



doi <https://doi.org/10.58256/jlfe.v1i1.992>



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Research Article

Section: Language and Ecology



Published in Nairobi, Kenya by Royallite Global in the *Journal of Languages, Folklore and Ecology*.

Volume 1, Issue 1, 2023



Article Information

Submitted: 29th October 2022

Accepted: 27th December 2022

Published: 4th January 2023

Additional information is available at the end of the article

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How to Cite:

Mutua, D. (2023). Influences of learning environment on English language vocabulary acquisition among learners in Kitui County, Kenya. *Journal of Languages, Folklore and Ecology*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.58256/jlfe.v1i1.992>

Influences of learning environment on English language vocabulary acquisition among learners in Kitui County, Kenya

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Abstract

This study sought to investigate the influence of the learning environment on vocabulary acquisition and proficiency among learners in rural settings in Kitui County, Kenya. Acquisition and retention of vocabulary is an important step in attaining the proficiency of the English Language as a second language. In this regard, the article opines that the household environment where children come from influences their vocabulary learning tendencies in respect of accepting the ideals to which the house is geared. A family in which good behaviors are discouraged, love is withheld, and compassion is withheld is not an appropriate setting for learning, growing, and developing youngsters. Such families are composed of sensible and educated parents who motivate their children to get an education by taking them to private schools. On the other hand, parents from low-income households only afford to enroll their children in public schools. Most parents from such households lack time to show affection to their children, which may influence their verbal acquisition process at home and school. Learners' performance suffers as a result of insufficient supervision, making it harder to acquire appropriate English vocabulary. The youngster tends to take all things lightly and is reluctant and unconcerned about educational programs. Children can originate from a variety of family backgrounds, including spontaneous and stable families, polygamous households, and divorced or split parents. This article contributes to the growing scholarship on understanding and developing ways of helping learners to acquire vocabulary in Kenyan schools.

Keywords: literacy, learning environment, rural setting, vocabulary teaching, vocabulary learning, vocabulary acquisition



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Public Interest Statement

Vocabulary teaching and learning is one of the priority areas in English as a second language. Acquiring vocabulary is essential for communicative competence and one of the central tasks for second language learners. Therefore, the process of learning the words remains the first step in acquiring any language. However, vocabulary acquisition and its effectiveness have been the focus of investigations in the field of Second Language Acquisition. Vocabulary learning can be difficult for English language learners in diverse environments. Hence, this article explores influences of the learning environment on the learning and acquisition of English vocabulary in rural education settings in Kitui County, Kenya.

Introduction

The sort of household environment a kid comes from influences their vocabulary learning tendencies in respect of accepting the ideals to which the house is geared. A family in which good behaviors are discouraged, love is withheld, and compassion is withheld is not an appropriate setting for learning, growing, and developing youngsters. Such families are composed of sensible and educated parents who motivate their children to get an education by taking them to private schools. On the other hand, parents from low-income households only afford to enroll their children in public schools. Most parents from such households lack time to show affection to their children, which may influence their verbal acquisition process at home and school. When a youngster is deprived of these rights or benefits, they develop a negative attitude toward the educational setting. Learners' performance suffers as a result of insufficient supervision, making it harder to acquire appropriate English vocabulary. The youngster tends to take all things lightly and is reluctant and unconcerned about educational programs. Children who grow up in a natural and healthy environment typically have a more favorable attitude toward vocabulary learning. Their parents prefer to enroll them in private schools where second and third language acquisition is more intense compared to public schools. These learners have been observed to be more intellectually and academically effective in English learning and all aspects of their educational instruction over the developing years (Peng, 2019). Because their parents are more sensible, the harmonious coexistence at home helps the youngsters develop with a feeling of love and a comprehensive awareness of society, language, their environment, and developing an exemplary method of behaving relating to the environment.

Literature Review

The ability of youngsters to acquire vocabulary is most influenced by their home and domestic situation. Parental involvement and childhood experiences are thought to be significant influences on a child's growth and IQ. No other element of socialization is as fundamental to the entire composition of the English language and vocabulary as is family. Therefore, a decent setting and household facilities for a kid to study and develop childhood education experiences should be provided by the household. The house has a significant impact on a child's early acquisition of vocabulary during the development years. The household into which a kid is brought into the world is the beginning of the series of his extracurricular experiences (Peng, 2019). It is preferable to gather as much information as necessary about a learner's family background to establish ways of guiding them on tactics of active learning. Learning of language and vocabulary should begin at conception and continue in the household. After learning from the household, the school system is about the growth of English and vocabulary, and these childhood years are the most crucial in the entire process of English learning. The difference may come in because of the quality standards of vocabulary instruction in public and private primary schools. If one category of the primary schools has a more enthusiastic approach to language vocabulary instruction, the learners of that category will develop their vocabulary skills faster and comprehensively compared to those of the other category. The child's family and educational surroundings shape their character, and good education entails balance and harmony (Qian & Lin, 2019). The family environment serves as

the foundation for student development since the basic language vocabulary they provide will determine the progress that the learner will make in school. Parents who wish for their children to acquire the best education are stricter about discipline, meaning that they would prefer them to enroll in rigorous and disciplined institutions like private primary schools. Dealing with disciplined parents and teachers is a motivating factor for learners to acquire appropriate language vocabulary and develop it at school. However, youngsters are more likely to feel at ease with whatever they do if their household is secure, peaceful, and harmonious (Chen., 2018). A broken household always creates a broken attitude and a vacuum when the learner is living with either of the parents but not both. As a result, a parent who retains custody of the kid must play two roles and may not satisfy the requirements of language vocabulary acquisition.

Consequently, the home environment is likely to have a significant impact on the child's language and vocabulary background. The type of mental difficulty that a kid is exposed to at different times of the developmental stage is anticipated to influence the type of cognitive ability that the learner possesses. Most learners may only be intellectually prepared for formal education, such as lower primary and upper primary institutions, when their parents are aware of the influence of a favorable environment for learning and acquisition of language (Chen., 2018). This phrase implies that a learner's background and household have a significant role to perform in the child's language and educational development. The ideal household should give opportunities for children to demonstrate their abilities and interests by fostering an intellectually engaging atmosphere. The learner's parents should motivate their children by giving school supplies such as texts, writing tools, and school necessities that will aid in their language and intellectual development. A youngster who lacks the aforementioned materials and support may struggle to acclimatize to the school environment. The attitude of the learner's parents towards the need for their children to develop excellent vocabulary has a significant impact on the academic success of such a youngster.

Methodology

The way a youngster acts at school is influenced by their relationship with their parents back home. Most of the children who arise from such families are enrolled in private primary schools because their parents think that they have higher standards of learning compared to public primary schools. According to studies, a student who is adored and tended to by their parents responds well to academics in terms of language and academic achievement (Peng, 2019). Children who are not loved and catered for by their parents tend to perform poorly in school. As a result, parents ought to stop denying their children the right to be loved and affected within the households they come from for their security. Depriving a youngster of proper education or compassion may cause them to become a criminal in society. A person does not conceive a criminal, lazy, or indifferent, but rather, it is the surroundings that they are brought within that shape them. A youngster from an educated family will likely outperform a youngster from a semi-literate one. Several studies have found a beneficial relationship between parents' educational achievement and pupils' academic success. According to some experts, if parents are well-educated and sensible, they may synchronize the school and the home influences on their children in such a manner that they make improvements in their language vocabulary and academic work. This affiliation motivates youngsters to succeed even more if their parents are well successful and intellectually wealthy in life. Educated parents and guardians will tend to encourage their youngsters to create an interest in language and academics by offering a default goal for the youngster to strive for achievement (Qian & Lin, 2019). While some learners hailing from low families may have an interest in education, they suffer from economic inequality, and their parents and guardians may regard education as a waste of money, time, and energy. Many factors in the home environment, specifically the interaction between children and their parents, can either promote or inhibit language vocabulary and school development through influencing the learner's determination to concentrate and learn. High motivation is often

thought to boost achievement (Chen & Hwang, 2020). According to the preceding statement, proximity to an adult family member can produce extraordinary benefits in a learner's language vocabulary and academic success. Whenever such an adult family member is a sensible and highly educated parent, the outcome is almost certainly significantly superior. It is commonly established that students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds have varying degrees of academic performance.

Attitudes and cultural values of the family have been linked to various socioeconomic groups, and it is worth noting how they affect the mode of interaction between children and parents. Traditional values and attitudes that are concerned with societal aspects like cleanliness, discipline, and respect for the kid, are most widespread among the lower class and lower middle-class parents. Developmental values, on the contrary, emphasize the child's motivations and the development of self-control, as well as internal attributes (Parkinson & Dinsmore, 2019). This is common among upper-middle-class individuals. Because upper-middle-class individuals respect freedom and place a focus on orderliness and stability, they are more likely to offer a decent educational environment for their children compared to impoverished parents. Wealthy parents may give their children appropriate language vocabulary, literature, and materials.

Nonetheless, the kids' social acknowledgment is influenced by the socioeconomic standing of the families that raised them. The social-economic standing of the parents is a critical predictor of accomplishment linked with the family. The greater the learner's family socioeconomic position, the higher the vocabulary and school's accomplishment. A similar trend has been discovered in America, Asia, and Europe. The association between social-economic position and accomplishment is widely recognized, with the social-economic status being the most crucial irrespective of the presence of sizeable variable ability (Chen & Hwang, 2020).

However, because the environment is a multi-dimensional item, socioeconomic status is linked to other family factors such as family size. According to the research, learners from poor and low-income families mostly enter public schools with a language disadvantage, and these schools may not match the standards of learning within private schools. This is thought to occur because such youngsters have little interaction with grownup family members like their moms, dads, and older siblings who have to work many hours.

Analysis and Discussion of the Findings

The kind of relationships and verbal patterns that children from the middle class have with their parents back home assist them in participating in the anticipated direction in school. The cause for this disparity in experience, expertise, economic stability, and work needs exists within the public and private school categories. The habits of conduct formed in the home transfer into the classroom (Peng, 2019). There is a shared factor, which is the structure of valued parental aid, which affects both household size and pupils' intellectual quotient (IQ). It would appear that, whatever the source, the standard of living in more prominent families has no effect on assessed intelligence and, maybe, attitude toward school. These inclinations, in consequence, will exert a significant impact on vocabulary and academic achievement, particularly in the selection procedure for primary schooling. Several investigations have shown the relevance of school as a social setting for learning languages for over a quarter century. Several of these investigations looked at locational organization and its effects on student success in various Federation states. The investigations were designed to help education officials in different states determine where a specific type of school should indeed be situated, the capacity of a school within every area, and whether or not a new school must be created, among other things. The World Bank advised that the essential data be collected in order to rationalize and create an urban and rural educational map (Parkinson & Dinsmore, 2019). Schools contain physical factors such as location, building type, utilization, size, and instructors (quantity, qualifications, and age).

Students' enrolment in a class by age, personal data in age, gender, primary schools, residence,

method of transportation location, the average time taken in between home and school commute, and parental background. A variety of nations are said to have employed these school location-based planning strategies to overcome educational challenges. Due to early community engagement, school placements were not predicated on sound population allocation principles when applying school location-based management to the research and development of primary-level education (Chen & Hwang, 2020). Historically, school locations were chosen arbitrarily, with little or no regard for necessary criteria such as inventiveness.

The findings also found that pupils in private primary schools in the rural regions outperformed their public counterparts in vocabulary proficiency. The results also demonstrated that students who attended private primary schools located in rural locations accomplished much better in many subjects than students within public schools in rural regions. The main reason is that above 55% of students learning in private schools received credit passes, whereas only 35% of students in rural public schools received credit passes (Vedadi, Abdullah & Cheok, 2019). In general, children in rural areas performed poorly in English when compared to those in metropolitan schools. The poor degree of student achievement in English language and vocabulary in rural public schools may be attributable to what we might call inadequate school personnel. Environmental influences have a substantial impact on second language acquisition, particularly on reading comprehension and vocabulary. The household literacy setting influences vocabulary development and levels of legitimacy of second - language acquisition.

The impact of Second - language exposure on pupils' vocabulary acquisition is uncertain. Evidence from research has failed to demonstrate that studying overseas has considerable merits over studying at home in aspects of vocabulary awareness growth, accurate written vocabulary application, and quickness of vocabulary development (Sooho, 2018). Environments also have an impact on student's reading comprehension abilities in both their original and second languages. External variables such as family literacy surroundings and educational environment might impact learners' reading progress in second language learning. Study time and accuracy, as well as the adoption of reading methods, may all be influenced by the instructional setting. Many research investigated the influence of settings on vocabulary and reading comprehension skills. Some studies sought to investigate the influence of the environment on the two variables. Furthermore, little research attempted to assess the impact of the Second - language genuine setting vs. a blended language-learning environment on vocabulary growth and reading comprehension skills. The current study attempted to determine if immersing students in a high degree of authentic second language setting would benefit them (Siyanova-Chanturia & Pellicer-Sanchez, 2018). A child's living environment could also influence his or her vocabulary acquisition. The majority of research found that factors such as a household's socioeconomic situation and the literacy practices that parents are involved in with their youngsters might well be linked to literacy development and vocabulary proficiency.

The discussions and findings also accord with investigations by Chen (2018) that show that private schools within the specified rural regions do better than public schools in academic programs as well as language and vocabulary proficiency. Private primary schools tend to go the extra mile in providing an accurate environment and instruction strategies that assist students in learning.

The data from several studies have revealed that male pupils in both public and private secondary schools might tend to outscore their female counterparts when it pertains to the mastery of vocabulary and articulation in English. This report's findings are consistent with those of (Peng, 2019), who discovered that male students surpassed female learners academically. Nevertheless, the results of this research contradict those who believe that gender categorization of English language ability is not based on biological variations. Rather, the ability of the learners to grasp the articulation of vocabulary in languages depends on whether one is male or female. The results of the discussion show that students at private primary schools outperformed those in public secondary schools in the level of vocabulary proficiency. The statistics used in the discussion shown above clearly show that students in private

primary schools outperformed their peers in public schools, providing validity to previous research (Qian & Lin, 2019).

Conclusion

The main explanation for this phenomenon is the type of environment that a learner interacts with while at school and at home, owing to the fact that most primary schools are day schools. Since the types of environments provided by public and private primary schools have a wide variation, the level of vocabulary proficiency in those environments also varies widely. Private primary schools tend to provide a more favorable environment that compels the students to acquire and develop skills in vocabulary and communication. Public schools, on the other hand, are more reluctant to develop strategies that ensure that learners are subjected to the right kind of vocabulary. The reason mentioned above is connected with the types of family background that the learners come from since most parents who enroll their children in public primary schools are more reluctant to ensure that their children acquire the appropriate skills they need in vocabulary. Likewise, parents whose children attend private primary schools make follow-ups on the development of their children's vocabulary proficiency and academic capabilities.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Acknowledgments: I acknowledge the diverse support offered by the Ministry of Education in Kitui County.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declared no conflict of interest.

Disclaimer Statement

This article is part of my on-going PhD studies at the Department of Linguistics and Languages, Machakos University.

Author Bionote

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