

Characterising Students' English Language Skills in Competency and Knowledge-Based Educational Institutions in Zanzibar, Tanzania

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Abstract

The paper explores the characteristics of students' English language competencies in facilitating learning at both the State University of Zanzibar (SUZA) and the Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy (MNMA) in Tanzania. It employed an 188 sample size obtained by simple random sampling to implement the case study design. The two institutions were chosen because they are different, one being competency-based and the other being knowledge-based in educational approaches for MNMA and SUZA, respectively. It was found that there was a low level of competence among students in English language proficiency in speaking, with SUZA having only 18.6% of highly proficient participants and MNMA having only 26% of highly proficient participants. Concerning competency in English language proficiency in writing, it was found that SUZA scored only 23.9% of high proficiency in writing, and MNMA scored 21.8% of the same. In measuring English language competencies in listening, it was revealed that SUZA had only an 18.6% score of high proficiency in listening. MNMA Karume Campus, Zanzibar scored only 20.7% high in proficiency in listening to the English language. In the English language, competencies related to students' socialisation ability, SUZA scored 18.6% of competencies among participants, whereas MNMA scored 31.3% on socialisation ability among students. It was concluded that there is a low level of English language competencies among the SUZA and MNMA Karume Campus in Zanzibar. It is recommended that efforts to build competencies should be enhanced in the practice of competency-based and knowledge-based education in higher learning institutions.

Keywords: Language competencies, Students, Competency-based Education, Knowledge-Based Education

1. Introduction

In the United States, Kalaian (2018) researched the effectiveness of small-group learning pedagogies in engineering and technology education. This was a meta-analysis in design. The findings were that the small-group learning methods were collectively more effective in competency-based education (CBE) than the traditional lecture-based instruction methodology of teaching. Using small group learning in technology and engineering classrooms could positively affect student achievement, moving the students' scores from the 50th percentile, which is the percentile score of the students in the lecture-based and individualised instructed classroom, to the 69th percentile in the small group learning. The recommendations were that there is a need for better reporting of the small group instructional process activities and the results of the effects of various forms of small group learning research. Razaei (2018) researched effective group work strategies from faculty and students' perspectives. The results indicated the most prevalent group learning strategies practised by faculty and the favourite ones among students. It was found that faculty and students' attitudes towards group learning were very similar. However, many faculty do not follow the guidelines suggested in early studies to improve the effectiveness of group work assignments in CBE.

Hassanien (2008) from the United Kingdom researched students' experience of group assessment in higher education. The researcher used focus groups and survey techniques in data collection. The findings were that group learning in knowledge-based education (KBE) was a significant method to foster the development of a wider breadth of knowledge through discussion, clarification of ideas, evaluation of others' ideas and placing students in groups and expecting them to cooperate promotes collaborative learning. The recommendations were that students need explicit training in interpersonal and small group skills that facilitate cooperation and encourage learning and achievement. For example, students should receive training on group learning, such as how to set goals, share roles, divide tasks, use peer and self-assessment, adopt strategies for conflict resolution and communicate face-to-face. The tutors should also allow time for team development through building informal reflective exercises to assess team strengths and weaknesses. Tutors must get positively involved in the group learning process. These recommendations paved the way for this study to examine the effectiveness of group learning.

The study from Vietnam by Tran (2014) focused on the effect of cooperative learning on academic achievement and knowledge retention. The findings were

that group learning in KBE, which had been engaged in learning together, produced a higher overall improvement in scores on the psychology posttest scores, and it showed that students who were instructed using cooperative learning achieved significantly higher scores on the achievement and knowledge retention protests than those students who were trained using lecture-based teaching. The recommendations were that group learning be adopted as an alternative instructional pedagogy in the current wave of educational reform in Vietnamese higher education. It was recommended that to promote the implementation of cooperative learning effectively, both lecturers and students would need to undergo a training course for students' achievement and knowledge retention. This study took a lens to examine both KBE and CBE groups in the context of Zanzibar.

Al-Masri (2018) from Jordan researched the effect of group work on student achievement. The study concluded that group learning in CBE improves students' learning performance, improving their achievements, skills, and behaviour. A study from Kuwait by Taqi and Al-Nouh (2014) on the effect of group work on English as a foreign language (EFL) students' attitudes and learning in higher education was also conducted. The researcher used a questionnaire survey and observation methods in data collection. The findings were that CBE students who worked in groups gained higher grades while working in groups, yet after working individually again, the grades decreased. Also, it was found that age, gross point aggregate (GPA) and years affected the students' results when working in groups or separately. It was found that when students with high GPAs worked in groups, they improved and reflected better on their learning. The recommendations were that group learning would be more advantageous if a few steps were taken to enhance forming and working in a group. For example, the group can be formed earlier in the beginning of the semester to allow students to familiarise themselves with their peers and become more comfortable engaging in any discussion.

The study conducted in South Africa by Haffejee (2017) examined the benefits of group learning as a collaborative strategy in a diverse higher education context. The findings were that group learning in KBE improved students' performance due to peer group discussions, which improved understanding of concepts. Even when the concepts had initially been unfamiliar to the group, lower-ability students performed better when engaged in groups with peers of varying abilities. The recommendations were that group learning can be an innovative method to foster positive learning experiences and cross-cultural engagements across cultural barriers. Even limited group learning was

beneficial for classroom cohesion and improved self-directedness. Hodges (2017) argued that group learning in CBE can help students develop metacognition, the ability to think about and monitor one's thinking and learning, which is closely related to the idea of critical thinking and is a crucial element in learning.

In Tanzania, studies by Mbalamula (2018) on the effects of group versus individual assessments on coursework among undergraduates in Tanzania. The findings were that students perform better in groups than in particular settings. Mwaikokesya (2018) conducted a study on the potential of group discussions to develop students' lifelong learning skills in Tanzanian higher education institutions. The researcher used interviews in data collection. The findings were that at least two modes of learning groups existed at the University of Dar es Salaam, namely, formal and informal learning groups; formal groups are usually determined and moderated by the course lecturers, most of whose procedures are formally monitored. Formal methods, for example, included attending the lecture and choosing the questions to be discussed and presented.

Additionally, the presentation of formal groups usually takes the form of seminars or tutorials. On the contrary, most informal learning groups are organised by the students with no pre-determined guidance or requirements. Regarding the nature of these groups, the study's findings indicate that former groups are more likely to promote self-directed learning and impart lifelong learning attributes to students. In most cases, informal learning groups were formed on an ad-hoc basis, unregulated, and ineffective. The recommendations were that using these groups is still a dominant mode of teaching and learning in most institutions of higher learning in Tanzania. It would seem, therefore, sensible to propose that universities should foster both students' learning skills in groups and individual learning skills. Similarly, universities should find ways to boost the productivity of group learning in KBE. The study examined the utility of both models of group learning.

Faustino (2020) researched the effects of cooperative learning on students' achievements in the literature in the English subject. The researcher used a questionnaire survey as a data collection method. The findings were that using cooperative learning in teaching literature in English subjects leads to motivation towards learning, lowers anxiety, improves language skills, increases social skills and maximises the level of students' achievement in the classroom. The recommendations were that teachers should strive to maintain

the effectiveness of cooperative learning, which is a crucial factor for learning effectiveness. School administrators should give necessary financial and moral support to ensure that teachers in schools under investigation use cooperative learning for effective outcomes. Paschal (2015) researched the role of collaborative learning in attaining inclusive education in classroom creativity and innovation. The findings were that group learning in CBE has a very significant role in achieving inclusive education, such as reducing the performance problems of students. It involves students in the teaching and learning process, and it helps students to master the English language. The study concluded that effective implementation of group learning can lead to innovative, creative and inclusive education.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The overall literature on the effectiveness of group learning in both CBE and KBE receives limited attention locally. Despite using CBE and KBE in Tanzania, little is known about exploring language competencies as the basis for utilising group learning in education. In particular, exploring English language competencies and skills among students in both CBE and KBE higher learning institutions receives limited attention among scholars. Some studies indicate that in Indonesia, most social science learning results from a lack of student communication skills. Students are less proficient in articulating learning outcomes through presentations in front of the class. In addition, there is a lack of student communication skills in social studies learning due to students' lack of confidence in their deficient communication skills in social learning. This leads to a lack of confidence in expressing the discussion's outcomes. Teachers still use the lecture method model (Buhari & Ningsih, 2021). The findings showed that group learning is effective for many reasons, such as improving students' interpersonal skills and promoting the development of students' social skills, such as communication, presentation, problem-solving and leadership delegation (Vrioni, 2011). However, this depends on the language competencies held by learners. Furthermore, in Tanzania, the studies show that the implementation of CBE faced many challenges, such as a lack of support facilities and resources, a large number of students in the classroom, a lack of motivation for some teachers due to unfavourable working conditions and a low attitude of cooperation (Tambwe, 2017). Scanty understanding is there to inform the status of language competencies among learners.

From a training (teaching and learning) function point of view, the policy emphasises the centrality of equipping students with skills in three aspects: higher intellectual, professional, and managerial capacities. By doing so, higher

education is expected to contribute to skills development and innovations and enable professionals to make informed decisions (MOEVT, 2006). Language competencies contribute to the achievement of learners. Therefore, this paper attempts to measure the status of language competencies as the basis for informed CBE and KBE in higher-learning institutions in Zanzibar, one of the essential elements that is not well articulated in the body of knowledge.

2. Methodology

The paper explored the effectiveness of group learning in higher learning institutions in Zanzibar. The paper is based on the study that was conducted in two higher learning institutions in Zanzibar: The Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy (MNMA) Karume Campus, Zanzibar and The State University of Zanzibar (SUZA) at Tunguu Campus. The location of this study was in the West B District and the West A District, in Zanzibar. The reason for choosing these areas was that SUZA is a university that educates learners by implementing a knowledge-based teaching and learning pedagogy. The Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy is a technical college that provides training to learners by implementing a competency-based mode of teaching and learning. According to Chetty (2016), the research approach is a plan and procedure comprising broad assumptions to detailed data collection, analysis and interpretation methods. The study was conducted by applying both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The reason behind these approaches is the nature of the study. The researchers decided to use the mixed approach because of the complexity of research problems and the desire to understand the problem's depth and breadth. Also, the researcher used a questionnaire survey and interview methods to triangulate the data collection from the respondents.

According to Kothari (2004), research design is the arrangement of conditions for collecting and analysing data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in a procedure. A cross-sectional case study design was used in this study as it tends to examine comparatively the effectiveness of group learning in competency and knowledge-based education in higher learning institutions. The researcher used a cross-sectional case study design since it enabled examining the data within a specific context and helped the researcher understand the problem in detail to get concrete, accurate and exact information. A population is a group of individuals, objects, or items from which samples are measured (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). They further argue that a population under study must have at least one thing in common. The target population of this study included female and male students and teachers of MNMA and SUZA. The population selection in this study determined the nature

of the research. The target population of this study included students and teachers from MNMA and SUZA. The researchers comprised this population because they were expected to provide relevant information.

According to Kothari (2004), a sample refers to a group of respondents or elements drawn from a population consisting of individuals with one thing in common that provides representative characteristics of the entire population in which a researcher is interested in gathering information and drawing conclusions. In selecting this sample size, the researcher considered different issues like financial resources, the purpose of the study, time and methods of data collection and availability of the population of interest. Therefore, the sample size of this study was 188 respondents; the divisions of respondents included one hundred and eighty-eight students, one hundred from MNMA and eighty-eight from SUZA and four teachers. Two teachers from SUZA and MNMA, respectively, were key informants. In order to get the sample size of the study, the researchers consider Yamane's 1967) formula:

$$n \frac{N}{1 + N(\epsilon)^2} = 188.$$

The study employed systematic and purposive sampling techniques, each chosen with a clear purpose and strategy. Systematic sampling was used in the study. This is a type of probability sampling method in which sample members from a larger population are selected according to a random starting point but with a fixed, periodic interval. The researcher used systematic sampling because when you have a significant population, and the names of the targeted group are known, this is a more straightforward technique than random selection. The researchers collected quantitative data through questionnaires; the responses were compared, summarised and statistically analysed. Systematic sampling was used to select a sample of 188 students from MNMA and SUZA.

The purposive sampling technique is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their judgment when choosing population members to participate in their surveys. The researcher used purposive sampling to avoid a large population and it was extremely time and cost-effective. Also, the researchers used purposive sampling because it is quick to select a sample, and the results obtained from analysing a deliberately selected sample were acceptable. Thus, a purposive sampling technique was used to select four teachers, two from MNMA and two from SUZA.

Data collection is a comprehensive process whereby a researcher collects data from various sources of information according to the research plan (Cohen et al., 2011). This study collected data using a questionnaire survey and interview methods. The advantage of multiple data-gathering methods is that they enable the researcher to gather in-depth information from different sources related to the topic under study, increasing the ability to triangulate and get informed details.

The interview collects information through oral-verbal stimuli and replies regarding oral-verbal responses (Kothari, 2007). In this research, the researcher used structured interview questions because they allowed flexibility in maintaining the course of the interview and responses by classifying questions to ensure that the required data had been collected from respondents. It also helped the researcher to understand the interviewees' experiences and feelings more deeply. This research instrument was applied because it gave the interviewer and interviewee freedom by asking or omitting some questions to allow changes during the interviewing process. Therefore, the researcher used face-to-face interviews to collect information from 2 lecturers from MNMA and two lecturers from SUZA on examining the effectiveness of group learning in higher learning institutions. Hence, the researcher recorded the interviews using field note-taking and phone devices.

A questionnaire survey was another method for data collection. A questionnaire survey is a data collection tool consisting of several questions printed or not in a definite order on a form or set of forms (Kothari, 2004). The questionnaires were used for 188 students. The researcher used the questionnaire survey method because it was cheaper and quicker, although the sample was large and widely scattered in different geographical areas. In addition, the technique helped the researcher minimise bias and be fair regarding the answers given by the respondents. The researcher used open-ended and closed questions for the students to collect qualitative and quantitative data. Closed and open-ended questionnaires were used to collect data from students. The researcher used open-ended questions to allow respondents to provide general explanations of the specific questions. On the other hand, the researcher used closed questions specifically for the respondents to select an appropriate answer from the given options to limit the number of answers and facilitate quantitative analysis. The researcher used questionnaires to collect quantitative data. It was used to get a large number of respondents.

Data analysis is systematically searching and arranging interview transcripts, field notes, video or audio recordings, and other materials accumulated by the researcher to make the findings (Remler & Ryzin, 2019). The quantitative data the researcher collected were coded, entered into the computer, and then analysed into percentages and frequencies using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to assess the effectiveness of group learning in knowledge-based and competency-based education of higher learning institutions in Zanzibar. The researcher edited the raw data before entering it into SPSS to avoid errors. Each potential response was assigned a number, and each item from the questionnaire was given a unique variable name to use in SPSS. Frequency tables were drawn, and the data were presented in tables. The similar responses were grouped under the same group of reactions. These responses in themes later were used to support other data during the discussion.

Also, the qualitative data the researchers collected from the interviews were analysed thematically. The researchers followed the six-step framework shown by Braun and Clarke (2006). Those steps are becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing, defining, and writing reports. The audio recordings were listened to multiple times to get familiarised with the data and understand the information provided by the respondents. The researchers translated the Swahili language audio recordings into English. Then, the audios were transcribed, coded by underlying, and grouped with similar codes called categories. The researcher used thematic analysis because of the flexibility of the method, which is a relatively easy and quick method to learn.

According to Creswell (2007), respecting the site where the research takes place and gaining permission before entering a site are paramount in research. The consent to carry out the study was considered at all levels, where the researcher asked for permission from the State University of Zanzibar (SUZA), Directorate of Research. The State University of Zanzibar Department of Educational Foundation Instruction and Leadership approved it before the researcher conducted the study. The researcher obtained permission from the Second Vice President's Office to confirm that the research was conducted legally with the cooperation of the office of the Chief Government Statistician, Zanzibar. There was an agreement of confidentiality between the researcher and regular teachers.

Validity refers to the quality of a procedure or instrument used in research that is accurate, correct, true, proper, and meaningful (Enon, 1998). To establish the validity of the research instruments, the researcher consulted the supervisor to assess them before using them to collect data. Also, the researcher ensured that all the items of the research instruments corresponded with the study's objectives. This is important to ensure that the instruments purport to measure the adequacy of the scales. Reliability refers to how consistent a research procedure or instrument is. Therefore, the degree of consistency was demonstrated in the study (Enon, 2018). The researcher conducted a pilot study in one of the colleges using purposive sampling to obtain consistent results. Students and teachers were present during the pilot testing. The researcher collected data using questionnaires. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), transferability refers to the extent to which a study's findings may be used or applied in other similar situations. It helps the researcher determine if the findings are generalisable. The researcher used purposive sampling to give a rich, contextualised understanding of people's experiences through an intensive study exploring the effectiveness of group learning in competency-based and knowledge-based education.

3. Results and Discussion

4.1 Characteristics of Students

The study involved 188 respondents, including students and four lecturers of MNMA and SUZA. The respondents' characteristics were education level, marital status, prior specialisation, and English language proficiency in speaking. Other elements involved English language proficiency in writing, listening, and socialisation, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Students Characteristics (N= 188)

Institutions	SUZA		MMA	
Education level	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Degree	39	20.7	43	22.8
Diploma	26	13.8	38	20.2
Certificate	23	12.2	19	10.1
Prior Specialization				
Art with English subject	37	19.7	68	36.1
Science subject	23	12.2	10	5.3
Arts without English subject	28	14.8	22	11.7
English language proficiency in speaking				
Not proficient	12	6.3	4	2.1
Less proficient	17	9.0	6	3.1
Moderate	2	1.0	3	1.6
Proficient	22	11.7	38	20.1
High proficient	35	18.6	49	26.0
English language proficiency in writing				
Not proficient	4	2.1	9	4.7
Less proficient	5	2.6	9	4.7
Moderate	2	1.0	13	6.9
Proficient	32	17.0	28	14.8
High proficient	45	23.9	41	21.8

4.2 Education level

Education is one of the most important characteristics that might affect a person's attitudes and how they look at and understand any particular social phenomenon. In a way, an individual's response will likely be determined by educational status. Therefore, it is imperative to know the educational background of the respondents. Hence, the researcher investigated the variable 'Educational level', and the data about education is presented in Table 1. Results from the questionnaire in Table 1) show that in MNMA, 43 (22.8%) students had been studying a degree level of education, 38

(20.2%) respondents had been studying a diploma level of education, and only 19 (10.0%) respondents had been studying a certificate level of education. Whereas the result from SUZA shows that 39 (20.7%) students were studying a level of degree education, 26 (13.8%) students were studying a diploma level of education, and only 23 (12.2%) students were studying a certificate level of education.

The results imply that many respondents were progressively learning in higher education, which is essential today to create a knowledge-based society. In this study, the respondents possess different levels of education, as indicated in Table 1. Most respondents (79.7%) were studying at a degree level, whereas the minority were studying at a certificate level of education (2%). That is, people who are in higher education are more likely to give reliable information and views than those who have been at lower levels. These proportions reflect that most higher learning institutions' students are more educated and have achieved primary education. Similar arguments were put forward by Mitinje et al. (2017), who argued that education is usually considered the key to improved opportunities for development and accessibility to information and services. For that reason, education was an enabling factor that influenced the respondents in the study area to give more details about group learning questions.

4.3 Prior specialisation

Table 1 indicates that in MNMA, 68 (36.1%) respondents said they combined art with English subjects, and 10 (5.3%) students took science subjects. In contrast, only 22 (11.7%) students took a combination of art and English subjects. However, the results from SUZA show that 37 (19.7%) students took a combination of art with English subjects, 23 (12.2%) respondents took science subjects, whereas 28 (14.8%) students took a combination of art without English subjects. Therefore, the study results indicated that MNMA students were very conversant in the English language since many had taken a combination of art and English subjects in their studies compared to students from SUZA.

The analysis, as shown in Table 1, indicates a significant difference, considering the prior specialisation group. The results revealed that many students took Art with an English specialisation compared to those who did science subjects and Art without English. Therefore, the difference in English subjects, science subjects, and art without English between the SUZA and

MNMA groups is essential for improvements. Based on these results, it is indicated that the majority of students specialise in art with English subjects.

4.4 English language proficiency in speaking

Table 1 shows that in MNMA, 4 (2.1%) of the respondents were not proficient in English, and 6 (3.1%) said they were less proficient. However, 3 (1.6%) of respondents were undecided, 38 (20.1%) of the respondents were proficient, and the rest, 49 (26.0%) of the respondents were very proficient. While the results from SUZA show that 12 (6.3%) students were not proficient in English language speaking, 17 (9.0%) students were less proficient. However, 2 (1.0%) students were undecided, 22 (11.7%) students were proficient, and the rest, 35 (18.6%) students, were very proficient. Therefore, due to the results, the study indicated that MNMA's students were very conversant in English language speaking compared to students from SUZA, since many showed the capacity and inspiration to speak English to the public. The results are in line with those found in the United States by Kalaian (2018), who conducted research focusing on the effectiveness of small-group learning pedagogies in engineering and technology education, with evidence on promoted effectiveness where language proficiency has its root in facilitating communication of knowledge among students in group learning. The analysis, as shown in Table 1, indicates a significant difference in the English language proficiency in speaking. The results revealed that many of the respondents were proficient in speaking English *compared to those who were less proficient. Therefore, the difference in English proficiency in speaking was very large. These results indicate that most students who join higher learning institutions in Zanzibar are proficient in English language speaking, which helps them improve their academic performance and achievement.*

4.5 English language proficiency in writing

Table 1 shows that in MNMA, 9 (4.7%) students were not proficient in English language writing, and 9 (4.7%) students were less proficient. However, 13(6.9%) students were undecided, 28 (14.8%) students were proficient, and the rest, 41(21.8%) respondents, were very proficient. The results from SUZA show that 4 (2.1%) students were not proficient in English language writing, and 5 (2.6%) students were less proficient. However, 2 (1.0%) students were undecided, 32(17.0%) respondents were proficient, and the remaining 45 (23.9%) of the respondents were very proficient. Therefore, the study results indicated that SUZA's students were conversant in English language writing compared to students from MNMA, since many showed willingness and readiness to write English scripts.

The analysis, as shown in Table 1, indicates a difference in the English language proficiency in writing. The results revealed that many of the respondents were more proficient in English than those who were less proficient. Therefore, the difference in English proficiency in writing was observed. These results indicate that most students who join higher learning institutions in Zanzibar are skilled in English writing, which helps them write university projects, research assignments, and other related works.

Table 2: Students' Competencies in Listening and Socialization (N= 188)

Institutions	SUZA		MMA	
English language proficiency in listening	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Not proficient	17	9.0	20	10.6
Less proficient	17	9.0	14	7.4
Moderate	2	1.0	3	1.6
Proficient	17	9.0	38	20.2
High proficient	35	18.6	39	20.7
English language proficiency in socialization				
Not proficient	11	5.8	6	3.1
Less proficient	17	9.0	6	3.1
Moderate	2	1.0	1	0.5
Proficient	23	12.2	28	14.8
High proficient	35	18.6	59	31.3

4.6 English language proficiency in listening

Table 2 shows that in MNMA, 20 (10.6%) students were not proficient in English language listening, and 14 (7.4%) students were less proficient. However, 3(1.6%) students were undecided, 38 (20.2%) students were proficient, and the remaining 39 (20.7%) students were very proficient. The results from SUZA show that 17 (9.0%) students were not proficient in English language listening, and 17(9.0%) students were less proficient. However, 2 (1.0%) of respondents were undecided, and 17(9.0%) students were proficient; and the rest, 35 (18.6%) students, were very proficient. Therefore, the study's results indicated that MNMA students were very conversant in English language listening compared to students from SUZA since many showed the ability and capacity to listen to English through different

educational materials. The findings are related to Vrioni (2011), who showed that group learning is effective for many reasons, such as improving students' interpersonal skills and promoting the development of students' social skills such as communication, presentation, problem-solving and leadership delegation. Therefore, having proficient students who listen to one another in the group is a good foundation for developing group learning strategies.

The analysis, as shown in Table 2, indicates a difference in English language proficiency in listening. The results revealed that many of the respondents were more proficient in English than those who were less skilled. Therefore, the difference in English proficiency in listening is an area that requires improvement. This result indicates that most students who join higher learning institutions in Zanzibar are proficient in listening to the English language, helping them understand the content and knowledge delivered during the teaching and learning process.

4.7 English language proficiency in socialisation

Table 2 shows that in MNMA, 6 (3.1%) students were not proficient in using English in different social contexts; 6 (3.1%) students were less proficient. However, one respondent was undecided; 28 (14.8%) students were proficient, and 59 (31.3%) students were very proficient. The results from SUZA showed that 11 (5.8%) students were not proficient in using the English language in various social contexts, and 17 (9.0%) students were less proficient. However, 2 (1.0%) students were undecided, 23 (12.2%) students were proficient, and the rest, 35 (8.6%) students, were very proficient. Therefore, due to the results, the study indicated that MNMA students were very conversant in using the English language compared to students from SUZA, since many showed the ability and capacity to use the English language through different educational settings and other settings beyond the university setting. According to Haffejee (2017), South Africa found the benefits of group learning as a collaborative strategy in a diverse higher education context. The findings were that group learning in KBE improved students' performance due to peer group discussions, resulting in an improved understanding of concepts. Linked to language as a communication medium, improving socialisation competencies is critical to promoting group learning.

The analysis, as shown in Table 2, indicates a difference, considering the proficiency of the English language in socialisation. The results revealed that many respondents were proficient in speaking English in different social

contexts compared to less skilled ones. Therefore, the difference in English proficiency in social contexts exists, entailing areas that require improvement. Based on these results, it is indicated that the majority of students who join higher learning institutions in Zanzibar are very proficient in speaking the English language in a variety of contexts and settings, hence helping them to use it in a variety of educational settings, including seminar presentations, workshops, and seminars.

4. Conclusion

The paper explored the characteristics of students who were involved in the study. It was found that most participants were studying a bachelor's degree level education, with SUZA at 20.7% and MNMA Karume Campus Zanzibar at 22.8%, respectively. Most students had Arts with English language prior specialisation, whereby SUZA had 19.7% of participants, and MNMA had 36.1% of all participants. It was found that there was a low level of Competency among students in English language proficiency in speaking, with SUZA having only 18.6% of highly proficient participants and MNMA having only 26% of highly proficient participants. Concerning competency in English language proficiency in writing, it was found that SUZA scored only 23.9% of high proficiency in writing, and MNMA scored 21.8% of the same. In measuring English language competencies in listening, it was revealed that SUZA had only an 18.6% score of high proficiency in listening. MNMA Karume Campus, Zanzibar scored only 20.7% high in proficiency in listening to the English language. In the English language, competencies related to students' socialisation ability, SUZA scored 18.6% of competencies among participants, whereas MNMA scored 31.3% on socialisation ability among students. Therefore, it was concluded that there is a low level of English language competency among the SUZA and MNMA Campus Zanzibar. This has implications for the administration and learning processing among students and Karume facilitators. Therefore, efforts to build competencies should be enhanced in the practice of competency-based and knowledge-based education in higher learning institutions.

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