



# Effect of Competency-Based Teaching Intervention on Teachers' Pedagogical Practices and Students' English Communication Skills in Rural Secondary Schools in Tanzania: A Quasi-Experimental Study

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**Abstract:** This study investigated the effect of a competency-based teaching (CBT) intervention on teachers' pedagogical practices and students' English communication skills in rural secondary schools in Mbinga District, Tanzania. Anchored in Constructivist Learning Theory and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the research employed a quasi-experimental mixed-methods design. A sample of 286 respondents participated in the study. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires and pretest–posttest instruments administered to teachers and students. Qualitative data were gathered through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentary reviews of lesson plans and assessment records, providing insights into lived experiences and instructional dynamics. Data were analysed through independent sample *t*-tests and content analysis. Findings revealed that teachers initially demonstrated limited knowledge of CBT principles and relied heavily on traditional lecture methods. Following the intervention, teachers in the experimental group showed significant improvements in competency-based knowledge (mean scores rising from 2.75 to 3.50) and reported greater confidence in implementing learner-centred strategies such as role-plays, group discussions, and collaborative tasks. Students likewise exhibited enhanced communicative competence, particularly in speaking and listening, validating CLT and Constructivist claims that interactive, authentic learning environments foster language acquisition. Despite these gains, challenges persisted, including inadequate instructional resources, limited ICT integration, and reliance on traditional assessment practices. The study concludes that teacher-training interventions can effectively improve pedagogical practices and student communication outcomes, but sustained progress requires systemic support in professional development, resource provision, and assessment reform.

**Keywords:** Competency-Based Teaching (CBT); Communicative Language Teaching (CLT); Constructivist Learning Theory; Quasi-Experimental Mixed Methods; Teacher Training Intervention; English Communication Skills; Rural Secondary Schools; Tanzania

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# 1. Introduction

English language teaching around the world has become increasingly focused on methods emphasising communicative competence and real-life language use, rather than the traditional grammar-focused approach. Modern pedagogy is strongly defined by Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and competency-based approaches, which emphasise interaction with learners, participation, and the application of language in functional contexts. Recent empirical research underpins this change. Indicatively, in a systematic review, Chen and Shuib (2026) found that communicative approaches enhance students' speaking, listening, and classroom participation at high levels. Similarly, Salam and Luksfinanto (2024) found that CLT improves learners' motivation, involvement, and overall language proficiency. Derseh et al. (2024) also confirm these results, finding that competency-based language teaching can enhance students' speaking performance through relevant instructional strategies and evaluation techniques. There is empirical evidence supporting the importance of interactive, learner-centred approaches to developing communication skills. Zhou et al. (2024) have shown that communicative and cross-cultural competence can be integrated to enhance learners' ability to apply English in various situations. Similarly, peer feedback and collaborative learning studies show that student-led models have a substantial positive impact on the development of communication and critical thinking skills, as well as on learners' independence (Studies in Educational Evaluation, 2024).

Nevertheless, although there is strong evidence of the effectiveness of competency-based and communicative approaches worldwide, implementation challenges remain. The analysis indicates that the success of such strategies hinges on teachers' readiness, access to instructional materials, and compatibility with assessment practices (Kamiri, 2022; Chen and Shuib, 2026). Teachers still struggle to fully implement learner-centred pedagogies across numerous settings due to insufficient training and institutional barriers (Salam & Luksfinanto, 2024).

Most African countries have also been embracing competency-based learning curricula to enhance learners' hands-on communication skills. Empirical research, however, has shown that there has always been a disjunction between curriculum policy and classroom practice. Indicatively, Adem and Berkessa (2022) found that, despite curricula's focus on communicative approaches, teachers often rely on conventional lecture methods due to large classrooms and limited resources. In other studies, in African settings, the lack of proper teacher training, teaching resources, and examination-based

systems has been identified as an obstacle to the successful implementation of competency-based instruction. These issues reduce students' chances of actively engaging in communicative practices, thereby lowering their communicative competence. In Tanzania, a new competency-based curriculum was introduced to help students use English in practical life. Although this reform has been implemented, recent data indicate that it is still being applied unevenly, especially in rural secondary schools. Educators tend to be undertrained in competency-based instruction and face contextual pressures, such as insufficient resources to teach, low student proficiency in English, and sociolinguistic influences that prompt code-switching. As a result, classroom practices often blend traditional and competency-based approaches, with little emphasis on communicative practice and authentic assessment. As a result, many students leave secondary school with poor communication skills, particularly in speaking and listening.

In general, African and Tanzanian contexts as well as the rest of the world, the current empirical evidence is united around the following three problems: (1) competency and communicative-based approaches enhance students in their English communication skills; (2) the effectiveness of these approaches requires teacher training, instructional materials, and institutional facilitation; and (3) a discrepancy between the policies and classroom practice persists. Nonetheless, only a few studies have specifically examined how teacher-training interventions can enhance competency-based teaching practices and students' English communication competencies in rural secondary schools. This paper thus aims to fill this gap.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although the competency-based curriculum, which should enhance students' English communication skills in Tanzania, has been adopted, students in rural secondary schools have failed to demonstrate high communicative competence. The empirical evidence shows that competency-based teaching practices are not fully adopted or consistently applied because teachers tend to rely on traditional teaching methods, underuse communicative activities, and fail to incorporate authentic assessment practices. Although studies available have identified general implementation factors, little has been done on the effectiveness of teacher training interventions in improving competency-based teaching practices and students' communication skills in rural settings. This research thus examines how a Competency-Based Teaching intervention can improve teachers' instructional practices and students' English communication skills.

### 1.3 General Objective

The General Objective of the study was to determine how the Competency-Based Teaching intervention influences teachers' pedagogical practices and students' English communication skills in rural secondary schools in Mbinga District, Tanzania.

#### 1.3.1 Specific Objectives

The following two objectives guided the study.

- i. To compare the teaching practices of the teachers based on their competency before and after the intervention in rural secondary schools.
- ii. To establish how competency-based teaching practices influence the English communication skills of the students.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

The paper is based on the Constructivist Learning Theory and the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Theory, which, together, can provide a comprehensive view of how competency-based teaching practice can enhance students' English communication skills. Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky developed constructivist theory, which considers learning as an active process where the learning individual (learner) constructs knowledge through interaction, experience, and social interactions. In the same spirit, CLT, as a form of communicative competence as theorised by Dell Hymes and subsequently elaborated by Michael Canale and Merrill Swain, focuses on using language to convey meaning rather than on mastering grammatical rules. The two theories also shift the orientation of instruction from teacher-centred to learner-centred, and thus, they are highly pertinent to competency-based teaching.

The combination of these theories can provide a solid foundation for understanding teachers' instructional practices, the study's first objective. Constructivist theory describes how teachers make learning interactive and collaborative through group activities, and CLT defines the kinds of language activities, including role-plays, group discussions, debates, and problem-solving tasks, that encourage communication. When these theories are applied in the context of Mbinga District, where traditional lecture practices have been dominant, the shift towards competency-based practices, which would involve learners

in actively constructing and applying knowledge, would be supported. The interventions intended for teacher training are expected to enable teachers to adopt strategies that encourage participation, Collaboration, and real-life language use to enhance classroom practices.

Moreover, the combination of constructivist and CLT theories directly shapes students' English communication skills, a goal of the research. Constructivism also focuses on interaction and social learning as the two processes central to knowledge development, whereas CLT offers practical means for acquiring communicative competence through real language use. These theories can help explain how interactive, learner-centred settings in rural secondary schools in Mbinga District can be used to improve speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Students can be challenged by low English proficiency and limited exposure, issues that these theories can address. Thus, the synthesis of the two theories explains the application of competency-based teaching as a viable solution to enhance students' communication skills and to address the discontinuity between the curriculum policy and classroom practice.

### 2.2 Empirical studies

Many articles and research works by scholars worldwide have analysed competency-based teaching, offering valuable insights, diverse experiences, and analyses of its implementation and outcomes. The experience of competency-based teaching methods across different regions is always the same: they foster higher student engagement, active participation, and the capacity to apply acquired knowledge in practical contexts (Chen and Shuib, 2026; Derseh et al., 2024). Research in developed and developing settings demonstrates that when delivered effectively, competency-based strategies enhance communicative competence, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities (Salam and Luksfinanto, 2024; OECD, 2023). Nevertheless, the literature also shows that some challenges persist, especially in resource-strained environments, where teachers are sometimes poorly trained, lack instructional resources, and receive limited institutional support (Adem & Berkessa, 2022; Uwizeyimana, 2022). All these studies indicate that although competency-based teaching is a promising concept that can greatly enhance the educational impact of the Teacher, its application is heavily conditioned by contextual factors such as teacher readiness, resource availability, and the harmonisation of curriculum, teaching, and assessment practices.

### 2.2.1 Teachers' Competency-Based Teaching Practices

Empirical research in Europe shows that competency-based, learner-focused instruction greatly enhances instructional effectiveness. Indicatively, Niemi (2022) found that sustained teacher professional development in Finland improves the implementation of interactive pedagogies. Likewise, Hargreaves (2023) reported that, in the United Kingdom, teachers with long-term training transition to collaborative, student-centred instruction. A study by Richter and Kunter (2022) in Germany reveals that effective classroom practices are closely linked with teacher competence. In the Netherlands, van den Akker (2021) found that implementing curriculum changes based on competencies requires congruence among teaching, assessment, and Teacher training. Similarly, according to the OECD (2023), teacher capacity is the key to the successful implementation of competency-based education across European systems.

Studies in Asia continue to emphasise the importance of teacher preparedness in adopting competency-based teaching. For example, Chen and Shuib (2026) found that educators who used communicative practices enhanced student interaction and engagement in the classroom. Salam and Luksfinanto (2024) found that classroom participation in Indonesia improved significantly when learner-centred instruction was used. Nguyen and Nguyen (2021) discovered in Vietnam that communicative teaching practices enhanced instructional effectiveness. Likewise, Zhang (2022) in China found that task-based teaching improves teachers' pedagogical practices. Rahman (2023) observed in Malaysia that competency-based methods are more effective but are constrained by examination-based systems.

Empirical research in Africa indicates a discrepancy between policy and classroom practice. Indicatively, Adem and Berkessa (2022) found that teachers in Ethiopia still use lecture methods even after curriculum reforms. Waweru (2023) also found in Kenya that the lack of proper training limits teachers' capacity to adopt competency-based approaches. Along the same lines, Uwizeyimana's (2022) research in Rwanda found that teaching activities cannot be conducted effectively due to resource shortages and the large class sizes. In Uganda, Ssekamwa (2021) found that teachers struggle to implement learner-centred approaches due to institutional constraints. Moreover, Ngussa (2022) found that teachers' limited pedagogical knowledge influences classroom interaction and engagement.

Various empirical studies in Tanzania highlight these challenges. Komba and Mwandaji (2015) found that teachers do not fully understand competency-based

teaching. According to Hardman et al. (2012), classroom interaction remains teacher-dominated. Vavrus et al. (2013) found that structural challenges affect teaching practices. More recent research by Issa et al. (2024) shows that teachers' CBT application is inconsistent due to insufficient training and resources. Shayo and Mnyanyi (2023) found that the lack of ICT resources limits effective teaching practices. According to Kanyabwoya et al. (2025), teachers use the conventional forms of assessment. Also, Mtebe and Raisamo (2022) discovered that weak integration of technology impacts the delivery of instructions. All of these findings can be used to justify Objective 1, as they show that improving teachers' practices will require targeted training and systemic support.

### 2.2.2 Effect of CBT on Students' English Communication Skills

Empirical evidence from Europe shows that competency-based teaching significantly improves students' communication skills. To illustrate, Sahlberg (2022) found that student-oriented methods in Finland improved students' communication and critical thinking skills. Lundahl (2021) found better speaking and listening results with communicative instruction in Sweden. Similarly, García's (2022) investigations in Spain demonstrate that interactive instruction increases students' fluency. According to Hellekjær (2022), the communicative approach can improve language proficiency in Norway. OECD (2023) also confirms that competency-based education will improve learners' real-world communication competencies.

Powerful empirical evidence supports the use of communicative strategies in Asia. According to Chen and Shuib (2026), CLT is effective in enhancing students' speaking and listening skills. Derseh et al. (2024) found that students who had been exposed to competency-based instruction performed better in speaking. According to Zhou et al. (2024), cross-cultural communicative competence enhances language use. Nguyen and Nguyen (2021) expressed enhanced student engagement and participation. Moreover, Rahman (2023) discovered that task-based learning promotes communication skills and learner autonomy.

By contrast, in Africa, research has yielded conflicting results. Although the idea of competency-based teaching is promising, its success is not always guaranteed. Waweru (2023) reported that students' communication skills are low due to limited use of communicative activities. Uwizeyimana (2022) indicated that there is limited interaction among students in classrooms. Adem and Berkessa (2022) found that speaking skills are

underdeveloped due to teacher-centred teaching. Ngussa (2022) reported low scores in communicative competence among students. These results imply that CBT does not necessarily enhance learning results unless it is properly implemented.

Empirical research in Tanzania has shown that students have low English communication skills. Hardman et al. (2012) found low student attendance in classrooms. Vavrus et al. (2013) indicated that students are given little opportunity to interact. In the study, Isa et al. (2024) found that students exhibit poor speaking skills due to a lack of communicative instruction. According to Shayo and Mnyanyi (2023), communicative learning is constrained by limited resources. The findings of Mtebe and Raisamo (2022) indicate that ICT integration has the potential to enhance communication skills, but is not used. Kanyabwoya et al. (2025) discovered that the traditional assessment is restrictive to skill development. These results contribute to Objective 2 by demonstrating that students' communication competencies are related to effective teaching practices.

### 2.2.3 Synthesis and Research Gap.

In the studies reviewed, three major issues are identified. To begin with, competency-based and communicative methods enhance students' communication skills when applied effectively (Chen and Shuib, 2026; Derseh et al., 2024; OECD, 2023). Second, the successful implementation depends on teacher competence and training (Niemi, 2022; Hargreaves, 2023; Waweru, 2023). Third, the policy-practice gap is a chronic issue, especially in Africa (Adem & Berkessa, 2022; Uwizeyimana, 2022; Issa et al., 2024). Nevertheless, there is little research examining how teacher-training interventions, specifically designed to address students' teaching practices and communication skills in rural Tanzania, have impacted them. This paper fills this gap.

## 3. Methodology

In this section, the research methodology applied in the study, such as research philosophy, approach, research design, sampling procedures, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, validity and Reliability, and ethical considerations, is presented. Leading scholars in educational research informed the methodological decisions.

### 3.1 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy that guided this study was post-positivism, which assumes a reality that can be imperfectly

comprehended due to human constraints and contextual factors. Creswell and Creswell (2018) state that post-positivism advocates the application of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to enhance the validity and richness of knowledge about educational phenomena. On the same note, Phillips and Burbules (2000) claim that post-positivist research enables the researcher to test hypotheses besides acknowledging the significance of context and interpretation. Post-positivism was suitable for this research, as competency-based Teaching (CBT) and students' English communication skills could be quantitatively measured and, at the same time, qualitatively interpreted through teachers' experiences and classroom realities. This philosophical position allowed triangulation of data sources, and data triangulation is more credible (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018).

### 3.2 Research Approach

The research used a mixed-methods approach, meaning both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in a single study. According to Creswell (2014), mixed-methods research combines quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more comprehensive view of a research problem. In a similar vein, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) argue that mixed methods are effective in educational research because they enable researchers to interpret statistical findings using qualitative evidence. The quantitative data used in this study included questionnaires to measure teachers' use of CBT and students' communication skills, and the qualitative data included interviews, observations, and documentary reviews used to explain classroom experiences. This combination used the triangulation design Denzin (1978) suggested, and the results of one approach helped or supplemented those of the other.

### 3.3 Research Design

The research design employed in this study was a quasi-experimental mixed-methods design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of competency-based teaching (CBT) interventions. Unlike purely descriptive designs, the quasi-experimental approach allowed for a systematic comparison between an experimental group (teachers and students who received CBT training) and a control group (those who did not). Quantitative data were collected using structured questionnaires and pretest–posttest instruments that measured teachers' knowledge and application of CBT principles, as well as students' English communication skills, before and after the intervention. This design feature strengthened internal validity by enabling direct measurement of the intervention's effect. Qualitative

methods complemented these measures by providing contextual insights into classroom realities. Semi-structured interviews captured teachers' perceptions of CBT practices, classroom observations documented instructional behaviours, and documentary reviews of lesson plans and assessment records revealed how competency-based strategies were integrated into teaching. The triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data ensured that statistical findings were interpreted alongside lived experiences, thereby enhancing the credibility of the results. This quasi-experimental mixed-methods design was particularly appropriate for the Mbinga District context, where random assignment was not feasible but meaningful comparisons between the experimental and control groups could still be drawn to evaluate the intervention's effectiveness.

### 3.4 Study Area

The research was conducted in Mbinga District, Tanzania, among rural secondary schools characterised by a lack of instructional resources and low English proficiency among schoolchildren. Common issues in rural schools in Tanzania, as reported by URT (2021), include a shortage of qualified teachers and insufficient teaching materials. These factors rendered Mbinga District suitable for research on the implementation of competency-based teaching and its influence on students' English communication skills.

### 3.5 Population and Sample Size

The target population was English language teachers, students, heads of schools and School Quality Assurance officers in Mbinga district. A total of 286 respondents were included in the study. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) conclude that a large sample will yield reliable statistical inference in a social science study.

### 3.6 Sampling Procedures

Purposive sampling was used to identify participants in the study. Patton's (2015) purposive sampling is used when researchers select individuals who possess rich, pertinent information for the research. English teachers and other interested parties were purposely selected for this study, as they are directly involved in competency-based teaching and in the development of students' communication skills. The schools were also purposely chosen based on their exposure to CBT implementation and their rural background, as suggested by Cohen et al. (2018) in the education field research.

### 3.7 Data Collection Methods

The study employed pretest and posttest, questionnaires, observation, interviews, and documentary review to gather information for the inquiry. To achieve triangulation (Denzin, 1978), the study employed multiple data collection techniques that combined quantitative and qualitative approaches. Questionnaires were administered to teachers to gather standardised quantitative information on CBT practices and teaching strategies, consistent with Orodho's (2009) observation that questionnaires are effective for large samples. Pretest and posttest instruments were used with students to measure changes in pedagogical practices and English communication skills before and after the intervention, thereby strengthening the quasi-experimental design. Meanwhile, qualitative data, which complement these measures, provide in-depth insights into lived experiences and perceptions, as Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) emphasise the value of interviews in capturing participant perspectives. Moreover, Classroom observations documented real instructional behaviours, aligning with Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) view that observation is crucial for understanding authentic classroom dynamics, and documentary review of lesson plans, schemes of work, and assessment records provided further evidence of instructional practices and policy implementation, consistent with Bowen's (2009) argument that document analysis is a valuable source of educational evidence. Data analysis was conducted using independent t-tests, descriptive statistics, and content analysis.

### 3.8 Validity and Reliability

Research instruments were approved for validity by aligning them with the study's objectives and evaluating them with specialists in education and measurement. Cohen et al. (2018) assert that content validity is attained in the case where instruments can measure intended constructs. It was recommended that a pilot study be done to refine the instruments (Creswell, 2018). To achieve Reliability, data collection processes were consistent. Bryman (2016) identifies standardised instruments and consistency in repeated measurement as means of improving Reliability in social research. Reliability was enhanced by further triangulation of methods (questionnaires, interviews, and observation) (Denzin, 1978).

### 3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted with ethical standards. Israel and Hay (2006) affirm that informed consent, confidentiality, and the protection of participants' rights are required elements of ethical research. All the participants were informed about consent prior to data collection. Anonymity

was used to ensure confidentiality, meaning participants' identities were anonymised. The respondents were given the option to participate and could withdraw at any time. No data were used in any other way, as per Bryman (2016).

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Teachers' competency-based teaching practices before and after the intervention

To meet this objective, the study examined teachers' pre- and post-intervention CBT practices. The information was collected through questionnaires, classroom observations, interviews, and document reviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of how CBT is implemented and its effects on students' English communication skills. The findings revealed that educators applied the coexisting techniques, Competency-Based Teaching and traditional techniques, in classroom activities, students' English communication skills; still, full implementation of CBT principles in the classroom was not enough.

#### 4.1.1 Teachers' Knowledge of Competency-Based Teaching in the English Language Subject Before and After the Intervention

This part of the study evaluated teachers' knowledge of Competency-Based Teaching (CBT) at the pre-intervention stage and after CBT training interventions to enhance English communication skills in rural public secondary schools in Mbinga District. The researcher used interviews, classroom observations, and questionnaires to collect data about this question. The results suggest that, prior to the intervention, teachers possessed little conceptual knowledge of communicative and learner-centred approaches to developing students' communication skills and encouraging expression. There were remarkable improvements after the intervention, especially among the teachers who received CBT training. The post-intervention results indicate that knowledge of CBT increased moderately. However, weaknesses in the use of various instructional materials and in the implementation of genuine evaluation strategies in teachers' classroom practices within the CBT context still existed. The classroom observation results indicated that teachers' knowledge of CBT increased from a pre-intervention mean of 2.75 to an after-intervention mean of 3.50, with a difference of 0.75 and an overall mean of 3.125. This enhancement shows that the intervention was effective in increasing the knowledge of teachers about the principles of CBT, as indicated in Table 1

**Table 1: Teachers' Knowledge of Competency-Based Teaching (CBT)**

Indicator	Experimental (M)	Control (M)	SD	Mean Difference	Interpretation
CBT Knowledge	3.50	2.75	0.375	0.75	Improved CBT knowledge in the experimental group after intervention

#### Source: Field Data (2025)

According to Table 1, teachers in the experimental group had a higher mean score (M = 3.50) on CBT knowledge than those in the control group (M = 2.75). The 0.75-point difference is considered a significant improvement in teachers' CBT knowledge after the intervention. The standard deviation (SD = 0.375) is quite low, showing comparatively low variability in responses. This result indicates that the gains in CBT knowledge were relatively uniform among teachers in the experimental group. These results affirm the hypothesis that the intervention positively impacted teachers' competency-based teaching knowledge and English communication skills in rural public secondary schools in Mbinga District. Teacher interviews are qualitative evidence that contributes to this enhancement in CBT knowledge. One Teacher said: "Having been trained, I know how to engage students in the learning process and how to create exercises that can help them learn to use skills, not to memorise information (Teacher, September 2025). This reaction can be seen as a transition from traditional, teacher-centred practices to

learner-centred practices within CBT. Likewise, another teacher reported that subjects that we would have previously regarded as challenging are now easy following the training (Teacher, September, 2025). The result indicates progressive growth in understanding and the ability to apply the principles of CBT. These findings indicate that the intervention not only enhanced theoretical knowledge but also affected teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards Competency-Based Teaching. Classroom observations further corroborated these findings by demonstrating changes in instructional practices after the intervention. The teachers were seen using interactive methods, including group discussions, role-plays, and question-and-answer sessions, which are the main elements of CBT.

Nevertheless, the observations also showed that CBT was not yet consistently implemented, with some teachers still relying on traditional teaching techniques, especially when time constraints or limited resources were encountered. This result shows that although teachers' knowledge of

CBT increased significantly, integrating this knowledge into long-term classroom practice is slow. Thus, ongoing professional guidance and follow-up are needed to guarantee comprehensive adoption of CBT strategies.

#### 4.1.2 The Use of Learner-Centred Teaching Before and After Interventions

In this part, the research evaluated the extent to which English teachers employed the learner-centred method in their teaching activities before and after the intervention. The results of the teachers revealed that the application of learner-centred teaching practices was moderate and not entirely developed in rural government secondary schools, as shown in Table 2

**Table 2: Teachers' responses to learner-centred teaching practices before interventions**

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	1	12.5%
Disagree	2	25.0%
Neutral	2	25.0%
Agree	3	37.5%
Most Agree	0	0.0%

Source: Field data (2025)

The results of Table 2 reveal that the highest percentage of respondents (37.5) reported using learner-centred approaches, and a similar percentage (62.5) disagreed, strongly disagreed, or remained neutral. Moreover, none of the teachers was strongly in favour of using these practices (Most Agree). This observation indicates that learner-centred instruction is not fully developed or consistently implemented by the teachers. Although there is a slight positive inclination, the lack of high agreement and the

observation of significant disagreement and neutrality suggest less confidence, incomplete implementation, or potential difficulties in applying the Learner-Centred method within the CBT. Findings from classroom observation of the Teacher's application of Learner-Centred strategies prior to interventions revealed a comparatively smaller difference between the control and experimental groups, as indicated in Table 3

**Table 3: Learner-centred pedagogical practices before and after interventions**

Group	Mean Score	SD	Interpretation
Experimental	3.75	0.125	Effective facilitation of collaborative, inquiry-based learning
Control	3.50		Moderate adoption, but inconsistent and lacking depth

Source: Field data (2025)

The results of Table 3 reveal that the highest percentage of respondents (37.5) reported using learner-centred approaches, and a similar percentage (62.5) disagreed, strongly disagreed, or remained neutral. Moreover, none of the teachers was strongly in favour of using these practices (Most Agree). This observation indicates that learner-centred instruction is not fully developed or consistently implemented by the teachers. Although there is a slight positive inclination, the lack of high agreement and the observation of significant disagreement and neutrality suggest less confidence, incomplete implementation, or potential difficulties in applying the Learner-Centred method within the CBT. Findings from classroom observation of the Teacher's application of Learner-Centred strategies prior to interventions revealed a

comparatively smaller difference between the control and experimental groups, as indicated in Table 3.

The mean score of 3.75 in the experimental schools when interventions were implemented is relatively high, which means that teachers were involved in the strategies that encouraged active participation, student autonomy, peer engagement, and collaborative learning, which are essential aspects of Competency-Based Teaching (CBT). The result indicates that the intervention supported the use of student-centred pedagogies by redirecting teachers' focus from teacher-centred instruction to learning environments where students create knowledge through interaction and guided discovery. Nonetheless, the small difference between the groups also implies that, by the time

of the intervention, some degree of learner-centred instruction already existed in both teaching settings.

The mean score of the control schools ( $M = 3.50$ ) is also lower, although Teachers in these schools seemed to be conscious of the contemporary pedagogical expectations, perhaps as a result of national curriculum reforms, in-school support programs, or personal experience. The small difference in standard deviation between the two groups indicates little variability in teacher performance in this area across and within schools. As Table 3 indicates, although the intervention enhanced the use of strategies learners focused on among the experimental teachers, this understanding of the topic was already present in both conditions.

The results show that the intervention did not introduce new practices but rather reinforced and normalised existing pedagogical practices, helping teachers use them more effectively and consistently. The other significant conclusion was drawn from teacher interviews conducted at the end of the interventions. According to the teachers, Competency-Based Teaching (CBT) training helped them improve their Teaching of English communication skills and make students more engaged in the classroom. One Teacher said that the training experience strengthened both teaching practices and student engagement. They had the following to say;

*"... I have been teaching twenty years now and CBT has been introduced in 2025 and since then we have been pressured to use it without being trained and given any guidelines on how to make the classroom activities interactive and to evaluate the attainment of the learners through role play and group discussions, but then we got to know during these three days of training that we were supposed to use this method. My classroom is now interactive, and I use role-plays. Findings of the Teacher*

*response indicate that the application of Competence-Based Teaching (CBT) was initially hampered by poor preparation and institutional support. The Teacher said that CBT was officially introduced in 2025, but teachers had no choice but to use it without training or guidance, especially in developing competence-based goals, promoting classroom learning, and assessing learners' achievement.*

This absence of support at its base posed problems in proper implementation. Nevertheless, the results also suggest that the recent professional growth, namely a three-day training, was a major contributor to the Teacher's increased knowledge and skills regarding CBT. Consequently, a significant shift was observed away from conventional lecture-driven teaching strategies toward more learner-focused instructional strategies, such as role-play and group discussions, which enhanced classroom interaction and student engagement. The result implies that CBT implementation in schools cannot succeed without continuous training and capacity-building.

#### 4.1.3 Use of Communicative-Based Activities Before and After Interventions

In this section, the study sought to assess the extent to which English language teachers used teaching and learning methods that accentuate the development of English communicative skills in classrooms, such as storytelling, dialogue, debates, role plays, project-based activities, and group discussions, before and after interventions. A Likert-scale item was administered with a statement: "My teaching focuses on developing communication skills in the English language." A total of eight teachers responded to this item, with responses ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Most Agree (5), as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Teachers' responses on the use of communicative activity before interventions**

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	2	25.0
Disagree	3	37.5
Neutral	1	12.5
Agree	2	25.0
Most Agree	0	0.0

Source: Field data (2025)

According to Table 4, most teachers (62.5) were strongly in agreement or strongly in disagreement that their teaching aimed to enhance students' English communication skills prior to the interventions. The discovery indicated that communicative competence was not prioritised in teaching during the pre-intervention period. The single neutral

response (12.5) may indicate uncertainty or variability in implementation, but the lack of a majority of agreed responses may indicate that, prior to the interventions, resistance to communication-oriented instruction was high. These background results are used to assess the effect of the intervention programme on the Improvement of both

the clarity of pedagogy and the coherence of instruction. Another discovery was made by the teachers themselves when they were asked whether they had applied the lecture method in the teaching and learning process prior to the interventions. The results indicated a mottled reaction pattern. Table 5 indicates that 3 (37.5) teachers were

neutral, 3 (37.5) agreed or strongly agreed that they regularly practised lecture methods. On the other hand, 2 (25%) teachers did not agree, indicating a partial transition towards traditional delivery. None of the respondents replied with Strongly Disagree. This distribution implied that the lecture method was still well-known and common.

**Table 5: Teachers' use of the lecture method in English lessons**

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Disagree	2	25.0
Neutral	3	37.5
Agree	2	25.0
Most Agree	1	12.5

Source: Field data (2025)

The finding suggested that teachers still relied on lecture-based delivery, while others were shifting toward more interactive methods. The relatively high proportion of neutral responses may reflect uncertainty or transitional practices, where teachers balance traditional lecturing with emerging communicative strategies. This finding, therefore, highlights the coexistence of traditional and modern pedagogical approaches within the same instructional context. The findings illustrate that the lecture remained a dominant feature of English language teaching classroom practice.

The interventions' findings revealed improvements in classroom practices among the teachers who received them. The findings reveal a strong and consistent advantage for teachers who received training in promoting

student participation, Collaboration, critical thinking, and student-led activities. Table 4.10 indicates that across the four indicators, active participation, critical thinking, Collaboration, and student-led activities, the experimental group noted uniformly high mean scores ( $M = 3.75$ ).

This finding indicates that the intervention significantly shifted classroom practices toward active participation, Collaboration, critical thinking, and student-centred learning aligned with Competency-Based Teaching (CBT) principles. In contrast, control schools recorded lower mean scores (ranging from  $M = 1.75$  to  $M = 2.75$ ), demonstrating that opportunities for learner engagement and higher-order skill development were more limited in the traditional instructional settings.

**Table 6: Teachers' use of communicative-based activity after interventions**

Indicator	Experimental (M)	Control (M)	SD	Interpretation
Active Participation	3.75	2.75	0.500	Strong engagement in experimental schools
Critical Thinking	3.75	2.25	0.750	Critical thinking is emphasised in experimental schools.
Collaboration	3.75	2.50	0.750	More collaborative learning in experimental schools
Student-led Activities	3.75	1.75	1.000	Students take a central role in experimental schools.

Source: Field data (2025)

The findings from Table 6 indicated that, after interventions, students' active participation in classroom activities improved in the experimental group but remained low in the control group. The finding reveals a mean of  $M = 3.75$  in the experimental group compared to  $M = 2.75$  in the control group, with a standard deviation of  $SD = 0.500$ . The moderate variability suggests that although most experimental classrooms implemented active learning consistently, there was variation in the extent to which students were engaged. The higher mean indicates that students in the experimental schools were more directly involved in learning tasks, responding to questions, engaging in discussions, and contributing to classroom activities. Meanwhile, the lower mean in the control group suggests more teacher-centred instruction, with learners having fewer avenues to participate meaningfully in the learning process.

The findings in Table 6 also indicated that students' critical thinking abilities improved after interventions. The finding showed one of the clearest differences between groups, with experimental schools scoring  $M = 3.75$  compared to  $M = 2.25$  in control schools, and a standard deviation of  $SD = 0.750$ . This difference suggests that CBT-based teaching interventions provided structured opportunities for students to analyse, evaluate, interpret, and solve problems rather than simply recalling information. The relatively high variability ( $SD = 0.750$ ) indicates differences among classrooms in how effectively teachers pushed students toward deeper reasoning.

The findings from Table 6 revealed that Collaboration between teachers and students improved after the interventions, compared with before. Collaboration demonstrated a higher mean performance in the experimental group ( $M = 3.75$ ) than the control group ( $M = 2.50$ ), with  $SD = 0.750$ . The finding reflects strong integration of peer-based learning, including group tasks, pair work, and collective problem-solving, in experimental groups that received teacher training. The results show that learners in the experimental schools were more frequently engaged in cooperative learning processes, which help develop communication skills. The higher standard deviation suggests differing levels of student cooperation across classrooms.

The findings in Table 6 showed improvements in student-based activities after interventions: The largest gap was recorded in student-based activities, with a mean of  $M = 3.75$  in experimental schools compared to  $M = 1.75$  in the control group, and  $SD = 1.000$ . The finding confirms that the intervention significantly shifted classroom dynamics, placing students at the centre of learning and giving them opportunities to lead tasks, present findings, engage in peer teaching, and take responsibility for their learning progress. The wide variability indicates that, while strong gains were made, the extent of student-centred activities

varied across classrooms, depending on students' confidence levels, teacher support, resource availability, and classroom culture.

The findings from teachers' interviews after the intervention supported previous findings for revealing a significant improvement in the teaching and learning of communication skills. Teachers consistently reported progress across all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They emphasised that areas previously perceived as difficult had become easier to teach following the training and classroom exposure. One of the teachers who received training had this to witness;

*"..... Improvement had been noticed across all skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. After 4 weeks of CBT training and teaching, the areas we used to consider difficult have become simple. The major problem we faced was a lack of training. I can now teach listening through short stories, storytelling, and whispering games; I can teach speaking through role plays, debates, and guest speakers; I can teach writing through dictation, group discussion, simulations, project-based learning, and reading aloud; and I can teach reading through group work, group reading, and reading aloud. (Teacher, K2S, September 2025)*

One of the major issues identified prior to the intervention was inadequate training. Teachers acknowledged that this limitation had previously hindered their ability to teach communication skills effectively. However, after receiving training on Competency-Based Teaching (CBT) and engaging in four weeks of classroom practice, they developed greater confidence and competence in delivering lessons. Furthermore, teachers demonstrated the ability to apply a variety of learner-centred teaching strategies across different language skills. For listening skills, they reported using methods such as short stories, storytelling, and whispering games. In teaching speaking, strategies such as role-plays, debates, and guest speakers were highlighted. Writing skills were taught through dictation, group discussions, simulations, and project-based activities. For reading, teachers employed techniques such as reading aloud, group work, and group reading.

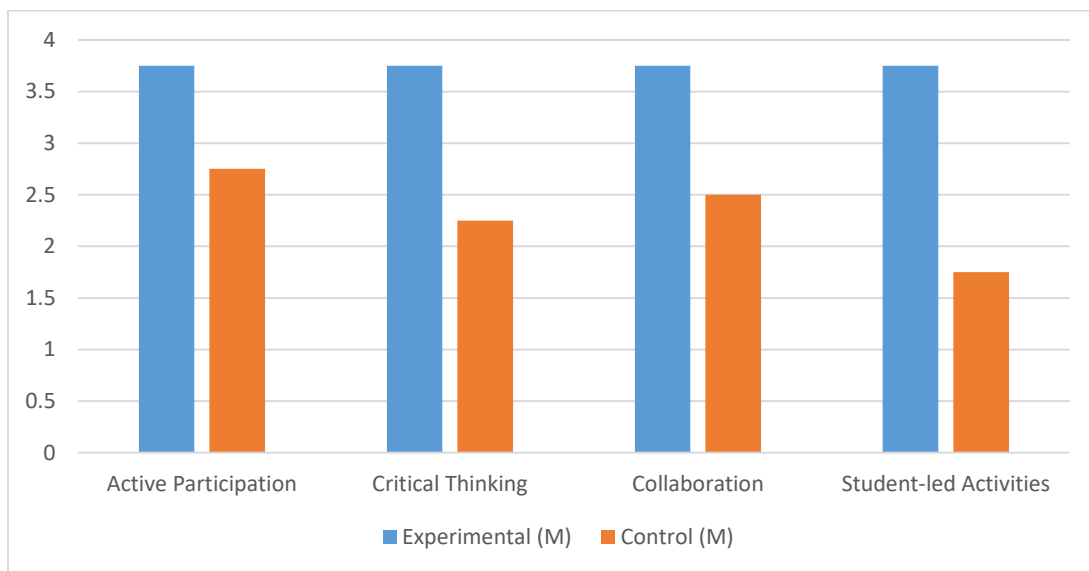
The findings indicate that the intervention contributed to a transformation in teaching practices, with teachers shifting toward more interactive, participatory, and student-centred approaches. The finding suggests that targeted training and practical exposure play a critical role in enhancing teachers' pedagogical skills and improving the teaching of communication competencies.

These findings demonstrate that the intervention had a substantial positive influence on student engagement,

participation, and the development of critical thinking skills. The consistently higher mean scores in the experimental group indicate that CBT-oriented teaching approaches transformed the classroom into a more interactive, learner-centred environment, where students were not passive recipients of knowledge but active participants in constructing their learning experiences. The lower scores in the control schools reveal that traditional teaching methods offered fewer opportunities for critical inquiry, Collaboration, and student leadership. This finding emphasises that without structured pedagogical reform and teacher support, classrooms tend to remain teacher-centred

and less responsive to competency-based educational goals.

The findings from the mean average in Figure 4.1 support the argument that CBT-informed instruction enhances learners' cognitive engagement, fosters deeper understanding, and better prepares students for real-world problem-solving, confirming the intervention's effectiveness in shifting teaching and learning toward modern, student-driven approaches across experimental and control group schools.



**Figure 1: Student participation, engagement, and Critical thinking**

#### 4.1.4 Clarity of Learning Objectives and Lesson Organisations Before and After Interventions

This section assessed the clarity of instructional objectives and lesson organisation among teachers before and after the intervention. Data were collected through questionnaires, classroom observations, and interviews to provide both quantitative and qualitative insights into teachers' instructional practices. The findings indicate that teachers in the experimental schools demonstrated significantly greater clarity in communicating learning objectives after the intervention compared to the control group. As shown in Table 4.11, the experimental group attained a high mean score of  $M = 4.25$  with a standard deviation of  $SD = 0.750$ , suggesting that teachers consistently articulated clear learning intentions during lessons. This Improvement reflects the intervention's positive influence, particularly in enhancing teachers' understanding of Competency-Based Teaching (CBT), which emphasises clearly defined learning outcomes.

In contrast, before the intervention, teachers in the control group reported a lower mean score ( $M = 2.75$ ), indicating that learning objectives were less explicit and inconsistently communicated. The observation implies that, prior to the intervention, many lessons lacked clear direction, making it difficult for learners to fully understand the intended outcomes. Qualitative findings further support these results. One Teacher from the experimental group reported: *"After the training, I make sure I tell students what they are going to learn at the beginning of the lesson. It helps them to follow and participate well"* (Teacher, September, 2025). This finding illustrates a shift from implicit to explicit communication of learning goals, a feature of embedded CBT.

Regarding lesson organisation, the experimental group showed moderate Improvement, with a mean score of  $M = 3.00$  and a smaller standard deviation of  $SD = 0.125$ . This finding indicates that while teachers demonstrated some consistency in structuring their lessons, the level of organisation remained moderate. Compared with the

control group, which maintained a lower mean score of  $M = 2.75$  before the intervention, the results suggest that the training improved lesson sequencing and preparation. However, the relatively small gain also implies that some aspects of lesson planning were not yet fully aligned with CBT requirements. Interview data revealed some of the challenges underlying this moderate performance. One Teacher explained: "...sometimes I am compelled to complete the syllabus earlier, which makes me shift to direct teaching instead of following all planned steps..." (Teacher, September 2025). This finding shows how external pressures, such as syllabus coverage, may limit teachers' ability to implement well-structured, competency-based lesson plans fully.

The findings confirm that the intervention was effective in improving teachers' clarity in communicating learning objectives and, to a lesser extent, in lesson organisation. While clarity of objectives showed substantial Improvement and wider adoption among teachers, lesson planning practices exhibited gradual progress, indicating the need for continued professional support. The standard deviation values further suggest that clarity of objectives was more widely and consistently implemented, whereas lesson organisation, though improving, still needs strengthening to support competency-based teaching.

**Table 7: Clarity of learning objectives and lesson organisation**

Indicator	Experimental (M)	Control (M)	SD	Interpretation
Clarity of Objectives	4.25	2.75	0.750	Clear communication of learning intentions in experimental schools
Lesson Planning	3.00	2.75	0.125	Moderate structuring in experimental schools; weaker in control schools

Source: Field data (2025)

#### 4.1.5 Use of Interactive Strategies in English Language Instruction Before and After Interventions

The section sought to assess the extent to which teachers incorporated interactive strategies in English language instruction before and after the interventions. To establish this, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "I regularly use group discussions, debates, project work, and pair work in my English lessons." As shown in Table 8, the findings

indicate varied levels of use of interactive teaching strategies among teachers prior to the intervention. Specifically, 25.0% of respondents strongly disagreed, 25.0% disagreed, 25.0% remained neutral, and 25.0% agreed with the statement, while none selected *Most Agree*. These results suggest that the use of interactive instructional methods was not widely or consistently practised before the intervention, as half of the respondents (50.0%) expressed disagreement with the statement.

**Table 8: Use of interactive strategies before interventions**

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	2	25.0
Disagree	2	25.0
Neutral	2	25.0
Agree	2	25.0
Most Agree	0	0.0

Source: Field data (2025)

The findings reveal that interactive teaching strategies, such as group discussions, debates, project work, and pair work, were not commonly used by a substantial proportion of teachers prior to the intervention. The equal distribution across response categories indicates inconsistent adoption of participatory instructional practices. Additionally, the presence of neutral responses suggests uncertainty or irregular use of such methods among some teachers.

who received training improved their ability to use interactive strategies. The mean score of  $M = 3.25$  and a standard deviation of  $SD = 0.125$ , higher than the control schools ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 0.125$ ). The modest difference between groups suggests that the intervention led to partial adoption of interactive learning structures, where students engaged in some peer discussions, group problem-solving, and cooperative activities.

During classroom observation between the control and experimental groups, the findings indicated that teachers

In the control schools, lower mean scores reflect limited peer interaction, with classroom activities largely teacher-

directed and fewer opportunities for students to work cooperatively. This pattern suggests that traditional instructional approaches continue to dominate in non-

intervention settings, limiting the development of social and cooperative learning skills, as shown in Table 9

**Table 9: Interactive strategies**

Group	Mean Score (M)	SD	Interpretation
Experimental	3.25	0.125	Partial adoption of collaborative learning structures
Control	3.00	0.125	Limited peer collaboration

Source: Field data (2025)

The findings from teachers who received CBT training indicated that the training has significantly improved their competence in lesson preparation, classroom delivery, and assessing how well students can use the skills in real life. One Teacher had this to say;

*".....I use interactive methods like questions and answers and discussions after training, but sometimes I am compelled to complete the syllabus before June, which forces me to shift to a direct teaching method. Students expect teachers to do everything in the classroom; they do not like it when you involve them. When one is selected to respond to a question, they dislike it. I also fail to use a CBT approach because it requires facilities like computers and tablets, which could help them listen to English from native speakers. CBT could build interest in learning English, and in fact, they could like the subject, they hate because they do not understand it....." (Teacher, September 23, 2025)*

The teacher interviews revealed a noticeable shift in instructional practices following the intervention. Teachers reported increased use of interactive teaching strategies such as question-and-answer sessions and group discussions, indicating improved understanding and application of interactive strategies. As one Teacher explained, *"I use interactive methods like questions and answers and discussions after receiving training..."* (Teacher, September 23, 2025). The study suggests that the training on Competency-Based Teaching (CBT) played a significant role in enhancing teachers' teaching skills and confidence. These qualitative insights support the quantitative results, which indicated limited and inconsistent use of interactive strategies prior to the intervention, thus demonstrating that the training contributed to improved classroom practices.

However, the findings also revealed several challenges that hinder the consistent implementation of interactive

methods. Teachers noted structural and contextual barriers, including pressure to complete the syllabus, negative student attitudes toward participation, and a lack of teaching resources. For instance, one Teacher noted, *"...sometimes I am compelled to complete the syllabus earlier before June, which makes me shift to a direct teaching method,"* while also highlighting that *"students expect teachers to do everything in the classroom... they do not like you to involve them."* Additionally, limited access to technological resources was identified as a constraint, with the Teacher stating that *"CBT requires facilities like computers, tablets..."*. These findings suggest that although the intervention improved teachers' use of interactive strategies, effective and sustained implementation requires addressing broader challenges related to time management, resource availability, and student readiness for participatory learning.

#### **4.1.6 Real-Life Assessment Practices Before and After Interventions**

This section investigated the alignment of teachers' assessment practices with real-life before-and-after interventions. Teachers responded to the item Likert statement: *"I assess students based on their ability to use English in real-life situations."* The purpose of this question was to determine whether teachers' assessment methods emphasised authentic performance and functional communication. The findings revealed that the majority of teachers 3(37.5%) selected *Neutral*, indicating uncertainty or inconsistency in applying authentic assessment practices. 2 (25%) *disagreed*, suggesting resistance or limited familiarity with real-life evaluation methods. In comparison, 3 (37.5%) of the teachers *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they assess students based on real-life language use. This distribution shows that few teachers recognised the importance of authentic assessment, while many remained hesitant to endorse it.

**Table 10: Teachers' use of real-life assessment**

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Disagree	2	25.0
Neutral	3	37.5
Agree	2	25.0
Most Agree	1	12.5

Source: Field data (2025)

Table 10 showed that real-life assessment practices were not yet fully embedded in teachers' instructional approaches prior to the interventions. The predominance of neutral and disagreeing responses suggested that authentic or formative assessment remained an area requiring professional support to better align with CBT principles.

The classroom observation revealed no substantial improvement in the teachers' received training in this area. The results indicate that assessment practices changed little for both the experimental and control groups. The mean score was recorded as equal ( $M = 3.25$ ), with a low standard deviation ( $SD \approx 0.250$ ). This finding suggests consistent reliance on traditional evaluation methods across classrooms. The finding implies that teachers who received training implemented CBT-aligned strategies while their assessment practices remained conventional, focused on summative assessments such as tests and terminal examinations rather than formative assessment methods. The uniformity indicated by the low Standard deviation supports that this trend was consistent across both groups.

Peer assessment, however, showed slight Improvement in the experimental schools ( $M = 2.75$ ,  $SD = 0.250$ ) compared to the control schools ( $M = 2.25$ ,  $SD = 0.250$ ). However, the difference indicates that the intervention encouraged some peer-led evaluation; the low means in both groups suggest that this strategy was infrequently used and not yet fully integrated into classroom assessment routines. The standard deviations suggest minimal variability, indicating that most teachers used peer assessment either rarely or moderately, with little difference across classrooms.

These findings in Table 11 revealed that assessment remains an area needing further attention in the context of CBT implementation. While the intervention positively influenced several instructional dimensions, teachers require additional professional development to adopt formative, competency-based assessment methods and to integrate peer evaluation practices effectively. Strengthening this aspect is critical to ensuring alignment among teaching strategies, learning activities, and the evaluation of student competencies.

**Table 11: Assessment Practices**

Indicator	Experimental (M)	Control (M)	SD	Interpretation
General Assessment	3.25	3.25	0.250	Equal reliance on traditional assessment methods
Peer Assessment	2.75	2.25	0.250	Rarely practised in both groups; slightly better in experimental schools

Source: Field data (2025)

This observation was further supported by the School Quality Assurer (SQA) during the interview, who stated; "...teachers continue to rely on written tests and examinations, they do not use other assessments advised in CBT policy, such as portfolios, projects, oral presentations, and others. This situation is because no directive policy to make the assessment flexible... (SQA, September 22, 2025).

Content analysis of the SQA's response reveals a recurring theme of limited use of authentic assessment practices in

the implementation of Competency-Based Teaching (CBT). The findings indicate that, prior to the intervention, teachers predominantly relied on traditional assessment methods, such as written tests and examinations, with minimal integration of alternative approaches, including portfolios, project-based assessment, and oral presentations. The finding suggests that assessment practices were largely teacher-centred and focused on content recall rather than competency development. Even after the intervention, although some improvement in instructional practices was observed, the adoption of

diverse, learner-centred assessment strategies remained limited. The finding shows a persistent gap between CBT policy and classroom practice. The SQA attributed this challenge to the absence of clear policy directives and enforcement mechanisms to support flexible assessment approaches. Consequently, despite increased teacher awareness following training, the lack of systemic support constrained the full implementation of authentic assessment methods. These findings imply that while the intervention contributed to pedagogical improvements, meaningful change in assessment practices requires not

only teacher training but also supportive policy frameworks and institutional guidance.

#### 4.1.7 Use of English as the Medium of Instruction in Classroom Interaction Before and After Interventions

This section examined the extent to which English was used as the medium of instruction in classroom interactions in rural public secondary schools. A Likert-scale item was administered using the following statement: *"I use English during most classroom interactions."* The results are summarised in Table 12

**Table 12: Teachers' use of English in classroom interaction**

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	1	12.5
Disagree	2	25.0
Neutral	3	37.5
Agree	2	25.0
Most Agree	0	0.0

Source: Field data (2025)

The findings indicate that, before the intervention, the use of English as the medium of instruction was limited and inconsistent among teachers. Only 25.0% of respondents agreed that they used English during most classroom interactions, while a larger proportion either disagreed (37.5%) or remained neutral (37.5%). The finding suggests that English was not the dominant language in classroom discourse prior to the intervention, with many teachers relying on alternative languages to facilitate understanding. After the intervention, although teachers who received training demonstrated increased awareness of the importance of using English as the medium of instruction, qualitative evidence suggests that contextual challenges still constrained consistent use. Data from teacher interviews revealed that language barriers among students continued to hinder effective implementation. One Teacher explained:

*"...they do not like you to involve them; when one is selected to respond to a question, they dislike it because of the language barrier. I also fail to use English frequently because they do not understand. Sometimes we use code mixing and switching at least to help them understand..."* (Teacher, September 2025).

Content analysis of this response indicates that students' low English proficiency and the sociolinguistic

environment significantly affect classroom language practices. The dominance of the local language (Kimatengo), coupled with limited exposure to English, discourages active participation and compels teachers to use code-mixing and code-switching as coping strategies. This finding from classroom observations conducted after the intervention further confirmed this pattern. During a lesson observed on September 23, 2025, from 11:00 AM to 12:20 PM at School K1S, the Teacher was observed using Kiswahili alongside English while analysing the poem 'Freedom Song'. This instructional approach appeared to facilitate students' comprehension of the lesson content; however, it simultaneously reduced consistent exposure to English, which is essential for the development of communication skills.

#### 4.3.8 Use of Competence-Based Teaching Instructional Resources Before and After Interventions

This section examined teachers' ability to use a variety of instructional resources in English-language instruction before the interventions. The Likert scale item statement was administered: *"I use various resources (audio, video, texts) to enhance communication skills."* The findings revealed a mixed pattern of responses, indicating variability in the use of such resources, as shown in Table 13.

**Table 13: Teachers' use of instructional resources before interventions**

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Disagree	2	25.0
Neutral	2	25.0
Agree	3	37.5
Most Agree	1	12.5

Source: Field data (2025)

The findings in Table 13 indicate that, before interventions, teachers used instructional resources moderately in English language teaching. Specifically, 37.5% of respondents agreed, and 12.5% strongly agreed that they used instructional resources in their teaching. However, 25.0% of teachers disagreed, while another 25.0% remained neutral. This distribution suggests that although some teachers incorporated instructional materials into their lessons, a considerable proportion either did not use them consistently or were uncertain about their application. The variation in responses reflects inconsistent integration of teaching resources across classrooms.

The findings on the use of instructional resources showed Improvement among teachers who received training, while it remained stagnant among those who did not. The mean score was  $M = 3.00$  ( $SD = 0.625$ ), while the control schools showed a lower mean of  $M = 1.75$ . The higher mean in the experimental group indicates that teachers incorporated a wider variety of instructional materials, including visual aids, audio resources, and other learner-centred tools, to

enhance lesson delivery. The standard deviation of 0.625 reflects moderate variability among classrooms, suggesting that while most teachers made good use of resources, some were still developing proficiency in integrating diverse materials effectively.

As shown in Table 13, the control group not only had a lower mean score but also demonstrated a limited range of resource use, indicating minimal integration of multimodal approaches. The lower mean reflects reliance on traditional, predominantly text-based instruction, with few teachers employing varied formats to engage students or facilitate understanding.

The finding highlights that the intervention positively influenced the experimental group by encouraging teachers to adopt more diversified instructional approaches, despite challenges related to technological infrastructure in rural settings. The moderate standard deviation indicates the practice was adopted rationally and consistently. This finding suggests that professional support and training helped teachers apply varied instructional resources effectively across classrooms, as illustrated in Table 14.

**Table 14: Use of Instructional resources**

Group	Mean Score (M)	SD	Interpretation
Experimental	3.00	0.625	Moderate variability among classrooms, suggesting that while most teachers made good use of resources, some were still developing proficiency in integrating diverse materials effectively.
Control	1.75		Minimal integration of multimodal approaches, technology, and multimodal resources in the classroom

Source: Field data (2025)

The findings revealed inconsistency in the use of varied instructional resources in teaching English in rural secondary schools. This observation was supported by insights from the School Quality Assurer (SQA), who expressed dissatisfaction with the limited and ineffective use of teaching and learning materials. The SQA stated:

*"...I am not happy with the use of teaching and learning resources; teachers normally use charts and maps, and it is very rare to see them improvise materials from the*

*environment. Even in schools with computers, they are rarely used... improving students' language is not possible without teachers' creativity. Even textbooks are few; sometimes it takes a month for a student to access a certain book."* (SQA, September 19, 2025).

Content analysis of this statement reveals that teaching and learning resources in rural secondary schools are both scarce and underutilised. Before the intervention, teachers largely relied on limited materials such as charts and maps,

with minimal effort to improvise with locally available resources or to integrate technology into instruction. The shortage of textbooks further constrained students' access to learning materials, thereby limiting opportunities for independent practice and language development. The finding indicates that instructional practices were not fully aligned with Competency-Based Teaching (CBT), which emphasises the use of diverse, learner-centred resources. After the intervention, although there was some improvement in teachers' awareness of the importance of instructional resources, their actual use remained inconsistent. The continued limited use of computers and the lack of improvisation suggest that structural challenges, such as inadequate resources, limited access to materials, and insufficient teacher creativity, persisted despite training. These findings imply that while the intervention contributed to some pedagogical awareness, effective integration of instructional resources requires not only training but also increased availability of materials and support for innovative teaching practices. Without such improvements, the development of students'

communicative competence in English is likely to remain constrained.

## 4.2 Effect of CBT on Students' English Communication Skills

In this objective, the study investigated the effect of competence-based teaching on students' English communication skills. The pretest and posttest assessments indicated a positive impact of competence-based teaching on students' communication skills across all four domains: Speaking, Reading, Listening, and Writing. The findings revealed that the experimental group consistently outperformed the control group across all four domains, demonstrating the intervention's comprehensive effectiveness. The magnitude of Improvement was highest in speaking, followed by reading, listening, and writing. This pattern supports the holistic nature of CBT, which integrates activities that simultaneously build multiple communication competencies. The details are presented in Table 15.

**Table 15: Mean score gains across communication skills**

Skill	Experimental Gain	Control Gain
Speaking	+2.2	+0.2
Reading	+1.1	+0.1
Listening	+0.7	+0.1
Writing	+0.2	0.0

Source: Field data (2025)

### 4.2.1 Improvement in Speaking Skills

The findings from pretest and posttest scores revealed that speaking skill development showed the most substantial

Improvement in the experimental group. Table 16 presents the descriptive results for the pretest and posttest mean scores for both groups.

**Table 16: Pretest and Posttest mean scores for speaking skills**

Group	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
Experimental	5.1	7.3	+2.2
Control	4.8	5.0	+0.2

Source: Field data (2025)

The results indicate a 2.2-point improvement in the experimental group compared to a 0.2-point improvement in the control group. This substantial difference demonstrates the intervention's effectiveness in enhancing oral communication skills. The Improvement suggests that learner-centred activities integrated into the CBT approach, such as role-playing, group discussions, presentations, and dialogues, significantly strengthened students' speaking competence. The control group's

marginal progress indicates limited exposure to structured oral communication tasks.

### 4.2.2 Improvement in reading skills

The findings from pretest and posttest scores revealed remarkable Improvement in reading skills among students in the experimental schools. Table 4.2 presents the comparative means.

**Table 17: Pretest and Posttest mean scores for reading skills**

Group	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
Experimental	2.7	3.8	+1.1
Control	2.5	2.6	+0.1

Source: Field data (2025)

The experimental group demonstrated a 1.1-point gain, while the control group gained only 0.1 points. The reduced variability in the experimental group's posttest scores suggests more consistent learning outcomes. This Improvement can be attributed to CBT strategies that emphasise text analysis, guided reading, skimming and scanning, and vocabulary development. The minimal change in the control group suggests that conventional

teacher-centred instruction was insufficient for boosting reading skills.

#### 4.2.3 Improvement in listening skills

The findings from pretest and posttest scores revealed that listening skills improved moderately in the experimental group compared to the control group. Table 18 summarises the findings.

**Table 18: Pretest and Posttest mean scores for listening skills**

Group	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
Experimental	1.8	2.5	+0.7
Control	1.7	1.8	+0.1

Source: Field Data (2025)

The experimental group increased by 0.7 points, indicating enhanced comprehension and auditory processing. The consistent exposure to listening activities, such as audio clips, conversations, teacher-student dialogues, and note-taking tasks, contributed to this Improvement. The control group's negligible Improvement suggests minimal access to authentic listening materials, highlighting the

importance of multimodal input in communication skills development.

#### 4.2.4 Improvement in writing skills

The findings from pretest and posttest scores revealed significant Improvement in writing skills in the experimental schools, as summarised in Table 19

**Table 19: Pretest and Posttest mean scores for writing skills**

Group	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
Experimental	0.6	0.8	+0.2
Control	0.4	0.4	0.0

Source: Field Data (2025)

Although the gain of 0.2 points appears small numerically, it represents notable progress given students' low baseline writing performance. The control group's lack of Improvement reinforces the need for structured writing support. The experimental group benefited from CBT writing strategies, including guided writing, peer editing, integrated reading–writing tasks, and composition practice, which enhanced coherence, organisation, grammar, and vocabulary use in student writing.

#### 4.2.3 Relationship Between Control and Experimental Groups in Pretest and Posttest Results

This part presents the relationship between the control and experimental groups based on the patterns of change in

communication skills from pretest to posttest. The comparison focuses on the four domains of English communication skills: Speaking, Reading, Listening, and Writing, to determine the extent to which the intervention influenced students' English communication improvements.

##### 4.2.3.1 Pretest Score Relationship Between Experimental and Control Groups

During pretest assessment, the findings revealed that both the experimental and control groups had comparable baseline performance, indicating similar levels of communication competence before the intervention. As shown in Table 20, pretest mean scores in all four domains

showed minimal variation between the two groups. The finding showed that the experimental group had mean scores of 5.1 in Speaking, 2.7 in Reading, 1.8 in Listening, and 0.6 in Writing. Similarly, the control group demonstrated closely related means of 4.8, 2.5, 1.7, and 0.4, respectively. This similarity underscores a balanced

starting point, meaning the groups were academically equivalent before the intervention. The comparative closeness in pretest scores confirms internal validity by ensuring that any subsequent differences in performance can reasonably be attributed to the intervention rather than pre-existing disparities.

**Table 20: Pretest means scores for experimental and control groups**

Skill Area	Experimental Group	Control Group
Speaking	5.1	4.8
Reading	2.7	2.5
Listening	1.8	1.7
Writing	0.6	0.4

Source: Field Data (2025)

#### 4.2.3.2 Relationship control group and experimental group in Posttest assessments

The posttest results revealed a clear divergence between the two groups, indicating a strong relationship between the intervention and observed learning gains. The experimental group showed substantial improvements across all four communicative domains, while the control group exhibited only marginal changes. For example, speaking skills increased from 5.1 to 7.3 in the experimental group, whereas the control group showed a slight increase from 4.8 to 5.0. Reading skills improved by

1.1 points in the experimental group but only 0.1 in the control group. Similar patterns were observed in listening and writing skills: the experimental group made measurable progress, while the control group remained nearly stagnant. This widening gap in posttest outcomes indicates a strong positive relationship between the intervention and learner improvement in the experimental group. The limited changes in the control group confirm that typical instructional practices did not produce comparable gains. A summary of the results is illustrated in Table 21.

**Table 21: Posttest mean scores for experimental and control groups**

Skill Area	Experimental Group	Control Group
Speaking	7.3	5.0
Reading	3.8	2.6
Listening	2.5	1.8
Writing	0.8	0.4

Source: Field Data (2025)

#### 4.2.3.4 Relationship in learning gains between experimental and control groups

The pretest and posttest results demonstrate a strong contrast between the groups. The experimental group's gains ranged from moderate to substantial, reflecting the effectiveness of Competence-Based Teaching (CBT), while the control group's gains were minimal across all

domains. As shown in Table 22, the relationship can be described as divergent growth, with the intervention acting as the determining factor in improving learner communication. This divergence illustrates that the instructional strategy had a positive effect on communication skill development, whereas the conventional teaching experienced by the control group did not.

**Table 22: Learning gains (Posttest – Pretest) for both groups**

Skill Area	Experimental Group Gain	Control Group Gain
Speaking	+2.2	+0.2
Reading	+1.1	+0.1
Listening	+0.7	+0.1
Writing	+0.2	0.0

Source: Field data (2025)

The pretest–posttest results reveal a clear contrast in learning gains between the experimental and control groups, demonstrating the impact of Competency-Based Teaching (CBT) on students' English communication skills. As shown in Table 22, the experimental group recorded substantially higher gains across all four language skills than the control group. In speaking, the experimental group achieved a gain of **+2.2**, while the control group recorded only **+0.2**, indicating a large difference in oral communication development. Similarly, reading skills improved by **+1.1** in the experimental group compared to **+0.1** in the control group, while listening skills increased by **+0.7** in the experimental group compared to **+0.1** in the control group. Writing showed the smallest Improvement overall, yet the experimental group still recorded a gain of **+0.2**, whereas the control group showed no improvement (**0.0**). These results demonstrate that students who received CBT experienced consistent, measurable progress across all communication domains.

The pattern of results reflects divergent growth between the two groups, with the experimental group showing steady Improvement while the control group remains relatively stagnant. This divergence suggests that the intervention played a critical role in influencing learning outcomes. The higher gains in speaking and reading, in particular, indicate that CBT strategies such as role-plays, discussions, and collaborative reading tasks created more opportunities for students to engage actively with language. In contrast, the minimal gains observed in the control group imply that conventional teaching methods did not significantly enhance students' ability to use English for communication. The consistency of low gains across all skill areas in the control group further confirms that without targeted pedagogical intervention, Improvement in communication skills remains limited.

Furthermore, the variation in gains across skill areas highlights the differential impact of CBT on language development. The highest Improvement in speaking suggests that interactive and communicative classroom activities had the strongest influence on oral proficiency, while moderate gains in reading and listening reflect increased exposure to meaningful language input. The relatively lower gain in writing may indicate that this skill

requires more time and sustained practice to develop fully, even within a competency-based framework. Overall, the findings demonstrate that CBT is an effective instructional approach for enhancing students' English communication skills, as evidenced by the substantial gains in the experimental group compared to the negligible progress in the control group.

### 4.3 Discussion of Findings

#### 4.3.1 Teacher Practices and Competency-Based Knowledge

The study revealed that teachers in Mbinga District initially relied on traditional lecture methods, with limited conceptual knowledge of competency-based Teaching (CBT). After the intervention, however, their knowledge and practices improved significantly, as evidenced by the rise in mean scores from 2.75 to 3.50. This finding aligns with Chen and Shuib's (2026) conclusion that communicative approaches enhance classroom participation and language use. Salam and Luksfinanto (2024) similarly emphasise that CLT fosters learner motivation and involvement, as reflected in teachers' post-intervention confidence in engaging students through learner-centred activities. Derseh et al. (2024) also confirm that competency-based strategies improve speaking performance when supported by instructional techniques, a result mirrored in Mbinga classrooms. Zhou et al. (2024) further argue that communicative competence can be strengthened through contextual adaptation, a claim that resonates with teachers' efforts to integrate local realities into lessons. From a theoretical perspective, Constructivist Learning Theory explains this shift as teachers began to facilitate knowledge construction through group activities and collaborative learning (Piaget; Vygotsky). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) provided the practical framework for role-plays, debates, and problem-solving tasks that encouraged authentic communication. Together, these theories illuminate how the intervention bridged the gap between policy and practice, enabling teachers to shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred instruction.

### 4.3.2 Student Outcomes in English Communication Skills

The intervention also improved students' English communication skills, particularly in speaking and listening. This outcome corroborates OECD's (2023) assertion that competency-based education enhances real-life communication competencies. Sahlberg (2022) observed that student-oriented methods enhance critical thinking and communication skills, while Lundahl (2021) reported improved fluency through interactive instruction. García (2022) highlighted the role of collaborative learning in boosting language proficiency, which parallels the peer discussions and role-plays introduced in Mbinga classrooms. Hellekjær (2022) similarly demonstrated that communicative approaches foster higher proficiency, reinforcing the observed gains among rural Tanzanian students. The theoretical framework further explains these outcomes. Constructivism emphasises social interaction as central to learning, while CLT stresses authentic language use. In Mbinga, students' engagement in group tasks and contextualised activities facilitated deeper learning despite resource constraints. Thus, the intervention validated the theoretical claim that learner-centred, communicative environments foster communicative competence even in resource-limited settings.

Despite these gains, challenges persisted. Teachers continued to struggle with authentic evaluation strategies, echoing Kamiri's (2022) observation that assessment compatibility is critical for successful implementation. Adem and Berkessa (2022) similarly noted that African classrooms often revert to traditional methods due to large class sizes and resource shortages, a reality evident in Mbinga. Uwizeyimana (2022) emphasised that institutional barriers hinder effective learner-centred practices, while Waweru (2023) identified inadequate training as a major obstacle. Shayo and Mnyanyi (2023) further highlighted the lack of ICT resources, which constrained teachers' ability to fully implement CBT. These findings underscore Constructivist theory's principle that learning is shaped by context and resources. While interventions can improve teacher competence and student outcomes, systemic challenges such as resource scarcity, examination-driven assessment, and limited institutional support must be addressed to sustain progress. Without structural reforms, teachers risk reverting to traditional practices, undermining the gains achieved through training. The study confirms three key insights consistent with global literature: (1) competency-based and communicative methods enhance students' communication abilities when successfully applied (Chen & Shuib, 2026; Derseh et al., 2024; OECD, 2023); (2) teacher competence and training are essential for effective implementation (Niemi, 2022; Hargreaves, 2023; Waweru, 2023); and (3)

the policy-practice gap remains a chronic issue in African contexts (Adem & Berkessa, 2022; Uwizeyimana, 2022; Issa et al., 2024). By focusing on rural Tanzania, this study contributes new evidence on how targeted teacher-training interventions can improve both pedagogical practices and student communication skills. The findings suggest that policymakers should prioritise continuous professional development, resource provision, and assessment reforms to align classroom practices with curriculum goals. The constructivist and CLT frameworks provide theoretical justification for these reforms, emphasising the need for interactive, learner-centred environments that foster authentic communication. Ultimately, bridging the gap between policy and practice requires systemic support alongside teacher training, ensuring that competency-based teaching can sustainably enhance communicative competence in rural Tanzanian schools.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the effect of a competency-based teaching (CBT) intervention on teachers' pedagogical practices and students' English communication skills in rural secondary schools in Mbinga District, Tanzania. Guided by Constructivist Learning Theory and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the quasi-experimental mixed-methods design enabled both quantitative measurement through pretest–posttest instruments and qualitative exploration through interviews, observations, and documentary reviews. The findings revealed that teachers initially relied heavily on traditional lecture methods and demonstrated limited knowledge of CBT principles. Following the intervention, however, teachers in the experimental group showed significant improvements in their understanding and application of learner-centred strategies, with mean scores rising from 2.75 to 3.50. Students likewise exhibited enhanced communicative competence, particularly in speaking and listening, validating the theoretical claim that interactive, authentic learning environments foster language acquisition. Despite these gains, systemic challenges persisted, including inadequate instructional resources, limited ICT integration, and reliance on traditional assessment practices. These constraints highlight the enduring policy practice gap in Tanzanian education and underscore the need for sustained institutional support.

### 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made.

- 1. Continuous professional development programs should institutionalise Continuous Teacher Training.** These initiatives will be used to reinforce teachers' understanding of competency-based and communicative pedagogies and to introduce adaptive practices into the classroom.
- 2. Ensuring that instructional resources are provided;** Policymakers should give priority to allocations of resources for underserved districts

- 3. Introducing authentic assessment strategies** that will assess speaking, listening, and collaborative problem solving will help classroom practices match the communicative goals of the curriculum and will hopefully persuade teachers to incorporate interactive activities in class.

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