

Article on:-

The influence of Somalis' poor English language skills on doing (second degree) master's. Case study (Some selected Universities in Kampala-Uganda.)

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Abstract:

The main purpose of this article is to analysis the sources and resolutions of poor language on Somali Master Students in Kampala, Accordingly, the objectives of this article as follows:-

- To discovery the reasons of poor language on our Students
- To designate the greatest conducts that can solve poor language

As methodology, the author used explanatory design to explain the causes and solutions of poor language on Somali Master Students the Considering the findings of this article, it can be concluded that there are more male master students as compared to females in UGANDA, most of them English is third language, and the people were not use as communication, lastly the best way that can solve this problem is to establish boarding English collages with hiring foreign language teachers from traditional English speaking countries.

And the lastly, the author presents key recommendations from the article information findings based on objectives.

- 1- Students should recognize their weakness before they request a master degree to outside and inside of the country.
- 2- Academic directors of the universities should ensure the communication level of their graduate Students before they sent to a master degree to outside countries.

KEYWORDS: Communication skills practices, Improvement of academic Student's performance

INTRODUCTION:

Once we study our native language, we originally learn to listen, then to speak, then to read, and finally to write. These are four language skills. We all convey these four features of language throughout our life and as we live, we put continuous efforts in order to reinforce the way we listen, speak, read and write.

Not just in obtaining our mother tongue, but these four are called as the four important language skills that are necessary if you acquire and study any language particularly if you study English language and literature, together they function as four pillars of a language.

After 2001 with establishment of the new government in Afghanistan a huge influx of international forces (NATO) and American troops, English language got a special attention in Afghanistan.

English language has a special place and it is being taught from grade 4th -12th in all schools across the country. In addition, many private language institutes have been providing English language courses for people. English language Department as part of Education Faculty and also Faculty of Languages and Literature have been providing Bachelor degrees in universities across the country.

Though learning English language releases a new gap for the Afghan learners, but it should be stated that it's not quite easy and everyone has to deal with many challenges in the process of acquiring language and almost everywhere in the world ESL/EFL learners and their instructors face with some sort of difficulties in the process of learning and teaching English language.

In 2000 it was the time that Somali Students started coming to Uganda to take Master after graduating with bachelor from Somalia, and as we know that no one can go without communication.

The purpose of this article is to review the causes and solutions of poor language on Somali Master Students in Kampala, as we know most of Somali Master Students Came from a country which English is not widely used as is the case in Uganda, this has made most of them to experience different in communications. During the article information collection, the author met with one of the Academic directors in the Mogadishu Universities he said “since 1991 after our central government collapsed the Students have been going to other Countries to obtain Master degree and PHD but from 2007 Master Students those studying in Uganda increased in number”. Consequently Mr. SUUDI MOHAMED YUSUF (Travel agency manager) said “From 2009 there has been an increase of students from Somalia to Uganda by 75%”

Thus: the author decided to write this article after seen a lot of challenges met our new comers those wants to do their master in this country

The information that contains this article is the causes of poor language and the solutions to improve the communication of the new comers after solving this problem,

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

. Accordingly, the objectives of this article are the following:-

- To find out the reasons of poor language on our Students
- To describe the best ways that can solve poor language

METHODOLOGY

Method and materials

In findings of this article the author used questionnaire as tool to collect the information that the author needs and the sample size that employed was 109, and the author applied explanatory design as method which enables to provide more details about the reasons and the solutions of poor language.

Findings

Respondents in this article were the master students in Kampala Uganda. During closed ended questions in the questionnaire, respondents were asked to provide their personal information. Their responses were summarized using frequencies and percentage distributions as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	68	62.4
Female	41	37.6
Total	109	100.0

According to the results in Table 4.1, most Master students (62.4%) were male as compared to females who were only 37.6%. This suggests that there are more male master students as compared to females in UGANDA.

Table 2: What Do you think that the reason why most of Somali Master Students not active their English communication? Response	Frequency	Percent %
I thought the reason is English is the third language in our country and people weren't use English as communication.	55	50.5
Since 1992 up to 2009, Arabic schools were more than English schools and Somali people were not interesting learning English.	39	35.7
In our Country Somali Students did not have better English collages and lack of language experts	15	13.8
Total	109	100.0

According to the results in table 1 shows that the reason (50.5%) was, since English is the third language and people were not use English as communication, consequently, the second reason (35.7%) was Arabic schools were more than English schools and people were not interesting learning English, the last reason (13.8%) was Somali Students did not have better English collages and lack of language experts.

However, this may have implication on the highest reason which (50.5%) was English is the third language and the people were not use as communication, therefore the most reason is this one.

Table 3: What are the best ways that can solve poor language of our Students?

The best ways are :-	Frequency	%
To establish boarding English collages with hiring foreign language teachers.	85	77.9
To encourage people being English for the second language and force them using it as communication.	24	22.1
Total	109	100.0

As regards to best way that can solve poor language of our students, results in Table 2, a big number of respondents argued that the best way is to establish boarding English collages with hiring foreign language teachers which contributes (77.9%), followed by those who said the best way is to encourage people being English for the second language and force them using it as communication which contributes (22.1%). According to their views, the best way is to establish boarding English collages with hiring foreign language teachers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several of determinants and problems that effect to the students' learning English as a foreign or second language in a non-native speaking country as Lao PDR.

Those factors may derive from many components including social environmental issues, the difference of culture, social economic extension, and etc. These issues cause students to have poor performance in language learning, particularly in the bottom billion countries such as Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Vietnam. So, this paper has a main purpose to investigate the factors which contribute to students low English language proficiency.

Causes of Weakness in English Language Learning The development in the quality of English language learning has not satisfaction towards the demands of the society in Laos. This is because of lack of several factors to support the learning and teaching approaches.

According to Savannas, Masashi, & Yukiko (2008b), identify that teaching and learning English implementation still has shortages of textbooks, unqualified English teachers and also unstandardized curriculum. The poor socioeconomic background is one of factors that creates learners face with the use foreign language (Khattak et al., 2011).

A study has been conducted by (Muhammad, 2007), on the investigation of the factors that cause language anxiety for ESL/EFL learners in learning speaking skills and the influence it casts on communication in the target language found difficulties of language learning, differences in learners' and target language cultures, the difference in social status of the speakers are the factors that affect to the students' weakness of language learning.

In addition, a study of problems encountered by Arab EFL learners showed that learners preferred to use Arabic rather than English for communication in both outside and inside the classroom, the lack of the target language exposure as spoken by its native speakers, the shortage and weakness of the contribution in their language teaching context, and lack of their personal motivation (Loae, 2011). Normazidah, Koo, & Hazita (2012); Trawiński (2005), also presented the factors that impact the EFL learners to have poor performance in English language learning as followings: • English is regarded as a difficult subject to learn.

- Learners' learning depends on the English teachers as authorities.
- There is a lack of support to use English in the home environment and the community.
- Learners have insufficient or lacking of exposure to the language as there is a limited opportunity to use English outside the classrooms
- Students have a limitation of vocabulary proficiency as well as English reading materials are not always available.
- Learners have an unwillingness and lack of motivation to learn English as they do not see the immediate need to use the language.
- Lack of motivation for learning or the negative attitude towards the target language.

Chang (2010), indicated that reasons cause students' weakness for English language learning derived from learners' laziness, lack of efficiency of the school, and insufficient of parents' promotions.

Moreover, according to Dembo (2004), specifies that time management is involved in students' educational achievement; for instance, students with better time-management skills tend to have higher grade-point average (GPA) than students with poorer time-management skills. Alderman (2004), states to the students' poor performance of language learning are affected from a lack of effort, lack of effective learning strategies, whereas a good language learner is a highly motivated students and a successful user of a large number of different strategies (Trawiński, 2005). So, teachers have to help them improve the motivational beliefs and language learning strategies in order to find ways that reach to their academic achievement.

Therefore, to these key factors, all stakeholders should find ways to solve the problems for learners' academic achievements. 2.2 Motivation for English Language Learning In general, motivation is recognized as one of the most significant factors affecting students' performance of second language (L2) learning (Lei, 2012; Thang et al., 2011). At present, many numbers of Lao students have failed in their English language learning because of lack of motivation from some elements such as family background, social-environment, physical environment, culture, methods of learning and so forth (Dembo, 2004). Motivation can influence students' freedom, attention, attempt, patient, the frequency of using learning strategies, and their learning success (Zhou, 2012).

Learners have pleasure for a second or foreign language learning when they receive motivation, especially internal motivation because it could be well predicted by perceived second language ability and independence (Wu, 2003). For a long time, motivation is generally involved by English as foreign language teachers and researchers have been attempting to sustain students' motivation in learning English by knowing their English learning motivation types and factors which influence their supporting motivation in the long process of English learning is still in requirement of investigation in the Lao context (Lei, 2012).

If students are strongly motivated, they will enjoy learning the language, need to learn the language and attempt to learn the language (Sakiroglu & Dikilitas, 2012). Moreover, motivation has usually been considered to be the key concept in the learning of foreign language (Klimova, 2011).

Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are the methods that learners use to obtain information; normally high achievers learners use more learning strategies than do lower achieving learners (Dembo, 2004). There were several unsuccessful students in their study because they often failed to apply learning strategies appropriately to the task at hand.

The aspects of researchers believe that learning strategies are as significant in second language acquisition (SLA) motivation; it provides the learners tools for gaining achieving the goal. They can facilitate specific aspects of the learner's competency such as communicative, and individual's emotional state that related to the learning process (Trawiński, 2005).

It is very valuable to formulate and adapt learning strategies to complement learner's English language level and then encourage successful participation (Margaret, 2005).

According to Ting (2009), students are able to overcome their weakness in some learning styles with suitable strategy training, and learning strategies can influence students' learning achievements.

Moreover, learning strategic factors also enhance students to be good learners as Oxford (2001), classifies the characteristics of the good learners that s/he:

- Is an enthusiastic and accurate guesser?
- Has a strong drive to communicate;
- Is uninhabited and ready to make mistakes;
- Emphasizes on form by looking at patterns and using analysis;
- Take improvement of all practice opportunities;
- Monitors his or her own speech and that of others;
- Pays attention to meaning

However, there are many scholars and researchers describe the difference of definitions of learning strategies as followings: Richards & Lockhart (2007), describe that learning strategies are the particular processes students use with individual learning tasks such as reading a chapter of a book or preparing a written summary of a passage as well as the student can select many different ways of completing the task, learners can make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more effective, and more transferable to new situations.

As highlighted by Grainger (2005); Oxford (2002), language learning strategies are conscious techniques for students' usage to purposely assist English language learning process which include both informal and formal interviews, group discussions, language learning diaries, dialogue journals among students and teachers, open-ended survey, structured three- or five point surveys of strategy frequency.

Ting (2009), describes that language learning strategies from a specific aspect as a) learning strategies are possible behavioral thus observable, or mental then not observable. b) Learning strategies could be either common methods or special action or techniques adopted to learn a target language.

However, Ting also identifies that the term 'strategies' has been referred to as a small range of synonyms such as 'techniques, tactic, and skills, by which each expert or researcher defines their understandings in the particular field in quite different ways. Abbasi, Ahmad, & Khattak (2010), definite that language learning strategies are the specific manners or thoughts students use to increase their language learning.

Best Practices to improve poor English language

In order to help English Language Learners achieve their actual potential, it is essential to evaluate the best practices for testing and assessment. Currently, there is no national standardized method for assessing language proficiency in English Language Learning students. School districts utilize a variety of language proficiency tests and 13 states encourage the use of an oral native language assessment along with the English examination (Macswan & Rolstad, 2006).

English Language Learners also struggle on everyday classroom tasks that require a high level of proficiency in the English language. Most of the time these students do not have effective language supports to ease the test-taking process, such as an English-Spanish glossary with common vocabulary words (Pennock-Roman & Rivera, 2011).

When faced with linguistically demanding test items, such as problem solving tasks, English Language Learners have a difficult time because the focus relies on English language comprehension first rather than the content related task.

There are multiple test accommodations that have proved successful in assisting English Language Learners and provided better practices in core content-specific areas. One example of a mathematics-specific assessment instrument that utilized effective testing accommodations for English Language Learners is the KeyMath-3 assessment (Alt et al., 2013).

The mathematics focused assessment implemented the use of language translation of test items to better determine ELL's mathematical knowledge. The research team translated test items into Spanish. During the examination, when a student incorrectly answers a KeyMath-3 question in English, the test item is re-administered in Spanish.

Thus, the researchers can determine if the student does not understand the mathematical concept, or if the student's response reflects a problem with English language comprehension. As a result of this modification, there was a significant improvement in students' test scores.

Researchers concluded that an English-only administration of the exam would not provide accurate evidence of English Language Learners' mathematical skills and that Spanish version is an appropriate accommodation for ELL students participating in high-stakes mathematics assessments (Alt et al., 2013).

Studies suggest incorporating additional supports that more accurately assist English Language Learners with regard to their specific classroom needs.

One way to combat this overrepresentation of English Language Learners in special education is to hire a consultant to help referral team members more clearly define the difference between second language development and learning disability.

The consultant is able to collaborate with teachers and administrators to provide neutral advice for placing a student in special education (Sanchez et al., 2010). Early Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies also show promise in providing English Language Learners with improved early language development.

Research indicates that when schools administer early phonological awareness strategies in the student's native language, such as Spanish word recognition and fluency assessments, this type of RTI is a better predictor of future performance in English literacy (Vanderwood, 2008).

The improvement can be attributed to the fact that phonological awareness is not a language-specific skill.

English Language Learners can apply these skills when they begin reading in English. The interventions identify students who are at risk for reading disabilities, but results show that this type of instruction help these ELL students "make substantial gains in reading" (Vanderwood, 2008, p. 1851).

Similarly, results from small-group reading interventions also see significant gains in both English and Spanish literacy performance among English Language Learners. One example of an effective intervention is Read Naturally, which is a daily, small reading group that focuses on repeated reading and progress monitoring.

For the sake of making the intervention equitable for English Language Learners, the intervention materials are translated into Spanish. The daily repetitions of reading and frequent progress monitoring associated with this Response to Intervention technique help English Language Learners make considerable gains in oral fluency and literacy (Vanderwood, 2008).

Consequently, districts that adopt an early literacy intervention can expect to increase early language development and reduce the number of students chosen for referral (Sanchez et al., 2010).

CONCLUSIONS

Deliberating the results of this article, it can be settled that there are more male master students as compared to females in UGANDA, while the highest reason is English is the third language and the people were not use as communication, lastly the best way that can solve this problem is to establish boarding English collages with hiring foreign language teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, the author presents major recommendations from the article based on objectives.

- 3- Students should recognize their weakness before they request a master degree to outside and inside of the country.
- 4- Academic directors of the universities should ensure the communication level of their graduate Students before they sent to a master degree to outside countries.
- 5- It is important that the students should help each other to improve their communicational level.
- 6- Finally, parents should make continue observation to what their children are learning and encourage them to recover and develop by their educational level.

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