



Competency-Based Language Teaching: Personalized learning and Interaction in Speaking Skills Instruction at Grade 4

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v11i4.5820>

Abstract

The study aimed to investigate the implementation of personalized learning and monitoring the progress of students' speaking skills in Competency-Based Language Teaching. Additionally, the study aimed to evaluate the level of interaction created in the class to develop speaking skills in the context of Competency-Based Language Teaching. The study used a mixed-methods approach and a descriptive survey design. A random sample of 97 English teachers was selected to fill out a questionnaire, and six schools were chosen for classroom observation and teacher interviews. The study used various methods to collect data, including a questionnaire, observation, and interview and employed both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods. The results indicated that there was inadequate implementation of the two components of Competency-Based Education, namely personalized learning to monitoring students' progress in speaking skills. The finding also showed that there was insufficient interaction intended for the mastery of speaking skills competencies. The study recommends that teachers implement Competency-Based Language Teaching components such as personalized learning and monitoring the progress of students learning practically in spoken language instruction. Additionally, there should be adequate interaction in the class to meet the required competencies in speaking skills.

Keywords: *Competency-Based Language Teaching; Interaction; Personalization Learning; Monitoring Progress; Speaking Skills*

Introduction

Competency-Based Education (CBE) is an approach that focuses on the pre-specified competencies. Competency describes a specific set of behaviours or performance indicators associated with a facet of exceptional performance in a given role. The unique combination of knowledge, skills, and abilities in each competency is reflected in skillful behavior, which is influenced by multiple traits and motivations (Wang, 2021). Thus, a competency model refers to a set of different competencies that apply to performing a given task (Morel & Griffiths, 2018, Wang 2020). Taken to a language context, CBE is

an instructional approach that teaches competencies that perform real-life tasks, rather than language components such as grammar and lexis (Boukhentache, 2020).

Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) is the application of CBE in the instruction of language skills. It includes learning that is explicit, measurable, transferable, and empowering for learners (Egbert & Shahrokni, 2019). The overall goals of CBLT are to provide students with high-quality education, enough time to individually master knowledge and skills and to create links between knowledge and real-life applications. CBLT is different from other approaches because it focuses on individual students through self-paced learning, which is also different from differentiation of instruction that is based on groups (Egbert & Shahrokni, 2019).

Personalized learning as a component of CBLT is tailoring learning for each student's strengths, needs, and interests. It includes enabling student voice and choice in what, how, when, and where they learn to provide flexibility and support to ensure mastery of the highest standards possible (Marion, Worthen & Evans, 2020). Personalized learning is an instruction that optimizes the pace of learning and the instructional approach for the needs of each learner (Zhang, Basham, Yang, 2020). Pace, a ratio of individual student growth and time, is an important indicator of whether students are adequately progressing along their trajectory. In personalized learning, students receive timely, responsive additional support if not yet proficient (Sturgis & Casey, 2018).

Personalized instruction and interaction in the class have a strong link between them. The term personalized education refers to adjusting any aspect of instructional practice based on data to meet the relevant characteristics of a specific learner. Variables that explain variance in learning outcomes are called relevant learner characteristics. By 'instruction,' we refer to any interaction between the teaching and learning agents directly or indirectly relevant to the learning process (Tetzlaff, Schmiedek & Brod, 2020). Interaction on the other hand is an essential element without which speaking competency is unthinkable. Personalized language learning can enable active interaction with the real world by applying authentic and social knowledge to one's surroundings (Chen, Zou, Xie, & Cheng, 2021; Zhang, Basham, Yang, 2020). Therefore, there is a strong relationship between personalized learning and interaction.

Competency-based learning helps teachers vigilantly monitor learning and adjust instruction until each student develops essential understandings and skills for competency. CBLT is designed to help a large majority of students become proficient learners. Monitoring and responding to student progress, proficiency, and pace is a key element in realizing equity in CBLT. This is concerned with the teachers' role of meeting students where they are in their learning and can monitor students' progress and pace toward proficiency (Marion, Worthen & Evans, 2020). To help every student succeed, both progress and pace are vital. Progress means students advance along personalized pathways, meeting key milestones and achieving proficiency along learning continua designed to achieve learning outcomes, and ultimately, move to the next level.

Ethiopia updated the primary school English syllabus recently with a new curriculum framework that implements CBLT. This update was necessary due to the significant issues with the previous curriculum, which was hindered by its teaching methodology (Ministry of Education, 2009). However, students at lower grade lacked basic oral skills. As per the Education Sector Development Program V (ESDP V), Grade 4 students were required to achieve composite scores of at least 50% in the National Learning Assessments (NLAs). However, the composite scores for Grade 4 were only 33.6 (Ministry of Education, 2021). Wodebo's (2019) asserted that the majority of primary school students in government schools face difficulties in their English as a foreign language (EFL) speaking skills. They are unable to participate effectively in speaking activities in the classroom (Habtamu, 2017). Wakjira and Melaku (2023) suggested that there is evidence of low English language proficiency with primary school students.

The students need to get support proportionate to their needs in the CBLT class. While attention to an individual's progress and outcomes is a key function of competency-based education, studies show

that learners receive inadequate support in CBLT class (Sibomana and Dushimumuremyi, 2018; Warda, 2015). It is also uncommon to observe teachers performing their role of monitoring learners' progress and initiating interaction as prescribed by the CBLT approach. In particular, initiating interaction needs personalization and providing support for learners in the classroom. This can aid in the development of a learner's speaking ability, and we have held in mind that interaction and dissection are important aspects of learning. Interaction is a unique and central component of CBE; however, previous research suggests it is infrequently observed in practice.

Studies were conducted in this regard which focused on the support teachers should provide and follow up on the progress of learners. Basham et al., (2016) conducted a study on identifying the design characteristics of personalized learning environments and the initial results of these environments. The finding revealed that when education is personalized, it has the potential to provide immense growth outcomes for learners with disabilities.

A study was conducted by Karuppiah (2021) to develop baseline data on the quality of teacher-child interactions. It was found that the overall quality of teacher-child interactions was low to moderate, with instruction support being the lowest. A study conducted by Langeloo et al., (2019) focused on understanding of the nature of teacher-child interactions that multilingual children experience and how they differ from those of monolingual children. The finding indicated that teacher-child interactions with multilingual children are similar to those with monolingual children (Langeloo et al., 2019).

The previous studies focused on gaining an understanding of the characteristics of teacher-child interactions that multilingual children are exposed to. However, it is worthwhile to generate data on the issues that contributed to the qualities of interaction and an in-depth understanding of how interaction is performed in the class. There is also the need to understand how interaction is practiced during the speaking class to aid mastery of competency. Furthermore, the previous study on personalized learning focused on identifying the design characteristics of personalized learning environments. However, there is a need to understand to what extent learners receive personalized support to demonstrate mastery of the competency in speaking skills. Therefore, the study focuses on the following key research questions:

1. What is the level of interaction between teachers and students during the speaking skills instruction?
2. What is the support system implemented during speaking skills instruction as per the principles of CBLT?
3. To what extents do personalized learning are practiced in the class?

Literature Review

1. Components of Competency Approach

Competency-based education (CBE) enables students to achieve mastery of content utilizing CBE components. Patrick et al., (2018) demonstrated five components peculiar to CBE. 1) CBE is a system where students advance upon demonstrated mastery. 2) Competencies refer to specific, measurable and transferable learning objectives that give students the ability to take charge of their own learning. 3) The process of assessment is significant and provides a constructive learning experience for students (Levine, & Patrick, 2019). 4) Personalized learning, students receive timely and differentiated support based on their individual learning needs, 5) Learning outcomes emphasize competencies that include application and creation of knowledge, along with the development of important skills and dispositions. Recent literature argues that CBE has more components seen as pillars of the model than what is listed. In this regard (Sutherland et al., 2022 and Aurora Institute) indicated two more additional components: 1)

Students engage in active learning through the utilization of diverse pathways and varying speeds to facilitate active learning of students, and 2) Equitable strategies should be an integral part of the school's culture, structure, and pedagogy to benefit all students (Aurora Institute 2023).

Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) is the application of CBE in the teaching of language. Providing timely and differentiated support is one of the core components of CBLT. When students struggle with a concept, they receive timely, personalized support. Often, schools with personalized, competency-based learning environments provide flexible time during the day for students to receive additional instructional support in the area where they need it (Patrick et al., 2018). Students' engagement is the prime mover in preparing learners to the level at which they demonstrate mastery. This engagement is interaction made in the class during the lesson. By advancing upon demonstrated mastery, students are more engaged and motivated and educators can direct their efforts to where students need the most help (Patrick et al., 2018).

2. Personalized Learning

Personalized education is defined as the data-based adjustment of any aspect of instructional practice to relevant characteristics of a specific learner. Variables that explain or are assumed to explain variance in learning outcomes are considered relevant learner characteristics (Tetzlaff, et al., 2020). The term "personalized" inherently suggests that there will be differences in how it is applied to individuals (Twyman, 2014).

Personalization or individualized learning is one of the pathways to achieving CBLT. By definition, anything "personalized" implies variation across individuals. CBLT programs are likely to support personalization as they are often crafted at the outset to provide students with individualized learning opportunities. This is not only about time, place, and pace but also about tailoring instruction according to each student's unique needs and reflective of his or her particular interests—which may lead to greater student engagement and outcomes (Twyman, 2014).

CBLT possesses a significant characteristic which involves advocating for the provision of diverse educational environments. This means acknowledging variation across individuals is basic in providing individualized learning which is followed by greater learner engagement. This in turn is responsible for greater learning outcomes or it improves student's results. Therefore, it is useful to consider that there are students with a variety of intelligence in the class, but still have problems with mastery of speaking skills. We need to have skillful teachers who can properly respond to these variations and satisfy learners' needs and interests for greater results.

3. Flexible Pace and Personalized Learning

Students learn languages at different paces. Some students go faster than others, and some students require more time to finish their tasks or to acquire a language skill. All students progress and grow in their language ability at different paces. Some intelligent students finish quickly while others finish slowly. It is personalized learning that addresses the difference in pace and helps students arrive at the same goal. Flexible pacing overlaps with personalized learning, which goes hand in hand (Vail, 2019).

4. Providing Support

Students engage when they have help and support that they can use in meaningful ways. Like competency learning, task engagement depends on receiving feedback when it is needed and can make a difference in the task process or outcomes. Further, accessible and comprehensible task support (e.g., handouts, web links, and peers) that students can use as they see fit can help them not get lost or stuck and thereby become involved in the task. In all teacher education, scaffolding can be provided in ways that

demonstrate what will be expected of all teachers when they take on their classrooms (Egbert & Shahrokni, 2019).

5. Speaking in the Context of CBLT

Speaking is a skill that helps users to convey meaning according to the context they are talking about. It is an oral production of skills that consists of constructing a systematic verbal utterance to convey meaning. Humans can make sounds and express opinions from their minds (Lingga, Simanjuntak, & Sembiring, 2020; Nunan, 2015). Brown (2004) observed in an alternative formulation that verbal communication constitutes an interactive endeavor aimed at constructing meaning through the activities of generating, receiving, and assimilating information.

The CBLT approach enhances the teaching of speaking skills to the level expected in quality. CBLT, as the application of principles of CBE, when implemented effectively improves the quality and consistency of student's learning (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). Students are introduced to the lessons of speaking skills by making the competencies clear for them. Learners know what they should learn and are assessed to check mastery of competencies. Personalized learning, one of the core components, which provides learners with support through monitoring progress, assists in the achievement of mastery of competency.

Interaction is a key aspect necessary in developing speaking skills. Bohari (2019) stated that students can perform their speaking abilities through discussion activities. All components of CBLT including personalized learning and monitoring progress have interaction in themselves. Interaction is essential for speaking skills development in classrooms.

6. Learners' Speaking Skills and Differences among Learners in the Classrooms

Learners come to the class with different background skills of speaking in the class. Some have low proficiency levels and less engaged and display less progress. Others have higher beginning levels of mastery. When students had the opportunity to interact with demanding assignments at a self-regulated speed, they exhibited enhanced performance and demonstrated increased self-assurance within heterogeneous classrooms.

Learners come to the class with different background skills of speaking in the class. Some have low proficiency levels and less engaged and display less progress. Others have higher beginning levels of mastery. When students had the opportunity to interact with demanding assignments at a self-regulated speed, they exhibited enhanced performance and demonstrated increased self-assurance within heterogeneous classrooms. There have been many solutions proposed to address this problem, including putting students in a group with students of a similar level or pairing them up with a partner. Partnering and peer feedback have been demonstrated as an effective method as stated in Sivaslian (2016). This allows teachers to implement several tried and true teaching methods and supplement those methods with partnering or peer feedback activities to keep students engaged and ensure they will achieve mastery.

7. Interaction

The significance of social interaction in the process of learning has been substantiated through an extensive body of research (Eskildsen & Majlesi, 2018; Ohta, 2000). Even when a task is of less interest or seen by students as less authentic, the opportunity to discuss, collaborate, and problem-solve with peers, experts, the teacher, and other interactants can help students become deeply involved. This principle overlaps with active learning, where discussion and interaction are a central focus (Egbert & Shahrokni, 2019).

Research Design

The researchers employed a mixed-method approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of how personalized learning is implemented in CBLT. A descriptive survey was conducted to explore how Grade 4 English teachers use personalized learning to monitor progress and support students in acquiring speaking competencies. To address the research issues, the study needed data from a wide area; therefore, a survey methodology was chosen.

1. Setting

The research was carried out in primary schools within the East Wollega Zone of the Oromia Region in Ethiopia. The Oromia Region was chosen because it exemplifies the nationwide uniform introduction of the Competency-Based Curriculum Framework. By selecting this region, it is possible to mirror the status of other regions, as all adhere to a similar primary English curriculum framework based on CBLT. Secondly, there is a range of CBE training to be implemented in primary schools with the cooperation of UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, and the Oromia Regional Bureau of Education.

2. Participants of the Study and Sampling Technique

Primary school grade four English teachers and students were participants in the study. There are seventeen (17) districts in the East Wollega Zone. Four districts Diga, Wayu Tuka, Guto Gida, and Leka Dulacha were selected through a simple random technique. The four districts had 141 primary school English teachers. From this population, 108 teachers were selected for the study. According to Saunders et al. (2016), with a margin of error of 5% and a 95% confidence level, the sample size required for the target population of 150 is 108. In total, 108 questionnaires were handed out personally and with the help of school supervisors and 97 were returned. Six schools with their teachers were selected randomly for observation and interview.

3. Data Collection and Procedure

Data was collected through the use of questionnaires, interviews, and observations. The quantitative data was obtained through questionnaires that consisted of 14 items, a checklist for observation, and interview prompts. The questionnaire was developed after an extensive review of the literature, and the Cronbach alpha value for the internal consistency of the questionnaire was .872. To ensure its effectiveness, the questionnaire was tested in a pilot study with thirty-three participants to determine if they understood the questions and if the questions addressed the type of information sought. Finally, English teachers rated the questionnaire using a Likert-type scale. Researchers gathered qualitative data through interviews and observations. Observations were conducted at six schools, spanning seven days at each institution, to collect data on the implementation of a CBLT component known as personalized learning during instruction of speaking skills. Furthermore, interviews were carried out with teachers who had been observed in the classroom to gather insights into their practices of implementing personalized learning.

4. Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistical methods. These methods were used to describe the mean score of each measured variable. On the other hand, data from interviews and class observation were analyzed qualitatively and thematically using descriptive content analysis. This involved transcribing, translating, and codifying the recorded data. After coding, categories and themes were organized, and thematic content was created. Finally, comments were presented in the form of an argument, as per Creswell (2012).

Results

1. Elements of Classroom Interaction in Speaking Class

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for Elements of classroom interaction

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Dialogue	96	1	4	2.01	.979
Giving information	96	1	4	2.01	1.010
Learning task	96	1	5	1.89	1.045
Question and answer	97	1	3	2.09	.647
Giving feedback	96	1	4	1.61	.813
Valid N (listwise)	96				

The experience of implementing different elements of interaction is below average ($M = 1.9697$, $SD = .12346$). As can be seen from the table, as element for teaching speaking under the CBLT approach “dialogue” ($M = 2.01$, $SD = .979$), “giving information” ($M = 2.01$, $SD = 1.01$) “Learning task” ($M = 1.89$, $SD = 1.04$), “Question and answer” $M = 2.09$, $SD = .647$, and “giving feedback” ($M = 1.61$, $SD = .813$) all were implemented at below average.

Interview data shows that all participants believe in the importance of interaction. The main question for respondents to answer was “How do learners arrive at spoken utterances and interaction?” Respondents reacted to these questions differently. T1’s (A teacher at Lalisa Primary School) response to this question emphasized the use of question and answer. She shared, “I pause a question and then listen to their answer”. T2 (Teacher at Tolera Primary School) claimed that he employed direct one-on-one discussions with the teacher. He explained, “The class talk to each other, my students are girls’ majority, they aren’t afraid of each other, they talk to each other, they repeat after me, there is time to talk to each other”. T3 (Teacher at Garjo Fite Primary School) shared, “I made learners interact and speak the language through the use of pair and group work”. T4 (Teacher at Tinfa Primary School) informed the researchers that he incorporates dialogue in the text and introduces interaction in the class during speaking skills lessons. T5 (Teacher at Gatama Primary School) implemented translation and discussion when students failed to respond during the lesson. He shared “I mix Afan Oromo (L1) to English and translate it into L1 when students keep silent, they sometimes involved in speaking as a result, and tell them to discuss with their partners”.

Elements of interaction such as question and answer and a few feedbacks were seen during the observation. T1 was observed asking a few questions during observation sessions. However, students were not responsive to questions from the teacher. T1 was observed providing some activity that students must answer. T2: the whole class was taken up by the teacher’s explanation. During the observation, the teacher paused a few questions. The learners were not put in for interaction, but the teacher answered the questions. T3 frequently observed lecturing long on different topics such as comparatives and their degrees. Without interaction from parts of the students, teaching in the class continued. During one of the observed periods the teacher said “If we have time we would continue”. On the other day, he told them to take homework on the 35th minute when 5 minutes were left to leave the class. During the majority of the period’s time, the teacher gave explanations and the students were listening passively. Therefore, there was no interaction. The teacher had a lot to provide throughout the lecture which hindered interaction. On the third day, he was observed asking a few questions and he said “no” to incorrect answers frequently which was a discouraging way of providing feedback and did not sustain interaction. Meaningful activity

planned for triggering interaction was not observed through the observation sessions. A few students were raising their hands for participation. No effort was made to improve the lack of interaction in the class through pair or group work.

T4, a teacher at Tinfa Primary School, started the class by inquiring about any homework. The answer was short, which is 'yes/no', which is not a favorable condition for sustainable interaction. The peculiar characteristic of this teacher is the focus he made on teaching vocabulary. Whatever the lesson content is for the day some minutes goes while teaching vocabulary. Learners noted the definition given by the teacher and learn meanings through translation. It was observed all activities were done by the teacher. He asks questions. A few students raise their hands to respond to the teacher's question. The intended interaction was rarely made in the class. T5 created class participation through revision of the previous lessons and questions and answers. A platform was created to identify silent consonant letters. The teacher made students read the dialogue in pairs on the other days. These activities were done by a few pairs in the class. Students were made to answer comprehension questions and a few students participated. T6 (Teacher at Kawisa Shone) had many students in the class and got large class size. Frequent observation of this class shows that instead of creating an environment for interaction in the class, she chose to tell all the things by herself. Students were listening and there was no interaction.

2. Monitoring the Progress

Table 2. Mean of monitoring progress of learning

	N Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation
Progress of students below proficiency is monitored in demonstrating that they have learned the lesson.	96	1.65	.940
Progress in demonstrating mastery is monitored closely for all achievers	97	1.70	.948
Teachers have regular meeting with students to discuss their progress	96	2.04	1.095
Students have personalized learning plans, regardless of how well they are doing in school.	96	2.02	1.056
Valid N (listwise)	94		

Table 2 shows how the progress of learning of students who are below proficiency and all group achievers are monitored. Responses indicated that teachers' practice of monitoring the progress of students' learning and implementing personalized learning is below average ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 1.00$). The practice 'of having regular meetings with students to discuss their progress was conducted at mean, $M = 2.04$ and $SD = 1.09$. While the practice of realizing personalized learning seems to be at the emerging stage $M = 2.02$ and $SD = 1.05$, monitoring progress in demonstrating mastery for all achievers is $M = 1.70$, $SD = .948$. The practice of monitoring the progress of students below proficiency in demonstrating their learning of the lesson is far below average $M = 1.65$, $SD = .940$.

Interview data shows that there is no clear demarcation between assessment and progress monitoring. Respondents of the study in the interview admitted that they have no plan for personalized learning. However, some of the teachers have tutorial classes sometimes for low achievers and makeup classes for content completion. T1 shared "I don't have a progress monitoring plan; I have three categories of learners in the class, I have tutorial class sometimes". T2 shared, "The progress report of students is presented in the semester when they take the final exam, the rest, we check the progress when the class ends by asking a few questions". T3 opined, "There is no progress monitoring of students learning, but tutorial class is conducted for few students who are underachiever". T4 has a similar

experience of the practice with the others. But the thing different from the others is in this school, there is a permanent schedule in the school when the teachers are required to provide tutorial classes. T5 admitted that “there is tutorial class and make up class for low achievers and content coverage respectively”. T6 expressed her idea that monitoring students’ progress needs more time manageable size of students in the class. She shared, “Monitoring student progress is difficult due to an unmanageably large class size”.

Observation data does not show evidence of the implementation of progress monitoring. There was no sign of preparedness in devising tools for measuring progress. T1 and T2 did not make any effort to measure the progress. The teachers provided instruction through lectures and both teachers leave the class without collecting information on the learners’ progress. T3 used purely lecture method frequently during observation, on one instance he said “If we have time, we move to the next lesson” in the class. T4 also used a teacher-centered approach, so no evidence of the implementation of monitoring the progress of learning. Only a few students were raising their hands to participate. The teacher approves the few hands raised and moves on to the next lesson without questioning the actual thing in the class about the learners’ participation. T5 put into practice the traditional ways of managing the instruction. He used the deductive approach where the teachers provide detailed explanations and learners follow teachers from head to tail.

3. Providing Support through Personalized Learning

Table 3. Support provided

	N Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic
Students are provided personalized support when they are not able to demonstrate that they have learned the material	97	2.01	1.168
Students are provided personalized support, regardless of how well they are doing in school.	97	1.81	1.024
Students move in and out of receiving extra support based upon their progress in their learning.	94	2.59	1.315
The school schedule includes enrichment time where students can receive personalized supports.	96	2.93	1.544
Valid N (listwise)	93		

Respondents were asked to fill in Likert-type questions in which they showed agreement or disagreement to provide their response concerning the support they provide to learners. Their response shows a mean average of the support provided $M = 2.33$, $SD = 1.26$. Providing personalized support for students regardless of how well they are doing in school is practiced at $M = 1.81$, $SD = 1.02$. The practice of providing personalized support when students are not able to demonstrate that they have learned the material is $M = 2.01$, $SD = 1.16$. Efforts in moving students in and out of receiving extra support based on their progress in their learning were practiced at $M = 2.59$, $SD = 1.315$. The data indicates that the school schedule includes enrichment time where students can receive personalized support gets slightly above average $M = 2.93$, $SD = 1.544$.

In the interview data, it was found that teachers do not implement personalized learning. T1 admitted that there is no personalized learning implemented in the class. She shared “There is no personalized learning plan; I have three categories of learners in the class, I have tutorial class sometimes, but we don’t have time for tutorial class”. T2 indicated that the school offers tutorial classes to provide support for students who are struggling. He shared, “We sometimes conduct tutorial classes when we come across learners with low results in general”. T4 replied, “No personalized learning plan in the school and I do not have a plan on my lesson plan”. T6 indicated that the school has no personalized

learning schedule. She shared, “We don’t have time to conduct extra periods of supporting the students, students are also not interested in coming back to school when called for additional time in the class, in addition, there is a large number of students in the class which hinders to support individually”.

Observation data shows that there was no evidence of support provided by teachers in line with mastery of competency. T1 observed while she was in a hurry to present the day’s lesson content. Several students who were struggling to read the dialogue did not get support. Dialogue lessons time was spent only on reading. At times, the teacher did not pay attention to lessons that aimed to encourage learners to become independent. So the lesson left immature and mastery was not achieved. He uses L1 to make it easier to understand. T2 on the other hand, rather than supporting was just observed telling and giving information. T3 comes to the class to tell students what they listened to without worrying about things they should achieve. During every observation day, a series of explanations on various topics were provided. Telling a lot is the way of teaching in this teacher’s class. A unique instance considered as support is in the remaining few minutes, the teacher asked “Do you have a question?”. T4 did all the activities in the class while students were listening. There was no time for identifying students’ needs and where they should get support. T5, in different ways, makes a pause for students and listen to their questions. He also uses L1 to make it easier to understand.

Discussion

1. Elements of Classroom Interaction in Implementing CBLT in Speaking Class

There is inadequate interaction in the class during speaking skills instruction. All the elements of interaction were implemented inadequately in the class. This finding is similar with the result of study conducted by Karuppiyah (2021) which concluded that the overall quality of teacher-child interactions in classrooms was low to moderate, with instruction support being the lowest. Dialogue, giving information, learning tasks, question and answer, and giving feedback all implemented at below average. This is consistent with the finding of the study by Warda (2015) who concluded that lack of interaction in the classroom, is the first cause that leads students to poor oral production. Dialogue, in the teaching of speaking, is one of the elements of interaction where speaking is initiated and learners practice dialogue to train them in speaking skills. Most real-world speaking occasions are initiated by dialogues (Taylor, 2021). This dialogue, however, is not adequately implemented in the data collected through questionnaires, observation, and interviews. In the observation session, all teachers were not able to facilitate the class for dialogue. Teachers observed asked questions that could only be answered with ‘yes’ or ‘no’, which does not create a condition for dialogue and indicates there is no interaction.

Giving information or direction is one way of interaction between teacher and students during instruction. It helps provide learners the direction for producing a talk which leads them to improve speaking skills. Teachers provide insufficient information about what learners should do and there was a gap in interaction which facilitates communication. Learners were not clear about what was needed and what they should. There were no clear instructions about what to do and as a result, students had no confidence in what they should do next. Long explanations and questions are provided without giving them clear instructions concerning what students are required to do to achieve competency. There should be information given to students about the competencies expected of students, moving to the next level, and activities to perform that lead to competency.

The provision of learning tasks initiates interaction. Through the provision of tasks teacher and students interact with each other because there is a talk during giving and taking the task. The tasks provided also create interaction between students during the activity. Students should talk to each other when they do the activity. Teachers in the study, however, did not provide sufficient tasks, or encourage students to work and see the activity. They were observed doing a lot of boring explanations to which

students had no response. Teachers were observed providing a few tasks as homework or class work and they didn't provide support during the task and proper check for the homework.

Interaction is successful and becomes smooth when question and answer are conducted properly. According to Hall (2011), teachers' questions, students' responses, and the teacher's feedback are among the elements included in classroom interaction. However, the findings show that the question and answer conducted in the class is inadequate and performed below average. Observation and interview data also show that only a few teachers used question and answer to elicit interaction. In the classroom, the teachers employed a question-and-answer method to interact with the students, who were unresponsive during this exchange. It was disappointing that sufficient response was not obtained from the students and interaction did not consistently occur.

Giving feedback is one of the means of eliciting correct interactions in the speaking skills class. Mellak & Menad (2015) asserted that interactions that involve feedback draw learners' attention to the form of their errors, prompting them to make modifications. For interaction to develop the speaking skills, learners must notice the errors and recognize them for correction. Feedback may occur from learners, i.e. learners can correct and call each other's attention to the errors. However, feedback from teachers can be different from the learners', because teachers employ many types of correction strategies. However, findings indicated that the provision of feedback was implemented at below average. Any of the teachers interviewed did not mention an instance in which they used feedback as a useful part of the interaction. In the same token observation data also did not show adequate feedback by the teacher. During his class, the teacher provided feedback in the form of simple 'yes' or 'no' responses to students' answers. However, this kind of feedback may not be very effective in promoting long-term learning and competency, as it does not follow up with sufficient explanation or guidance.

Responses from participants show that the practice of using different elements of interaction in speaking skills class is below average. The finding indicates that interaction is found to be at its lowest level. The study indicated that information sharing and dialogue are still at an emerging level of interaction. Interaction is essential in the speaking skills class in that through interaction the instruction of speaking is facilitated. The 'dialogue' raised here is conducted between the teacher and student and student and student. Thornbury (2006) asserts that speaking is an interactive activity. "It requires the ability to cooperate in the management of speaking turns" (Thornbury, 2006, p. 1). These elements of interaction are essential in speaking skills under the CBLT model. CBLT requires classes that are student-centered with a focus on what students can do (Griffith and Lim, 2014). Interaction is one of the elements that give life to the student-centered class.

The class had limited interaction. Observation in the class proved that there were elements of interaction such as giving information and question and answer in a limited amount. English teachers initiated and encouraged students to be involved in an activity through question and answer and giving information in a limited way. However, teachers were observed with tasks not designed to achieve mastery of the given competency in speaking skills through interaction. Even if activities were provided, they had less focus on producing sufficient interaction aimed at speaking skills competency development. They were merely completing the tasks responsible for different skills development but not handled in a way to produce competency in speaking skills to that effect. That is, the activities were not initiating interaction desired to create an environment conducive to competency development in speaking skills.

2. Monitoring the Progress

Findings from respondents indicated that the practice of monitoring the progress of students below proficiency and all achievers is implemented at below average. CBLT is known for its practice of monitoring the progress of students learning. In a personalized learning environment, children would be carefully monitored for the development of crucial skills (Sornson, 2023). According to Patrick & Sturgis (2013) through carefully monitored instruction and learners' mastery of the competency, moving to the

next level is made possible. The data reveals that there is a decrease in student progress monitoring and regular meetings compared to the average. In the observation conducted at the sample schools, there was no evidence of scheduled discussions with students. A few teachers had tutorial classes for low achievers only when the school wanted them to do so. Only one school had a permanent program for tutorial classes for underachievers. As per the principles of CBLT the teacher respondents did not have a plan for monitoring the progress of students' learning and competency. The teachers' efforts to conduct tutorial classes for low-achieving students are valuable. This is particularly true for learners whose results are affected by various factors. As an essential element of CBLT, monitoring progress in demonstrating mastery for all achievers should also be conducted in speaking class. However, monitoring progress for all students and students below proficiency in demonstrating their learning of the lesson was implemented inadequately.

Teachers' respondents had no preparedness for the implementation of monitoring the progress of mastery of the speaking competency. Teachers were leaving the class without collecting evidence of the student's mastery during observation. Some of the teachers had the habit of telling a lot of information and students' copying from the table until the time was up. Consequently, teachers had less time for speaking skills practice, measuring progress, and collecting information about the mastery of the competency. Teachers provide progress reports only at the semester or at the end of the term when requested by the school administration. Through carefully monitored instruction and learners' mastery of the competency, moving to the next level is made possible in CBLT. In our case, the learner's progress monitoring practice received a below-average score based on the indicated data.

3. Providing Support through Personalized Learning

The findings indicate that teachers are not doing enough to provide support through personalized learning in the speaking class. Providing personalized support regardless of how well learners are doing in the class is part of the CBLT implementation during instruction. Similarly, providing personalized support when students are not able to demonstrate mastery after they have learned the material is also equally important. The findings showed that in both cases learners did not get personalized support. Similar findings by Warda (2015) confirmed that a lack of the teacher's encouragement and support for learners to interact in the learning environment was an additional factor in student's poor oral production. The teachers' ways of delivering the lesson are similar for all students. Teachers should personalize their teaching methods to optimize learning opportunities for all students, regardless of their language background (Langeloo et al., 2019). The CBLT approach requires teachers to use different methods. In contrast to the CBLT approach which allows teachers to use different methods for student from different background during instruction, the traditional approach emphasizes one-size-fits-all.

There seems an effort to move students in and out of receiving extra support based on their progress in their learning practiced in the respondents' questionnaires. However, personalized learning was not available during the observation session for speaking skills instruction. Questionnaire data indicated that the school schedule includes enrichment time where students can receive personalized support. Also, observation and interview data did not show evidence of the existence of an enrichment program for personalized learning. There is evidence of a one-time tutorial class program in a few schools. Tutorial classes can be used as enrichment programs for personalized learning (Tetzlaff, Schmiedek, & Brod, 2020)). However, the tutorial program was not consistently implemented for all students to achieve competency aiming at personalized learning at all schools. The approach develops a system that supports "learning that empowers personalization, expanding students' voice and choice, to learn at their own pace, anywhere and anytime" (Patrick & Sturgis, 2013).

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to address issues of implementation of personalized learning as one of the CBLT components in English speaking skills. It focused on monitoring progress and providing support as prescribed by the CBLT approach. It also aimed to describe the status of interaction in the speaking skills competency in Grade Four. The study concluded that personalized learning which has a strong connection with interaction was practiced at below average in the speaking skills instruction. Teachers' practice of monitoring students' progress about students' learning was inadequate. It is also evident that providing support for learners individually is conducted insufficiently. Finally, there was less interaction in the class during speaking skills instruction and teachers' support in initiating interaction got inadequate attention.

The current study has important implications for teaching practices. Firstly, personalized learning is a crucial component of the CBLT model, which involves the use of various methods essential to realizing mastery of competency. Personalized instruction consists of providing support, monitoring progress, and interaction. These elements are useful in leading learners to mastery which is the ultimate goal of learning in the CBLT approaches. Students cannot move to the next level without demonstrating mastery of competency. Therefore, the results offer insights into implementing personalized learning practically in spoken language instruction. Secondly, educational experts can gain insights into addressing the lack of support and progress monitor in the class in speaking skills instruction. Thirdly, the findings can help practitioners and educational experts remain committed to promoting personalized learning in moving learners based on the demonstration of mastery.

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