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Effect of Teachers' Attitude towards Integrated English Approach on Learners' Achievement of Linguistic Skills in Secondary Schools in Bungoma County, Kenya

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Abstract:

In spite of the efforts to enhance the performance of English in Kenyan secondary schools, there have been persistent challenges in using the integrated English approach on learning achievement of linguistic skills. The purpose of this study was to assess the effect of teachers' attitude towards integrated English approach on learners' achievement of linguistic skills in secondary schools in Bungoma County, Kenya. The study utilized descriptive survey research design using mixed methods approach. A sample size of 251 teachers, 371 students and 134 heads of languages department was used. Purposive, Proportionate and simple random sampling techniques was used to obtain the respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires, interview schedules, observation and document analysis. The validity of the instrument was tested through expert judgment while reliability was achieved through the use of Croncbach Alpha. Quantitative data was analysed by use of frequencies, percentages means and standard deviation. Qualitative data was analysed thematically and presented in narrations and quotations. The study revealed that there was a strong positive correlation between attitude and learners acquisition of linguistic skills ($r=.911$; $p=.000$) showing that the positive attitude has a positive effect on learners' linguistic skills. As such, perceptions and motivation play a significant part in linguistic learning since they affect learners' accomplishment or failure in the linguistic skills acquisition. The findings of this study will be significant to teachers of English to re-evaluate their styles of teaching and improve on them.

Keywords: Attitude, integrated English approach, learners, linguistic skills

1. Introduction

In a study by Otieno (2003) the outcome of data showed that teachers had a negative attitude towards the methodology of integration. These teachers' attitude was associated to subject content and instructional resources that were used in the instruction of integrated English. Further the research found a positive association between instructors' perception and their instruction performance in the integrated methodology. According to Law, (2008) teachers' skills and attitude count for a great deal more in curriculum renewal than do changes in content and method. It is noted that a lot of instructors lacked the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out an innovation. These teachers are reluctant to break new ground and lack sense of inner security, so necessary in good teaching. Hughes, (2005) in her study into the methods and challenges of integrating the teaching of English language and poetry in Kenyan Secondary Schools reported that a sizeable number of instructors had negative perception towards integrated English.

Yang & Huang (2008) carried out a survey in Malawi on secondary school learners' attitude towards learning English and their effect on performance. The students complained that the teachers embarrassed them continuously during lessons and this was associated to negative attitude that the teachers of English had towards the subject. This study intends to establish the attitudes teachers of English and how this affect implementation. One of the key problems noted by K.I.E (2004) evaluation report is that there still exist negative attitudes of some teachers towards the changes in the curriculum. This is supported by Gichuki (2007) who found out that teachers in Othaya division had a negative attitude towards the implementation of the revised English Curriculum.

Some scholars have different views on what influences English performance. In their study, Ahmad and Aziz (2009) revealed that instructors viewed that English lessons need to be teacher-centered. In this instance, the instructor is expected to be the expert and the authority in presenting information while others take a student-centered teaching approach viewing their role as more of student-learning. Ndirangu (2004), notes that skills including the usage of teacher-centered methods sabotage the attainments and goals of even the meticulously designed curriculum. Eken (2000) revealed that in a learner-

centered class, teachers are more of implementers and learners take on the discussion role where students are seen as being able to undertake a more active and participatory role vis-a-vis traditional methods. This teaching approach encourages active participation of learners during classroom learning.

According to Law, (2008) teachers' skills and attitude count for a great deal more in curriculum renewal than do changes in content and method. It is noted that many teachers often lack the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out an innovation. These teachers are reluctant to break new ground and lack sense of inner security, so necessary in good teaching. Hughes, (2005) in her study reported that a sizeable number of teachers had a negative attitude towards integrated English. Yang & Huang (2008) carried out a survey in Malawi on secondary school learners' attitude towards learning English and their effect on performance. The students complained that the teachers embarrassed them continuously during lessons and this was associated to negative attitude that the teachers of English had towards the subject.

Kilgallon and Maloney (2008) on their study on how pre-school teachers accomplish educational transformation, it emerged that pre-school teachers' capability to cope during the execution of assigned educational change was affected by a range of predictors. respondents were able to describe how these predictors impacted on their daily instruction practice, influencing their ability to manage the implementation of the imposed changes and their ability to be sustained in the teaching profession. These predictors included having a positive attitude towards obligatory changes to educational plans and practices, teachers' workload and association with professional colleagues, the methodologies adopted by teachers when implementing educational change, attending professional development sessions and the role of the line manager. The current study investigated the effect of teachers' attitude towards integrated English approach on learners' achievement of linguistic skills in secondary schools in Bungoma County, Kenya.

2. Methodology

The research used descriptive survey design using mixed approach methods. Mixed methodology is the blending of two or more approaches in a research study resulting in both quantitative and qualitative data (Greene, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The study was mixed methods in a single research which permits for pragmatism.

The study targeted all the 724 teachers of English teaching Form three students in 206 secondary schools in Bungoma County. In addition, the study targeted all heads of languages department in all the 206 secondary schools. Form three teachers of English were specifically targeted for the purpose of this research because, it is at this level that set books are fully introduced according to the syllabus and thus the teacher is tasked with the responsibility of teaching the skills appropriately using integrated approach. The sample size formula for this study is Krejcie and Morgan (1970) as quoted by Kasomo (2001) where a sample size of 251 teachers and 134 heads of languages department was obtained.

The researcher stratified the respondents into the six administrative units; Bungoma Central sub-county, Bungoma East Sub-county, Bungoma West sub-county, Bungoma North sub-county, Bungoma south Sub-county and Mount Elgon Sub-county making Bungoma County. The researcher further employed stratified sampling technique to select the respondents from each of the administrative unit. Thereafter, simple random sampling was used to choose Form Three teachers of English involved in the study from each of the six administrative units. In addition, HODs in every selected school were selected purposively to take part in the study.

Questionnaires, interview schedules, observation and document analysis were the main data collection instruments used in this study. A pilot study was carried out in a neighbouring Kakamega County to establish the reliability of the research instrument. The content and structural validity of the instrument was tested by consulting supervisors of Kisii University and thereafter incorporating their positive inputs in the refining the final data collection instruments (Foxcroft, wood, Kew, Herrington & Segal, 2004).

The quantitative data from the questionnaire was first subjected to preliminary processing through validation, coding and tabulation in readiness for analysis with the help of the statistical package for social science (SPSS) computer package. Frequencies, percentages, means and Standard deviation was used to analyze quantitative data. Data analysed was presented by use of tables and figures. Qualitative data from interview schedules, observation and document analysis was thematically classified and arranged before they were reported in narrations and quotations as per the research objectives.

3. Results and Discussions

The participants were requested to rate their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale items on effect of attitude in the adoption of integrated English approach. The outcomes of the analyzed information are shown in Table 1

Statement	SD		D		UD		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Teachers have negative attitude towards teaching listening skills using comprehension passages.	20	8.4	38	16.0	17	7.2	146	61.6	16	6.8
Learners' attitude towards composition writing plays a vital role in achievement of writing skills	23	9.7	56	23.6	11	4.6	71	30.0	76	32.1
Secondary school students have a poor reading culture making them perform poorly in reading skills	9	3.8	21	8.9	43	18.1	84	35.4	80	33.8
The nature of the English comprehension curriculum poses a challenge to the learners affecting their comprehension negatively	67	28.3	68	28.7	22	9.3	66	27.8	14	5.9

Table 1: Teachers' Responses on Effect of Attitude on the Adoption Integrated English Approach in Learners' Achievement of Linguistic Skills

Table 1 shows that 146(61.6%) teachers were in agreement with the statement that teachers have negative attitude towards teaching listening skills using comprehension passages, 38(16.0%) teachers were in disagreement with the statement, and 20(8.4%) teachers strongly disagreed with the statement while 16(6.8%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement. The study findings suggested that majority (78.4%) of the teachers of English in secondary schools in Bungoma County noted that teachers had negative attitude towards teaching listening skills using comprehension passages. This implies that most of the teachers may not be using comprehension passages while teaching listening skills and this could hinder the acquisition of linguistic skills by secondary school learners. Okwara, et al., (2009) noted that teaching integrated English requires a situation where students could be presented with a reading comprehension in form of an oral narrative and are required to respond to both literature and grammar questions based on the comprehension. This implies that effective acquisition of the four linguistic skills could be achieved when teachers in secondary schools develop a positive attitude towards teaching of integrated English.

Further, 76(32.1%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement that learners' attitude towards composition writing plays a vital role in achievement of writing skills, 71(30.0%) teachers agreed with the statement, 56(23.6%) teachers disagreed with the statement while 23(9.7%) teachers of English were strongly in disagreement with the statement. The results of the study showed that majority (62.1%) of the teachers of English in secondary schools believed that learners' attitude towards composition writing plays a vital role in achievement of writing skills. This implied that students with a positive attitude towards composition writing have better chances of acquiring linguistic skills in comparison to those who have negative attitude towards composition writing. Based on a preliminary survey on students' performance in advanced grammar and composition, attitudes and behavior appear to be important factors affecting students' English performances. This implied that students with a positive attitude towards composition writing have better chances of acquiring linguistic skills in comparison to those who have negative attitude towards composition writing. Based on a preliminary survey on students' performance in advanced grammar and composition, attitudes and behavior appear to be important factors affecting students' English performances (Aceron, 2015). According to Alagozlu (2007) college students demonstrate poor performance in grammar as manifested in their inability to construct sentences in English with correct grammar and utilize verbal ideas effectively as reflected in their difficulties encountered in expressing their decisions or stand, as well as their judgement and disposition in writing essays.

Similarly, 84(35.4%) teachers agreed with the statement that secondary school students have a poor reading culture making them perform poorly in reading skills, 80(33.8%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement and 43(18.1%) teachers were not decided on the statement while 30(12.7%) teachers disagreed with the statement. The study findings suggested that majority (76.2%) of the secondary school teachers of English in Bungoma County were of the view that students had poor reading culture and this made them to perform poorly in reading skills. Therefore, learners need to be given various reading resources and be encouraged to develop reading culture which enhances the acquisition of reading skills in the integrated English approach. This supports the findings of other researchers such as Panida & Nutprapha (2017) and Siriprasert, (2009)

who pointed out that reading is perhaps the most significant skill for the student learning development because students basically use written texts in searching for information and acquiring new data of knowledge.

In addition, 68(28.7%) teachers disagreed that the nature of the English comprehension curriculum poses a challenge to the learners affecting their comprehension negatively, 67(28.3%) teachers strongly disagreed and 80(33.7%) teachers were in agreement with the statement while 22(9.3%) teachers were undecided on the statement. From the responses, it can be deduced that majority (57.0%) of the secondary school teachers were of the opinion that the nature of the English comprehension curriculum did not pose any challenge to the learners. According to Nasser and Al-Shorman (2017), comprehension is certainly the most crucial reading skill. Gallets further noted that reading comprehension leads to developing all areas of language competence such as speaking, writing and listening.

During classroom observation and interviews conducted with HODs, it was found out that most teachers had negative attitude towards teaching of listening skills using comprehension passages provided in the teachers' guide. They did not give the learners the opportunity of listening to the passage first, then answering the questions. Instead, passages were photocopied and given to the learners to read and answer the questions. According to Kurita (2012), students may find listening conception capabilities a problem to acquire and this necessitates instructors to modify their listening instructions into more efficient ones. The development of listening conception skill assists students to prosper in linguistic learning and increase their input of conceptualization. On their part, Pourhossein, & Ahmadi, (2011) said that listening conception is a dynamic procedure in which the listener conceptualizes meaning by use of cues from contextual data. Ahmadi (2016) further adds that listening comprehension lessons should be constructed with cautious step by step preparation. This suggests that listening activities move from the simple to the more complex ones; that the learners know what the activities are and are given directions as to "where to listen, what to listen for, how to listen and when to listen. In this study therefore, teachers need to give learners the opportunity of listening to the passages before answering questions enhancing their listening skills. The aim of this paper was to establish the influence of teachers' attitude towards the use of integrated English approach on achievement of linguistic skills in public secondary schools in Bungoma County. Pearson Correlation analysis was used test the influence and the results are presented in Table 2.

	Learners' Acquisition Linguistic Skills
Teachers' Attitude	$r = .911^{**}$
	$p = .000$
	N= 237

Table 2: The Correlation Coefficient between Teachers' Attitude towards Use of Integrated English Approach and Learners' Achievement of Linguistic Skills

Table 2 shows that there was a strong positive correlation between attitude and learners acquisition of linguistic skills ($r=.911$; $p=.000$). This implies that attitude had a significant but positive correction with learners' acquisition of linguistic skills showing that positive attitude has a positive effect on learners' linguistic skills. The study found out that attitude had a significant but positive correlation with learners' acquisition of linguistic skills showing that positive attitude has a positive effect on learners' linguistic skills. Learners' inspiration and positive perception during the teaching episodes is important in ensuring that the students persist adequately to successfully acquisition of the second language. As such, perceptions and motivation play a significant part in linguistic learning since they affect learners' accomplishment or failure in the linguistic skills acquisition. Palencia (2009) further pointed that the predictors that affected English language achievement of the student-participants are based on their attitude and motivation on learning the language, learning approaches and learning styles.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Teachers' attitude had a significant but positive correlation with learners' acquisition of linguistic skills showing that positive attitude enhances learners' acquisition of linguistic skills. The study therefore recommended that teachers of English need to be motivated through trainings and provision of adequate teaching and learning materials for instructions of integrated English.

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