Effect of Cooperative Learning on Kiswahili Performance in Secondary Schools in Keiyo South Sub County, Kenya

BY

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Abstract

The study investigated on effect of cooperative learning on Kiswahili performance in secondary schools in Keiyo South sub-county, Kenya. The study employed quasi-experimental design. The target population were all form three students. Stratified simple random sampling was used to get the sample size. To determine validity, experts were consulted. To establish reliability, test-retest was used. Data were analyzed using Chi-square and ANOVA. The findings observed that the students very often learn through group investigation and Think-Pair-Share. The other finding was that students liked Kiswahili very much.

Keywords: *Cooperative Learning, Kiswahili Performance*

Introduction

World-over, Cooperative learning is an approach that requires the cooperation of a small number of students who work towards the completion of a given task; each student is responsible for a part of the task, and the entire task cannot be completed without all the learners finishing their portion of the task. According to Barres (2011), Cooperative learning is a system that requires assistance from all groups, upper or lower, medium or average. The method also keeps a wider range of intellect and mutual help. In cooperative learning, students work together to seek solutions to problems and to complete the assignments. The need for cooperative learning is increasing day by day, Crowling (2018). This method is used by a mixed-ability group to teach to achieve a common goal with mutual collaboration and support. It allows students to learn academic and social skills, such as asking questions, offering suggestions, answering questions, good manners, speaking positively about others, and correcting others. The teacher plays an important role by creating a team and a learning environment where students share ideas, interact, brainstorm, collaborate, discuss, and create a community. Cooperative learning approaches include think-pair-share, numbered heads together, and a carousel, Gray (2017). Think pair share is a cooperative learning strategy where a teacher asks an open-ended question, and students think quietly about it for a minute or two. Then every student pairs up with a partner, and they discuss the question for two to five minutes

The whole class engages in a discussion where students raise their hands and share all the thoughts and ideas they've gathered. They must use their inside voices, take turns, and avoid interrupting their partner. Some teachers even pass out worksheets so students can write down the questions and their thoughts. Some students feel safer and more relaxed when talking in small groups rather than in front of the entire class. The Think-Pair-Share activity allows them to feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts. In addition to fostering social skills, this strategy improves students' speaking and listening skills. When pairs of students brainstorm together, each student learns from the partner. This can help students expand their vocabulary by learning new words from their peers and building on their prior knowledge, according to Crowling (2018).

Numbered Heads Together is a cooperative learning strategy that holds students accountable for learning the material. Students are placed in groups, and each person is given a number (from one to the maximum number in each group). The teacher poses a question, and students "put their heads together" to determine the answer. The teacher calls a specific number to respond as a spokesperson for the group. By having students work together in a group, this strategy ensures that each member knows the answer to the problems or questions asked by the teacher. Because no one knows which number was called, all team members must be prepared (Teacher Vision Staff 2020). This cooperative learning strategy

promotes discussion and both individual and group accountability. This strategy is beneficial for reviewing and integrating subject matter. Students with special needs often benefit when this strategy is used. After direct instruction on the material, the group supports each member and provides opportunities for practice, rehearsal, and discussion of content material. A teacher can divide the students into groups of four and give each one a number from one to four, pose a question or a problem to the class, have students gather to think about the question and to make sure everyone in their group understands and can give an answer, then ask

The question and call out a number randomly. Finally, the students with that number raise their hands, and when called on, the student answers for their team. According to Teacher vision staff (2020).

Globally, Kiswahili language has gained more prominence as one of the official languages of communication. In countries like USA, China, and Japan, Kiswahili is taught as a subject in universities. Apart from being recognized as one of the 42 official languages of communication by the United Nations, Kiswahili has also been embraced as a means of disseminating information in corporations such as British Broadcasting Corporation, Deutsch Well, Channel Africa, Voice of America, Radio Japan and Radio China international. In addition, computer software for Kiswahili has been created, thus Google and Wikipedia sites can be read in Kiswahili, and therefore, Kiswahili is increasingly becoming an international language (Kachru, 2017)

Groupwork is a subset of cooperative learning, (Hummel 2014), Brown & McIlroy 2017) of Ireland reviewed several articles on students" perspectives about groupwork. They concluded that students usually learned to hate it rather than learn to value group collaboration. The question is why these students were unhappy about their groupwork and what instructors could have done to change the situation. According to (Chapman 2015), "working and discussing with other students per se did not necessarily result in improved learning". Asking a group of students to decide if they preferred individual or groupwork, Brown and McIlroy (2017) found out that a high number of learners preferred to do individual projects, somewhat few preferred group assignments, and very few individuals had no preference. They reported that students' comments mirrored those issues like time management, personal control, and concern over the quality of the outcome (Cartney & Rouse, 2016). The most common teaching and learning strategy used in classrooms have been lectures (Lammers & Murphy (2012). However, this strategy usually lacks many of the active learning components, such as critical thinking, self-pacing, and encouraging dialogue and group discussion (Fredrick & Hummel (2014). Higher education institutions have been paying more attention to developing students' communicative abilities and critical thinking. Cooperative learning is a key teaching and learning strategy to develop these skills. Cooperative learning or group work is an instructional approach in which students work together in small or large groups to accomplish a common learning goal or a well-defined learning task (Rezaei, 2017). Groupwork is beneficial for both students and instructors. Groupwork motivates students, provides a peer instruction opportunity, allows them to look at the problem from multiple perspectives, and helps them become more creative. For teachers, group work is an opportunity to give students more complex and authentic assignments. Cooperative learning procedures have also enhanced student satisfaction with the learning and classroom experience (Groccia & Miller, 2016). Research has demonstrated that small-group learning creates situations in which schoolwork is perceived not as a task or chore but as an opportunity to interact on issues of personal importance (Ahern & Durrington, 2015). Educators use group work because it is popular or if there is hard evidence to prove their effectiveness (Brown & McIlroy, 2017). These authors also reported the results of other studies, which have revealed students" negative perspectives regarding the worth of "problem-oriented interactive sessions." In a study about course groupwork in China, students reported: uncertainty about the accuracy of the knowledge acquired, time wasted during the session, inadequate focus in teaching, and heavy workload for the students (Huang, 2015).

In Kenya, Kiswahili is a compulsory subject taught and examined in internal (Random Assessment Tests, Continuous Assessment Tests, and end of term and year) and external (K.C.S.E) examinations from form one to form four in secondary schools in Kenya. Kiswahili is examined in three categories. The first part is Insha, subdivided into functional writing (insha za kiuamilifu) and creative writing (insha za kiubunifu / insha za kawaida). Kiswahili Lugha is the second part that encompasses passage (ufahamu), Summary (Ufupisho), Grammar (Lugha), and Isimu Jamii. The third part is Literature which has three parts, i.e., Written Literature (play- Tamthilia, Novel- Riwaya and Short stories- Hadithi Fupi), Oral Literature (Fasihi Simulizi), and Poetry (Ushairi) (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2017).

However, despite the significance of Kiswahili, the achievement of the subject in Keiyo South Sub County in Kenya National Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E) remains dismal. Most secondary schools in the Sub County have posted Kiswahili mean scores ranging between 4.23 and 5.72 between 2016 and 2019, respectively this is coupled with an increasingly competitive society and limited university entry cut-off points making the minimum entry requirements into various courses in higher institutions of learning to rise up. This means that achieving higher grades in K.C.S.E is of great importance. Notably, schools in Keiyo South within Elgeyo Marakwet County are minimally resourced, and the lack of adequate and quality resources includes the deployment of teachers. Some schools lack the requisite number of teachers, and the local conditions may also imply random disruption of learning. One of the effects of the status quo is that schools and learning in Keiyo South sub-county schools have been poor performance by students, including Kiswahili as a teachable and examinable subject. The poor performance in Kiswahili in Keiyo South eventually affects the student's academic choices and life outcomes.

Kiswahili being the only subject with a different language of instruction, careful research on its instruction and pedagogy has to be undertaken. According to KNEC reports of 2018 and 2019, candidates registered an overall mean grade of D in Kiswahili which is a worrying trend. "While other subjects are improving, Kiswahili is dropping," said Mr. Petot, the Keiyo South T.S.C Sub County director, in one of the educational stakeholders meeting held in the Sub County headquarters. Keiyo South secondary schools registered an overall mean of 3.7 in Kiswahili. Although teachers are working hard, there is a need to assess the instructional techniques used in Kiswahili lessons.

Cooperative learning stands out to be the best learning methodology for Kiswahili Subject. With Kiswahili being an arts subject, interaction is key; therefore, the study investigated the effect of Cooperative learning on Kiswahili performance.

METHODOLOGY

Description of the Research Design
This study employed the Quasi-Experimental research design. Concerning the study topic "Effects of Cooperative Learning on Kiswahili Performance in Secondary Schools in Keiyo South Sub County", this design was suitable since it is experimental that does not provide for random assignment of participants to a group. The existing groups were used as experimental and control groups. The researcher selected two schools and picked two classes. Again, the researcher identified a topic in the Kiswahili subject. One of the research assistants (a Kiswahili teacher) used cooperative learning as a learning approach, while the other used the traditional learning approach in their respective classes and schools. The research used double-blind; the respondents did not know that an experiment was being done on them. The researcher then selected a test from the selected topic and gave a pretest at the beginning of each school. After six lessons of treatment, the same test as a post-test was given; the researcher then found out the results using time series.

Target Population
Population refers to all people or items (unit of analysis) with the characteristics one wishes to study. The unit of analysis may be a person, group, organization, country, object, or any other entity that you wish to draw scientific inferences about (Bhattacherjee, 2012). The target population was Form 3 students in secondary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County. This is because form 3 students are a cohort that studies the whole Kiswahili subject and are not involved in the national exam.

Sample and Sampling Procedures
This study adopted a stratified sampling technique. Stratified sampling is a probability sampling technique wherein the researcher divides the entire population into different subgroups or strata, then randomly selects the final subjects proportionally from the different strata. The sampling method was chosen because it enabled the researcher to representatively sample even the smallest and most inaccessible strata in the population. This allowed the researcher to sample the rare extremes of the given population. Proportionate sampling was used to generate a sampling fraction applied to each stratum.

Validity of Research Instrument Results
Validity is the appropriateness of inferences and uses of research instrument results. The questionnaires were reviewed by the researcher" 's professional peers and the research supervisor and then tested on a small sample of respondents with similar characteristics using a rating scale to check on the appropriateness of the questions to the target group. To ensure Content validity, an Achievement test was set to test and given to three experts to determine whether the questions in the test adequately covered the topic tested and whether the language and instructions were clear. The experts then gave feedback to the researcher to revise then pilot test. The researcher then selected schools that did not participate in the study. Again, the researcher pilot-tested questionnaires for teachers and that for learners.

Reliability of Instruments' Results
Reliability refers to the extent to which an instrument's results are consistent each time it is administered to the same individuals (Ogula, 2018). It refers to the consistency of the result of a research instrument. In this regard, the Test-retest reliability method was employed to check on reliability. This involved administering the same instruments twice to the same group of subjects but after some time. Hence, a measure or test was repeated on the subject at a future date to determine stability. Results were then compared and correlated with the initial test to give an estimate of stability. Since Responses obtained during the piloting were used to calculate the reliability coefficient from a correlation matrix. The test-retest method was used, which tests the consistency of the research instrument.

Data Collection Procedures
The researcher first obtained an introductory letter from the university approving data collection and conducting the study, which was used to introduce the respondents. A research permit to conduct the study was obtained from the National Council of Science and Technology (NACOSTI) to conduct research in Kenya; a license was obtained. The secondary schools were then selected using stratified random sampling. Three schools were selected for the study. Research assistants assisted in administering the questionnaires and an achievement pretest and posttest to the respondents with close supervision from the researcher. The respondents selected were briefed on how to fill in the questionnaire. The respondents were given a time frame to respond to the questionnaire, after which the research assistant shall collect the questionnaire within the agreed time.

Data Analysis Techniques
Frequent tables, percentages, charts, and graphs presented descriptive statistics. While inferential statistics were presented by mean scores, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation coefficient to generate data that were used to test hypotheses, Hypotheses were tested using the Chi-square test of independence and ANOVA to determine whether there is a

significant difference and relationship between the means of the variables under study. Hypotheses testing was carried out at a 0.05 confidence level.

Results

The descriptive findings showing the frequency of using cooperative learning models, the effectiveness of cooperative learning models, and the level of Kiswahili performance in secondary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County, Kenya, are presented and discussed below.

Cooperative Learning

The descriptive results showing the level of usage of cooperative learning models

Frequency of usage of Cooperative Learning Models

	Descriptive Statistics		
No.	Cooperative Learning Model	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	Think-Pair-Share	2.400	0.802
2.	Numbered Heads Together	2.067	0.931
	Overall Score	**2.219**	**0.815**

The findings observed that the students very often learn through group investigation and Think-Pair-Share, supported by mean scores of 2.467 and 2.400 and standard deviations of 0.720 and 0.820, respectively. The findings concurred with Brown and McIlroy (2017), who posited that group work is the most popular cooperative learning model used by learning institutions. The research outcomes also noted that jigsaw and round-robin were the most frequently used cooperative learning models in the studied secondary schools. These were supported by mean scores of 2.333 and standard deviations of 0.791 and 0.872, respectively. The findings also observed that Numbered Heads Together is also one of the most commonly used techniques to teach students in Keiyo South Sub-County. This was supported by a mean of 2.067 and a standard deviation of 0.931. The findings agreed with Lammers and Murphy (2012), who established that the most common teaching and learning strategy used in classrooms is Numbered Heads Together (Lammers & Murphy (2012). However, the strategy usually lacks many of the components of the carousel, such as critical thinking, self-pacing, and encouraging dialogue and group discussion (Fredrick & Hummel (2014).

On the other hand, the descriptive results observed that cooperative projects together with carousel are often used to teach the secondary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County, Kenya. These were supported by means of 2.000 and 1.933, respectively, together with standard deviations of 0.732 and 0.856, respectively. The descriptive findings showing the perceived effectiveness of cooperative learning models in secondary schools situated in Keiyo South Sub-County, Kenya, are presented below.

Effectiveness of Cooperative Learning Models

The findings presented noted that numbered heads together and Think-Pair-Share were the most effective cooperative learning models used to teach students at Keiyo South Sub-County, Kenya. These were supported by means of 2.467 and 2.400, respectively, and standard deviations of 0.720 and 0.802, respectively. This is because Think-Pair-Share is student-centered approaches that make students easily understand and internalize the content (Laguador, 2014; Ogula, 2021). The findings disagreed with Chapman (2015) and Brown and McIlroy (2017) who argued that group investigation does not necessitate effective learning and is not the most preferred teaching model.

Learner's Attitude Concerning Kiswahili

The findings were that more than half of the students studied at 57.2% like Kiswahili, while only 42.8% do not like Kiswahili. This means that many Keiyo South Sub-County, Kenya students have a positive attitude concerning Kiswahili at secondary schools. This stirs hope that the students can exhibit good performance in the near future despite registering a dismal performance between 2016 and 2019.

Whether One Likes Kiswahili or Not

		Whether one Likes Kiswahili or not	
		Frequency	Percent (%)
Valid	No	77	42.8
	Yes	103	57.2
	Total	180	100.0

The findings observed that 72.8% of students like Kiswahili very much. The participants argued that it makes it easier for them to build relationships together with trust when interacting and working with other people around them. Moreover, Kiswahili is easy to learn and communicate fluently. The findings also observed that 14.6% of the students fairly liked Kiswahili, while only 12.6% liked it a little. This is because they only embrace Kiswahili as an interesting subject to be learned, but they really love English since it's not only a national language but an international language.

The extent to which the Students like Kiswahili

		The extent to which Students like Kiswahili	
		Frequency	Percent (%)
Valid	Like a Little	13	12.6
	Fairly Like	15	14.6
	Like Very Much	75	72.8
	Total	103	100.0

Kiswahili Performance

The average score obtained by the students was 68.2% which was exemplary. This shows that the effective implementation of the cooperative learning models at the targeted schools in Keiyo South Sub-County, Kenya boosts students' performance

in Kiswahili. The lowest grade obtained was 33%, while the highest grade was 96%, revealing a gap of 63%.

Kiswahili Achievement Test Performance of the Students at Keiyo South Sub-County, Kenya

Descriptive Statistics					
	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard. Deviation
Kiswahili Performance	63.00	33.00	96.00	68.2000	20.97788

The students recorded an average performance of 14/20, which was excellent since it showed that they are good at functional and creative writing. Moreover, concerning Paper 2 (Kiswahili Lugha), the students also recorded an average performance of 56.9333/80 which was also great since it meant that the students are good at Kiswahili grammar, summary generation, and Isimu Jamii. Finally, regarding Paper 3 (Fasihi), the students recorded an average performance of 38.2/60 which was also exemplary.

Regression Analysis Results

The regression analysis was conducted to establish the relationship between Learner's attitudes towards Kiswahili on Kiswahili performance and to establish the relationship between cooperative learning and Kiswahili performance. It was observed that the regression model explained 98.1% of the entire dataset since the model posted an R-value of 0.981[a]. Thus, the regression model was reliable for inferences to be made from it. Besides that, the model posted an R-Square value of 0.962, this meant that 96.2% change caused in Kiswahili performance was explained by the Learner's attitude towards Kiswahili and cooperative learning.

Model Summary Results

Model Summary[b]					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.981[a]	0.962	0.962	4.08866	1.340

a. Predictors: (Constant), Cooperative Learning, Learner's Attitude towards Kiswahili

b. Dependent Variable: Kiswahili Performance

Relationship between Learner's Attitudes Towards Kiswahili and Kiswahili Performance

The regression coefficient value of 0.028 was used to establish the relationship between Learner attitudes toward Kiswahili and performance. The finding meant that a unit increase in learners' attitudes towards Kiswahili subsequently increases the Kiswahili performance at secondary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County by 2.8% though insignificantly (p-

value $= 0.940 > 0.05$). Therefore, we reject the hypothesis that a relationship exists between Learner's attitudes towards Kiswahili and Kiswahili performance. This means that having a positive attitude towards Kiswahili is inadequate; one has to work hard and passionately to learn Kiswahili to record better performance as a student.

Relationship between Cooperative Learning and Kiswahili Performance

The regression coefficient value of 30.355 was used to establish the relationship between cooperative learning and Kiswahili performance. The finding meant that a unit increase in Learner's abilities, mastery, and critical thinking in Kiswahili subsequently increases the Kiswahili performance at secondary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County by 3035.5% in a very significant fashion (p-value $= 0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, we accept the hypothesis that there is a relationship between cooperative learning and Kiswahili performance.

CONCLUSIONS

Regarding the extent of use of cooperative learning in secondary schools in Keiyo South Sub County, most schools incorporate group investigation and think-pair-share features of cooperative learning, with the group investigation component being the most commonly used strategy. The preference for group investigation and think-pair-share elements is because they are already familiar methods in other forms of pedagogy, and learners easily understand and embrace them. The same holds for jigsaw and round-robin aspects of cooperative learning due to ease of introduction, control, and implementation for both the learner and the teacher. The other reason for the application of group investigation is that it allows learners to break down complex problems, especially in Kiswahili set books and poetry, with more success than alternative approaches.

On the performance of Kiswahili in secondary schools in Keiyo South Sub County based on the achievement test, most students attained 68.2%, which was exemplary output. The performance in Kiswahili suggests that deploying cooperative learning targeting Kiswahili will enhance student performance in the subject. The last grade was 33%, and the highest grade was 96%, which shows a significant gap in the county's distribution of learners' abilities in the subject. Promoting all aspects of cooperative learning, such as jigsaw, round robin, and cooperative projects, will help improve the abilities of each learner in learning Kiswahili in the region.

The outcome of the study showed that the gender of the learner was insignificant in determining their performance in Kiswahili. The male students accounted for 60% of the secondary student population in the region. Sub-county schools in Keiyo South were the best performers in Kiswahili, recording a mean of 68.5125%, followed closely by the County Schools at 68.2% and trailed by the Extra-County Schools at 67.575%. There was no significant difference in Kiswahili performance across all three categories of schools. Since the One-Way ANOVA results posted a p-value of 0.974 > 0.05 which was statistically insignificant, it was essential to account for extraneous variables.

Finally, a determination of a relationship between the use of cooperative learning and Kiswahili performance in Secondary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County proves that a link between cooperative learning and performance in Kiswahili exists. The regression coefficient value of 30.355 was used to establish the relationship between cooperative learning and Kiswahili performance. The finding meant that a unit increase in learner's abilities, mastery, and critical thinking in Kiswahili subsequently increases the Kiswahili performance at secondary schools in Keiyo South Sub-County by 3035.5% in a very significant fashion (p-value = 0.000 < 0.05). Therefore, the hypothesis that there is a relationship between cooperative learning and Kiswahili performance was accepted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion above, which indicates a significant relationship between cooperative learning and Kiswahili performance, the following recommendations can be made:

I. Promote the use of cooperative learning strategies: Educators should actively incorporate cooperative learning strategies in the teaching and learning of Kiswahili. These strategies can include group projects, jigsaw activities, think-pair-share, and numbered heads together. Engaging students in collaborative activities can enhance their abilities, mastery, and critical thinking in Kiswahili, leading to improved performance.

II. Provide training and support for teachers: Teachers should be provided with training and professional development opportunities to enhance their understanding and implementation of cooperative learning strategies. This can include workshops, seminars, and ongoing support from instructional coaches or mentors. By equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills, they can effectively implement cooperative learning techniques in their classrooms.

III. Foster a positive and supportive classroom environment: Creating a classroom environment that promotes cooperation, respect, and active participation is crucial. Teachers should establish clear expectations for collaboration, encourage open communication among students, and promote a sense of shared responsibility for learning. A positive classroom climate will facilitate effective cooperative learning experiences and enhance Kiswahili's performance.

IV. Integrate Kiswahili content with cooperative learning activities: Teachers should design cooperative learning activities that specifically target Kiswahili content and skills. For example, group discussions can focus on analyzing Kiswahili literature or practicing oral communication in Kiswahili. By aligning cooperative learning tasks with the specific learning objectives of Kiswahili, students can deepen their understanding and proficiency in the language.

V. Monitor and assess cooperative learning outcomes: Regular monitoring and assessment of students' cooperative learning experiences and Kiswahili performance are essential. Teachers can use various assessment methods, such as observations, group evaluations, self-assessments, and performance tasks. This feedback can help identify areas for improvement, provide individualized support, and track the progress of students' Kiswahili performance.

VI. Collaborate with parents and the community: Involving parents and the community in supporting cooperative learning and Kiswahili performance is beneficial. Educators can organize workshops or information sessions to educate parents about the benefits of cooperative learning and strategies they can use at home to support their children's Kiswahili learning. Additionally, community partnerships can provide resources and opportunities for students to apply their Kiswahili skills outside the classroom.

By implementing these recommendations, educators can leverage the positive relationship between cooperative learning and Kiswahili performance, creating a supportive learning environment that enhances students' abilities, mastery, and critical thinking in Kiswahili.

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