

TEACHERS' CHOICE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES AND THE IMPACT ON LANGUAGE LEARNING IN TANZANIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

The official medium of instruction in Tanzanian secondary schools is English language. However the teaching and learning of the language as a subject is also strengthened. This paper is a result of the study whose purpose was to explore the Teachers' choice of English language teaching and learning strategies used in Tanzanian secondary school classrooms and their impact on language learning. The study was conducted in secondary school classrooms of the two sampled schools in Mbeya region. The sample involved a total of four streams/classes of Form three students which were randomly selected in the two sampled schools (making a total of 140 students in all the four streams/classes selected) and eighteen English language teachers who were purposively selected from the two sampled schools. Survey design was used. The main data gathering techniques used include documentary review, questionnaire with students, classroom observations and interviews with teachers. Teacher-centred and student-centred approaches to language teaching/learning were thus used to guide this study.

Overall findings from this study indicated that secondary school teachers of English language mostly opted for teacher-centred teaching strategies. Very rarely student-centred strategies were used. This tendency made the strategies to be ineffective in improving language learning in the classrooms. Teachers' choice of language teaching strategies was determined by many factors including availability and non-availability of teaching and learning facilities, class size, teachers' personality, interest and linguistic background of students, teachers' training, sociolinguistic situation of students and the students' learning strategies. Lastly it was noted that the major constraints to effective use of the relevant teaching and learning of English language in the classrooms included lack and inadequacy of teaching/learning facilities and teachers' perception of the students. Other constraints were teachers' training background and class sizes.

It is recommended in regard to the conceptual framework of this study that the secondary school teachers of English language should choose appropriate language teaching strategies which enable all students in the classroom and not few to learn, student-centred strategies are thus highly recommended. English language teachers should be trained on how to use effectively the relevant teaching and learning strategies which suit the Tanzanian secondary schools' scenario. Lastly it is also recommended that the government and non-governmental organisations should make a closer follow-up of the teaching/learning process of the language in secondary school classrooms so as to minimize the revealed constraints.

Introduction

English language in Tanzania is used as the medium of instruction for secondary schools, tertiary institutions and in some colleges (URT, 1995). But English has been a disadvantaged language as far as the teaching/learning environment in the classroom in particular is concerned. This disadvantaged position is due to lack of support from the school and home environments which do not fully encourage the English language use. This was also observed by Vuzo (2005) who points out that English language is not part of day to day out of school life, and has to be learnt through formal channels. She further reveals that the students lack the opportunity to speak English because the environment, both at home and school, is predominantly Kiswahili speaking with very few exceptions.

Accordingly, English language is indeed a language confined to the classroom. Teachers use it only in class and most often mix English and Kiswahili. In comparing the teaching and learning activities of students when studying the English language in and out-of-class activities, Mushi (1989) found that secondary school students have a tendency to do only necessary reading to enable them to do their written exercises or assignments well. Reading for the sake of improving one's own English language competence was not favoured.

The Status of English Language in Tanzania

English Language in Tanzania is not only supposed to be used as the medium of instruction but also as language of international business, newspapers and textbooks (URT, 1997). English is also theoretically a second language (L2) but in practice it is gradually becoming a foreign language (FL). As a second language, it is expected to serve day-to-day affairs (social, official, education, business etc) but English in Tanzania is not doing so (URT, 1998). This was also observed by Vuzo (2007) who points out that English remains a foreign language and has ceased to be a necessary language for the majority of Tanzanians. She further adds that in Tanzanian homes and society English language proficiency is usually not required and in fact in the average community, using English appears artificial as it is not common practice. Stern (1983) presented a distinction between a foreign language and a second language. He said that L2 is used within the environment in which it is learnt e.g. Kiswahili to most Tanzanians whereas Foreign languages lack environmental support. This is the case of English in Tanzania. Teachers and students do not use the English language frequently outside the classrooms where it is taught because Kiswahili and vernaculars are used instead. Therefore, this justifies the fact that English is acquiring the status of a foreign language rather than retaining a second language status in Tanzania.

The fact that Kiswahili is the official and national language; the medium of instruction in primary schools and the language of daily life affairs to the majority of Tanzanians reduces the enthusiasm in students to learn a foreign language. Currently, there is lack of English language exposure to Tanzanian students. The lack of exposure is due to the fact that Kiswahili is growing rapidly and extensively (URT, 1998). It is increasingly undermining the use of other foreign languages especially English. Hence, the students and teachers depend entirely on

classroom interaction for the foreign language mastery something which is very difficult. The demands for effective pedagogical measures are, therefore vital if successful English language learning is to be achieved. One of the measures is to emphasize the technical know how in the teaching and learning processes in the classrooms. The effective use of relevant language teaching strategies and the students learning strategies is one of the "technical know how" in the teaching and learning of the language that can be enhanced in the classroom. The only place where the learning of English language would take place effectively is in the classroom (Mbise, 1991; Emmanuel, 2003). Therefore emphasis on the teaching and learning of the FL in the classroom is vital.

English Language Teaching and Learning Situation in Tanzania Secondary Schools

The English language teaching and learning situation in Tanzania is that the classrooms are overcrowded with not less than (40-49) students (Kibogoya, 1988; Emmanuel, 2003). This is also revealed by Ministry of Education and Vocational Training that, most of the classes in the country are above the stated national standards of 40 pupils per class (URT, 2006a). In this case, attention to individual pupil's needs might be difficult (Baker and Westrup, 2000). Furthermore there is low readability of the available materials (Kapinga, 1982). The teacher is the most important single resource for promoting language mastery (Mbise, 1991; Emmanuel, 2003). Some teachers are not well trained and some were trained for teaching Literature in English but are forced to teach English structure while they lack English structure methodology knowledge (Roy-Campbell, 1990). Due to this situation, there is necessity to study the choice and use of teaching/learning strategies in the English language classrooms so as to improve the teaching and learning processes of the language.

The teaching/learning of different language skills is emphasised in Tanzanian classrooms (URT, 1998). In language teaching, the

mode or manner in which language is used is what is referred to as language skill (Widdowson, 1978). The four language skills are; listening, speaking, reading and writing. The listening skill refers to the art of making one receive what another person is verbally conveying. It is a receptive skill which is highly connected to perception of ideas. Speaking skills refer to the production of meaningful sounds of a language through the vocal organs. Reading skills refer to the ability to recognise sentences of a written discourse and comprehending issues from the text. The writing skills refer to the psychomotor activity whereby the learner uses his/her hand or any other device to put words and sentences on a flat surface (Stern, 2002). What is emphasised in writing skills is to make the learner write meaningful strings of sentences. The four skills as understood in this study are represented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The Four Linguistic Skills

	Productive/Active	Receptive/Passive
Aural medium	Speaking	Listening
Visual medium	Writing	Reading

Source: Widdowson (1978:57)

Table 1 above illustrates vividly the classification of the four language skills. This denotes that teaching/learning strategies also would differ according to the type of skills which are being taught in the classroom (Thompson, 2001). The productive/active skills, for instance could be taught through language teaching/learning strategies which call for classroom activities like group discussion, role playing and writing situational compositions, to mention just a few. On the other hand the Receptive/Passive skills would be taught through language teaching/learning strategies which call for self-reliance on the part of the students under guidance of the teacher (Stern, 2002). Most of the classroom

activities should be done by the students. Activities like listening to a tape recorded model speech and discussing, reading a passage and raising questions and interesting issues from it and discussing it are conducive for teaching/learning language skills in the classroom (ibid).

Statement of the Problem

There are very few studies which have been carried out specifically on English language teaching and learning processes in secondary schools in Tanzania. Many of the studies and publications, as Numi (1991) and Emmanuel (2003) states, have been "product" oriented. This means that researchers have tended to focus on the outcomes such as national examination results, falling standards of English language sensed in passing or failing national examinations and performance in examinations. Researchers have not investigated what goes on during the "process" of learning the four language skills, that is, the nature of the teachers' and students' involvement. For instance, little attempt has been made to investigate teachers' strategies in teaching the above said language skills, factors determining the choice of teaching strategies and students learning strategies when learning the said skills and more importantly, the studies are silent on the need to investigate the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies opted and used in English language classrooms.

Many of the studies and publications have dealt with general issues such as the theoretical perspective of English language teaching and learning problems. These include Mlekwa (1977), Criper and Dodd (1984), Kibogoya (1988) and Emmanuel (2003). As a result there is a gap to be filled, that is, the "practical" part of teaching and learning processes in secondary school classrooms.

This study attempts to investigate the choice and the effectiveness of English language teaching/learning strategies used by teachers and their impact on students' language learning in the Tanzanian

secondary school classrooms. The need to study the choice and the effectiveness of English Language teaching strategies and the students learning strategies used in Tanzanian secondary school classrooms arose from the need to understand the actual language classroom activities and to improve English language teaching and learning processes.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the English language teaching/learning strategies used in Tanzanian secondary school classrooms and their impact on language learning.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study were to:

1. Identify the teaching strategies used by English language teachers in the classrooms.
2. Investigate the factors which determine teachers' choice of teaching strategies of English language.
3. Examine the effectiveness of English language teaching/learning strategies used in the classrooms and their effect on language learning.
4. Find out if there are any constraints to effective use of relevant teaching/learning strategies in English language classrooms.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Language Teaching and Learning Strategies

Language teaching strategies is a set of operations consciously planned for imparting linguistic skills and knowledge on the learner, under specific objectives (Stern, 1983 & 2002). For example, planning to direct pair reading in a reading comprehension lesson. And language learning strategies are cognitive operations and techniques entailed for solving language learning problems (Stern, 1983 & 2002). This can also be conceived as intentional behaviour and thoughts used by learners during learning so as to better help them understand, learn, or remember new information (Richards and Platt, 1992). This could be for example, a student repeating a new sentence several times in a spoken language.

Thus the terms “teaching strategy” and “learning strategy” as used in this paper is based on the assumption that all language learners use language learning strategies either consciously or unconsciously when processing new information and performing different tasks in the language classroom (Brown, 2007). Since a language classroom is like a problem-solving environment in which learners are likely to face new inputs and difficult tasks given by their teachers, learners’ attempts to find the quickest and easiest way to do what is required, that is using language learning strategies, a thing which is inescapable (ibid). Under this scenario a language teacher ought to consider the language teaching strategies that integrate with the learners’ learning strategies in order to improve the language learning in the classrooms (McKay, 2002).

Factors Determining the Choice of Language Teaching and Learning Strategies.

Brumfit (1985) suggests that there are many environmental factors which influence the teaching and learning process specifically the choice of teaching/learning strategies. The factors cover the use of

time, space, human and material resources in order to increase the efficiency of teaching and learning. Besides, interaction affects pupil/teacher behaviours and content matter because it is not just the teacher's transmission strategies but the pupil's reception strategies which influence pupil performance (Child, 2004). Here Child (2004) is trying to point one factor which affects the choice of teaching strategies that is student's cooperation in the classroom. According to him there are many sub-factors within the nature of the student which affect teacher's choice of teaching strategies. The student's linguistic background for example can affect the teacher's choice of teaching strategies. Student's interest on the target language can also affect the teachers' choice of teaching strategies. This is further cemented by Harmer (2005) who points out that, some evidence has revealed a positive correlation between student's interest in a subject and the level of achievement in the subject. Thus interest and achievement are mutually enhanced. Therefore the student co-operation, interest and attitudes are crucial factors which affect the choice of teaching strategies.

The nature of the teacher himself/herself is also a factor which affects the choice of language teaching strategies in the following ways (ibid). Teacher's social expectations (to do with the behaviour and grooming of children-the well behaved and better-groomed child being favored) teachers' academic expectations of the students (the students' perceived academic ability), teachers' tendency to entertain such expectations in mass instruction, by interacting with the few able students and neglecting the majority in the classroom, the teachers' personality qualities such as mastery of language, teaching experience and self-confidence matter in the choice of teaching strategies (Mackey, 2000).

Sociolinguistic context is another factor which affects the choice of teaching strategies. Child (2004) argues that conducive

sociolinguistic environment provides the student with opportunities for rehearsal of good practices. He says lectures, tutorials and seminars help to give theoretical background but good practice after classroom sessions are important. In the environment like the one in Tanzania where English language practice does not exist outside the classroom, the teacher may face difficulties in choosing language teaching strategies suitable for language skills. It is most likely teachers would opt for teacher-centred strategies which do not demand students' practice out of the classroom (Thompson, 2001).

The teaching/learning materials availability, adequacy and sufficiency also determine the teacher's choice of teaching strategies (ibid). Smith (1981) revealed the importance of these materials which, long before the advance of instructional technology they were called "teaching aids" but currently they are called "technological media". This study calls them "teaching/learning materials" because Tanzania's secondary schools are far from having language laboratories, computers and other linguistic technological media. Smith (1981) said that these materials can serve four purposes namely, to help simplify the choice of teaching strategies, teacher's work is simplified, the use of mother tongue by the students can be avoided and the materials act as instruments of motivation. Hence, the teaching/learning materials stimulate the learning process and simplify the teaching process.

The class size is another determinant of the choice of language teaching strategies (Baker and Westrup, 2000). The smaller the class (10-20 students) the greater the tendency to choose student-centred language teaching strategies (ibid). Also the smaller the class the greater the chance of using effectively the relevant language teaching and learning strategies in the classrooms (Stern, 2002). Thus, there is a causative relationship between the language teaching strategies used and the size of the class, that is a

big class (above 20 students) causes the preference of use of teacher-centred language teaching strategies like lecturing and talk-chalk, which would enable all students and not few students to learn.

Sebatane (1991) study in Lesotho primary school classrooms also revealed almost similar factors determining the teachers' choice of the teaching strategies as pointed above. The factors included the school management, teacher's qualifications, physical facilities, class size, shortage of staff, pupil/teacher ratio, adequacy and quality of teaching materials and equipments and general school climate. Writing on the classroom instruction in general, he argues that the only way to improve the situation despite all these factors is to improve the classroom interaction strategies and not clinging to the chalk-and-talk pedagogical strategies employed by many third world teachers.

The above mentioned factors by Sebatane (1991) are also in line with Oxford (2002) who points out five criteria which affect the choice and the use of teaching strategies to be considered by a foreign language teacher. Firstly is the attitude of the teacher towards the language. For instance, is the teacher fluent? how familiar is he/she with the people's culture? is he/she confident orally, or will he/she depend on written form? And, is his/her confidence maimed by personality factors in front of the class? Secondly is the attitude of the teacher towards the aims of learning a foreign language; Is it merely for passing exams?, or for communicative purposes?. Thirdly is the attitude of the teacher on how he/she thinks a child should learn a foreign language in the class, for instance, is it book bound? passive or active? by making a learner a slave to the method? by allowing some working noise and to get learners communicate? or by making them work in groups to act out situations in which language is the practical vehicle for communicating and conveying messages?. Fourthly is

the attitude of the pupils to the language. And lastly are the local conditions in the school; for example, the availability of the language room with attractive posters and atmosphere projecting the feeling of that country, the availability of audio-visual aids, overhead projector, availability of language laboratory, nature of the class, such as, is it mixed class or streamed?, co-operation from head of department and fellow staff and the attitude of the parents and the entire community on the foreign language being taught.

Theoretical Framework

The English language teaching/learning strategies in this study will therefore be viewed and be determined in broader context of teacher-centred and student-centred approaches. The key scholar for this concept as shall be used in this study is Brady (1985). Brady (1985) in his models and methods of language teaching/learning, views these approaches in terms of underlying principles which could be translated into actual language teaching and learning strategies as detailed later in this part. He summarized the principles underlying the teacher-centred and student-centred approaches as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: The Difference between Teacher-Centred Approach and Student- Centred Approach.

Teacher-Centred	Pupil-Centred
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Views learning as acquisition of knowledge, intellectual development -Teacher’s main function is to instruct -Emphasises teacher as judge and censor -Teacher selects learning experiences -Encourages teacher-pupil interaction -Emphasis on tests and grades -Does not encourage group work -Evaluation is a teacher responsibility -Emphasises teacher control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Views learning as acquisition of experiences ,affective development -Teacher’s main function is to evoke -Emphasises teacher as facilitator, or supporter -Pupils contribute to selection of learning experiences -Encourage pupil-pupil interaction -Emphasis on less traditional evaluation -Encourages the use of group work -Evaluation is jointly determined -Emphasises pupil participation

Source: Brady (1985:5)

As shown in table 2 above, Brady (1985) puts the two types of approaches in a continuum in which on the left there are assumptions underlying the teacher-centred approach. Under the teacher-centred approach, teaching/learning is viewed as imparting knowledge for students’ acquisition and mental development. The teacher mainly instructs and commands as a judge. There is no teacher-pupil interaction, whereby the pupil is assumed to be tabula rasa expecting to get knowledge from the teacher. In teacher-centred approach, the teacher controls every behaviour and activity in the classroom. The approach warrants the teacher to schedule activities and make adjustment according to his/her objectives and not necessarily students’ needs (Weimer, 2002). Therefore, in this approach the language teaching/learning strategies used are those which are characterized by the teacher planning the content, choosing the techniques of handling the

subject matter, setting the assignment and directing the classroom activities (Harmer, 2005).

Teacher-centred strategies according to Weimer (2002) and Brown (2007) are those which induce high teacher dominance in the language classrooms. To them the strategies thus include instructing, that is giving instructions on a certain language item. Others are talk-chalk that is the teacher speaking while using chalk to write some points on the chalkboard, explaining, that is the teacher elaborating a language item and lecturing, that is the teacher speaking through out the teaching and learning session. To mention just a few.

On the other hand, in the student-centred approach, teaching/learning is viewed as free acquisition of knowledge by the student through metacognitive, cognitive and socioaffective teaching and learning strategies (Brown, 2007). Hence, free practice activities and group discussions would prevail. The teacher mainly supports the learning as an advisor or facilitator. There is pupil-pupil interaction whereby the pupils exchange their experiences and learn from one another and from the teacher, who also learns from them. This is also supported by Sheri and Alison (2007) who views student-centred teaching as an active approach, since it represents a fundamental shift from the teacher being the centre of attention in the classroom to the students as the centre of learning. In student-centred approach pupil self evaluation and full participation dominate in the learning process.

Under student-centred (learner-centred or pupil-centred) approach the language teaching/learning strategies used, are therefore those which allow the teacher and the learners working together to determine the content and learners' techniques of handling the subject matter. Thus facilitating the growth of learners' cognitive, metacognitive and socioaffective abilities (Thompson 2001 and Brown 2007). This approach also encourages high degree of

student verbal and physical participation in the language classroom (ibid).

As pointed out by O'Malley et al. (1985) cited in Brown (2007), Metacognitive teaching/learning strategies are kinds of strategies that involve teachers and learners in planning for learning, thinking about the learning process itself as it is taking place, monitoring of learner's production or comprehension, and self evaluation of teachers and learners themselves. These strategies include pictorial demonstration that results into students transferring the knowledge from the picture to the skill they learn, and then the students internalize the knowledge. A teacher can enter the classroom and display T/L materials like manila sheets or video show and demonstrate a topic, at this moment students pays attention to the demonstration, which also serves as a learning strategy (Brown, 2007).

Patterning of items is another teaching/learning strategy under Metacognitive category. This strategy results to students pairing some parts of sentences, arranging and matching of the language items. This can be achieved by a teacher providing his/her students with a variety of classroom activities within a lesson like puzzles and numerous games. While categorization teaching/learning strategy under the same category results into students arranging language items according to sub topics as well as characterizing the language items (Thompson, 2001). For this to be achieved the teacher as well can provide his/her students with a variety of classroom activities such as games and puzzles which would enable them discover the target language items for themselves.

Cognitive teaching/learning strategies on the other hand are those which allow learners to use previous knowledge to solve some new language learning problems. Thus are more limited to

specific learning tasks and involve more direct manipulation of the learning materials itself (Brown, 2007). The specific strategies under this category include imitation teaching/learning strategy which results into students practicing the language items. A teacher can enter a classroom and display some new words for students to practice. This can also be achieved by the teacher involving his/her students actively in other classroom activities like role playing and singing (Riddle, 2002). Whereas contextualization teaching/learning strategy which also follows under cognitive category allows for students to retrieve and relate language items done in the classrooms to daily life. This is by teacher providing them with the T/L materials that are familiar to them.

Repetition is another language teaching/learning strategy under cognitive category that can result into students attending to the language items more than once. In so doing it enables them to internalize the language items acquired in the lesson. This can be through the teacher allowing his/her students to constantly revise some words and other language items done in the classes (Riddle, 2002). The teacher directing oral drills as another strategy under cognitive category is interrelated to practicing and repeating teaching/learning strategies whereby all students repeat words or sentences said by the teacher. When they repeat several times, they are practicing them, hence, the learning process is assumed to be taking place.

The socioaffective teaching/learning strategies are those which have to do with social-mediating activities and interacting with others. Thus, these kinds of strategies allow learners to ask native speakers to correct their pronunciations, or asking a classmate to work together on a particular language problem. These strategies include personification and dramatization. They result into students role playing as well as relating language items to living things. The teacher can achieve this by allowing students in the

class to talk about themselves, their home, school and local environment through group or class discussions (Thompson, 2001). Another strategy under this category is question for clarification, which allows students to ask a teacher or other native speaker for repetition, paraphrasing, explanation, and/or examples (Brown, 2007). In the classroom scenario this can be achieved by the teacher guiding students to use their language experiences by asking them situational questions.

Unlike the teacher-centred teaching and learning strategies, developing English language skills through metacognitive, cognitive and socioaffective teaching/learning strategies which according to Brown (2007) are student-centred strategies can therefore help the foreign language learner even in Tanzanian secondary school build up learner independence and autonomy whereby he/she can take control of his/her own learning if used effectively and appropriately in their language classrooms.

Justification for the Theoretical Framework

The use of Brady (1985) teacher-centred and student-centred approaches on language teaching and learning is based on truth that, there has been a prominent shift within the field of language teaching and learning over the last twenty years with greater emphasis being put on learners and learning rather than on teachers and teaching (Murat, 2000). In parallel to this new shift of interest, how learners process new information and what kinds of strategies they employ to understand, learn or remember the information in the language classrooms, has been the primary concern of the researchers dealing with the area of foreign language learning (ibid).

Since the amount of information to be processed by language learners is high in the language classrooms, learners use different language learning strategies in performing the tasks and

processing the new input they face (Brown, 2007). Language learning strategies are thus good indicators of how learners approach tasks or problems encountered during the process of language learning (ibid). In other words, language learning strategies, while none observable or unconsciously used in some cases, give language teachers some valuable clues about how their students assess the situation, plan, select appropriate skills so as to understand, learn, or remember new input presented in the language classrooms (McKay, 2002). These learning strategies in turn serve as a potential tool for teachers as they enable them choose the appropriate language teaching strategies that relate with students' learning strategies.

According to Murat (2000) the language teacher capable of using a wide variety of language teaching/learning strategies appropriately can improve his/her learners' language skills in a better way. The consideration of Brady's approaches (teacher-centred and student/learner-centred), as discussed above was therefore used to guide the study in determining whether the English language teaching/learning strategies used in Tanzanian secondary school classrooms are either teacher-centred, student/learner-centred or integrate both approaches. Furthermore, the approaches was used in examining the factors and constraints which affect the choice of such strategies and the effectiveness of the strategies used and the effect on English language learning in Tanzanian secondary school classrooms.

Study Methodology

This study used survey design. The design was opted for two major reasons. First is the fact that the study required a breadth of view which is rather demanding, an argument which is also supported by Denscombe (2003) that, data from survey studies are greatly comprehensive and reliable because of their ability to explore instances in a breadth of view. In so doing, they enable the researcher to get information, which is purposive and

comprehensive (Bryman, 2004). The second reason for opting survey design is because largely the study intended to collect information through questionnaires and interviews, an idea which is also supported by Denscombe (2003) that researchers who adopt survey approach should be able to use a whole of range of methods within it, including questionnaire, interviews, documents and observation. These methods therefore, helped the researcher in seeking for the necessary detailed information about the teaching and learning strategies used in English language classrooms of Tanzanian secondary schools and their effectiveness in improving the language learning.

The Context of the Study

The study was conducted in Mbeya region. The area was purposefully selected because it is one of the regions with many secondary schools in Tanzania, being the fourth in the rank out of twenty one regions (URT, 2008: 77). The region has 265 schools which have more than 45 pupils per class (ibid). There are eight districts in Mbeya region, out of them Mbeya city and rural was selected by the simple random sampling method.

In the selected districts there are thirty secondary schools (The list of these secondary schools of the selected districts was obtained in the Regional Education Office) out of which, two schools were randomly selected to be studied which is a representation of all schools. Two secondary schools were chosen on the assumption that they would have all the characteristics observable in other secondary schools

Target Population

The target population in this study was of two categories, the first category being Form Three government secondary schools' students in Mbeya region who were observed in their classrooms and who also filled the questionnaires (see appendices A and C).

The choice of Form Three students was deliberate, because at this level there is high concentration of all language skills in comparison to Form one, two and four (URT, 2005). For that case, they were thought to be in a good position of revealing the characteristics representing mastery of the overt learning processes of all language skills to be observed. It was hoped that such students could tell useful things about their learning strategies during learning the four language skills. Their views would be used to discuss the teaching/learning processes of the English language as demanded in the research. The second category of participants included all English language teachers in the selected government secondary schools. Their behaviours/activities during classroom interactions revealed the language teaching strategies used. It was hoped that these teachers could provide first hand information during interviews. Such information could be useful for the analysis and discussion of the findings.

The Sample and Sampling Procedure

Sampling is essential for all studies. Likewise in this study two sampling procedures (purposive and simple random sampling) were employed. The purposive sampling method was applied to select teachers to be included in the sample. This non-probability sampling is appropriate because it allows the researcher to select respondents deliberately to meet resource constraints and accessibility of respondents (Leedy, 1989). Furthermore the method enables the researcher to select people who meet certain important requirements for the research (Denscombe, 2003; Kothari, 2009). This method was applied to teachers because they were assumed to be well informed about the teaching and learning strategies going on in their English language classes. Simple random sampling on the other hand was used for selecting students. The researcher assumed that these students had equal chance of providing the required data.

The sample of the study was selected out of 30 government secondary schools in Mbeya city and rural districts. Government secondary schools were opted purposely as they have a uniform curriculum and the government is the single institution responsible for preparing, supervising and implementing the secondary school curriculum and syllabus. I did not include private secondary schools deliberately to avoid findings from schools with different administrative set ups. The schools were assigned consecutive numbers. Thereafter, by using a table of random numbers two different random numbers that lie in the list was selected as advised by Bryman (2004). In so doing two secondary schools were then selected to be involved in the study. One of the selected schools is from Mbeya city district (School A) which is located in the centre of Mbeya city (the headquarter of Mbeya region) and the other selected school is from Mbeya rural district (School B) about 22 kilometres away from Mbeya city. Therefore school A is an urban school with Forms 1-6 and school B is a rural school with Forms 1-4. Hence, from each school, two Form three streams/classes were chosen for the study. The choice of Form three was deliberate. As said in the earlier parts, in this Form three there is highest concentration of the teaching of all the language skills in comparisons to Form one, two and four (URT, 2005).

As it was for choosing the study schools, the Form three streams of the respective schools were assigned consecutive numbers. Thereafter, by using a table of random numbers two different random numbers that lie in the list of the respective schools was selected, which made four classrooms for observations. The list of streams was obtained in the Academic Offices of the respective schools. Thus, in total the sample of the study involved 140 students in all the four streams/classes selected and eighteen English language teachers who were purposely selected from the two sampled schools

Data Collection Techniques

According to Goetz and Lecompte (1984) as well as Kane (1994) there is no any method of data collection, which is the best in all situations. Therefore in this study, the researcher used multiple methods of data collection, commonly known as triangulation, which has the advantage of gathering more and wide information, hence helping to cross-validate the authenticity of information from a single source. For that case several data gathering techniques were employed in this study, including documentary review, questionnaire, observations and interviews. The documents reviewed included teachers' lesson plans that gave a hint of language teaching strategies. The English language inspector's report was also reviewed. This gave in-depth information of English language teaching and learning going on in the schools. Some factors influencing the teaching and learning processes were also obtained from this report. Other sources including books, pamphlets and journals, containing information on language teaching/learning processes which covered experiences of the processes from Tanzania and other countries were reviewed.

The purpose of using questionnaires were that they might provide more information on the issue of study. Questionnaire which contained open-ended and closed-ended questions was therefore designed and used for students (see appendix C). The questionnaire thus, had questions which probed into students' views on the teaching and learning strategies used in their language classrooms. The questionnaire also probed into students' constraints in learning the four language skills. Furthermore according to Goetz and Lecompte (1984) observations are used to acquire first hand data and enable the researcher (observer) to examine incidents as they occur during the study. Thus, two observation instruments were used to observe the teaching strategies in relation to the students learning strategies in the

English language classrooms. The first one was the observation form (see appendix A) adopted from Flanders' (1970) and Bellack's (1966) models cited in Harmer (2005) where behaviours/activities which depicted a certain language teaching strategy or learning strategy were tallied to provide the dominant language teaching strategy and students learning strategy after every five minutes. The second one was a tape recorder which was used to tape the verbal interactions in the lessons observed. Lastly face to face interviews that were semi structured were administered to teachers. Data obtained from interviews were on the prevalent language teaching strategies used by the teachers, how the teachers attempted to use effectively the relevant English language teaching and learning strategies in the classrooms and the constraints which they faced, if any.

Data Analysis Procedure

The concept data analysis refers to examining what has been collected in a survey or experiment and making deductions and inferences (Orodho, 2003). It involves uncovering underlying structures, extracting important variables, detecting any anomalies and testing any underlying assumptions. It also involves scrutinizing the acquired information and making inferences (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The analysis of data for this study, therefore involved the use of both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Finally as Bryman (2004) recommends in analyzing data in social science research, the data that were collected through all the instruments were summarized in a descriptive and/or tabular form. Then they were analyzed in order to find the relationship of the variables.

Findings of the Study and Discussions

In regard to Brady (1985) approaches to language teaching and learning (teacher-centred and student-centred), the overall findings in this study shows that the dominant teaching/learning

approach in the studied secondary schools were teacher-centred. This was because the number of sessions the teacher-centred strategies dominated in the English language classrooms was more than those in which student-centred strategies dominated. It was observed that teachers' instructing, that is giving instructions on a certain language item, talk-chalk, whereby the teacher speaking while using chalk to write some points on the chalkboard, explaining, that is the teacher elaborating a topic and lecturing whereby the teacher speaking throughout the teaching/learning session were the dominant strategies in teaching the language skills. It was noted that student-centred strategies were rarely used in the classrooms. The noted strategies included the teacher guiding reading aloud, silent reading which was accompanied by listening and writing drills and pair/group/class discussion were the student-centred strategies at least rarely used in teaching the language skills. Therefore, it was noted that the learning process was taking place for only a few students and not the whole class.

In regard to the factors which determine the choice of language teaching strategies, the study established that such factors included availability and non availability of T/L facilities, class size, students' linguistic background and interest, teachers' training, teachers' personality qualities such as teaching experience and language competence, students' learning strategies and sociolinguistic situation of students. In regard to Brady (1985) approaches to language teaching strategies (teacher-centred and student-centred) it was observed that such factors made the teacher choose the teaching strategies' approach according to the situation. It is therefore argued that due to these factors there was a need to train teachers to improve the choice of language teaching strategies right from the teachers' colleges and in the subsequent in-service trainings. Attention should be directed at use of student-centred strategies which involve all the students and not some in the learning processes (Murat, 2005).

Regarding the question on the effect of the English language teaching/learning strategies used in the English language classrooms on language learning, the findings reveal that to a large extent the strategies used were not effective in improving the language learning in the classrooms. As has already noted above this is because largely the strategies used were teacher-centred. Very rarely student-centred strategies were used, even when used they could not involve all students in the learning process due to inadequacy and insufficiency of teaching/learning materials in the studied secondary schools. This implies that the dominant use of teacher-centred language strategies made teachers control more the learning sessions and their main roles in the classrooms were just to instruct, to explain, to elaborate and to lecture. The situation which made the sessions to be one sided (teacher sided) and also became a barrier to participatory learning, a kind of learning which is the pillar in improving language learning in the foreign language classrooms (ibid).

The study also indicated that there were some constraints to effective use of relevant teaching/learning strategies in the English language classrooms. The constraints observed included lack of teaching/learning facilities, teachers' perception of students' abilities, those teachers misperceive that the majority of students just cannot learn the English language as a consequence they employ teaching/learning strategies which make them interact with very few and not all students in the class, students' lack of motivation and interest because of their linguistic background and teachers being bad models. Thus these constraints were barriers to teachers in using effectively the relevant teaching/learning strategies in the English language classrooms. It is therefore suggested that the government should enlighten students, teachers, parents and other members of the society on the importance of teaching and learning English language in secondary schools.

This would reduce some constraints to the effective use of relevant teaching and learning of English language in the classrooms. In general, the findings reveals that the English language teaching and learning strategies used in the secondary school classrooms observed was not effective for language learning.

Conclusion and Recommendations

On the basis of the research findings, analysis and discussion, the following conclusions were drawn:

Secondary school teachers of English language mostly use teacher-centred teaching strategies in their English language classrooms. These strategies have proved to be ineffective for English language learning in the classrooms. Very rarely student-centred strategies are used, which according to Brady (1985) and Murat (2005) are recommended to be effective for language learning in a foreign language classroom.

The choice of language teaching strategies was not much determined by the guidelines like the syllabus but by many other factors including availability and non availability of teaching/learning facilities, class size, teachers' personality qualities like language competence and teaching experience, interest and linguistic background of students, teachers' training, sociolinguistic situation of students and the students' learning strategies.

The dominant use of teacher-centred teaching strategies and the tendency of English language teachers rarely using the student-centred teaching strategies in the secondary school classrooms, leads to the ineffectiveness of these strategies in improving language learning in the classrooms. This is because the teacher dominance in the classrooms becomes high making the learning sessions lack participatory kind of learning. It is suggested that

proper use of the language teaching and learning strategies which are effective in improving language learning in the classrooms, should be intensified in the teachers' colleges and in the subsequent in-service teachers' trainings.

The major constraints to effective use of the relevant teaching/learning strategies of English language in the classrooms included lack and inadequacy of teaching/learning facilities and teachers' perception of the students. Those teachers have preconceived idea that the students just cannot learn the English language just because of their poor linguistic background. Other constraints included teachers' training background and class sizes.

On the basis of the research findings and discussion of results the following recommendations are made:

In regard to the conceptual framework of this study, first the secondary school English language teachers should choose appropriate language teaching strategies which enable all and not few students in the classroom to learn; student-centred strategies thus are highly recommended.

Secondly, English language teachers should be trained on how to use effectively the relevant language teaching and learning strategies which have a good effect on language learning of all the students in the classroom. This should be more emphasized in the teacher training courses.

Lastly, the government and non-governmental organizations should make a closer follow-up of the teaching/learning processes of English language in the secondary school classrooms. The findings and experience have shown that there are many constraints to the effective use of the relevant teaching/learning strategies of English language. Some of the constraints, for

example include the provision of teaching/learning facilities and the proper training of English language teachers. These constraints ought to be rectified.

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