MASENO UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

ANALYSIS OF MEDIATED INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES IN LITERACY SKILLS ACQUISITION AMONG   PUPILS WITH CEREBRAL PALSY IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN KENYA

ABSTRACT

Learners with Cerebral Palsy (LCP) experience difficulties in acquiring literacy skills. This has adversely affected their academic performance. A baseline survey conducted in 2013 in 3 special schools in Kisumu, Kiambu and Mombasa Counties in Kenya shows that, from the year 2009 to 2011, more than a half, 28(88%) out of 32(100%) LCP repeated grades due to inability to read and write. Studies conducted have focused on general and specific areas of instruction to LCP. Research has shown that when mediation is used appropriately, learners improve in learning. Little is known, however, about how mediation can be used as a strategy in instructing LCP on literacy acquisition. The purpose of this study was to analyze the use of mediated instructional strategies in acquisition of literacy skills among LCP in special schools in Kenya. Objectives of the study were to: Examine types of mediated instructional strategies used by teachers to teach literacy skills to learners with cerebral palsy; analyze strategies used by learners with cerebral palsy to acquire literacy skills; examine teacher competence in using mediated instructional strategies to teach literacy skills to learners with cerebral palsy; establish the constraints faced by teachers in using mediated instructional strategies to teach literacy skills to learners with cerebral palsy. The study is based on socio-cultural theory- the Vygotskyian framework of Zone of Proximal Development that advocates for mediation by a more capable person in learning situations. Descriptive and embedded case study designs were adopted. Target population was 72 teachers and 18 LCP. Saturated sampling procedure was used to sample 65 teachers and 18 LCP. Observation schedule, document analysis guide and questionnaires were used to collect data. Reliability of instruments was 0.8 at $p<.05$ when determined through test re-test. Expert opinion was sought from the School of Education to determine both face and content validity of the instruments. Qualitative data was coded into categories and themes. Quantitative data was analysed through descriptive statistics using frequency counts and percentages. Results revealed that there were variations in the types and use of the strategies in which individualized adaptations

(47(72.3%), Scaffolding (47(72.3%) and artifacts (46, (70.8%) were the most used with direct instruction in combination. Most learners (11, (61.1%) depended on association of objects or pictures paired with experience to read. Majority of the teachers (36, (55.4%) were found to be competent in using mediated strategies. As for the constraints faced by teachers, most challenges were found to be in Peto strategies and differentiation with 46, (70.8%) each. Other challenges from qualitative data included varied needs of learners, lack of resources and time constraints. The study concludes that with appropriate use of mediated instructional strategies, learners' strategies, teacher competence and minimal constraints, LCP can acquire literacy skills. The study recommends that teachers should be sensitized on how to scaffold and differentiate literacy instructions to LCP; fade out learner support to minimize overdependence in literacy acquisition; in-service training on mediated instructional strategies for teachers of LCP to upgrade their skills on mediation; It is further recommended that there is need to address/ minimize the constraints that teachers face in using mediated strategies. The outcome of the study may be of value to the teachers and inform policy on improvement of instructional strategies for mediating learning of literacy skills to LCP.