
**THE ROLE OF LOCAL LANGUAGES ON LEARNERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN UGANDA,
A CASE STUDY OF BUTAWUKA MAGEZI NTAAKE, BUTAMBALA DISTRICT**

1 Wasswa Andrew, 2 Dr. Sekiswa Peter

1, 2 Metropolitan International University

ABSTRACT

The study aimed at the role of local languages on learners' academic performance in secondary schools in Uganda and it was guided by the following objectives; To examine the prevalence of local language on academic performance of learners, to examine the perception of teachers and students on the influence of Local language on academic performance of learners and to identify the challenges that Local language, bring about to students in the process of learning. The researcher used largely quantitative research approach as well as qualitative research approach. A survey of selected public day secondary schools in Butambala District was used to study how and the extent to which the use of Local language influences academic performance of learners. The findings shown that the regression model substantially and accurately forecasts the dependent variable. The regression model's statistical significance was demonstrated by $F = 64.295$ and $Sig = 0.000$, both less than 0.05. The regression means square value of 6.224 contrasted to the remainder mean square value of 0.097, which was substantial to zero, further supports this. This demonstrated that there was a connection between perception of teachers and academic performance of learners. Teachers should come up with teaching methods that are interactive to ensure that students are given an opportunity to interact with each other in Learners so that students can have good communication skills.

Key words: prevalence of local language, perception of teachers and academic performance

Background to the Study

Uganda is a linguistically heterogeneous and diverse country with many indigenous (mother tongues) and exogenous languages. Basically, Uganda has over 42 indigenous languages. Learners is one of the exogenous languages. Other exogenous languages include: French and Swahili while some of the indigenous languages include are Luganda, Lusoga, Iteso, Japadhola, and Acholi among others. Use of Learners has a long history in Uganda. When Uganda attained self-rule in 1962, Learners was declared the official language (Republic of Uganda, 1962). It was to be used in all important government sectors including education. This policy re-emphasized what was already in place as a result of colonial language policy (Christopher et al., 2022). At this particular point in time, the Ministry of Education and sports took steps in line with language policy. In 1964, the Uganda Education Commission mounted a survey to establish the interests of the citizens with regard to language use. The findings revealed that most people wanted a trilingual approach to education (Ministry of Education, 2012). During this period, Local language was preferred for verbal communication especially in rural areas, while Learners was preferred for education from lower primary to the university (Kanyerere & Muhammed, 2023). Kiswahili was especially favored in education for purposes of national and regional unity. However, unlike Learners, Local language languages were not anchored into the school curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

Most of the emerging secondary schools are in the rural areas where learners prevalently use Local language at home and school; Butambala district is not an exception. This prevalence of use of Local language especially in day schools is an issue of concern since it is a challenge that influences the academic performance of learners (Mwangi, 2009). The performance of learners in the country has been declining and the

results in Butambala district reflect this decline (Anthony et al., 2023). The previous studies have only highlighted mother tongue as a factor affecting performance of Learners but they have not made an analysis of use of mother tongue and its influence on the academic performance of learners (Micheal et al., 2023). Therefore, in this study the researcher intends to investigate the influence of Local language on academic performance of learners in Butawuka Magezi Ntaake, Butambala District.

Specific objectives

- 1. To examine the prevalence of local language on academic performance of learners.*
- 2. To examine the perception of teachers and students on the influence of Local language on academic performance of learners.*
- 3. To identify the challenges that Local language, bring about to students in the process of learning*

Research Questions

- 1. What is the prevalence of the use of Local language in Secondary Schools of Butambala district?*
- 2. What is the perception of teachers and students on the influence of Local language on academic performance of Learners?*
- 3. What challenges does Local language bring about to students in the process of learning?*

Methodology

Research Design

The researcher used largely quantitative research approach as well as qualitative research approach. A survey of selected public day secondary schools in Butambala District was used to study how and the extent to which the use of Local language influences academic performance of learners. Survey research could be descriptive,

exploratory or involve advanced statistical analysis. Besides, interviews were used. Interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation (Mertens, 2016).

Target Population

The target populations were students and teachers in a selected public day secondary school in Butambala District. The study was conducted on 50 students, 10 teachers, 1 head teacher and the district education officer of Butambala District.

Description of the Sample and Sampling Procedures

The participants for this study were students and teachers in a selected public day secondary school in Butambala District. The sampling was through probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Precisely, the study shall employ simple random sampling, systematic random sampling, stratified sampling and purposive sampling.

Sample size

Sample is a subgroup in a population which can be used as a representative of the population to derive inferences about the Guidance of that population (Kingori, 2004). According to Mulusa (1988), at least 30% of the total population is representative. Therefore, the sample size for this study shall be 18 respondents.

Description of Research Instruments

Research instruments are tools that are used to collect data. The research instruments that were used to collect data in this study are described herein.

Questionnaires

With the above method of data collection, the researcher used a number of printed questions specifically about the role of local language on the learner's academic performance. This was done relating to the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary

(2010) which defines questionnaire as a written or printed list of questions to be answered by a number of people especially as part of survey. This technique involved written questions to which the respondents was required to write answers individually with no researcher's guide. The questionnaires were in two forms, the open- ended questionnaire that requires the respondents to answer the way they wish and the Close- ended questionnaire which will limit the respondents to answer "YES" or "NO".

Interview Guide

Interview is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation (Mertens, 2018). Interviews are useful when you want detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviors or want to explore new issues in depth. The interviews enabled the researcher to capture what the students' and teachers' questionnaires would have failed to capture.

Data Analysis

Analysis of data based on the research questions. Quantitative information was organized, coded and summarized using SPSS, version 17.0. After collecting the raw data, the questionnaires were coded into numerical values which were then keyed into the computer (Nelson et al., 2022). The open-ended items were categorized into themes. The analyzed data was summarized using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages and presented using tables and bar graphs.

RESULT

Table 1: Relationship between prevalence of local language and academic performance of learners

	prevalence of local language	academic performance
--	---------------------------------	----------------------

<i>prevalence of local language</i>	<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	1	.806**
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>		.000
	<i>N</i>	17	17
<i>academic performance</i>	<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	.806**	1
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.000	
	<i>N</i>	17	17
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source; Primary Data, 2023

The correlation coefficient 0.806 shows a strong relationship between the prevalence of local language and academic performance of learners. This is statistically significant at 95% confidence since the probability 0.00 is less than 0.05 and therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between prevalence of local language and academic performance of learners

Table 2: Perception of teachers and students on the influence of Local language on academic performance of learners

Table 2: Correlation between perception of teachers and academic performance of Learners

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
1	.606 ^a	.367	.361	.31114
a. Predictors: (Constant), social support				

Source; Primary Data, 2023

The Regression results as presented in table 2 above show the, adjusted R square value 0.361, it implies that academic performance of learners only contributes to 36.1% towards social support, the remaining 63.9% academic performance being explained by other factors. This generally shows that there is a relationship between perception of teachers and academic performance of learners.

Table 3: ANOVA values for social support and academic performance of students in English

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.224	1	6.224	64.295	.000 ^b
	Residual	10.746	102	.097		
	Total	16.970	103			
a. Dependent Variable: academic performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Perception of teachers						

Source; Primary Data, 2023

Table 3 of the study's findings shows that the regression model substantially and accurately forecasts the dependent variable. The regression model's statistical significance is demonstrated by $F = 64.295$ and $Sig = 0.000$, both less than 0.05. The regression means square value of 6.224 contrasted to the remainder mean square value of 0.097, which is substantial to zero, further supports this. This demonstrates that there is a connection between perception of teachers and academic performance of learners.

Conclusions

To curb use of Local language, proper measures need to be put in place. Language policies can reduce the use of Local language if they are implemented in the right way. An established mechanism that ensures students are rewarded and punished in equal measure can help to deter use of Local language and encourage use of Learners. It was thus concluded that teachers reward for students who use Learners and punishment for those who use Local language is important to encourage students to converse in Learners and deter those who intend to converse in Local language.

Recommendations

Teachers should come up with teaching methods that are interactive to ensure that

students are given an opportunity to interact with each other in Learners so that students can have good communication skills.

References

- Anthony, D., Kazaara, A. G., Kazaara, A. I., Ismail, L., & Prudence, K. (2023). *The Impact of Teachers ' Teaching Methods on Students ' Performance in English Subject in Secondary Schools In Uganda , A Case Study Of Selected Secondary Schools In Kampala & Wakiso*. 7(3), 290-297.
- Christopher, F., Moses, N., Muhindo, M. E., & Komunda, T. R. (2022). *Employee Training and Organizational Performance: A Case Study of African College of Commerce and Technology in Kabale District, South Western Uganda*. *International Journal of Academic Pedagogical Research*, 6(5), 1-7.
- Kanyerere, O. E., & Muhammed, M. (2023). *The Factors Affecting Learners Attitude towards Offering Kiswahili Subject in Secondary Schools . A Case Study of Sironko Secondary School in Sironko District*. 7(3), 39-43.
- Micheal, T., Nicholas, K., Kazaara, A. G., & Nelson, K. (2023). *The Effect of Teacher ' s Motivation on Academic Performance of Students in Kole District a Case Study of Alito Sub-County*. 7(2), 64-72.
- Nelson, K., Christopher, F., & Milton, N. (2022). *Teach Yourself Spss and Stata*. 6(7), 84-122.