

# **Communicative Approach: Implementation and Implications for French Pedagogy in Selected Secondary Schools in Central Region Counties, Kenya**

**Harrison M. Mulwa**

## **Abstract**

Performance in French as a foreign language (FFL) in secondary schools in Kenya had declined since the year 2006. Student teachers entering university to pursue studies in French are finding it more and more challenging to follow lectures delivered in French. Performance by the students in the Form four Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (KCSE) seemed to be affected when the format was changed to include testing of communicative competence, in all skills. To rescue this situation, the need arose for the teachers of French to use pedagogical approaches that would enhance communicative competence in FFL teaching and learning. The communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) had been adopted as a method for use in the teaching of FFL in Kenya. The observation that there has been a decline in performance in French since this change, along with others, implied that there could have been some problem in the implementation and/or application of this approach in the teaching of FFL. This study therefore investigated the pedagogical implications of use of the communicative approach in the teaching of French in the Kenyan Secondary Schools. Specifically the study had the following objectives: (i) To establish activities that facilitate the application of the CLT (ii) Establish teachers' preparedness in using the communicative approach, (iii) Find out other methods being used to teach French, (iv) Establish the challenges faced by teachers and students of French and how these were mitigated, (v) Establish availability and use of resources for teaching and learning of FFL. The descriptive survey design was used and for the study and the target population of the study were the teachers of French, students and administrators. Ten schools in the Central region counties were sampled for the study. The instruments for data collection were the questionnaire, interviews, observation schedule and Focus Group Discussions. The data of the study were analysed through qualitative analysis methods, while inferential data was analysed using the Chi square. It is hoped that the findings and recommendations of this study will be helpful to the French language curriculum developers, teachers of French and school administrators. The findings of the study showed that there was a marked degree of omissions in the teaching of French, at Form Three level, in relation to use of the CLT. The study also showed that there was a significant difference between the theoretical and practical aspects of the CLT, among teachers. Limitations of resources and time were other causes of ineffective implementation of the method. Recommendations were made to policy makers to consider designing curriculum with, in mind, the factors which made it problematic to implement the CLT fully, for effective acquisition of communicative competence,

**Keywords:** Communicative Approach, Implementation and Implications, French Pedagogy Secondary Schools, Central Region Counties, Kenya

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