



WHY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD IN TANZANIA? REASONS FOR PARENTS CHOICE ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract:

Currently in Tanzania, many parents send their children at very early age to learn English language. There is rapidly increasing of schools that enrolls children for English language learning from informal pre-school to formal school age. Therefore, the study aims at examining reasons for parents to send their children in learning English language school at early age. The study used the documentary review to collect data for the study. Various studies on the theme were consulted by a researcher from different sources. Results showed that majority of the parents sent their children to learn English language at early age for future mobility of their children, competence for higher learning, better child care, avoid congestion experienced in public schools, happiness of the child and for quality education. The study recommends to parents that, they should consider child growth period before the age of school rather than sending the children to school at early age for learning purposes. Children should have enough time for growth, eating cared of their age at home before schooling age.

Keywords: English language, pre-school education, early age learning, school parents choice

1. Introduction

English language is a global language as it develops roles that are recognized in every country. It plays an official role or given a priority in a country as foreign language teaching, although the language might have no an official status. Then in a country where English Language plays an official role, it can be used in media, government issues, to the court or laws and to the education system, for that nature English language become the second language, as a complementary of the first language or mother tongue (Crystal, 2003). Education in English is spreading around the world, not only as a foreign language subject, but increasingly as a language of learning as both local and international schools implement

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English medium teaching across the curriculum (Kirkpatrick 2011). Tanzania has no exception from this world truth.

Tanzania, immediately after independence 1961 did many education reform among the reforms was on the aspect of language for educational instruction (Puja 2003) Currently Tanzania Educational Policy of 1995 "Education Training Policy" emphasis the use of Kiswahili as medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools, and English language is taught as compulsory subject in both levels. In secondary education, English language is the medium of instruction (MOEC 1995) the main feature of Tanzania Education system is the bilingual policy which requires children to learn both Kiswahili and English whereby English is essential, as it is the Language which links Tanzania and the rest of the world through technology, commerce and also administration. (United Republic of Tanzania 2001)

In Tanzania English language is acknowledged as an essential contrivance for engaging in economic commercial, technological, and cultural exchange with the rest of the world and hence for facilitating the modernization process however it is the first and foremost of a vehicle for international class struggle and revolutionary diploma (Mwalongo 2016)

Therefore, this study intends to examine why English language is learning in early childhood Education in Tanzania with special attention on the reasons for parents sending their children in English language learning school at early age, by reviewing different studies the importance of English and reasons for parents in sending their children in learning English language at early age.

1.1 General objective of the study

To examine, the reasons why parents do like their children to learn English language at early age.

1.2 Specific objective of the study

To identify reasons that influence parents to send their children to learn English language at early age.

2. Literature review

2.1 Early age education in Tanzania

Early age education in Tanzania can be refers to the child education covered from the period birth to four years old before formal pre-primary school which starts to a child with five years old. A time of remarkable brain growth, these years laid the foundation for subsequent learning and development. Early age education is frequently applied to the education of young children from birth to five years and this type of education takes place before formal pre-primary education either at home, neighbor, child care centers, pre-school or nursery school, and Montessori (EFA, Global Monitoring Report 2007). Quality Early Age Education helps a child develop their potential and promotes their social, emotional, physical and

cognitive development. (UNESCO, 2012) Therefore, the Early age education in Tanzania is regarded as a preparation of a child for pre-primary education focuses on development of literacy and numeracy skills, social and emotional skills of the child.

2.2 English language learning versus indigenous learning education

Formally, children at early age were stayed at home with their parents taught indigenous education while waiting for formal school education. With the change of time and globalization era most of parents do send their children to school at very early age. Indigenous education in pre-colonial era in Tanzania was viewed both informal and non-formal as a process by which children were assimilated into society and were taught the necessary skills and knowledge to function and work within the society. In Africa, and Tanzania in particular indigenous education was based on five fundamental principles which act as rationale for the goals and methods of educational system these include preparationalism, functionalism communalism, perennialism and wholisticism (Weaver, 2011).

The early indigenous childhood education carried at home aimed to produce high quality members in the society for both social and economic contribution while the early age learning childhood education, carried out at schools aimed at learning English language and prepare the child for pre-primary school education. In Tanzania as in many African societies, the mother is supposed to be responsible for her child's education particularly during a child's earliest years. As the child becomes matured, the responsibilities are supposed to be shifted to the extended family members and teachers for education purposes. (Fafunwa & Aisku, 1982)

In fact, the introduction of formal early age childhood education system had made a disappearance of indigenous education dramatically. The experience showed that parents were the primary source of education and knowledge for future students' education from a young age but nowadays the situations have changed most of parents do not have time with their children instead they send their children to early childhood education centres as a result the teachers became the primary source of education, knowledge and future plan for the children's.

Although Indigenous education still plays an extremely important role in Tanzanian life today most of children do not learn much from their parents instead they learn appropriate behavior from their teachers and their assimilation within society due to the fact that parent sends them to school at a very early age (Zanolli, 1971). Thus, from this experience, it is believed that, current teachers always teach their students the most aspect of life than their parents. From this experience of life style, most of parents in Tanzania are always looking on the better choice and decisions of schools for their children's future educational development at very early stage. Therefore, with the development of globalization and the importance of English language most of parents prefer their children to learn English language at a very early age.

2.3 English language learning in early childhood

English language learning is a conscious process of receiving information about the English language, transforming it into knowledge through intellectual efforts and storing it through memorization (Chomsky, 1952). English Language learning develops familiarity to the phonetic characteristics, the structure as well as its vocabulary. The process is tied to the pre-set syllabus including memorization of vocabulary, pronunciation and grammatical structure of a particular English language.

According to Andersson (1955), there are two kinds of learning any language; conditional or imitative learning and conceptual or analytical learning. Learning language imitative refers to where language learning its peak starts at birth and declines with time, while Conceptual language learning refers to where language learning its peak starts at lowest at birth and increase from the age of 10 and become more powerful and effective.

The studies show that, the lower the age the faster and complete language learning will be. It is said that a one year child can put three to four words together to make a sentence without considering articles and conjunctions. After twelve months, children can understand up to fifty words and can make simple sentences and make directions by thirty a child can understand up to nine hundred words and speak more than five hundred seventy words. At the kindergarten level, a child knows more than four thousand words; it is a time when the child is able to follow multisets of directions and understand basics of grammar Chomsky (1952). Therefore, children who learn English language at early age are in better position of mastering English language in future.

3. Methodology of the study

This is a review study about English language learning at early childhood age. Current in Tanzania most of parents do prefer to choice to send their children to learn English language at a very early age. The roles of parents and responsibilities of child early age indigenous education have been shifting dramatically from parents to teachers because most of the time children are with teachers at school in early age years in Tanzania. Therefore, this study relied on different literatures on learning language, importance of English language to children to current world and the reasons why parents do send their children to learn English at early age whereby a number of significant literatures were obtained and consulted for this study.

4. Presentation, analysis of the findings and discussion

This part of presentation analysis of the findings and discussion will be based on the literatures on the concept language and its importance in the society and why parent prefer more English language rather than other languages for their children in Tanzania. The concept language has different definitions in different scenario, Algeo (2010) define can be language as a system, as vocal, as a conventional as human activity and as a communication. In this study has defined language as a system of communication based upon words and the

combination of words to form sentences therefore English language refers to global system of communication based on English words and combination of words to form sentences.

4.1 Reasons for English language learning at early age

Recently in Tanzania, almost all parents do like their children to learn English language at early age and this initiate the emergence of various centres for day care, preschools for children to learn English language before pre-primary school. However, most of parents are very proud off if his or her child can manage to speak English at early age.

Crystal (2003) argues that globally English language has develops roles that are recognized in most of country in the world. He said English language plays an official role in many countries as foreign language, although the language might have no an official status in a particular country. In this case, many countries in the world Tanzania in particular, English Language plays an official role, such as in media, government issues, to the court or laws and to the education system. With this demand and development of English language in the world automatically in most of countries English language, become the second language, as a complementary of the first language or mother tongue including Tanzania. Most of children in Tanzania do learn Swahili as a mother tongue or first language from their parents and English language as a second language from schooling.

As far as learning English language is concerned, language in education system is the vehicle by which knowledge is jointly constructed, internalize and exchange verbal or symbolic utterances for communication (Mercer, 1994). Thus, the parents in Tanzania do send their children to learn English language as a language for their children's future education system from early age. In this case most of Tanzanian parents wish to send their children in English medium school where these schools are using English language to teach all academic subjects in the country where first language of the majority population is not English Tanzanian is included (Mwalongo, 2016).

The English language in early childhood age in Tanzania has been intimately influenced by the reforms and progress of Tanzanian politics, economy and social development. Currently, English language is taught from formal public and private primary school to university level where by English language in primary school is taught as a subject and from secondary school level English is a medium of instruction for communication and learning (MEoVT, 2009). Under private owned school, English language is taught from even pre-schools level. With this reference from Tanzanian education, system parents seem to see English language as a main way for their children's education journey.

4.2 Reasons influencing parents to send their children to English language at early age

One reason is education future of their children as a major factor for them to send their children to learn English language at early stage. Mwalongo (2016) did study in china on English language learning the results revealed that, The English is among the major requirement for the good university in china so they prepare their children to study at a good university in china, and also three of them touched the issue of studying abroad out of china where English is used so they prepare their children to study abroad. This is supported by

the policy makers and implementation of the ministry of education (MOE) by introducing English as a first compulsory subject from primary school education to tertiary level of study MOE (2001) more recently in 2011 the ministry of education introduces the new version of English language curriculum standard. In this case most of parents in Tanzania do prepare their children for the future educations stages through English language and the parent demand, expectation and believes on English education is high.

Happiness of the children is one among of the reasons that makes parents send their children to learn English language , by believing that the English medium pre-schools are the places where their children are taken much care in comparison to home where the parents most of the time are busy with employment work or daily economic activities (Ibid.) Parents in Tanzania do believe that the preschool teachers are professional for taking care of their children and also they believe that in pre-schools there are so many indoor games that their children can play and become happy compared to home. The happiness reason was supported by the single child policy in China most of parents do care most their child every day and they invest much on them. With this policy, parents always find a better place for their single child care happiness and education all the time (Mwalongo, 2016)

Again, some parents prepare for their children future employment mobility opportunity by sending them to learn English at early stage. English language is said to be additional advantage in Tanzania and in the rest of the world employment opportunity so by sending their children to English language at early stage they add the advantage for their future children opportunity employment in the country and outside the country (Crystal, 2003).

However, Safety and security of the child during the working hours is another reasons for parents sending their children to learn English language at early age (Mwalongo, 2016). It has been observed that most of parents in Tanzania do send their children to learn English language at early age in different pre- school because they are looking for the safety and security place for their children during working hours. This is because the formal schooling by government started at pre-primary level and most of pre- schools day care centres are owned by private and individual institutions where most of them are using English language in daily communication and most of parent feel so prestige when their children speaks English language at early stage before pre-primary school.

Moreover Coleman (2010) argues that, in Switzerland English language skills are directly associated with labor market in the world. His argument with concur with study's findings that English language allowing individual to go anywhere, it is seen as a key for unlocking development opportunities and accessing crucial information worldwide The finding also show that English language prepare children to become worldwide persons in various field through English language as connectors with other people in the world (Mwalongo, 2016). In this case, parents do create a wider labour market for their children through sending them to learn English language at a very early age. The reason was supported by Kingsley and Graddol (2012) in 2010, china Daily Article that, *"More and more importance has been given to English language after China carried out the policy of reform and opening up to the outside world in the late 1970s. And accompanying China's rise on the world stage*

in recent years are growing connections of commerce and culture with other countries, especially those developed English speaking countries. The entire Chinese society attaches high importance to the English language study as sometimes it even plays a vital role for a person who plans to pursue further education and seek a better career. There is no doubt that people who have a good command of English are more competitive than their peers". (China Daily, 2010a)

5. Conclusion

Apart from the fact that, English language is very important in the world and for children's future mobility parents in Tanzania should know that both languages Kiswahili and English are very important for ones' life, where as English language enables people to go with the rapid changes of the world taking place, economically politically as well as socially leaving Kiswahili has its own position as a national language and a symbol of identity.

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