

Influence of Teaching Methods on Students' Academic Performance in Kiswahili Subject in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Lang'ata Sub-county

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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of teaching at any level of education is to bring a fundamental change in the learner through various teaching and learning methods. The effectiveness of these teaching and learning processes largely depends on the choice of the teacher's teaching method. It appears that the literature with regards to effectiveness of teaching methods may not be extensive. The purpose of this study therefore was to examine influence of teaching methods on students' academic performance in Kiswahili subject in public and private secondary schools in Lang'ata Sub-county. This study applied mixed methods research design. The target population for this study consisted of all 18 secondary school Principals, 91 Kiswahili teachers and 7691 students of the 18 secondary schools in Lang'ata Sub- County. Both probability and non-probability sampling procedures were used to get a sample of 234 participants (9 principals, 45 teachers and 180 students). Interview guide for principals, questionnaires for teachers and students were used to collect data. Qualitative data were thematically analyzed whereas quantitative data were analyzed with the help of SPSS version 20. Findings revealed that teachers used a blend of lecture, group work and question and answer methods to a larger extent and demonstration, guided learning and role- play to a lesser extent to teach Kiswahili. Teaching methods had both a positive and negative influence on students' performance in Kiswahili. In conclusion, teaching methods influence students' academic achievement in Kiswahili. The study recommends regular in service training for Kiswahili teachers as it is believed that in service training addresses contemporary issues that will help teachers understand various methodologies and how to incorporate them in their day to day teaching.

Keywords: *Teaching methods influence, students' academic performance, Kiswahili subject performance, students and Kiswahili, Kiswahili teaching methods, Kiswahili student performance, Lang'ata Sub-county performance*

INTRODUCTION

Education is the most effective agent of social and personal transformation that leaves a relatively formative effect on learners. The primary purpose of teaching at any level of education is to bring a fundamental change in the learner through various teaching and learning methods (Oigara, 2011). The effectiveness of this teaching and learning process largely depends on the choice of the teacher's teaching method. Whalen III (2012) alludes that effectiveness of a teaching method is reflected in the outcome of the teaching-learning process in form of marks, grades and mean scores.

Teaching methods are categorized into teacher-centered approaches and learner centered approaches (Oigara, 2011). Teacher-centered approaches include lecture method, drilling and questioning. In teacher centered approach, learning takes place when teachers teach and later examine taught concepts by giving students exercises related to the teacher's presentation during or after the lesson. This is for the purpose of finding out whether students grasped the knowledge passed on to them by the teacher. It is considered sensible for teachers to be familiar with the language which the students are using to learn. Language is key to the process of teaching as well as assessing or testing so as to discover the weakness of the students or areas they did not understand in the course of learning (Brad, 2000).

Learner-centered approaches of teaching involve a state where students construct their own understanding of the content and develop a personal feeling about the learnt concepts (Collins, 2003). This means that student centered approach puts much focus on enquiry and problem-based learning thereby making students as the center point of learning. The methods in Learner centered approaches include question, answer, group work, demonstration, guided learning, role play/drama, and project based learning.

The significance of student led learning approach is that students influence the content, activities, materials, and pace of learning. The student-learning model puts more emphasis on a student as a central component of teaching-learning process in school. The instructor creates platforms and avenues for students to learn independently and from one another and offers supportive supervision to students as they learn. The efficiency of this teaching and learning procedure largely rests on the choice of the teacher's teaching method.

Kiswahili subject, which is a core and compulsory subject that contributes to the overall mean score of a student at both the school and national level has been poorly performed both in internal examinations and external exams including K.C.S.E. Out of the possible 100 percent mark score, majority of secondary schools in Lang'ata sub-county have been scoring a mean grade of between 51.02 and 44.879 between the years 2013 to 2017 (Lang'ata Sub-County Education Office Report, 2018).

According to Mocho (2012), poor methods of teaching have been blamed for Kiswahili subject's underachievement because Kiswahili teachers are left with the prerogative of deciding what topic

and when to teach it in a given level of learning for example forms one, two, three or four. Some Kiswahili teachers go to the extent of teaching all related aspects of a topic at a certain level without considering the cognitive ability of a learner and the level of learning a learner is in. Further, Odundo (2013) asserts that Kiswahili teachers have a tendency to choose familiar pedagogical methods like the lecture method, drilling and questioning, which may in turn affect learning achievement negatively. However, it is for this reasons that the current state of Kiswahili performance in secondary schools in Lang'ata Sub-County leaves a lot to be desired. Despite the poor performance in Kiswahili subject, few studies have been conducted to ascertain the effectiveness of the teaching methods used in teaching Kiswahili subject in secondary schools in Lang'ata sub – county. Thus, this study intended to examine the influence of teaching methods on students` academic performance in Kiswahili subject in public and private secondary schools in Lang'ata sub-county, Nairobi.

METHODOLOGY

The research adopted a mixed methods research design that combined both qualitative and quantitative methods concurrently (Creswell, 2014). The design was selected for this study since it advocates that a single data set is not sufficient to provide answers to a research question. In this case, the quantitative and qualitative methods complemented each other hence greater validity of the emerging inferences.

The target population for this study consisted of all 18 secondary school Principals, 91 Kiswahili teachers and 7691 of 18 secondary schools in Lang'ata Sub- County (Lang'ata Sub-County Education Office, 2018).

The study adopted stratified simple random sampling procedure to select two public secondary schools, two private girls boarding secondary schools, two private boys boarding secondary schools and two private mixed day secondary schools. Non- probability sampling was used to generate a sample of 9 principals and 45 teachers. Probability sampling was used to select 180 students bringing the total number of study participants to 234.

The study used questionnaires to collect quantitative data from the students and Kiswahili Teachers and interview guides to collect qualitative data from the Principals.

Data obtained from the quantitative instruments was entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 and was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Data obtained from qualitative instruments such as open-ended questions from questionnaires and interviews was systematically coded, organized to generate categories and themes based on research questions. The results were then presented in form of narratives describing the effectiveness of teaching methods on students` performance in Kiswahili subject.

RESULTS

Demographic characteristics

The study sought socio-demographic data from the respondents to ensure that the selected sample represented the entire population based on gender, type of school and class level for the students and gender, qualifications and teaching experience for the teachers.

With regards to gender of the students, slightly more than half (52.8%) of the respondents were female while nearly half (47.2%) of the respondents were male. In establishing the type of school the students' studied, two thirds (66%) of the respondents indicated that they were in private schools whereas slightly above a third (34%) responded that they were in public schools. Going by the classes, the students were equal with 90 students from form three representing 50% and 90 students from form four representing 50%.

Among teachers, 64.4% were female while 35.6% who took part in the study were male. In terms of education qualifications, majority (64.4%) of the teachers had a Bachelors Degree in Education (B.ED) followed by teachers who had Diploma in education at 20 % while the smallest number (15.6%) of the teachers had Masters Degree in Education (M.ED). With regards to teaching experience, 55.6% of the teachers had taught for 1 to 5 years, 33.3% for 6 to 10 years while those who had taught for 11 to 15 years were 11.1%.

Effectiveness of Teaching Methods on Students' Academic Performance

This study sought to find out the effectiveness of teaching methods on students' academic performance in Kiswahili subject in public and private secondary schools. In answering this objective, a number of items were analyzed which included: teaching methods used in teaching Kiswahili and effectiveness of Kiswahili teaching methods.

Teaching Methods Used in Teaching Kiswahili

The study examined the teaching methods used in teaching Kiswahili in public and private secondary schools in Lang'ata Sub-County. Figure 1 shows the distribution on teachers' responses on the teaching methods used in teaching Kiswahili.

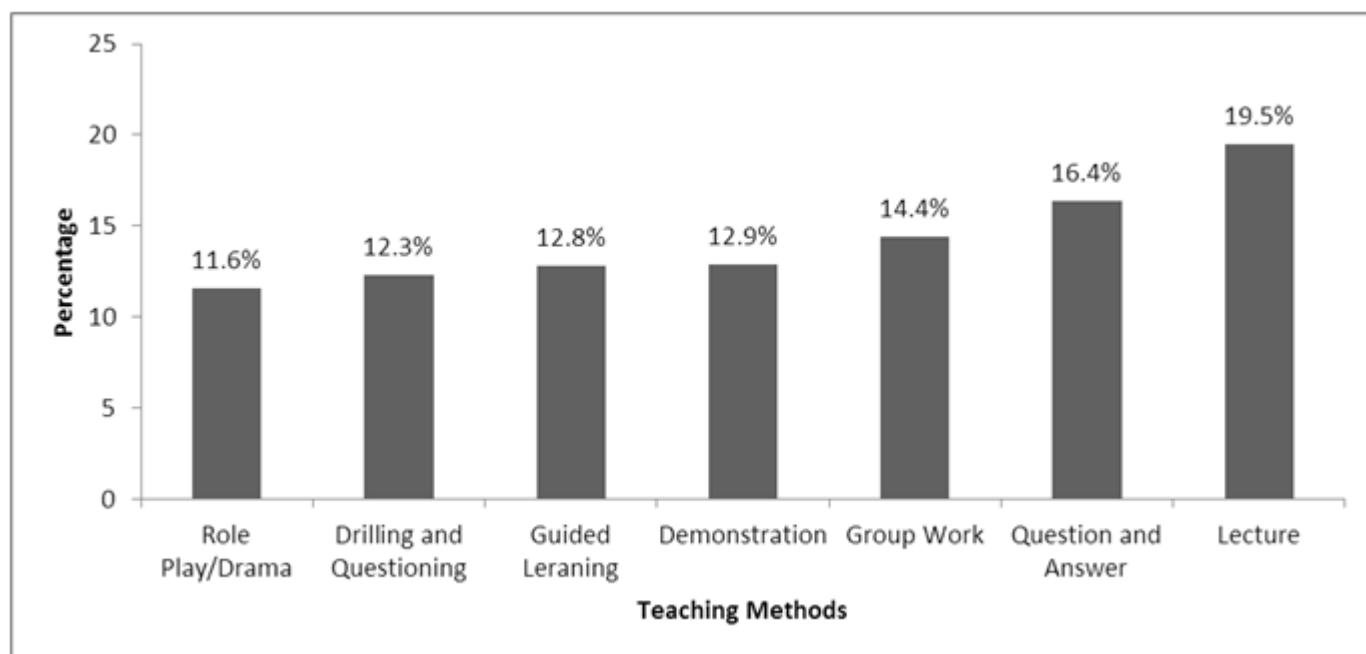


Figure 1 Teaching Methods Used in Teaching Kiswahili

As shown by Figure 1, findings revealed that lecture method (19.5%) was the leading method used by Kiswahili teachers followed by question and answer method (16.4%), group work (14.4%), demonstration (12.9%), guided learning (12.8%), drilling and question (12.3%) while role-play and drama (11.6%) ranked the least applied method of teaching Kiswahili subject.

Effectiveness of Kiswahili Teaching Methods

In this study, the students were asked to rate the effectiveness of Kiswahili teaching methods from 3 choices: not effective, effective and very effective. The students' responses are presented in Figure 2.

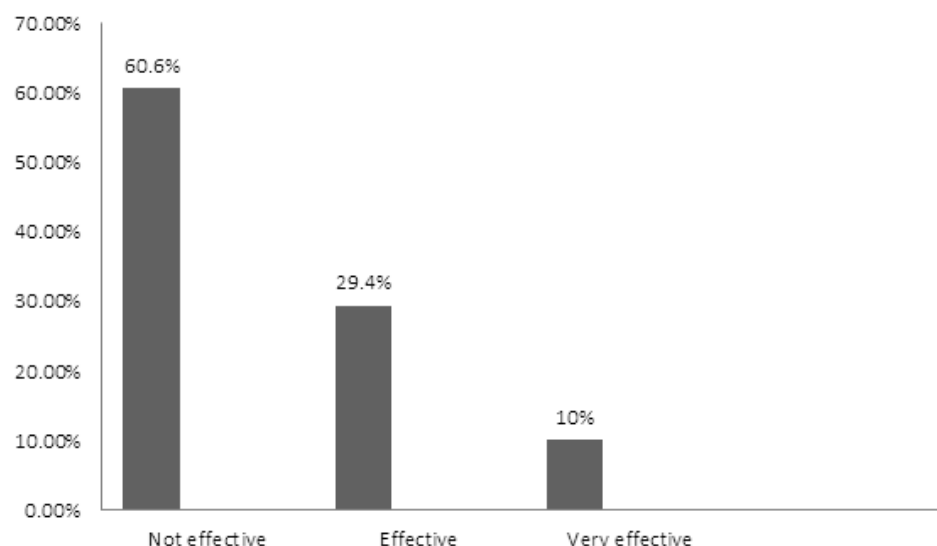


Figure 2 Effectiveness of Kiswahili teaching methods

According to most (60.6%) of the students, teaching methods used by Kiswahili teachers were not effective while 29.4% and 10.0% of the students considered the methods used by Kiswahili teachers as effective and very effective respectively. Majority of the students who indicated that the teaching methods their Kiswahili teachers used in teaching them were not effective attributed their ineffectiveness to the fact that some methods like group discussions gave them time and chance to catch up with their friends and/or they found themselves drifting and discussing totally unrelated matters to the subject under discussion. Others indicated that they preferred learning on their own and not in groups.

Findings from the interviews agree with these results as most principals P1, P2, P4, P6, P7, P8 all agreed that teaching methods contributed, positively or negatively, to the Kiswahili grades that the students posted. Some of the influences they mentioned included: boosting confidence among learners, aiding knowledge retention, making a student develop a negative or positive attitude towards the teacher and the subject they taught therefore influencing the students' performance either negatively or positively.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that lecture method was the leading method used by Kiswahili teachers followed by question and answer method, group work and demonstration. These findings concur with findings in a study by Roblyer (2006) on the effect of teaching methods on student achievement on learning test for algebra I in Virginia's institute and state university. The study found that the lecture based approach was the dominant mode of instruction used in the school. Further findings align with another research by Sajjad (2011) on effective teaching methods at higher education level. The study sought to determine the effectiveness of the various teaching

methods used for teaching students at graduate level from the faculty of arts in Karachi, Pakistan. Findings from the study established that lecture method was the best teaching method followed by group discussion and other teaching methods that included: individual presentation, seminars, workshops, conferences, brain storming and case study.

Most of the students indicated that the teaching methods used by Kiswahili teachers were not effective. These findings were inconsistent with a study by Namasaka, Mondoh and Wasike (2017) which established that demonstration, experiment and lecture methods were effective as students taught using those methods recorded an improvement in the tests they were subjected to as compared to those taught using oratory lecture method. This may be the case as Biology involves experiments.

CONCLUSION

In light of the fact that learning is a process that involves investigating, formulating, reasoning and using appropriate strategies to solve problems, the effectiveness of teaching and learning process largely depends on the choice of the teacher's teaching methods. Therefore, teachers should realize that it becomes more effective when students are tasked to perform rather than just asked to remember some information. Knowledge is generated by the learners through experience based activities rather than those directed by the instructors.

The Ministry of Education therefore needs to organize for regular in service training for Kiswahili teachers as it is believed that in service training addresses contemporary issues in Kiswahili. Further, it will expose the teachers to dynamics of teaching the subject and enhance their teaching skills which will help the teachers in dealing with the wider Kiswahili curriculum, shed more light and help teachers understand various methodologies and how to incorporate them in their day to day teaching.

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