

Challenges Teachers Face in the Use of the Communicative Language Teaching Approach in the Teaching Listening and Speaking Lessons in Lugari District, Kenya

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Abstract:

Teachers face a number of challenges in teaching listening and speaking in languages. These include students' lack of motivation for developing communicative competence; low English proficiency, and resistance to class participation. In addition to these are teachers' misconceptions, lack of training in CLT combined with deficiencies in sociolinguistic competence, little time for developing materials for communicative classes, and large classes. Other difficulties include grammar based examinations; insufficient funding; and lack of support. The study sought to find out the challenges faced in the use of the CLT approach for teaching Listening and Speaking lessons among teachers in Lugari District in Kenya. The study was grounded on Dell Hymen' theory of communicative competence. The descriptive research design was adopted, with direct observation and interview methods of data collection being used. Note-taking and tape-recording were used to record class proceedings and interviews. A total of twelve secondary schools were selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Fourteen teachers of English were involved. A descriptive analysis of data was done. Frequency tables were used to highlight the data. This helped to establish the extent to which CLT was used. The study revealed that the major challenge lay on time, and wide syllabus. These, together with the large classes limited the teachers' ability to involve learners in meaningful participatory activities. The pressure for formal examinations made the teacher concentrate on training and drilling the learners on how to pass the exams at the expense of communicative competence. The teachers chose to teach the learners how to pass exams and not how to use English in different situations. The result of this is that the learner will not be able to speak English both in school and after school. A teacher whose aim is to cover the syllabus will be unwilling to follow an approach that does not recognize that second language learning in a class room set- up is guided by what has already been prescribed. To such a teacher CLT is a waste of time. Tasks should be formulated by students themselves because learner-initiated questions have the advantage that will lead the learner to develop those strategies for understanding which will ultimately take him beyond the tutelage of the teacher. These questions should be answered by fellow students.

Keywords: Challenges, Teachers, Communicative Language Teaching Approach, Listening, Speaking Lessons, Kenya.

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