AN INVESTIGATION OF HOME- BASED DYNAMICS ON DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE SKILLS AMONGST PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN KAKUZI DIVISION, MURANG'A COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Home-based dynamics have been established to contribute immensely to language acquisition amongst preschool children. However, the influence of such dynamics as parents' activities, sibling characteristics, peer-related play and home materials have not been fully exhausted. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate the contributions of home-based dynamics on development of language skills amongst preschool children in Kakuzi Division in Gatanga District. These dynamics included parents' activities, sibling characteristics, home materials and peer-related play and literature for this study was reviewed based on these dynamics. The study applied qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study applied explanatory sequential design in which researcher implemented the quantitative and qualitative methods in which qualitative data helped to build upon initial quantitative results. The study targeted 600 parents, 700 siblings and 1200 preschool children in the 35 preschools in Kakuzi Division all totaling to 2500. From these data, the parents constituted a proportion of 24% whereas siblings and preschool children constituted 28% and 48% respectively of the target population. Using The Central Limit Theorem of sample size determination, a sample of 7 homes, that is, 20% of 35 targeted homes were selected. Based on the same theorem, 250 respondents, that is, 10% of 2500, were selected. The researcher then applied stratified sampling to create 7 strata each consisting of 5 homes. Simple random sampling was applied to select 1 and 1 preschool from each stratum. At the same time, from each stratum 8 parents were selected using simple random sampling; the inclusion criteria being that one must have had a child at preschool. Simple random sampling was also applied to select 10 siblings and 17 preschool children from each stratum since it eliminated bias and favoritism. This sampling procedure enabled the researcher to realize a sample of 7 preschool managers, 1112 preschool teachers, 60 parents, 70 siblings and 120 preschool children. Analysis of data began by identifying common themes from the respondents' description of their experiences. Frequency counts of the responses were then obtained to generate descriptive information about the respondents and to illustrate the general trend of findings on the various variables that were under investigation. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically along the study objectives whereas basic quantitative data was analyzed using Pearson's product Moment Correlation Coefficient Test Analysis in Statistical Package for Social Sciences and then merged into one overall interpretation in which the researcher will relate the quantitative results to the qualitative findings. The findings of the study was presented using tables. The study has established that home dynamics contribute immensely towards preschool children's acquisition of language skills. The study has established that parents' activities, siblings' characteristics, home materials and peer-related play enhance preschool children's acquisition of reading, writing and listening skills. The study thus recommends that educators, teachers and other stakeholders should encourage parents to provide conducive environment to enable preschool children acquire reading, writing and listening skills. Parents should collaborate with language teachers to ensure that the materials they provide at home are relevant, suitable and of right quality in helping preschool learners acquire reading, writing and listening skills. Parents should monitor the play activities of their children to ensure their effectiveness in enhancing language acquisition.