CHALLENGES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING OF SPEAKING SKILLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TANZANIA

Nanai Emmanuel Nanai[1]

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges of teaching and learning of speaking skills in English subject at secondary schools in Tanzania. The study employed qualitative research approach, a case study design with a total of 56 participants. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion, classroom observation and documentary review. The study findings revealed that there were a number of challenges of teaching and learning of speaking skills. These are linguistic difficulties, mother tongue use, inhibition, teachers' perceptions and tacit beliefs. Others are limited authentic materials, limited supportive environment, limited oral assessments and low students' self-motivation. The study concludes and recommends that the actual description of those challenges need to be recognised and understood, thus, they can be alleviated through giving this skill more emphasis and attention. Numerous concerns such as teachers, students, learning environment and assessment regulation should be taken into an account.

Keywords: Speaking skills, Speaking constraints, English language teaching in Tanzania, EFL learners, secondary schools

[1] Corresponding Author: University of Dar es Salaam, School of Education Department of Educational Psychology and Curriculum Studies Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. E-mail: emmanuel110591@gmail.com. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3063-9484

INTRODUCTION

Spoken language is a means through which learners interact with others to achieve particular goals of expressing their beliefs, opinions, feelings, intentions, attitudes and perspectives (Kiymaz & Doyumğaç, 2020). Nevertheless, problems in speaking can be setbacks towards effective teaching and learning. Undeniably, it is imperative to develop communication skills. English oral communication skills are part of this skill set, and thus, students should be supported to gain these skills (Al Hosni, 2014). Developing students' speaking ability is of significance importance in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as Second Language (ESL) teaching as Burkart and Sheppard (2004) and Nunan (1999) argue that success in learning a language is measured in terms of the ability to engage in a conversation in the target language.

The teaching and learning of speaking in English in secondary schools provide students with more exposure and giving them a platform to use English in academic setting. This is brought by the functions of speaking that cut across various aspects of human interaction such as communicating ideas and opinions, conveying a wish or a desire to do something, negotiating, solving a particular problem, creating and building social relationships, maintaining business or other professional reasons (Richard, 2008).

Worldwide expansion of English language has increased the demand to acquire good communication skills in English language (Richards, 2006). Adding to this, during this era of globalisation, intense competitiveness in the job market and high unemployment rates, learners from variety of sectors have to exhibit a certain mastery of communication skills in different fields, thus, learners with good spoken English are more likely to win this competition than their counterparts (Malone, 2007; Simpson, 2006; Bailey, 1999).

As a result of this necessity for improving speaking ability among learners, a number of countries including Tanzania have put much efforts and emphasis on the teaching of English as a foreign language rather than their native languages to its citizens (Hossain, 2015; Tork, 2006). The role of English is of significant important in promoting economic growth and

developing skilled man powers, who are globally compatible hence, improvement in English language teaching and learning has become the prior concern (Hamid, 2010).

According to the Ministry of Education, vocational training (MoEVT) in Tanzania, objective of teaching English is to enable a student to be able to communicate orally and confidently in different life situations (TIE, 2009.p.vi). As a strategy to improve the English language proficiency of students in Tanzania, the government reviewed English subject syllabus for secondary education in which the 2009 communicative competence-based English subject syllabus was issued to replace the 1997 old structure-based English subject syllabus which emphasized more on language descriptions. It was previously noted that students could make language descriptions however they could not use English language to communicate orally (TIE, 2009). Thus, the 2009 reviewed English subject syllabus embodies the content of speaking skills so as to enable students develop an ability to communicate orally using English language.

Despite a number of measures that have been taken in years to improve English language teaching (ELT) in Tanzania, the outcomes are still unsatisfactory since language proficiency level among students is depressing. Several studies show that the majority of students in secondary schools yet have poor English language proficiency, hence they fail to communicate using English language in different life situation (Bikongoro, 2014; Sane & Sebonde, 2014; Makewa, Role & Tuguta, 2013; Komba, 2012; Qorro, 2012; Rubagumya, 2010; Vuzo, 2010; Swilla, 2009). English is occasionally used outside the classroom settings, students in government schools do not usually use English language rather they use Kiswahili language when engaging fully in the social, political and economic life of Tanzania, thus they normally do not have platforms to speak English outside the classroom settings (Mtallo, 2015; Sane & Sebonde, 2014; Qorro, 2013). This raises a question as to why students in secondary schools find it difficult to speak in English language. It is against this background, the current study intended to explore challenges of teaching and learning of speaking skills in English subject at secondary schools in Tanzania.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative research approach. The approach enabled the researcher to explore challenges of teaching and learning of speaking skills in secondary schools in Tanzania since qualitative method helps researchers to study things in natural setting in an attempt to make sense of it in terms of the meaning people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In addition, a case study design was used because it helped the researcher to develop a deeper insight and better exploration on challenges of teaching and learning of speaking skills. As Ary et.al., (2010) contend that the case study design enables the researcher to arrive at a detailed description and understanding of a phenomenon. Yin (2009) holds the view that case study design provides opportunities for gathering evidence of information from diverse sources and thus promotes triangulation of findings on the basis of research objectives.

The study was conducted in three government advanced-level secondary schools offering English subject combinations such as History, Geography and English language (HGL), History, Kiswahili and English language (HKL) and Kiswahili, English language and French (KLF) in Ilala Municipality. The area was purposefully selected since the municipality has a large number of schools in which it has three government advanced-level secondary schools offering more than one English subject combination such as HGL, HKL and KLF as compared to other districts in Tanzania.

A total of 56 informants comprising eight English subject teachers and 48 English subject students from form six were involved in a study. Specifically, the researcher used criterion purposive sampling to select all English subject teachers teaching in Form Five and Form six in each school to participate in the study. In addition, criterion purposive sampling was used to obtain Form Six students from English subject classes who were involved in the FGD. Form Six students were involved because they have been learning speaking skills since they were in form five. So they have potential information with regard to the teaching and learning of speaking. In reducing bias for students' participation, random purposive sampling was used to obtain eight students as potential purposive sample to participate in discussion as per FGD standards.

In qualitative research studies, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Punch, 2006). In regard to this study, data gathering methods included observation, interviews, documentary review and focus group discussion. These methods enabled the researcher to gather multiple sources of information for exploring challenges of teaching and learning of speaking skills in English subject in secondary schools in Tanzania. The benefit of these methods includes richness of data and deeper insight into the phenomenon under study (Hancock, 2002).

The data were analysed thematically. The study used Braun and Clarke model for thematic analysis which includes six steps such as moving back and forth through the entire collected data in order to be familiar with the data, coding the data through searching for interesting patterns and features, searching for the theme through arranging codes into potential themes through gathering all data relevant to each potential theme, reviewing themes, defining and naming the themes and lastly, writing a report for the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Linguistic Difficulties

Findings revealed that linguistic difficulty hindered the teaching and learning of speaking skills in secondary schools. It was reported that students had difficulties in finding appropriate vocabulary items to express themselves in English language when carrying out conversations. During interview with teachers, students were reported to encounter difficulties in constructing sentences when trying to express themselves in English. For example, teacher (T7) from school C said that:

> Students do not know how to express themselves appropriately using English language. You may find them speaking one or two English sentences and then code switch to Kiswahili since they lack much of English vocabularies thus they cannot speak English fluently (Interview, T7 at school C).

Similarly, During FGDs it was reported that students encounter difficulties when speaking English language. For example one of students from school B said "*We always want to speak a lot of English but we fail to do so since we don't*

know much of English words". In addition, another student from school A reported that:

> Speaking English is hard since is not our language we are
> not good at it. Even if we are trying to speak some sentences
> but we do struggle a lot when we are told to make a speech
> in English (FGD, a student from school A).

In addition, Data collected through observation revealed that students encounter difficulties when trying to carry out a conversation in English language. Many of their sentences were full of errors and mistakes and hence ungrammatical. Also inappropriate use of vocabularies and mispronunciation of English words were also noted.

The findings suggest that students had difficulties in speaking English language when trying to carry out a conversation. Insufficient vocabulary repertoire, not knowing grammar and pronunciation of English language lead to the linguistic difficulties thus students struggle in their speaking. As Rababa'h (2005) found out that linguistic difficulties hinder teaching and learning of speaking as many learners do not have sufficient amount of vocabularies to get their meaning across, and consequently, they fail to make the conversation going on.

Mother Tongue Use

Findings revealed that mother tongue use hampers teaching and learning of speaking skills. It was reported that mostly students used their mother tongue when engaging in classroom activities. Students felt comfortable using Kiswahili language when discussing different given tasks. This is attributed to the difficulties in finding appropriate vocabulary items to express themselves in English language when carrying out conversations. During interview with teachers, students were reported to be using their mother tongue when communicating among themselves at school. For example, teacher (T1) from school A said that:

> Majority of students use Kiswahili when communicating one
> another when in classroom or outside classroom. Even in their
> classroom discussion they use sometimes Kiswahili to discuss

and then they write their answers in English (Interview, T1 at school A).

A similar view was provided by teacher (T3) from school B as was quoted saying that:

> English language is another issue to students…. It becomes difficulty for many students to speak the language hence they tend to use Kiswahili language in their discussion since they know much about Kiswahili than English. So you may find they discuss in Swahili and present their answers in English (Interview, T3 at school B).

In addition, findings from FGDs showed that students tend to speak in Kiswahili when performing classroom tasks especially pair works and group works. This is due to the reasons that Kiswahili is well known by the majority of students who felt comfortable discussing using their mother tongue rather than using English. For example, one student in a FGD had the following to say;

> We do not know much of English thus why we discuss in Kiswahili because Kiswahili is known by every student so it becomes easy for us to speak and share our ideas and views regarding the topic of discussion. And then we write our views and answers in English (FGD, a student from school A).

In similar vein, findings from observation carried out in all the sampled schools revealed that students used code-mixing and code-switching between English and Kiswahili languages and they eventually used Kiswahili language when they were discussing in groups.

The findings suggest that students do not know how to speak in English language when discussing matters in a group discussion, so they shifted to Kiswahili language. The reasons for using the mother tongue may be attributed to inadequate vocabulary repertoire and weak sentence building skills. This may not render students opportunities to use English language in communicating among themselves and hence limits students to get exposed to actual use of English language due to code-mixing, code-switching and use of Kiswahili medium during learning process. Ur (1996) contends that learners who share the same mother tongue tend to use it

because it is easier and because learners feel less exposed if they are speaking their mother tongue. In addition, Littlewood (1981) argues that some teachers and students use a mother tongue in class. Nevertheless, this can be another factor that contributes to the problem of speaking difficulties. This is because using the first language/native language or mother tongue means sacrificing valuable opportunities for well-motivated foreign use.

Inhibition

Findings revealed that inhibition is one of the constraints on improving teaching and learning of speaking skills. It was reported that students were not speaking English due to fear of making mistakes and being laughed by their fellow students thus they felt shy to speak in front of their classmates. During interview with teachers, students were reported to be haunted with fear when they were required to speak English language. For example, teacher (T2) from school A said that:

> Students do not speak English much because they feel shy and fear of making mistakes in which they will be laughed at by their fellow students.. you know these student tend to laugh at their fellow when making mistakes and thus you find students become reluctant to speak (Interview, T2 at school A).

In a similar vein, teacher (T4) from school B had the following to say:

> Our students feel shy to speak in front of the class. So when you choose a student to speak English language you may find that student becomes nervous and uncomfortable. So he may end up making errors and mistakes if you insist him to speak (Interview, T4 at school B).

Findings from FGDs revealed that students do not speak English language due to fear of committing errors and mistakes from which they will be laughed at by their fellow students. Also shyness hinders them to speak English in front of the class. One student from school C in a FGD said "Students tend to laugh at their fellow students if make mistakes. So most

of us do not speak much because we are afraid of being embarrassed and laughed at by our fellow students".

Similarly, another student had this to say:

> Some of us in our class, we sometimes feel shy to speak in front of the class and hence we tend to remain quite when the teacher asks questions. And sometimes, when you make mistakes other students may laugh at you (A student, FGD school A).

In addition, one student from school B during a FGD said the followings:

> You know us students do not speak English much because of feeling shy to speak in front of many people…. We sometimes get anxiety when are told to speak may be at the assembly during debates, morning speeches….. Being laughed at by our fellow students it is really an embarrassment (A student, FGD school B).

The findings suggest that students do not speak English language as a result of feeling shy and fear of making mistakes and being laughed at by their fellow students which in turn is an embarrassment to them. Therefore this may lead to learners' engagement in a lesson becomes very low thus may result to ineffective learning and hence students will not be able to develop an ability to speak English language. These findings align with Nakhalah (2016) who pinpointed that there are some difficulties in the speaking of the students due to some reasons such as fear of mistake, shyness, anxiety and lack of confidence. In a similar vein, Abdalla and Mustafa (2015) found that students' psychological factors such as fear, shyness and inhibitions are among the constraints towards teaching and learning of speaking skills. In addition, Dil (2009) highlighted that anxiety and unwillingness during the English speaking process are the major obstacles for EFL learners. Anxiety and unwillingness are a result of the fear of being negatively evaluated when committing errors and mistakes, especially in front of their fellow learners. Similarly, Ur (1996) argued that students do not speak since they are afraid about making mistakes, fearful of criticism, or simply shy.

Teachers' Perceptions and Tacit Beliefs about Teaching of Speaking

Findings revealed that teachers perceived the teaching of speaking skills as the most difficult component in language teaching. Teachers believed that teaching learners to communicate using English language both inside and outside classroom setting is a tedious task. Teaching of speaking skills requires supportive environment which allows speaking of English and also teachers are supposed to be competent in pronunciation, intonation and stress as used in English language. For example, teacher (T1) from school A said that:

> To be honest, I find teaching speaking tedious and difficult because of its complexity and it involves a lot of things such as pronunciation, intonation and stress. As the matter of fact, we are not native speakers of this language so we cannot teach it appropriately (Interview, T1 from school A).

In addition, teacher (T5) from school B had a similar view with regard to the teaching of speaking skills. She said that:

> Teaching of speaking skills is a very difficult task because the environment surrounding our students is not friendly. And also some components of speaking itself such as pronunciations, intonations and stress are complex thus make students not to understand them (Interview, T5 from school B).

The findings suggest that teachers perceived the teaching of speaking skills to be difficult unlike the teaching of other language skills such as listening, writing and reading. This is attributed to the nature of learners, complexity of speaking and inadequate knowledge on English speaking skills among teachers. Teachers' perception seems to undermine students' ability to learn speaking skills and it may affect the way they teach speaking skills. In similar vein, Michel (2017) found that teachers perceived the teaching of speaking skills as a difficult task but they believed that students are the ones who need to make efforts to speak in English. In addition, Ahmed (2017) found that teachers perceived that teaching of speaking is the most difficult of the four language skills that is why teaching of speaking is relatively

neglected hence most of the teachers focused on teaching grammar and reading.

Limited Authentic Teaching and Learning Materials

The findings from teachers' interviews revealed that schools do not have authentic materials for teaching speaking skills. Thus, teachers relied much on the use of text books and reference books. For example, teacher (T1) from school A explained that:

> There are a number of challenges, but the big issue here is lack of real materials. I can say, for example, you are teaching pronunciation and you want to show your students the way native speakers pronounce the words. You need to have a recorded video tape of native speakers' conversation voices and the devices such as television so that your students can hear and watch how native speakers pronounce English words (Interview, T1 at school A).

Teacher (T3) from school B had a similar view with regard to the teaching and learning materials of speaking skills. She said that:

> For sure, teaching and learning materials for speaking skills are not available. Sometimes we rely on our textbooks to teach speaking because the real materials are not available. For example, I am teaching job interview, so I am supposed to have real recorded videos of job interview sessions from a real environment; unfortunately, I don't have them since here at school we don't have the required materials. So I only use my textbook with a written sample of a job interview (Interview, T3 from school B).

In addition, FGDs were conducted with students. The findings revealed that there was lack of authentic materials for teaching of speaking skills in schools. For example, a student from school B was quoted as saying that "Normally our teacher comes with different textbooks only in class. So she teaches using those textbooks. In the library, you only find normal written materials especially textbooks which also are few in number".

Similarly, findings from observations revealed that teachers relied on the use of textbooks to teach speaking skills in their classes. For example, the

researcher observed a teacher at school A teaching a sub-topic on "job interview" using a textbook with a sample of written text on job interview. The teacher did not have any other teaching material apart from English subject textbook where he provided examples, elaborations and explanations from the textbook. In addition, the researcher visited a library and found only printed materials for teaching and learning of English subject. Moreover, the same was observed at school B and C in which teachers relied much on the textbook when teaching speaking and also the libraries found in the respective schools had only printed materials for teaching English subject.

These findings suggest that schools do not have authentic materials such as audio-visual on speeches and conversations of how native speakers pronounce English words which reflect real world English language use for teaching and learning of speaking. Thus, teachers relied much on the use of textbooks. This implies that students are likely not to be exposed to English language inputs as used in real life situations. This, in turn, hindered students to develop and improve their speaking ability in communicating orally in English language. These findings support findings by Rababah (2005) who found that authentic materials are not used by the majority of teachers since they are hardly available in schools. In addition, Abdalla and Mustafa (2015) pin pointed that inappropriate teaching materials are among the constraints towards teaching and learning of speaking skills. Nevertheless, Michel (2017) found that inadequate resources for teaching of speaking skills hinder teaching and learning of speaking. As Azri and Al Rashid (2014) contended that using inappropriate teaching materials makes learners face difficulties in learning a foreign language since learners ought to be motivated to succeed in learning any language. Therefore, teaching materials are important in motivating and raising learners' interest.

Limited Supportive Environment towards Speaking of English Language

Findings from teachers' interviews revealed that the surrounding environment at schools do not support speaking of English language due to the sense that English language is only heard and spoken during English subject lessons. For example, teacher (T2) from school A explained that:

> The issue here is lack of supporting environment that encourages the use of English language everywhere, inside and outside the classroom. So students speak little English during English lessons only and none after classes when they go outside classroom. They speak Kiswahili language, and even teachers themselves speak Kiswahili language around the school (Interview, T2 at school A).

Teacher (T3) from school B had similar views with regard to environment that supports the use of English. She said that:

> For sure, environment is challenging since Kiswahili language has dominated communication everywhere at school. So students lack English language exposure due to limited use of the English language. Interestingly, other teachers are using code-mixing and Kiswahili language when teaching other subjects (Interview, T3 from school B).

In addition, findings from students' FGDs confirmed teachers' interviews. It was established that there is limited supportive environment for students to practice speaking of English language. For example, one of students from school B said that:

> I have never seen speaking English being emphasized though there is a slogan, "NO ENGLISH NO SERVICE" but you may find teachers themselves speaking Kiswahili everywhere. So why bother speaking English while our role models (teachers) are speaking Kiswahili (FGD, a student from school B).

Similarly, findings from observations conducted in all sampled schools revealed that there is limited supportive environment for speaking of English language. For example, it was observed at school B that a teacher and students at some point used code-mixing and code-switching when teaching and learning. The teacher was observed explaining some concepts in Kiswahili and students were observed discussing in their groups in Kiswahili. In addition, teachers and students outside classroom setting were observed communicating using Kiswahili language throughout around the school compounds. This was also observed at school A and C where teachers and students used Kiswahili medium to communicate outside classroom setting. Very interesting, teachers in their offices where

the doors labeled with posters "NO ENGLISH NO SERVICE" communicated among themselves using Kiswahili language and even they addressed their students using Kiswahili medium.

The findings suggest that students did not have an opportunity to practice speaking of English language outside classroom context since English language is not emphasised and spoken around the school compound apart from classroom English lessons. The use of Kiswahili language and code-mixing dominated communications across schools' settings, teachers among themselves communicated using Kiswahili and sometimes they used Kiswahili in explaining ideas and concepts when teaching. Moreover, teachers addressed their students in Kiswahili language although they insisted their students to speak English. This may be attributed to lack of language competence among both teachers and their students and poor implementation of language in education policy which advocates for the use of English language as a medium of communication at secondary education level.

Similarly, Ahmed (2017) found that students' inability to speak is due to lack of opportunity to practice speaking since English is very rarely spoken outside the classroom. In the same vein, Abdalla and Mustafa (2015) found that lack of target language environment hinders the teaching of spoken language in secondary schools because there is little opportunity to learn English in a natural environment. Also Kabir (2014) reported that the major challenge that the learners faced in English speaking is lack of supportive environment in which they have very limited opportunity to practice speaking English outside classroom context.

In addition, Mtallo (2015), Sane & Sebonde (2014) and Qorro (2013) contend that English is occasionally used outside the classroom settings, students in government schools do not usually use English language rather they use Kiswahili language when engaging fully in the social, political and economic life of Tanzania, thus they normally do not have platforms to speak English outside the classroom settings. Similarly, Rababa'h (2005) found that lack of a target language environment can be regarded as another factor contributing to speaking problem since this may result to a lack of involvement in real-life situations.

Limited Oral Assessments

Findings from interviews with English subject teachers revealed that students were not orally assessed in speaking. Teachers relied on the national examination setting format to assess their students. For example, T6 from school B said that:

> Normally we assess our students through written exams. To be honest, I have never conducted oral exams to my students. Even national examinations do not assess students' oral communication, speaking is assessed in a written form (Interview, T6 from school B).

In addition, teacher (T8) from school C extended by saying that:

> Time for completing the syllabus is not enough because we have many classes to teach. So we normally use traditional paper and pencil assessment to assess speaking. I think oral assessment is time consuming and it needs a well competent teacher. So normally, I give students some English words to transcribe phonetically so as to assess pronunciation and stress (Interview, T8 from school C).

The verbatim narrations above suggest that teachers do not administer oral assessment because this assessment is time consuming. They use traditional paper and pencil assessment which seems to be less time consuming so as to be able to cover the syllabus on time. In additional, teachers seemed not to have language competence in administering oral assessment which requires teachers to have English language competence.

Moreover, teacher (T1) from school A commented by saying that:

> I normally assess my students by giving them normal written tests with varied questions on speaking topic so as to know their progress on what they have learned. This has been a practice; even national exams do assess students through normal written exams (Interview, T1 from school A).

Findings from FGDs supported teachers' views that students were not orally assessed their speaking ability. For example, one of the students from school A reported that "here at school, we are given written exams with questions on the topic of speaking. For example, a question can be like that

….. explain briefly things to consider when initiating conversations". Similarly, a student from school C adds that "our teacher gives us tests and examinations with questions on the topic of speaking. For example, we are asked to describe English words phonetically"

Similarly, Findings from documentary review on English subject school based examinations showed that students were given written assessment on speaking skills. Students are normally assessed basing on a traditional paper and pencil assessment where students are asked to describe the language rather than performing oral communication in the real life situations. For example, in the following figure, most of the questions aim at assessing how much a student knows about language rather that how well a student is able to use the language in communication.
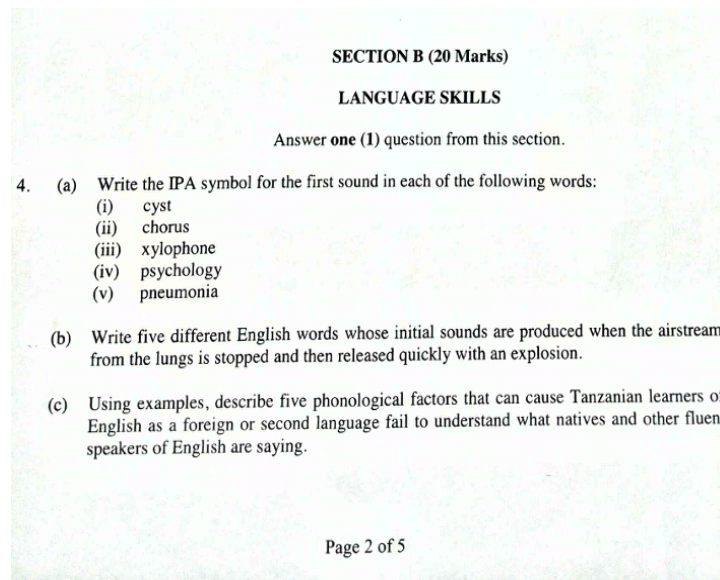

Figure: *An extract of school-based examination questions assessing language skills*

Source: *Field data*

Figure above shows kind of questions that were asked in English subject in school based examinations aiming at assessing students' speaking ability. In particular, questions (4) (a) and (b) intend to assess students' ability to describe English language sounds in written form rather than assessing

students' ability to pronounce in the real life situation. English words as they communicate.

The above findings suggest that students are assessed on the basis of written form tests and examinations with questions that assess students' speaking ability. The setting of the examinations and tests are influenced by the national examination setting format which assesses speaking skills by using the traditional paper and pencil. This implies that students are more likely to be able to make language descriptions rather than being able to communicate using English language in real life situations. The findings are contrary to the English subject syllabus stipulations; according to TIE (2009) continuous assessment of speaking skill consists of oral test in which students are required to be assessed when engaging in interaction. In order to fulfill these assessment requirements, sufficient time in the lessons should be allocated for speaking.

However, the findings concur with those by Maryslessor, Barasa and Omulando (2014) who found that among the challenges teachers faced in the use of the CLT approach in teaching listening and speaking lessons in secondary schools in Kenya is the pressure for grammar based examination. Teachers concentrated on teaching and drilling students on how to pass examinations at the expense of developing communicative competence. Thus, teachers choose to teach the students how to pass examinations and not how to use English in different situations.

In addition, Mwamba (2005) contends that the reasons for poor speaking skills could emanate from lack of emphasis on speaking skills in the curriculum since it is not examined in national examinations. Similarly, Ambu and Saidi (1997) and Al-Lawati (2002) reported that both teachers and students pay little attention to speaking tasks in the course books because speaking is completely not assessed in exams.

Low Students' Self-Motivation and Commitment towards Speaking English Language

Findings from interviews with English subject teachers revealed that many students are less motivated to speak English language. They said that the existence of little students' self-motivation hindered speaking English in secondary schools. For example, Teacher (T7) from school C said that:

> Many students here are not self-motivated to speak English language on their own since they normally speak little English only when we force them to speak. So I can say that they are lacking self-motivation towards speaking the language. (Interview, T7 from school C).

In addition, teacher (T1) from school A reported that:

> Many students lack self-motivation and commitment towards speaking English language. They are not using extra time to practice speaking it outside the classroom context. They rarely speak little English during lessons in classroom then after the lesson they don't bother to practice communicating by using English language among themselves (Interview, T1 at school A).

The above findings suggest that students do not put much effort to practice speaking of English language on their own since they lacked self-motivation and commitment towards speaking it. In addition, teachers seemed not know how to motivate their learners to practice oral communication in English language.

In addition, findings from students' FGDs revealed that students' own desire towards speaking English language was low. For example, a student from school A said that:

> We are not given more opportunity to speak English language because most of the time, during English lessons we use much time in copying notes provided and listening to the teacher. So this reduces our motivation to speak English (FGD, student from school A).

The quote above suggests that teachers provide their students with few opportunities to speak English language because most of the time students copy notes from the teacher. This reduces students to have more opportunities to practice speaking English language.

Another student from school B blamed students for poor language mastering. He said that:

> We as students are not committed our self towards speaking English. You may find a student does not bother to try practicing communicating in English language waiting for a teacher to force him/her to speak (FGD, student from school B).

Similar view was given by a student from school C who said the following:

> We students do not have a habit of practicing things on our own. We just wait for the teacher to tell us what to do. Honestly, we are not self- motivated to learn own our own. This is a problem when it comes to speaking English language (FGD, student from school C).

The above findings suggest that students had little self-motivation towards speaking English language and they put little effort in learning speaking skills. They devoted less time for learning and practicing oral communication among themselves outside classroom setting. In addition, it seems that English subject teachers do not create the learning environment by providing a diversity of learning activities for practicing oral communication in English language. It is expected that provision of such activities would promote students' speaking ability. Similarly Abdalla and Mustafa (2015) revealed that lack of self-motivation among students hinders the teaching of spoken language in secondary schools in Sudan. In addition, similar findings were reported by Maryslessor, Barasa and Omulando (2014) who found that among the challenges teachers faced in the use of the CLT approach in teaching listening and speaking lessons in secondary schools in Kenya was lack of self-motivation for developing communicative competence among students in which many students were not motivated to engage themselves in speaking activities inside and outside classroom context. Furthermore, Al-Hosni (2014) observed that some learners lacked motivation to speak English language because they did not see the need to learn or speak English.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that teaching of speaking skills to students in secondary schools is ineffective due to speaking problems that these students encounter hence the intended objective of enabling students to develop an ability to orally communicate in real life situations will not be

realised. The prevailence of these speaking difficulties deprives students with an opportunity to practice speaking English language for communication purpose hence their ability to engage themselves in English communication becomes limited.

Therefore, in order to flourish the knowledge to counteract speaking difficulties in an EFL setting, the actual description of those challenges and the contexts in which they are created need to be recognized and understood, thus, they can be alleviated through giving this skill more emphasis and attention. Numerous concerns such as teachers, students, learning environment and assessment regulation should be regarded. Thus it is recommended that teachers need to be trained on how to integrate speaking to other skills and how to teach it communicatively. Their awareness of how language is acquired and learned should be raised.

Nevertheless, teachers should ensure that the English language is used throughout students' discussions so as to provide them with a platform to practice speaking English language in its actual use and hence this will improve their speaking ability in communicating using English language. In addition, it is necessary for teachers to get into the habit of addressing their students in English language wherever possible even when they meet outside the classroom hence, students should be exposed to the use of English language both inside and outside classroom settings in which they will have an opportunity to practice speaking English language in the real environment.

Lastly, oral assessment should be used thus, students be assessed basing on actual use of English language in real life situations since this will give them an opportunity to practice the use of English language in communication rather than assessing how much students know about the language through traditional paper and pencil assessment.

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