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## Teaching and Learning Challenges On Implementation of Learner-Centred Pedagogy for English Language Subject in Selected Secondary Schools in Longido District

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**ABSTRACT:** *This paper explores the need of a good knowledge of the English language subject for teaching and learning processes. Tanzanian government is in a race to provide the quality education to all people. The study adopted mixed methods research under concurrent triangulation design. The theory guided this study was Social Constructivism. The target population for this study was 1381 respondents from Longido District. A sample of 100 respondents was selected through probability and non-probability methods. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from secondary school teachers and students whereas interview guides were used to collect qualitative data from school heads and heads of English department. Validity was established through expert to the area of study whereas reliability was determined using split-half method. Credibility of qualitative data was ascertained by involving multiple analyses, whereas dependability was established through detailed reporting of the research process. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically along the research question and presented in narrative forms whereas quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferentially using ANOVA and presented in tables. The study concludes that LCP challenges can be diminished if seminars, workshops and enough resources can be offered to both teachers and students. The study recommends that school management and Ministry of Education Science and technology should motivate teachers by providing incentives, instructional resources and physical facilities when implementing LCP. Also teachers need to develop positive self-esteem, attitude and positive perception towards oneself.*

**KEYWORDS:** learner centred pedagogy, English language teaching, education, competence, quality education.

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### INTRODUCTION

The Learner-Centered Teaching and Learning Pedagogy (LCP) rely on the constructivist philosophy which conceptualizes that knowledge is constructed through interaction with the environment, dialogue with fellow students, teachers and reflection –all within culture and language. For this reason, knowledge is created by interacting new information with the existing experience of learners (Mgyabuso, G.2022). It is believed that the concept of (LCP) originated

from developed countries (Faustine, 2017). In Tanzania therefore, like any other countries in the world, is striving to improve the quality of education to all people. Different education reforms have been undertaken by the government to ensure that all people are provided with an education of good quality (Abdurakhmanova et al., 2020). The country's education system is based around 2-7-4-2-3+ structure (Kivenule, 2015). The language of instruction to all subjects is English especial from ordinary level up to the university level, (Faustine, 2017). In ordinary level, there are internal assessments to learners before moving to another level of education. However, in Form two there is national examination which a student cannot move to another level if he/she has not met the required grades. This examination is delivered after two years. (Lupogo, 2017). The National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA) receives the students' examination results in the form of continuous assessment immediately following the administration of the examination, which is used to determine whether students are eligible to continue with the next level or not. (Selemani, 2018). English language is believed to play a key role to student to understand other subjects since it is a language of instruction in secondary schools and is taught as an independent subject (URT, 2014). However, the performance of government secondary school students in Tanzania has been a point of discussion for years since students are performing very poorly in English subjects (Mgonja, 2017; Baum & Cilliers, 2018). A similar situation is experienced in other countries, including Kenya, Uganda, and Nigeria, where the English language has been made the language of instruction despite the fact that it is not the first language of most of the students (Rong'uno, 2017; Education Watch, 2008; Tooley, Bao, Dixon & Merrifield, 2011). This raises a concern about whether these students acquire the language skills that are instructed by English language teachers. Because of their weak English language backgrounds, the majority of public secondary school students do not have a strong foundation in English (Kivenule, 2015 since in primary schools, English language is not used as a medium of instruction. (Ngimbwa, 2015). This shows the need to adopt better teaching style that may assist learners in effortlessly coupling with the subject and scoring high grades in secondary schools. (Wold, 2016) Most scholars advocate the use of a Learner-Centred Pedagogy (LCP) in order to improve the understanding of the English language learning as a foreign language (Badjadi, 2020; Lupogo, 2017; Ngimbwa, 2015; Trenholm, 2017). According to Moradi (2020), the application of LCP in the teaching of the English language makes the learners acquire four important (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) skills required for them to perform well in subjects and become good in communication. Teachers must employ the best teaching pedagogy to ensure easy and rapid knowledge acquisition and communication skills is one of the required skills in the twenty-first century (Sarifa, 2020). For instance, in developed countries like the USA and Morocco, LCP is being well implemented due to teachers' positive attitudes towards LCP versus Teacher-Centred Pedagogy (TCP), and hence the context of learning has improved (El Hammoumi et al., 2020), (Maluleka, 2021). The LCP considers students to be responsible participants in their own learning. Through LCP students learn new things and use new skills and concepts (Maluleka, 2021). Despite the huge benefits of using LCP in English class learning, some subject teachers talked about some problems that made it hard for them to use LCP effectively. The difficulties included a lack of passion and confidence among students, lack of desire on the part of instructors, inadequate teaching and learning

resources, learners overcrowded classrooms, and students feeling uncomfortable when they have to collaborate with others (Lupogo, 2017; Selemani, 2018; Usanov&Qayumov, 2020). These, have been associated with poor adoption of LCP in teaching English subjects. Thus, teachers need to be competent in applying LCP, so that could select effective teaching strategies that create a positive environment for students to learn, (Yetti et al., 2021). In addition utilizes multiple teaching techniques to meet students' learning goals (Darsih, 2018; Ali, 2019). It has to be noted that, availability of resources makes learners feel comfortable and free to work on different activities (Richardson & Mishra, 2018). According to Salema and Wambiya (2016), the availability of adequate teaching and learning resources in schools could make teachers change their minds and apply learner-centred pedagogy. Tanzanian government through the ministry of education science and technology (MoEST) and the Tanzanian Institute of Education (TIE), is constantly providing the schools with resources. Yet, no adequate literature has been documented to the extent of equipped with such resources for English language teachers. Therefore, all of these raise the need to examine the extent to which secondary school teachers have been able to use the LCP to help students excel in their subjects. On this ground, the current study intends to assess the effectiveness of implementing learner-centred pedagogy to improve English language performance in FTNA in Longido district.

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

The public secondary school statistics of existing schools in Longido district have not been satisfactory in recent years. It has been revealed that most public schools still hold a less than 20% pass rate in FTNA. (Bai, et al, (2019). It has been revealed that the district experiences a ratio of 1 class to 71 students, which does not reflect the national ratio of 1:40 (Challya, 2018). Many students in public secondary schools have failed the SCEE exam for years because they don't understand the English language well (Mazana et al., 2020) The application of learner-centred teaching has been recommended by a number of scholars as the best way of equipping students with 21st century skills, including communication, collaboration, creativity, and problem solving (Rachmadtullah, et al., 2020), yet, things are found to be different with its applicability in public secondary schools. The literature review revealed that LCP is faced with several challenges that limit its implementation, such as overcrowded classrooms, limited coverage duration, lack of interest among students and/or instructors, and a lack of enough resources to support it effectively in public schools (Mgyabuso&Mkulu, 2022). Those are challenges that lead to experiencing poor performance in secondary level, particularly in the English subject FTNA in Longido district. For instance, in 2020, more than 10% of students who sat for the FTNA scored a grade F, indicating that they failed to demonstrate their skills (NECTA, 2020). Despite those problems, there is still limited literature on how effectively the LCP is implemented by English language teachers to enable learners to acquire the intended skills and improve their academic performance. Therefore, this study was conducted to assess the extent to which English language teachers have been effectively implementing LCP towards improving students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Longido district. The study is expected to come up with findings on attitudes

of students and English subject teachers towards the usage of LCP and the challenges facing the effective implementation of LCP in English subject teaching in Longido district..

### **Research Question**

This study was guided by one research question:

What are the teaching and learning challenges for LCP for English language in selected secondary schools in Longido district?

### **Research Hypothesis**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significance relationship between challenges facing teaching and learning for LCP for English language subject in selected secondary schools in Longido district.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by the social constructivist theory developed by Lev Vygotsky in the 1930s. The theory upholds that knowledge is socially constructed by interaction with others (Msonde, 2021). According to the theory, learners should be active in the learning process, and the learning environment should be positive to allow maximum interaction. The theory assumes that knowledge is based on the experience of the learners, and the role of the teacher is to facilitate (Shah, 2019; Zhang et al., 2020). The primary goal of LCP is to help students develop higher-order thinking skills. According to Behjat and Yadollahvand (2020), constructivism encourages the use of learner-centred methods that enable students to become familiar with writing skills. The theory offers an opportunity for effective participation and acceptance of individual differences, as well as promotes assisted discovery. Therefore, teachers are advised to use different methods of teaching, which would enable students to be engaged in different activities to acquire not only writing skills but also oral skills. The theory also encourages the use of the senses in seeing, hearing, and manipulating things to understand the learned concepts. It also supports the recognition of individual differences in the class, and so calls for teachers to use different methods to enable each student to learn best. In general, the theory supports the use of LCP. So, in this study, the researcher used it to see how effective English language teachers are at using LCP through effective engagement of learners.

### **Review of Empirical Studies**

Teaching and learning challenges for English language teachers on the implementation of LCP in Longido district. Teachers usually face many challenges which can have a direct effect on the teaching and learning process (Otara · 2019). These challenges stem from the teacher, the students, and the educational system (Ozsevik, 2022). A study in Turkish by (Sali & Kecik, 2018) educational context has some features, such as large class sizes, inadequacy of instructional materials, high-stakes testing system, lack of professional support which can cause various challenges for the teachers of English Language subject.

A study in China by Zhou, X, (2019) emphasized that student desire personal contact with their instructors and peers, along with a high-quality level of technology and environment. New

techniques must be constructed that make time for students to interact, because personal interaction between teachers and students, students and students, students and course content directly relates to student course satisfaction. The study has not specifically show a high quality of technology to be used. (Junior O.M · 2020) emphasized the importance of interaction by affirming that student achievement and positive attitudes increased as the level of interaction increased. However didn't articulate to what extent of interaction could help a learner to achieve the learning attitudes.

Christa Green, (2021), published a report on Student-Centered Learning in Michigan K-12 Schools. The study aimed to capture the ways in which Michigan schools are implementing student-centered learning practices along with the factors that impact the successful implementation of such practices. Teachers and administrators were interviewed from five Michigan school districts. The findings revealed that, it was clear that the work required to make learning student-centered is not uneasy task. There are many challenges that teachers and school leaders may face which complicate the process in adopting and implementing a LCP. These included the lack of relevant resources, insufficient and inappropriate teacher-support programmes as well as the environmental constrains. The study has not shown specific group of teachers and has not included the departmental English subject teachers.

In South Africa Plessis, E · (2020) conducted a study to find out if there are challenges when teachers apply LCP in the classroom teachings, the findings was that because learners are talking, classrooms are regular-ly hectic, loud, and disordered. Teachers must try to manage all learners' activities at once, which can be challenging when learners are working on different stages of the identical project. Again, because the teacher does not deliver instructions to all learners at once, some learners may miss vital facts, hence some learners choose to work alone, thus group work can become challenging. This study has not explain the advantages of using LCP such as to develop learners' ability to direct their personal learning, ask questions and complete tasks independently students make their own choices and determine own goals. Also to have self-motivation through internal incentives, viewing problems as challenges, desiring change and enjoying learning (Burnage, 2018).

In Tanzania, a study by to investigate the factors impeding the implementation of learning studies in developing countries. The study employed a qualitative research approach whereby data was collected from 3 mathematics teachers through in-depth interviews, focused group discussion document analysis and observation. The study found that large classes, inadequate teaching and learning resources, commitment, teachers' heavy workloads, low attitudes towards student-centred learning, and shortage of time were the inhibitors of implementing a LCP in teaching.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted mixed methods approach and used the concurrent triangulation research design. This design was suitable in this study because qualitative and quantitative helped the obtained data to be more comprehensive and answer a broader range of research questions because a researcher



can use more than one approach. The target population for this study was 1381 respondents from which a sample of 100 was selected through purposive, simple random sampling and stratified sampling techniques. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from teachers who are teaching English language subjects and form three students whereas interview guides were used to collect qualitative data from head of schools and heads of English language subject department. Both probability and non-probability sampling procedures were applied to select participants of the study. Validity was established through expert judgment whereas reliability was determined using split half technique. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically along the research question and presented in narrative forms whereas quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferentially using ANOVA and presented in tables.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Teacher's Responses on teaching and learning Challenges Related to Learner-Centred Pedagogy in English Language subject in Secondary Schools (n=17)

| Challenges related to learner-centred pedagogy in English language in secondary schools | SA     | A      | U      | SD    | D     |
|---|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|
|   | f (%)  | f (%)  | f (%)  | f (%) | f (%) |
| Some teachers have negative attitudes towards English language                          | -      | 5(29)  | 9(53)  | 3(18) | -     |
| Lack of teacher's proficiency in English language                                       | -      | -      | 10(59) | 4(24) | 3(18) |
| Lack of support from the Ministry of education and vocational training                  | -      | -      | 8(47)  | 7(41) | 2(12) |
| Lack of motivation for teachers teaching English language                               | 4(24)  | 11(65) | 2(12)  | -     | -     |
| Teachers face challenges from the first language (mother tongue) among students         | -      | 12(71) | -      | -     | 5(29) |
| Teachers face political interference towards learner-centred pedagogy                   | -      | 10(59) | -      | -     | 7(41) |
| Some teachers are facing challenges of communication using English language             | 6(35)  | 9(53)  | -      | 5(29) | -     |
| Teachers are optimistic with learner-centred pedagogy                                   | -      | 13(76) | 4(24)  | -     | -     |
| I feel disappointed when the students fail English language subject                     | 8(47)  | 9(53)  | -      | -     | -     |
| I treat my students with respect all the time   | 10(59) | 7(41)  | -      | -     | -     |

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, f= frequency, % = percentages, values in brackets are percentage of demographic information

**Source: Field Data (2022)**

In regard to the challenges related to LCP in English language in secondary schools, the results show that, 29% of secondary school teachers agree to the statement while 53% of teachers undecided and 18% of teachers strongly disagree. Teachers reported that, although English language subject is a foreign language yet teachers have negative attitudes towards the language. From the results on the challenge of lack of teacher's proficiency in English language subject, 59% were undecided while 24% of teachers strongly disagree and 18% of teachers disagree. The results revealed the challenge of lack of support from the Ministry of education science and technology that, such that, 47% of teachers who were undecided to the statement while 41% of were strongly disagree and 12% disagree. Therefore, this implies that, there is a little support from the ministry of education science and technology. The results further indicated that, among the challenges related to learner-centred pedagogy in English language in secondary schools is lack of motivation for teachers teaching English language subject as 24% of secondary school teachers strongly disagree and 65% agree to the statement while 12% were undecided to the statement. The teachers reported that, English language teachers are not well motivated to enhance learner-centred pedagogy whereby sometimes the approach is ignored and teachers apply more teacher-centred method. The use of first language (mother tongue), the results show that, 71% students agree that, teachers face challenges from the first language (mother tongue) among students while 29% disagree to the statement. The students revealed that, most of secondary school students in Longido district are Maasai natives which speaking their mother tongue so forced teacher-centred. The results further indicated that, among the challenges related to learner-centred pedagogy in English language in secondary schools, is that, teachers face political interference towards learner-centred pedagogy as 59% of secondary school teachers agree and 41% of teachers disagree. The majority of teachers agree and reported that, education system more recently has interfered with political issues. Challenges of communication using English language, about 35% of secondary school teachers strongly agree and 53% agree to the statement while 29% strongly disagree to the statement. The majority of respondents agree and indicated that, some secondary school teachers are not competent enough orally using English language. Optimistic with learner-centred pedagogy the result showed that 76% of secondary school teachers agree while 24% were undecided to the statement. The respondents viewed that, English language teachers are lacking seminars and workshops to enhance learner-centred pedagogy. I feel disappointed when the students fail English language subject, the results revealed that 47% of teachers strongly agreed and 53% of teachers agree to the statement. The respondents opined that, among the challenges related to learner-centred pedagogy in English language in secondary schools is disappointment among teachers especially when the students fail English language subject. I treat my students with respect all the time, 59% of teachers strongly agree and 41% agree. This showed that under learner-centred approach the students are required to be treated with respect all the time which most of teachers fail to do so as they doubt that teaching and learning could not become effective as students can learn as usual which it is a challenge in maintaining effective teaching and learning among secondary school students.

Students response on Challenges Related to Learner-Centred Pedagogy in English Language subject in Secondary Schools (n=70)

| Challenges related to learner-centred pedagogy in English language in secondary schools | SA     | A      | U      | SD     | D      |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|   | f (%)  | f (%)  | f (%)  | f (%)  | f (%)  |
| Students' negative attitudes towards English language                                   | 20(29) | 38(54) | 12(17) | -      | -      |
| Lack of teacher's proficiency in English language                                       | -      | 21(30) | 31(44) | -      | 18(26) |
| Little support from the school management   | -      | 29(41) | 28(40) | 13(19) | -      |
| Students get little motivation from English language teachers                           | 24(34) | 30(43) | 16(23) | -      | -      |
| Students are not influenced by the first language (mother tongue)                       | -      | 32(46) | -      | 12(17) | 26(37) |
| Students are not interested in learning English language                                | -      | 35(50) | 17(24) | 5(7)   | 13(19) |
| The school leadership has limited facilities to support learning media                  | -      | 49(70) | -      | -      | 21(30) |
| The English language subject has no future in my life                                   | -      | -      | 36(51) | 8(11)  | 26(37) |
| All students do not participate throughout the English language lesson                  | -      | 37(53) | 24(34) | 3(4)   | 6(9)   |
| Students are disliking when they provided with English language subject tasks           | -      | 40(57) | 20(29) | -      | 10(14) |

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, f= frequency, % = percentages, values in brackets are percentage of demographic information

**Source: Field Data (2022)**

In regard to the students, the results revealed that challenges related to learner-centred pedagogy in English language in secondary schools is students' negative attitudes towards English language as 29% of students strongly agree, and 54% of agree, while 17% were undecided to the statement. This showed there is negative attitude towards English language and that; students are forced to learn the language which is not their native which becomes difficult to implement learner-centred pedagogy. Lack of teacher's proficiency in English language as the challenge related to learner-centred pedagogy in English language, about 30% of students agreed while 44% undecided and 26% disagreed to the statement. This indicates that, though English language teachers in secondary schools are teaching using curriculum yet some of them lack performance in English language as it is the challenge associated with learner-centred. Support from the school management, the results revealed that, 41% of students agree to the statement, while 40% were undecided and 19% strongly disagree. The majority reported that, the school management to do not always emphasize on the practice of learner-centred pedagogy while teaching aids are lacking and sometimes the



environment are not conducive to meet the demands of all students in English language subject. About Motivation, the results indicated that about 34% of students strongly agree, 43% agree while 23% were undecided to the statement. This revealed that, English language teachers provide little motivation to students. Influenced positively by their first language (mother tongue), the results indicated that, 46% of students agree while 17% strongly disagree and 37% disagree. This revealed that, the native language among students in secondary schools in Longido district is not influenced by the second language learning due to structure differences. Students are not interested in learning English language, the results revealed about 50% of students agree to the statement, 19% strongly agree where 24% were undecided and 7% disagree. The school leadership has limited facilities to support learning media, about 70% of students agree to the statement where 30% disagree. Therefore, majority of students agree that, there are limited facilities to support digital learning under learner-centred pedagogy. English language subject has no future in my life, about 51% students were undecided to the statement while 11% strongly disagree and 37% disagree. All students participate throughout the English language lesson, the results indicated that, among about 53% of students agree to the statement while 34% were undecided, 4% strongly disagree and 9% disagree. Majority agree that, not all students participate in English lesson as it becomes difficult in evaluating all students under learner-centred pedagogy. Students dislike when they are provided with English language subject tasks about, 57% of students agree while 29% were undecided to and 14% disagree. This implies that, there are secondary school students who dislike when they are provided with English language tasks under learner-centred pedagogy. The findings from the interview revealed the related challenges as one of the head of English language subject department reported:

Some teachers were not interested in teaching using learner-centred techniques hence they use a limited number of teaching activities in the teaching of students in secondary schools. Teachers' lack of interest in the application of learner-centred teaching prohibits lifelong learning in students. Therefore, the teachers should be encouraged and motivated to use learner-centred pedagogy in teaching students to develop lifelong learning skills in students (Interview 12th July 2022)

Also one of the head of schools commented that:

Teachers do not believe in the use of learner-centred pedagogy for classroom management and therefore advocated the use of a teacher-centred approach that cannot aid students to develop lifelong learning skills and good performance (Interview 12th July, 2022)

The findings on the challenges related to learner-centred pedagogy in English language subject in secondary schools are in agreement with Msonde and Msonde (2017) conducted a study in Tanzania to investigate the factors impeding the implementation of learning studies in developing countries. The study employed a qualitative research. The study found that large classes, inadequate teaching and learning resources and commitment, teachers' heavy workloads, low

attitudes towards student-centred learning, and shortage of time were the inhibitors of implementing a LCP in teaching

## CONCLUSION

From the findings the study concludes that, there are challenges facing teachers and students in teaching and learning English language subject using learner-centred pedagogy. These challenges includes; teaching and learning resources, overcrowded classrooms, incompetent teachers to the English Language speaking, students are influenced by the background mother tongue language.

## Recommendations

The study recommends that, all learners in schools should be earmarked to speak English language throughout while in school compound, so as build confidence to learners and become competent. Students should practice themselves through English subject clubs, debates, dialogue, writing competitions and oral communications. Also the school heads, administrators should make a follow-up if teachers practice learner centred pedagogy during teaching and learning English language subject. Further, Ministry of Education science and technology needs to run several seminars and practical workshops on encouraging teachers to use learner-centred pedagogy in teaching English language subject and to provide enough teaching and learning materials.

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