

The Effect of Teachers' Use of Reinforcement on Learners' Performance in English Language

Ndegwa Grace Konyu¹; Dr. Lucy Wathika²; Dr Josephine Khaemba³

^{1,2,3} Egerton University, Kenya

Main Author Email Address: gracekonyu@gmail.com

ABSTRACT:

The intention of the study was to establish the effect of teachers' use of reinforcement on learners' performance in English language. It was done in selected secondary schools in Nakuru town and used descriptive research design. The study was guided by Gardner and Lambert's Socio-Educational model of second language acquisition. Stratified random sampling was employed in selecting four schools while simple random sampling was used to choose one stream in form two, three and four in each school for observation. It resulted in eight observational schedules. The study sample of 60 students in form 2-4 and 8 teachers of English was purposively selected for interviews. A total number of 353 learners were observed. The study used interviews, audio recording and Structured Observational Schedules for data collection. The data was presented in form of tables, figures and verbatim transcript excerpts used for exemplification and illustration in a qualitative explication. The findings of the study revealed that second language learners' performance in English is greatly influenced by teachers' use of reinforcement. Moreover, it proved that teachers of English give unguarded praises, negative statements and criticisms to English second language learners. This study is a vital contribution to the field of Second Language Acquisition theory and practice with regard to offering information and insight into reinforcement, motivation and attitude in practical language acquisition and learning in the classroom situation. These findings are useful in the improvement of second language learners' performance in English. Teachers of English will also acquaint themselves with effective use of positive verbal reinforcement which works as a motivational force on learners' acquisition and use of the English language.

Key Terms: Learner, Learner's performance, Second language acquisition, Positive reinforcement

How to cite this article in APA (6th Edition)

Konyu, N. G., Wathika, L. & Khaemba, J. (2019). The effect of teachers' use of reinforcement on learners' performance in English language. *Editon Cons. J. Lit. Linguist. Stud.*, 1(3), 116-129.

Introduction

The role of reinforcement on second language learners' performance in English is very significant because it enhances the learning of a second language. English has a prestigious status and is the most common second language used by most communities worldwide (Crystal, 2015). In Kenya, it serves as the most important tool to attain both national and curriculum goals of education as enshrined in Vision 2030 (Gathua, Kiptiony, & Somba, 2012). In order to study English as a second language and be successful in it, learners must be facilitated to obtain the four language skills. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing (Wyatt, 2009).

According to Chitiyo and Wheeler (2009), the teacher improves a student's behaviour by creating a supportive learning environment by positively reinforcing the desired behaviour. Reinforcement on the second language during classroom teaching is one of the most significant factors which play a positive role in second language learning by enhancing the performance of the language (Fromkin et al., 2018).

According to Zua (2008), the emotional bonding between students and teachers ought to be built. Students are anticipated to be at ease with their teacher of English and be certain that he/she will correct them if at all, they make mistakes. Boniecki and Moore (2010) further affirm that teachers have the ability to reinforce learners' behaviour extrinsically through praise or tangible prizes. Systems of formal praise enhance inherent motivation to develop learners' behaviours (Wheatley et al., 2009).

The linguistic repertoire of secondary school students in Nakuru town is that of multilingualism which supports that Kenya is highly multilingual. The multilingual students are the majority at 69.32 per cent that speak English, Kiswahili, Mother tongue and Sheng-slang (Oduor, 2016). English

language in Kenya serves as lingua franca that enables communication among people depending on their exposure and level of education (Kaviti, 2018).

Students' oral proficiency in English is affected much by their communicative patterns. Students have expression difficulties in their spoken English because they mostly use Kiswahili and Sheng in their oral interactions in all the domains in which they are by themselves. This greatly limits their opportunities to practice speaking in the school setting. As a result, this affects their oral proficiency in the language (Oduor, Ibid).

Despite the importance of English language in Kenya, performance in it as a subject in the national examinations has remained far below the expected standards. A report from the Nakuru Town East and West Sub-County Education offices indicates that the percentage of learners, who perform below average in English in the K.C.S.E examination in the town, over the years, has been increasing. Learners' performance in English subject is assessed, measured and evaluated in the mastery of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills tested in functional skills, comprehension, literally appreciation, grammar, imaginative composition and essays based on set texts.

Table 1 indicates the learners' registered performance in English subject as a second language out of 12 points for five consecutive years. The performance is inconsistent, that is, improving one year and deteriorating the next. The status shows that as time goes the number of learners who fail in the subject increases. It is in this respect that the study sought to investigate the effect of teachers' use of reinforcement on learners' performance in English language.

Table 1: K.C.S.E English Subject Performance

Year	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Mean score	5.484	6.346	5.633	6.118	5.695
Deviation	-0.862	+0.713	-0.485	+0.423	

(Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2018).

English is the language of instruction in Kenyan secondary schools; hence, the performance in it determines the achievement in other subjects except for Kiswahili and other foreign languages. Despite that, there is a worrying trend of poor performance of English language in K.C.S.E examination in Nakuru town. There are few studies in Second Language Acquisition that have focused on the influence of reinforcement on second language learners towards the improvement of competence. Reinforcement has always been considered important in education theory and practice; however, it has been regarded as of little or no consequence in Second Language Acquisition theory and practice. Little focus worldwide has been given to praise and motivation in research, especially in Second Language Acquisition research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reinforcement in behavioural psychology refers to the consequence applied that will strengthen a person's future behaviour whenever that behaviour is preceded by a particular antecedent stimulus (Reeves, 2017). Reinforcement is very important in the achievement of academic excellence. More students of English as a vital second language can be inspired if teachers of English embrace important concepts of reinforcement. It is maintained that for a consequence to be called a reinforcer, there must be an indication that it strengthens behaviour for a specific individual. Reinforcement happens when an event following a reaction, rises an organism's

propensity to make that response (Nnachi, 2007). The stimulus-response theorists believe that for language learning to occur, the teacher has to motivate students by the use of reinforcement techniques. This study found out that teachers' verbal praise is a reinforcer on second language learners' performance in English language.

Positive Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement involves a positive reinforcer which is the motivation that raises the possibility of a behaviour happening when it is added to a condition. For instance, when you exchange jokes and the audience laughs, the more the exchanging jokes behaviour continues. A study by Conroy et al. (2009) established that teachers could advance their general classroom environment, in addition to rising positive interactions with learners by professionally implementing positive reinforcement. This study ascertained that positive reinforcement of learners is a powerful tool in the improvement of performance in the use of English language in selected secondary schools in Nakuru town, hence may increase the opportunity of acquiring communicative competence in the language.

Reinforcement of Second Language Learners of English

Reinforcement is very important in the achievement of academic excellence worldwide. Odima's (2015) study looked into the influence of teaching on the acquisition of English language skills in primary schools in Busia County, Kenya where he collected data using structured questionnaires, interview schedules and descriptive research design to analyse the data. Based on the results of his study, he acknowledges that teachers of English play a major role in helping learners to gain, practise language skills and develop proficiency. Choudhury (2011) agrees that the main responsibility of all teachers of English is to help all learners in the development of their capability to write and speak better language. The current study found out that more learners of English as a second language got

motivated when teachers of English embraced important concepts of reinforcement.

According to the UNESCO education report, examination results are prejudiced by factors other than teaching, including student skills, expectations, motivation, parental background, peer pressure, curriculum structure, school organisational resources and culture. Teachers' influence on students' performance is cumulative, where their performance is influenced not only by current teachers but also by former ones (Wanzala, 2017). Improving learners' performance in English means that their national examination results in K.C.S.E will also be enhanced. The current study found out that teachers' positive verbal praise reinforcement enhances learners' performance in English language.

Kotut (2016) carried out research on factors influencing the performance of English as a subject in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Nakuru Town, East sub-county. The findings indicated that the respondents agreed and/or strongly agreed that to improve students' attitude in learning of English, various rewards are given to excellent pupils. Majority of the respondents strongly agreed and/or agreed (92.4%) that student's attitude in learning of English which is achieved through positive reinforcement by teachers of English, greatly determines their success in learning. It was in agreement that the teachers support weak students by building their motivation in learning English. The current study established that to improve learner's motivation in learning of English language, positive reinforcement like the use of positive verbal praise should be given to all learners of different performance levels (low-, average-, and high-scoring) which would later show a significant increase in their performance.

In a study on challenges and strategies for teachers and learners of English as a second language, Dhillion and Wanjiru (2013) studied the reinforcement strategies for teachers and learners of English in an urban primary school in Kenya. One of their outcomes showed that positive reinforcement was more significant and intricate often used by the majority of teachers in their classroom management. In addition, the results of their study displayed that forms of rewards and appraisal are good in reinforcing learners. These findings relate to the present study which looked into the role of reinforcement on second language learners' performance in English in selected secondary schools in Nakuru town. While their study looked into forms of rewards and appraisal, the current one sought to investigate teachers' positive verbal praise reinforcement which its findings revealed that it strengthens learners' of English language behaviours.

Wafula, Malimbe, and Kafu (2011) carried out research on classroom management. It was to determine the state of positive reinforcement in secondary education in Kenya. The study was carried out in public secondary schools in Eldoret Municipality. They established that positive reinforcement in the secondary school classroom in Kenya drives at inspiring students' positive academic achievement, teacher efficacy and effective teaching and learning. The results of their study confirm that incentives are good in comparison to those that incline to be material in nature. In fact, the latter should not be regularly used. This is because some students might do everything they can to perform a chore for the sake of the reward. They established that positive reinforcements are indispensable techniques in classroom management. While their study was on general education classroom management, the present one focused specifically on English language behaviour management on second language acquisition and use in English. It is evident from the current study that

teachers' verbal praise reinforcement manages English language behaviour of learners.

With regard to the efficacy of reinforcement tactics, Oyo (2012) examined the usefulness of the rewards system in Kenyan secondary schools. The study concentrated on the assessment of how rewards have an effect on positive attitudes resulting in the advancement of school's standards in academics. The findings of their study revealed that most students prefer simple items like erasers, stickers and pencils as prizes and other classroom treats such as homework pass and computer time. Whereas the study was on prizes, the current one investigated the effectiveness of the verbal praise.

Kirui (2007) carried out an investigation on the effect of teachers' use of praise and criticism in students' learning in Moiben Division of Uasin Gishu District, Kenya. She found out that though teachers use praise and criticism in the classroom; criticisms were commonly used compared to praise. Praise encouraged students to actively participate in class by attempting questions asked, paying attention to the teacher and putting more effort into their classwork. Criticism, on the other hand, had made the students get discouraged, hate the subject, and the teacher concerned, fear the teacher, get stressed, feel embarrassed, irritated, avoid questions and lack concentration. She concluded that praise enhanced learning while criticism hindered learning.

Her findings were useful for this study which also comparatively tried to find out the starring role of positive reinforcement on second language learners' performance in English. Whereas Kirui's study investigated learners in the following subject classes: English, Kiswahili, Mathematics, Chemistry, History, Business Studies and Agriculture, this study was specific to English language classes. Her study was carried out in a linguistically

homogeneous area while this one was conducted in a linguistically heterogeneous area.

Njoroge (2013) looked into language learner performance and interpretation of teachers' written comments among primary school learners in Nakuru Municipality, Kenya. She found out that pupils interpret teachers' written comments in different ways. Given that she established that positive relationship exists between teachers' written comments and pupils' attitude and motivation towards learning and using the English language, it was worth considering the effect of teachers' use of verbal praise reinforcement on secondary school learners' acquisition and use of English language which was the concern in the current study.

Effects of Teachers' Verbal Praise Reinforcement on Students' Learning

Brophy (1981) contends that praise is broadly recommended method of reinforcement by teachers. It enhances intrinsic motivation. Praise is typically seen as appropriate not only because it can be an operational reinforcer but due to its provision of encouragement to learners which help them to build self-esteem and enhance the teacher-student relationship. An additional specific potential advantage is that praise permits an undeviating statement of the contingency between behaviour and reinforcement. Anything characterised as positive reinforcer must proliferate the rate of behaviour; therefore, to the extent that praise is outlined as a positive verbal reinforcer, it cannot have anything but enhancing effects. The current study found out that praise used by teachers enhanced learners' motivation, provided encouragement, helped build their self-esteem, self-confidence, a close teacher-student relationship and improved their performance.

Praise is correspondingly considered to have valuable effects on learners' motivation, performance and self-esteem. A group of researchers and teachers assert that

usually a feedback message of praise upsurges motivation and leads to improvement in students' performance (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Ilies and Judge (2005) confirm that feedback which encompasses praise is more actual since it causes a positive emotional reaction, which is frequently associated with improved motivation and higher goals.

The effectiveness of praise is enhanced by the positive mood it creates or due to its capability to make people feel good about themselves (Jin, 2008). Additionally, due to the positive interpersonal dynamism that normally supplements praise, children may remain to display praised behaviour to withstand the attention and approval of the evaluator (Folse, 2009). In this case, motivational paybacks are purely extrinsic and quite transitory, dissipating as soon as the evaluator is no longer present to dole out approval (Chalak & Kassaian, 2010). Lastly, operant principles explain the positive influence of praise on motivation. Based on these principles, praise is thought to upsurge the rate of behaviour because the positive know-how of being praised becomes connected with the behaviour that stimulated praise (O' Leary & O'Leary, 1977). Indeed, studies in this tradition of "The effects of praise on children's intrinsic motivation" have displayed that praising children for completing an assignment, following a rule, or paying attention to the teacher upshots in an increased rate of the desired behaviour (Drabman & Lahey, 1974). This study found out that the positive effects of teachers' verbal praise reinforcement on learners' intrinsic motivation resulted in increased frequency of English language behaviour.

The researchers who stress on the positive role of praise for students' learning denote to a number of theoretical mechanisms to clarify their results. One usually discussed variable, which is alleged to facilitate the effect of praise, is self-efficacy, defined as the belief that one has the

capacities to execute the courses of actions required to achieve desired outcomes (Bandura & Locke, 2003). Drawing upon a long line of inquiry, Bandura (1997) suggested that individuals' self-efficacy is strongest when it arises from their own success, but coaxing can be effective in convincing individuals that they have the capability to prosper. In this circular process, praise can be used to make learners believe that they can prosper, which should, in turn, enrich self-perceptions of effectiveness and lead to greater academic attainment.

According to Lemlech (1999), a lot of teachers frequently use praise as a form of positive reinforcement for suitable behaviour and as a motivational tool. Many professionals agree that praising less is good since too much praise mostly unwisely applied such as praising for insignificant endeavours or weak efforts, especially in young learners' classes, can lessen student's self-motivation and suppress a student's natural curiosity. Davies (2003) states that actual praise necessities to be given genuinely and enthusiastically focused on the learners' effort in comparison to actual achievement. It is agreed that it is important to work on a positive style of praise which is more effective rather than a negative one like punishment (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison 2005). Genuine, natural praise reassures positive self-esteem and acceptance of both self and among other learners in the classroom (Davies, Ibid). There is, therefore, the need for teachers of English to sincerely and credibly praise learners with correct responses which have affirmation and natural voice for their present effort and progress. This will lead to greater learners' achievement benefit results while using the English language.

Occurrence of praise inclines to be positively correlated with self-perceptions of capability among school children (Abu-Mulhim, 2009). In another study by (Deci, 2000), grownups who were commended for a puzzle-completion

chore spent a lot of time engaging in the same activity during a consequent free-choice session than those given no feedback. According to Baumeister, Hutton, & Cairns, (1990), praise has been displayed to increase adults' performance at skilled tasks as compared to the performance of a control group. This study found out that despite teachers' of English knowledge of reinforcement, most of them downplayed it. The findings will acquaint teachers of English with positive verbal reinforcement techniques (general praise, ability praise and effort praise). The study also established that the rate of teachers' verbal praise reinforcement positively relates with different self-perceptions of interest and capability among secondary school learners in the mastery of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills tested in functional skills, comprehension, literary appreciation, grammar, imaginative composition and essays based on set texts.

Effects of Verbal Praise Reinforcement in Motivating Second Language Learners

Motivation is considered as one of the most vital factors in Second Language Acquisition (Sun, 2010). It is a kind of desire for learning. It is very hard to teach a second language in a learning environment if the learner does not have a desire to study a language. Gomleksiz (2001) expresses that motivation is a fundamental factor in the second language acquisition process. He further stresses that a less able student who is highly motivated can achieve greater success than the more well-informed student who is not motivated. Unmotivated students are insufficiently involved in L2 learning and therefore, unlikely to develop their L2 skills (Engin, 2009). The current study established that a less able learner who was often praised for effort became highly motivated and achieved greater success than the most intelligent learner who was seldom praised for his/her effort and was not motivated.

Effective teachers encourage their students' participation in classroom discussions, welcome their contributions, and motivate them by such practices (Cazden, 2001; Stipek, 2002). However, many educators often allow their less proficient students to remain silent or to participate less than their English-fluent peers (Wilhelm, Contreras, & Mohr, 2004). Baumeister's et al. (Ibid) presented evidence that praise can both facilitate and impede students' performance. This study found that effective teachers' verbal praise reinforcement encouraged their learners' participation in English language class learning activities which included: debates, discussions, dialogues, presentations, role plays, storytelling and games, welcomed their contributions and motivated them by their increased frequency of English language behaviours.

Motivation is extensively accepted as one of the main factors which affect the rate and success of second language learning (Folse, Ibid). Secondly, it considers how ready and willing students are to gain more information to enhance their capacity to comprehend, write and speak the L2 (Engin, Ibid). Thirdly, it offers the primary incentive to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to endure the tedious and long process of learning (Huang, 2007). Fourthly, it defines the level of active personal taking part in L2 learning (Warden & Lin, 2000). Finally, motivation unwaveringly affects how regularly learners use L2 learning strategies, how much learners interact with native speakers and how long they endure and maintain L2 Skills after language study is over (Wyatt, Ibid). This study established that teachers' verbal praise reinforcement on learners in English language directly affects their motivation and later performance and communicative use towards the establishment of competence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was done in four secondary schools in Nakuru town. This study used a descriptive research design. The

target population for this study was teachers and learners of the English language in four secondary schools in Nakuru Town. In this study, stratified random sampling was employed in selecting the four secondary schools. Simple random sampling was used in choosing one stream in form two, three and four in each school for observation. A total number of 353 learners were observed. A sample population of 60 learners (5 learners in each form and 15 learners in each school) in form 2-4 and 8 teachers of English were purposively selected for the interview. The learners were sampled by performance (low-, average- and high scoring learners) plus gender. Teachers' records were the source of learners' English subject performance in examinations. Data collection tools used in this study included interviews and observation. This study employed a qualitative method to analyse the recorded data obtained from the field. The researcher wrote a letter to the Nakuru County Director of Education to seek consent to do the research in the town. Permission was obtained from the Principals, Heads of English Language Department and class teachers before the research was carried out in the schools. Permission to carry out the study was also sought and acquired from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Effect of Teachers' Use of Reinforcement on Learners' Performance in English Language

The objective of the study was to establish the effect of teachers' use of reinforcement on Learners' performance in English language

Importance of Learning English Language in School

Learners were asked during the interview to give the benefits of learning the English language in school. Most of the responses were repeated by many of them in school A, B, C and D. Among the four schools, form two learners reported that English is an international language and it is

the most spoken language throughout the world. Secondly, it is widely used by the international business community. Thirdly, it is the medium of communication in a majority of people's professional careers because most of them who work in offices communicate with their clients and each other in English language. It is also the language of the internet and social media handles like, WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Snapchat.

Form three learners mentioned that acquiring English as a second language allows one to love and appreciate the culture of its speakers. In fact, it is important in education since most of the books on any subjects are written or translated in the English language. It is also the channel of instruction in education in most schools, universities and higher education institutions in Kenya and the whole world. In addition, it is essential for getting a good job and better earnings on account of global business organisations and many international corporations which request for people who are competent in English. Further, it is important for sustaining international relations.

Form four learners said that English is the official language in a large number of countries, including Kenya. Again, if one masters English, he/she can enjoy travelling around the world. Moreover, when one acquires English, he/she can get entertainment from around the world because most famous films, songs and cartoons are in English. Sports telecast live and their commentaries broadcasted in English. There are also very many both fiction and non-fiction texts from many countries around the world. Moreover, if one learns the language, he/she is able to visit most websites like google.com, youtube.com, wikipedia.org and yahoo.com. Lastly, English is the language of electronic media which is extensively spreading globally.

These findings show that many learners are enlightened about the significance of learning the English language. What remains as a matter of concern is that a number of learners' knowledge on English merits has not translated into their performance and communicative use towards the establishment of competence in the language.

The study also found out that learners of English language differ greatly in the types of motivation. The instrumentally motivated learners were destined in their career, better earning, passing a test or examination by getting a good grade, furthering their studies and earning more respect from people.

Integratively motivated learners were motivated to learn English as a school subject, being comfortable with English speakers, meeting and conversing with more and varied people who speak the language, liking and appreciating the culture of English speaking community, wanting to learn, participating and communicating in it because it is an official language in Kenya. This concurs with Gardner and Lambert's (2007) integrative and instrumental motivation.

Developmental or personal motivated learners liked listening to or watching songs sung in English language, listening to or watching English television programmes and films, reading both fiction (poems, stories, plays and novels) and non-fiction texts (textbooks, newspaper articles, magazines and editorials) and enhancing their status among their friends. Intrinsically motivated learners enjoy learning English because it is their favourite subject. Extrinsically motivated learners expressed the importance of English by their participation in class activities and improvement in their performance.

Learners' Comparison between Learning English and Other Languages

The study found out that many of the students believe that English is an easier language in learning compared to Kiswahili and French. All learners in school A, B, C and D reported the usefulness and appreciated the value of learning the English language. Most of them stated all their reasons to justify that it is easy to learn English was as a result of motivation from their teachers' positive reinforcement. On the other hand, some criticised learners in school C and D were aware of reasons that justified their belief that English language is more difficult than learning Kiswahili. They reported that it is difficult because it has lots of exceptions to rules, the order of words and adjectives, pronunciation, homophones and emphasis of certain words in a sentence could subtly change its meaning.

Learners' Attitudes towards their Teachers of English

The findings indicated that learners liked teachers of English who enabled them to develop a positive attitude towards English subject, motivated them, build a close teacher-student relationship, empowered them to believe that they had the ability to achieve their targets, build their self-esteem and self-confidence. On the contrary, learners did not like teachers who criticised them. The following conversations designate learners' representation that includes liking or disliking of their teachers of English.

"Yes. She has enabled me to develop a positive attitude towards the subject." (Excerpt 1.)

"Yes. She motivates me." (Excerpt 7.)

"Yes. I have a good relationship with him, and I feel comfortable asking him questions." (Excerpt 4.)

(Excerpt 4.)

"Yes. She enables me to believe that I have the ability to achieve my targets." (Excerpt 6.)

"Yes. She builds my self-esteem." (Excerpt 8.)

"No. She criticises me." (Excerpt 5.)

Learners' Performance in English Language

The findings indicated that low, medium and high scoring learners of English language reported to have improved their mastery of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills tested in functional skills, comprehension, literary appreciation, grammar, imaginative composition and essays based on set texts. The following conversations show learners' improvement in English language skills because of their teachers' verbal praise reinforcement.

"Yes. I have learnt to be keen and listen actively."

(Excerpt 7.)

"Yes. I have gained the confidence of speaking during class and school debates." (Excerpt 2.)

"Yes. I have developed a habit of reading novels." (Excerpt 1.)

"Yes. I write legibly using punctuation marks correctly." (Excerpt 6.)

"Yes. I have improved my ability to write essays and functional skills." (Excerpt 3.)

Learners' Feelings in Efforts and Achievement when Rightly Merited

The findings indicated that learners of English felt confident and proud in the efforts and achievement in English language skills when they were rightly merited by their teachers for the things they did well. They were happy, proud and grateful. Their good mood of joy meant that things in the classroom were going on so well. They reported that most of them were in a positive mood which encouraged them to maintain or repeat the desired English language behaviours. The following conversations indicate learners' feelings in efforts and achievement in English language skills when rightly merited by their teachers for the things they did well.

"Yes. I believe I have high self-esteem."

"Yes. I feel confident and proud because it has made me learn more and believe that I am competent in the language." (Excerpt 2.)

"Yes. It accredits to my good performance." (Excerpt 6.)

It is very critical for the teacher to positively reinforce his/her learners and make them feel confident when they use the English language correctly, which will lead to effective performance. The sense of confidence which the teacher gives to his/her learners allow them to feel relaxed and concentrate more on efforts and achievements in English language skills.

In accordance with Gardner and Lambert's (Ibid) socio-educational model, teachers' of English verbal praise reinforcement directly affects second language learners' motivational intensity, attitudes towards English subject, their teacher and speakers of English language.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study concludes that positive verbal praise reinforcement given by teachers of English works as a driving and motivational force which increases their probability to use and acquire competence in English language. In addition, reinforcement used by teachers in language classes greatly influences learners' performance in English. Positive verbal reinforcement allows learners to justify the benefits of learning English in school, encourages them, builds their self-esteem, self-confidence, a close teacher-student relationship and improves their performance in the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

Recommendations

As indicated from the findings of the study that positive reinforcement could improve the learners' performance in English language in selected secondary in Nakuru town. It is necessary for secondary schools' administration to encourage teachers of English to acquaint themselves with positive verbal reinforcement techniques (general praise,

ability praise and effort praise) which lead to learners' maintenance or repetition of the desired English language behaviours hence improve their performance. It is significant for learners to acquire all the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in addition to being competent in using English language in a variety of contexts in the modern world. As a result, reinforcing learners to improve performance in English is to empower them to raise the standards of performance in national examinations and attain diverse educational, social, commercial, political and professional gains throughout their lives. The Ministry of education through curriculum developers should also come up with the current teachers' reinforcement policies inclined to the improvement of learners' competence and performance of English as a

second language in secondary schools nationally. This research was based on how reinforcement could improve the learners' performance in English language in selected secondary schools in Nakuru town. The study recommends more research to be undertaken in tertiary institutions and universities to examine the role of reinforcement on second language learners of English.

REFERENCES

- Abu-Mulhim, A. (2009). Re-evaluating the effectiveness of the audio-lingual method in teaching English to speakers of other languages. *International Forum of Teaching and Studies*, 5(2), 39-45.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise control*. New York: Freeman.
- Bandura, A., & Locke, E. A. (2003). Negative self-efficacy and goal effects revisited. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(1), 87-99.
- Baumeister, R. F., Hutton, D. G., & Cairns, K. J. (1990). Negative effects of praise on skilled performance. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 11(2), 131-148.
- Boniecki, K. A., & Moore, S. (2010). Breaking the silence: Using a token economy to reinforce classroom participation. *Teaching of Psychology*, 30(3), 224-227.
- Brophy, J. (1981). Teacher praise: A functional analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 51(1), 5-32.
- Cazden, C. B. (2001). *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning* (2nd Ed.). Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Chalak, A. & Kassaian, Z. (2010). Motivation and attitudes of Iranian undergraduate EFL students towards learning English. *Journal of Language Studies*, 10(2), 37.
- Chitiyo, M., & Wheeler, J. J. (2009). Analysing the treatment efficacy of a technical assistance model for providing behavioural consultation to schools. *Preventing School Failure*, 53(2), 85-88. Retrieved February 16, 2018, from ERIC database.
- Choudhury, A. S. (2011). Classroom role of English language Teachers. The traditional and innovative. *Contemporary Online Language Education Journal*, 1, 33-40.

- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2005). *A guide to teaching practise*. RoutledgeFalmer, London.
- Conroy, M. A., Sutherland, K. S., Snyder, A., Al-Hendawi, M., & Vo, A. (2009). Creating a positive classroom atmosphere: Teachers' use of effective praise and feedback. *Beyond Behavior*, 18(2), 18-26.
- Crystal, D. (2015). *English as a global language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Davies, L. (2003). *Effective praise*. Retrieved from <http://www.kellybear.com/TeacherArticles/TeacherTip37.html>
- Deci, E. L., Koestner, R., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). A meta-analytic review of experiments examining the effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125(6), 627-668.
- Dhillion, J. & Wanjiru, J. (2013). Challenges and strategies for teachers and learners of English as a Second Language: The case of an urban primary school in Kenya. *Journal of English Linguistics*, 3(2), 14-24.
- Drabman, R. S., & Lahey, B. B. (1974). Feedback in classroom behaviour modification: Effects on the target and her classmates. *Journal of Applied Behaviour Analysis*, 7(4), 591-598.
- Engin, A. O. (2009). Second language learning success and motivation. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 37(8), 1035-1042.
- Folse, K. S. (2009). *The art of teaching speaking: Research and pedagogy for the ESL/EFL classroom*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Fromkin, V., Rodman, R., Hyams, N., Amberber, M., Cox, F., & Thornton, R. (2018). *An introduction to language*. (9th Ed.) South Melbourne, Vic.: Cengage Learning.
- Gardner, R. C. (2007). Motivation and second language acquisition. *Porta Linguarum*, 8, 9-20.
- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (2007). Motivational variables in second language acquisition. *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, 13, 266-272.
- Gathua, J., Kiptiony, G., & Somba, A. (2012). *The challenges of teaching the revised English syllabus*. Paper Presented at the 2nd Annual Conference of Kabarak University, 2012. Retrieved from <http://ir.kabarak.ac.ke/handle/123456789/253>
- Gomleksiz, M. (2001). The effects of age and motivation factors on second language acquisition. *Firat University Journal of Social Science*, 11(2), 217-224.
- Huang, C. (2007). *Why do university students want to learn English?* Unpublished M.A. Thesis. Providence University.
- Ilies, R., & Judge, T. A. (2005). Goal regulation across time: The effects of feedback and affect. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(3), 453-467.
- Jin, G. (2008). Application of communicative approach in college English teaching. *Asian Social Science*, 4(4), 81-85.
- Kaviti, L. (2018). The new curriculum of education in Kenya: A linguistic and education paradigm shift. *International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning*, 5(1), 15-27.
- Kirui, C. C. (2007). *The effect of teacher's use of praise and criticism in student's learning: A case study of Moiben Division of Uasin Gishu District*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis. Egerton University, Njoro.

- Kotut, J. B. (2016). *Factors influencing performance of English as a subject in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Nakuru Town, East Sub-County, Kenya*. Unpublished M.E. Project. University of Nairobi, Nairobi.
- Lemlech, J. K. (1999). *Classroom management: Methods and techniques for elementary and secondary teachers* (3rd Ed.). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- Njoroge, A. M. (2013). *Language learner performance and the interpretation of teachers' written comments: A case study of pupils from selected primary schools in Nakuru Municipality, Kenya*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis. Egerton University, Njoro.
- Nnachi, R. O. (2007). *Advanced psychology of learning and scientific enquiries*. Enugu: John Jacob's Classic Publishers Ltd.
- O'Leary, K. D., & O'Leary, S. G. (1977). *Classroom management: The successful use of behaviour modification* (2nd Ed.). New York: Pergamon.
- Odima, L. E. (2015). *Effect of teaching on acquisition of English language skills in primary schools in Busia County, Kenya*. Unpublished M.E. Thesis. Kenyatta University, Nairobi.
- Oduor, C. (2016). *Students' perceived oral proficiency in English among Secondary School Students in Nakuru Town, Kenya*. Published M.A. Thesis. Egerton University, Njoro.
- Oyo, O. (2012). *Impact of reward system in Kenyan Secondary Schools*. Unpublished Master's thesis, Kenyatta University, Kenya.
- Pintrich, P. R., & Schunk, D. H. (2002). *Motivation in education: Theory, research and applications* (2nd Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Reeves, A. (2017). *Teacher perceptions, use, and knowledge of applied behaviour analysis-based techniques* (Doctoral dissertation, Appalachian State University).
- Stipek, D. (2002). "Good instruction is motivating." In Wigfield, A., & Eccles, J. S. (Eds.), *Development of achievement motivation* (pp. 309–332). San Diego: Academic Press.
- Sun, Z. (2010). Language teaching materials and learner motivation. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 1(6), 889-892.
- Wafula, A. L., Malimbe, G. N., & Kafu P. (2011). Classroom management: The state of positive reinforcement in Secondary Education in Kenya. *International Journal of Current Research*, 3(11), 38-70.
- Wanzala, O. (2017). *Daily Nation*, Oct. 26th, p17.
- Warden, C. A., & Lin, H. J. (2000). Existence of integrative motivation in an Asian EFL setting. *Foreign Language Annals*, 33(5), 535-545.
- Wheatley, R. K., West, R. P., Charlton, C. T., Sanders, R. B., Smith, T. G., & Taylor, M. J. (2009). Improving behaviour through differential reinforcement: A praise note system for elementary school students. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 32(4), 551-571.
- Wilhelm, R. W., Contreras, G., & Mohr, K.A.J. (2004). *Barriers or frontiers: A bi-national investigation of Spanish-speaking immigrant students' school experiences*. Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Volume: 01 Issue: 03| Sep-Dec -2019

Received: 09.11.2019; Accepted 11.11.2019; Published: 25.11.2019 at www.editonpublishing.org

Konyu, et al., *Editon Cons. J. Lit. Linguist. Stud.* *Double –Blind Peer Reviewed Journal*

Wyatt, M. (2009). Practical knowledge growth in communicative language teaching. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language*, 13(2), 1-23.

Zua, L. (2008). *Exploring the affective factors influencing teaching of spoken English*. Retrieved from <http://okarticle.com/html/Thesis/20080104/26.html>.