

Do Kenyan Set Book Novel *Kidagaa Kimemwozea* Advance Environmental Education?

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Abstract

Environmental protection is a sensitive issue in the world today. Erratic weather changes have been witnessed in many parts world including Kenya. Indeed, scholars and critics have argued that human beings are a major contributing factor to destruction of nature through industrialization, farming activities, transport, deforestation, wildlife attacks, and destruction of wetlands, unplanned rubbish dumping and pollution. Environmental protection as a problem is real and has dire consequences such as global warming, soil erosion, floods, reduction in wetlands, drought, pollution, human wildlife conflict, diseases and illnesses, food insecurity, unsafe drinking water, desertification among other threats. In underdeveloped countries like Kenya the consequences are devastating. It's because of this global reality that the researcher sought to establish whether environmental education is advanced in *Kidagaa Kimemwozea*; a Kenyan secondary school Swahili novel set book. The objectives were: To examine the environmental themes in the *Kidagaa Kimemwozea* Swahili novel set book and to evaluate its environmental protection impact on learners. The sampled *Kidagaa Kimemwozea* novel set book was content analyzed in terms of environmental theme illustrations through ordinary words. Moreover, a questionnaire was given to randomly sampled 43 secondary school students to collect their views on how those illustrations impacted on their views on environmental protection.

Keywords: Environmental Education and Protection, Themes, Ordinary Text, Set Book

1. Introduction

Environmental education refers to the process that allows individuals to explore environmental issues, engage in problem solving, and take action to improve the environment. As a result, individuals develop a deeper understanding of environmental issues and have the skills to make informed and responsible decisions. On the other hand, environmental protection refers to any activity to maintain or restore the quality of environmental media through preventing the emission of pollutants or reducing the presence of polluting substances in environmental media for the benefit of both the environment and humans. (United Nations,1997).Environmental education as noted by Kimiti et al (2013) should assist individuals in taking action in environmental protection and improvement through various activities such as tree planting, cleaning of environment, participation in national and international environmental days and the whole discourse about management of ecosystems and sustainable use of natural environments (Republic of Kenya,2014). Environmental degradation due to industrialization, farming activities, transport, deforestation, wildlife attacks, improper refuse disposal and pollution like in other parts of the world is prevalent in the Kenyan context, and the need to protect and conserve the environment for future generations from the worst calamities such as floods, expanding deserts, diseases and food insecurity (Kavila,2013).

The need to highlight environmental issues and consciousness have indeed prompted authors across the world to write. Notable examples of fiction novels are *The Monkey Wrench Gang* by Abbey Edward, *The Lake, The River, and the Other Lake*, by Amick Steve, *The Last Good Chance* By Barbash, Tom amongst many others. In Kenya, fiction novels with environmental themes are like *Terrorists of the Aberdare* and *Different Colours* by Ng'ang'a Mbugua. A thesis done by Kavila(2013) examines the novels; *Terrorists of the Aberdare* and *Different Colours* and discusses causes and effects of environmental degradation and human-wildlife conflict and proposes strategies to protect and conserve the environment for the betterment of current and future generations.. Since literature is a tool for education, Ng'ang'a Mbugua in his fictional works aims at educating his audience on environmental protection so as to reduce this imminent threat to flora and fauna that has direct dire consequences to the current and future generations. The purpose of the study was to examine the environmental themes in the *Kidagaa Kimemwozea* Swahili novel set book and to evaluate its environmental protection impact on learners. The study will be of help to students ,teachers, the public and policy makers in making the society be more responsive to environmental protection through environmental education.

Studies on Ordinary Text Illustrations in Any Work Of Art.

Available research has it that ordinary words communicate various messages and therefore assist learners understand the content (Ombasa,2016). Novels, through ordinary text illustrations too communicate various themes to their audiences. *Kidagaa Kimemwozea* a Kiswahili category set book novel as a work of art also communicates various themes(Rono,2013).A theme on environment has also been brought out in the novel . A study done by Kimiti et al(2013) reveals that environmental education themes have been incorporated in