

Investigating the Factors Limiting the Use of Visual Aids in English Language Teaching in English Medium Primary Schools in Meru District

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on investigating the factors limiting the use of visual aids in English language teaching in English Medium Primary Schools in Meru District. The study employed qualitative and quantitative techniques for data collections; observation and interview were used to collect qualitative data. The findings on the school environment (classroom), The results findings point out the average mean score of 1.8286 meaning that the respondents disagreed that classroom environments does not give full support in using visual aids because they are not equipped so well due to the fact that they are of poor physical and technical conditions to support the use of modern technology such as computer, video, Television etc. For item on School leadership supports teachers by supplying English language teaching Aids, the respondents disagreed with mean score of 1.7449 that school leadership does not supplying them teaching aids to facilitate learning, also they disagreed with mean score of 1.9429 that the government education policies does not support the use of visuals aids in English language teaching. For item on my school economic position can support the purchase and supply of visuals for the school the respondents disagreed with their mean score of 1.8529 that their school economic does not support the purchase and supply of visuals aids. Lastly, the item on supply of visuals in business centers, the results from the respondents point out the average mean score of 2.3143 meaning that the respondents disagreed that business centers supplies enough visuals at affordable prices. According to the presentation of the above respondents on teacher training and seminars there is lack of good seminars to language teachers regarding the modern technology visuals and how should be incorporated in language teaching, consequently language teachers lacks quality in their teaching which subsequently leads to poor learning outcome. The study recommends that: The government and other responsible authorities in schools should spend a lot of funds buying visual for language teaching. Teachers especially in primary schools should be encouraged to use as many teaching learning aids to stimulate and make the event conducive to learning and the education system should promote on training and seminars to be given to ESL teachers on modern technology visuals usage in teaching.

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The use of teaching materials has a major impact on the activity of language teaching. Abebe and Davidson (2012) point out that students are eager to learn vocabulary with the assistance of visual materials, and that the use of visual materials enhances the students' ability and opportunity to use language to express their ideas and feelings. However, Abebe and Davidson (2012) also found that

teachers rarely use visual materials such as cards, charts, and real objects in teaching, despite the majority of teachers and students admitting that visual materials help students learn language effectively. Agyei and Voogt (2014), report the limited technological resources in schools as one of the great impediments to the up-take of technology in schools. Reyner et al (2001) ascertained that "many good teachers are adaptive rather than rigid in their approach to teaching children and only loosely base their instruction on a given method". There are odds against the Nigerian students in learning English. Trifonovitch (1981) indicated that a student is automatically placed at a disadvantage when he already has a language of his own and he is asked to learn another language. Majority of secondary school students in Nigeria already have various mother tongues before they are admitted into school. Nigeria is reputed to have over 250 languages. Shetzer and Warschauer, (2000) However, as the success or failure of in language teaching and learning rests, to a large extent, on the effort and competence of teachers, they have a huge responsibility to upgrade or familiarize themselves with the most appropriate and effective application of ICT in classroom setting. Stempleski (2002) emphasizes the importance of teacher in "success" or "failure" of video used in language classroom as follows: The teacher plays a key role in the success or failure of any video used in the language classroom. It is the teacher who selects the video, relates the video to students' needs, promotes active viewing, and integrates the video with other areas of the language curriculum. Any video's chances of achieving the important goals of motivating students' interest, providing realistic listening practice, stimulating language use, and heightening students' awareness of particular language points or other aspects of communication can be improved or destroyed by the way in which the teacher introduces the video and the activities which the students carry out in conjunction with viewing. Moreover, any use of ICT does not automatically improve the quality of language teaching and learning. Orlova (2009) recommended that video recording of micro-teaching lessons should be done on a voluntary basis so trainees will regard it not as a means of punishment or criticism but as a useful tool for their successful professional development. According to the United Republic of Tanzania under the Ministry of Education (2010), a research was done on Pedagogy and leadership in Tanzanian primary school, the finding showed that, visuals when properly used in language teaching brings about learners communicative competence. But in Tanzania visual usage face a lot of obstacles due to the following reasons; Most of parents are not educated and do not value education, they are preoccupied with making ends meet, Many of pupils come to school while hungry. Also there are challenges such as the lack of teaching materials, not enough textbooks and visual aids also it is challenging to teach a wide range of pupil's abilities. According to Chaula (2014) on her case study done in two Tanzanian primary schools on; Challenges that teachers face in implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in Tanzania, asserts that; the learning environment is another key factor because teaching involves the creation of environment and activities that effectively invoke learning. Technology such as slides, video, and computers support learning, But there are many schools classrooms which are not equipped so well. This is poor physical and technological condition which limits even the teacher to choose the type of visual for language teaching. This study investigated factors limiting the use of Visual Aids in English Language Teaching in English Medium Primary Schools in Meru.

Significance of the Study

First, these findings of the study will facilitate the English instructors to discover the school factors that affect the pupils at English Medium Primary School level in Meru and country wide.

Second, this study will also provide broad information for Nation curriculum planners for English Medium Primary Schools the way to assist the pupils to cope with the circumstances.

Third, this study findings will assist language teachers to provide direction and guidance in teaching of English at English Medium Primary Schools in Meru..

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter discusses about different concepts and ideas from different other researches that are very closely related to the focus of this study. Firstly, it gives a policy review and Empirical Literature of factors limiting the use of visual aids in English language teaching in English Medium Primary Schools.

Policy Review

Visual Usage as Per Tanzanian Education and Training Policy (TETP)

The United Republic of Tanzania in Training Policy (2005) insists on Universal Primary Education (UPE).It explain that English language is the most important communication tool for accessing cognitive skills, knowledge, technologies, attitudes and values. Language teaching will continue to be an essential aspect of education. It will also be necessary for all teachers to have mastery and ability to communicate in two languages i.e. English and Kiswahili. The TETP aim and objectives of primary education are; To enable every child to acquire basic learning tools of literacy, communication, numeracy and problem

solving as well as basic learning content of integrated relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for survival and development to full capacity. Moreover, UPE insists on teacher education and training that, communication skills among students and teachers at all levels of education need to be emphasized. Teacher preparation programs should also take consideration of this important requirement. As it states; "In-service training and re-training shall be compulsory in order to ensure teacher quality and professionalism".

Empirical Literature

Factors Limiting the Use of Visual Aids in English Language Teaching

In English language teaching visual aid are of great importance. Visuals are thought to be suitable for all levels and groups, but not every visual is suitable to every class. The researcher presents a wide range of factors limiting the use of visual aids in English medium primary schools which includes;

Teachers

Jadal (2011) conducted a study on effectiveness of audio-visual aids in teaching learning of English primary level in Z. P. School of Solapur district, India the findings of the study suggest than many English teachers were found unable to use audio-visual equipments and materials like projected aids to be used in the classroom. Also the study done by Surgrue et al, (2013) on pedagogy and leadership in Tanzanian primary schools, based on a whole school approach exploring classroom realities in an urban setting of Kinondoni municipality. The involved primary schools were Manzese, Uzuri, Kilimani and Mkombozi, the research noted the failure of language learners in their national exams due to language teachers incompetence. The research highlighted the difficulties and consequences facing Primary school teachers in light of these targets which involves; overcrowded classrooms, lack of resources and lack of training. Park and Bae (2009) investigated factors affecting English as a foreign language teacher's use of technological aids in the classroom in Korea. Findings of this study suggest that quality of education does not depend on the use of visuals but depend exclusively on the quality of teachers. Bolandifar (2013) states, in his study on teachers' attitudes toward the use of ICT, that lack of internet access, lack of computer and internet facilities, insufficient computer skills, and lack of time were the barriers that were expressed by these teachers.

Copper (2003), points out that many teachers who have access to the technology will not use it because they do not have technical knowledge and are satisfied with their current approach to teaching. He says that these teachers either find difficulties while using technology or they do not have sufficient time together relevant lessons supported by technology. An effective integration of teaching aids and methodology elevated the learning environment.

Pupils

According to Domin (2007), nature of the learners is probably the most important factor. The younger the students are the simpler to teach; there are more pupils' individual differences that should be considered in language teaching. These are; abilities, motivation, character, interests, social and cultural background and their previous experience of the language are another limiting factor.

Learning Environment

Collis and Moonen (2010), describe the environmental factors such as availability of electricity and classroom settings as other factors determining the technology uptake by teachers. Also, Domin (2007) argues that in most of the primitive local schools there is poor learning environment which discourages teachers to work hard in making many visuals for language teaching.

Business People

Most of the local and government schools in developing countries have financial crisis which prevents the possibility to buy modern technology visuals for language teaching. Also parents mostly are of low income can't afford to buy some visual media like video to be used at homes, this limit the visual usage in language teaching. (Mushi 1996).

Time Factor

Park & Bae (2009) in his article on international journal of pedagogies and learning entitled "English language teachers Digital Literacy Development". A case study of EFL Teachers at Vietnam University, reports that, it is time consuming for teachers to search for appropriate on-line EFL materials and integrate with text books to meet the levels and need of learners. They also reported that language learning is affected by a number of external factors including lack of time. Domin (2007) explains that in most of schools especially in developing countries in Africa, Asia even India teachers have a lot of periods and subjects for teaching; hence time for preparation for teaching is limited. Due to time limit, teachers cannot spare the time in the class to make the visuals. Also home preparations for next classes consumes much time, this fails the teachers to prepare and arrange their visuals for language teaching.

Nature of the School Administration

Sterret (2011). In his study done in Alexandria, on Insight into action: Successful School Leaders Share what work; comments that, it is the administration which provides a good supply of visuals to their school pupils. Most of the administrators pay an attention on other aspects of school development denying the provision and supply of visual aids according to change of technology to enhance language teaching. Therefore, there is a strong relationship between school leaders and learners achievement.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was designed to investigate the Factors Limiting the Use of Visual Aids in English Language Teaching in English Medium Primary Schools in Meru District. The study describes and identifies factors limiting the use of the visual aids in language teaching.

The study employed qualitative and quantitative techniques for data collections; observation and interview were used to collect qualitative data. The reasons that made the researcher to use qualitative approach are: Qualitative approach allowed researcher to get into respondent's personal world and gain deeper and clear understanding of their experience and feeling. The nature of the study and kind of data to be obtained demands this approach to use instruments which are interview and observation Corbin & Straws (2008) describes that, qualitative approach allows researcher to get at the inner experience of participants, to determining how meanings are formed through culture and to discover rather than test variables.

A researcher has selected a case study as a strategy to carry out this research, because it is likely successful in achieving the objectives of the research and through this strategy I can easily accomplish it. Case study is providing suitable kinds of data for answering my research questions and I may provide good information to the findings. Yin (2003) argues that, "case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates contemporary phenomena in depth and within its real life context especially when the boundary between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident."

Population Sampling Procedures

The selection of population were employed as respondents in the identified five schools based on the sampling types which are random, cluster and stratified sampling the mention sampling types was used on selection of administrators, teachers and observation of classroom teaching. Thus, researcher selected population of 50 teachers of both genders, school Administrators and observed two classes.

The study was conducted in Meru district in Arusha council where by five English medium primary school were selected for the purpose of establishing the factors that limiting the use of visual aids in language teaching in English medium primary schools.

Interview

This study involved the semi structured forms of interview to collect data from the selected primary school administrators. Furthermore through interview, the researcher gathered data on limiting factors in usage of visuals in language teaching in selected schools. This is was also the best way of collecting data. According to Maxwell (2005), interview is often an efficient and valid way of understanding someone's perspective.

Classroom Observation

The researcher attended some live classes on English language teaching, this tool was used where by the researcher observed on factors limiting the usage of visuals in English language teaching in selected schools and how it affects English teaching. Maxwell (2005) argues that, it is known that observation often provides a direct and influential way of learning about people's behavior and context in which this occurs. In line with this, Gall et al, (2007) says, observation provides rich data sources that offer in-depth explanation of the case.

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The Factors Limiting the Usage of Visual Aids in Supporting English Language Teaching

Eleven items were used to determine the factors limiting the visual usage in English language teaching in English medium primary schools under the following interpretations:

Table 1: Factors Limiting Visual Usage in Language Teaching

Means Score		Interpretation		
3.50-4.00		Strongly Agree		
2.50-3.49		Agree		
1.50-2.49		Disagree		
1.00-1.49		Strongly Disagree		
SN	ITEM	MEAN	SD	INTERP.
1	Nature of my English language pupils affects my selection of visuals to be used.	2.8485	1.06423	Agree
2	The school environments (classrooms) give full support in using visual aids.	1.8286	.98476	Disagree
3	School leadership supports teachers by supplying English language teaching Aids.	1.7429	.98048	Disagree
4	The government education policies support the use of visuals aids in English language teaching.	1.9429	1.10992	Disagree
5	My school economic position can support the purchase and supply of visuals for the school.	1.8529	1.01898	Disagree
6	I have enough time to prepare my visual Aids before my English language classes starts.	1.7429	.85209	Disagree
7	I have all necessary equipments to be used for preparation of visual material in the English language classroom.	2.0000	1.07309	Disagree
8	I can integrate modern visual technology into instructional process of English language teaching.	2.0000	.86603	Disagree
9	I have been – trained to create my own visual materials.	1.7059	1.05971	Disagree
10	Preparation of extra visual aids for the lesson is a part of the teacher's job.	1.3143	.58266	Strongly Disagree
11	Business centre supplies enough visuals at the affordable prices.	2.3143	.99325	Disagree

Table 1, indicates the finding on the factors limiting the use of visuals on language teaching in primary schools. The eleven used items which were well used to determine the limiting factors were responded by all teachers that they are real factors affecting and limiting the visual usage in language classrooms. The statistical results point out the average mean score of 2.8485 for respondents who agreed that nature of the English language pupils affect the selection of visuals to be used. This is supported by Domin (2007), there are more pupils' individual differences that should be considered. These are: age, their abilities, motivation, character, interests, social and cultural background and their previous experience of the language. Also Harmer (2003) comments that people of different ages have different needs, competence and cognitive skills. Therefore the teachers face problems in selection of visuals to be used because of nature of the pupils they have. Regarding the school environment (classroom), The results findings point out the average mean score of 1.8286 this mean that the respondents disagreed that classroom environments does not gives full support in using visual aids because they are not equipped so well due to the fact that they are of poor physical and technical conditions to support use of modern technology such as computer, video, Television etc. This is supported by Domin (2007), who said that it is obvious that safe, comfortable and attractive classroom stimulates learning and helps building a classroom community. A great idea then is to decorate the walls. Attractive visual aids, such as bulletin boards and posters, are keys components of affective classroom wall decorations should be colorful, appealing and relevant to current class work. They should be related and refreshed frequently. For item on School leadership supports teachers by supplying English language teaching Aids. The respondents disagreed by ranking the average mean score of 1.7449 that school leadership does not supplying them teaching aids to facilitate learning, also they disagreed by ranking the average mean score of 1.9429 that the government education policies does not support the use of visuals aids in English language teaching. For item on my school economic position can support the purchase and supply of visuals for the school the respondents disagreed by ranking the average mean score of 1.8529 that their school economic does not support the purchase and supply of visuals aids. Further the results show that the respondents disagreed

by ranking the average mean score of 1.7429 that they don't have enough time to prepare their visual aids before their English language class begins. According to Domin (2007) teachers' time is limited; he cannot be expected to make a new set of visual for every item in the syllabus. In many cases the teacher will be obliged to do without visuals. On item number seven on having all necessary equipments the respondents rated with the average mean score of 2.0000 this mean that all respondents disagreed that they don't have all necessary equipments to be used for preparation of visual material in the English language class. For item number eight on integration of modern visual technology, the respondents disagreed by ranking the average mean score of 2.0000 and item number nine the respondents disagreed by ranking the average mean score of 1.7059, where by the respondents disagreed that they have been trained to create their own visual materials for their language classes consequently, they can't integrate modern visual technology unto instructional process of English language teaching. According to Sugrue et al (2013), the failure of learners in their studies is due to language teacher's incompetence, the highlighted difficulties and consequences facing primary school teachers are caused by lack of resources and lack of training. Teacher training in correspondence of technology change is of great value for language teaching.

Regarding the preparation of visual aids, the respondents strongly disagreed by ranking the average mean score of 1.3143 meaning that the respondents strongly disagreed that preparation of extra visual aids for the language lesson is part of the teachers' job. This may be caused by lack of special training for teachers on creativity in visual preparation for their language classes.

Lastly, the item on supply of visuals in business centers, the respondents disagreed by ranking the average mean score of 2.3143 meaning that the respondents disagreed that business centers supplies enough visuals at affordable prices. From these findings, it is confirmed that lack of support from the school administration on supplying visual aids and materials for preparation hinders visual usage in language classes it is obvious that schools should motivate teachers on vocational skills subject to incorporate their pupils in making visuals for their schools.

Teachers Attitude towards Visual Usage in Language Teaching

The Head teacher of school A responded to the interview question that:

"My language teacher's attitude towards visual usage in their classes is average because they rarely teach with visual aids, with a reason that the visual aid preparation is time consuming, costly and they have no knowledge on modern technology".

The response of the head of school as indicated above is supported by Cakir, (2006) visual usage and preparations are cost, inconvenience, maintenance is hard and some cases the fear of technology. Additionally, the sound and vision, quality of copies or home-produced materials may not be ideal. Another important issue in this case is that the teachers should be well trained on using and exploiting the video. Otherwise it becomes boring and purposeless for the students.

Another Head teacher from school B responded to the question that:

"My language teachers shows negative attitude towards the use of visuals on English language teaching because visual aids and materials for creating visuals are available at the school, yet the teachers are not using them accordingly, as a result they use lecture method which lessens the pupils interest on the subject."

Teachers Training on Use of Modern Technology in Language Teaching

According to the presentation of the above respondents on teacher training and seminars there is lack of good seminars to language teachers regarding the modern technology visuals and how should be incorporated in language teaching, consequently language teachers lacks quality in their teaching which subsequently leads to poor learning outcome.

Finding From the Class Observation

Case Study – School A

In this school, the researcher observed class one (1) English lesson which has 8 pupils, the topic was "naming things" the visual aids which were used, were models, photography, real objects and pictures. These visuals were used effectively in the class and pupils achieved four language skills which were reading, listening, speaking and writing. The objectives of the lesson were achieved because all pupils spoke, listened, read and wrote as per teacher's instructions with no difficulty.

Case Study – School B

The research observed the English language lesson of class five which had 33 pupils. The lesson was about "Nouns" In this class the teacher didn't use any visual aids, he just used sentences which, were written on the chalk board for the pupils to fill the gaps by the nouns required.

Difficulties Faced by Lack of Visual in Language and their Cause.

In the language class where a teacher lacked visuals, the teacher taught a Nouns lesson in a class with 33 pupils, the class was noisy, unselected, and there was poor interaction between the teacher and pupils. Therefore the teacher faced difficulties in teaching because there was poor communication between

teacher and pupils of different age, interest, family background. Lack of visual aids in the language class created a communication barrier between the teacher and pupils.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Findings

The findings on the school environment (classroom), The results findings point out the average mean score of 1.8286 meaning that respondents disagreed that classroom environments does not gives full support in using visual aids because they are not equipped so well due to the fact that they are of poor physical and technical conditions to support use of modern technology such as computer, video, Television etc. For item on School leadership supports teachers by supplying English language teaching Aids. The respondents disagreed by ranking the average mean score of 1.7449 that school leadership does not supplying them teaching aids to facilitate learning, also they disagreed by ranking the average mean score of 1.9429 that the government education policies does not support the use of visuals aids in English language teaching. For item on my school economic position can support the purchase and supply of visuals for the school the respondents disagreed by ranking the average mean score of 1.8529 that their school economic does not support the purchase and supply of visuals aids.

For item on integration of modern technology, the respondents disagreed by ranking the average mean score of 2.0000 and item on teacher training, the respondents disagreed by ranking the average mean score of 1.7059, meaning that they disagreed to have been trained to create their own visual materials for their language classes consequently, they can't integrate modern visual technology unto instructional process of English language teaching.

Regarding the preparation of visual aids, the respondents strongly disagreed by ranking the average mean score of 1.3143 meaning that the respondents strongly disagreed that preparation of extra visual aids for the language lesson is part of the teachers' job. This may be caused by lack of special training for teachers on creativity in visual preparation for their language classes.

Lastly, the supply of visuals in business centers, the respondents disagreed by ranking the average mean score of 2.3143 from the result findings showed that, the respondents disagreed that business centers supplies enough visuals at affordable prices. According to the presentation of the above respondents on teacher training and seminars there is lack of good seminars to language teachers regarding the modern technology visuals and how should be incorporated in language teaching, consequently language teachers lacks quality in their teaching which subsequently leads to poor learning outcome. Winger (2008) argues that, low quality of teachers' education or lack of qualified teachers might be one reason behind the poor learning outcome.

CONCLUSION

Visual aids are vital and popular in primary English lessons as the younger the pupils, the more they need perceptual stimulation to help their understanding and retain their memory. Moreover, English is the second language; more difficulties arise in conveying the knowledge to the younger pupils. Hence, Primary school English teachers need to rely more on visual aids in motivating pupils, interest, encouraging them to speak and practically, in stimulating their participation in the lesson.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The government and other responsible authorities in schools should spend a lot of funds buying visual for language teaching.
2. Teachers especially in primary schools should be encouraged to use as many teaching learning aids to stimulate and make the event conducive to learning.
3. The education system should promote training on modern technology visuals usage and seminars should be given to ESL teachers on using visuals aids in teaching.

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