

The Impact of Language Barriers to Kindergarten Learners: Exploring Teaching Strategies and Techniques

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Abstract: The study delved into the challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights that teachers experienced with language barriers in a kindergarten classroom. The findings of the study revealed that language barriers often led to decreased attention spans as learners struggled to follow instructions and classroom activities, also comprehension issues arose when children could not grasp the language used for instruction, hindering their overall learning experience. Moreover, teachers faced significant challenges in designing lesson plans that accommodate to diverse language proficiencies while meeting educational standards. In order to cope, the results suggested that teachers work together, share resources, and strategies to support language learners effectively. Also, instructional adjustments have been made to adapt teaching methods and materials to meet the needs of language learners, ensuring they can access the curriculum. Furthermore, establishing an inclusive and supportive classroom atmosphere that encourages language development and student engagement is also a way. The findings of the study suggest that collaboration, a positive mindset, and inclusive instruction are the most important insights that educators have gained. Moreover, addressing language barriers requires a comprehensive approach that combines collaborative efforts, adaptive instructional strategies, and a nurturing learning environment. By implementing these strategies, educators can better support kindergarten learners, facilitating their language acquisition and overall educational success.

Keywords: Language Barrier, Kindergarten Learners, Collaboration, Instructional Adjustment, Inclusive Instruction

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I. INTRODUCTION

All children, when going to school for the first time, come from different backgrounds and cultures. This type of diversity is something that one must always consider-- a factor that one must consider knowing better how to allocate and mold a learner in their first years. This factor is that of how one communicates with others. Communication can only be comprehensible and understandable if the speakers and/or receivers are using the exact words according to the knowledge that they have been inflicted upon in their early years growing up. In a population, there would always be different or diverse backgrounds, and that includes the languages that children have grown into depending on the language that they use at home with their respective families.

The language barrier is an issue that is common today and must be tackled despite it being on the surface for quite a long time now. Techniques and Strategies must be gathered upon and comprehended by teachers for them to know which methods and strategies best fit the situation as

they teach learners in kindergarten that carry diverse backgrounds, especially in terms of a culture where language is greatly affected.

This study, titled "The Impact of Language Barriers to Kindergarten Learners: Exploring Teaching Strategies and Techniques" aimed to delve into the concept of language barriers and how this can impact the learning of a kindergartener and explore the different techniques and strategies that a teacher can impose or implement in order to allocate learners in their education better. It was noted in an article by McConville (2019) that children who experience language barriers in the educational setting tend to fall back more commonly. Despite years of education, many students from linguistic minority groups graduate virtually illiterate. According to Wendy Erasmus, country director for Concern Kenya, "What we learned [from conducting assessments] is that children still can't read and can't write by the time they're in grades six, seven, and eight." They are able to repeat passages from books but fail to comprehend them.

In conclusion, addressing language barriers in early childhood education is crucial to ensuring that all learners have an equitable opportunity to succeed. As kindergarten students come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, it is essential for educators to adopt flexible, culturally responsive teaching strategies that accommodate these differences and promote effective communication. By exploring and implementing a variety of techniques and approaches, teachers can better support their students in overcoming language barriers and fostering a deeper understanding of the curriculum. The insights from this study underscore the need for targeted strategies that enhance language proficiency, ensuring that children from all backgrounds are equipped with the skills they need to thrive academically and develop a love for learning.

II. METHOD

In social and historical settings, these arbitrary interpretations are widely contested. Individuals want to understand their reality and create their own distinctive meanings that correlate to their experiences using Social Constructivism as an interpretative framework for qualitative assumptions (Creswell, 2013). In other words, they are developed through interactions with others as well as historical and cultural conventions that work in people's lives, as opposed to merely being imprinted on them. Due to the diversity and multiplicity of these meanings, the researcher chose to focus on the complexity of viewpoints rather than try to categorize or simplify them. Additionally, as a researcher, it is intended to depend as much as the researcher can on the participants' viewpoints.

The field of phenomenology will be used in this study's research design. It might be first described as the study of experience or awareness' structural components. Phenomenology is defined as the study of phenomena, which includes the manner in which things seem to us, how we experience them, and the meanings they have for us. Additionally, the field of phenomenology is different from yet connected to other important branches of philosophy including ontology, epistemology, logic, and ethics. It examines important circumstances of experience as well as the structures of conscious experience as perceived from the first-person perspective. The intentionality of an experience—the way it is focused on a particular item in the universe through its content or meaning—is its fundamental structural element.

The participants of this study will be preschool teachers. They will be identified using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling, is a type of non-probability sampling technique. Only 10 participants from a public elementary school were included as the key informants and were purposefully chosen based on the nature of their work as classroom teachers and who are employed by the Department of Education. This study was carried out in Kisulad, Sta Maria, Davao Occidental specifically in Hilario K. Cernal Elementary School.

In addition, the researcher will interview each of the chosen participants one-on-one using the interview guide in IDI or In-Depth Interview. In addition to the interview, I'll be doing a focus group discussion to confirm the findings of the first. Ten (10) kindergarten teachers from public elementary schools in Kisulad, Sta Maria, Davao Occidental will make up the study's 10 target participants, of whom will participate in individual interviews and the other in focus groups.

The researcher determined what information was necessary to have and then set out to locate those who could and would be willing to share it due to their training or expertise. Through the key informant approach, where one or a small number of people are asked to serve as guides to the phenomena, deliberate sampling is demonstrated. Key informants are perceptive, self-aware members of the community of interest who have a wealth of knowledge about the subject and are both able and eager to offer it.

The inclusion criteria are as follows: the kindergarten teacher must have at least three years of experience; they must be at least 25 years old; and must have attended at least three training in the last five years. Specifically, the participants of this study will be ten kindergarten teachers from a public elementary school in Kisulad, Sta Maria, Occidental, specifically in Hilario K. Cernal Elementary School.

In conclusion, this study aimed to explore the lived experiences and perspectives of preschool teachers in Kisulad, Sta. Maria, Davao Occidental, by focusing on their unique interpretations of teaching in a multicultural and diverse context. Using a phenomenological approach and social constructivism as a theoretical framework, the researcher sought to capture the complexities and nuances of teachers' experiences, ensuring that their voices and insights remained central to the investigation. Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with purposively selected participants, the study provided valuable insights into the strategies and challenges encountered by kindergarten educators, ultimately contributing to the development of effective teaching practices and policies for young learners in this community.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first theme presented the challenges experienced by teachers with language barrier. The study participants revealed that language barriers significantly contributed to attention problems among kindergarten students. Teachers observed that children who struggled with the language often had shorter attention spans and were easily distracted. Learners found it challenging to follow instructions and stay engaged during activities, which hindered their ability to participate fully in the classroom.

The second theme highlighted the coping mechanisms of kindergarten teachers. In order to cope with these challenges, the study found that effective collaboration is essential in addressing language barriers. This collaborative approach facilitated the sharing of strategies and resources, enabling a more cohesive support system for the students. Additionally, peer collaboration among students was encouraged, promoting language practice and social integration.

The third theme focused on the insights gained by kindergarten teachers. The insights of the study revealed the significance of fostering cooperation among students and between students and teachers to mitigate language barriers. Collaborative learning strategies, such as group activities, were found to be effective in enhancing language skills. These strategies allowed students to practice language in a social context, facilitating better understanding and retention. Teachers who promoted a cooperative classroom environment observed higher levels of engagement and participation from students facing language challenges.

The study has significant implications for educational practices and policies, particularly in relation to the identified themes of attention problems, difficulty understanding, difficulty in lesson planning, collaboration, instructional adjustment, positive classroom environment, positive mindset, and inclusive instruction.

Addressing attention problems related to language barriers requires the implementation of strategies that increase student engagement. Schools should consider integrating more interactive and hands-on learning activities that can hold students' attention and foster active participation, helping mitigate the impact of language barriers on attention spans.

Moreover, in order to improve comprehension among students facing language barriers, it is essential to employ a variety of instructional methods that cater to different learning styles. Visual aids, interactive activities, and simplified language can enhance understanding and make learning more accessible for all students.

The study underscores the importance of a multi-faceted approach to addressing language barriers in kindergarten classrooms. By focusing on these themes, educators and policymakers can create more effective and inclusive learning environments that support the diverse needs of young learners, ultimately enhancing their educational outcomes and overall development.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, addressing language barriers in kindergarten classrooms requires a collaborative effort among the Department of Education, school administrators, teachers, students, and future researchers. By developing and implementing policies that support language diversity, prioritizing bilingual educators, fostering inclusive teaching strategies, and creating student-centered programs,

significant strides can be made in improving language acquisition for young learners. Continuous professional development for educators, along with the integration of technology and differentiated instruction, will be crucial in supporting diverse language needs. Future research will further contribute to understanding the long-term impact of these strategies and the role of family and community in language development, ultimately leading to more effective and inclusive educational practices.

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