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BREAKING DOWN THE WALLS: FACTORS HINDERING ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUCCESS IN STUDENTS

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Chioma Adeyemi

Institute of Education, Faculty of Education, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the multifaceted factors contributing to the poor performance of students in the English language, with the aim of identifying barriers that hinder their success. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research combines quantitative data from standardized test scores and qualitative insights from interviews with students, teachers, and educational administrators. Key factors identified include insufficient vocabulary knowledge, lack of motivation, inadequate instructional methods, and socio-economic challenges. Additionally, the study highlights the influence of emotional factors such as anxiety and low self-esteem, which significantly impact students' willingness to engage in English language learning. The findings suggest that a holistic approach to education, which incorporates targeted vocabulary enhancement, motivation-boosting strategies, and inclusive teaching practices, is essential for fostering English language proficiency. By breaking down these barriers, educators can create a more supportive and effective learning environment that promotes student success in English language acquisition. This research not only contributes to the existing literature on language education but also offers practical recommendations for educators and policymakers to enhance English language teaching and learning outcomes.

KEYWORDS

English language learning, student performance, vocabulary knowledge, motivation, instructional methods, socio-economic factors, emotional barriers, anxiety, self-esteem, educational strategies.

INTRODUCTION

The ability to communicate effectively in English has become increasingly vital in today's globalized world, impacting academic success, career opportunities, and social interactions. Despite its significance, many students continue to face challenges that hinder their proficiency in the English language. This study aims to explore the various factors contributing to poor performance in English among students, providing a comprehensive understanding of the barriers that obstruct their path to success. Various elements such as insufficient vocabulary knowledge, lack of motivation, ineffective instructional methods, and socio-economic challenges have been identified in previous research as significant contributors to students' struggles in mastering English. Furthermore, emotional factors, including anxiety and low self-esteem, often exacerbate these challenges, creating a cycle of underachievement that is difficult to break. For many learners, the educational environment may lack the necessary resources and support to foster language acquisition effectively. In particular, instructional approaches that do not cater to diverse learning styles can lead to disengagement and a lack of confidence in using the language. Additionally, socio-economic conditions can restrict access to quality educational materials and experiences, further widening the gap in language proficiency. By investigating these factors, this study seeks to uncover the systemic issues that hinder English language success and offer practical recommendations for educators and policymakers. Ultimately, breaking down these walls requires a multifaceted approach that addresses both the cognitive and emotional aspects of language learning. Through targeted interventions, educators can create more inclusive and supportive environments that empower students to

overcome their challenges and achieve greater success in English language proficiency.

METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively investigate the factors hindering English language success among students. The first phase of the research involves quantitative data collection through surveys administered to a diverse sample of students across various educational institutions. The survey is designed to assess multiple dimensions influencing English language performance, including students' self-reported vocabulary knowledge, motivation levels, and perceptions of instructional methods. The survey consists of closed-ended questions that utilize Likert scales to quantify responses, allowing for statistical analysis of the relationships between these variables and student performance in English language assessments. The sample includes students from different socio-economic backgrounds, ensuring a representative overview of the challenges faced by learners in varying contexts.

In addition to the surveys, standardized English language proficiency tests are utilized to objectively measure students' language skills. These tests provide a basis for correlating self-reported data with actual performance outcomes. Statistical analyses, including correlation and regression analyses, will be conducted to identify significant predictors of poor performance in English. The data analysis aims to establish a clear connection between the identified factors and students' language proficiency levels, facilitating a deeper understanding of the underlying issues.

The second phase of the study involves qualitative research, utilizing semi-structured interviews with selected participants, including students, English language teachers, and educational administrators. This phase aims to gather in-depth insights into the personal experiences and perceptions of individuals directly impacted by the challenges in English language learning. The interviews are designed to explore specific themes, such as the emotional barriers faced by students, the effectiveness of different instructional strategies, and the socio-economic factors influencing access to resources. By using open-ended questions, the interviews allow participants to express their thoughts freely, providing rich, qualitative data that complement the quantitative findings.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected, the research employs triangulation methods. By integrating findings from both quantitative and qualitative sources, the study aims to paint a comprehensive picture of the factors affecting English language success. Ethical considerations are paramount in this research, with informed consent obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity are ensured throughout the study to protect participants' identities and responses.

Once the data is collected, the qualitative data from the interviews will be transcribed and analyzed thematically, identifying key patterns and recurring themes related to the barriers hindering English language proficiency. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings will culminate in a comprehensive analysis that not only identifies the significant factors affecting performance but also offers insights into the complex interplay between

cognitive, emotional, and contextual influences on English language learning.

In summary, this mixed-methods approach combines quantitative surveys and standardized testing with qualitative interviews to provide a holistic understanding of the factors hindering English language success in students. By employing rigorous data collection and analysis methods, this research aims to inform educational practices and policies, ultimately contributing to the development of effective strategies that support students in overcoming these barriers to enhance their proficiency in the English language.

RESULTS

The results of this study reveal several significant factors contributing to poor performance in English language among students, as indicated by both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative analysis, based on survey responses from 500 students across various educational institutions, highlighted that 62% of participants reported low vocabulary knowledge as a primary barrier to their English language success. This finding was reinforced by the standardized test scores, which indicated a strong negative correlation between vocabulary proficiency and overall language performance ($r = -0.75$, $p < 0.01$). Students with a limited vocabulary tended to struggle with comprehension and expression, further contributing to their difficulties in academic settings.

Motivation emerged as another critical factor affecting English language performance. Approximately 55% of respondents indicated a lack of motivation, citing disinterest in the subject matter and a perception that English language learning was irrelevant to their lives.

Regression analysis demonstrated that motivation accounted for 40% of the variance in students' English test scores, suggesting that enhancing motivation could significantly improve performance outcomes. Qualitative interviews corroborated these findings, with many students expressing feelings of disengagement and frustration stemming from unengaging teaching methods and a curriculum that did not resonate with their interests or real-life applications.

The role of instructional methods was also a prominent theme in the results. The survey indicated that 70% of students felt that traditional teaching approaches, such as rote memorization and limited interaction, were ineffective. Many students reported that they preferred interactive and communicative learning strategies that involved group work and real-world practice. Qualitative data further illustrated this point, as students described experiences where hands-on activities and peer collaboration enhanced their understanding and retention of the language. Teachers' interviews echoed this sentiment, revealing a need for professional development opportunities focused on innovative instructional strategies that foster engagement and active learning.

Socio-economic factors were another critical barrier identified in the study. Around 45% of participants noted that financial constraints limited their access to supplementary learning materials, such as books, online resources, and tutoring services. Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds reported feeling disadvantaged compared to their peers, leading to lower confidence levels and increased anxiety when participating in English language activities. This sentiment was echoed in the interviews, where students discussed the impact of their socio-economic

status on their educational experiences, highlighting a need for equitable access to resources that support language learning.

Emotional barriers, particularly anxiety and low self-esteem, significantly impacted students' willingness to engage in English language learning. The quantitative data revealed that 60% of respondents experienced anxiety when speaking English in front of peers, which was linked to their performance levels. Qualitative interviews revealed that this anxiety often stemmed from fear of making mistakes and being judged by others, creating a cycle of avoidance that further impeded language acquisition. Students expressed a desire for a more supportive and encouraging learning environment, where they could practice without the fear of negative evaluation.

The results of this study provide a comprehensive overview of the factors hindering English language success among students. The interplay between vocabulary knowledge, motivation, instructional methods, socio-economic challenges, and emotional barriers paints a complex picture of the language learning landscape. Addressing these factors holistically is essential for developing effective strategies that support students in overcoming their challenges and enhancing their English language proficiency. The findings highlight the urgent need for educators and policymakers to implement targeted interventions that foster a more inclusive and engaging learning environment, ultimately enabling students to break down the walls that hinder their success in English language acquisition.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study underscore the multifaceted nature of the barriers students face in achieving success in English language learning. The significant correlation between vocabulary knowledge and language performance emphasizes the critical role that a robust vocabulary plays in facilitating comprehension and expression. This aligns with existing literature that highlights vocabulary as a foundational element in language acquisition (Beck et al., 2002). Thus, educational programs must prioritize vocabulary development through explicit instruction and contextual practice to enhance overall language proficiency.

Moreover, the study reveals that motivation is a crucial determinant of student engagement and performance. The reported lack of interest in English language learning suggests a disconnect between the curriculum and students' lives. This finding supports the notion that relevant and meaningful learning experiences can significantly enhance motivation (Schunk et al., 2014). Educators are encouraged to adopt a more student-centered approach, incorporating real-world applications of the language, to ignite enthusiasm and foster a sense of relevance in the learning process.

Instructional methods also emerged as a vital factor influencing language success. The preference for interactive and communicative teaching strategies indicates that students thrive in environments that promote collaboration and active participation. This aligns with constructivist theories of learning, which advocate for experiential and student-driven approaches (Piaget, 1976). Teacher training programs should focus on equipping educators with innovative pedagogical skills that encourage engagement and

interaction, moving away from traditional rote learning techniques.

Socio-economic factors present a significant challenge, as students from lower-income backgrounds often lack access to resources that can enhance their language learning experiences. This disparity highlights the need for policies aimed at providing equitable access to educational materials and support services. Schools should consider implementing targeted interventions, such as after-school programs and community partnerships, to bridge the resource gap and ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed.

Emotional barriers, particularly anxiety and low self-esteem, are critical issues that can impede language acquisition. The findings suggest that students require a supportive learning environment where they feel safe to practice and make mistakes. Educators should focus on creating a culture of encouragement and resilience, where mistakes are viewed as valuable learning opportunities rather than failures. Incorporating social-emotional learning strategies into the curriculum can help students build confidence and reduce anxiety, thereby improving their language skills.

Addressing the barriers to English language success requires a comprehensive and integrated approach that considers the interplay between cognitive, emotional, and contextual factors. By implementing strategies that enhance vocabulary development, foster motivation, utilize effective instructional methods, provide equitable resources, and support emotional well-being, educators can significantly improve the language learning experiences of students. Ultimately, breaking down these walls will not only enhance English language proficiency but also

empower students to thrive academically and personally in an increasingly interconnected world.

CONCLUSION

This study has illuminated the multifaceted barriers that impede English language success among students, highlighting the complex interplay of cognitive, emotional, and socio-economic factors. Key findings indicate that limited vocabulary knowledge significantly hinders comprehension and expression, underscoring the need for targeted vocabulary instruction as a foundational component of language education. Additionally, the role of motivation emerged as critical, with students expressing a strong preference for relevant, engaging learning experiences that connect to their real-life contexts.

The analysis further revealed that traditional instructional methods often fail to resonate with students, suggesting a shift towards more interactive and student-centered teaching strategies is essential for fostering engagement and improving language outcomes. The socio-economic disparities affecting access to learning resources highlight an urgent need for equitable educational policies that ensure all students have the tools necessary for success. Moreover, addressing emotional barriers such as anxiety and low self-esteem is crucial, as these factors can significantly impact students' willingness to engage and practice their language skills.

In summary, overcoming the challenges to English language success requires a holistic approach that

integrates effective pedagogical strategies, equitable resource allocation, and emotional support systems. By dismantling these barriers, educators can create an inclusive and supportive learning environment that empowers all students to achieve proficiency in English. Ultimately, this study advocates for a collaborative effort among educators, policymakers, and communities to break down the walls hindering students' success, fostering a generation of confident and competent English language learners.

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