



The Use of Modes in Teaching English Language: A Case of Secondary Schools in Tanzania

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to verify the influence of the teaching modes that Tanzanian teachers use in teaching on the proficiency of the English language by the learners. The study was conducted in Kinondoni District of Dar-es-Salaam region, Tanzania. The study employed Mixed Methods of research design where quantitative survey and qualitative phenomenology were employed concurrently. The researcher found out that as much as only a small percentage of English teachers use visual modes in teaching English language to their learners due to unavailability of resources. The teachers as well as the students agree that teaching modes especially visual modes had a positive impact on the acquisition and proficiency of the English language by learners. The study concludes that it is vital for teachers to employ a variety of modes in the teaching as it enhances acquisition and proficiency of learners in the English language.

Key Words: Modes, Traditional Approach, Multimodality, Modern Approach,

Introduction

In Tanzania, English language is taught as the second language that has a high-demand as a subject of instruction that continues to experience growth in schools across the country. The language of instruction after Tanzania's Independence in 1961 was to a greater

extent influenced by the linguistic scenario characterizing English, Kiswahili and ethnic languages. These languages shared different functions in education and administration. Since Kiswahili was already a widespread lingua-franca and a language of national political consciousness due to the struggle against the British rule, it was officially declared the national language (NL) by the first president of Tanganyika, Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere. Mwalimu's interest was to eliminate the elements of colonialists that encouraged the spirit of individualism. In his initiative of decolonization, Nyerere sought to move the centre and create identity. Kiswahili became a route to create a Tanzanian identity that symbolized Tanzanians with their own culture. The adoption of Kiswahili, which is spoken by 95% of a population with over 120 ethnic cultures and languages, was a practical measure in Tanzania. The widespread adoption of Kiswahili has not led to the death of ethnic cultures and languages

The current policy guideline for secondary school education in Tanzania, as outlined by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC, 1995), has a number of objectives relating directly or indirectly to language, including the following: To promote development of competency in linguistic ability; to promote effective use of communication skills in Kiswahili, and at least one of the foreign languages such as English; to prepare the students to join the world of work, and to enhance further development and appreciation of national unity, identity, ethics, personal integrity, respect for and readiness to work, human rights, cultural and moral values, customs, traditions, civil responsibilities and obligations.

In accordance with the policy guidelines, Tanzanians learn "one of the foreign languages", in school. This language is English, which is also expected to play a big role as a medium of instruction from secondary school level onward. All primary school textbooks for all subjects are in Kiswahili except for English as a subject. English comes to be a medium of instruction in secondary schools, both at ordinary (O-level), from form 1 to form 4 and advanced level (A-level), from form 5 to form 6, where Kiswahili is then taught as a subject. To some Tanzanians, Kiswahili is the first language which creates a smooth

transition into school life, while many others enter the school system speaking Bantu languages, which share some similarities to Kiswahili. The role of English, therefore, is viewed in terms of academic purposes as a means of learning other subjects at an advanced level; its actual communicative function in the society is limited. This has implications for students (later-adult citizens) in a globalizing world, where they need to compete with speakers for whom English is the main medium of communication, in and outside schools, offices and homes, or whose curricula have laid emphasis on the communicative role of English (MoEC, 1995).

This shows that the list of the university leavers who cannot communicate in English is amazing. In a highly competitive job market, the lack of competence in English, even amongst Tanzanian university graduates, is a barrier to employment. After realizing this gap, some parents from upper classes and businessmen and women have been taking their children to the neighboring countries such as Uganda and Kenya to study, where English already has deeper roots within the education system. This is a proof that even those who could fight for elevation and realization of better standards of English within the country are actually helping to derail it. Families with low income cannot afford the expenses of those schools, leaving them with no option but to do as the Ministry of Education dictates. Many learners who have passed through the public education system of the government have to be offered a course in English after O- level or A-level, if they want to gain proficiency in the language.

There is a serious need of assessing the methods of teaching English and suggest the adoption of multimodal linguistic approaches in teaching English wherever it has not been used. This is due to the fact that previous methods of teaching do not meet learners' needs of learning the language such as, performing well academically, being able to communicate freely so as to find a place in the global arena. Instead, learners become very shy, cry out if they cannot do the assigned tasks, do not feel free to express themselves, are not confident and depend on the teacher or on few schoolmates who went for private coaching on the English language. Apart from these

impacts that affect an individual learner, the lack of proficiency in English has become a disaster as it has divided members within the same community in Tanzania Qorro, (2006) and Puja, (2003). The social concern created by this situation is that students are not performing well in their English subject and their proficiency in the same is far much wanting. This brings a serious concern not only for the future livelihood of the students but also a potential threat for the future development of the nation as a whole.

This leaves a gap on ascertaining the use of multimodal linguistic approach to teaching English language. Therefore the current study conducts an in-depth investigation to shed more light on the use of multimodal linguistic approach to teaching English language in secondary schools in Kinondoni District, Tanzania. The following research questions guided this study: i) Which modes do Tanzanian English teachers use to teach English subject, ii) What is the contribution of the modes used by Tanzanian teachers in teaching English subject iii) What challenges do Tanzanian teachers face in using multimodal linguistic approaches in teaching of English subject and iv) Which modes can be used to enhance the teaching methods in the English subject among Secondary schools in Kinondoni District, Tanzania?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Visual mode is a process in which communications are delivered through pictures, drawings, maps, diagrams, illustrations, motion pictures and visual written texts. Visual mode is used by a teacher when he or she makes charts, draws pictures, takes and uses photographs and slides, makes models to simplify features of complex objects or vocabularies and sometimes brings actual objects and apparatus for use by students. Since visual modes use more the sense of sight, it is always incorporated with other non-verbal communications that the learners can see. These may include gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and body postures to bring forth the intended message. In a classroom situation, a teacher uses

visual communication for different reasons such as substitution, complementation and acceptance (Kimamo, 2012).

A study conducted in the USA by Ryu and Boggs (2016) focused on teachers' perception about teaching multimodal composition. The study looked at what teachers think about teaching multimodal composition in their writing lessons and established that teachers relied basically on traditional methods of teaching, meaning, on direct instruction via lecture method of teaching to provide skills and knowledge. This situation was as a result of insufficient training rooted on multimodality, lack of the necessary resources required to employ multimodality approach of teaching and laziness on the part of the teacher that forces them to embark on the traditional approach of teaching.

A similar study conducted on the use of multimedia visual aids in the English language classroom at Margarita Salas Secondary School by Maria (2011) in Spain found that teachers do not use teaching and learning aids as an integral part of the daily lesson due to timing issues and students were not satisfied with this situation. Teachers find that the application of multimodality needs time and requires an autonomous teacher. So, to them the approach is time consuming and tiresome on the side of the teacher. The approach was seen as enslaving teachers and making them not enjoy their profession as teachers.

Sara (2016) carried out a study in Norway on the benefits and challenges of short videos in the EFL classroom whose aim was to investigate the use of short videos as pedagogical tools in lower secondary school level. The most prominent challenges accounted were the demanding and sometimes inappropriate language of authentic videos found on the internet, as well as technological issues such as unreliable video presentation tools. What came to light in this study was that videos were used mostly as supplement or illustrations to the textbook with the intention of filling the gap between what the curriculum demands and what the textbook offers.

This use of videos gives the impression that teachers do not incorporate short videos as texts into the subject syllabus and assessment, thus indicating that many teachers do not regard videos as being of equal educational value as written texts in English teaching. Also, students will often associate YouTube and video viewing in general with entertainment and relaxation, making it challenging for teachers to clearly distinguish educational and recreational use of the resource in their teaching. Students also indicated that a haphazard use and over- or misuse of video in the classroom results in the teaching tool losing its appeal to them. On the other hand, this can lead to higher intrinsic motivation because being able to understand that what they are viewing is transferrable to their personal lives.

The students in the study done by Sara (2016) were mostly positive towards learning with short videos and believed that they learn more, focus better, and remember content longer by viewing video as opposed to reading written texts in the EFL classroom. Teachers, on the other hand, experienced their students being motivated, engaged and remembering content better than through traditional textbook teaching. This is echoed from a study done by Dogan (2014) on digital learning tools in Swedish Upper Secondary Schools. The study intended to present teacher and student views on, and usage of digital learning tools. The results clearly showed that while digital learning devices are not necessarily the grease to maintain the educational machine moving, their usage licences the use of multimodality to the learning of English as a second language in their contexts as well as a global one. Digital learning tools are not seen as a hindrance, but rather as a means of opportunity for educators to add variety to their lessons and motivate students who do not respond well to traditional learning strategies.

Mathew (2014) conducted a study on communication challenges faced by teachers of English in primary schools for the hearing impaired in Central Kenya. The findings revealed that teachers of English in schools for learners with hearing impairment face many challenges through the medium of communication used. The situation

here shows the importance of multimodal linguistic approaches in the teaching of English. A teacher may fail to communicate successfully to his or her learners if at all he/she uses the traditional methods of teaching that engages learners to listening to lectures, reading a given text and asking or answering questions. There is a variety of styles through multimodality that engages a hearing impaired learner in the process for the learner to gain proficiency and competence in the language.

Kawa (2015) conducted a study on the effect of visual learning aids on students' academic performance in public secondary schools of Magu District, Mwanza region, Tanzania. The findings disclosed that Magu and Kitumba Secondary Schools, which used learning aids had better results than those which did not apply visual aids. It was further found out that schools used teaching and learning aids but the aids were in a poor state, the greatest challenge being the allocation of an inadequate monetary budget by the government.

Shirima (2013) carried out a study on effectiveness of participatory methods in teaching of English subject in community secondary schools in Tanzania. The researcher assessed students' perceptions in the use of participatory methods in teaching English subject and examined the challenges teachers face in using these methods. The findings revealed that teachers use participatory methods in the teaching of English with little knowledge on how to practice them. Majority of students had positive perceptions on the use of participatory methods but they were less practiced due to large class number of students and the fact that most of them had no mastery of the language. Participatory methods entail learners' involvement in the process. No way that a learner can be involved in the process without seeing what is engaging him or her; which in return necessitates the need to find out the contribution of the use of multimodality approach in teaching, especially visual modes.

Schoeman (2011) carried out a study in South Africa on English Second Language Learners' Interpretation and Appreciation. The findings revealed that English second language learners (ESL) with a

satisfactory English proficiency can be supported by using trans-mediation to engage them in rich interpretations of literary genres to realise their interpretations linguistically in written academic essays. From the study conducted by Hilliard (2014) on Tanzanian Students' Attitudes Towards English, findings led the researcher to suggest that, if Tanzania cannot dedicate more resources to developing an appropriate foundation in the English language for both students and teachers and improving teacher training, either improving receptive skills or productive skills by engaging learners in writing and speaking skills with diverse modes, learners will not gain proficiency in the target language.

The literature findings reveal a useful knowledge, which, its relevance, informs the current study. Most of the studies on multimodality were done in the Western countries and little on the regional and local countries. Findings from the studies done in the Western countries may not be generalized to the regional and local areas of this study because of the disparity that exists between these two regions in terms of development, availability of resources and systems of Education.

These little studies done in the regional and local area did not look at the multimodality approach of teaching per se, instead looked at approaches of teaching in general. This is evidenced by the study done by Wamalwa and Eric (2014) on utilization of instructional media for effective teaching and learning. Mathew (2014) studied on communication challenges faced by English teachers in primary schools for the hearing impaired in Central Kenya. Kawa (2015) studied on the visual learning aids on student's academic performance in public schools in Tanzania and Shirima (2013) carried out a study on participatory methods in teaching English in community secondary schools. It is from these studies the current researcher finds a niche to be filled, thereby informing the study on the use of multimodal linguistic approach to teaching English language in secondary schools in Kinondoni District, Tanzania.

METHODOLOGY

The research method used is mixed methods approach in which quantitative-survey and qualitative-phenomenology designs were employed concurrently. The mixed method unites the results of qualitative designs. So, it defends the purpose of triangulation, assistances complementarities and increases the breadth and possibility of learning (Creswell, 2009). According to Creswell (2003), these designs have been confirmed as tactics which boost the application of several worldviews by merging inductive and deductive thinking. It supports to respond to queries and offers more inclusive proof in statistics and arguments for learning study problem than each qualitative or quantitative approach.

The target population included all the 30 secondary schools, with 30 head teachers, 30 heads of English Department, 660 teachers and 15,000 students in Kinondoni district, in Dar-ès-Salaam, Tanzania. Sampling frame of this study were 96 students who were included through stratified simple random sampling and 32 teachers of English language, 8 Heads of English Departments and 8 Head teachers were purposively included in this study.

Questionnaires, interview guide and classroom observation guide were the tools used to collect data in this study. Face and content validity of the instruments were achieved by exposing them to the colleagues and university lecturers whose corrections and suggestions helped improve the instruments. To ascertain reliability of the instruments, the researcher employed the test-retest method after which the researcher computed the Cronbach's alpha where the students and teachers' questionnaire elicited a consistency of 0.711 and the teacher's Head of Department and Head of Schools interview guides gave a consistency of 0.938. Cronbach (1982) says a reliability of 0.70 or higher is acceptable as it shows consistency of the tools items and they can be reliable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION The study revealed that Tanzanian teachers use traditional approaches of teaching by using the black board (28.8%), paper handouts (21.6%), and photographs (14.4%).

Due to lack of facilities in teaching profession, they find themselves using what is at their disposal. These findings are supported by Ryu and Boggs (2016) who conducted a study on teachers' perception about teaching multimodal composition in Florida, USA.

The findings revealed that teachers relied basically on traditional method of teaching, meaning on direct instruction via lectures to provide skills and knowledge. This situation may be due to the result of insufficient training rooted on multimodality. Sometimes it is due to the lack of resources and laziness that force teachers to embark on the traditional approaches of teaching and learning.

4.1 Response from respondents on the Types of Visual Modes used by English Language

This part was used to investigate the exact various types of visual modes that are being used by English teachers in teaching English language. Learners were to respond to either a no or a yes to a particular type of the visual mode on the list whether it was being used or not.

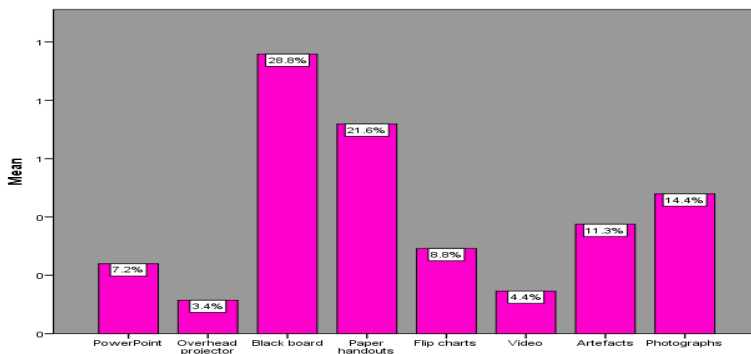


Figure 1: Types of Visual Modes

The study established that visual modes helped students to understand the English lesson (24.08%). Besides, the study revealed that some English teachers were not using visual modes when teaching English while some teachers were using more than one visual mode when teaching English language (17.0%). In addition, 22% each of the respondents indicated that gestures were part of communication and carried a lot of meaning. The findings mean that the use of visual modes is not widely practiced by English teachers in Tanzania. This means that there is need for a standardized approach on the use of visual modes in order to avoid a situation where some teachers use visual modes while others do not.

4.2 Responses from respondents on the types of Oral Modes used in Teaching of English Language

This part was used to investigate the exact various types of visual modes that are being used by English teachers in teaching English language. Learners were to respond to either a no or a yes to a particular type of the oral mode on the list whether it was being used or not by their English language teachers.

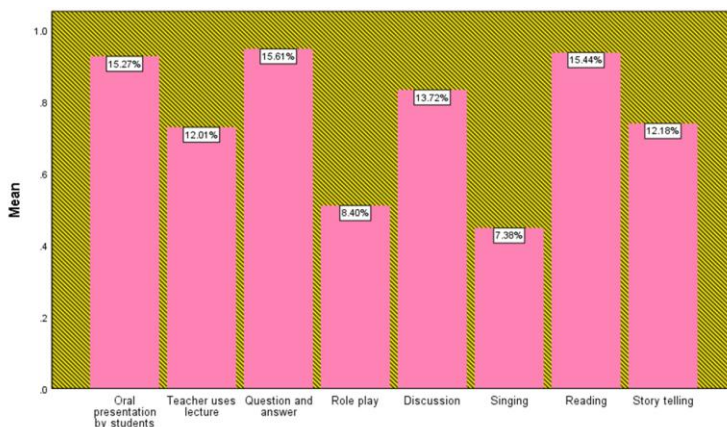


Figure 2: The types of oral modes in teaching English Language

The study established that English teachers were highly using question and answer method (15.61%) as well reading method (15.44%) and students oral presentations (15.27%) as the main multimodal methods of teaching and learning. This informs us that English teachers in Tanzania use verbal communication as the main way of instruction. These findings are supported by a study on the teaching of oral communication skills in the English curriculum in Schools in primary schools in Kenya by Syomwene (2010). The findings disclosed that engaging pupils in activities such as pronouncing new words and answering questions which are appealing in the teaching of oral communication skills in English, serves to make learners comprehend the subject matter. This is a promising result from a traditional way of teaching, but more wonderful results may be awaited when one uses the modern methods and / or integrate the two.

4.3 Response from teachers on the types of written modes

At this part the researcher wanted to confirm from the respondents whether written modes are used in the teaching of the language and the types that are being used in that regard.

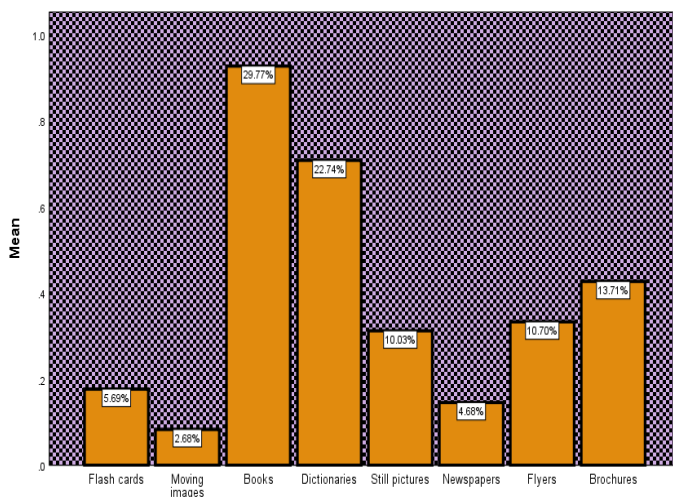


Figure 3; Response from respondents on the types of written modes

The discoveries of the study revealed the types of written modes which are being used by English secondary school teachers in Tanzania. (29.77%) of teachers said they use books in teaching, (22.74%) of teachers use dictionaries, (13.71%) agree being using brochures, still pictures and flyers had the same percentage only that they differ on points. This means that (10.03%) and (10.70%) respectively. Flash cards, newspapers and moving images are written modes that are hardly being used, whereas, flash cards had (5.89%), newspapers (4.68%) and moving images (2.68%). So, these discoveries do not vary much from the two categories. This communicated to us the truthfulness of the situation that English teachers use a variety of written modes but frequently use textbooks and dictionaries.

It was approved by the current researcher through classroom visit observation where teachers engaged learners into reading books, answering questions from them and teachers copied some questions on the chalkboard from books and assign learners' home works as they were suggested in those books. Some scholars warn teachers on the use of text books. For instance, Harwood (2005) claim that teachers, as experts, do not need text books in order to teach but on the other hand the scholar identified the influence of text books as a superior assistance to any educator as a guide. This suggests that, a text book should not be used as it is but as an alternative. This means that teachers should be innovative in the course of teaching. Teachers should use textbooks by considering the teaching and learning context as well as the capacity of their learners.

The students reported that their teachers did not understand the English language very well. This presented a challenge among the students in using multimodality. One of the students said, "Our teacher cannot elaborate or teach us properly. Teacher cannot explain more and reading for us properly those plays and novels. " This statement is supported by observation during the study whereby the researcher observed one English teacher who could not use tenses correctly. For instance, she could write such a sentence on the chalk board "When did you came to school?" Besides, the English teacher

lack of training among teachers is the greatest impediment to using multimodality in the teaching of English language in secondary schools. For instance one of the teachers noted, "Teachers lack training on the use of multimodality." This incompetence might be not only due to the lack of knowledge on how to use multimodal approaches but also to the problem in the language. On the other hand, the Heads of schools who participated in the study identified a gap of insufficient training of English teachers as a major challenge affecting the application of multimodal model.

According to the respondents, English teachers in Tanzania are not enough. This poses the necessity to all educational stake holders to do something in favor of learners in the country who will be future leaders of the country. It is clear that without enough teachers in the country the implementation of multimodality will be a legend of English. Teachers who participated in the study confirmed that the chief challenge is the great number of students in the classroom as compare to the number of teachers. For this reason teachers find difficult to apply multimodality to a very populated classroom where it entails involving learners in the process of teaching and learning.

Lack of resources was noted by both teachers and respondents as one of the barriers affecting full implementation of multimodal model in teaching English language. According to the respondents, multimodality is affected by lack of teaching materials to facilitate the process. This means that multimodality would have been easily implemented if there were materials. One of the students said, "Lack of literary books to be used in discussion and in storytelling." Another student said, "Shortage of equipment for all students." A third student said, "Lack of resources like novels, plays, story books, projector, TV and electricity". This also was confirmed by English teachers who indicated that "financial constraints, lack of teaching and learning materials and unconducive teaching and learning environment affected the use of multimodal model of teaching English language."

RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the English teachers and some students suggested that “the Government should be advised to revise the language policy of the country so as to fit in the current world of science and technology, and since English is both a scientific and technological language, teaching of English as well as its use as a medium of instruction should start right in primary school so as to build a good foundation for children in English language”.

Another teacher noted that, “It is very crucial to start teaching English language from kindergarten to the university in order to make students have proficiency in the language”. The Government should allow change of the previous language policy to address the current situation, where English may be used as a Medium of Instruction in upper classes of primary level or to train teachers who are expert in English language to give learners a good foundation in English as a subject in primary school using multimodal approaches.

Since the multimodal approach to teaching has shown positive results, it is recommended that the status quo of the schools already employing it be maintained and those that are not using it are urged to do so in order to improve teaching of English language and student’s proficiency on the same. The English speaking campaign was another effective measure that could mitigate this problem because it enables students to practice the language orally. The morning talks and debate sessions are also effective measures that improve language. It is also recommended that teachers and heads of schools do benchmarking with schools that have embraced multimodal approach of teaching, e.g. Magu and Kitumba secondary schools in Mwanza Region. The heads of schools would also organize debates among students in the English language so that there is open sharing of knowledge and students cultivate confidence among themselves in their usage of English.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed that, majority of English teachers use a variety of ways of teaching by involving learners into reading books, provide to them handouts, asking questions to learners or respond to learners' questions, and writing notes on the chalk board for learners to read and copy. They assign tasks to learners to be discussed and presented; either in pairs, groups or a whole class discussion. All these modes show that teachers mostly use verbal modes to motivate learners.

The study concluded that, it is necessary for joint, multi-level efforts in order to deal with these challenges in Tanzania as a whole country. The study recommended that, the government and all educational stakeholders should assist the teachers and learners to deal with challenges that influence the teaching and learning of English language in the country by using multimodality. For the purpose of making the teachers and students improve their perception on the multimodal approach of teaching, it is recommended that the school administration explains to the teachers when they are employed and to the students when they join form one what is multimodality approach to teaching and learning, and what is its importance. So teachers will no more be tempted to see it as a threat to their profession undermining their classroom delivery and, consequently, turn away from using it. Students too, after that explanation, will no more take the videos as a form of relaxation and entertainment; on the contrary they will use it with the seriousness it deserves

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