

## Research Article

# The Impact of In-Service Education and Training on Teachers' Learning: Perspectives from English Foreign Language Teachers in Tanzania

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Received 27 December 2022; Revised 19 February 2023; Accepted 16 March 2023; Published 12 May 2023

Academic Editor: Mehdi Nasri

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This study evaluates the impact of in-service education and training on Tanzanian foreign language teachers learning. The in-service training focused on equipping teachers with knowledge and skills in competency-based language teaching. The qualitative research approach and the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique were used to guide the research process. The data were collected from Manyara and Kilimanjaro Regions. Twenty-one respondents were purposely selected and interviewed in a one-to-one unstructured interview. Information from the interview was managed using ATLAS.ti and thematically analyzed using a thematic approach. The finding indicated that the in-service training effectively impacted teachers learning on subject knowledge, general knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge relating to competency-based language teaching. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and other education stakeholders need to sustain the knowledge gained to reflect it in English language teachers' classroom practice by providing follow-up and support. Moreover, the discrepancy in some facets of knowledge gained and limited change stories related to the planning, teaching, and assessing grammar call for more in-service training so that teachers gain the correct information and appropriately teach and assess grammar by associating it with functional usage.

## 1. Introduction

Seventeen years ago, the curriculum for the English language in Tanzania's ordinary secondary schools underwent a substantial paradigm change from content-based to competency-based language teaching (CBLT). The change was due to the prominent role that language plays as the language of instruction and communication in official settings rendering the need for students to master practical communication skills for English language usage [1]. To achieve this goal, English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers must use multiple, student-centred teaching methods that promote interaction, authentic learning material, and assessment [2].

It is advocated that effective implementation of the reforms lies in EFL teachers' comprehensive mastering of subject content and pedagogy for implementing it [3]. Thus,

the implementation of CBLT in Tanzania lies in EFL teachers' understanding of the content proposed and how it can be taught. Since positive teaching and learning in the classroom depend on teachers' knowledge [4], a great deal of learning through in-service education and training (INSET) is essential for the proposed changes to be understood and for teachers' competence to be heightened [5]. Participation in effective INSET changes teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs and improves classroom practice and student learning [6].

However, the change in teachers' practice can occur only if in-service training leads to profound changes in teachers' knowledge, skills, attitude, and beliefs [4, 7]. That means the change in teachers' knowledge, skills, and attitude is a prerequisite for improving teaching and student learning in classroom settings. While scholars suggest that sufficient teacher knowledge about the reform is the condition for its

effective implementation, there are limited studies in Tanzania that have documented the impact of INSET linked with the 2005 curriculum reform on teachers' knowledge. The World Bank report noted that in-service training provided between 2010 and 2017 improved the pass rate and increased the number of teachers trained [8]. While defining program success per number of participants attended may be attractive to the funders, still attending does not imply learning.

Other scholars directed their effort toward documenting in-service training weaknesses such as insufficient [9], partial [10], irregular [11], and inadequate [12]. While the in-service training may have weaknesses, how well the predetermined goals have been achieved is usually underscored. Besides, Yan and He [13] insisted that even if the INSET is for a short while, it can change teachers' practice. What matters most is quality and not quantity [14]. Thus, this study sought to obtain qualitative feedback from those privileged to attend the in-service training on the impact of the training on CBLT knowledge. The study's central question was: what was the impact of INSET on EFL teachers' knowledge of CBLT? Precisely, this study asks the following:

- (1) What was the impact of the training on EFL teachers' content knowledge?
- (2) What was the impact of the training on EFL teachers' pedagogical content knowledge?
- (3) What was the impact of the training on EFL teachers' general knowledge?

*1.1. The Context of the Study.* This study is linked to 2015 and 2016 when the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) conducted an INSET to strengthen English language teaching as per competency-based curriculum. The training came into existence after the 2011 government survey, which acknowledged that English language teachers have been facing a challenge in interpreting the 2005 syllabus and teaching some of its components. Thus, the training objectives were to help EFL teachers understand the approach, structure, and organization of the 2005 English language syllabus and its features, and then understand and prepare the format of a scheme of work and lesson plans. Besides, it aimed at developing EFL teachers' ability to plan, teach, assess, and evaluate forms (grammar) and function (writing, speaking, reading, and listening), and understand how to organize and manage a classroom.

While the program is documented to have been implemented, no studies have evaluated the training impact. The INSET reports reported the daily implementation process, the content covered, the number of participants, and the implementation challenges. However, whether or not the training impacted teachers' learning was not reported. Therefore, this study evaluates the perceived impact of the training on EFL teacher learning.

## 2. Literature Review

*2.1. Teachers' Knowledge Base.* Any effective instruction depends on teachers' knowledge [15]. Worldwide, teachers'

knowledge base is classified into subject or content knowledge (CK), general pedagogical knowledge (GPK), pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), technological pedagogical content knowledge, and the knowledge of general education context [16, 17]. The knowledge of classroom communication, assessment, management, instructional models, and lesson planning is regarded as GPK. In contrast, the knowledge that needs to be taught for a specific subject is referred to as CK. PCK includes methods and practice of teaching particular subjects, i.e., curriculum, syllabus, assessment, instructional strategies, and learners. Besides, they need to master the technological pedagogical and content knowledge that can facilitate content learning and understand the general education context [18–21].

Meanwhile, Tanzania's secondary teachers' education curriculum prepares prospective candidates in three main areas: professional studies, academic courses, and general courses. The professional courses facilitate the mastery of learners' knowledge, the philosophy of education, research skills, and theories of learning and teaching. Academic courses focus on the mastery of the subject matter and the strategies used to transcend the content to the learners. Lastly, the general course advances teacher knowledge on global awareness, the use of information communication technology in delivering and communicating information, media and technology in teaching, communication skills, research skills, and spiritual growth [22].

Consequently, an excellent EFL teacher is supposed to master the content to teach and be proficient in the language, understand curriculums, and EFL syllabus, and be able to plan, deliver, and assess the lesson using appropriate methods per learners and the topics. They need to understand how to manage a language classroom, recognize the vision and mission for English language learning locally and globally, and apply technology to facilitate communication, teaching, and learning. With the 2005 curriculum reform, EFL teachers must readjust the knowledge base to match the reforms. Since initial teachers' education is no longer into play, INSET helps to familiarize teachers with the new knowledge and skill base, thus understanding the new education goals, content, and teaching methods, and determine curriculum success [23, 24].

*2.2. Theoretical Framework.* This study used the social constructivism theory, advocated by Lev Vygotsky. The theory stresses that learning is not just an individual construction of knowledge, but also a social process taking place in it also takes place in a social context as an individual engages in an activity to facilitate knowledge and understanding [25]. Social constructivism advocates learning that is based on the following principles:

- (1) Learning is a social collaboration activity between the teacher and the students. Thus, there is no need for teachers to teach; instead, they should focus on creating a conducive learning environment, eliciting students' prior knowledge, and actively engaging them in a learning process. Since it is a collaboration process, active learning methods should also be used

so that they are involved in knowledge construction, such as role play [26].

- (2) Each learner's zone of proximal development is different. Thus, instead of grouping students as the same, individual difference should be acknowledged, and appropriate support and task should be provided [27].
- (3) Social interactions are an essential part of learning. The learning process does not take in an abstract setting but rather in a place where there is social interaction can, collaboration, and cooperative, i.e., provision of group work, peer teaching, and setting tasks that need skills application [28].
- (4) Provision of meaningful learning tasks: the education provided should be closely related to the society that students live in. Meaningful learning also includes a meaningful assessment. Creativity and imagination are also crucial in promoting multiple learning modalities such as doing, showing, telling, and explaining [27, 29].
- (5) Tools such as language, culture, and people affect learning and intellectual development; therefore, they are crucial to learning [25, 27, 30].

The theory was selected because the 2005 Tanzania curriculum for secondary education insists that secondary education should be constructivist. The above demand equally affects the knowledge that EFL teachers should possess and the learning students need to experience. Therefore, teachers' content, general pedagogy, and PCK have to match constructivism demand.

*2.3. Empirical Literature Review.* A mixed result, both negative and positive, of training impact has been widely documented, suggesting that not every in-service training is designed, supported, and delivered in a manner that can lead to a change in teachers' knowledge, classroom practice, and student achievement [31]. For instance, Borg [32] evaluated the impact of in-service training on language teacher beliefs. The course transformed teachers' beliefs in language teaching as they became more aware and articulate of their thoughts. Evaluating the Punjab Education and English Language Initiative (PEELI) Project, Naz et al. [33] found that the training led to trainers' and teachers' understanding of constructive feedback, active learning, and group work. Besides, teachers managed to move from a teacher-centered approach to a student-centered approach to language teaching.

Positive and negative program appraisal was also noted by Yastibaş and Erdal [34] who evaluated the English for Academic Purposes II Course. In their study, they found that the course led to improvements in students' critical thinking, problem solving, and reasoning in English academic skills. Besides, it encouraged students to learn English and the need for the English language in the future. However, some of the respondents also commented that to not be the case. In a study by Amara [35], EFL teachers in Libya perceived the in-service teacher training programs to be useful. The training led to mastering relevant skills and strategies needed for classroom teaching. In the evaluation study by

Hall and Hite [36], teachers appraised the program for helping them to define global education, develop an understanding of competence within their curriculum, and implement its recommended teaching approaches in the classroom.

Evaluating the efficiency of the INSET in improving EFL teachers' technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge, Mahmoudi et al. [37] found that the course adequately helped improve teachers' knowledge, and they could create online classes and share experiences with other teachers. Yoo [38] evaluated the impact of professional development (PD) on teaching efficacy. They further reported that the training led to an increase in teachers' efficacy by gaining new knowledge. In addition, El Afi [39] appraised the impact of PD on teachers' performance in Abu Dhabi and found that there was a change in teacher lesson planning, teaching methods, and lesson management strategies.

While some schoolers reported a positive program impact, some did not. For instance, Uddin [40] evaluated the adequacy and effectiveness of in-service training for secondary English teachers of Bangladeshi Madrasahs. This study found that the training was inadequate since it did not focus on what needed to be implemented in the classroom but on administrative issues. Dissatisfactory training impact was also reported by Jacob et al. [41]. In their study, they found that the training conducted for mathematical teachers had no impact on teachers' knowledge, hence no change in their instruction practice because the training was not per actual teachers' needs.

In Tanzania, in-service teacher training has been criticized for being poorly supported, budgeted, and uncoordinated at all levels [42] limiting its positive impact. Some factors widely documented to affect training impact include limited follow-up, low quality of modules, poor service provided to teachers, and incompetent school-based facilitators [43]. In a study by Makia [44], teachers complained of INSET being old fashioned. Their perception was influenced by INSET's failure to use technological tools and involve them during planning and organization. Even self-directed initiatives have been observed to face limited support, discouragement, lack of reading materials, family obligations, poor learning environment, and lack of permanent mentors [45].

Besides the challenges, some projects were evaluated, and the results indicated that they were successful. For example, Mkonongwa and Komba [46] assessed the impact of education development and quality improvement projects on English language teacher training in Tanzania (EQUIP T-ELT). Despite the challenges, the findings indicate that the project was successful. Participants changed their teaching approaches to be more participatory, and they could share knowledge and skills and learn how to work together. At institutional levels, the project improved human resource capacity, English language proficiency, and pedagogical and leadership skills. The reasons for its success were the availability of team teaching, intensive training, and peer mentoring.

On the other side, Kabole [47] evaluated primary school teachers' perception of school-based INSET (MWAKEMI). His result indicated that headteachers and teachers were happy with the program and outcome. Through the INSET,



they acquired knowledge and skills in preparing schemes of work and improving their teaching methods. The program also faced challenges such as a shortage of resources, weak mentoring, and time constraints. Likewise, Hamisi [48] evaluated the influence of LANES PD in enhancing numeracy and literacy skills in Tanzania. The finding indicated that, as a result of the program, teachers improved their knowledge and abilities, consequently improving literacy and numeracy in pupils. However, the challenge was inadequate time, inconsistency in content, and failure to include all qualified teachers.

Prosper and Doroth [49] also designed, implemented, and evaluated a school-based INSET, which aimed at strengthening English learning by increasing English teachers' competencies through the interpretation of short stories. The findings indicate that the training enabled English language teachers to improve their knowledge and pedagogical skills using short stories to teach competence-based lessons. They also managed to establish a professional network. The program's usefulness was due to its ability to include beneficiaries of training in designing the program. Besides, they could observe and receive feedback from their colleagues while teaching.

To sum up, the reviewed studies, both nationally and internationally, point to why in-service training can have an enormous impact, moderate, or no impact. All concerns can be lessened to INSET context, input, process, and school environment, and how they had or lacked features of effective INSET. The features include coherence, coaching and mentoring, modeling of the best practice resources, need-based, active learning, collegiality/collaboration, feedback and reflection, and sustained duration. Therefore, for effective training impact, Wedell [50] stressed the need for national and local stakeholders to be involved in training design and implementation beyond top-down commanding approaches.

### 3. Methodology

**3.1. Research Approach and Sampling.** This study is qualitative. The researchers relied on narrative to obtain unfathomable individualized meaning and experience associated with the impact of in-service training [51–53]. According to Wolgemuth et al. [54], making respondents' voices count in even descriptions gives them a sense of control, empowerment, self-awareness, and purpose. The data were collected from two regions: Kilimanjaro and Manyara Regions. Twenty-one ordinary school EFL teachers were selected as participants using purposive, snowball, and convenience sampling strategies. Respondents were purposefully selected because they took part in the INSET as trainees. Since they were many and dispersed, the process of identifying them was done using snowballing sampling strategy; then, they were included based on their convenience (availability and readiness to be interviewed).

**3.2. Data Collection and Analysis Process.** The Most Significant Change (MSC) technique, a participatory method of evaluating program impact using stories from those directly

affected by the program without predetermined indicators [55], was used as an evaluation method. First, the domain of the change was determined, whereas this study focused on learning (knowledge). The next step was collecting the stories of change relating to the domain using one-to-one semi-structured interviews, which allowed the gathering of more deep and individualized change stories. The interview was followed by selecting the most significant change stories linked to the training objective. Lastly, stories were again shared with respondents for verification. The MSC story selected was analyzed thematically with the help of ATLAS.ti. First, MSC stories were transcribed and uploaded into ATLAS.ti for coding, which was done inductively. After coding, themes were generated whereby codes were reread and added to the appropriate family, as shown in Table 1.

The last two stages of thematic data analysis, namely, defining and renaming the themes and producing report analysis, were done concurrently. The themes and codes were exported to the word documents and changed to more elaborative phrases and sentences for report writing.

**3.3. Ethical Considerations.** Ethical considerations included obtaining authorization from Moshi Co-operative University, Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS), District Administration Secretaries (DAS), and District Executive Director (DED) from Manyara and Kilimanjaro Regions to visit and conduct this study in the selected areas. An introduction letter and informed consent were presented to the respondents before data collection. Only after they consented to take part in this study, further arrangements were made. During data transcription and analysis of the research findings, their anonymity was preserved by using pseudonyms. Besides, any information that was suspected of leading to respondent identification was also deleted. That included the names of schools, places, and any information which described personal attributes that could be easily traced were also removed.

### 4. Findings

**4.1. Respondents' Characteristics.** This study used 21 respondents. They were all active English language teachers. Their level of education ranged from diploma to master's degree. They all majored in English or Linguistics as their teaching subject. Moreover, they were teaching different levels from form I to IV. Their teaching experience also varied those who ranged from 1 to 3, 4 to 6, 7 to 18, 19 to 30, and 31 to 40 years, respectively. Another interesting finding of the participants is that they all came from public schools. In an interview, EO1K mentioned that private schools had the arrangement to train their teachers.

**4.2. Perceived Most Significant Change in Knowledge.** During different stages of an interview, respondents conceitedly attested positive changes in knowledge and skills as the result of the INSET. For example, T4M noted that "nothing has improved my teaching like that training." At some point, T3K held that "the training was excellent; it was an

TABLE 1: Codes, categories, and themes generated from data analysis.

Codes	Categories/Family	Themes
Classroom management (2-0) Not controlling the class (2-0) Not related (1-0) Silent class (1-0) Teaching aid (3-0) We do not beat students (2-0)	Classroom management (i) Individual differences (ii) Teaching aids (iii) Friendly learning environment	General pedagogical knowledge
Allocating time (7-0) Competence (10-0) Scheme of work (2-0) Teachers' activities (2-0)	Format for a scheme of work (i) Time (ii) General objective (iii) Competence (iv) Teaching and learning activities	General pedagogical knowledge
Allocating time (7-0) Competence (10-0) Consolidation (3-0) Did not understand...remark (5-0) Format of the lesson plan (10-0) Introduction (2-0) Objective (4-0) Pupil evaluation (15-0) Reflection (3-0) Reinforcement (1-0) Specific objective (4-0) Teacher evaluation (4-0) Writing assessment (2-0)	Format of lesson plan (i) Competence (ii) General objective (iii) Specific objective (iv) References (v) Teaching aids (vi) Lesson stages (vii) Assessment (viii) Students' evaluation (ix) Pupil evaluation (x) Remark	General pedagogical knowledge
Consider learners knowledge (2-0) New knowledge (1-0) Not applicable (2-0) Now we do like how the syllabus (3-0) Reading skills and subskills (3-0) Student can advise on method (7-0) Supervisor (5-0) Teaching method (13-0)	Structure and organization of the 2005 syllabus (i) Nature of the syllabus (ii) Learner-centered method (iii) The role of the teacher (iv) Integrations of skills (v) Learners' prior knowledge (vi) Active teaching method	Pedagogical content knowledge
Four skills (2-0) Grammar (2-0) Reading skills and subskills (6-0) Teach listening (3-0) Writing (2-0)	Four skills and grammar (i) Grammar (ii) Listening and reading (iii) Writing and speaking	Subject/academic content knowledge

eye-opener." A similar view was also attested by T8K that "on my part, truthfully, they helped me." The positive affirmation above suggests that the INSET objectives were achieved and new knowledge and skills were acquired. The MSC stories were reported in the following knowledge categories

4.2.1. *Subject/Academic Content Knowledge.* Respondents appraised the training for helping them understand how the four skills (listening, writing, speaking, and reading) and grammar can be taught. By narrating change on the content to teach, T6M commented the following:

*Formally, we were teaching parts of speech and tense. However, with the current syllabus, these things are not said or taught as they are. They are inside the task. You are asked to teach listening; you read a story, and within a story is when a student realizes tense. I did not know that (Teacher 6, Manyara Region).*

Thus, T6M realized that grammar should not be taught separately but within the context along with other skills. On teaching reading, T11K also observed the following:

*Previously, when teaching reading, I was reading myself. I did not know that a teacher should read 20% and students 80%. My role is to make corrections in pronunciation. From the training, I learned that I should give students more time to read. When students read, they become familiar with the vocabulary, correct pronunciation, and spell them (Teacher 11, Kilimanjaro Region).*

Therefore, T11K realized that a big part of reading tasks should go to students, while the teacher remains with a supervisory role instead of the one doing the reading. Respondents also added that they gained knowledge on teaching methodology relevant to each skill. By narrating the outcome, T2M enlightened that:

*In these four skills, mimi nilikuwa natwanga tu (not knowing exactly the skills involved). I was lecturing about the skills I was taught at the university. I learned from the training that each skill has its teaching approach (Teacher 2, Manyara Region).*

From T2Ms perspective, the training enlightened her on the fact that each skill has its teaching strategies, hence the need to be facilitated differently. Lastly, an interesting observation was also noted in skills integration whereby respondents learned within one skill can contain subskills, and it is not easy to teach one skill at a time. Skills integration was commented by T10K, who had the following to say:

*While teaching reading, I could give students a picture and ask them to make a story that relates to the picture. From the training, I realized that we who graduated a long time had missed a lot of things (Teacher 10, Kilimanjaro Region).*

Therefore, while students are interpreting the picture, they also develop writing and comprehension skills. On the other hand, T4M stressed the outcome of the training on subject knowledge by exalting that:

*I did not know how to teach an impromptu speech; I was defining it. Now I take a piece of paper and inscribe topics like malaria, HIV, human rights, etc. I fold papers and divide students into two groups, like we have a debate, while some become judges. One person from each group would pick a paper and open it. He starts explaining whatever he sees on the paper without asking questions. Another person selects another paper and does the same (Teacher 4, Manyara Region).*

Thus, T4M understood what impromptu speech is and the meaningful way through which students can learn and practice. In a nutshell, on subject content knowledge, respondents learned not just the content to be taught but also the relevant approach per skill and how two skills or even more can be analogously taught at par.

**4.2.2. Pedagogical Content Knowledge.** PCK included the curriculum, learners, and subject-specific instructional methods. Relating to the curriculum, respondents remarked that the training broadened their understanding of the 2005 O-level English language syllabus. For example, T5M explained, “There are other things I may have learned, yet, the thing I remember well is to give a student a lot of chances to participate in the lesson rather than giving a lecture.” A similar comment was aired by T3M “after the training, I realized I was using a lot of energy to teach. Students are the ones who need a lot of time to talk, not me.” What T5M and T3M gained from the training is the new role that the competence-based curriculum wants all teachers and students to assume. Teachers became the facilitators of the lessons, while

students took an active part in learning rather than being spoon-fed.

Besides students’ and teachers’ new roles, trainees did not understand the meaning of different terminologies used in the 2005 syllabus. For example, T3K said, “understanding what competence is, was a problem. So, after attending the seminar, we released aah! So, it is a skill.” On the other hand, T2M had a challenge understanding what different columns in the new syllabus are used for, as she echoed in the following quote:

*Looking at the syllabus, I found column written patterns, situations, specific objectives, patterns, and vocabulary {laugh}. So, we were asking ourselves, what are these columns for? How are they being used? Why are they kept here? So, after attending training, I understood the reviewed syllabus (Teacher 2, Manyara Region).*

Therefore, after the training, T2M what each column in the language syllabus stands for as well as when and how to use them. However, while other trainees commented on significant change stories in the understanding of the new syllabus changed that was the case for everyone; for example, T1K conveyed that:

*It is the same old syllabus. What facilitators did was add up stories and make the syllabus complicated. I think the old syllabus, at least, was straight and sound. If you are supposed to teach students about tense directly, it will tell you so. It will help if you read a story to understand that the topic is about tenses (Teacher 1, Kilimanjaro Region).*

Thus, T1K still feels that the new syllabus is a complicated version of the old one, and even after attending INSET, it is still difficult to understand.

Moreover, significant change stories were also mentioned in instruction strategies. T11K explained that she did not care whether the lesson was understood. What was important was to finish the lesson.

*Before the training, I followed the lesson plan without caring whether students understood. But now, I use other teaching methods to ensure that students understand. If I am teaching literature, I use role play, where students act out what characters are doing (Teacher 11, Kilimanjaro Region).*

Therefore, the training encouraged her to think and apply different teaching methods to enhance students learning. T11K also learned to use narration as a teaching approach.

*You may tell a student to write an essay about Ngorongoro National Park, but if they have never been there, they cannot write. After the training, I learned that I could tell them about*

*Kilimanjaro Mountain or Mikumi National Park and ask them something about it later on.*

Thus, describing an event, object, or place can also stimulate learning and thinking.

The last aspect of understanding the syllabus content that was commented on was the preparation and use of teaching aids. T8K, for instance, narrated that before the training, she did not know what a teaching aid was or even how to make one. The INSET, however, changed that.

*Apart from not knowing what a teaching aid is, I did not know how to make one. I learned from there. For example, if you teach friendly letters, you may take manila cards, cereal crops like sorghum, beans, etc., and make a beautiful teaching aid. For the first time, I made one during the training (Teacher 8, Kilimanjaro Region).*

Similarly, T12K was thrilled that after the training, they could make teaching aid using locally available material:

*I was impressed that after the training, I could practice good teaching because they taught us how to use our environment to prepare teaching aids (Teacher 12, Kilimanjaro Region).*

In sum, through the INSET objective, which focused on training teachers to understand the approach, structure, and organization of the 2005 O-Level English language and its features, participants understood the meaning and use of different parts of the syllabus as well as teacher and students' responsibilities in learning. In addition, they learned other teaching methods that can be used to develop students' competencies across topics and how their environment can produce teaching aids.

**4.2.3. General Pedagogical Knowledge.** GPK explored if there were the most significant changes in stories related to classroom management skills, schemes of work, and lessons plan. Starting with classroom management, T3K realized that he did not treat his students equally. Commenting on the matter, T3K had the following to say:

*I learned I dealt with intelligent students only in my class through the training. For every question, I picked those who raised their hand. I learned from the training that I have to select even those who do not usually raise their hands. They will keep trying until they get it right and become confident to participate in the class (Teacher 3, Kilimanjaro Region).*

Thus, after the training, she learned the need to focus on every student and allow them to present their answers, whether right or wrong. Also, T4M learned how to treat students with compassion and care instead of always punishing them. Voicing on the new learning, T4M explained that:

*Sometimes, you go to class; you find students have not cleaned the blackboard; you punish*

*them before teaching. However, it is better to start by teaching them first and wait until you finish teaching to provide punishment. Before the training, punishing them before the lesson began was normal (Teacher 4, Manyara Region).*

As for T4M, the training helped him lessen the frequency of giving punishment to the students and focus on making lessons more enjoyable. While that was the case for T4M, T6K realized that she had been spending a lot of time keeping the class quiet, punishing them, and arranging the classroom before the lesson began.

*We learned how to control a class. We have been spending a lot of time and effort punishing students, keeping them quiet, and arranging the classroom, which consumes even time for learning. So, I have learned to use less effort in managing students by giving them productive work (Teacher 6, Kilimanjaro Region).*

Thus, T6K learned to successfully manage the class by giving them productive work instead of punishments and wasting time that could have been used for learning. Generally, relating to classroom management, teachers learned how to create a conducive environment for learning while remaining authoritative and firm.

Another aspect of general knowledge was preparing the scheme of work and lesson plan. During the interview, respondents provided change stories on different parts of the scheme and lesson plan that either they did not know what to write or they knew but never thought it necessary to write them. Starting with allocating time in the scheme of work T11K, as highlighted in the following "in a scheme I was writing too general. I was allocating time the whole topic. But we were told we should divide hours depending on the number of activities (T1K)." Thus, instead of indicating that the topic will be taught for 20 periods, they can distribute 20 periods per teaching activity. However, T1K views contradicted data from the documentary review, especially the syllabus that a teacher should state the number of periods needed to cover topics and subtopics and not teaching activities.

On the lesson plan, trainees commented on gaining knowledge and skills on competence. For instance, T10K had a challenge in deriving competence.

*Before the training, I did not know where to get competence. I was creating it myself since I thought it came from the head. From the training, I learned that it is indicated in the syllabus. There are a lot of competencies in the syllabus. You pick the one which matches your topic (Teacher 10, Kilimanjaro Region).*

Thus, T10K learned that competencies are prescribed in the syllabus and varies depending on the topic or subtopic.

On objectives, change stories were collected on both general and specific. For instance, in a general objective, T8K



reported, “I learned I should write a general objective for each subtopic. Before I wrote one general objective for the topics.” That was an exciting and contradicting finding since the 2005 syllabus states that subtopics derive specific objectives rather than general objectives, implying that the broad goal comes from the main topic rather than the subtopic.

Besides, the training prompted trainees that specific objectives should be smart (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound (T8K, T1M)). T8K further added that she did not know what a reference book is or how it is written. Through training, she learned how to write reference books in the American Psychological Association (APA) referencing format and that reference book is not restricted to the class book. Other relevant material used to prepare a lesson can also be included as a reference book.

Another area that trainees commented on having changed as the result of training is their understanding of the lesson development stages, such as introduction, new knowledge, reinforcement, reflection, and consolidation. For example, T11K has the following to say:

*In the introduction, I learned that you don't have to start by asking questions about the previous lesson. You can use a different strategy instead of a question and answer. I can pick five students and ask each to select a paper with a question and answer (Teacher 11, Kilimanjaro Region).*

Thus, T11K learned that any teaching method could be used with an introduction, not only questions and answers. In the developing new knowledge stage, T8K used to write notes “in new knowledge, you may find me writing notes on the blackboard... (laugh) but I learned that I should impart new ideas instead of writing notes.” Thus, the training helped her understand that developing new knowledge should focus on assisting students to gain a new understanding of the topic rather than writing notes. Furthermore, T8K did know what to do during the reinforcement stage. Sharing her previous practice, T8K elaborated:

*During the reinforcement stage, I did not know how to reinforce. Sometimes, I punish students with a stick and consider that reinforcement (laugh). But it is not so. To reinforce, I was supposed to use tools, actual tasks, or objects to strengthen learning.*

So, T8K improved her viewpoint of reinforcement, a point during which she needed to consolidate students' understanding of the topic being taught using different strategies. On another aspect, T8K described that she used to skip the consolidation stage before INSET. Sharing her experience during the interview, she said:

*In the consolidation phase, I did not know what to do. I usually skip the stage or write nothing. From the training, I learned that consolidation is like emphasis. Therefore, I can provide*

*exercises and mark 2–3 students' activities to spot where there is a problem (Teacher 8, Kilimanjaro Region).*

Therefore, from training, she learned that consolidation is for giving students tasks to test their understanding and use of what they learned. In a similar lesson stage, T11K used to make a general summary “I was making a general summary of the lesson or providing exercise.” Like T8K, T11K also learned that she could provide “either a quiz or a test and mark them in class at the consolidation stage.”

The last point of lesson development is reflection, where a teacher is supposed to guide students to express their views of the lesson and suggest areas for improvement. Once more, T8K mentioned:

*In reflection (laugh), I did not know what to do before the training (laugh). After attending the seminar, I learned that I could ask questions on reflection. I need to ask students what they have learned. If they reflect well and indicate that they have understood the question somehow, I can say the lessons have been understood. Honestly, before the training, I was not doing that. I could give them an exercise and even not mark it.*

Similarly, T10K learned that reflection is not just for asking students questions as she did before the training; instead, she can reflect from the first to the last stage of the teaching process. She reported, “but the truth is you reflect from introduction to conclusion, what did you see? In the reflection is when you conclude that, given this case, the students have understood (T10K).”

Apart from lesson development stages, the lesson plan has columns for teaching, learning, and assessment activities. During the interview, respondents' change stories depicted that the training helped them understand how to write an assessment column. Initially, they were writing in a question form, “is the student able to do something? For example, can a student define a noun (depending on teaching and learning activities developed in a particular lesson stage)? The training taught them that it is incorrect to do so since no one can answer that question. However, what needs to be written? Respondents had different answers as well. For example, T10K said, “We were told to write to observe if students can express feelings.” “We were told assessment should be in statement format,” T7K said. In addition, T11K reverberated that “We were taught to use assessment tools like questions and answers, quiz, presentation, checking, and observing what? Observing if students can answer the question.”

The foregoing findings, however, contradict 7M comment that:

*We debate a lot in writing a lesson plan, especially on assessment. We tried to ask because before the training assessment was written: is the student able to...? The question comes, where do we answer that question? That question even*



*facilitators were not able to answer. They said it would be covered in the next cycle (Teacher 7, Manyara Region).*

Based on T7M, they taught to write a question. To sum up, in the assessment column, respondents' views were divided: those who commented that it should be written in statements like T7M. Some were taught to write assessment columns in question, and others commented on having been introduced to writing assessment tools.

Finally, during the interview, trainees' stories of change revealed skills gained in writing and evaluating in three areas: student evaluation, teachers' evaluation, and remarks. In the student evaluation, T4M mentioned that before INSET, he never asked students their views on the lesson taught.

*Before the training, I did not ask students to evaluate the lesson. From the training, I learned that in students' evaluation, students have to comment if they have understood the lesson. My job is to report what they have said (Teacher 4, Manyara Region).*

Therefore, INSET taught him that students need to evaluate the lesson. In addition, T10K was leaving the class assuming that students understood even without asking them. She narrated that:

*Currently, teaching is not difficult, unlike before, when you teach and get off the class assuming that students have understood the lesson. Now you ask students, how did you find a lesson? They may say they understand because of teaching methods, teaching aids, classroom interaction, etc. They must say what made them understand the lesson (Teacher 10, Kilimanjaro Region).*

Therefore, from the training, they were taught that students' evaluation must come from students, not the teacher. Students have to be asked a question or given a quiz that will help determine if the lesson is understood rather than blindly writing that 80% of the student have understood the lesson.

On teacher evaluation, T11K commented that before the training, he wrote that "ninety percent of the students have understood the lesson" even without measuring students' understanding. From the training, they learned that "there must be something which proves that it is 90%. Either exercise or group work. So, after the seminar, I have improved a lot on that aspect." Thus, they learned that they needed to measure students' understanding of the lesson with an assessment activity before saying whether the lesson was understood. Moreover, T8K discovered that student and teacher evaluations determine what will be written in the remark section. Particularizing on the area, T8K said:

*If some students did not attempt the questions well or missed the class, when I come to remark, I will write that I will continue to help those who were not present during the remedial time.*

*Moreover, I will indicate that I will continue with another lesson for those who have understood the task (Teacher 8, Kilimanjaro Region).*

Essentially, despite contradictions, the findings warrant the INSET meaningfully contributed to the EFL teacher's understanding of the scheme and lesson plan format and what needed to be written and done in every aspect of the lesson during teaching.

## 5. Discussion

The findings inscribed the in-service training as a vital tool that helped EFL teachers to improve their content, general knowledge, and PCK in CBLT. Acquiring multiple dimensions of knowledge facilitates smooth teaching and learning, boosts their confidence, and allows EFL teachers to engage students in different learning activities that enhance the acquisition of multiple language competencies. The findings are at par with constructivism theory which insists on developing constructive teachers with knowledge of how to facilitate learning and apply learner-centred pedagogy. In addition, they need to understand the context in which learning occurs and provide learners with autonomy and feedback while learning [25]. Likewise, similar research findings were also documented by Amara [35], Arifani et al. [56], Liu and Kleinsasser [57], Mahmoudi et al. [58], Ulla [59], and Kocabaş et al. [60]. However, that was contrary to observations by Uddin [40] and Jacob et al. [41] whereby training could not impact teachers' learning due to a mismatch between the content and teachers' needs.

The overall shortage of INSET opportunities in Tanzania could have influenced this study's constructive impact. Komba and Mwakabenga [61] and Mapunda [62] highlighted that few EFL teachers in Tanzania were retrained even after introducing the curriculum. Therefore, most EFL had a feeble knowledge base on competency-based English language teaching and skills and strategies for its effective implementation, which increased the appreciation likelihood. The above claim is supported by Minor et al. [63] that teachers with weak prior knowledge of the content attend a high-quality content-focused INSET. They tend to gain multidimensional knowledge compared to those with substantial prior knowledge of the areas that are being facilitated.

Apart from that, the INSET impact stems from the fact that it was content focused. It has been widely acknowledged that in-service training can result in a substantial gain in teachers' knowledge when its content is subject-specific, focusing on methods for students learning, strategies for teaching, and strengthening teachers' subject knowledge in the program content [64–66]. Likewise, the INSET was helpful since there was coherence between the change proposed by the INSET and the countrywide curriculum reform, which was introduced in 2005. Desimone and Garet [67] supported the above observation that an INSET can be effective when there is coherence between its goals, its content, teachers' and students' need, and proposed reforms.

Still, despite trainees' immense credit for the knowledge and skills gained as the result of the in-service training, there was a discrepancy in some aspects of the updated knowledge. For example, the findings indicate variance on whether allocating the number of teaching periods in a topic is determined by the number of subtopics or teaching activities. Another difference was noted in general objectives, whether it is derived from a topic or subtopic and whether an assessment column in the scheme of work should be written in the statement, question, or write assessment methods/tools used to assess. The above concerns indicate that while an INSET may have improved EFL teachers' knowledge in some aspects, there are still confusion and divergence yet to be resolved.

Furthermore, from the findings, some felt like the training had no impact. A similar result was also documented by Novozhenina and López Pinzón [68] that while some participants experienced new learning, others did not. Likewise, Yastıbaş and Erdal [34] found that while some teachers believed that the English for Academic II Course helped students pay attention to Academic English, others believed that the course did not achieved so and the knowledge gained was not good. In our case, the lack of impact could be attributed to participants being at different stages of career growth. But also, "no impact" could be an influence of the varying working environment (rural vs. urban), as well as solid teacher cognition of the old curriculum (content-based), which impedes the new learning. The three situations, therefore, infer the need for more personalized and extended in-service training. Doing so can facilitate the gradual transformation of EFL from old to new curriculum knowledge and impact them with knowledge, skills, and attitude that is more related to the nature of the student they teach, working environment, and career stage.

Equally, the INSET focused on helping EFL teachers plan, teach, assess, and evaluate listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, as well as forms and function, among others. Yet, the most significant change stories focused on lesson planning, the nature of the curriculum, teaching the four skills, methodology, and classroom management. The respondents slightly mention the knowledge gained in planning, teaching, assessing, and evaluating forms and functions. The above findings also hint that despite the INSET, trainees will likely be facing challenges in teaching, assessing, and evaluating form and function as per competence-based demand.

## 6. Conclusion and Implication

Despite some limitations, participants greatly appreciate the INSETs contribution to shaping their knowledge of the competence-based language in terms of subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and PCK. The practical implication of the above findings is that the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and education stakeholders need to sustain the awareness created and the knowledge gained so that it does not be a spark of the moment but instead something that will also be reflected in teachers' classroom practice. Teachers' knowledge alone, however, though it is very vital,

does not guarantee a change in classroom practice and student outcomes. Therefore, it is equally essential that additional support such as follow-up, mentoring, coaching, peers, and school support (resources and emotion) continues to be provided for the impact to be extended from teachers' knowledge to classroom practice and improves students' learning outcome.

## Data Availability

The data used in this study will be made available upon genuine request.

## Additional Points

*Limitations of the Study.* This study was limited to evaluating training's impact on teacher learning using interviews and documentary reviews. However, another study could add and use classroom observation to assess whether or not respondents' positive learning sentiments are reflected in their actual classroom practice and what facilitated or hindered the change process. Moreover, this study findings were limited to the perceived impact of 21 respondents from two regions, namely, Kilimanjaro and Manyara, which hinder the generalizability of this study findings to the broader Tanzania population. Therefore, another study could expand the evaluation to other EFL teachers across regions that benefited from the same training.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest

## Funding

The research process was supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) under grant number (57298303). However, no fund was received for article publication.

## Acknowledgments

The researchers thank the funders for funding this study and the respondents for sparing time for an interview.

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