

ORAL QUESTIONING IN THE PEDAGOGY OF KISWAHILI GRAMMER: A STUDY OF TEACHERS PRACTICES IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF BUNGOMA DISTRICT KENYA

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine teachers' perception of their oral questions, quantity of teachers' oral questions on the basis of number, form and type as well as quality of teachers' oral questions in form of, meaningfulness and structure. The research also investigated the amount of learners' oral responses based on number and type, and the quality of learners' oral responses as manifested in their length, meaningfulness, congruence and structure. Oral questioning and responding practices were viewed within the framework of the Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Swain's Output Hypothesis and the Cognitive Code Learning Theory.

The study was conducted in Bungoma District of Western Province of Kenya. The population of the study comprised secondary school teachers of Kiswahili and their form 2 and 3 students. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select 20 teachers who constituted the sample. Their students, numbering 1446 also participated in the study. The data was collected by triangulation of several sets of instruments including classroom observation, audio recording, teacher interviews as well as schemes for the analysis of oral questions and responses. Data was analysed using the qualitative techniques constituting frequencies, percentages and means.

Data analysis revealed that teachers' perception was limited to a vague understanding of the Bloom's Taxonomy leading teachers to pose questions without reflecting on their source, characteristics or purpose. Analysis of data found no distinct variation of quantity and uses on the basis of qualification and experience although this was discernible among individual teachers and learners. It was found that teachers asked an average of 2 oral questions per minute mainly of the why, incomplete/rhetorical and the yes/no category. Results indicated that in terms of quality more than two thirds of the oral questions were complex, grammatical and related to grammar topics. However, majority of the questions were of low order type.

Data analysis further found out that there were oral responses than oral questions and that only 43.3% of learners provided individual responses comprising of mainly one to two word statement relating directly to the grammar content covered. It was also revealed that questioning and responding behavior were to some extent idiosyncratic and that learners' exposure to Kiswahili grammar was impeded by time wastage, poor attendance and classroom conditions.

In view of these findings, it is recommended that all agencies and people involved in Kiswahili language education strive through expanding and invigorating teacher training, classroom research, seminars and other related activities drawing from current theory and practice, to enhance teachers' perception of questions and improve their questioning skills and practices. Finally, it is recommended that further research involving an expanded design be conducted on

questioning practices, learners' responding and learning styles, grammar uptake and field factors influencing teacher questioning tendencies.