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MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS IN GHANAIAN LANGUAGES: THE ROLE OF AKUAPEM TWI BASIC SCHOOL'S TEACHERS IN ABETIFI KWAHU, GHANA

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ABSTRACT

Background: Teacher motivational strategies has become an important issue in language research globally.

Purpose: The study sought to investigate whether statistically significant relationship exist between motivational strategies use by teachers and academic performance of learners in Ghanaian Languages

Methodology: A descriptive correlational design was used. A total 200 pupils were selected from the population of 402 pupils. The Motivational Strategies for Teaching Languages Questionnaire (MSFTLQ) and the 2019 BECE performance data in Akuapem Twi subject were used for data collection. The content validity evidence was used to ascertain the content representativeness of the questionnaire. The Cronbach coefficient internal consistency of the MSFTLQ was 0.83. The data was analysed using means, standard deviations and Pearson product-moment correlation test.

Results: It was found that learners need motivational strategies such as creating a supportive classroom environment, using a short and interesting opening activity to start class and familiarizing students with the cultural background of the Akuapem Twi language. It was further found that teaching motivational strategies correlated positively with pupils' academic performance in Akuapem Twi.

Conclusion: It was concluded that successful language learning is linked to the learners' passion, therefore, teachers should find ways to connect to this passion using variety of motivational strategies.

Recommendations: It was recommended that basic school teachers should use short and interesting opening activity to start class lessons in order to attract and sustain learners' interest in learning the Akuapem Twi language in Kwahu-Abetifi.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Akuapem Twi, Ghanaian Language, Motivational Strategies



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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The findings of the study will enable the Akuapem Twi teachers to appreciate the importance of motivation in the Language instructions. Through this study, teachers will use appropriate instructional strategies in arousing the interests of students in the learning of Ghanaian Languages, specifically, Akuapem Twi. The Ministry of Education, through the Ghana Education Service will use the outcome of this study to formulate instructional policies in teaching Ghanaian Languages in Ghana in general and Abetifi-Kwahu in particular.

INTRODUCTION

Ghanaian Language is one of the subjects studied at the basic school level in Ghana. The subject is designed to help learners acquire essential skills such as reading, listening, writing and speaking skills. These skills are derived from the culture and traditions incorporated in the subject matter. According to National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA), learners who learn their own first language, are good in learning their second language faster and perfectly (NaCCA, 2019). This clearly shows that the child's mother tongue should be taken very seriously and placed at the central part of the child's learning to help him or her to learn the second language (English language) effortlessly. According to NaCCA (2019), learners' first language and culture will make them conscious about their identity and equip them with effective communication skills that will provide them with the ability to appreciate the values embodied in their language and culture. They will know their cultural values and practices to help them to become honest and responsible citizens in their communities.

The Ghanaian Language (including the Akuapem Twi Language) curriculum is delivered through the use of creative approaches, specifically, using differentiation and scaffolding. According to NaCCA (2019), differentiation is the process by which differences between learners are accommodated so that all learners in a group have the best possible chances of learning whereas scaffolding denotes the use of a variety of instructional techniques aimed at moving learners progressively towards a stronger understanding and ultimately greater independence in the learning process. In every successful creative approach, there is a strong teacher

motivation behind it (Hamidah Azizah, Shah, Faizah, Wan, Wan, & Mohd, 2017; Galishnikova, 2014; Chilingaryan, 2015). Alizadeh (2016) and Chilingaryan (2015) stated that paying attention to the importance of language will help learners improve their motivation to learn even if they do not have enough intrinsic motivation. Mceown and Takeuchi (2010), in their survey found that 46% of the learners reported that their teachers had a positive influence on their language. Johnson (2017) found that the level of performance depends on the level of motivation from teachers. This is an indication that teachers need to use different motivational strategies to help their learners learn Ghanaian Language better.

According to Adade (2014), personal or intrinsic motivation is very significant in language learning. This implies that teachers should help their students to develop intrinsic motivation for language learning. This is the reason why motivational strategies for learning a language is crucial. Nyamekye and Baffour-Koduah (2021) also found that students at University of Cape Coast pursuing degrees in Ghanaian languages do not pursue the courses because of grades but because they love to study those courses. Teachers are therefore advised to help their students to understand the reasons for pursuing language learning. The teachers can help the students to develop intrinsic motivation when they introduce the students to motivational strategies the students need in order to help these students to excel in the learning of those languages. It is believe that when students develop intrinsic motivation through motivational strategies for learning, they are likely to do well in language learning and this will in turn

lead to an improvement in their academic performance in general.

Birgen (2017) also found that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can affect students' academic achievement. Birgen's study was on motivating factors that enhance students' academic performance: a case of St. Michael's Tulwopngetuny Secondary School in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The result of the study revealed that students need to be helped to understand that their achievements in education mostly depend on them. They should therefore take control of their learning. The support of teachers and other educational stakeholders are very important in achieving this. The results of this study shows that students need to develop intrinsic motivation that will push them to learn on their own without depending so much on others, especially, at the higher level of education.

Motivation in language studies has several effects on students' learning and behaviour. Fishbach and Touré-Tillery (2021) propose that individuals set goals for themselves and direct their behaviour accordingly. Motivation determines the specific goals toward which learners strive. Motivation increases the amount of effort and energy that learners expend in activities directly related to their needs and goals (Birgen, 2017). It determines whether learners pursue a task enthusiastically and wholeheartedly or apathetically and lackadaisically. Furthermore, learners take more interest in anything they like doing. Even if they are occasionally interrupted or frustrated in the process, they are more likely to continue working at it they have completed it (Gbollie & Kaemu, 2017). However, learners continuous to record unsatisfactory results in the Akuapem Twi at the Basic Education Certificate Examination over the years. For instance, the chief examiner's report on Ghanaian Language in 2019 chronicled anecdotes of causes of learners' non-performance in the subject. The report indicated that most candidates make a lot of mistakes such as wrong spelling, word-division, punctuations and tenses during the Basic Education Certificate Examination (WAEC,

2019). It has been suggested that the success or failure of learners' is depended on the teachers' motivation are instrumental in assisting learners to study (Blazer, 2016; Sirait, 2016). Despite this claim, there is paucity of literature relating teacher use of motivational strategies to the academic performance of learners in the Akuapem Twi Language in Ghana.

This study is therefore on what motivational strategies do learners need from teachers to learn Akuapem Twi in Abetifi-Kwahu? But will there be any statistically significant relationship between motivational strategies use by teachers and academic performance of the learners in Akuapem Twi? Answers to these posers constitute the problem this study is designed to achieve.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1. To identify motivational strategies of teachers that learners need to learn Akuapem Twi.
2. To determine the relationship between motivational strategies of teachers and academic performance of learners in Akuapem Twi.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What motivational strategies do learners need from teachers to learn Akuapem Twi?

HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no statistically significant relationship between motivational strategies used by teachers and academic performance of learners in Akuapem Twi?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Descriptive correlational design was used in this study to describe the variables and to establish the relationship that occur naturally between them (thus teacher motivation strategies and academic performance of learners). The researchers were interested in estimating the relationship without controlling or manipulating any of the variables and also, without seeking to establish a

causal connection between the variables under investigations.

Population and Sample

The study population comprised all learners in the public Junior High Schools in the Abetifi-Kwahu with a total population of four hundred and two (402). From the population of 402, a total representative sample of two hundred (200) learners were drawn from the sample pool subject to the Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the five public schools from the initial 12 schools in the Abetifi Circuit. In every sampled school, one Junior High School class was randomly selected. All students in the sampled class in the sampled school were observed as study units.

Instrument for Data Collection

Two set of data collection instruments were used. The Motivational Strategies for Teaching Languages Questionnaire (MSFTLQ) was first used. It is a structured question developed by the researchers. The questionnaire used a five Likert scale options. In scoring the items, respondents had a possible score ranging from 5 to 1 which represents his/her opinion on the statements. The Cronbach co-efficient internal consistency of the scale was 0.83. Content related evidence validity was ascertained for the MSFTL by Ghanaian Language experts and Psychologists.

The academic achievements of the learners were estimated using the performance score of 2019 BECE

candidates in the district. The 2019 BECE scores are objective measures of learners' academic performance.

Procedure for Data Collection

The questionnaires were self-administered to the sampled learners and collected on the same day of administration since the questions were not the type that would demand too much time. The researchers made sure that all participants were informed about the aim of the research and its advantages to them. The participants were given the freedom to respond or not. In order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality participants were not allowed to write their names on the questionnaires. Furthermore, the participants were informed that the data collected were only for academic purposes. The data collection was done during break time since the researchers did not want to disrupt the academic time table of the sampled schools. This ensured a 100% return rate for the questionnaire. The 2019 BECE performance data was obtained from the Ghana Education Service, Abetifi-Kwahu.

Method of Data Analysis

The data was analysed using means and inferential statistics like Pearson product-moment correlation.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What motivational strategies do pupils need from teachers to learn Akuapem Twi?

Table 1: Distribution of Motivational Strategies for Learning Akuapem Twi

Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
Establish good relationship with learners	4.32	0.65	High
Bring in and encourage humour during lessons	4.21	0.52	High
Create a supportive classroom for learners	4.91	0.59	High
Use a short and interesting opening activity to start class	4.80	0.53	High
Help pupils develop realistic goals about learning Twi	4.13	0.72	High
Invite native speakers to class	4.71	0.62	High
Encourage pupils to set personal learning goals	4.45	0.53	High
Monitor students' progress and celebrate their victories	4.47	0.61	High
Give clear instructions by showing examples	4.75	0.52	High
Provide pupils with positive feedback	4.66	0.57	High
Make clear to pupils that communicating meaning effectively is more important than being grammatically correct	4.36	0.62	High
Familiarize pupils with the cultural background of the Twi language	4.78	0.71	High
Make sure grades reflect pupils' efforts and hard work	4.55	0.77	High
Mean of Means	4.55	0.61	High

Source: Field Data, 2020.

The result in Table 1 shows that the learners agreed with all the motivational strategies outlined in the questionnaire with High Mean (HM) levels. Some of the significant revelations included the creation of a supportive classroom (M=4.91, SD=0.59), using a short and interesting opening activity to start class (M=4.80, SD=0.53) and familiarize students with the cultural background of the Twi language

(M=4.78, SD=0.71). However, with a mean of means value of 4.55 (SD = 0.61), a value greater than 4 indicates respondents' high level of agreement with all the statements put forward.

Hypothesis 1: There is no statistically significant relationship between motivational strategies used by teachers and academic performance of learners in Akuapem Twi?

Table 2: Correlation between motivation from teachers and academic performance of learners in Akuapem Twi

Variable	Mean	SD	R	Df	p-value
Teacher motivational strategies	4.55	.61			
Academic performance	3.63	.71	.412**	198	000

Source: Field Data, 2020

** Significant, $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed)

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between motivational strategies and academic performance of pupils in Ghanaian language. The results established a positive correlation between the two variables [$r = 0.412$, $df = 198$, $p < 0.001$]. The estimated relationship coefficient of 0.1697 indicates that nearly

17% of the variance in learners' academic performance in Akuapem Twi is accounted for by the motivational strategies used by teachers. There is positive moderate relationship between teacher motivational strategies in facilitating Akuapem Twi language and academic performance of learners in the subject matter (Cohen, 1988). The alternative hypothesis, that there is a

statistically significant relationship between motivational strategies used by teachers and academic performance of learners in Akuapem Twi is accepted while the null hypothesis is rejected at an alpha level of 0.50.

DISCUSSION

From the results, it can be deduced that motivation is an essential components to language learning (Hamidah et al., 2017). Motivating learners is a long- term development and to motivate learners, teachers use variety of motivational strategies (Mceown & Takeuchi, 2010). For learners to develop interest for learning Akuapem Twi, it is imperative that teachers create a supportive classroom so that learners will take the learning tasks seriously. Teachers should provide guided practice and encourage learners to consult as much as possible. Denigrating reactions from teachers should stop. Furthermore, using a short and interesting opening activity to start class creates and sustain attention and enthusiasm among learners. Another motivational component identified in the current study is the familiarization of learners' cultural background. It is argued that motivated learners are more enthusiastic, goal-oriented, committed, persistent, and confident in their learning.

The study further established that motivational strategies used by teachers have positively significant relationship with the academic performance of learners in Akuapem Twi. The results confirmed the observation made by Johnson (2017) that the level of performance depends on the level of motivation from teachers. This is because it is the motivation that stimulates and energies learners to work and carry out the necessary tasks to achieve stated achievement goals. The results of the present study is also confirmed by Adade (2014), Birgen (2017) and Nyamekye and Baffour-Koduah (2021) that intrinsic motivation is significant in language learning and that teachers need to use motivational learning strategies to help their students to develop motivation for learning a language. This is so because

irrespective of the difficulty of the language, once the student is motivated within to learn, the student will study to learn the language without any difficulty. It is believe that when students develop intrinsic motivation through motivational strategies for learning, they are likely to do well in language learning and this will in turn lead to an improvement in their academic performance in general.

The effects of motivation on individuals has long term effects. This is because motivation can increase one's energy level. It also enhances the ability of learners to determine to reach a specific goal. Again, motivation can affect the type of learning strategies individual learners adopt.

CONCLUSION

Motivation performs significant role in language learning process. Teachers should understand the relationship between motivation and language acquisition since effective teaching of any language depends on teachers who are at the fore-front of teaching and learning. Successful language learning is linked to the learner's passion and teachers should find ways to connect to this passion. Any teacher who wants to make a mark in their pupils must tap into what internally makes them happy and find ways to connect them with external motivational factors that can be brought to the teaching and learning process. This is especially significant when Akuapem Twi as a subject is not seen as very important to most students' immediate needs, than to pass exams. Since learners have different reasons why they study the subject matter, it is imperative for instructors to identify learners' purposes and needs and to develop appropriate motivational strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the strength of the findings, the following motivational strategies were recommended:

1. Classroom teachers should create a supportive classroom environment so that learners will take learning tasks more friendlyly.

2. Teachers in Abetifi Circuit should use short and interesting opening activity to start class lessons in order to attract and sustain learners' interest in learning the Akuapem Twi language.
3. Teachers should assist learners to familiarize with the cultural background of the Akuapem Twi language.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Disclaimer Statement: We declare that this paper is our own work. All sources and materials used have been duly acknowledged and indicated as such. All texts quoted directly or paraphrased have been indicated by in-text citations. Full reference list have been given. This work has not been submitted to any other examination authority.

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Authorship and Level of Contributions:

Joseph Serebour Asante worked on the instrument, methodology, plagiarism test and the references.

James Divine Danyoh worked on the instrument, methodology, data collection and analysis

Faustina Gyampoh worked on the introduction and the literature review. All the authors worked and approved the final manuscript.

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