

## VISUAL MATERIALS USAGE AND LEARNER'S COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KITAGWENDA DISTRICT. A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY.

*Kiconco Violet, Rutaro Abas*  
*School of Graduate Studies and Research, Team University.*

Page | 1

### ABSTRACT

#### Introduction

The study established the effects of visual materials usage on learners' communicative competencies in primary schools in Kitagwenda District.

#### Methodology

The study used a cross-sectional survey research design consisting of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis. The study population consisted of teachers, head teachers, PTA members, and learners of p6 and p7 classes. A sample size of 232 respondents was used. Questionnaires and interviews were used during data collection. Statistical package for social scientists (SPSS) was used to aid the processing and summarizing of information obtained from the questionnaires while content analysis was used to analyze quantitative data.

#### Results

majority of the respondents (55.2%) were males while females were 44.8%. This implies that there are more male students than female learners in primary schools in Kitagwenda District. majority of respondents (51.8%) agreed that the Use of authentic materials improves reading skills only (18.3%) disagreed with the statement (Mean= 3.44; Standard deviation= 1.054). majority of the respondents (52.4%) agreed that the Use of authentic materials improves English language listening skills. (Mean= 3.37.; Standard deviation= 1.057).

#### Conclusion

Visual materials usage improves the learner's reading, writing, and listening schools which has a positive effect on their studies

#### Recommendation

The study recommends that the government and other stakeholders in the education sector should seek to increase the funding for UPE to cater to all the school's monetary requirements to have enough teaching materials. This will help teachers access various forms of materials and use them in teaching.

---

*Keywords - Visual Materials, Usage, Learner's Communicative Competence, Primary Schools.*

*Submitted: 2024-01-29 Accepted: 2024-01-30*

*Corresponding author:*

*Email: [kiconcoviolet2023@gmail.com](mailto:kiconcoviolet2023@gmail.com)*

*School of Graduate Studies and Research, Team University.*

---

#### Background to the study

Communication competence is the ability to communicate with others effectively (Shona (2019). It is the ability to apply language knowledge in its sociolinguistics context (Canale, & Swain, 1980). This involves the use of the language in writing, speaking, ability to read with comprehension, and listening to others speaking the language. In the context of this study, the learners can use the four skills of language learning to effectively communicate with others in daily life.

The relationship between the use of authentic materials in foreign language learning and communicative competence has been a major concern for scholars worldwide. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the use of the Grammar Translation Method was criticized for its negative effect on learners' ability to use the English language in everyday communication. This was because teachers over-relied on prescribed textbooks that did not have relevance to the sociocultural contexts of the learners.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the use of authentic materials in language teaching has been promoted in the teaching of English language because it makes language learning real

and facilitates communication using English in daily life (Shona, 2019). While language teaching in the pre-colonial periods and immediately after independence was based on foreign learning materials, the latter years have been characterized by the Africanisation of English language textbooks. However, their use has not helped in developing communicative competencies because there has been over-reliance on prescribed texts with little or no inclusion of real learning aids in the teaching of the English language in the classroom (Owiti, et al, 2019).

According to Brinton, authentic materials and media can reinforce for students the direct relationship between the language classroom and the outside world. Because communicative language teaching has emphasized giving students experience with real-life communication, the materials used in this approach are meant to reflect real-world, "authentic" qualities (Sumaia . A., 2021). Using real resources can help pupils learn new vocabulary and expressions and thus improve their reading comprehension (Zhang, 2004.). Students gain confidence in their ability to communicate in the target language outside of the classroom. To help students improve their listening

abilities and gain greater autonomy in their language use pointed out that the Internet and computer technology provide a variety of activities.

The main objective of the study was to analyze the relationship between visual materials and learners' commutative competence in primary schools in Kicheche Sub-county, Kitagwenda district.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research design**

In this study, both descriptive survey and cross-sectional design were used for the study. This design was adopted because it allows the researcher to collect and analyze data at a particular point in time without the need for follow-up. Furthermore, the use of mixed methods allows triangulation to validate the quantitative data collected with qualitative data.

### **Study setting**

The study was conducted among the government-aided primary schools in Kicheche Sub-county, Kitagwenda District. There are 6 government-aided primary schools in Kicheche Sub County. The study was conducted in all the six schools. Kitagwenda district is located in the Rwenzori region. It was carved out of Kamwenge district in 2019. It has 13 sub-counties with a total of 68 UPE schools.

Academic performance as per P7 entrance examinations and PLE is still below average. At the same time, inspection reports show that learners' use of the English language remains below expectation. The study took a period of two years from October 2021 to October 2022.

### **Study population**

The study population comprised UPE schools in Kicheche Sub County. There are 6 government-aided primary schools in Kicheche Sub County with a total enrolment of 3021 pupils, 42 teachers (19 male and 23 female) 12 teachers were sampled and 6 head teachers (district inspector's report 2022). The study was conducted using random sampling of pupils from P.6 and P.7 classes and a total of 214 pupils were sampled out of 480.

### **Sample size determination**

Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) table for sample size determination was used. Since the total population is 498, comprising 480 pupils from p6 and p7 classes, 12 class teachers for p7 and p6, and 6 head teachers the sample size for the study shall be 232 out of a total population of 498 where, all the 6 head teachers, 12 teachers out of 42 and 214 p6 and p7 pupils out of 480 were sampled for the study as indicated in table 1.

**Table 1: Table showing sample size for the study**

Category	Total	Sample	Sampling techniques
Headteachers	6	6	Purposive sampling
Teachers	42	12	Purposive sampling
P6 and p7 Pupils	480	214	Random sampling
<b>Total</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>232</b>	

### **Sampling technique**

purposive was used to select the head teachers and teachers while simple random sampling was used for the pupils. 6 Headteachers were selected purposively because their schools were targeted because they have issues with academic performance and learners' use of the English language while communicating. Purposive sampling was used to select the teachers for the study as the researcher was interested in class teachers of p6 and p7 classes. The names of the class teachers were obtained from the head teacher's office with permission to meet them

On the other hand, the learners were randomly selected from their classes. The research assistants formed clusters from which random samples were picked.

### **Data collection methods**

The data collection methods that were used in this study were questionnaire administration interviews and document review analysis.

### **Questionnaire administration**

The researcher designed a set of questions and made questionnaires. The respondents to the questionnaires were the learners of the selected primary Schools. The questionnaires were comprehensive enough to cover the

extent of the problem and all aspects of the study variables based on the objectives of the study and research question. The questions were close-ended because they were easy and quick to answer. This method was used because it eliminates the possibility of interviewer bias during data collection. At the same time, it saves time than having to interview a large number of respondents face to face. The questionnaires were administered to the learners.

### **Face-to-face interview**

This is where a researcher asks questions that the respondents answer orally. These interviews were used to collect data from the head teachers at their places of work. The process shall involve presenting open questions to which the head teachers and teachers were given their responses in a free manner. Meanwhile, the researcher was recording the responses for later transcription onto paper. This method was used because through the interview method, in-depth information was obtained from these persons and the researcher can probe for further probing.

### **Data collection instruments**

The tools that were used to collect data for the study were questionnaires, interviews, and document review guides.

### Questionnaires

They were used to collect primary data from the pupils of the p6 and p7 classes. The questionnaire was developed using a Five-Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree; to ease filling the questionnaire. The instrument was used because it facilitates the collection of large amounts of data in a relatively short time. The questionnaires had four sections, Section A sought demographic information of the pupil, Section B sought information on authentic materials used in teaching English language, Section C sought information on learners' ability to use the English language for communication while Section D looked for opinions on the relationship between the use of authentic materials and learners' ability to use English for communication purposes. The research assistant distributed the questionnaires to the selected pupils giving them time to fill them out and collect them as they finished immediately.

### Interview guide

This tool was used to collect data from the head teachers and teachers. It had items on head teacher and teachers' demographics, learners' ability to use English language for communication, the use of authentic materials, and how it influences the ability to communicate in the English language.

### Data quality control

Data quality control is establishing the validity and reliability of the instruments that were used in the study.

### Validity

A pilot study test was carried out on 10% of cases drawn from the target population outside the study. Mulusa, (1990) recommends 10% of the cases for a pilot test in a descriptive study. This proceeds questionnaire administration which is meant to create a good rapport with respondents and to reveal ambiguities, and inconsistencies, bringing into the light any weakness of questions (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999).

### Reliability

To test for the reliability of research instruments, the test-retest technique was applied. The same questions were administered to the same group within a time interval of two weeks. A reliability coefficient was calculated to indicate the relationship between two sets of scores obtained. Pearson product-moment formula was used to calculate the correlation.

### Data Analysis procedure

Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis were used for this study.

### Qualitative data analysis

Qualitative data from the interviews were first recorded and later transcribed onto paper. Themes were identified based on the study objectives and narrative analysis used to analyze and interpret the information. Therefore, the analysis used verbatim quotes from the responses during

the interview

### Quantitative data

This involved making sense of the quantitative data from the questionnaire. Quantitative data from questionnaires was fed onto the computer, coded, and analyzed using the SPSS program. The researcher used the mean and standard deviation analysis to obtain an indication of the direction, strength, and significance of the bivalent relationship of the variables in the study.

### Research procedure

After the proposal was approved by the School of Graduate Studies and Research, the researcher got a letter of introduction that introduced her to the respondents and relevant authorities. This letter was presented to the DEO office, head teachers, and the respondents before the data collection process began.

### Ethical Considerations

Clearance was first sought from the university by acquiring a letter of introduction. This letter was of help in introducing the researcher to the respondents and relevant authorities. This assured the respondents and authorities that the study being conducted was not of any harm to them.

Informed consent was first sought from the respondents before data collection. This ensured that the respondents participated in the study freely and were free to opt out of the study at any stage they felt like. Informed consent was achieved through the use of a consent document that the respondents signed.

Assurance was given to the respondents that all data collected was used for academic purposes only and confidentiality was safeguarded. Respondents were assured that the study was not to expose them to any major risks but rather a step towards future studies intended to provide solutions towards the impact of authentic materials on communicative competence.

## RESULTS

**Table 2: Response rate**

Respondents Category	Sample Size	Response Rate
Head Teachers	6	6
Teachers	12	12
P.6 and P.7 Pupils	214	214
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>232</b>

Source: Primary data, 2023

Table 2 indicates that the targeted sample size of 232 responded as planned. This confirms that the participation of the target respondents in this study was perfect. The researcher gave the questionnaires to the respondents and collected them on the same day and for interviewees the researcher first made an appointment to find them at their stations.

### Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographic characteristics of respondents considered in this study include sex, age, marital status, and education level as presented in Table 3.

**Table 3 Gender of respondents.**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Male	128	55.2	55.2
Female	104	44.8	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>100</b>	

Source: Primary data

Table 3 indicates that the majority of the respondents (55.2%) were males while females were 44.8%. This implies that there are more male students than female learners in primary schools in Kitagwenda District. This shows that either gender was fairly represented in the

learners who form the majority sample and therefore was thought to give balanced views for the study. The high number of male respondents showed that more male learners have led to a higher retaining rate of boys in schools compared to girls in schools.

**Table 4 Age of respondents.**

Age groups	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
10-30	222	95.7	95.7
31-40	7	3.01	98.71
41-50	3	1.29	100
51-60	00	00	100
60 and above	00	00	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>100</b>	

Source: primary data

Table 4 shows that the majority of the respondents (95.7%) belonged to the age bracket 10-30 years. This is because class 6 and 7 learners fall in this bracket and form the majority of the respondents. A small minority (1.29%) belonged to the age bracket 41-50 years no respondents

were in the bracket 61 years and above. This implies that primary schools in Kitagwenda District have young and energetic staff and management who are capable of performing their duties effectively

**Table 5 Marital status.**

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Single	220	94.8	94.8
Married	10	4.3	99.1
Others	2	0.9	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>100</b>	

Source: Primary data

Table 5 indicates that the majority of the participants (94.8%) were unmarried and only (4.3%) were married whereas a minority (0.9%) were in others. This shows that most of the respondents were single. This is because

the majority of respondents were students from p6 and p7 classes. Other than pupils majority (10 respondents) were married indicating that they were responsible worker

**Table 6 level of education**

Education level	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
PLE	214	92.3	92.2
CERTIFICATE	8	3.4	95.7
DIPLOMA	4	1.8	97.5
DEGREE and above	6	2.5	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>100</b>	

Source: Primary data

Table 6 indicates that the majority of the respondents (92.3%) were still at the primary level of education (1.8 %) had a diploma level and (2.5%) had degrees. The majority of the respondents sampled were in primary because they were learners of (p6 and p7). The respondents with certificates and diplomas (5.2%) and those that had attained the degree level (2.5%) were teachers and head teachers. This indicated that there was a good number of Teachers with professional qualifications which matters a lot (Mulusa, 2010).

**language for communication.**

Respondents were asked to indicate whether their position was based on a five-point Likert scale. The analysis was done using the percentages, mean, and standard deviation. A mean above 3 indicates agreement by respondents, a mean of 3 shows undecided, and a mean of below 3 shows disagreement by respondents. The standard deviation (Std) of close to 1 shows agreement, while the standard deviation of close to zero shows the disagreement of the respondents. The analysis further grouped 'strongly agree' and 'agree' to mean 'agree, and 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' to mean 'disagree'. The elicited responses are shown in Table below.

**Visual Materials Usage in the English**

**Table 7: showing the Visual Materials Used in the English language for communication in primary schools**

Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std
The use of authentic materials improves reading skills	10 (4.7%)	29 (13.6%)	64 (29.9)	78 (36.4%)	33 (15.4%)	3.44	1.054
The use of authentic materials improves English language listening skills.	11 (5.1%)	36 (16.8%)	55 (25.7%)	87 (40.7%)	25 (11.7%)	3.37	1.057
The use of authentic materials improves debate participation	15 (7.0%)	55 (25.7%)	35 (16.4%)	83 (38.8%)	26 (12.1%)	3.23	1.167
The use of authentic materials improves communication with teachers in English	22 (10.3%)	39 (18.2%)	35 (16.4%)	92 (43.0%)	26 (12.1%)	3.29	1.198
The use of authentic materials improves writing skills	17 (7.9%)	26 (12.1%)	48 (22.4%)	85 (39.7%)	38 (17.8%)	3.46	1.151

Table 7 indicates that the majority of respondents (51.8%) agreed that the Use of authentic materials improves reading skills only (18.3%) disagreed with the statement (Mean= 3.44; Standard deviation= 1.054). This implies that there is a strong relationship between the use of authentic materials and pupils' reading skill

Also, findings show that the majority of the respondents (52.4%) agreed that the Use of authentic materials improves English language listening skills. (Mean= 3.37.; Standard deviation= 1.057). This implies that there is a relationship between authentic materials and pupils' English listening skills.

*"in this area, there are no primary schools which use projectors or videos in teaching but I strongly agree that if used they improve learners listening and speaking". (Interview, 2023)*

Also, findings show that the majority of the respondents (57.5%) Use of authentic materials improves writing skills only (20%) disagreed (Mean= 3.46; Standard deviation= 1.151 This implies that there is a strong relationship between the use of authentic materials and pupils English writing skills.



## Discussion

Findings show that the majority of the (51.8%) agreed that the Use of authentic visual materials improves reading skills, 52.4% agree that the use of visual materials improves listening skills and 57.5% agreed that This implies that teachers from schools that use authentic materials in teaching English improve learners English listening, speaking, and writing skills. This is in agreement with Tamo (2009), who maintained that the greatest way to prepare pupils for real-life circumstances is to provide a larger choice of materials and techniques for teaching them. Beginner-level pupils were able to use actual materials. For learners who are learning a new language, they must learn about the context in which they encountered the language to better understand it.

Learner's motivation is believed to be boosted by the use of authentic materials since they are exposed to real-life language. When learners find the content engaging, they are supposed to be more enthusiastic about the learning process. Learners benefit from "immediate and direct interaction with input data that reflect genuine dialogue in the target language" if teachers incorporate authentic speech into their lessons (Azizah, 2016). As a result of employing real resources, students' reading comprehension improves (Sumaia . A., 2021). These findings are in line with Berardo(2006) who revealed that using real resources can help pupils learn new vocabulary and expressions and thus improve their reading comprehension. Students gain confidence in their ability to communicate in the target language outside of the classroom, (Berardo, 2006). (Sumaia . A., 2021), To help students improve their listening abilities and gain greater autonomy in their language use, Miller (2003) points out that the Internet and computer technology provide a variety of activities (Miller, 2003, p. 18). As a result, some researchers claim that authentic resources encompass a wide range of texts and topics that are difficult to locate in traditional educational materials.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This work would not have reached this far without the support of my supervisor Mr. Abas Rutaro. His constructive criticism and guidance helped me to fine-tune the document at this stage.

I also wish to acknowledge the support of my family, friends, and course-mates for the moral and material support while I was doing their work. Had it not been for their patience, encouragement, and support, I would not have completed this work.

## Source of funding

No source of funding

## Conflict of interest

The author had no conflict of interest

Having a wide range of texts to choose from can help students develop their reading skills and become more self-sufficient as a result (Berardo, 2006) (Sumaia . A., 2021).

Learners who have had the opportunity to interact with real materials have been shown in numerous studies to get superior results in their language studies. In addition, numerous studies suggest that realistic materials boost all four aspects of language learning: hearing, speaking, writing, and reading (Sumaia . A., 2021).

## Conclusions

Visual materials usage improves the learner's reading, writing, and listening skills which has a positive effect on their studies

## Recommendations.

- i. The study recommends that the government and other stakeholders in the education sector should seek to increase the funding for UPE to cater to all the school's monetary requirements to have enough teaching materials. This will help teachers access various forms of materials and use them in teaching.
- ii. There is a need for the government to recruit more teachers in primary schools to cater to the big crowds of learners in classes to allow the teacher to reach every learner and help them communicate in English well. There is also a need to motivate the learners to speak English without fear of punishment. There is a need to revive teachers retooling to the impact of education among rural schools which have been noticed to be reluctant in educating children. This can help in instilling a new spirit of applying teaching materials which are very important in improving learners' communication in English.

## REFERENCES

- 1) Canale, M. and M. Swain (1980) Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing". *Applied Linguistics* 1: 1-47.
- 2) Owiti, T, Omulando, C and Barasa, P(2019). Teachers' Conceptualization of Authentic Printed Materials in the Teaching of Intensive Reading in Secondary Schools in Bondo Sub-County, Kenya. *International Journal of Education and Research Vol. 7 No. 2*
- 3) Shona, W (2019). Revisiting Communicative Competence in the Teaching and Assessment of Language for Specific Purposes *Language Education & Assessment*, 2 (1), 1-19 (2019)
- 4) Zhang, X. (2004.). *Authentic materials in English as a Second Language conversation instruction*.
- 5) Sumaia Alzarga, 2021 Using Authentic Materials in Foreign Language Classes: EFL English Teachers' Perspective English

Language Department, Faculty of Arts,  
SirteUniversity

- 6) Azizah, A. (2016). Authentic materials for developing listening comprehension. *English Education Journal*, 7(3), 360-376.
- 7) Tamo, D. 2009: The Use of Authentic

Materials in Classrooms. Article 9 in LCPJ.

- 8) Berardo, S. (2006). The use of authentic materials in the teaching of reading. *The Reading Matrix*, 6/2:60-69.
- 9) Miller, L. (2003). Developing skills with authentic materials. *ELS Magazine*, 6/1:16-19.

**Publisher details:**

**SJC PUBLISHERS COMPANY LIMITED**



**Category: Non-Government & Non-profit Organisation**

**Contact: +256775434261(WhatsApp)**

**Email: [admin@sjpublisher.org](mailto:admin@sjpublisher.org), [info@sjpublisher.org](mailto:info@sjpublisher.org) or [studentsjournal2020@gmail.com](mailto:studentsjournal2020@gmail.com)**

**Website: <https://sjpublisher.org>**

**Location: Wisdom Centre Annex, P.O. BOX. 113407 Wakiso, Uganda, East Africa.**