Chapter 20

How Does Technology Influence Students’ Motivation Towards Learning Kiswahili Proverbs?

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ABSTRACT

The presumed importance of technology in enhancing students’ motivation may call for a profound shift in pedagogy. In an attempt to inform evidence-based practice, this study examined the influence of videos mediated instructions on students’ motivation towards learning Kiswahili proverbs in a sample of secondary schools of equal ability in Nakuru County, Kenya. A Solomon Four quasi-experiment research design was used. The 436 students who participated in this study had a mean age of 16.2 years (SD = 0.89) with a nearly equal sex distribution. The 43 five-point Likert type motivation items used were reduced into three dimensions: affective, behavioral, and cognitive by use of factor analytic methods. Regression analyses highlight equivocal effects of technology on these three dimensions of motivation while teacher experience was a notable confounder. Pre-test effects were also evident. The study has important implications for promoting more ambitious teaching methods.

INTRODUCTION

Kiswahili is an important language since: it is the eleventh most populous language in the world; is spoken by one hundred and fifty million people; is a United Nations language; an official African Union language and is taught in leading universities globally (Karanja, 2012). Proverbs are defined as short, generally known sentences of the folk which contain wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a

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metaphorical, fixed and memorable form and which are handed down from generation to generation (Mieder, 2004, 2008). Proverbs occupy a central place in Kiswahili language and their teaching is heavily emphasized (Bin Wallah, 2014). Furthermore, they provide suitable illustrations for enlightening our understanding of a given situation (Mieder, 2008). They are devices for installing wisdom (Abudu and Baruwa, 1983) and morals which are imperative in the 21st Century (Pacific Policy Research Center, 2010). Proverbs are used to illustrate ideas, reinforce arguments and deliver messages of inspiration, consolation, celebration and advice (Mieder, 2004).

Therefore, one can argue that Kiswahili language and literature would be incomplete without proverbs and allegorical symbolism (Mogambi, 2015). Need therefore exists to integrate proverbs in the teaching and learning of Kiswahili. Currently it is not clearly understood whether the use of new technologies in the teaching of Kiswahili proverbs would be beneficial. In addition, there are various ways in which Kiswahili proverbs can be taught. Traditionally Kiswahili proverbs have been taught using teacher centered methods (Hussein, 2009). For example whenever teachers teach some Kiswahili proverbs, they mostly explain the meaning of the proverb by elucidating the meaning of each of the words making up the proverb, without paying special attention to the cultural context that usually help to arrive at the hidden and intended meaning (Turuthi, 2014).

BACKGROUND

Students’ interest or motivation is generally considered to influence their academic performance (Makini, 2014). Emerging technologies world over, have in other areas of learning been shown to improve student motivation (Kong, 2009; Turuthi, Njagi and Chemwei, 2016; Youssef, 2012). Emerging technologies such as videos are a promising method of teaching Kiswahili proverbs (Turuthi, 2014). It is worth noting that in this era cameras are ubiquitous, affordable and easy to use. Similarly, both teachers and students own standalone cameras or phones with cameras and can therefore develop video clips. It is however not known if emerging technologies would apply in the teaching and learning of Kiswahili proverbs. The teaching of Kiswahili proverbs is conversely surrounded by controversy (Thompson, 2013). It is however not known if would influence students’ motivation in the learning of Kiswahili proverbs.

There is substantial evidence to show that technology is changing our way of life everywhere (Wamari, 2014). For example, Vidya (2014) views technology as a catalyst of new pedagogical change. In this direction, Wheeler (2000) observes that teachers have a duty to identify emerging technologies for use in an array of learning environments. It is worth noting that technology as a tool in learning has been embraced successfully in some fields of study for example in Biology and Mathematics (Ally, 2014; Goffe & Sosin, 2005). In this direction, technology is seen to offer flexibility and adaptability reflective of pedagogies across various learning models (Mayer, 2005). At the same time, technological tools supply vast amounts of information allowing teachers and learners, new ways to explore education compared to ordinary instructional tools (Vidya, 2014; Wamari, 2014). Vidya (2014) argues that if this is the case, technology should then change the way we teach. It is therefore prudent for the 21st century teacher to be familiar with and to integrate technology in teaching and learning.

Technology is known to enhance the learning experience (Salkeld, 2013) by enabling the learner to access knowledge through multiple processes that include audio, visual and kinaesthetic (Mayer, 2005; Morris, 2013). This implies that video technology is specifically acknowledged to improve the teaching and learning experience. Such processes take care of students’ diversity and multiplicity of intelligences.
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