

THE CHALLENGES IN LEARNING ENGLISH AMONG S.1 STUDENTS OF KUMI SEED
SECONDARY SCHOOL

BY

OKILAN THOMAS

BU/UP/2019/1453

A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A BACHELOR
OF EDUCATION IN ENGLISH AND LITERATURE IN ENGLISH


OF

BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY

JUNE 2023

DECLARATION

I **OKILAN THOMAS** certify that this research report is my original work and it has never been presented or submitted to any University or any other higher institution of learning for the award of a Bachelor's Degree

Signature..... 

Date..... 16th/05/2023

APPROVAL

This research report has been submitted with my approval as the candidate's university supervisor.

Name of Supervisor..... KWAGALA OLUM.....

Signature..... [Signature].....

Date..... 16/5/23.....

DEDICATION

From the core of my being, I dedicate this work to my tireless Mother Atim Christine, stoical Father Okilan Joseph, my only Sister Asio Juliet, Late Grandmother Adeke Glades and Pastor Okia Sam.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a debt of gratitude that cannot be measured to the following prominent intellectuals who have directly impacted in my life. Mr. Okalany Naboth, Ms. Anumo Immaculate (Halcyon High School) Ms. Ikano Evelyn, Ms. Mburu Sally Njoki and my supervisor Ms. Kwagala Olivia for the effort she has rendered towards the completion of my research.

I intensely thank my parents Ms. Atim Christine and Mr. Okilan Joseph of Ngabet village, Kumi sub-county Kumi District Uganda. May God richly bless and grant you long life.

Special thanks to institutions; Halcyon High School Soroti city, Kumi Wiggins Secondary School and Kumi Seed Secondary School. These are the places where the writer steered the ideas of the project.

I will be ungrateful if I don't thank my friends and colleagues who have helped me to make this project a reality including; Timothy Opolot, Kyotalye Brain, Muyama Miriam, Ajuko Mary Immaculate. The latter has always given me a shoulder to lean on, and to all English and Literature students, Busitema University, Faculty of science and education, sadly too numerous to be named. Lastly, I want thank all the members of Teso students' Development association (TESDA) of Busitema University for their genuine support and companionship.

List of abbreviations

TESDA- Teso Students' Development Association

L2- Second Language

SLA- Second Language Acquisition

FL- Foreign Language

MLAT- Modern Language Aptitude Test

LD- Language Deficiency

L1- First Language

UK- United Kingdom

SVO- Subject, Verb and Object

MDD- Music, Dance and Drama

ABTRACT

In this research work, the author explored the challenges involved in the process of learning English language among senior one students of Kumi Seed Secondary School in Kumi, Sub County, Kumi District, Uganda. The researcher sampled senior one population.

The researcher utilized questionnaires in the process as well as observation and interview method. The total population amounted to 145 students and 3 teachers. Information collected was analyzed through tabulation and explanation. The resultant findings indicated that learners carried on learning difficulties from their respective primary schools to secondary school, the effect of environment in which they were living in and inborn conditions.

The author noted that the challenges in learning English language affected the learner's general performance and their interaction. However, with the teacher's intervention, the learners improved and became confident when learning English language.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
APPROVAL	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
DEDICATION.....	IV
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	V
TABLE OF CONTENTS	VIII
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE STUDY	2
1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY	3
1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.....	3
1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	3
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	3
1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	4
CHAPTER TWO.....	4
LITERATURE REVIEW	4
2.0 INTRODUCTION	4
2.1 SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION.	4
2.2 FIRST LANGUAGE (FL) LEARNING DIFFICULTIES.....	5
2.3 ROLE OF THE FIRST LANGUAGE (MOTHER TONGUE)	6
2.4 APTITUDE	8
2.5 INTERACTION	8
2.6 MOTIVATION.....	9
CHAPTER THREE.....	10
METHODOLOGY.....	10
3.0 INTRODUCTION	10
3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN	10
3.2 DATA COLLECTION	10
3.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS	10
3.4 POPULATION SAMPLE.....	11
3.5 SAMPLE SIZE.....	11
3.6 DATA ANALYSIS.....	11
TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE	23
LEARNERS' QUESTIONNAIRE	25

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1 Shows the Persistent Challenges in Learning English

Table 4.2.1. Shows the Overwhelming number of learners with the inability to construct correct sentences

Table 4.2.2. Shows the response of teachers in offering intervention measures to learners with low proficiency in English language

Table 4.3.1. Shows the number of learners taught using mother tongue at primary school level

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

English has long been recognized as a global language of importance and has been studied for over 50 years as a core in lower secondary school level in Uganda. The ability to communicate effectively in English is essential for all students, as they learn to function and communicate in a state where it's used as an official language, on top of excelling in their examination. However, it may be very difficult for some young adults to learn and use English, and they may show very little progress over time. While it is unlikely that every learner of English enjoys the amenity of learning in ideal and perfect learning situations, a number of learners are still reasonably able to attain high levels of English proficiency and should at least be able to make modest progress.

Despite the great effort spent in developing a general competency in English among Kumi seed secondary school students over recent years, the results have been mixed. The researcher intended to find out the persistent obstacles in learning English language, and bring them into lime light and to equally recommend some intervention mechanisms targeted at alleviating the problems as portrayed in their performance in the previous years.

1.1 Background of the Study

As effective language learning involves diversity of practices, skills and abilities, the challenges could be grounded on a number of areas or may just be a combination of reasons for the lack of necessary and expected progress (Shank, 2001). The survey was necessary due to the revelation that, the learners were not performing to their expectations in English proficiency, due to difficulties in pronunciation, spelling, and grammar construction.

The learners in Kumi seed were found to be experiencing other speech difficulties such as articulation disorders, voice disorder, inflection, monotonous and hoarseness. They were found to easily lose concentration during English lessons. Most of the time, they were not willing to participate in question and answer periods in class due to fear of being teased by their counterparts.

A number of learners in kumi seed brought with them learning difficulties right from their previous primary schools where the use of English language was not emphasized, and some teachers went an extra mile to deliver lessons on various subjects in the mother tongue (Ateso).

References

- Bialystok, E. (1997). The structure of age: In search of barriers to second language acquisition. *Second Language Research, 13*(2), 116-137. Retrieved December 25, 2005, from ERIC database.
- Burt, M., & Peyton, J. (2003). *Reading and adult language learners: The role of the first language*. Retrieved July 8, 2005, from ERIC database. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 482 586)
- Comstock, R., & Kamara, C. (2003). *Adult language/learning disability: Issues and resources*. Retrieved July 8, 2005, from ERIC database. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 482 311)
- Curzon, J. (2005). Mind the gap: Existential views of language. *Existential Analysis, 16*(1), 100-112.
- Downey, D., & Snyder, L. (2000). College students with LLD: The phonological core as risk for failure in foreign language classes. *Topics in Language Disorders, 21*(1), 82-92.
- Ellis, R. (1997). *Second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ganschow, L., Sparks, R., & Javorsky, J. (1998). Foreign language learning difficulties: An historical perspective. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 31*(3), 118. Retrieved June 23, 2005, from Infotrac database.
- Holm, A., & Dodd, B. (1996). The effect of first written language on the acquisition of English literacy. *Cognition, 59*(2), 119-147. Retrieved June 30, 2005, from Infotrac database.

- Holt, G. (1995). Teaching low-level adult ESL learners. *Center for Adult Language Acquisition*. Retrieved May 7, 2005, from <http://www.cal.org/caela/digests/HOLT.htm>
Available at http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/collections/ld.html
- Krug, K., Shafer, T., Dardick, W., Magalis, C., & Parente, R. (2002). A test of foreign language acquisition: Paired-association learning. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 16(2), 211-221. Retrieved July 31, 2005, from Wiley Inter science database.
- Lim, S., & Wieling, E. (2004). Immigrant Chinese American women: Negotiating values and perceptions of self in the cultural borderlands of East and West: A qualitative study. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 12(2), 148-158.
- Lueers, N. (1983). *How older dogs learn: Adults and language learning*. Retrieved August 7, 2005, from ERIC database. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 230 028)
- Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Moss, D., & Ross-Feldman, L. (2003). Second language acquisition in adults: From research to practice. *Center for Adult Language Acquisition*. Retrieved May 7, 2005, from http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/SLA.html
- Orem, R. (2000). English as a second language in adult education. In A. Wilson & E. Hayes (Eds.), *Handbook of adult and continuing education* (pp. 438-448). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Schwarz, R. (2003). *LD and the English language learner*. Retrieved June 1, 2005, from http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu/pdf_files/esl_ld.pdf

- Schwarz, R., & Burt, M. (1995). ESL instruction for learning disabled adults. *Center for Adult Language Acquisition*. Retrieved May 7, 2005, from <http://www.cal.org/caela/digests/SCHWARZ.htm>
- Schwarz, R., & Terrill, L. (2000). Adult English language learners and learning disabilities. *Center for Adult Language Acquisition*. Available at http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/collections/ld.html
- Shank, C. (2001). English language learners with learning disabilities. *Center for Applied Linguistics National Center for ESL Literacy Education: Adult ESL practice in the new millennium*. Retrieved July 15, 2005, from <http://www.tnfs.edu.tw/teach/eng/web/applied%20linguistics/www.cal.org/ncl/millennium.htm#LD>
- Sparks, R., Philips, L., Ganschow, L., & Javorsky, J. (1999). Students classified as LD and the college foreign language requirement: A quantitative analysis. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 32(6), 1-28. Retrieved June 23, 2005, from Infotrac database.
- Tenant, M., & Pogson, P. (1995). *Learning and change in the adult years: A developmental perspective*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Von Worde, R. (1998). *Student perspectives on foreign language anxiety*. Retrieved November 8, 2005, from ERIC database. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 479 986)