

Stakeholders' Perceptions of English as a Medium of Instruction in the Acquisition of Vocational Skills in Vocational Training Centers in Morogoro Tanzania

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Abstract

Limited skills among Vocational Education and Training (VET) graduates emanates from English language incompetence among trainees and trainers. This makes it more difficult to interact effectively during training sessions to develop the necessary abilities. The study examined stakeholders' viewpoints on the application of English as a medium of instruction (MOI) for the development of vocational skills in Morogoro region. Interviews, focus group discussions and documentary analysis were used to gather data from 92 participants and analysed using thematic lenses. The findings showed that trainees' use of English as a MOI for skill acquisition was ineffective. Stakeholders differed in their opinions on the use of English as MOI that provoke a thoughtful debate on the appropriate medium of instruction in VET centres. Stakeholders suggest a need to improve English language use in VET centres through the use of remedial strategies and the extension of practical training duration. The study recommends using Kiswahili as a MOI in VET.

Key words: *English language, a medium of instruction, vocational training, vocational skills,*

Introduction

English was first used as a language of teaching in Tanzania during the British colonial era (Mtana, 2013). Despite the fact that Tanganyika was ruled at various periods by two imperialist powers, Germany and Britain, both of which had linguistic distinctions, the English language was able to develop a foothold in key areas like education, government, and a small number of high domains. This was possible during the British rule domination because they introduced English language in strategic areas like schools. The British used the English language as a medium of instruction from the sixth year of primary education up to secondary education while it was taught as a subject from the third year of primary school (Mtana, 2013). However, Kiswahili (the national language) remained the language of instruction for the first five years of primary schooling and school subjects in both primary and secondary education.

After independence, Tanzania adopted a philosophy of education for self-reliance which aimed at making Tanzanians self-sufficient and eliminating inequalities in education provision, since English language was associated with elitism and therefore, denied the majority the rights to education (Mtana, 2013). Thus, Kiswahili was re-introduced as a medium of instruction in primary education after Arusha declaration in 1967 as a way of addressing elitism in education. Simultaneously, English continued to be used as a medium of teaching in secondary and higher education (Lwaitama, 2006; Rubagumya, 1990). This situation explains the current status of using English language as a medium of instruction in secondary and higher education in Tanzania.

A number of educational contexts, including vocational training, employ English as a MOI. Additionally, from primary to higher levels of education, English is taught as academic subject (Vuzo, 2018). In this scenario, English is quite important in Tanzanian vocational training. However, without a sufficient command of the English language among both trainees and trainers; the learning of skills through the English language would be ineffective (Lwaitama, 2006).

Tanzania has paid a lot of attention to vocational and educational training in recent years as a means of addressing the pressing demands of workers in the industrial sector and other socio-economic activities. The Tanzanian government has made a number of attempts, including enacting the Vocational and Education Training Act of 1994, which provided management, administration, and funding for vocational and education training. Traditionally, trade examinations guided the creation of VET programmes (traditional training approach). By 2002, it was replaced by competence-based education and training (CBET), a new curricular approach that aimed to generate employable graduates by merging three crucial VET components: technical skills, business and entrepreneurial skills, and life skills. CBET introduced a demand-driven strategy to completely developing trainees into VET curriculum. Related disciplines were introduced within the scope of VET. These included English language, communication skills, engineering science, and mathematics, as well as Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) (Vocational Education Training Authority- VETA, 2013). English was employed as the instructional language while incorporating theory, application, and field attachments.

The addition of English as MOI to all VET occupations was made possible through the advent of CBET. Thus, in order to proceed to the next level, trainees have to take the CBET examination. The CBET technique was introduced to overcome the problem of trainee skills acquisition. This was done because, VET accepts both elementary and high school graduates who have difficulty learning the English language and this had impacts on skill acquisition (Godfrey, 2014). Due to their educational backgrounds specifically, using Kiswahili as a medium of instruction in primary schools and using English as MOI in all post primary education as stated in the Educational and training policy (ETP) 1995:2014), the majority of trainees have difficulty in using English for communication purpose. Similarly, it is reported that learners at all levels of education in Tanzania have problems with mastery of English Galabawa & Senkoro, 2006; Godfrey (2014) and Mapunda, 2022). The classes are characterized by translation, code-switching, and code-mixing to facilitate learning (Brock-Utne, 2012; 2018). The adoption of English language as a MOI has discouraged both learners and teachers to actively engage in skill acquisition due to a huge language gap (Mwinshekhe, 2003; Munisi, 2010). VET graduates therefore have a restricted capacity to effectively serve the labor market. This means that graduates in many professions are unable to make high-quality goods because they must invest a significant amount of time learning from skilled artisans. The researcher believes that language incompetence among trainees and trainers, which restricts effective interaction during training sessions for proper skill acquisition, is the root cause of the issue with low skills among VET graduates. In light of this, the researcher

was eager to learn what stakeholders thought of the use of English as a MOI in the acquisition of vocational skills. Specifically, the objectives of this study were:

- i. To find out stakeholders' perceived factors influencing trainees' English language ability as they build up vocational skills
- ii. To explore stakeholders' opinions on using English language as a MOI in VET centres.
- iii. To explore stakeholders' suggestions for effectively using English language as a MOI in VET centres.

Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework

The Role of Language in Skills Acquisition

Language is used to communicate on a regular basis such as meaning building, justification of meaning to acquire abilities, and held information (Roy-Campbell, 2001). Furthermore, language opens the door to information and allows knowledge to be passed down from one generation to the next (Mochiwa, 1991). Msoka (2011) contends that during the teaching and learning process, language learners read, comprehend, and effectively interact. Interaction occurs when they ask and answer questions, or when they debate matters related to their area of interest (Vuzo, 2012). If trainees and trainers are unable to communicate effectively in the language employed as a medium of teaching, the learning process will be affected. As such, educational practices need to be conducted through a language in which both learners and instructors have a good command. Students can fully understand the subject matter if only they understand the language in which it is taught, and students and teacher's classroom interaction require them to have a good command of the language of instruction (Qorro, 1997). Similarly, Roy-Campbell et al., (1997) reported that students in secondary schools are not prepared to use English as a medium of instruction as such both teachers and students struggle to express themselves clearly using English. Consequently, Kiswahili becomes the *de facto* language of instruction as students and teachers frequently use it for clarification and discussion.

Challenges of Using English as a MOI in Tanzania

The use of English as a MOI confronts a variety of obstacles in achieving educational objectives. As it is a foreign language to the majority of Tanzanian learners, there is a concern about how it will affect the learner's capacity to acquire the desired knowledge and skills (Vuzo, 2018).

When using English as a MOI, most students and teachers can be disadvantaged (Qorro, 2006 & Vuzo, 2018). Furthermore, Roy-Campbell and Qorro (1997) discovered that a learner's lack of language proficiency affects his/her participation in the class. Poor mastery of the MOI can have short- and long-term effects on learners. Marwa (2014) considers short-term effects as poor performance and inability to learn while in the long-term, poor mastery of

MOI creates, “a systemic problem of a structural inefficiency which results into relatively less competent locally trained experts” (p. 1265).

Furthermore, ineffective language policies, poor teaching and learning facilities and learners' attitudes about English, and ineffective language policies are major challenges that inhibit the successful use of English as a medium of instruction. The use of translations, code-mixing, and code-switching as coping mechanisms to influence interaction during teaching and learning processes was proposed by (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2004).

Theoretical Framework

This study was informed by Phenomenography theory developed by Marton in 1986. Phenomenography theory asserts that there are distinctively different ways that people understand a phenomenon (Marton, 1986). Every phenomenon, notion, or principle can be interpreted in only a few different ways. Phenomenography, according to Marton (1986), is the empirical study of the various ways in which people think about the world. In other words, its aim is to discover the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualize, realize and understand various aspects of phenomena in the world around them. This theoretical lens guided and motivated the researcher in this study to investigate stakeholders' views on the use of English as a MOI in the development of vocational skills in VET centers.

Research Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach as well as a multiple embedded case study design (Creswell, 2008; Yin 2012). In addition to stakeholder comments on the use of English as a medium of teaching, the researcher was able to gather detailed and descriptive data on the variables influencing trainees' English language abilities as they developed vocational skills. Morogoro municipality and Mvomero districts were the area of this study. Administratively, VET is decentralized into zones where Eastern Zone (Morogoro and Coastal regions) being among its nine zones. Eastern Zone was selected because it comprises of 52 vocational training centres compared to other zones such as Western Zone which has only 42 training centres. Likewise, Morogoro region was selected because it has 46 vocational training centres (Vuzo, 2018). Thus, it is among the region with a big number of vocational training centres. Similarly, Morogoro Municipality and Mvomero districts were selected because their centres have five occupations compared to other districts with less than four occupations. These occupations are *Plumbing and Pipefitting (PL)*, *Motor Vehicle Mechanics (MVM)* *Masonry and Bricklaying (MB)*, *Electrical Installation (EL)* and *Carpentry and Joinery (CJ)*. Moreover, these centres have more than 200 trainees that enabled the researcher to have enough sample for the study.

The study involved 92 participants in total who were selected among the target population of 152. The participants include four Centre Managers who are responsible for all managerial responsibilities at vocational training centers. Four Registrars who are coordinators of training activities at each centre, 20 vocational trainers

teaching identified occupations, four trainees' parents and 60 vocational trainees. Purposive and convenient sampling were the primary sampling techniques for the study. Purposive criterion sampling was used to select training centres with five occupations in Morogoro municipality whereby the more experienced trainer from each occupation was selected from each centre, Centre managers and Registrars based on the virtues of their positions in VET colleges and purposive stratified sampling to select 12 students based on their specific occupations including *Plumbing and Pipefitting (PL)*, *Motor Vehicle Mechanics (MVM)* *Masonry and Bricklaying (MB)*, *Electrical Installation (EL)* and *Carpentry and Joinery (CJ)*. Convenient sampling was used to select 4 trainees' parents.

The data for this study were obtained through Interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary analysis. The semi-structured interview was utilized to collect information from Center Managers, Registrars, and trainers regarding the aspects that affect trainees' English language abilities in acquiring vocational skills, as well as their perspectives on the use of English as a MOI in VET. Vocational trainees' perceptions of elements influencing their English language abilities in developing vocational skills, as well as their perspectives on the usage of English language as a MOI in VET centers, were collected through focus group discussion. Two focus group discussions involving 6 vocational trainees from each centre were conducted, whereby each focus group discussion session took about 45-60 minutes. The documentary data was mainly obtained from terminal and annual examinations question papers constructed by VET trainers for respective courses.

The data from semi structured interview, documentary review and focus group discussions were analyzed through thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Following established themes drawn from the study objectives, repeating information was authentically coded and grouped together. The researcher was able to create a systematic account of what had been observed and recorded. The researcher observed ethical considerations such as obtaining research clearance, obtaining informed consent from participants, and assuring them of confidentiality and anonymity throughout the research process.

Research Findings

Factors Influencing Trainees' English Language Abilities

Findings from semi structured interview and vocational trainees' focus group discussions show that among the factors that influenced trainee's acquisition of English language abilities included: their educational background, the nature of the occupation offered, teaching and learning materials, the institutional culture of emphasizing English language, the English language itself, and the effects of mother tongue. Details of each factor are described in the next section.

Educational Background of the Trainers and Trainees

Findings from interviews and focus group discussions revealed that educational background of trainers and trainees affect largely on their English Language ability which in turn affects the acquisition of vocational skills. It was reported that the VET admits both primary and secondary school leavers. The primary school leavers have low level of English mastery as Kiswahili was used as MOI in Government primary schools. Yet those from secondary schools mostly, scored division IV and majority of them failed the English language subject. As such, the proficiency level is low; hence low acquisition of vocational skills. One of the trainees from centre C said:

"...we have difficulties with the English language.... it might take us a long time to understand even a simple English word or sentence; as a result, our trainers frequently apply Kiswahili to aid our comprehension; unfortunately, this tendency hinders English language skills".

Conversely, the findings also revealed that in the centres where the management and trainers emphasised the use of English language during training sessions, trainees tended to raise their morale in improving English language mastery. In supporting this fact a trainee from centre D has this to say:

"Morning assembly speeches and English debate sessions are frequently employed in our center to improve English speaking skills. These habits, to a significant extent, assist us in developing some proficiency in the English language".

Teaching and learning materials in Morogoro VET Centres

This study revealed that the resources used in teaching and learning have a significant impact on students' understanding of the English language in Morogoro VET Centres. It was found that VET centres in Morogoro region had shortage of materials and most of them were of poor quality. This was emphasized by one of trainees from centre C who said:

"In our centre we have few books and other materials which we can read for ourselves mostly, we are provided with notes and short modules and manuals for the courses. Generally, these are not meant for strengthening our ability to use English language".

In addition a trainee from centre B commented about the language difficulty of the books and training manuals by saying that: *"the majority of our books and manuals are packed with English language terminologies that are challenging to learn, especially for the novices."*

Trainers' Competence in English Language

Findings from the analysis of examination question papers implied that trainers had low proficiency of English language. Their examination question papers had spelling and grammatical errors which might have contributed to difficulties in understanding the content and message contained therein. The excerpts below exemplify the case:

"List six safety precaution you must folow when..... (Spelling mistake)

What are the purpose of the battery in car..... (Grammatical error)

Generally, arches are classified into (3) categories, mention it and name 5 forms of arches. (Grammatical error)

Write six safety precaution you must observe when.....(Spelling mistake and Grammatical error)”

Nature of occupation or Sub-Field Versus Level of Language Use

Findings from trainees’ focus group discussion revealed that some courses have very complex language. Thus it is very difficult to comprehend the text from such sub-fields, for example it was reported by trainees from centre C that Plumbing and Pipe fitting courses have complex English language:

“Most of the books and manuals in this course are full of technical terminologies which are difficult to read and master especially for the beginners. It will take long time to master even the half of the course content as we used to memorize the contents”

Similarly, a trainee from Center A expressed his dissatisfaction with the difficulty level of English spoken in the teaching and learning of courses such as *Motor Vehicle Mechanics* by saying:

“To be honest, I get very little from the trainers when English is used frequently during training sessions without being mixed with Kiswahili. The majority of the time, I lose focus throughout the lecture due to unfamiliar English terminologies”.

The above findings echoes with that of a Manager in centre B who said:

“In order to improve trainees’ English skills, VET curricula should offer English course programmes to trainees upon enrolment. Additionally, in order to provide successful training, trainers must be educated to the best uses of the English language”.

Institutional Culture of Using English language in Various Activities

The findings from trainees’ focus groups discussions with trainers revealed that institutional culture that supports efficient English language use is a critical factor in the development of vocational skills. They further reported that the culture of using English language at different contexts apart from the classroom instructions at the centres facilitated their English language mastery. It was further reported that English language use is emphasized during trainees’ assembly, in trainers’ offices and at the workshops.

The above findings complemented findings from the Centre Managers and Registrars interviews who revealed that trainees faced difficulties in studying their courses due to their educational background. As such as the mother tongue. The Registrar from centre B had this to say:

“During our visit in class sessions we recognised discomforts experienced by trainees from their faces when listening to their trainers and the silence in the class that does not show any kind of interaction apart from the trainers teaching”.

Similarly, the Manager from centre A reported that:

“It’s true; we are experiencing difficulties when English language as a medium of instruction is used in this college. Many times our trainers claim to use Kiswahili language during teaching and learning so that trainees can understand their courses ...otherwise they won’t learn anything.”

Stakeholders’ Opinions on the Use of English as a MOI in Vocational Training Centers

The study's goal was to ascertain the opinions of interested parties about the use of the English language as a MOI in vocational training centres. The findings from Centre Managers, trainers, trainees and parents were obtained through interviews and focus group discussions show that stakeholders had two main opinions, namely: English should remain as a MOI in VET and Kiswahili be introduced as MOI. The subsequent subsections elaborate each opinion:

English to Continue as MOI in VET Centres

The stakeholders opined that English should remain as a MOI in VET centres. This is because the language is internationally used in various domains including science, technology and labour market. English as MOI will ensure the graduate to be competitive in the labour market. To exemplify this, the manager from centre A said:

“In fact, English should be emphasized as a medium of teaching in vocational education and training. This is because English is currently a business language all over the globe, abandoning English in favour of Kiswahili, for example, indicates that we are separating ourselves from the global environment and, in most circumstances, will have an impact on our training at other levels of learning”.

Similar findings were provided by two of the eight Managers who focused on widening the chances of the trainees’ by saying that *“...if the language of instruction is English this will guarantee trainees with better job opportunities and career development”*Furthermore, *“More trainees will join the centres because parents wish better paying jobs for their children.”*

One of the vocational trainers from centre B expressed that using English as MOI was more advantageous as most of instructional materials are found in English Language.

“Both trainees and instructors will have more resources and references available in English, including access to a variety of books and extra materials published in English, as well as the internet”.

Kiswahili should be introduced as MOI in VET Centres

According to the findings of this study, some stakeholders, particularly Registrars, believe that Kiswahili should be introduced as a MOI in the VET centres. This is because the use of English provided challenges for the learners. As most of trainees have limited English language skills, they are unable to comprehend the classes. The majority of the trainees lacked a solid educational foundation. Neither primary nor form four leavers have mastered the English language. The Registrar from Centre C explained it as follows:

"You are aware that we accept trainees from a variety of educational backgrounds, including those who have completed primary and secondary schools. Unfortunately, they are taught in the same class using English as the medium of teaching. It goes without saying that primary school graduates will have more linguistic challenges than their high school counterparts".

Similarly, a trainee from centre D had this to say:

"I believe that using Kiswahili during training will be beneficial, as English is a tough language for most of us." As a result, we prefer to use Kiswahili during our training and group discussions to make our courses easier to follow."

On the other hand the trainees' parents partly shared the same views as the registrars and some trainees' with regard with using English language as a MOI in VET centres. They argued that the current situation where Kiswahili is a primary language and English as a secondary language is not the best practice for attainment of educational outcomes in VET centers. One of the parents of the trainees in centre D said:

"The current system in VET centers, in my opinion, is not the best option, somehow it should be modified. Realistically speaking, we should maintain the language used in Primary schools" which is Kiswahili".

As demonstrated by some centre administrators, Registrars, and trainers who support English as a language of instruction in vocational training centers, other stakeholders have diverse viewpoints on the use of English as a medium of education. It was discovered that some parents and trainees favor the usage of Kiswahili because they feel it is a language they are familiar with. This indicates that trainees are aware of their linguistic limitations and how these affect their ability to learn new skills. As a result, they believe that they have the ability to grasp vocational skills during training, but their attempts are hampered by the language of instruction.

Suggestions from Stakeholders on how to Improve Skill Acquisition at VET Centers

The study aimed at getting feedback from stakeholders on what should be done to increase skill acquisition in vocational training centers where English is used as a medium of teaching. The results of the focus group discussions and interviews showed that improving English language use, introducing remedial sessions, and extending the period of practical training may contribute positively on skills acquisition in VET centres.

Improving English Language Use in VET Centres

The findings revealed the necessity for improved English language use among VET trainees and trainers as a viable technique for the trainees' vocational skill acquisition. During interviews with the Center Manager and Registrars, it was discovered that increasing English language capability among trainees and trainers would help to improve the ability to use English in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, the process of training should ensure that the basic language skills are mastered and strengthened. To this strategy the manager in centre B said that:

“VET curriculum should include an English course program for trainees upon admission to help them improve their English language skills. In order to provide efficient instruction in VET centers, trainers must also be exposed to the best ways to use the English language”.

During the focus group discussions, trainees expressed similar issues, indicating that some trainers were not well qualified in facilitating training using English language appropriately. As a result, it was proposed that the trainers' and trainees' English communication skills be improved. The ability to communicate in English would aid in effective implementation and mastery of vocational skills. Some trainers at centre C who teach *Carpentry and Joinery occupation (CJ)* confirmed that they frequently used *code switching* or *code mixing* when teaching in order to help the trainees understand the concepts taught.

Besides, a trainee from centre D said: *“I believe that trainers should be devoted to language use through regular in-service training.”* As a result of this finding, it can be concluded that increasing language competence is a key step toward enhancing skill provision in the vocational training centres.

Initiating Remedial Sessions in VET Centres

The results of the interviews indicated that remedial session be implemented as a strategy to solve the language difficulty. According to trainers and Registrars, standard seven leavers recruited in VET centres displayed acute linguistic inefficiency; consequently, remedial sessions may be introduced as a strategy for addressing the problem and motivating trainees to master the necessary vocational skills. Hence, trainees would have an opportunity of participating in the language remediation sessions regardless of their educational backgrounds.

Extending the Period of Practical Training:

During interviews and focus group discussions, it was advised that trainees may be given more time for practical training. Practical sessions were said to be extremely important in helping trainees acquire occupational skills. This study revealed that the trainees were not given enough time in practical sessions to improve their abilities in their fields of specializations and English. As a result, practical activities were designed to fill up the gaps left by theoretical

sessions. Yet some trainees have limited time to participate. A trainee from Center C corroborated this suggestion by saying:

“...the practical sessions are attended by a huge number of trainees, and it is possible that you will leave a practical session with nothing. The reason for such a huge group, in my opinion, is related to the inadequate time available for practical sessions”.

It is evident from the findings that the trainees saw the practical session as useful opportunity to fill the gaps that had developed during the theoretical sessions. Therefore, greater practical time was advised as a way to address skill deficiencies induced by language inefficiency. According to the suggestions made by stakeholders, the language of teaching is a crucial part of learning attainment, especially when it comes to monitoring what happens inside the classroom. The opinions and suggestions of stakeholders show on the whole, a constructive approach toward the necessity of an instructional language that supports efficient skill acquisition. Stakeholders agree that VET trainees must acquire appropriate and worthwhile skills, despite their differences in viewpoints.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that trainees were unable to properly acquire vocational skills due to a lack of English proficiency. The majority of trainees (particularly the ones enrolled from public primary schools) had poor ability to use English language during instruction. These findings are in line with that of Msoka (2011), who found that learners in secondary schools in Tanga region in Tanzania had linguistic challenges in all parts of the English language, including grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. According to Kinyaduka and Kiwara (2013), English is a barrier to students learning acquisition in the Morogoro region. This explains why vocational trainees are unable to compete in competitive job market. For a nation to enjoy the fruits of vocational training for its social and economic development, the trainees must be taught using the language of instruction that they are familiar with and comfortable to. In this regard, Roy-Campbell and Qorro (2009) commented that learners' language incompetence affects their participation during classroom interaction. Supporting this argument, Mapunda (2022); Godfrey (2014) and Brock-Utne (2010) found that many teachers and students in Tanzania cannot communicate effectively by using English. They also said that such a circumstance has a negative impact on teaching and learning because pupils remain inert for the most of class time.

The impacts of English as a medium of instruction on teaching and learning have been shown in Munisi's (2010) study. It is indicated that the limited level of communication between teachers and their students, pushed and forced the teachers to use Kiswahili during science classes. The findings of this study show that some vocational trainers prefer to use *code-switching and code-mixing* involving Kiswahili and English language in order to simplify communication process during teaching and learning sessions. This has catalyzed facilitation of the acquisition of intended vocational skills. These findings concur with Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir's (2004) who claim that

translations, *code mixing*, and *code flipping* are employed as coping methods to improve interaction during the teaching and learning process. This study also found that the enrolment of students who are primary school leavers, particularly from public schools, had acute language problems. In order to help the trainees to understand the concepts, some trainers were forced to use code-switching and code-mixing. This tends to be in congruence with findings from (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir's, 2004).

The results of this study showed that difficulties with using English as a medium of instruction among vocational trainees were caused by a number of factors, including the trainees' educational backgrounds, poor quality and a lack of teaching and learning materials, the nature of the field of specialization subjects, the English language itself, and the impact of mother tongue on the English language. The effect of mother tongue in student learning was also found by Mammino (2010) on the importance of language mastery and mother tongue instruction in Pakistan. It was revealed that language-related difficulties increase enormously when students use a second language as a medium of instruction. This is because the mastery of a second language is never complete compared to the mastery of the mother tongue and, in many cases, it is considerably poor. According to Brock-Utne (2010) this situation often generates and leads to rote learning and memorization of facts.

Further, Godfrey's (2014) found that some teachers believe that a quick shift from Kiswahili to English as a medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools in Tanzania, contribute to students failure. The study recommends that it is imperative to have uniformity in terms of MOI throughout the education sector.

Moreover this study found that there was either lack or scarcity of teaching and learning materials related to English language mastery such as textbooks, supplementary books, journals, DVDs and computers connected with internet which would influence the trainees English language abilities. These results are consistent with those of Mlay (2010), Ivonne and Loza (2013), who discovered that inadequate physical facilities and a lack of learning resources hindered students' language acquisition, which in turn affected the development of necessary skills. With the aforementioned impediments, it is clear that acquiring the necessary vocational skills for improved social and economic position in Tanzania may take some time to achieve. . This is because English language continues to be used as a medium of instruction in vocational training centres which seems not to be worthy for enhancing acquisition of vocational skills among the trainees. Hence, the development of people at the grass root communities is likely to be affected. In line with this argument, Roy-Campbell (2001) held that education for liberation and self-reliance must begin with the use of languages that do not impede the acquisition of knowledge and skills.

Other ideas put forth by stakeholders to improve skill acquisition include giving remedial sessions, extending the practical training duration to provide trainees more opportunities to learn by doing, and strengthening English language usage through language development programmes. This proposal is based on Mlay's (2010) recommendation that students should be introduced to English classes as soon as they are admitted. It is advised

that practical steps be taken to solve the language problem to ensure adequate skill development among vocational trainees given the situation in which language becomes a crucial tool for skill learning.

Conclusions and Recommendation

The trainees and trainers' capacity to communicate effectively in support of the acquisition of vocational skills is insufficient to reach the required goals due to the low proficiency in the use of English as a medium of teaching and learning in vocational centers. The trainees' lack of proficiency in English language as a medium of instruction is caused by a number of factors including the educational background, the nature of English language itself, the shortage of materials and resources, the occupational content, the mother tongue interference, the trainer's language competence as well as the institutional culture.

Stakeholders had conflicting views on whether or not English should be used as a MOI. On the one hand, Centre Managers, Registrars, and the trainers advocated for the use of English as a MOI in vocational training centers; on the other hand, the trainees and parents advocated for the use of Kiswahili, which they believe is well-known among trainees because they have been using it since primary school. Similarly, the stakeholders suggested different ways to minimize the effect of English language incompetence experienced by trainees and some of the trainers during teaching and learning to include; the improvement in English language use, the introduction of remedial sessions and extension of practical training time.

In order to strategically address the issue of linguistic inefficiency among trainees and trainers, it is advised that training managers and registrars at VET centers collaborate in devising English language enhancement programmes. As a result, their contact during the training sessions should be strengthened, allowing the trainees to gain the necessary and relevant skills to serve competently in the labour market. In the same token of vision, education stakeholders should collaborate to reach an agreement on the type of MOI which favours the trainees' acquisition of VET skills. The debate on whether or not Kiswahili should replace English in the Tanzania's secondary and post-secondary education is a clear illustration of medium of instruction decision debates. Debates on MOI decisions are also common in other parts of the post-colonial nations, including South Africa and Zimbabwe (Bristowe, Oostendorp and Anthonissen, 2014).

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