

Effect of Self-Evaluation Learning Strategy on Academic Performance in English Language among Students in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya

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Received September 25, 2020; Revised October 27, 2020; Accepted November 04, 2020

Abstract The rationale of the study was to find out the effect of self-evaluation learning strategy on academic performance in English language among students in public secondary schools. The study adopted a convergent mixed design which combined Solomon Four group experimental design and in-depth interviews. The study targeted 1397 form three students from 23 public secondary schools and 49 teachers of English language. The study sampled 283 form three students through stratified random sampling technique. The participants from the four groups were randomly assigned into experimental and control groups. Purposive sampling technique was used to obtain twelve (12) teachers of English. Triangulation was employed to collect data using pretest/posttest scores, Focus Group Discussion, in-depth interviews, and metacognitive learning strategy questionnaires. Multiple regression analysis findings revealed that self-evaluation learning strategy explains 6.4 per cent ($R^2 = .064$) of the variance in academic performance in English language. The study found a statistically significant difference on self-evaluation learning strategy on academic performance in English language among students in public secondary schools. The study concluded that there exists a positively statistically significant effect of self-evaluation learning strategy on academic performance in English language. Therefore, the study recommended that self-evaluation learning strategies should be utilized and integrated by students in the learning process in order to foster their ability to learn and enhance the overall academic performance in English language.

Keywords: *self-evaluation, learning, strategy, academic performance*

Cite This Article: Justine Momanyi Omare, "Effect of Self-Evaluation Learning Strategy on Academic Performance in English Language among Students in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya." *American Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 8, no. 11 (2020): 822-827. doi: 10.12691/education-8-11-2.

1. Introduction

Globally, the academic performance in English language among students seems to remain below the expected standards despite of the language being widely used as a medium of communication and instruction in many tiers of learning institutions, in trade, scientific and technological progression according to Al- Nasser [2]. Many students from nations which have adopted English language as a second language have encountered several challenges in the basic language skills. This problem has hindered effective learning because students cannot understand effectively the instructions and content in the curriculum and other literary materials that provide important information for learners in respect to Curtain and Carol [5]. Low academic performance in English language has attracted a worldwide attention. In Saudi Arabia, English language was introduced to all learning levels and made mandatory for all learners from class four and beyond after Arabic language. Since then its usefulness has expanded because of its great contribution

in teaching, training and spurring economic growth as expressed by Al-Nasser [2]. English language as a subject has attracted a positive attitude from learners, however the degree of proficiency and academic performance in the subject remains inadequate and below expectation as observed by Al-Seghayer [3]. A study conducted on the performance in English language in Asian countries like; Malaysia and Singapore among others revealed that English was taught as second language in most learning institutions and it was critical in addressing the growing global demands. However, the low academic performance in the subject was in the dire state according to the revelation by Al-Asmari and Khan [1].

In Ghana, literature revealed that English language is pertinent in the education sector because it is a core language in learning institutions. However, performance in the subject was unsatisfactory in the national examinations according to S'aad and Oppong-Sekyere and Oppong-Sekyere and Akpalu [20] respectively which was attributed to poor instructional strategies. In Tanzania, English language was adopted into the education system and has expanded its use especially by learners in secondary schools. Tanzanian syllabus on language policy,

stipulates that students are expected to acquire and master basic skills of the English language to allow them to cope with the demands of English in the society and progress for further training. However, the results from the national examinations in English language indicated that there was consistent poor performance in the subject for learners in rural and urban settings as indicated by Mosha [18].

In Kenya, during the release of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examinations (KCSE) in 2013, the minister for education indicated that English language had the highest decline in all the thirteen subjects that dropped in the average mean. This poor performance was attributed to sheng' and frequent use of electronic and technology gadgets which denied learners opportunities to learn and practice proper language use as it was noted in the Kenya National Examinations Council report [13]. In 2014, there was slight improvement in the mean to 3.86. In 2015, there was improved performance in English language to 4.029 as indicated in the Kenya National Examinations Council report, [15]. However, in 2016, the national performance in English dropped so much and this was perturbing to the students because it frustrates students from their future career prospects. The low academic performance in English language remains to be a major national challenge and impediment in a country in regard to education, training and development where its mastery and competency is indispensable.

The national academic performance in English language in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1; presents the results of the national performance in English language in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examinations (KCSE) for a decade. The fluctuating level of academic performance in English language among students is a national outcry and it poses a serious challenge. Teachers, parents, Employers, teachers, parents and educators are raising concerns over poor results at school and national examinations. Previous studies on

possible attributes of low academic performance have been connected to; scientific and technological dynamics, school facilities, and poor instructional delivery and attitude among others. The Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) annual reports from 2008 to 2016 indicated a prolonged and persistent problem of low academic performance in English among most learners in public secondary schools especially in Marani Sub County in Kisii County based on the Kenya National Examinations Council Report [16]. The results of the academic performance in English language are summarized and shown in Table 2.

It is clear from the results in Table 2, that academic performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examinations (KCSE) in English in Marani Sub County is dismal because it is below the expected pass mark of seven points out of the possible twelve points despite being a compulsory subject and a medium of instruction. Efforts to intervene on the low academic performance have been made however, the problem of dissatisfying results among students still exists. This situation compelled the present study on the effect of self-evaluation learning strategy on academic performance in English language among public secondary schools in Marani Sub County because there is no single known study which has been carried out in the area regarding continuous and deplorable results in the subject from the metacognitive learning strategy perspective. Therefore, the present study sought to establish the effect of self-evaluation learning strategy on the academic performance in English among students in public secondary schools in Marani Sub County. Self-evaluation learning strategy is concerned with individual's deliberate cognitive processes of making judgments on how well one has completed a learning task, the extent to which set goals have been attained and how one reacts to the overall learning achievement according to Flavell [7]; Woolfolk [25].

Table 1. Summary of National KCSE Performance in English Language

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Mean	3.97	3.378	3.926	3.890	3.642	3.788	2.747	3.86	4.029	3.862

Source: KNEC, Annual Reports, 2018).

Table 2. Summary of KCSE in English Language in Kisii County

Sub County	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Mean
Marani	3.11	3.30	3.23	3.23	3.36	3.52	3.81	4.10	3.21	3.43
Kisii Central	3.81	4.41	4.34	4.53	4.10	4.205	4.43	4.67	3.98	4.27
Gucha South	3.30	3.34	3.56	3.63	3.66	3.76	3.98	4.03	3.23	3.61
Kenyenya	3.43	3.58	3.49	3.67	4.21	3.54	3.67	4.11	3.46	3.68
Sameta	3.22	3.62	3.65	3.45	4.10	3.75	3.78	4.22	3.22	3.67
Kisii South	3.12	3.33	3.48	3.49	3.87	3.57	3.57	4.00	3.41	3.54
Masaba South	3.44	4.11	4.04	4.34	4.33	4.45	4.35	4.65	3.75	4.16
Nyamache	3.38	3.67	3.78	3.63	4.20	3.82	3.69	4.65	3.66	3.83
Gucha	3.25	3.492	3.53	3.74	3.87	3.86	3.78	4.45	3.47	3.71
Mean	3.34	3.65	3.68	3.74	3.96	3.83	3.94	4.32	3.45	3.76

Source : (County Education Office, Kisii County, 2018).

2. Literature Review

Self-evaluation learning strategy helps students to assess the degree of understanding, applying the content and perform task(s) accurately. In addition, this strategy also checks on the overall mastery and accomplishment of the learning process. The key indicators of self-evaluation include; summarizing, reviewing, self-explanation, and taking tests successfully among others in respect to Woolfolk [25]. Empirical studies have highlighted that self-evaluation learning strategy is critical in the learning process. In Toronto, a study conducted by Zapitis [26] sought to establish the effects of self-evaluation training on writing of students and needs for improvement in grades 5 and 6. A sample size of 46 from students from elementary school was used. The study adopted a mixed method approach with explanatory design. The outcome indicated that the self-evaluation process helps learners to set clear guidelines, enables them become focused and improve attention on critical writing criteria and writing process. The reviewed study used a smaller sample size of 46 students which had a higher probability of error margin, making it difficult to generalize results to unknown population. However, the present study sampled a larger sample of 283 students to minimize error margin and increase the extent of accuracy, objectivity and authenticity of study the findings. A study by Kallweit and Melle [10] in Germany revealed that students which were inducted with self-evaluation learning strategy achieved higher learning outcomes than the control group. This was an experimental study to determine the effects of self-evaluation on students' achievements in an individualized learning unit in chemistry education among the learners in the 7th grade of upper secondary. The reviewed study was executed in Germany, which had a different socio-economic system with Kenya where the present study was done. To establish whether similar assertions could be arrived, the present study was crucial and the findings would valuable insight to the previous literature. In South Africa, Dodd and Snelgar [6] employed questionnaires to collect data from the Zulu youth on the relationship between self-evaluation and academic achievement. The study targeted youths pursuing human resource management at the University of Zululand. This study used Solomon Four-group experimental, quantitative, and exploratory approach. The results attested that students that possessed higher core self-evaluations seemed to perform better in academic success compared with those with lower levels. The reviewed study used questionnaires which were rigid and could not allow the participants to express their inner views, opinions, and reasons behind their responses in the findings. Hence, the present study utilized Focus Group Discussions and in-depth interviews which were flexible to capture the participants' feelings, experiences, attitudes and perceptions which broadened the understanding on the application of self-evaluation learning strategy in learning, hence expanding the findings in literature. A study by Ghaslani [8] in Iran investigated on the effect of self-assessment on English among learners' reading comprehension skill. The students were grouped equally into experimental and control group of 20 students per

group. Data were collected using a reading strategy checklist, test of English as foreign Language actual test book for selecting the reading comprehension tests, Test of English as foreign language test, and two reading comprehension test, as pretest and posttest of the study. The findings unveiled that self-assessment had a positive effect on the reading ability of the students. Unlike, the reviewed study which was quantitative in nature and lacked qualitative domain that could have catered for the participants' impression and experiences in the findings, the present study adopted triangulation methods (Focus Group Discussions and in-depth interviews) which enabled participants to express and substantiate their responses in detail and with clarity, hence increasing accuracy of knowledge in the findings and illuminate the existing body of literature on the area under scrutiny. In Jakarta, Purwanti [22] employed a case study design at Stblia to survey the implementation of self-evaluation in writing class and learning from nine (9) students. Data were collected through examining students' essays, students' self-assessment checklist and student's responses to the questionnaires on their attitudes towards self-assessment practice. The results indicated that the process of reflecting on one's own learning was beneficial although their grammatical accuracy did not match and progress significantly. The reviewed study used a case study, hence the outcome could not be generalized to a large population because of the smaller sample size in contrast with the present study which sampled a larger number of 283 students, and hence the findings were fairly representative. McAndrew, Morrow, Atiyeh and Pierre [17] in New York University studied on self-testing learning strategies and academic performance among students pursuing dental course. Survey data were obtained through the General Performance Average and through self-reports and questionnaires. The findings revealed high performers embraced self-testing strategy compared to the low performing students. The reviewed study was conducted in New York which varied in terms of socio-economic backgrounds from Kenya where the present was carried out among high school students. To find out whether consistent results could be generated across the varying situation like Kenya, the present study was of great import and the findings would augment the existing body in literature. In Baltimore, Price (21) investigated among public schools on the effects of assessment on academic performance among third grade students in mathematics. The study employed a quasi-experimental design. The study sampled 30 participants that were taught a self-assessment strategy as a whole group and it was reinforced in small group with mathematics instruction. During the study, they were given three pretest, posttests and winter mathematics test to determine their progress. The findings revealed that there was a significant change in academic performance because of the intervention on self-assessment strategies. The reviewed study exploited a relatively small number (30) of participants whose findings were difficult to generalize the findings beyond the situation and participants, while the present study used a larger sample size of 283 students which boosted credibility and generalization of the results. The findings from a study

conducted by Thawabieh [24] in Tafila Technical University in Israel demonstrated that student's self-assessment accuracy was higher especially when criteria were provided in relation to the teacher's assessment. Data were gathered using two test tools; which were teacher made and two student's self-assessment tool. This was comparative study between students' self-assessment and teacher's assessment in introductory to psychology course. Purposive sampling technique was used to obtain a sample size of 71 students. The reviewed study adopted purposive sampling technique inferring that the findings were prone to high error margin thus reducing its dependability.

To bridge this gap, the present study employed stratified random sampling to increase its credibility and authenticity of the findings yielding to rich and enhanced scope of the phenomena under study. In summary, from the reviewed literature it was clear that some studies have been conducted in elementary learners that were at preadolescent stage whose reasoning abilities differed from each other in their learning and developmental tasks. In some reviewed literature, data were collected using questionnaires which were rigid, hence the participants views, impressions and experiences were lacking in the findings. However, in the present study multiple approaches were employed (Focus Group Discussions, in-depth interviews, pretest/posttest and metacognitive learning questionnaires) in order to tap the entire spectrum of the participants' rich data in the results. In some reviewed studies, a small sample size was utilized thus increasing the margin error and variability making the results not generalizable. To close up this gap, the present used a larger sample size to ensure a fair representation of the findings beyond the situation and population and increase knowledge in the available literature.

3. Research Methodology

The present study employed a convergent mixed design which combined both quantitative and qualitative data aspects within a single study. In this study, quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed separately and then the results were merged to amplify the findings in regard to the study problem in accordance with Creswell [4]. The present study employed pretest/posttests, metacognitive learning questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions, and in-depth interviews to collect data. The study targeted Sub County schools from which 1395 form three students and teachers of English (49) were obtained. Purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample size of twelve (12) teachers of English language. Stratified random sampling was used to obtain a sample size of 283 students. The experimental group was treated for 12 weeks while the control group used conventional learning. Quantitative data were collected through pretests/posttests which measured on the academic performance in English language, metacognitive learning strategy questionnaires which were rated on Likert Scale (Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1) were used to measure the application of metacognitive

learning strategy. Qualitative data were collected using Focus Group Discussions from students and in-depth interviews from teachers of English language. To ensure content, construct and face validity were achieved, the study utilized University experts from the department of education foundations and psychology and my PhD supervisors from Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOUST). The experts checked thoroughly the tools and provided constructive feedback on the suitability of the instruments and procedures to be followed. Reliability of the instrument was obtained through Cronbach Alpha with a correlation coefficient of .80 Trustworthiness of qualitative data was also guided by the thematic procedures as outlined by and Lincoln and Guba [20]. Data were analyzed using both descriptive statistics such as; means, standard deviation and inferential statistics like; regression analysis, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and multiple regression. For qualitative data, thematic analysis procedures were employed.

4. Findings and Discussion

The purpose of the study was to find out the predictive effect of self-evaluation learning strategy on academic performance in English language among students in public secondary schools in Marani Sub County. To establish the effect of self-evaluation learning strategy on academic performance in English language among students in public secondary schools, parametric tests such as linear regression and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to investigate the influence. This was done by testing the null hypothesis that:

“There is no statistically significant effect of self-evaluation learning strategy on academic performance in English language among students in public secondary schools in Marani Sub County.” The results were as shown on Table 3.

Table 3, indicates that the effect of Self-Evaluation Learning Strategy was positive and significant ($r = .231$, $n=270$, $p<.01$), with improved use of Self-Evaluation Learning Strategy resulting to improvement in performance of English language. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis taken. This means that there is statistically significant effect of self-evaluation learning strategy on academic performance of English language among students in public secondary schools. The present study results concluded that there exist a positive correlation between self-evaluation learning strategy and academic performance. This assertion was in harmony with a survey conducted by Zapitis [26] which attested that self-evaluation improved the academic outcomes among the learners.

However, a hierarchical multiple regressions shown in the Model Summary box in Table 4 was used to control for the possible effect of treatment and pretesting and find out whether the variable (Self-Evaluation Learning Strategy) is still able to predict a significant amount of the variance in performance in English language among secondary school students.

Table 3. Correlation between Self-Evaluation Learning Strategy and Academic Performance in English Language

		Post test Score	Self-Evaluation Learning Strategy
Post test Score	Pearson Correlation	1	.231**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	270	270
Self-Evaluation Learning Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.231**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	270	270

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4. Model Summary: Effect of Self-Evaluation Learning Strategy on Performance in English Language

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	
					R Square Change	Sig. F Change
1	.231 ^a	.053	.050	12.199	.053	.000
2	.253 ^b	.064	.054	12.174	.011	.216

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Evaluation Learning Strategy

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Evaluation Learning Strategy, Treatment status, Pretest status.

From results presented in Table 4, in the model summary, it is evident that the variable in Block 1 (Self- Evaluation Learning Strategy) explains 5.3 per cent ($R^2 = .053$) of the variance in academic performance in English language as a subject. However, after adding the other two variables (treatment and pretesting condition) in Block 2, the model now as a whole explains 6.4 per cent ($R^2 = .064$) of the variance in academic performance in English language as a subject. The R square change value in Model 2 is .011; meaning treatment and pretesting conditions explained an additional 1.1 per cent of the variance in performance in English implying positive statistically significant change statistics, as indicated by the Sig. F change value (.216).

To find out the actual contribution of each of the variables (pretesting and treatment), linear regression was generated as shown in Table 5.

From the coefficients in Table 5, it is evident from Model 2, that when the students improve in application of self-evaluation learning strategy by one unit then their level of academic performance in English language as a subject would improve by 6.258 units, which is

a reputable effect. It therefore made a statistically significant contribution, $p < 0.05$ to the model in changing academic performance in English language as a subject among secondary school students.

To determine whether there exists a statistically significant effect of self-evaluation learning strategy on the academic performance in English language, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed and the result was generated in Table 6.

The ANOVA results presented on Table 6, shows that the model as a whole (which includes both blocks of variables) is significant [F (3, 266) =6.082, $p = .000$]. This result signifies that all the variables affect academic performance in English language by accounting for a statistically significant amount of the variance in performance in the subject. Scholars like; Ghaslani [8] and McAndrew, Morrow, Atiyeh & Pierre [17] reported similar dispositions with the present survey that self-evaluation learning strategy had a positive effect on the academic outcomes whereby those who embraced the stimulus scored higher compared to the control group.

Table 5. Coefficients of Linear Regression: Self-Evaluation Learning Strategy, Treatment and Pretest on Performance in English Language

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	29.512	5.104		5.782	.000
	Self-Evaluation Learning Strategy	6.041	1.555	.231	3.886	.000
	(Constant)	27.283	5.295		5.153	.000
2	Self-Evaluation Learning Strategy	6.258	1.557	.239	4.020	.000
	Treatment status	.099	1.485	.004	.067	.947
	Pretest status	2.632	1.498	.105	1.757	.080

a. Dependent Variable: Post test Score.

Table 6. ANOVA: Influence of Self-Evaluation Learning Strategy, Treatment and Pretest on Performance in English Language as a Subject

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2246.838	1	2246.838	15.098	.000 ^b
	Residual	39882.362	268	148.815		
	Total	42129.200	269			
2	Regression	2704.224	3	901.408	6.082	.000 ^c
	Residual	39424.976	266	148.214		
	Total	42129.200	269			

a. Dependent Variable: Post test Score

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self -Evaluation Learning Strategy

c. Predictors: (Constant), Self -Evaluation Learning Strategy, Treatment Status, Pretest Status

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study sought to find out the effect of self-evaluation learning strategy on academic performance in English language among students in public secondary schools in Marani Sub County. The results demonstrated that self-evaluation learning strategy contributed to the improved performance in English language as it was evident from experimental compared to the control groups, hence this study affirmed the more the application of self-evaluation learning strategy the higher the academic performance in English language. The study found that self-evaluation learning strategy is critical in learning because it fosters the ability and quality of individual thinking process. This becomes the basis for making judgments on how well effective learning has taken place and feedback improves retention and internalization, self-testing taking knowledge and experiences which eventually boosts the academic performance. In conclusion, this study attested that there exists a statistically significant effect of self-evaluation learning strategy on academic performance in English language among students in public secondary schools. Therefore, the study recommended that self-evaluation learning strategy should be infused in the teaching learning process of English language among students in secondary schools in order to improve overall performance in the subject.

Acknowledgements

My special thanks goes to Dr. Peter Aloka and Dr. Robert Ochieng' who were my supervisors in addition to the National Research Fund (NRF) for their financial support.

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