

Strengthening English Learning in Language Transition Classes by Spiraling English Teachers' Competences in Tanzania

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

English is an important language in Tanzania and the world over. In Tanzania, it is a compulsory school subject in primary and lower secondary (i.e. Forms I to IV) education and a compulsory medium of instruction in secondary tertiary levels of education. However, several studies have consistently reported on low levels of English competence among students in secondary schools in Tanzania. The situation is more evident at the language transition class (Form I). This study aimed at mitigating the challenges encountered in learning English in Form I classes. The study established a School-Based Professional Development (SB-PD) program to improve competence in English among Form I students. Six (6) English teachers and thirty (30) Form I students from three secondary schools in Dodoma Region were involved in this study. The referred teachers formed a learning team and participated in a series of activities which were facilitated by researchers from the University of Dodoma (UDOM).

The teachers worked together in developing short stories and other lesson materials, using them in lessons, observing and receiving feedback from colleagues. The teachers' competences developed during the program were assessed using interviews and observation of students'

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learning focusing on teachers' adoption of effective pedagogical skills. The main question which guided this study was "Which school-based professional development program is likely to enhance the teachers' competences in developing exemplary short story lessons for effective learning?" The findings indicate that English language teachers gained knowledge and competences in English content and effective pedagogy for teaching English. They were also able to develop and implement short story lessons using the current competence-based syllabus. Therefore, the learning team formed by the teachers was able to strengthen its teaching competences.

Keywords: Language transition class; school-based professional development; professional learning team; exemplary lesson materials.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper introduces an action research study that designed, developed, implemented and assessed a School-Based Professional Development (SB-PD) program, which aimed at strengthening English language teachers' teaching competences. The aim was to facilitate effective learning of English among Form I students through the topic of interpretation of short stories in the secondary schools syllabus in Tanzania. Language is one of the most useful tools for communication in our societies. Without it, we could not have thoughts expressible to others, nor could we engage in the activities that commonly take place in the society we build ourselves [1,2]. Moreover, [3] assert that education is carried out largely through the medium of language, thus, language is very significant in the education process. Additionally, [4] argues that language is not everything in education, but without language, everything is nothing in education. Language plays a crucial role in learning, and if the learner is handicapped in the language of instruction, then, learning may not take place at all as the teacher and learner will seldom communicate.

The fluency and proficiency in English language are recognized as the most important learning tools in the Tanzanian education system. They are also important international tools to compete in the global economy for the increasingly mobile international community [5]). Both international and national policies, with countless initiatives, emphasize the effective learning of English language to acquire English fluency and proficiency [6]. In this veil, the Government of Tanzania (GoT) has made countless efforts to improve English learning among its citizens since its independence. However, several studies, including the baseline study conducted at the beginning of this project reveal the challenges in the learning of English language in Form I classes in Tanzania. The challenges include teachers' incompetence in English and

insufficient materials for students' effective learning. This paper presents the teachers' attempt at teaching using a Form I textbook called *Hawa the Bus Driver* by Mabala [7] as one of the sources of short stories. In Tanzanian context, such books are used for teaching English to secondary school entrants in early months to enhance their language skills, which will in turn enhance learning of both English and the content in other subjects. The learning materials support teaching and learning; but they do not work alone to facilitate teaching and learning. The materials which are accessible to students will have a measurable impact when are in the hands of teachers who have the ability to implement teaching and learning strategies that develop language skills. During the study, the plan was centered on working with teachers to develop effective language teaching materials across in their schools in Dodoma Municipality in Tanzania.

1.1 Background and Statement of the Problem

English is the medium of instruction in secondary schools and higher education in Tanzania while Kiswahili is the medium of instruction in primary schools. English is taught as a subject both primary and secondary schools. The learners who complete primary education are expected to have achieved adequate competence in English to be able to cope with it as the medium of instruction throughout secondary education. For this to be attained effectively, the government of Tanzania (GoT) through the Ministry of Education and Vocational training (MoEVT) decided to revise its primary and secondary education curricula. After the review, a Competence-Based English language Syllabus (CES) was introduced. The new syllabus requires teachers to teach English language using the communicative approach so as to build the competence and proficiency of learners in English language [8]. Contrary to the expectations, the English proficiency and

competences of students in secondary schools in Tanzania have remained a big challenge for a number of decades. Such challenge is apparently more serious among Form I students as they move from primary school where Kiswahili is the medium of instruction to Form I where *English is the medium of instruction*. The majority of these Form I students are not conversant with the new medium of instruction in this language transition class [2,6].

There are several research-based findings which show that the majority of secondary school students in Tanzania, especially those in Form I have inadequate English language proficiency and competencies for effective learning of concepts in various subjects. For example, findings by [9] indicate that low levels of English language proficiency are obstacles to students' learning in secondary schools. The findings in question support [10] and [2] who explain that secondary school learners and teachers in Tanzania have difficulties in using the language because of inadequate proficiency. This problem is compounded further by lack of learning materials as well as teachers' incompetence in using the newly introduced communicative approach syllabus [6].

The English teaching and learning process in Form I classes in Tanzania have been faced with a number of challenges. The introduction of the competence-based English syllabus with its immediate implementation did not go hand in hand with the training of teachers. The lack of teachers' training has further compounded English learning challenges. For instance, the students find it difficult to learn English as a subject and use it to learn other subjects at this language transition class. The English teachers are reported to be less competent in both English language and pedagogy. Consequently, the students are observed learning just by copying and memorizing the contents with little engagement in any meaningful learning. Eventually, the students complete secondary school education with both little English proficiency and competencies in their school subjects. In such a situation, mounting rigorous and continuous professional development programs, that may support the teachers' competences in English language teaching sounds crucial.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were as follows;

1. To explore the extent of the current challenges in English teaching in Form I classes.
2. To design and develop short stories lessons using the SB-PD program accompanied with formative assessment strategies.
3. To assess the efficiency of the SB-PD program in addressing the challenges of English teaching to Form I students.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The social constructivism theory of learning proposed by [11] and [12] form the theoretical stance of this study. The constructivism theory focuses on supporting the students' own effort towards meaningful learning. The learners, either individually or socially construct meaning as they learn [11,12]. For effective learning to occur, the learning environment is supposed to be rich in opportunities that encourage students' engagement in the learning process. The teaching and learning materials such as short stories lessons are expected to have a variety of minds and hands-on learning activities such as talking, writing, discussing and making presentations to mention a few. The constructivism theory was used as it considers the learner as an important key stakeholder in the learning process. The prior knowledge of the learners is very important to be taken on board [12]. The teachers' role is just to give students guidance to take initiative for their own learning experiences [11]. The theory helped the study to understand the significance of organizing the students into carefully arranged groups for better learning during SB-PD program. In the constructivist classroom, the students work primarily in groups during knowledge construction in an interactive and dynamic process [13].

There is focus and emphasis on social and communication skills as well as collaboration and exchange of ideas. This is contrary to the traditional classroom in which students work primarily alone; learning is achieved through repetition, and the subjects are strictly adhered to and are guided by a textbook. Some activities encouraged in the constructivist classrooms are classroom discussions, field trips, projects, experimentation and the like. In the constructivist classrooms, the teacher's role is to prompt and facilitate discussion. Thus, the teacher's main focus should be on guiding students by asking questions that will lead them to develop their own

conclusions on the subject. Therefore, in the SB-PD program, the teachers were exposed to a variety of learning experiences as they would interact among themselves in designing and developing activity oriented short stories lessons for Form I students.

2.1 Location of the Study

The study was conducted in Dodoma Region in central Tanzania. The academic performance of the students in both primary and secondary schools in the region has not improved for quite some time now. Consequently, the region is ranked at the bottom level in terms of national performance ranks [14]. Moreover, the baseline study conducted at the beginning of this study revealed that most teachers in this region had limited exposure to professional development programs since the introduction of the Competence Based Education (CBE) in Tanzania. Yet, in the region, there are good numbers of curriculum developers, experts in developing teaching and learning materials, as well as developers of teacher development programs. Some of these are found at the University of Dodoma (UDOM). Hence, the choice of the region is due to its wealth in education experts, several of whom work in this outstanding state university. The collaboration of these experts, researchers and teachers in the study would promote the initiatives in developing educational programs to strengthen both teachers' quality and students' English learning. The Dodoma Municipality was purposely selected for the study based on the fact that most of the experts would continuously be consulted during and even after the study. The Municipality of Dodoma has 30 wards and each ward has about two secondary schools.

According to the baseline study, these wards have established secondary schools with at least two English teachers each. These teachers appeared to have remarkable experiences in teaching literary topics to Form I students, who are the focus of the present study. Three (3) out of 30 wards were purposely selected to be involved in this study. The referred wards included Ngh'ongh'onha, Kilimani and Makole. The selected wards are close to each other, which facilitated communication between the researchers and teachers during the designing, developing and assessing of the School-Based Professional Development (SB-PD) program. The closeness of the wards saved time and costs of the participating teachers during the

implementation of the program, thus encouraging them to form a strong and sustainable network of English teachers.

Three secondary schools (School A, B and C), one from each of Ngh'ongh'onha, Kilimani, and Makole wards respectively were purposely selected. The schools are relatively close to each other and are near the university. With this closeness, the communication among teachers in the schools and among the experts from the university was easy and less costly. This closeness also simplified attendance of teachers in the professional development sessions at school B which acted as a resource centre throughout the study. In addition, allowed easy mobility of the participants to each school during the teaching, observation of colleagues, follow up sessions and peer coaching after classroom observations. These were the essential stages in this action research study. The teachers in these schools formed a professional network, visiting one another to share experiences. Among the experiences shared was expertise in teaching topics about literary works in Form I. In each of the schools, there was at least one teacher with considerable experiences in this area. In general, the teachers in these schools agreed to participate actively in all stages of the action research study.

2.2 Population and Study Sample

The target population comprised English language teachers, who were teaching Form I classes, Form I students, and researchers who included curriculum experts and linguists. The English language teachers were involved in participating in the developed SB-PD program where they were oriented in designing and developing the short stories lessons' materials. The Form I students were beneficiaries of the lessons' materials and improved pedagogy developed in this study. They were in a transition state from Kiswahili (at primary school level) to English (at secondary school level) as the medium of instruction. The Form I students have been observed to face difficulties in acquiring English proficiency during the baseline study conducted prior to this study and hence, end up with poor performance even in other subjects. Thus, the teachers who attended the professional development programs designed and developed during the current study are expected to teach Form I students the skills, knowledge and competences acquired in the program. The curriculum experts and linguists

reviewed and appraised the program and the materials developed during the prototyping stages. Eventually, their valuable appraisals assisted in refining and balancing the improvement of the program and materials designed during the study.

A total of six (6) English language teachers of Form I, two (2) from each of the three (3) selected schools were accepted to participate and were involved in the study. The teachers accepted to participate in the study from the designing, prototyping and assessment stages of the study. Six (6) teachers were relatively enough in comparison to available resources during the professional development program. A total of thirty (30) Form I students, ten (10) from each school were purposely selected and participated fully in the study. The number of students was enough to work with when trying out and getting feedback on the materials and lessons designed and taught by the teachers during the study.

Two (2) curriculum experts from the University of Dodoma, College of Education were involved in this study. The experts had an outstanding experience in designing curriculum, teaching and learning materials, teaching and learning resources in schools and the new teaching approach as suggested in the Competence Based Education (CBE). Moreover, one expert in linguistics from the University of Dodoma, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, with experience in designing short stories and analysis of various literary works, was involved in this study.

2.3 Study Approach

The study adopted qualitative ethnographic research approach. The qualitative approach was used to explore the classroom practices and interaction processes during the teaching of the lessons on short story topics developed during the study. The qualitative approach enabled the study to describe how teachers felt about the procedures and interactive processes and what they believed about the professional development program during designing, prototyping and assessment stages of the study. However, aspect of the quantitative approach such as frequencies, and descriptive tables were used in collecting, analyzing and reporting some of the findings. The approach provided an opportunity for the researchers to express their feelings and give advice during the review of the

proposed professional development program and developed materials. The ethnographic research approach was also used to describe and understand the processes. For example, it was used to describe the meanings and opinions teachers gave as they were interacting with the various components of the program in this action research study. This approach was the possible means of understanding the complexity of classroom contexts as well as the characteristics of the developed teaching and learning materials. The used approach also allowed the assessment of the teachers' interpretations of the acquired competences in their natural classroom settings during the development stages of the program.

The study was arranged in such a way that the involved six (6) teachers met in a one-day workshop in school B. During the workshop, the teachers had time to know the objective of the study, meet with experts, and study the newly introduced English language syllabus. The teachers also reflected on the various ways of designing and developing teaching and learning materials. The teachers planned the timetable for developing and prototyping the lessons' materials they would develop on short stories topic. They also planned a program of visiting each teacher in his/her school to observe and review the lessons developed by each of the teachers. After the workshop, the researchers had the opportunity to join the teachers during the school visits. It was through this way that the teachers collaborated among themselves and with the researchers to come up with a professional link in designing the intervention to address the Form I students' challenges in English language learning.

2.4 The Study Design

For effective SB-PD program to facilitate the smooth implementation of the short stories lessons using the communicative approach embedded in the constructivism learning theories, the action research study design was adopted. With this design, the teachers were guided to learn the philosophy of the newly introduced syllabus by doing and reflecting upon their experiences and adjusting their ways of doing things accordingly. The action research design gave the teachers opportunities to plan, implement, observe, and reflect as they developed the new teaching and learning materials deemed potential for effective students' English learning. Three main stages, namely

orientation, prototyping, and assessment were identified as shown in Fig. 1.

The first stage of this study design was a orientation stage. The stage involved the baseline study and the analysis of documents (such as English syllabus, schemes of work and lesson plans) and needs identification. The information gained from this stage assisted in the designing of preliminary guidelines of the short stories lessons' materials. It also led to the establishment of the School-Based Professional Development (SB-PD) program in the study area as an intervention to active and extensive support for the teachers during the learning and implementation of the competence-based English syllabus, through a maximized collaboration among the teachers. The prototyping stage involved the try-out of the short stories lessons' materials in the actual environment. This stage included the appraisal by various experts such as linguists, curriculum developers and teachers and classroom trials in Form I classes. The SB-PD program exposed the teachers to development of materials which reflect the classroom context. As [15] reveal, the prototyping stage is suitable for the processes and development of the products that potentially meet the criteria of internal consistency and effectiveness. The idea behind establishment of this stage was to allow the researchers to "learn by doing". This revolved around proposing specific guidelines of the invention first, and then using them in small scale with modifications of the versions based on formative evaluation of the material [15]. By using the formative assessment results, the versions were tried out and improved several times, until the needed perfection was attained.

The assessment stage involved the process of determining the effectiveness of the developed School-Based Professional Development (SB-PD) program. The focus of this stage was to analyze the extent to which the developed SB-PD program was able to address the challenges which English language teachers faced during the teaching and learning process as identified during the baseline study at the beginning. This assessment of the effectiveness of the SB-PD program involved studying the quality of the short story lessons' materials and the actual practice of teaching the collaborative lessons.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented and discussed according to the stages of the research design

which involved the orientation, prototyping and assessment cycles.

3.1 Findings from Orientation Stage

The findings from this stage indicate that teaching English language to Form I students in Tanzania is challenging in three ways. Firstly, the students experience abrupt change of the medium of instruction and seem to be incompetent in English language. Secondly, teaching using the newly introduced competence-based approach is a challenge to most of the teachers since they had never attended any training concerning the approach. Thirdly, the implementation of the new syllabus was not accompanied by the development of the teachers' guides and students' learning materials. Because of this situation, the teachers still implement the new English syllabus by using the conventional approaches and strategies.

Detailed analysis of the data indicates that the majority of teachers were unable to prepare and implement the competence-based lessons. The findings indicate that the teachers had their lesson plans which were prepared early before actual English lessons. However, basically, each lesson plan was observed to bore information similar to the schemes of work. Moreover, further analysis of the lesson plans showed that some of them were not prepared for actual use but as a formality only. For example, a teacher from school B (TSB) wrote in her lesson plan that she would visit the library with students as a method of interpreting the literary work topic. She also wrote that she would use audio-visual aids in that lesson. The use of audio-visual aids was also observed in the TSB scheme of work. Surprisingly, it was later observed that there was neither library nor electric connection in that school. Thus, what the teachers wrote was actually not realistic in that school. From this practice, it was concluded that the lesson plans were not for actual use but for other reasons. One possible reason behind mentioning the library was that it appeared in the syllabus and just copied without considering the actual school situation. This indicates that some teachers may design learning activities knowing that it is impossible to implement them. It is therefore important to note that sometimes the teachers prepare the lesson plans just to indicate what they are required to do by the syllabus and not for the sake of the effectiveness and efficiency of their lessons. It may also be possible that they prepare lesson plans in order to please the

academic officers and school inspectors who sometimes visit them. Because of pressure of time, the academic officers and school inspectors only end up assessing the lesson plans and not actual teaching.

The interviewed teachers reported that they lacked the skills for teaching using the competence-based syllabus. As the result, they continued teaching using the approach they had been using before. Some of the teachers complained about lack of teaching and learning materials including relevant teaching aids for implementing the competence-based curriculum. Some of the teachers complained about the preparation and use of demonstration and hands-on activities. According to them, this was a waste of time. Most of them were observed to have limited knowledge and skills in planning and using the techniques such as role-play. The findings showed that the teachers lacked important skills and knowledge about the lesson preparation and implementation. Most of the lesson plans observed lacked sufficient engaging activities for students particularly when it comes to interpreting short stories. Moreover, the shortage of teaching guides and other learning resources such as class readers were among the challenges observed.

Worse still, the teachers lacked opportunities for professional development programs that would help them in the planning and implementation of lessons. The teachers were not competent in teaching interpreting literary works as far as the content and the use of interactive methods. The teachers were of the opinion that the topic of interpreting short stories was the most difficult for them to teach and students to learn. In addition, they did not believe in learning through collaborative activities as an effective method to update their knowledge, skills and practices. One teacher from school C (TSC) commented that:

“... We need an expert to orient us on the newly introduced syllabus. There is nothing we can share to learn among ourselves ...”
(Field Data, 2015).

This indicates that the teachers were of the opinion that only formal training model of in-service education is the only way to learn about the preparation of the lesson plans and the use of interactive approaches such as role-play. According to [16] and [17], teachers are the center for any school reform and improvement process that bring about effective students'

learning. For this reason, mounting effective professional development programs is thought important at this juncture [13,17].

However, not all professional development programs are effective to bring about the desired objectives [17]. Thus, any effort to assist the teachers of this kind needs a careful planning of a model that would be potentially promising. Ward [18] proposed the school based workshop as being useful in identifying the need and solutions within the school context and developing appropriate measures to bring about effective learning among students. Moreover, the school-based professional programs for these teachers need to be continuous and sustainable [16]. Thus, [19] suggests a professional development program that is geared in developing professional links among teachers as a more promising one.

3.2 Findings from Prototyping Stage

During this stage, a school-based professional development (SB-PD) program was developed where six teachers and the experts had an opportunity to meet, design and implement the teaching materials based on the literary work topic in their schools. They planned together the lesson, one implemented it in the class, and then all discuss the lesson and set strategies to improve it. The findings indicate that this arrangement helped the teachers to revisit and refined their beliefs and methods of doing things better. The teachers were observed to plan lessons together that were actually realistic to the school environment. Moreover, the teachers were observed to use interactive teaching approaches that included role-play in their lessons. This indicated that the teachers gained more knowledge particularly when visited one another to observe the lesson. They also gained more knowledge when assisted each other the appraisals of the lessons implemented during this study. It eventually helped them to change their pedagogical orientations by employing interactive learning strategies that encourage students' participation in the learning effort than before. Moreover, the lesson materials they developed during the study (See the Appendix) were considered as an outstanding experience and a motivation towards their efforts to develop more of this to other topics.

3.3 Findings from the Assessment Stage

The effectiveness of the SB-PD program developed during this study was assessed

focusing mainly on the teachers' change in teaching and students' experiences in learning. The findings revealed that the teachers acquired new orientations in teaching as well as new skills and knowledge by the end of the study. The findings also revealed that students' engagement during the teaching and learning process increase. The findings further indicated that the teachers were eager to learn the concepts of the newly introduced Competence-Based Syllabus (CBS) and its approach. In addition, the teachers were observed participating in planning, practicing and implementing activities that were potentially important to involve students. All teachers agreed that being in team work was an important opportunity to learn the effective ways of developing lessons. They all agreed that observing others during role-playing or classroom teaching was important to improve their teaching approaches (see Table 1).

Moreover, the findings in Table 1 revealed that, all teachers agreed that the supports from their colleagues were inevitable for them to grow professionally. This indicates teachers' change from the beginning where they did not believe if they can learn from one another. This shows that professional collaboration is always important among the members of the team [19]. In addition, the findings from the interview indicate that teachers were engaged actively during the study and hence another reason for their learning. This is the essence of the Chinese proverb *"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand"*. Furthermore, one teacher from school A (TAS) added that visiting other teachers' class was among the approaches which made her to learn useful things that she could hardly get from books. This indicates that teachers learn best by doing and building their own understandings rather than being told [16].

More findings from the assessment stage indicate specific skills learned by teachers during the study. These included the ability to prepare the lesson plans and use interactive teaching approaches as exemplified in Table 2.

The data in Table 2 indicate teachers' change with remarkable new experiences in developing lesson plans, using the interactive teaching approaches, ability to contextualize the story and their English proficiency increases. Before this study, findings showed that the teachers' lesson plans were not compatible with the schemes of work, syllabus and the context. However, the

teachers were noted to be able to address this problem as a result of participating in this study.

3.4 Students' Learning

Thirty (30) students, ten (10) from each school, were involved during the SB-PD programs in this study. The questionnaires and interviews were used to gather the information concerning their perceptions in learning after their teachers attended the study. All students showed that they valued the active role of their teachers in teaching literature lesson using the new approaches such as role-play model. The majority of the students from all schools wanted their teachers to motivate them to learn literature through role-play and vary their styles in teaching literature/short stories.

The result from the questionnaire and interviews indicated that the students' opinion were very positive. The findings indicated that the students liked the lesson and appreciated a lot to the lesson. Students also indicated that they had enjoyed role-playing when learning, this increase positive reaction towards learning short stories lesson. Most of them revealed that they normally do not do any role play during the lessons. During this study, it had been their first time to role-play the story from the book. One of the students from school A said;

"... I acted as a bus driver (Hawa) in this lesson. This was the first time where students role-play some characters from the short story. This supported me to master the basics of the English language ..." (Source; Field data 2015).

The Second student from school C commented;

"... Teachers are now coming to the class a variety of learning materials, We are now doing a lot of activities during the lesson. We are pronouncing words, talking, presenting our tasks. I like it and hope to perform well in this subject ..." (Field data 2015).

These revelations indicate that teachers changed to the extent that students are enjoying and following actively the lessons than before. Table 3 supports these findings by giving students' experiences on the teachers' teaching techniques and the extent they influence their learning. All students showed that they valued the active role of their teachers in teaching short stories component. More than 85% students from both school appreciated teacher who used a lot of own prepared materials to teach short stories

(literature) and the one who gave regular feedback on students' performance in class.

Moreover, a few students identified some aspects they did not like most in the lesson. Twelve (12) students (40%) did not like the teacher who criticizes them during the class presentation. They said that this confuses them. They suggested that the teacher should reserve her criticisms or corrections until they finish the presentation. Moreover, about 26.7% of the students do not like the teacher to use a lot of

role-play when teaching, with the reason that it uses a lot of time and more work during the preparations. The students who participated in the role-play face challenges as they were given nick names which sometimes connote negative. However, all these findings indicated that the teachers used more interactive teaching methods during teaching that involve students in the learning endeavor. These observations were not in the teachers' repertoire before this study.

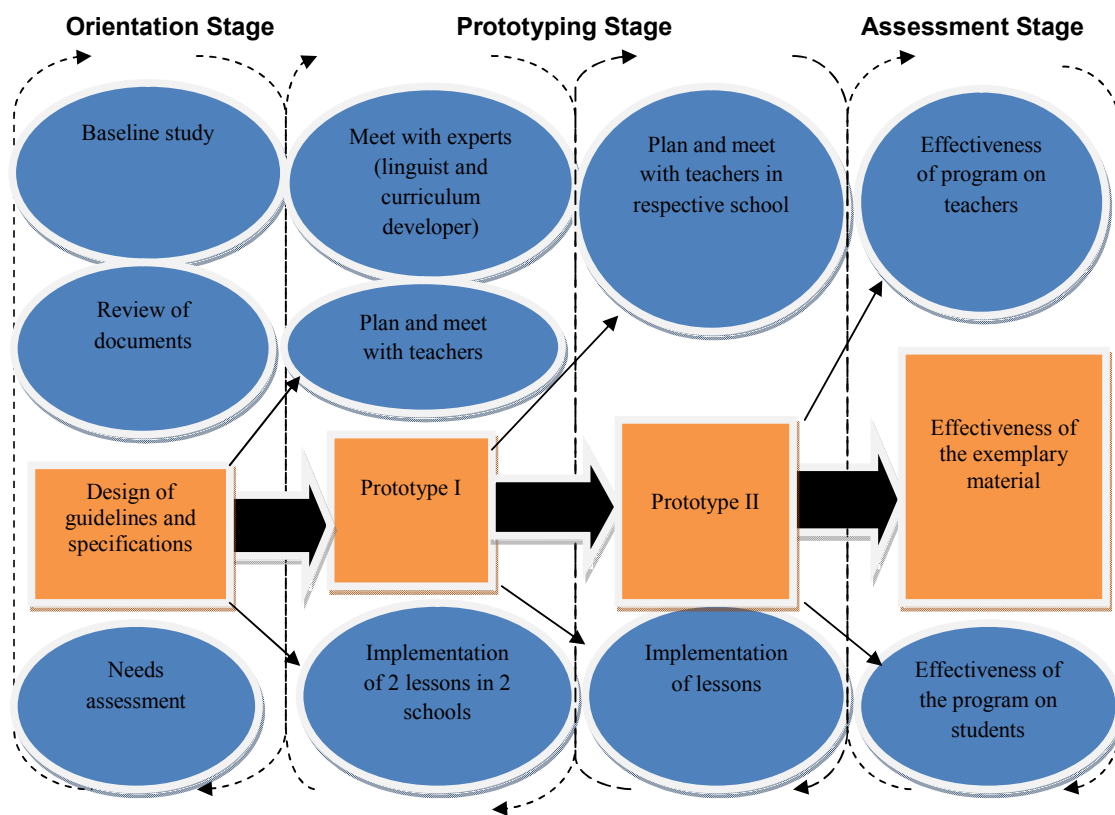


Fig. 1. The study design

Key: 1. The areas shaded into orange signify the increase in the desirable characteristics of the SB-PD program based on formative evaluation.

2. The cycles shaded into blue indicate the interaction among the components

Table 1. Team-work in teachers' learning

Item	Yes/Good	%	No/Bad	%
The lessons which we planned together were very useful	6	100	0	0
Observation sessions improved my teaching approaches	6	100	0	0
I got new skills to improve my teaching approaches	6	100	0	0
I need support from colleagues in teaching literature	6	100	0	0

Source: Field data (2015)

Table 2. Teachers' learning

Item	E	%	M	%	P	%
I am very comfortable to prepare a lesson plan now	5	100	0	0	0	0
I can apply new skills that I learned to my class	4	80	1	20	0	0
I learned lesson planning and the use of interactive approaches by observing my colleague	4	80	1	20	0	0
Reading short stories improves my English	2	40	3	60	0	0
I can relate the content in the text with the activities that I role played during the study	3	60	2	40	0	0

Key: E-strong agreement, M-moderate agreement, P-poor agreement.

Source: Field Data (2015)

Table 3. Students' perceptions

Item	Yes	%	Not necessary	%	No	%
I like the teacher when explains the content of the lesson	30	100	0	0	0	0
I like the teacher when uses role-play method when teaching	11	37	11	36.7	8	26.7
I like the teacher who follow the text during lesson	19	63	9	30	2	6.67
It is important for the teacher to give summary of the book before reading	30	100	0	0	0	0
It's important for the teacher to motivate students	30	100	0	0	0	0
I like the teacher when vary teaching styles	17	57	12	40	1	3.33
I prefer to learn by role-play in classroom	30	100	0	0	0	0
I like the teacher who criticize during presentation	16	53	2	6.67	12	40

Source: Field data (2015)

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The findings from the current study have indicated that teachers who participated in the proposed SB-PD program perceived their knowledge on competence-based approaches to have been sufficient for them to apply the same in the teaching field. The findings further revealed that English teachers gained more knowledge and competences as well as the pedagogical skills regarding the current English syllabus content as a result of taking an active part in the SB-PD program. Interestingly, they were able to prepare and implement the lessons on the short stories topics quite easily than before. The findings revealed that the teachers were of the opinion that the SB-PD program assisted them in building and sharpening their skills more often. Besides, they acknowledged that through the program, they were able to establish a professional link that could continually exist and help them to consult one another to solve some of the teaching challenges that could emerge for the time being and those likely to happen in future. The teachers also claimed that the techniques used to design the short stories teaching materials during the SB-PD program paved the way for them to design and develop

more materials even in other topics suggested in English syllabus.

Based on the significance of the SB-PD program to both teachers and students who participated in the study, there is a necessity for the collaboration between the teachers, students, researchers and other experts in the educational institutions around. Such collaborative teams of professionals will always meet, discuss the challenges that they face and develop a number of school based interventions to address such challenges. The potentials of forming such a network of professionals teams to strengthen the teachers' competence are evident from the current study and, hence, the need to scale it up.

DISCLAIMER

This manuscript was presented in the conference "Conference on English and Communication: Exploring Communication Competence in the Industry and Academy".

Available link is:

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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APPENDIX

A Sample of the Lesson Designed and Developed by the Teachers

LESSON ONE: INTRODUCTION TO SHORT STORIES

PRELIMINARIES

Lesson Objectives

Students should be able to:

1. Define the term short story.
2. Outline characteristics of short stories.
3. Mention the reasons for studying short stories.

INTRODUCTION: 05 Minutes

On your own, write down the meaning of short story then discuss and share with your fellow and your views then come up with a single definition.



I would like to introduce to you the “term short story” which is the part of our lesson.



A *short story* is a fictional work of prose which is shorter in length than a novel. The short story should be read in one sitting, anywhere from a half an hour to two hours. In contemporary fiction, the short story can range from 1,000 to 20,000 words. Because of the shorter length, the short story usually focuses on one plot, main character (with a few minor additional characters), and central theme. The short stories also lend themselves more to experimentation that is, using uncommon prose styles or literary devices to tell the story.

PRESENTATION: 30 Minutes

Why short stories?

The short stories are important for student's learning. They help them in learning English easily. The short stories help students to develop positive attitude towards a foreign language and enrich their learning experiences. It is important to select a story that is at the 'instructional level' for the majority of students in the class.

In a group of five students, discuss why a short story is good then, each group should present what was discussed.

Discussion will be done during the presentation with the help of the teacher.

Teacher should write on the board the reasons for short stories being important.

WHY SHORT STORIES

Historically, it has always been a popular mode of amusement. It provides a distraction that can be savored and enjoyed quickly. The short stories are important to student's learning. They help them in learning English language smoothly. They also help students to develop positive attitude towards the foreign language and enrich their learning experiences. It is important to select a story which is at the 'instructional level' for the majority of students in the class. An instructional level text is the one in which the student is able to read at least 90% of the words accurately and understand no less than 75% of the overall content (Loukia, 2006). If the text is too difficult, the teacher is expected to spend some time explaining vocabulary and scaffolding student learning. The students are also expected to spend some time focusing on word recognition struggle to understand the meaning and therefore comprehend the story.

The students in group should listen to the guide from the teacher and write down characteristics of short stories.



Discuss with students about the common features of short stories



Teacher should guide students to write the characteristics of short stories.



STUDENT'S ACTIVITIES

Expected characteristics of short stories to be mentioned

Short stories make the students' reading task easier because they are simple and short in comparison with other literary genres.

They enhance the level of the readers' worldviews about different cultures and groups of the people.

They provide more creative, encrypt, challenging texts that require personal exploration supported with prior knowledge for advanced level of the readers.

They motivate the learners to read because such short stories are authentic materials.

They offer the world of wonders and mystery.

Lastly, they give the students the chance to use their creativity.

Teacher with student should discuss and write at least five characteristics of short stories from each group.



CHARACTERISTICS OF SHORT STORIES

Short stories tend to be less complex than novels. A short story will usually focus on only one incident, has a single plot and setting, limited number of characters, and covers a short period of time. In longer

forms of fiction, the stories tend to contain certain core elements of dramatic structure: exposition (the introduction of setting, situation and main characters); complication (the event of the story that introduces the conflict); rising action, crisis (the decisive moment for the protagonists and their commitment to a course of action); climax (the point of highest interest in terms of the conflict and the point of the story with the most action); resolution (the point of the story when the conflict is resolved); and moral. Because of their shortness, short stories may or may not follow this pattern. Some do not follow the patterns at all. For example, modern short stories occasionally have an exposition. More typical, although it is an abrupt beginning, the story starts at the middle of the action. As with longer stories, the plots of short stories also have the climax, crisis, or turning-point. However, the endings of many short stories are abrupt and open and may or may not have moral or practical lesson.

REINFORCEMENT: 30 Minutes

Student's Activity

To read the sample of story given by the teacher in a pair.

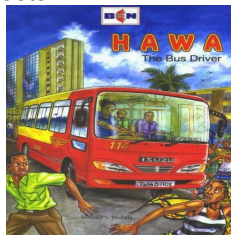


Teacher Activity

Present a sample of short story for students to read in groups. Guide students to read it aloud for everyone to hear.

A SAMPLE OF STORY

One day, Hawa was in Ubungo, she saw a bus standing by the side of the road. The driver was standing outside smoking a cigarette. Suddenly, the bus started to move. The brakes were not working. Hawa shouted to the driver but he did nothing. He was too afraid because the bus was already moving fast. Quickly, Hawa ran across the road and jumped into the bus, she blew the horn to warn people. Then, she tried the foot brake; it didn't work. She tried the hand brake; it didn't work. The bus was now going very fast Hawa took the gear stick and using all her weight, all her 82 kilos, she forced the gear to work. The bus shook and slowed down and finally stopped. Hawa was sweating and everyone came to congratulate her but she just got out of the bus and walked away. From that day, all the drivers accepted and respected Hawa. She was one of them. Soon, the first song about Hawa began to be heard in the streets.



LESSON CONSOLIDATION and CLOSURE: 15 Minutes

Student Activities

To write the summary of the story

Ask and answer the questions given by fellow students.



The teacher summarizes the lesson. The teacher should give a brief summary of the entire lesson by reminding students on the discussed issues (lesson objectives), clarify some misconceptions from the definition of short stories to its discussed characteristics. Also, he/she should ask students if there is any question(s) or suggestion(s) on the lesson presented.

He/she should direct students to find the references for further reading and tell them about the next lesson.



The teacher finishes the lesson by telling the students that they have learnt the meaning of short story in that lesson, the reasons for short stories and major characteristics of short stories. He/she has to inform the students that the students have practiced several activities to enhance their reading skills which are very important in learning stories. The students are informed that they shall meet their teacher in the next lesson to learn about *Hawa the bus driver*. They are reminded to keep their book and read the first chapter before they start reading it next period.

Also, the teacher assigns some reading task to students so that they can engage themselves in more readings.

The students should be asked if there is any new thing that they have learned from that lesson.

Lastly, the students should be reminded to ask their parents or elderly people about short stories and their uses when at home.

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