, Ko (2014) reports that despite the efforts done to adopt CLT approach to English language teaching in Primary Schools in Hong Kong and Malaysia, most of the learning and teaching activities in textbooks do not yet reflect CLT principles. Among others, these findings imply that there is still a big challenge in designing CLT-based materials not only in Tanzania but also in other countries. Following this challenge, several practitioners have been facing big challenges in applying CLT approach in their day to day teaching. Consequently, CLT is regarded as an approach that does not work (see Hiep, 2007; Chang and Goswami, 2011; Adnan et al., 2012; Daisy, 2012; Kalanzadeh et al., 2013; Ju, 2013; Ridge, 2013; and Sane & Rafiki, 2013)

Researchers of this study are aware of the proposal by Yalden (1987) that a language learner should concentrate on language structures in early stages and shift to communicative functions as time increases. However, Yalden's proposal should not be misinterpreted for the suggestion that beginners should concentrate on forms does not mean the use of traditional methods. Rather, the suggestion should be interpreted as it requires the syllabus to expose beginners to aspects of language forms like vocabulary knowledge and basic grammar using strategies which would make the learners to be main participants for their own learning. To make this possible, the textbook should

have rich activities which engage learners and the teacher's guide should be elaborative enough to inform teachers how learners should be engaged in a lesson. By so doing, learners are prepared to be confident and free to participate in any lesson from the early stage of learning the language. Consequently, they can never feel shy to speak whenever engaged in communicative activities.

The findings of the present study are partially in conflict with the findings presented by Lyimo and Mapunda (2016). In that study, authors found that CLT approach was minimally practiced in classrooms though CLT was adequately included in textbooks. These two studies agree that CLT is hardly practised in classrooms; but they differ on the content of the textbooks. This difference is due to some reasons, including the fact that Lyimo and Mapunda worked on English language syllabus for secondary schools while the present study was working on primary schools. Secondly, Lyimo and Mapunda used the input, interaction, and output theories of second language learning as their theoretical framework while the present study used the conceptual framework built on the principles of CLT as per Richards (2006).

Therefore, the findings of this study uncover the fact that even though the main goal of the syllabus is to teach the language communicatively, learners can never achieve communicative competence due to two hindering factors: curriculum materials which lack features of CLT and teachers who do not observe CLT principles in teaching. To meet the goal of the curriculum, the curriculum development body should improve the identified challenges. This can be tackled if the principles of CLT are considered whenever preparing curriculum materials; and through providing special in-service training to English language teachers on the strategies that will assist them to implement the CLT as required. One of the useful strategies that seem to be lacking in curriculum materials and classrooms is the use of games. This strategy could be beneficial to learners within and outside the classrooms such that; learners are allowed to engage in well-designed games and by so doing; they are indirectly engaging in communicative activities.

4. Conclusion

The aim of the present paper was to examine the challenges facing curriculum materials for English language teaching in relationship to CLT approach in Tanzania as a case study. Deliberately, the paper focused on examining how curriculum materials respond to principles of CLT and how such materials are implemented in classrooms. The findings show that the syllabus explicitly declares that English language is taught through communicative approach. On top, teachers declared that the goal of teaching English is to enable their learners to develop the four language skills. Nonetheless, the analysis on how learners learn a targeted language, textbook/classroom activities, teachers' roles and learners' roles in classrooms has shown that CLT features are rarely reflected in curriculum materials and neither applied in classrooms. The findings of this study therefore support the argument by Adnan et al. (2012) that some challenges associated to CLT are due to externally associated weaknesses. Such weaknesses include misconceptions, inability to design for CLT and failure to implement as per CLT requirements.

Following the weaknesses noted and in consideration to the fact that the quality of curriculum materials determines teachers' and learners' performance, this paper recommends that curriculum material designers should adopt the use of different

versions of task-based approach in preparing materials like textbooks and teacher's guide. Task-based approach provides various activities which can engage learners and help them in practising different language skills. Therefore, Adoption of task-based approach will not only enable learners to be active participants in learning but also it will help teachers to avoid the use of traditional methods in teaching. On top of that, English language teachers require refresher courses which will keep on informing them on new development in the field of language learning and teaching.

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