

An Assessment of Perception of Students toward English as an International Language (A Case of Mwakaleli, Luteba, Mwatisi, Isange and Mbigili Secondary Schools in Busokelo District Council - Mbeya Region, Tanzania)

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Abstract:

This research paper aims at assessing the inner perceptions of the students toward English as an International language. English language has a promising outlook to the students and the nations as well. The study was guided by the following specific objectives; to identify whether the students understand what it means by an international language. To figure out the perception of the students toward English as an International language and to determine strategies, this can be used to make the students grasp position of English in the World as an International language. More over the design of this study is qualitative in nature i.e. descriptive and inferential as well. Thus, an adapted questionnaire was employed as a measuring instrument. The participants were required to answer all the items of the questionnaire honestly, giving their own perceptions about their attitudes toward English language as an international language in terms of the emotional, cognitive and behavioral aspect. The most regarded group in this study were the public Secondary school students which also included some few appointed sampling technique to select teachers and villagers. Furthermore in collecting students' perceptions random sampling technique was also used to select students of secondary schools who are found in Busokelo district Council.

The researcher used Gregory's theory of Perception as one among the Constructivist theories in his study. The questionnaires were used to collect data from the students while interview technique was used to gather data from the villagers and other educational stake holders.

The results show that the students and other education stake holders understand or have a positive perception of English as an International language. The challenges which make students ignore English language are as; most of the teachers are using Kiswahili in teaching subjects which are supposed to be instructed by using English language. Teachers, their fellow students, and the society use Kiswahili or vernaculars (Nyakyusa language) mostly in communication, and other related challenges explained in the research paper.

Regardless the position, rank, education, and economic status everybody should advocate the use of English language wherever he or she is. Also the government should create a friendly environment to teachers and students so that teaching and learning English language can take place easily and comfortably, by providing necessary incentives which include motivating them.

Keywords: Perception, English language, International language, students, Attitude.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Language is one of the most useful tools we have as humans. Without it we could not think thoughts expressible to others, nor could we engage in the activities that commonly take place in the society we build ourselves. Language is very important in education. For instance, Roy-Campbell and Qorro (1997) asserted that education is carried out largely through the medium of language, thus, language is very significant in the education process. Additionally, ADEA (2005) argues, “Language is not everything in education, but without language, everything is nothing in education” (p. 5). Language plays a crucial role in learning, and if the learner is handicapped in the language of instruction, then learning may not take place at all as the instructor or teacher and the learner will not be communicating.

Most people in Tanzania speak a vernacular language as their first language, with Kiswahili and English as possible second and third languages. Kiswahili, the national language, is widely spoken throughout East Africa; in fact, Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir (2004, p. 69) estimate that around 95% of the population in Tanzania is fluent in Kiswahili¹. On the other hand, the percentage of Tanzanians who have some knowledge of English has been estimated at 5%–15% (Rubagumya, 1991, p. 68; Ngonyani, 1997, p. 413)². Considering that Tanzania is composed of numerous different ethnic groups speaking around 120 vernacular languages, the choice of an official language and a language of instruction are important political and educational decisions for the country. Although previous policies promoted Kiswahili as a national language, lingua franca, and medium of instruction, the most recent comprehensive education policy, published in 1995, designates Kiswahili as the language of instruction at the primary school level and English as the medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary education and makes English a compulsory subject from the first year of primary school (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2004, p. 69; Vavrus, 2002, pp. 375–376). These changes promoted English as the language of the educated elite and increased its importance for individual advancement and education.

In a comparative study between Tanzania and Kenya on high school students’ performances, the Tanzanian language policy is questioned by the World Bank (WB) because the results were not quite impressive (Mazrui, 1997). The World Bank (WB) stated that the Tanzanian education system of using Kiswahili throughout the seven years of primary school education has shown how difficult it is for students to learn in English in secondary school (Mazrui, 1997). This is seen in their academic achievement in high school where Kenya has done remarkably well while Tanzanian students results were very low.

Tanzania as one of the few African countries is endowed with a local national language Kiswahili that is used by about 95% of the entire population, while English is spoken fluently and used by only about 5% of the population (Brock-Utne, 2002).

Batibo (1990) found that Kiswahili is a fast growing language in Tanzania. Although it is a second language to many children after their vernacular languages especially those who

¹ Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir (2004, p. 69)

² (Rubagumya, 1991, p. 68; Ngonyani, 1997, p. 413)

live in rural areas while remaining the first language to the urban children, at present, has become a tool of communication to facilitate national interactions in business, in Parliament, in the various Ministries, in the lower judicial courts as well as in all of public primary school as a medium of instruction since independence as compared to English which is used as the medium of instruction in post primary education and in few ministries³. Currently a Tanzanian child receives seven years of primary education in Kiswahili medium while English is taught as a compulsory subject. According to Rubagumye (2002) as the children complete their primary education and continue to secondary schools they switch from Kiswahili to English which seems to be difficult for most of them. He found that the students' level of English proficiency in secondary schools was completely inadequate for teaching and learning of other subjects and suggested for immediate measures to be taken⁴.

According to the current educational demands, English Language has become a tool of communication to facilitate both national and international interactions in business, science and technology, education, foreign relations as well as other areas. English is also a second official language and a medium of instruction in secondary schools in Tanzania. This makes it important to equip student teachers with appropriate skills to enable them cope with the paradigm shift, from content to competence based teaching and learning (MOEVT, 2009)⁵

Kiswahili is the national and official language in Tanzania. Kinigi (2002) observes that Kiswahili is widely spoken in Tanzania. Teachers and students speak Kiswahili during school activities. There is no rule that requires students to speak English at school as a result, spoken English is not practiced. Rubagumya (2003) reports that 79.8% of parents would not send their children to a school where English language is not the medium of instruction, however, they attribute their children's low proficiency in English language to teachers who speak Kiswahili most of the time. Rugemalira (1990) observes that wealthy Tanzanian parents send their children to Kenya and Uganda to start primary school to have a good foundation of English language. There are many young men and women from Kenya and Uganda who qualify to take high paying jobs in Tanzania because of their English skills thereby displacing Tanzanians who would be qualified if only they spoke better English. Second language acquisition is the process of learning a second language after a first language is already established. There are many factors affecting the process of learning the second language⁶.

According to Gardner (1985) motivation and attitude are the most influential factors in second language acquisition⁷. For most Tanzanians, matters pertaining to customs, values, humour and cultural practices are often better communicated by the use of these ethnic languages (Rubagumya, 1993)⁸.

³ Batibo (1990)

⁴ Rubagumye (2002)

⁵ MOEVT, 2009⁵

⁶ Rugemalira (1990)

⁷ Gardner (1985)

Kiswahili is the national lingua franca, official language and the second language for about 80 percent of Tanzanians (Mapunda, 2013). Mapunda (*ibid.*) further observes that the exclusion of ethnically-based languages from being used in the education system in Tanzania makes the transition of non-Kiswahili speaking children from the home language in a primary school language⁹.

Although English is spoken by few people, it occupies a high status as it is the language of higher education, in the judiciary system, and in diplomatic circles (Schimied, 1986). *The Education and Training Policy* (1995) presents that the objectives of language teaching in secondary education are to promote the development of competency in linguistic ability and effective communication. These objectives indicate that English language is a very important school subject and medium of communication at both local and international levels. The English syllabus for forms I-IV targets at enabling students to communicate effectively with other speakers of English language both inside and outside the country and use their knowledge of English in furthering students' own education (URT, 2010)¹⁰.

The effective learning of a foreign or second language depends largely on the attitudes of individuals to the target language (Baker, 1992).

With this view I sincerely contend that most of the stated stumbling blocks for the students to learn and use English as an International language, there are several ways to be used as the government should plan to conduct several seminars for English language teachers, so that they may get exposure thereafter they will be able to impart the skills obtained to the students. Moreover this should go further by insisting the teachers mostly to use English language as a medium of communication; the students will get to learn from them.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Greenwood (2002, p. 1) mentioned that more and more people need to use English for social, educational and professional reasons in all kinds of contexts, locally and internationally. English language is not solely used for social and professional purposes but also in knowledge sharing and transferring¹¹. Thus, most of the universities in the world today use English language as a medium of instruction and communication. Moreover, Asmah (1982, p. 53) state that this language is a language of international diplomatic and commercial relations as well as a World language for the dissemination and exchange of knowledge and technology. Generally in Tanzania English has become a language which is widely used in education system especially from secondary schools up to the University level as an instructional language and also a subject. In public primary schools is only used as a subject¹². For the the improvement of English language different scholars have conducted different researches such as Kirui, K. E. J., Osman, A., & Naisujaki, L. (2017). Attitude Of Teachers Towards Use Of English Language As A Medium Of Instruction In Secondary Schools In Republic Of Tanzania: A Pragmatic Perspective Of Community Secondary Schools In Arusha District. Nyamubi (2016). Students' Attitudes and English Language Performance in Secondary Schools in Tanzania. Makewa, Role &Tuguta (2013)

⁸ Rubagumya, (1993)

⁹ Mapunda,(2013).

¹⁰ URT, (2010)

¹¹ Greenwood (2002, p. 1)

¹² Asmah (1982, p. 53)

Students' Perceived Level of English Proficiency in Secondary Schools in Dodoma, Tanzania. Wamalwa, Edika & Kevogo (2013). Multilingualism and Language Attitudes: Students Perceptions towards Kiswahili in Mtwara Region of Tanzania, and others but 'An Assessment of the Students' Perception toward English as an International language' has received less attention. So this will make different scholars, society, education stake holders, and the governments grasp the perception of the students toward English as an International language.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

To assess students' perception toward English as an International language.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- a) To Identify Position of English language in Students' studies
- b) To evaluate students' perceptions toward English as an International language.

1.4 Research Questions

- a) Do the students understand position of English language in their studies?
- b) What are the perceptions of Students toward English as an International language?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Largely the study speculates deeply on students' perceptions toward English as an International language. Regarding the fact that English is the language which is used in Education system and also other official settings in Tanzania, different researchers proved this with their findings.

This study provides an intensive light to researchers, university students and the government on the genuine students' perceptions toward English as an international language.

Moreover the study enlightens the government, education stake holders and the society at large on position of English language in education system.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

The study was conducted in Mbeya region and concentrated on "An Assessment of Students' Perceptions toward English as an International language". The study based in Busokelo district, Luteba ward which included five schools which are Mwakaleli, Mwatisi, Isange, Luteba and Mbigili secondary school. The findings obtained from this ward will represent other wards found in Busokelo district Council.

During the accomplishment of this research paper, a researcher encountered some stumbling blocks which made him to find alternatives to make his work vivid. Some of them being lack of enough funds, considering the fact that most of the schools are very scattered.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

There are a lot of words or terminologies used in this research paper, this section defines the key terms used in the research;

1.7.1 Perception

According to Yolanda Williams, a psychology professor; can be defined as our way to recognize and interpret information we've gathered through our senses. This also includes how we respond to a certain situation with the given information (Williams). Psychology is the study of behavior and mental processes (Milnes). Perception relates to psychology because as discussed in the notes, psychology is the study of behavior and mental processes, while perception is how we react to situations, in other words, our behavior towards that situation.

1.7.2 English Language

According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, English is a West Germanic language that was first spoken in Anglo-Saxon England in the early middle ages.

1.7.3 Student

The Free Dictionary defines a "Student" as the one who is enrolled or attends classes at a school, college or university.

1.7.4 International Language

In Sociolinguistics, a world language (Sometimes global language, rarely International language is a language that extends far beyond its national boundaries and makes it possible for members of different language communities to communicate. (Wikipedia)

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher reviewed various related writings and documents like books, journals and other related sources pertaining to "An Assessment of Students' Perceptions toward English as an International Language". Several authors have deeply discussed and analyzed the nature of the problem based on specific research objectives. This chapter discusses an introduction, empirical literature, theoretical literature, and the relationship between literature review, topic and the knowledge gap which is supposed to be revealed to the society.

2.1 Empirical Literature

Quantitative and qualitative approaches are employed to collect data across a variety of study types, including empirical studies. Empirical studies are the collection and analysis of primary data based on direct observation or experiences in the 'field.' In this part different researchers who conducted researches in the related topic of "Perceptions of the students Toward English language" are as follows;

2.1.1 The Concepts of Perception

According to Yolanda Williams, a psychology professor; can be defined as our way to recognize and interpret information we've gathered through our senses. This also includes how we respond to a certain situation with the given information (Williams). Psychology is the study of behavior and mental processes (Milnes). Perception relates to psychology because as discussed in the notes, psychology is the study of behavior and mental processes, while perception is how we react to situations. In other words, our behavior towards that situation.

Another word often associated with perception is sensation. They are often used interchangeably, however; sensation is the process of reevaluating information from the world into the brain (AlleyDog). We use our senses to detect and recognize something which then allows us to process the information and discover the emotions and react to the situation we see, which is perception.

There are two types of theories to perception; there is the self-perception theory, and the cognitive dissonance theory. There are many theories about different subjects in perception. There are also disorders that relate to perception even though you may think perception is just a person's view point.

First, the self-perception theory, inspired by B. F. Skinner's analyses, is when individuals come to "know" or better understand their own attitudes, emotions, and other personal states mostly by concluding them from observing their own behavior and/or the situations in which this behavior occurs. One example would be an individual who describes "butterflies in the stomach". We have all identified this feeling for ourselves, on our own (Bem).

The cognitive dissonance theory is a person having two thoughts that contradict each other. For example, a person that thinks eating sugar is bad for you, but then continues to eat sugar because they believe that by not eating sugar, it wouldn't change anything, so nothing will change the current health the individual is in. These thoughts are contradicting, almost hypocritical. According to Leon Festinger, the existence of dissonance causes the individual to be psychologically uncomfortable, which then allows the individual to try to remain constant in his/her thoughts. Also, while the individual wants to become consistent, the individual will try to avoid situations that include that subject that causes dissonance (Festinger).

Like other things in psychology, there is a lot of science behind perception. One thing has to do with light and our eyes. When looking in a mirror, light bounces off your face, and then off the mirror, and then into your eyes. Your eyes then take in all that energy and transform it into neural messages that your brain processes and organizes into what you actually see. As humans, we only see a small fraction of the full spectrum of electromagnetic radiation that ranges from gamma, to radio waves (Jenkins, Sensation & Perception).

Our eyes percept what we see based on wave lengths and amplitudes. Wave lengths and frequency determine their hue, for example, short wavelengths and high frequencies omit blueish colors, whereas long wavelengths and low frequencies

omit reddish colors. The amplitude determines the intensity or brightness. Large amplitudes are bright colors, and small amplitudes are dull colors (Jenkins, Sensation & Perception).

After taking in light through the pupil and the cornea, it hits the transparent disc behind the pupil called the lens. This focuses the light rays into specific images, which projects these images onto the retina. The retina is the inner surface of the eyeball that contains all of the receptor cells that begin sensing that visual information. Once reached the ganglion cells, the axon tails form the ropy optic nerve through the thalamus, to the brain's visual cortex, which is located in the occipital lobe (Jenkins, Perceiving is Believing). This allows us to view things in the world.

An example of our perception of the things we look at and how it can differ depending upon the person would be The Dress. The Dress that became an internet phenomenon over-night, because people couldn't agree on what color it was. Some people swore that they saw a white dress with gold lace, while others saw a blue dress with black lace. Scientists studied the dress and came to the conclusion that the different perception in color is due to the expectation that the dress will appear the same under different lighting, explaining color constancy. People, who saw the dress as white and gold, probably saw that the dress was lit by sunshine, causing their brains to ignore the shorter, bluer wavelengths. The people that saw the dress as blue and black, saw it lit by a false lighting; causing their brains to ignore longer, redder wavelengths (Lewis).

Oliver Sacks, a famous physician, professor, and author of unusual case studies, is viewed as a brilliant individual for his work; however, cannot do a simple task such as recognizing himself in a mirror. He has a form of Prosopagnosia, which is a neurological disorder that impairs an individual's ability to perceive or recognize faces. This is also known as face blindness. He can perceive other information, such as his own handwriting, or book on a shelf, but is not able to recognize a close friend in a crowd.

Lindsay and Norman defined perception as “the process by which organisms interpret and organize sensation to produce a meaningful experience of the world” (as cited in Pickens, 2005, p. 52)¹³.

McLeod (2007) argued that in order to receive information from the environment we are equipped with sense organs namely; eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin¹⁴. Each sense organ is part of a sensory system which receives sensory inputs and transmits sensory information to the brain. The theory of affordances shows that perception is more than a means of passively representing the intrinsic physical organization of objects. Perception is inherently active and exploratory. It seeks out alterations in the vast flow of information enveloping it. These alterations are detected when the

¹³ Pickens, 2005, p. 52

¹⁴ McLeod (2007)

perceiver moves through the environment and probes it with a pair of glancing eyes (Braund, 2008)

2.1.2 Attitude

Eliaset *al.* (2012) contended that an attitude can be defined as an evaluative judgment, either favourable or unfavourable, that an individual possesses and direct towards some attitude object. The attitudes objects can be either abstract (e.g. technology) or concrete (e.g. the Internet). Individuals are typically biased towards those attitude objects for which their evaluation is positive and against those attitude objects for which their evaluation is negative. Bohner and Dickel (2011) argued that attitude change involves both the retrieval of stored evaluations and the consideration of new evaluative information to varying extent. Attitude is defined as an accumulation of information about an object, person, situation or experience¹⁵. It is a predisposition to act in a positive or negative way toward some object (Littlejohn, 1989). Attitude is an essentially information obtained about someone or something that form an opinion or predisposition about. Mattee (1983) defined attitude as an individual's favourable or unfavourable evaluation of an object while Msemo (2012) asserted attitude to be a positive or negative view of a person, place, thing, or event and that people can also be conflicted or ambivalent towards an object, meaning that they simultaneously possess both positive and negative attitude towards the item in question. Bohner and Dickel (2011) also defined attitude as an evaluation of an object of thought. Attitude objects comprise anything a person may hold in mind, ranging from the ordinary to the abstract, including things, people, groups, and ideas, tents.

2.2 Theoretical Literature

Theory is the body of knowledge which explains why a certain phenomenon exists or happens in a particular way. In relation to this study, the researcher will use the Gregory's Theory of Perception.

2.2.1 Gregory's Theory of Perception

One of the most popular constructivist theories of perception is Gregory's theory. While Gibson integrated the phylogenetic flow of time (the influence of evolution on cognitive apparatus) into the process of perception, Gregory used also the flow of ontogenetic time. He claims that sensory data found on receptors are just some sort of energy samples, but they are of no great importance themselves. Their importance is based on our previous experience. Data have the past and the future; they change themselves and they influence each other. They have some hidden aspects that emerge only if influenced by various conditions (Gregory, 1990, 219).

What Gregory is trying to suggest is what we call the importance vagueness of sensory data. Similarly to Gibson, he does not doubt the importance of receptors for acquiring data but he disagrees that sensors possess the ability to read the meaning of

¹⁵ . Bohner and Dickel (2011)

particular data (e.g. affordance). Gregory believes this process, just like any other similar process of reading, requires higher cortex centers activity and learning. Perception is a matter of receptors as well as of brain. The name of his book *Eye and Brain* follows this idea.

Material acquired by sensory organs is non-specific and raw, so we must approach it by higher cognitive functions. In this contexts Gregory talks about searching for a hypothesis that would be able to grasp and interpret sensory data in the most pertinent way. Subsequently, we test the given hypothesis (e.g. this is the letter A) and if it seems to be congruent with the model, we accept it. So sensory data are only clusters of physical stimuli and our brain tries to interpret them in the most meaningful and the most likely way.

A typical example of such a procedure is various optic illusions or gestalt figures. Many of these figures are based on our endeavor to grasp some non-specifically outlined shapes in the most meaningful way. The model itself is neither a duck, nor a rabbit, only a group of some points we tend to connect and interpret as lines that are somehow connected. We believe, if there are two points close to each other, there must be a connection (the law of closure). It means that the cortex is searching for an appropriate explanation of what the retina is offering. We do not know exactly how and by what principles the cortex does this. It is, however, obvious that it concerns the rule of similarity and association, and thus it is based on previous experience. When searching for the appropriate answer, the cortex is forced to use already existing contents and knowledge. Among them it tries to pick and choose the best and the most likely one, consequently it tries to subject the sensory stimulus to this hypothesis.

Verifying particular hypotheses is considerably constructivist. When talking about constructions we mean that when grasping sensory data on receptors we do not accept them as they are, but we try to construct a sensory object to organize it according to hypotheses that should describe it. Ultimately it means we ignore data, which do not support the hypothesis (e.g. an incomplete object and its imperfection) and we emphasize those which agree with the hypotheses. If we succeed in doing this and sensory data do not oppose the hypothesis, it is certain the hypothesis is correct.

Many psychological experiments have proven that when we search for hypotheses we are very sensitive to either slight simplifications leading to a clear conclusion (an oval as a circle) or vice versa, to tiny obstacles which violate the ideal shape which leads to a search for totally different hypotheses (an unclosed circle with the gap on the top we interpret as the letter u, with the gap on the right side as letter c). It is quite interesting, however, that to find the right interpretation, neither the perfection or completeness of sensory data nor the ratio of these data to those that contradict the hypothesis are important. In fact, only a small amount of information and its correspondence with the whole idea is sufficient. Taking this into account, Gregory thinks, that a subject needs contents and ideas more than a great sum of sensory information. Experience is the key point of interpretation.

Gregory often points out that for interpretation of sensory data, experience is more important than sensory image. Our conclusions about stimuli such as the Müller-Lyer Illusion or the Ponzo Illusion prove that. We perceive both by using our experience with spatial perception, which we apply to two-dimensional outlines. We suppose that

two parallel lines of the same size are not of the same length because they are bordered by opposite oriented arrows. Gregory believes, we interpret this illusion (drawing) through our experience with the distant corner of a room versus the near corner of a building. Also in a Ponzo Illusion, we use the rules of perspective to interpret the size of objects.

A distinctive example of using perspective for identifying stimulus is the Necker Cube. The cube portrayed in a two-dimensional surface is a slightly illusionary object. In fact, we should see and identify some sort of polygon rather than a spatial object. But our previous experience with representing perspective forces us to interpret this object as a three-dimensional one, portrayed according to the rules of the Renaissance perspective. What's peculiar about this cube is the fact that it immediately offers at least two equally correct interpretations and those are the top-view as well as the view from below. Both views are reversible and we can switch between them according to our approach to object organization we happen to adopt at that particular moment. There are some other similar unreal or infinite objects (the Penrose Triangle, Escher's Infinite Staircase).

It is quite remarkable that these illusions are somehow forcing us to spontaneously interpret them the wrong way even after we had just realized that the first hypothesis was wrong. It is the same with the Ebbinghaus Illusion. In this experiment we incorrectly identify the size of circles based on context in which we see them. If there are two identical circles surrounded by circles of different size (one is surrounded by smaller circles, the other by larger circles), we tend to think that the one surrounded by smaller satellites is larger than the one surrounded by the larger ones. This phenomenon applies mainly when evaluating visual stimuli (for the tactile ones it is less significant) and it may be attributed to the fact that we are trying to perceive the contrast and the context at the same time.

Research has shown (Bruner, Goodman, 1947) that overestimating the size of an object relates also to attributing specific values to a larger object. Poor children, for example, tend to overestimate the size of coins, while more affluent ones (perhaps because of a lot of experience) do not trust this illusion so much. The context, the motivation and the expectations are some of the key theorems of Gregory's theory. From our own experience we know that when evaluating stimuli we are often led by what we are mostly expecting. We do not take into account atypical features and we see what we want to see, or on the contrary what we don't want to see; it means what we are afraid of, but are convinced, we are in danger of it. Allport and other constructivists in this context talk about perceptual sets and setting. Gregory, therefore, says that to see means to believe, that the given object is what it is, but also, that our perception is determined by attitudes, emotions and expectation.

One of the most significant examples is operating with incomplete objects. And this applies to completing pictures as well as to more abstract objects such as the letters. If we look at a written text, we focus not as much on the structure and visual aspect of a particular letter, but rather try to integrate it into a meaningful unit consisting of other letters — into a word. According to the holistic reading method, it is possible to apply this strategy even when reading whole words in sentences. What we are attempting here is to identify a letter according to the already read context and expectations arising from the following letters. Psychologists carried out a wide range of

experiments, in which they used incomplete letters and found out that this obstacle does not necessarily play a major role in reading and identifying the content. Similarly, if we use a letter font, which makes it impossible to identify differences between some letters (e.g. cl and d), despite the fact, that typographically it will be the same object, the reader often, based on context, has no problem to distinguish them and reads the text as if these were two totally different letters. This means that the way we identify stimuli is not “literal“, but it is driven by most likely context. Hypotheses, where do they come from, because in early childhood we possess mainly sensory data and hypotheses (experiences) are created via grasping and interpretation of this data.

To express this in a lighter way we can say, that while Gibson studies correct perceptions in optimal conditions, Gregory’s theory is based on analyses of incorrect perceptions and perceptions in borderline or limited conditions. This allowed him to demonstrate that perception is a more complicated and complex phenomenon than Gibsonians had thought, and that besides mere collection of information, it involves also active participation of higher cognitive functions responsible for constructing.

2.3 Relationship Between Literature Review and The Topic

To a greater extent literature review cohere with the topic of study because most of the researchers’ works used in this study have touched key areas of my research topic. For instance Yolanda Williams, a psychology professor; defined “Perception” as our way to recognize and interpret information we've gathered through our senses. This also includes how we respond to a certain situation with the given information (Williams). Psychology is the study of behavior and mental processes (Milnes). Perception relates to psychology because as discussed in the notes, psychology is the study of behavior and mental processes, while perception is how we react to situations. In other words, our behavior towards that situation.

More over McLeod (2007) argued that in order to receive information from the environment we are equipped with sense organs namely; eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin. Each sense organ is part of a sensory system which receives sensory inputs and transmits sensory information to the brain. The theory of affordances shows that perception is more than a means of passively representing the intrinsic physical organization of objects. Perception is inherently active and exploratory. It seeks out alterations in the vast flow of information enveloping it. These alterations are detected when the perceiver moves through the environment and probes it with a pair of glancing eyes (Braund, 2008).

Attitude is defined as an accumulation of information about an object, person, situation or experience. It is a predisposition to act in a positive or negative way toward some object (Littlejohn, 1989). Attitude is an essentially information obtained about someone or something that form an opinion or predisposition about. Mattee (1983) defined attitude as an individual’s favourable or unfavourable evaluation of an object while Msemo (2012) asserted attitude to be a positive or negative view of a person, place, thing, or event and that people can also be conflicted or ambivalent towards an object, meaning that they simultaneously possess both positive and negative attitude

towards the item in question¹⁶. Bohner and Dickel (2011) also defined attitude as an evaluation of an object of thought. Attitude objects comprise anything a person may hold in mind, ranging from the ordinary to the abstract, including things, people, groups, and ideas.

A good learner will try to find their own way in solving the problem that is faced by them. Attitudes are inclinations to like or dislike something – such as an idea, thing, person or behaviour – and the object of these tendencies (the thing that are being liked or disliked) is often called the attitude object (Hewstone, M., Fincham, F. D., & Foster, J, 2005). The attitude of the learners will determine the effectiveness of the learning outcome. At this point, whether male or female would have their own means to overcome the problems in dealing with language learning, especially English. Some of the experts in language learning believe that the good learner will find their own way of learning; organize the information they get about language; can feel the language by further studying the grammar and words; practicing the language inside and outside the classroom; learn from mistakes; try to communicate even though they know very little about the context as well as will learn various speaking styles to communicate differently in different situations, either formal or informal.

A study held in UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia by Muhammad Khoir (2014) stated that the students of English department in the university were aware about the importance of English language for their future. Unfortunately the awareness did not reflect the attitude of the learners. They only knew and understood the benefits of learning English but not the practical part of it. The study has also shown that there were aspects of cognitive dissonance present, which meant that there was no correlation between what they believe and their actual behavior or attitude. Khoir measured the motivational intensity of the students towards English language using Integrative and Instrumental orientation. As a result, the students dominantly studied English language based on instrumental orientation rather than integrative one. In relation to this, Lambert has defined integrative orientation as personal interest to learn or study others' culture, languages or customs. However, instrumental orientation relates to the potential of second language learners proficiency, such as to get a better job, have a bright future or to pass a required examination¹⁷.

The importance of attitude of the learners in improving the second/foreign language learning is undeniable. Brown (2000, p.160) stated that "it is easy in second language learning to claim that a learner will be successful with the proper motivation". Furthermore, Gardner (2006, p. 241) posits that "students with higher levels of motivation will do better than students with lower levels". He also said "if one is motivated, he/she has reasons (motives) for engaging in the relevant activities, expends effort, persists in the activities, attends to the tasks, shows desire to achieve the goal, enjoys the activities, etc" (Gardner, 2006, p. 243). In short, the learning outcome of one person is highly determined by the level of attitude towards the subject either derived from the internal factors and he external factors such as parents, grades, and also public

¹⁶ Msemo (2012)

¹⁷ Muhammad Khoir (2014)

opinion. Both are having influence in motivating and boost the students' attitude toward learning.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes research design, research approaches, sample and sampling procedures, research methods, Data collection methods, area of the study, informants of the study, criteria for the selection of the informants, data recording and analysis,.

3.1 Research Approach

The study applied qualitative research approach. The qualitative approach involves a function of researches insights and impressions. This approach was used in Assessing Students' Perceptions toward English as an International Language. The approach was employed because this research is descriptive in nature. Shank (2002) defines qualitative research as "a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning" (p. 5). By systematic he means "planned, ordered and public", following rules agreed upon by members of the qualitative research community. By empirical, he means that this type of inquiry is grounded in the world of experience. Inquiry into meaning says researchers try to understand how others make sense of their experience. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) claim that qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach: "This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3).

3.2 Research Design

According to Kothari, (2004:31) research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedures. The case study as the type of research design was used in this study¹⁸.

This study used the descriptive research design to assess the Students' Perceptions toward English as an International Language. Through this design, the study presented the results of the research topic through the objectives and research questions. The data were collected from the students, teachers, and other Education stake holders using a questionnaire and focus group discussion whereby the obtained data will be analyzed qualitatively for the sake of obtaining better and latest feedbacks.

3.3 Sampling

. The population of the study included fifty (50) respondents at Luteba ward who were chosen to represent other wards in Busokelo Distric, similar results that were obtained at this ward determined that the perceptions of English as an International language could be existing in other parts of district are found. Considering that there are five (5) public secondary schools in Luteba ward- Busokelo district. The researcher sampled eight (8) students for each school, but he added ten (10) students of Mwakaleli

¹⁸ Kothari, (2004:31

secondary school (Form five and form six). The population provided, had given adequate and liable data for the research study appropriateness.

3.3.1 Population

Population in research refers to a complete set of individuals or objects or measurement having a common observable characteristic. Omari (2011:71) defines population as the totality of any group of units that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the research.

The study focused on an assessment of Perceptions of students Toward English as an International Language. The sample population has involved students, teachers, education stake holders and villagers. The only criteria used to gather information from informants was that one has to be a student of secondary school in Luteba ward.

3.4 Area of the Study

The research was conducted in Mbeya region specifically Busokelo district and one ward included which is Luteba ward. This ward represented other wards in Busokelo district pertaining to the perceptions of English as an International language. Moreover the researcher was unable to go through other wards in Busokelo district because the data obtained in this ward are related to other wards in Busokelo district.

The researcher intended to collect data in Busokelo district because the observation and development of English language in Busokelo district is at the low level. However a researcher knows the environments as he worked in Busokelo district.

3.5 Sampling Procedure

Sampling procedure refers to the methods used by the researcher in getting the sample of the study from the population that will be studied, this population becomes the representatives of the whole population of an area under study, and the sampling procedure to be employed is a purposive sampling.

3.5.1 Purposive Sampling

The study used purposive sampling which according to Omari (2011:76); refers to picking units most relevant or knowledgeable in the subject matter under study. The study employed purposive or deliberate sampling. Purposeful sampling is used because the selected samples can give vivid feedbacks of the study research as long as they are in that field (education).

3.6 Research Methods

According to Kothari, (2011:7) research method refers to all those methods that are used by the researcher during the course of studying research problem. In this research, the researcher used primary data tools to get the data through introspection, lexical questionnaire and focus group discussion methods.

3.7.1 Introspection

The researcher used the knowledge that he has in formulating the techniques for making the research study effective. The motive behind in choosing this method of data collection is that, a researcher is a teacher residing in the same environment and he has experience on the subject matter as he teaches English language.

3.7.3 Focus Group Discussion

This research used focus group discussion, which according to (Kombo and Tromp, 2006) refers to a special group of people in terms of purpose, size, composition and procedure. The focus group discussion was important in this study because it enables to capture ideas, and understanding opinions the speaker has in the area of study. In this study, focus group discussion was used by providing speakers with questionnaires which contain several questions in different forms. Through this focus group discussion; the group had made in-depth discussion on the topic and provide natural data in the perception of the Students toward English as an International language. The group discussion involved ten respondents divided into five (5) groups in different scheduled sessions of eight (8) students per school in five (5) schools and ten (10) Advanced level students of Mwakaleli secondary school. The group was selected depending on knowledge and experience of the position of English language. The researcher guided the group by clarifying the questions where necessary.

3.7.4 Questionnaires

This tool included fifty (50) respondents from Luteba ward and both open and closed questions were used for data collection.

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION (RESULTS)

This chapter presents research findings and discussion of the data which were collected from five (5) schools in Busokelo District pertaining to an Assessment of English as an International language. Furthermore the chapter is constructed by using two specific objectives of this research paper which starts with identification of Position of English language in Students' studies and to evaluate students' perceptions toward English as an International language. The first research question was; do the students understand position of English language in their studies? And the second research question was; what are the perceptions of Students toward English as an International language? The results are stipulated in the questionnaires attached.

5.0 DISCUSSION

The whole research paper has keenly investigated about the topic and ultimately came out with clear statements which can be used to solve a lot of questions pertaining to Student's Perception toward English as an International Language. According to the Questionnaires given to the respondents basing to statements set in Appendix B from 2.1 to 2.15 has real

proved that students perceive the use of English language positively. For instance in **2.4- I would do better in school if my classes were not taught in English** gave the results as follows;

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
40 = 80%	02 = 4%	01 = 2%	03 = 6%	04 = 8%	50 = 100%

Moreover, in Appendix C, which has the statement **Students' Perceptions toward English as an International Language** has proved that students perceive English as an International language positively? This is proved by referring to the answers got from the respondents, such as the statement from **3.6 I want to learn English to communicate with people from other countries.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
01 = 2%	01 = 2%	0 = 0%	02 = 4%	46 = 92%	50 = 100%

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, the use of English language in all official settings such as in schools, office etc is inevitable. As long as English is also used as the language of Instruction/ Medium of Instruction in Tanzania, the researcher, according to the students' responses admit that practical side of the English language as the medium of Instruction is not effective. The researcher suggests that, students are ready to learn English language but there are some factors which makes them not to perceive English as an International language. Some of the factors mentioned by the students (respondents) are as follows, first a tendency of English language teachers to use Swahili and other Vernaculars to teach English language and related subjects. Again, Incompetence of some English language teachers, this situation makes a teacher not to be confident enough to use and deriver materials to the students. Moreover, Poor techniques of teaching English language such as the use of games in learning new language. Apart from the mentioned factors above, Students lack Exposure, most of the students are not exposed to different opportunities which come from English language such as meeting with people from other countries whose first language is English.

Solving this problem, the government should put much emphasis in the use of English language as the medium of Instruction practically. Teachers need to be very innovative while or in teaching English language under the assistance of the Government, hence promoting learning English language. On the other hand, the researcher suggests that the government should create Forums/ seminars and workshops for the English language teachers. This will give room to the teachers to share experience in different areas of teaching English language.

This can be done through some organs/ institutions such TELTA – Tanzania English Language Teachers’ Association etc.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRES

AN ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARD ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

I am Jackson J.Kamugisha, a teacher at Mwakaleli Secondary school in Busokelo District-Mbeya. I am conducting a research on “An Assessment of the Students’ Perceptions toward English as an International Language”. I request you to assist me filling these questionnaires, the information given will be valuable to me and I will keep them confidential. Thanks.

1.0 RESPONDENTS’ PROFILE:

Choose or give the correct answers by filling the blanks in the given brackets

1.1 Sex (a) Male () (b) Female ()

1.2 Age (a) Below 18 years old () (b) 18 years old -above ()

1.3 What is the name of your school? _____

1.4 What class are you now? _____

1.5 How many subjects are you studying? _____

1.6 What are the subjects of your interest? (**Mention the best three (3) subjects**)

I _____ ii. _____ iii _____

1.7 Where is your home residence? (**Tick the correct option**)

a) Rural () b) Urban ()

1.8 What is the highest level of education of your father? (**Cycle the correct option**)

(a) Did not go to school (b) Primary school (c) Secondary school (d) University level

(e) Other (please specify).....

1.9 What is the education level of your mother? (a) Did not go to school (b) Primary school

(c) Secondary school (d) University level (e) other (please specify).....

1. 10 what is the education level of your guardian if you don't have father and mother?

(a) Did not go to school (b) Primary school (c) Secondary school (d) University

(e) Other (please specify).....

1.11 What is the occupation of your father?

1.12 What is the occupation of your mother?

1.13 What is the occupation of your guardian if you don't have father and mother?

APPENDIX B

2.0 THE POSITION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN STUDENTS' STUDIES

s/n	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree
2.1	I understand classes taught in English.	0	05	0	45	0
2.2	I prefer classes taught in English and Kiswahili.	03	02	03	02	40
2.3	I would do better in school if my English skills were better.	02	03	0	40	05
2.4	I would do better in school if my classes were not taught in English.	40	02	01	03	04
2.5	I have negative feelings about learning English.	42	02	02	02	02
2.6	My English skills limit my ability toward my education.	03	07	0	12	38
2.7	My English teacher speaks English well.	01	0	03	39	07
2.8	My other subject teachers speak English well.	08	12	04	25	01
2.9	My Secondary teachers only speak English in the classroom.	05	30	05	10	0
2.10	I think all subjects Except Kiswahili should be taught in English.	01	03	01	05	40
2.11	When a teacher uses English I doesn't grasp anything.	38	09	02	01	0

2.12	I feel happy when a teacher teaches using English language	03	02	03	05	37
2.13	I grasp everything effectively when a teacher uses English.	12	02	01	30	05
2.14	You need to take private classes to learn English well	04	05	02	37	2
2.15	You need money to learn English well	38	02	03	05	02

Table 1: Responses of Students of Five Secondary Schools (Mwakaleli, Luteba, Isange, Mbigili

and Mwatisi Secondary School - Number of students' answers per Question)

APPENDIX C

3.0 STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARD ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

S/N	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree
3.1	I feel comfortable speaking English.	10	05	02	30	03
3.2	I don't like speaking English in front of other people.	25	05	05	15	0
3.3	Learning English is important for my future education.	0	0	01	02	47
3.4	Learning English is important for my future career.	01	03	0	38	08
3.5	I don't need to Learn English for my future plan.	34	02	01	10	03
3.6	I want to learn English to communicate with people from other countries.	01	01	0	02	46
3.7	After graduation, I think I will rarely use English.	35	04	01	07	03
3.8	My English skills give me an advantage over other Tanzanians.	04	05	02	31	08
3.9	English education in schools helps Tanzania's economy.	03	05	01	39	02
3.10	My English skills limit my ability to get a good job.	04	04	02	33	07

3.11	I don't need to learn English for my future career.	37	05	03	02	03
3.12	Studying English is wastage of time and power.	41	02	0	05	02
3.13	I don't bother myself about English because even my teachers are not committed to it.	05	03	04	08	30
3.14	I don't receive enough advice about the advantages of English as an International language	01	05	05	07	32
3.15	English language doesn't offer good career opportunities	36	03	03	03	05

Table 2: Responses of Students of Five Secondary Schools (Mwakaleli, Luteba, Isange, Mbigili

and Mwasisi Secondary School - Number of students' answers per Question)