



## THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS ON STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

(A CASE STUDY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN GEZIRA STATE: SUDAN)

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### ABSTRACT

This study is carried out to identify factors cause the poor performance in English language among secondary school students in Gezira State. The researcher has adopted the descriptive and analytical methods through questionnaires, interviews and observations as tools for gathering the data concerning the study. The sample study was 400, in which 374 were students and 26 were teachers. The data obtained from the questionnaire have been processed computationally with SPSS program to examine the correctness of the hypothesis of this study. Frequency and simple percentage were used in the analysis of data. The findings of the study led to the conclusion that inadequate qualified teachers of English language, negative attitudes of students toward English language are the causes of poor performance in English language among secondary school students in the Gezira State. The study also found out that provision of qualified teachers of English language, using the right approach to teaching of English language are some of the ways that can improve secondary school students' performance in English language. The study also recommended that qualified teachers of English language should always be employed to teach it, adequate facilities and instructional media/materials need to be provided where they are not available.

Key words: English teachers, Students' performance, teachers-students' relationship

### INTRODUCTION

There was a widespread interest in improving the levels of English language performance in schools. Education in developing countries was at a critical juncture as international effects were galvanized towards attainment of internationally agreed targets to expand and improve education as part of Education for All (EFA) movement. However, at the same time, a potential crisis in teaching threatened the ability of governments of developing and developed countries to reach this target (MOE 2007).

There were also social benefits tied to improving access to larger numbers of younger people to post-primary education and training opportunities and laying stronger foundations to skills for lifelong learning. The interest in raising levels of achievements had led to focus on identifying the range of factors that shape achievement as well as understanding how these factors operated to limit or enhance the achievement of

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different groups of learners. Low academic performance had been defined as failing to meet the average academic performance in tests or examination scores as determined by a set cut off point. (African Population And Health Research Center Policy brief.

According to Best and Kahn (1998), performance was the process that ensured school/organizations pursued strategies that led to achievement of the overall goals and objectives. According to National Assessment of Education program (NAEP; 1990) of US, performance had stagnated or fallen in most subjects English inclusive since 1970 with targets and most thoroughly established accruing in basic literacy. Ajibola (2006), stated that a reading habit was cultivated and natured by individuals who were ready to give it their all. The skills acquired in reading could promote the acquisition of language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. English learners were one of the largest to struggle with literacy (Hickman, Pollanc Dorudula and Vaugyhn, 2004). Because of this, focus on instruction was placed on the learners' ability to comprehend the lesson content and not the learners' language proficiency (Myburgh, Poggenpoel and Rensburg, 2004).

Teachers would therefore employ strategies in their classrooms to benefit all the students. This was because all other subjects in secondary school syllabus, except Kiswahili, depended on English for both communication and examination. Reading was therefore indispensable and definitely key in determining general performance in examinations as a whole (KIE Syllabus vol.2). Under the free education policy in Kenya then, both at primary and secondary school level, there was an influx of students in schools. The number had been increasing steadily from the year 2004 to then.

Brumfit (1994) explained that the total process of teaching was a complex phenomenon not only on the specific pedagogical behaviors but also on the administrative and social content of their activity, personal attitude, habits and collective expectations. Teaching was an institutionalized activity in a way that learning cannot be. It was possible to identify and intervene in the formal teaching process with some precision because there were conventional sets of behavior that were approved for practice of particular subjects. Brumfit (1994) differentiated teaching and learning as follows; - teaching was causative whilst learning occurred willingly or unwillingly; teaching was a linear process and observable but learning was internal; teaching could be planned while learning could not; teaching was syllabus - based while learning wasn't; teaching could be administratively controlled but learning could not; lastly, effectiveness of teaching could not be measured but effectiveness of learning could be measured by observation and subsequent performance or behavior.

If this position was accepted, then it made sense to see what the teacher did as something that contributed to learning, but it certainly did not make sense to see teaching as simply the obverse of learning. Harly (1978), stated that learner strategies had a wide range of variation that could not possibly be predicted. Only opportunities provided for manipulation could disable or enable the learning process. Hughes and Hungen (1959) illustrated teaching as causing to learn, nothing had been taught until it had been learnt.

Wordfolk(1990) described a teacher as an instructor expert who knew and identified teaching materials and methods to be used in class. A motivator, who applied techniques that involved learners actively. A manager, who timed and planned activities. A curriculum developer and an implementer hence could cause learning to take place.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem.**

English language was one of the core subjects in Sudanese education system; it prepared students for future careers related to communication and technology. Regardless of that, students had continued to perform poorly. That performance in English language was a worrying trend worldwide as noted by Amuthelezi

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(2006). He noted that there was an urgent need to investigate the causes of poor reading and poor comprehension among students. That was with a view of finding a lasting solution to the problem. English was also a national language in Kenya and a global language of communication. Information and communication technology (ICT) used English. It was also a determinant of students' entry into quality colleges, universities and their future prospects.

Many studies had been carried out to establish reasons behind poor performance in English language. Some of these studies carried out attributed poor performance in English to factors such as poor teaching methods, students' attitude towards the subject, weak link between primary and secondary school levels, psychological factors, economic factors, level of motivation among others.

**1.3 Purpose of the study.**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of a teacher on students' performance in English language in public secondary schools in Gezira State.

**1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The study was guided by the following objectives

1. To investigate the extent to which teachers' academic qualifications influence performance of students in English language in public secondary schools in Gezira State.
2. To determine the extent to which teachers' attitude influence performance of students in English language in public secondary schools in Gezira State.
3. To examine the extent to which teachers' workload influence performance of students in English language in public secondary schools in Gezira State.
4. Performance of students in English language<sup>1</sup> in public secondary schools in Gezira State.

**1.5 Research Questions.**

The study was guided by the following objectives.

1. To what extent do teachers' academic qualifications influence performance of students in English language in public secondary schools in Gezira State?
2. To what extent does teachers' attitude influence performance of students in English language in public secondary schools in Gezira State?
3. To what extent does teachers' workload influence performance of students in English language in public secondary schools in Gezira State?
4. To what extent does teachers' professional advancement influence performance of students in English language in public secondary schools in Gezira State?

**2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Section two was divided into two main sub sections. These were empirical literature and the Theoretical framework. The empirical literature addressed the influence of a teacher on students' performance in English language as discerned in the literature. It would review literature related to the study. The chapter was divided into sections, basing on research objectives. The sections were divided into; level of teachers' academic qualification, attitude, workload, and professional advancement on students' performance in English language. On the other hand, theoretical literature sheds some light on some key theories related to learning and performance.

**International Journal of ELT, Linguistics and Comparative Literature***(Old Title-Journal of ELT & Poetry)*<http://journalofelt.kypublications.com>**Vol.7.Issue.3. 2019(May -June)****ISSN:2455-0302****2.2 Teachers' level of academic qualification**

A study done by Koledoye John Adeyemi in Nigeria reveals that the quality of education for a teacher is directly related to the quality of instruction in the classrooms. It is a fact that the academic qualifications, knowledge of the subject matter, competence and skills of teaching and commitment of the teacher have effective impact 'on the teaching learning process (National Education Policy Nigeria, 1998 - 2010). Quality improvement in education depends upon proper training of teachers. The teachers cannot play any of the roles unless properly trained (Yadved and Singh, 1988). Teaching is an art. It can be refined by training and practice. The availability of competent teachers is central in the construction of the educational system. English has acquired the status of a global language keeping in view the growing need and importance of English language in every walk of life, English is made a compulsory subject in Pakistan from the very beginning of the academic year, (Crystal, 1977). This increasingly necessitates good quality initial preparation for non - native speakers - teachers in the school system. Commenting upon the place of English language in Pakistan, Baumgardner (1993:43) said "English in Pakistan is used as an official and second language. It is spoken and used by relatively small but extremely influential portion of country 's population in the domain of government administration." Thus in Pakistan English language is widely used by the elite and the ruling class. Most of the official correspondence and documentation takes place in English. According to Koech report (1999) he recommends that the admissions criteria for teachers training colleges be reviewed to ensure that only the qualified candidates admitted. Lambo (1961) notes that the teacher - pupil ration should be one to forty (1:40) with at least one teacher per class. Thompson (1987) notes that the way in which teachers are recruited and trained may adversely affect the pupils performance. According to Moumouni (1968) a good training is necessary to help a teacher develop his interest and ability for teaching. Errant (1972) emphasizes that no one should enter teaching profession unless he is determined to do his best for children. Eshiwani (1993) notes that most schools face a lot of problems in terms of finance and qualified teachers as a result of which pupils have performed poorly in National examination. Harrison and Dale (1957) emphasize that management skills of head teachers should be upgraded.

**2.3 Attitude of the teacher**

William (1920) notes that male and female teachers have sometimes been found to have negative impact on the gender of learners in the classroom. According to Kwesiga (2002), male teachers may be impatient with girls and their attitudes have proved to be biased in favour of boys. Stone) 1996 ,(emphasizes that lower achievement of pupils may be lack of encouragement by teachers Pala and Awori (1978), notes that only a small proportion of women hold positions in high and middle - level employment. The jobs which women hold (teachers, nurses and secretaries) are not as highly paid as those held by men in public and private sectors hence they tend to relax when carrying out their duties. According to Tanner (1961), boys' work appears to teachers to be better than that of girls and that girls lag behind boys in achievement. Research carried out by Kokurirwa) 1982 ,(reveals that teachers in mixed schools pay more attention to boys. In the United Kingdom) UK), teachers were found to devote 63% of their time attending to boys marginalizing or ignoring girls. Kokurirwa (1982), notes that girls are treated as a group while boys are given individual attention.

**3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.**

This section covered research methodology which was divided into the following themes; research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, data collection instruments, pilot testing of the instruments, validity of the instrument, reliability of instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis techniques.

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A descriptive survey design was used to obtain the data that was used to describe the existing phenomena. It was used for exploring the existing two or more variables at one given point of time. It was the method suitable for collecting original data for the purpose of describing a population which was too large to observe directly, (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999).

**3.2 Target population**

Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) noted that target population was a population to which the researcher wanted to generalize the results of the study. In this case the target population for this research would comprise of 26 teachers of English and 374 students in public secondary schools in Gezira State.

**3.3 Data Collection Instruments.**

The research instruments entitled Head of English language department questionnaire and Teachers' of English language questionnaire in public secondary schools in Gezira State were used to solicit data for the study to investigate the teachers' influence on students' performance in English language. The researcher will develop his own questions. Section 1(a) of the questionnaire will consist of open/closed ended questions which answered by the teacher. The reasons for the choice closed ended questions are; they were easier to analyze since they are in an immediate usable form, they were easier to administer because each item is followed by alternative answers and they were economical to use in terms of time and money. Section 1(b) consisted of closed/ open ended questions which helped to solicit the respondent's feelings or motive and expression of what he/she considered to be most important.

**3.4 Data collection procedures**

Questionnaires were presented to the respondents in Gezira State public secondary schools. The respondents were requested to fill the questionnaire within two weeks after which the researcher will collect the questionnaires for data compilation and analysis.

**3.5 Data Analysis Techniques**

Data collected was coded and analytical using descriptive statistics with the aid of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). This involved presentation of statistical data in form of frequency tables whose explanation was mainly descriptive. Each item in the questionnaire had been designed in line with the research objectives. Frequencies, percentages and mean scores were calculated and presented in frequency distribution tables. The final data was summarized in form of tables. The information obtained from the analysis was discussed and aided in the drawing of conclusions.

**4.1 Respondents Return Rates**

A total of 26 English teachers were targeted for this study and given questionnaires and out of these the return rate was 21(84%) for English teachers and The high respondent return rate could be attributed to the use of drop and collect survey theory in which you come face to face with the target key informants. The high return rate could also be due to the high level of mobilization and awareness created about this study by the Gezira State Education Officer and the head teachers of the sampled schools prior to the data collection. The respondents were all found in schools which were fully operational and hence they made it easier to collect all the data without any hitch.



Table 4.1: Gender distribution for respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	18	67%
Female	8	33%
Total	26	100%

From the results in table 4.1 showed 18(67%) of the teacher respondents were males while only 8 (33%) were females. This probably pointed to the fact that in Gezira State, the number of male teachers who teach English was significantly more than that of female teachers. This agreed with Pala and Awori (1978) who noted that only a small proportion of women held positions in high and middle level employment for example teachers, nurses and secretaries.

#### 4.2 Age categories of the respondents

The study sought to find out the age distribution among the heads of English department and English teachers and whether it had any influence on students' performance in English language in public secondary schools in Gezira State. The respondents were asked to state their age categories and the results were recorded in table.

Table 2. Teachers' academic qualifications

Academic qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor	21	75.8
Master	5	24.2
Doctorate	0	0
Total	26	100

From the table and the figure above table, the number of teachers who had a bachelor degree was 21 (75.8%). The number of teachers who had a master degree was 5 (24.2%). There was no any teacher who had a doctorate degree.

Table 3 Teaching experience of teachers of English

Experience	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	5	19.2
6-10 years	4	15.4
11-16 years	8	30.8
Above 16 years	9	34.6
Total	26	100

The table and the figure above show that majority of the teachers, 9 (34.6%) indicate that they had taught for more than 16 years. They are followed by those who have taught for 10 16 years, being 8 (30.8%) less than 5 years, 5(19.2%) and 2-5 years being 4 (15.4%). Therefore, the majority of teachers had adequate experience to guarantee good results among students. Teaching experience is a crucial variable in students' learning outcomes in secondary schools.

**Table 4 An unqualified teacher is unable to use appropriate teaching skills**

Agreement level	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	1	1.0
Undecided	3	4.0
Agree	9	34.0
Strongly agree	13	61.0
Total	26	100.0

According to the above table and figure 61% respondents are strongly agree 34% respondents are agree 4% respondents are undecided and 1% respondent is disagree. Alkhuli (1990,8) argues that " teachers with limited or no training on teaching a foreign language methods find it rather difficult to vary their methods". This proves that an untrained teacher negatively affecting teaching English.

**Table 5 An unmotivated teacher negatively affects students outcome**

Agreement level	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	1	2.0
Undecided	3	3.0
Agree	8	36.0
Strongly agree	14	59.0
Total	26	100.0

The above table and figure show that 59% respondents are strongly agree, 36% respondents are agree, 3% respondents are undecided and 2% respondents are disagree Haenakon (2012,548) claims that "teacher's lack of motivation greatly affects learning process. When teacher poorly motivates for the teaching process, he will directly affect learner outputs". This proves that an unmotivated teacher negatively effects on students' performances.

**Table 6 How often teachers advise students on attaining the highest marks.**

Response	Teachers' response Frequency %	Students' response frequency %
Never	0 (0)	0 (0)
Once a term	3 (11.5)	75 (20.1)
Once a month	20 (76.9)	229 (61.2)
Once a week	1 (3.8)	47 (12.6)
Every lesson	2 (7.8)	23 (6.1)
Total	26 (100)	274 (100)

From the table above 11.5% of the teachers advised students on attaining good marks once a term or less, 76.9% about once a month, 3.8% about once a week and 7.8% nearly in every lesson. Among the students, 20.1% reported that teachers advised them on attaining good marks once a term or less 61.2% about once a month, 12.6% about once a week and 6.1% reported that teachers advised them on attaining good marks nearly in every lesson. These results are depressing since it is clear that majority of the teachers do not advise students on the value of hard work and attaining good marks. As a result, this can contribute to a majority of



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students lacking direction and focus as they do not know why they should work hard and practise good study habits. This does not help in improving performance.

**Table 7. Teaching load .**

Teaching load	Frequency	Percentage
Below 20	4	15.4
21-25	2	7.7
26-30	20	76.9
Above 30	0	0
Total	26	100

The table shows that majority, 26(76.9%) of the teachers had a teaching load of between 26 – 30 lessons, 4(15.4%) had below 20 lessons and 2 (7.7%) had between 21 -25 lessons. This shows that though the teachers had the right qualifications, they had less time to discuss with the students as most of their time was spent in content delivery and not discussion as the majority 20 (76.9) of the teachers had a heavy teaching load. Perry (1995) agrees that teaching load affects teachers' performance. He argues that when teachers experience too many demands on their skills and attitudes they become irritated and confused which affects the commitment and performance.

**5.0 Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations.****5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of the findings as well as the conclusions of this study. It also presents the recommendations of this study and its contribution to the body of knowledge.

**5.2 Summary of the findings**

This study investigated the influence of a teacher on students' performance in English language in public secondary schools in Gezira State in Sudan. This was based on teachers' level of academic qualification, attitude, workload and professional advancement. With regard to the study, teachers' level of academic qualifications influence students' performance in English language in public secondary schools in Gezira State in Sudan, it was observed from the findings that teachers' academic qualification positively affected the students' performance in English language in public secondary schools which was measured in terms of teachers' academic qualification and area of specialization. In respect to teachers' comfort ability in handling their teaching subjects in secondary schools in Gezira State, the study established that most of the teachers were comfortable with teaching Literature.

To examine the level at which workload influence the performance of English in public secondary schools in Gezira State, 4(15.4%) had below 20 lessons, 2 (7.7) between 21-25, 20 ( 76.9) between 26-30. Perry (1995) agrees that teaching load affects teachers' performance.

**5.3 Conclusion.**

This study concluded that teachers influenced the students' performance in English Language in public secondary schools in Gezira State . The study concluded that professional qualification, employment and area of specialization of the teachers the un qualified and un motivated teachers influenced the performance in English. Lower professional qualification made the teachers to less competent in tackling subject content.



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Similarly, the study concluded that the attitude of the teacher played an important role in students performance in English. Attitude depended on the type of school one taught in, the general performance of the class and teachers urge to change the profession. While some teachers preferred teaching in a girl school, others preferred boys' schools and even others favored mixed schools. Each category of teachers had their own reasons which would in turn affect their performance in teaching and hence directly affecting the students' performance in English.

The study also concluded that teachers' workload influenced students' performance in English. Extra responsibilities assigned to the teacher, number of teachers, students' enrollment were some of the aspects that played an important role in determining the outcome of students' performance in English. More responsibilities assigned to the teacher inhibited his or her performance in teaching as there was no adequate time to prepare for the lessons and hence lowering productivity. Shortage of teachers of English meant the few who were available being overworked hence making them less productive. High student enrollment in most schools strained the meager human and physical resources (teachers, textbooks, classrooms and writing materials). This could not allow good performance in English to be posted. ( Teachers' professional advancement also played an important part in determining students' performance in English language. Attendance of external workshops and seminars in English and other courses for professional advancement equipped the teacher with necessary current knowledge and skills that would make him or her better teacher.

**5.4 Recommendations.**

In order to improve the performance of students in English language in Gezira State, it was recommended that:

1. The school management to ensure that teachers of English prepared adequately for the lessons by preparing necessary documents such as lesson plans.
2. The government would as well introduce some incentives in schools like presidential award scholarships to reward both students and teachers who put in more efforts to improve the performance in the English language.
3. Schools would as well be forced to admit the number of students that consume rate with the number of teaching and learning material available.
4. Government and other humanitarian agencies would always organize to rehabilitate the teaching and learning infrastructure so that smooth learning and teaching was maintained.
5. School management would ensure its teachers attend workshops, seminars and other courses in order to equip themselves with new ideas and attain promotions.

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