TIRF-British Council Research Mentoring Awards

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Project Title
Literate and Attitudinal Benefits of
Local Game-Based English Instructions in
Tanzanian Rural Public Primary Schools

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TIRF Research Topic Investigated
Teaching English to Young Learners

TIRF Mentor Name
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Final Report

Introduction

This study centers on the research title: "Literate and Attitudinal Benefits of Local Game-Based English Instructions in Tanzanian Rural Public Primary Schools," resulting from the reshaped title: "Impact of Local Games on Learning English Reading and Writing Skills in Tanzanian Primary Schools." Carrying out this research is motivated by the difficulties encountered in the teaching and learning of English in Tanzanian rural public primary schools. On the learning side, difficulties are evidenced by unfavorable attitudes towards the language among students (Anyiendah, 2017; Byabato & Onyango, 2022), and a lack of strong English proficiency foundations (Elibariki, 2017; Hasani, 2023). Moreover, on the teaching side, there are issues with poor pedagogical practices that do not account for the needs of learners (Chacha & Zhong, 2013); lack of enough time dedicated to English language instruction and practice (Mwaka, Nabayego & Musongo, 2014); and general limited English language proficiency among teachers themselves (Elibariki, 2017). These difficulties are intensified by the widespread use of local languages, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient time for pupils to practice and strengthen their English language knowledge and skills (Elibariki, 2017).

Many English teachers in Tanzania encounter challenges when adapting teaching methods developed in different contexts. This issue highlights the need to create methods suitable to the Tanzanian environment. Nanai (2023) stresses the importance of using approaches tailored to Tanzanian pupils to enhance their English skills. A proposed method, post-Methodism, advocates

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for adjusting teaching methods to specific contexts rather than relying on traditional approaches (Canagarajah, 2016; Kumaravadivelu, 2006). With this backdrop in mind, my study aims to incorporate local games, which are currently underutilized in English language education in Tanzania, believing in their potential effectiveness as evidenced by researchers from other areas (Kenanoğlu & Duran, 2021; Novinda, 2020; Rusiana & Nuraeningsih, 2016). Therefore, assessing the influence of local games on English language education in Tanzania is essential.

Investigating the use of local games in English language education in Tanzania is vital for enhancing primary school instruction. This study aims to explore how local game-based teaching can improve English language learning and communication skills among Standard Three Tanzanian learners. If successful, it is anticipated that English teachers will adopt these methods more broadly, ultimately enhancing the language skills of primary school pupils.

Research Questions
This study intends to answer the following questions:

i. What kind of local games are played by pupils in Tanzanian rural public primary schools?
ii. What local games are suitable for teaching reading and writing skills to Standard Three pupils in Tanzanian rural public primary schools?
iii. How does the local game-based English instruction impact reading and writing skills among Standard Three English language learners in rural public primary schools in Tanzania?
iv. What are the English teachers' and pupils' views with regard to the incorporation of local games in English language teaching and learning in rural public primary schools in Tanzania?

Research Methodology
This research will employ a mixed-methods approach for three reasons: (1) strengthening the study's conclusions through combined methodologies; (2) fostering a deep understanding by comparing qualitative and quantitative results; and (3) offering a comprehensive view of how local games and English teaching/learning activities affect literacy skills and pupils' attitudes in Tanzanian rural public primary schools. This study will be guided by Design-Based Research (DBR) by adapting, after modifying it, the Reeves model. Kumar (2005) describes DBR as the procedural plan a researcher must follow to find solutions to the existing challenges. The adapted Reeves model highlights the significance of researching educational interventions in real contexts, promoting collaboration between researchers and practitioners, and contextualizing educational practices.

This study, set to be conducted in Chamwino District, Dodoma, Tanzania, targets rural public primary school pupils who face literacy challenges (Ndijuye, Beatus, & Ndijuye, 2022). Data will be gathered from Standard Three pupils and English teachers, with varying participant numbers. Three hundred pupils and twenty four English teachers will be involved at the problem analysis stage, one hundred pupils and two English teachers at the implementation stage, and one hundred pupils and two English teachers at the evaluation stage. The data collection tools include pre- and post-tests, focus group discussions, interviews, observations, and Likert-scale questionnaires. The analysis of data will employ both qualitative and quantitative techniques.

Progress Made Through the Mentoring Program
The mentoring initiative, particularly with Prof. Anamaria Pinter (my mentor), has greatly aided me in improving my proposal writing skills. I remember when we started the mentoring program,

Prof. Anamaria assisted me in improving various aspects of the research proposal, including specific objectives, research methodologies, especially the choice of research design and selection of participants, as well as data-gathering techniques. In short, TIRF played a key role in helping my research proposal get approved during the presentation by the university committee.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to extend my thanks to TIRF leadership and Prof. Annamaria Pinter for their support in enriching my research proposal. The TIRF financial support, their decision to assign Prof. Annamaria as my mentor, and the feedback she provided for my research proposal are greatly appreciated.

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