

Relationship between Vocabulary Development and Use of Teaching Aids among English Second Language Learners. A Case Study of Kericho County Secondary Students

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ABSTRACT: *Most students encounter English as their second language when they join school. The Curriculum of education in Kenya recommends the teaching of English and Kiswahili at all levels of basic education. The two languages and especially Kiswahili is used outside school for communication. English being the official language is also used in different situation especially formal set ups. Kiswahili and English share the same status linguistically. In spite of this, factors beyond linguistics such as social, political and historical, spells the status given to a language. Kiswahili in comparison to English is a language that is learned or acquired and is used extensively in addition to first language. English as a second language is given a lot of emphasize due to roles it plays in learning institution. Competence in language is key especially in English because it's the medium of instruction. Lack of proficiency in English language hinders ones understanding of other subjects and the ability to express oneself.*

The objective of the study is to identify ways in which students change input to knowledge. and establish the effectiveness of teaching/learning aids in developing vocabulary.

Ellis's theory of instructed second language acquisition was used in the study. Another theory that the study is based on is Krashen's monitor model. The target population was 9 public secondary schools. 144 students and 9 teachers. Questionnaires were used to collect information from the teachers. Classroom observation schedule were also used to collect data.

I. Statement Of The Problem

In 2016 KCSE results showed that no student scored an A grade in English. It has been noted that over the years form four candidates have been performing poorly in English. By the time a form four student sits for KCSE he/she is expected to have mastered the format and language of at least twenty five different types of functional writing. A KCSE English candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to communicate not only information and meaning but feelings, tastes and points of view using a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and original approach. English is the medium of instruction in all levels of education hence proficiency in it makes the learning of other subjects easier. Based on the above the researcher deems it necessary to research on vocabulary development and to highlight the role that teaching / learning materials play in development of vocabulary.

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What are some of the ways used by students to develop vocabulary?
2. Do instructional materials influence the development of vocabulary?

II. Literature Review

2.1 Apt vocabulary

The aim of learning English as second language is to be able to communicate effectively. Effective communication happens when one has competency in the chosen languages. Adequate mastery of apt vocabulary is necessary for a learner to be proficient in a given language. In teaching English as a second language we need to emphasize all the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The four skills need to develop adequately to enable learner discuss issues in any given situation. This calls for adequate vocabulary development appropriate for different registers.

Words are the building blocks of a language among children learning a second language. Words are grouped into two, firstly, content words this are words which carry meaning, they include nouns, lexical verbs adverbs

and adjectives. Secondly, structural words, these do not carry much meaning but express some structural or grammatical relationship. These are preposition and conjunctions.

2.1 Vocabulary teaching strategies

- **Use of dictionary**

A dictionary is an important tool in vocabulary development. A good dictionary has useful information in respect to pronunciation of words, meaning, usage and word classes. Learners should be aware that words can have different meaning depending on the usage.

- **Reading activities**

Through wide reading, learners encounter new words. With the help of a dictionary or teacher's explanation, learners are able to turn input to knowledge. Wide reading is not adequate for vocabulary development. Teachers should ensure that learners use productively the new words they encounter.

- **Use of synonyms, homophony, homonymy, polysemy, antonymy, and hyponymy.**

Synonyms are words that have similar meaning. It should be noted that no two words have exact meaning. Words have connotative meanings. For example a word like thrifty and stingy. Stingy have negative orientation. In synonymous words one will be considered informal while the other formal. In the words 'start' and 'commence', commence is formal while start is informal. Familiarity with lexical relationship between words helps to expand the learners vocabulary.

- **Sentence construction.**

A learner plays an active role in converting input into stored knowledge (intake). Both explicit and implicit knowledge can be learned and converted into intake. Explicit knowledge is a type of knowledge that is easy to articulate, write down and even share. Understanding of new acquired vocabulary is implicit knowledge and the ability to use these new words in construction of sentences is explicit knowledge. Vocabulary learning requires both implicit and explicit learning.

Students texts books are designed in away to help students get opportunities to learn and practice new English words used in comprehension passages. Secondary English text books used by form two students are organised in the following order: there is comprehension, followed by word power which is a section that gives sentences that are presumed to be new word. After this, is a section that asks questions related to the new word. Grammar part will use some of the new words. This enables learners to use new words more than once. This facilitates the retention of words and hence vocabulary development.

2.2 Importance of teaching aids

Teaching aids are objects such as books, picture or sketch maps or devices such as computers used by a teacher to enhance or enliven classroom instruction. The success of teaching and learning is facilitated by use of different types of equipment available in the classroom. There are several teaching aids which can be used in vocabulary development. These aids assist learners through the following ways:

- 1 Motivation: students get the interest to learn; hence learning takes place with student being active and involved in the learning process.
- 2 Developing vocabulary: Teaching aids helps to increase the vocabulary of students more effectively.
- 3 Direct experience: Teaching aids provide direct experience to the students
- 4 Use of whiteboard
 - Presents the target language neatly and in an orderly manner.
 - The important concepts are underlined; this attracts the attention of the learners.
 - Learners are actively involved especially when given an opportunity to write on the board.

When students are taught vocabulary in an explicit manner, their reading comprehension improves, Beck & MCKeown, (1991.)

Learners need to be given opportunities to say and write new words, this creates an opportunity for practice. Bear & Helm, (2004), asserts that students vocabulary knowledge is reciprocal between spoken and written forms of language.

Learners have a tendency to forget concepts taught but with proper use of teaching aids, retention of ideas is facilitated. It has been noted that learners can learn better when they are motivated properly through different teaching aids. They help develop the proper image when the students see hear and touch. Learning with teaching aids provide complete example for conceptual thinking because they provide direct experience.

2.3 Types of Teaching Aids available for use in English second language classes.

Visual aids

They are aids that use the sense of vision. These include actual objects, models, pictures charts maps, flashcards, channel board, bulletin board, overhead projector, slides and blackboard/whiteboard

Audio Aids

These are aids that involve the sense of hearing. Examples are radio and tape recorders.

Audio – visual aids

These are aids that appeal to learner's sense of vision as well as hearing. Television, film projector and film strips are the commonly used aids.

2.4 Theoretical framework

Ellis (2004) says that implicit knowledge is procedural, is held unconsciously and can only be verbalised if it is made explicit. He further notes that this knowledge is accessed rapidly and easily and is available in fluency communication. Ellis's theory of instructed second language learning acquisition explains how instructed learners develop the ability to use linguistic and pragmatic knowledge in production of correct sentences.

Research in L2 learning has shown that competence in L2 is primarily a matter of implicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge according to Ellis, (2004) is the declarative and often anomalous knowledge of the phonological, lexical, grammatical, pragmatic and social – critical features of an L2 together with the metalanguage of labelling this knowledge.

Implicit knowledge determines the ability to communicate fluently and confidently in L2. This kind of knowledge can be developed in different ways. Dekeyser, (1998) came up with skill building theory, he says that implicit knowledge arises out of explicit knowledge when the latter is proceduralized through practice. Krashen, (1981) and Ellis, (1998) differ with this opinion. They noted that implicit knowledge develops naturally out of meaning – focused communication aided by focus on form.

This study agrees with Ellis, (1998). Implicit vocabulary knowledge need to develop into explicit knowledge which is reflected by learner's competence when they are able to utilize this type of knowledge in actual performance. Krashen, (1981) monitor model has five hypothesis. One is monitor hypothesis. Krashen says that learners can only use explicit knowledge when they monitor.

Monitor requires that learners focus on form (as opposed to meaning) and they should have sufficient time to access knowledge. Researchers agree that irrespective of whether explicit knowledge has value in and of itself, it assist language development by facilitating the development of implicit knowledge.

Long, (1996) in interaction hypothesis point out that interaction facilitates acquisition when a communication problem arises and learners engaged in negotiation for meaning. Explicit knowledge is realized when learners use newly acquired words to negotiate for meaning.

III. Methodology

In this chapter the methodology that is employed to realize the research objectives is discussed in terms of research design, target population, sampling and data collection procedures.

3.1 Research designs

This study used descriptive survey. Orodho, (2003) points out that descriptive survey involves collection of information using interview or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. Through the use of questionnaire the research sought to find out ways in which instructional materials influence the development and retention of vocabulary among English second language learner.

Kerlinger, (1978) supports the use of surveys as they are useful for fact finding. They provide a great deal of information which is accurate. The study mainly used research questionnaires and observation. Data collected was on strategies used by learners to acquire vocabulary and the effectiveness of learning materials. Cohen and Marion, (1980) states that the intention of a survey research is to gather data at a particular point in time and used to describe the nature of existing condition.

3.2 Location of the research

Study was carried out in Kericho county. It has been noted that form four students in their essay writing of paper three have inadequate vocabulary to express themselves.

3.3 Sampling procedure

The target population was selected through random sampling. In this method each school and student in the population had equal chance of being selected. Convenience sampling was further used to select 9 English teachers from 9 secondary schools and 144 form two students.

This population selected acted as a representative of the other schools in the municipality. All the schools were public schools. It's assumed that all public schools have same teaching resources. Observation was done in selected 9 classes. From two class was used because it's at this stage that they are introduced to essay writing.

3.4 Description of sample population

Boys	Girls	Mixed	Teacher
20×3=60	16×3=60	4 boys/ 4girls ×3=24	9

3.5 Research instrument

In collecting data, the following instruments were used.

1. Observation
2. A questionnaires

3.5.1 Observation

This is a form of naturalistic inquiry techniques which allows investigation of phenomena in their naturally occurring setting. This research used participant observation where by the researcher joined learners in class. Jargenson O. L, (1989) noted that observation techniques can be used to collect in-depth information.

Observations involve the collection, interpretation and comparison of data. This method is based on spontaneous or naturalistic data, gathered by an independent observer. One advantage with this method is that unexpected data which other methods can miss is collected. One main difficult faced by researchers who opt for this method is that they have to prepare adequately in order to fit onto the observed context without disturbing anyone.

The first method used was note taking. This was an important method because learners encounter vocabulary in the course of been taught different aspects of English language.

Some of these aspects are functional writing skills and even oral skills.

Each lesson used different vocabularies. Teachers also used different learning aids. The second form of observation involved a structured table that contained learning teaching aids

3.5.2 Questionnaire

Kirlinger, (1978) pointed out that some methods such as telephone survey is limited by non-response, uncooperativeness and reluctance to answer questions in details. Cohen and Manion, (1980) asserts that as compared to the interview which is both time consuming and expensive, questionnaire is the best form of survey in carrying out an enquiry.

Learner's questionnaires

Learner's questionnaire sought to find out how learners internalize vocabulary and how they ensure that they used the new words in their own sentence.

Another aim of the question was to find out how students rate teaching aids used.

Teacher's questionnaire

Questionnaire given to teachers was mainly to find out how teachers draw the attention of the learners to the new words. It also sought to find out how they rate teaching/learning aids in the development of vocabulary.

Data collected from the student /teacher's questionnaires were coded and given qualitative analysis. Data collected from the observation schedules were mainly on the effectiveness of teaching aids.

IV. Data presentation, analysis and discussion

In this chapter we describe the ways used by learners to change input into knowledge. We also discuss the effectiveness of teaching materials.

4.1 How learners change input to knowledge

Although Krashen assert that only input matters in second language acquisition, recent research show that output appears to play an important role and can help provide learners with feedback. It makes them to concentrate on form of what they are saying and help then automatize their language knowledge.

Learners use the following methods to enable them learn and use new words.

1. Connect words to experience to aid in remembrance.
2. Associate words to their synonyms, homophones, homonyms, polysemys antonyms and hyponymys.
3. Associate words with their cognates e.g. word family – child, children.
4. Use of semantic maps to remember words for example, vegetable: kales, cabbages, carrots, tomatoes and potatoes
5. Remember a new word by remembering its location on page or on board
6. Study spellings of new words to remember them
7. List/arrange words by topic or their common features
8. Say the new words loudly in order to remember them
9. Saying words a loud and studying their spelling was used by 124 students, 86%. of the students.
9. Constructing sentences with new words. 140 students indicated that they used this method. This is 97% of the students.

4.3 Learners’s use of new words

Learners, with instruction from the teachers, construct sentences using new words they encounter in reading passages. Passages have presumed vocabulary written in bold. After the reading passage, students are asked to construct sentences.

Another exercise that aims at enabling learners use acquired vocabulary productively is asking learners to explain the meaning of the given set of words and phrases as used in a given passage.

4.4 Effectiveness of teaching materials.

From teachers and learners observation the following data was collected

SCHOOL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
semantic maps	√	√		√				√	
Flashcards, slides,	√	√		√			√		
text books	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
dictionary	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Charts	√		√	√		√	√	√	
Projector	√					√		√	
Black /white board	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Audio									
Realia		√		√		√			

Observation schedule showed that the following teaching aids are used.

Visual aids: All the classes that were attended used dictionary, text books and white/black board . Six classes used charts. New words and their meaning were written on the charts and displayed on classroom walls.

Teachers and learners supported the use of visual aids because it helps learners understand and remember concepts easily.

Teachers rated visual aids highly because it reduces the time taken in explaining the meaning of words.They also boost students talking time hence practice in ESL. 80% of the teachers pointed out that visual aids such as pictures, charts, word map provided a touch point they can refer back to throughout the lesson. Visuals aids helps remind learner’s words they have learnt.

They make the class more dynamic and fun. They take the focus off the teacher and the learners’ text books.

Realia are real-life authentic items. One class was being taught hotel vocabulary meant for a writing lesson, The teacher had menus and hotel brochure which were used to teach new words. It is a convenient teaching aid. It’s also economical as it can be used again and again.

Audio-visual

The main aim of audio – visual aids is to enhance teacher talk and to present the lesson in simple, effective and easy way.

These aids help to provide direct sense experience to students, they also help students to form clear and accurate concepts. Teachers observed that audio – visual provide variety to teaching methods, like visual aids they reduce teacher talk.

Audio – aids

40% of the classes observed used audio – aids. Though a good teaching aid, most teachers and students preferred audio visual aids. Teachers concurred that audio aids needs a lot of class control unlike audio – visual which easily captivates learners attention.

4.4 The impact of teaching and learning materials.

Teachers' responses showed that teaching aids help learners in retention of new words. They also promote learners interest.

Inadequate use of teaching materials.

Teaches questionnaire revealed that there was inadequate use if teaching aids and that most teachers' preferred using text books apart from one or two teaching aids. Teachers noted that teaching aids needed adequate time for preparation and that they are not always available.

4.5 CONCLUSION

Teaching aids play the following roles:

1. Promote vocabulary development.
2. Help teacher clarify meaning of words more easily.
3. They assist in understanding of concepts which will discourage cramming.
4. Help in motivating learners hence making language classes be lively.
- 5 Encourage class participation.
6. They provide direct experience to learners making learning easy.
7. They help reduce teacher talk and bring in varied teaching methods.

RECOMMENDATION

Teachers should use simple aids that are readily available.

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