



Influence of Classroom Environment on the Academic Performance of Students in English Language

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ABSTRACT

The classroom environment plays a pivotal role in the academic performance and engagement of students, particularly in the realm of English language learning. This study explored the perceived influence of various classroom environmental factors on the academic performance of students in English language. Factors such as the physical environment, teacher-student interactions, peer interactions, teaching strategies, and assessment techniques were examined. A mixed-method approach, encompassing surveys and focus group discussions, were employed to gather perceptions from both students and teachers in a diverse urban secondary school. The findings suggest that a conducive physical environment, positive interpersonal relations, innovative teaching strategies, and fair assessment practices significantly impact students' motivation and performance in English language. Recommendations for improving the classroom environment to foster better language acquisition and academic performance were made. This study contributes to the broader understanding of how the classroom environment shapes the learning experiences and academic outcomes of students in the context of English language education.

INTRODUCTION

The academic milieu within which students learn significantly impacts their performance, especially in the realm of English language acquisition. A conducive classroom environment not only nurtures students' linguistic skills but also significantly influences their motivation and engagement towards learning. The importance of the classroom environment in the academic journey of students is supported by various studies that have explored its multifaceted impact on English language learning. One study delineated that the classroom environment profoundly affects the academic performance of students in English language, highlighting factors such as the frequent use of English at school and home, teacher-student ratios, teacher responsibilities, and the general conduciveness of the classroom setting as pivotal elements that either bolster or hinder the language learning capacity and performance in English as a Second Language (ESL) learners (Wali et al., 2019). Additionally, it posited that the quality of education is inextricably linked to the effective coordination of the classroom environment, underscoring the critical role a well-structured classroom plays in promoting optimal learning outcomes in English language (Mohammed, 2019). Furthermore, a conducive classroom environment is described as a catalyst that enables students to perform to their highest potential, emphasizing the necessity of an environment that is both supportive and stimulating.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The dynamics of the classroom environment also extends to the emotional realm, where the interplay between the classroom setting and learner emotions significantly influences learners' willingness to communicate in English, which is a critical aspect of language acquisition and proficiency (Dewaele et al., 2022). The objective of this study is to delve into the perceived influence of the classroom environment on the academic performance of students in English language. This includes an exploration of the physical, social, and pedagogical aspects of the classroom environment, and how they collectively contribute to shaping students' academic performance in English language. Through this inquiry, insights will be garnered on how to enhance the classroom environment to foster better language acquisition and improved academic performance in English language.

METHODS

A mixed-method approach, encompassing surveys and focus group discussions, were employed to gather perceptions from both students and teachers in a diverse urban secondary school.

RESULTS

Classroom Physical Environment

The physical environment of a classroom plays a crucial role in facilitating effective learning and academic performance, especially in language acquisition like English. The following are some insights on how

seating arrangement, lighting, and acoustics influence the learning environment:

1. Seating Arrangement

A study investigated the effect of changing the seating arrangement (Clusters Vs. Single Desks) on logical reasoning, creativity, and theory of mind in children attending primary school. It also explored individual characteristics like gender, loneliness, and popularity as potential moderators in the seating arrangement's impact on learning (Tobia et al., 2020). The physical arrangement and features of the classroom environment, including seating arrangements, can influence students' behavior and attention to academic tasks (Guarding, 2012).

2. Lighting

Exposure to more sunlight during the school day was found to be associated with higher reading and math outcomes among students. Specifically, students exposed to more sunlight displayed 26 percent higher reading outcomes and 20 percent higher math outcomes compared to those in less sunny classrooms (Uncapher, 2016). Classroom lighting affects cognition, as proven in terms of academic achievement, attention rates, working speed, productivity, and accuracy among other reported effects. LED lighting, in particular, appears to be the most suitable to improve psychological and cognitive processes in the classroom (Jordi et al., 2020).

3. Acoustics

Acoustics, along with light, color, and temperature, are scrutinized to determine whether and by how much they improve or hinder students' academic performance in classrooms. The acoustics of a classroom can affect students' ability to hear and understand instructions, which is particularly crucial in English language learning where auditory comprehension plays a significant role (Lewinsky, 2015). These factors collectively contribute to creating a conducive classroom environment that supports the academic performance of students in the English language. The interplay between the physical layout, seating arrangements, and sensory elements like lighting and acoustics creates a milieu that either enhances or hampers the learning process, thereby impacting the students' academic performance in English language learning.

Classroom Social Environment

The social environment within a classroom significantly influences students' learning experiences, especially in the context of English language learning. Here are some insights into teacher-student and peer interactions within this environment:

1. Teacher-Student Interaction

Teacher-student interactions are identified as a key asset for improving student learning and development. The degree to which teachers interact with students, understanding their perspectives and interests, greatly impacts the

learning process. This interaction forms the basis for professional development models and coaching, emphasizing its importance in the educational landscape (Robert, 2015). The interactions between teachers and students not only aid in learning but also help build confidence, alertness, and active participation among students. These interactions make the class a more engaging and fulfilling experience, which is particularly crucial in the digital era where online learning often lacks these interpersonal dynamics (Joshi, 2023).

2. Peer Interaction

Peer interaction is a crucial part of the learning process, especially in the context of language learning. It serves as a pedagogical tool in communicative and online classes, facilitating group activities and discussions among students. Through peer interaction, students can enhance their understanding and application of the English language in a practical, interactive manner (Sato, 2022). Interactions with peers are critical for students' social, behavioral, and academic development within the classroom. The relationships and interactions students have with their peers can significantly influence their learning experiences, providing a platform for collaborative learning and social engagement, which are essential for holistic educational development (Chen et al., 2020). Both teacher-student and peer interactions contribute to creating a conducive social environment within the classroom, which is instrumental in promoting effective learning and academic performance in English language. These interactions provide the necessary support, engagement, and collaborative learning experiences that are fundamental for students' academic success in mastering the English language.

Classroom Pedagogical Environment

The pedagogical environment within a classroom encompasses the teaching methods and assessment practices employed to facilitate and evaluate learning:

1. Teaching Methods

Pedagogy is integral to the teaching-learning process, encompassing a variety of teaching methods influenced by the educator's beliefs, the cultural context, and the subject matter being taught. Teaching methods range from teacher-centered approaches, where the educator is the primary source of knowledge, to more interactive or student-centered approaches that encourage active participation and engagement from students. Additionally, educators employ diverse and sometimes highly creative methods involving specific strategies, prompts, and tools such as appointments with students, art-based projects, and audio tutorials (Latan, 2023).

2. Assessment Practices

Assessment practices are crucial for monitoring and guiding learning. Assessment for Learning (AfL) is a notable approach that focuses on monitoring the quality of the learning process and providing continuous feedback to guide learning and teaching. Implementing AfL encourages frequent assessment of students' learning progress through self- and peer-assessment, which provides

students with accurate input for monitoring their own cognitive processes and progress towards certain learning goals. Other effective assessment practices include providing feedback early and often, encouraging self-assessment and goal setting, allowing new evidence of achievement to replace old evidence, and ensuring assessment transparency (Tsereteli, 2014). Both teaching methods and assessment practices significantly impact students' academic performance and the overall pedagogical environment within the classroom. By employing effective teaching and assessment strategies, educators can create a conducive learning environment that fosters better academic outcomes, especially in the context of English language learning.

Influence of Classroom Environment on Language Acquisition

The classroom environment plays a significant role in facilitating language acquisition, creating either conducive or challenging conditions for learners:

1. General Environmental Factors

The overall environment can either provide opportunities for language learning or present obstacles. A conducive environment makes language learning enjoyable, while a challenging environment could lead to frustration.

2. Human Interaction

The people within the learning environment are crucial. If they are supportive and interested in aiding the learner, progress is achievable. In contrast, if they are unsupportive or disinterested, the learner may find it challenging to make progress.

3. Language Difficulty

The level of difficulty of the language being learned also affects the learner's experience. A language that's too difficult may lead to frustration, while one that's not challenging enough may result in boredom.

4. Time Devoted to Learning

The amount of time learners can dedicate to language learning also influences their progress. More time typically leads to better progress.

5. Natural, Cultural, and Social Factors

A range of factors including natural, cultural, and social elements influence language development. For example, a child's shyness or emotional reactivity can affect his language articulation. A nurturing environment in early childhood significantly accelerates language learning.

6. Physical Environment

Elements like noise levels can impact how well someone can hear and understand speech, which is fundamental in language acquisition. The physical conditions of the classroom, including its acoustics, lighting, and seating arrangements, can either aid or hinder the language learning process.

7. Social Factors

The attitudes and beliefs of those around an individual can shape language development. For instance, if a community values bilingualism, its members are more likely to become bilingual (ILL, 2022). The outlined points elucidate the multifaceted ways in which the classroom environment influences language acquisition. From the human interactions to the physical and social conditions of the classroom, every aspect plays a part in shaping the language learning experience.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Create a conducive physical environment by organizing classroom spaces with adequate lighting, acoustics, and seating arrangements that are conducive to both individual and group work. Tailor the environment to minimize distractions and promote engagement with the learning material. Foster a positive social environment by encouraging supportive teacher-student and peer interactions. Strive to create a low-anxiety language learning environment to enhance motivation and engagement in language acquisition. Adopt a student-centered approach to teaching and assessment to cater for different learning styles and abilities, which in turn can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

Employ a variety of teaching methods and continuous assessment practices. Provide constructive feedback to guide students in understanding their progress and areas for improvement. Integrate technology in language teaching to provide diverse and contemporary learning experiences, aiding in the development of linguistic skills in an engaging manner. Foster a culture of lifelong learning and curiosity within the classroom to instill a love for language learning. Encourage self-directed learning, promote the value of bilingualism or multilingualism, and provide opportunities for real-world language application to enhance the language learning experience and academic performance in the English language.

The classroom environment is a critical factor that significantly influences the academic performance of students, particularly in the realm of English language learning. This environment is a complex blend of physical, social, and pedagogical aspects, each of which plays a crucial role in shaping the learning experience. On the physical front, a well-organized classroom with appropriate lighting, acoustics, and seating arrangements sets the stage for conducive learning. The physical layout of the classroom can either promote engagement with the learning material or serve as a barrier to effective learning. For instance, proper lighting and acoustics are essential for visual and auditory learning, while a flexible seating arrangement can facilitate both individual and collaborative learning activities. The social environment within the classroom, characterized by the interactions between teachers and students as well as among peers, significantly impacts the motivation and engagement levels of students. Supportive teacher-student interactions can foster a sense of belonging and motivation among students, creating a low-anxiety environment that is conducive for language acquisition. Similarly, positive peer interactions provide a platform for collaborative learning, where students can learn from

one another, share ideas, and engage in constructive discussions. Pedagogically, the methods of teaching and assessment practices employed in the classroom are at the heart of the learning process. Digital tools and resources can aid in the development of linguistic skills, offering a modern and engaging approach to language learning. Utilizing technology can also facilitate self-directed learning, allowing students to explore and learn at their own pace. Lastly, fostering a culture of lifelong learning and curiosity within the classroom can significantly enhance the learning experience. Encouraging self-directed learning, promoting the value of bilingualism or multilingualism, and providing opportunities for real-world language application can instill a love for language learning among students. Such a culture can also promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of the English language, which in turn, can significantly enhance the academic performance of students in English language learning. In summary, a conducive classroom environment characterized by a supportive physical, social, and pedagogical framework can significantly enhance the academic performance of students in English language learning. By adopting a holistic approach that addresses these different facets of the classroom environment, educators can create a nurturing and effective learning milieu that promotes better academic outcomes in the English language.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so further research needs to be done on this topic "Influence of Classroom Environment on the Academic Performance of Students in English Language".

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