

**EFFECT OF PLAY ON ACQUISITION OF LANGUAGE SKILLS AMONG SCHOOL
CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY OF KABIRIA PRIMARY SCHOOL IN DAGORETTI,
NAIROBI COUNTY.**

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ABSTRACT

This study was intended to investigate the effect of play on acquisition of language skills among children with special reference to those in lower primary in Kabiria Primary School in Dagoretti District in Nairobi County. It was guided by the following objectives: To determine frequency of use of play in language learning; to find out effect of type of play on acquisition of language skills among children; and to determine effect of availability of play resources on acquisition of language skills among children. This study shall be of great significance to teachers, school management committees and curriculum developers in effective provision and management of learning. The study was anchored on interactions explanatory models which combine the contributions of various research directions and emphasize in particular the significance of the exchange between the child and the social environment in the process of language acquisition, which they regard as being fundamentally bi-directional. The design adopted for this study was descriptive survey design which facilitated use of questionnaires for teachers and observation checklists for children. The researcher targeted nine teachers and 180 children in classes one to three. Purposive sampling and simple random sampling method were used to select all language teachers in lower primary (classes one to three) which is nine teachers and 30 children from each class to obtain 90 children. Therefore the study had sample size of 99 respondents comprising of 9 teachers and 90 children. Collected data was sort and arranged for analysis. It was analyzed by use of Microsoft Excel for expressions in simple statistical measures like mean, mode and percentages. It was then presented in form of tables and graphs. Qualitative data was descriptively analyzed and discussed. Findings of the study showed that play is significant in language acquisition and skill development. Through play, sounds, grammar and language comprehension are enhanced. Acquisition of such skills depended on frequency of use of play, type of play and availability of play resources. In addition, use of play in teaching English enhances acquisition of language skills such as listening, recitation, memorization, writing, comprehension and speech. However, acquisition of such skills depends on type of play children engage in, frequency of use of play in teaching English and availability of play resources. The case in Kabiria primary school indicates that majority of children acquire less language skills due to ineffective utilization of time allocated for play and English lessons, use of less rewarding types of play to language skills and inadequate play resources.