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Exploring the correlation between the natural surroundings and the prevalence of offensive language in society: A case study on three (3) selected residential compounds in Lusaka District

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Abstract

A very important discovery has been made through the reviewed literature and theories showing existence of an intricate relationship between natural surroundings and the prevalence of offensive language, aiming to unravel the underlying dynamics that contribute to linguistic behavior in diverse environmental contexts. Through a multidisciplinary approach that integrates insights from psychology, sociology, and environmental science, the study established the impact of natural environments on the frequency, intensity, and contextual nuances of offensive language. Therefore, the purpose of this research paper was to explore the correlation between the natural surroundings and the prevalence of offensive language in society: a case study on three (3) selected communities in Lusaka district. The sample consisted of sixty (90) respondents. A representative sample of 60 adolescents and 30 parents: i.e., 20 adolescents from each named compound and 30 parents, that is, 10 from each compound were randomly selected from the three compounds in the district. Qualitative method was applied during data analysis. The results of the study indicated that environmental factors, including the natural surroundings do influence human behavior and emotions thereby adversely affecting language use in various contextual settings. It was equally revealed that exposure to nature or green spaces has a positive effect on the mental well-being, reducing stress and promoting positive mood amongst people living in low density residential compounds where the use of offensive language is less, as opposed to high density residential compounds where the use of offensive (profane) language is heavily influenced by numerous social, cultural, and personal factors among others.

Keywords: Natural Surroundings; Offensive Language; Language Behavior; Ecological Psychology; Linguistic Analysis; Psychological Surveys; Socio-Cultural Factors; Natural Language Processing; Environmental Quality.

1. Introduction

The debate on the relationship between language and the environment is subject to the analysis of language and landscape or environment. Beyond reasonable doubt, it has been justified and proven that language serves as a powerful medium for human expression and interaction, reflecting societal norms and individual behaviors. Vygotsky's study of language and culture spills out how the environment or natural surroundings influences and shapes a persons' language. According to Baldwin and Hoffman (2002), the influence of the environment on language use is a burgeoning area of research, with a noticeable gap in comprehending how natural surroundings effectively and efficiently shape the prevalence of offensive language. Just as it has been observed in other jurisdictions, the development of offensive language, encompassing profanity, derogatory remarks, and verbal aggression in Zambia, has implications for social cohesion, individual well-being, and community dynamics. The study reviewed that in recent times, the prevalence of offensive language in public discourse has drawn increased attention from scholars, policymakers, and the general public world over. While this research explored various factors influencing language use in Zambia particularly in low

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and high residential compounds of Lusaka district, Bonvillain (1993) indicated that there is a growing interest in understanding how environmental surroundings, specifically natural environments may be linked to the manifestation of offensive language in society. Thus, the relevance and importance of exploring the correlation between the natural surroundings and the prevalence of offensive language in society within low density and high density residential compounds (communities) is to establish the potential implications for planning, mental health initiatives, and community well-being. Equally, the findings have to contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between nature and language behavior in society.

Of interest is the growing concern in relation to an increase in the number of people using offensive or rather profanity.as is the situation in developing countries. Zambia's high densely populated residential areas have been noted to have this problem since they are usually characterized by challenges stemming from economic problems, cultural, social and environmental: including indiscriminate disposal of waste and use of profane or offensive words. However, this has not been the case with low density residential areas as far as the aforementioned is concerned. The cause to why specific conventions are given special accord over others by certain interest groups or individuals in society, has been suggested that cross-linguistic variation can be motivated by factors of the wider non-linguistic environment as postulated by Mercer (2002). Adding to this, Baldwin and Hoffman (2002: 78) reaffirmed that, "statistical differences among languages that pattern with environmental variables such as topography or population size." To this cause, it has been established through this study that the possible mechanisms of these cultural evolutionary processes endeavors to give an insight to how environmental factors come to shape the emergence of linguistic conventions. Adding to this fact, Wapner and Demick (2002) confirmed that subtle environmental motivations drive the emergence of different communicative conventions in an otherwise identical task, suggesting that linguistic adaptations are highly sensitive to factors of the shared environment.

Through this study, it has been observed that the linguistic environment of landscape and social dynamics of a society is shaped by a myriad of factors, including cultural, social, and environmental cleanliness influences as stated earlier on. However, the potential impact of the physical environment on language use has only recently become a subject of scholarly inquiry. Equally, Bonvillain (1993) posited that "…environmental psychology offers a framework for understanding the reciprocal relationship between individuals and their surroundings". Therefore, investigations into the effects of natural environments on human behavior have yielded insights into cognitive processes, emotional responses, and interpersonal dynamics Palmer et al, (2017). A very thoughtful inference made in light to this revelation is the idea that natural surroundings may influence the prevalence of offensive language stems from the broader understanding that environmental factors can shape social norms and behavior.

1.1. Statement of the problem

Beside language being a code only understood by those who know it, it is also an instrumental and fundamental aspect of human communication, reflecting the intricate interplay of cognitive, social, and environmental factors (Arbib, 2012). Through his establishment, Palmer et al, (2017) echoed that there has been a growing interest in understanding how the natural surroundings influence human behavior and well-being. However, a noticeable gap exists in the literature regarding the correlation between natural environments and the prevalence of offensive language. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining the relationship between natural environments and the prevalence of offensive language. The inquiry is prompted by the recognition that language use is not only a reflection of individual choices but is also influenced by external stimuli, including the physical spaces in which communication occurs. Henceforth, the need to explore the correlation between the natural surroundings and the prevalence of offensive language in three (3) selected residential compounds of Lusaka district.

1.2. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore the correlation between the natural surroundings and the prevalence of offensive language in three (3) selected low and high density residential compounds on Lusaka district, namely: Ng'ombe, Kalingalinga and Kabulonga.

1.3. Objectives

This study was guided by the following research objectives:

- To investigate the correlation between natural surroundings and the prevalence of offensive language in various settings.
- To assess the impact of psychological mechanisms underlying the natural environment on the use of offensive language.

1.4. Theoretical Framework

1.4.1. Theory of Sociolinguistics

This study was guided by the theory of sociolinguistics which concerns itself with language that is related to society. According to Holmes (1992:1) sociolinguistics is the study that has relationship with language and society in the world. It is in line with Fasold's (1993) idea about sociolinguistics which is science that combine linguistic and society. Thus, a speaker is influenced by the choice of offensive language (profane words) use which are words that roll easiest off the tongue and their notions of taboo and perceived rudeness but also possibly by their sociolinguistic, or demographic, background. Factors such as geographical configuration gender, age, social class, among others may have a small or big impact on the particular use of offensive or profane words by an individual. These factors may not only influence their language use in general, but also their choices of vocabulary; regional, ethnic, political, and class differences by a diversity of pragmatic norms as they are by linguistic variations.

1.5. Significance of The Study

It is hoped that the study would contribute knowledge to a nuanced understanding of the relationship between natural surroundings and language use in society, particularly the three (3) selected low and high density residential compounds in Lusaka district, and that the findings may have implications for urban planning, mental health initiatives, and community well-being by highlighting the potential impact of nature on language behavior.

2. Literature review

2.1. Current study

Language is a dynamic reflection of societal values, attitudes, and behaviors. The use of offensive language in public spaces has become a concern, prompting researchers to investigate its potential correlations with various environmental factors. One such factor is the natural surroundings in which individuals interact. This literature review aims to explore and synthesize existing research on the correlation between natural surroundings (environment/s) and the prevalence of offensive language in society.

2.2. The Impact of Environmental Factors on Human Behavior

To understand the relationship between natural surroundings and language use, there are studies which have been conducted to examine the broader literature on the impact of environmental factors on human behavior. The study conducted on 'linguistic adaptation', clearly interrogates the correlation between the natural surroundings and the prevalence of offensive language with the idea that languages, just like biological organisms, can potentially adapt to their local environment (Lupyan and Dale 2016). While in biology the term 'environment' usually refers to a particular ecological habitat, in linguistics, it encompasses a variety of contexts that language is embedded in. Also, there is the natural ecology of language, that is, its primary use in multimodal and direct face-to face interaction, where speech and gesture are used for information transfer to coordinate with an interlocutor and achieve common communicative goals. In a related study, Becker et al., (1999) reported that, not only the environmental sustainability stands as an ecological crisis, but also it includes the viability of socially shaped relationship between people and nature. In contrast to a dirty environment, living in a clean natural environment, characterized by elements such as green spaces and open landscapes, has been associated with positive psychological outcomes and pro-social behavior of a person (Mercer, 2002).

Another study by Lupyan and Dale (2016) shows that the environmental problems in the shape of global warming, dirty and filthy surrounding, air pollution, noise and loss of diversity brings back the fundamental root cause as human behavior which in turn affects language use. From a psychologists' perspective, understanding human beliefs, values among others helps to explain and address emotional reactions to social issues and how the antecedent factors poorly impact language behavior in people. Borrowing Wapner and Demick's (2002) words that…

"…exposure to physical environmental factors including objects, dirt among others…brings about a common shared effect of a gradual cross-language transfer of that which a person sees frequently from the environment into phonological properties and vocabulary of that person's language."

Furthermore, Koolen et al, (2013), also mentioned that specific environments have the capacity to favor different linguistic solutions stemming from a grammatical, lexical or semantic level and that this may include physical aspects of the environment such as climate. In light to the aforementioned, Kaye et al, (2009) explained this by way of describing

how people are intentionally rude in order to obtain power or vent negative feelings. Importantly, Locher and Watts (2005) argue that what is impolite cannot be universally construed, since impoliteness depends on the relationship between speaker and the listener. Therefore, the symbiotic relationships that people have to landscape both individually and collectively, have synthesized an important research theme in several disciplines, notably geography, anthropology, philosophy, and psychology. This tradition and its successors have focused on land use and land-based activities. Equally, anthropologists examine the relations of people to their environments, mainly emphasizing cultural aspects and landscape (Koolen et al, 2013).

However, the reviewed literature also indicates that there has been relatively little scholarly research on how landscape is *conceptualized*, that is, how a continuous land surface, a landscape, becomes cognitive entities, and how those entities are classified and represented in language and in thought.

2.3. Nature and Well-Being

Studies focusing on the connection between nature exposure and well-being can provide insights into the potential mitigating effects of natural surroundings on offensive language use. Research conducted by Vygotsky (1978) has suggested that spending time in natural environments can reduce stress, enhance mood, and foster a sense of well-being. It has been argued that a transition for wellness and sustainability necessitates an emotional "shift from materialist to post-materialist values, from anthropocentric to ecological worldviews" (Koolen et al, 2013)). In this connection, environmental knowledge in the form of awareness stands as a subcategory of a more comprehensive environmental attitude, and that is the starting point of getting emotional involvement which shapes the sense for an environmental attitude (Chomsky, 1986). It has been further argued that the stronger a person's emotional reaction, the more likely that person will engage in pro-environmental behavior, and emotional connection seems to be very important in shaping one's beliefs, values, and attitudes towards the environment and in relation to language use (Arbib, 2012). It is plausible that individuals who experience positive emotions and reduced stress in natural settings may be less inclined to use offensive language

2.4. Social Norms and Environmental Influence

The prevalence of offensive language is not only an individual choice but also a reflection of culture and societal norms. An interesting linkage between language and the environment is culture. According to the social psychology research, "…individuals conform to social norms, and their behavior is influenced by the perceived norms of their environment." Investigating how natural surroundings shape or challenge social norms related to language use is crucial for understanding the correlation between the two. Vygotsky (1978) pointed out that language is a carrier of culture. It conveys all the information about culture in verbal and written forms. On the other hand, culture influences and shapes language. Language is intrinsic to the expression of culture and the natural surroundings at the most. Because it is for most people if not all, a means of communicating values, beliefs and customs, it certainly has a significant social function and fosters feelings of group identity and solidarity among others. The study conducted by (Emmitt and Pollock 1997) had been placed within the socio cultural approach of discourse analysis and it illustrated how speakers construct the contextual foundations of their talk as an influence of socio cultural factors on the structure, rhetorical devices, and choice of words of participants' written and spoken discourse. Furthermore, the findings expose the correlation of language (culture) and the environment to the use of language either (positive or negative) regardless of its component or structure and it varies from person to person as well as from generation to generation according to the socio cultural boundaries, their experiences and social backgrounds which take part in the building of their thoughts, beliefs and perceptions. Also, it was revealed from the research of Vygotsky (1987) that cultural and social environmental implications and inferences of language, or cultural agreement concealed and codified into language as stated by Whorf, which influence the expression of one's thought, perceptions or emotions as a sign and symptom of conscious hidden identity

2.5. Technology and Virtual Environments

It has been noted that as technology increasingly mediates human interactions, the definition of "environment" expands to include virtual spaces. The detection of negative content of malicious intent (personal attacks and insults) on most online forums and comment streams is a challenging and nuanced problem, (Ammon et al, 2004). It is however worth noting that research on online communities and social media platforms provided valuable insights into the correlation between virtual environments and the prevalence of offensive language. According to Anderson et al, (2003),

"a person's exposure to both virtual and physical environmental factors including objects, dirt among others…brings about a common shared effect of a gradual cross-language transfer in phonological properties and vocabulary."

The above cited quotation gives rise to a better understanding of the correlation between natural surroundings or rather how the absence of physical nature or the presence of virtual landscapes affects language use of offensive words either by way of expressing pain, anger, emotions and so on and contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the topic. In a related development, the reviewed literature shows that exposure to violent television, film, and aggression among youth causes short-term increases in aggressive behaviors, thoughts, and feelings among youth. On average, these effects sizes are moderate and are larger for less serious outcomes and smaller for serious outcomes (Koolen et al, 2013). In addition, cross-sectional surveys show that exposure to violence on television and film is correlated with physical aggression, verbal aggression, and aggressive thoughts among youth, and longitudinal studies show correlations of viewing violent media during childhood and aggressive behaviors during adulthood (Anderson et al., 2003).

3. Methodology

3.1. Study design

This study attempted to explore the correlation between the natural surroundings and the prevalence of offensive language in society: a case study on three selected residential compounds of Lusaka district. The study design was a survey with sparse use of qualitative data. This design was chosen because the considered appropriate as they also allowed for more flexible strategies of data collection in order to answer the research questions, (Ammon et al, 2004). It relies on observation (questionnaire and interview) for the acquisition of the data, so that valid and accurate conclusions can be drawn from them (Arbib, 2012). Therefore, this study depended on qualitative methods in data collection and analysis.

3.2. Research Sites

The study was carried out in three compounds (Ng'ombe, Kalingalinga and Kabulonga) in Lusaka District of Lusaka Province from which respondents were also sampled.

3.3. Population, Sample and Sampling procedure

The population for the study consisted of all children and all parents of marginalized children in the three compounds of Lusaka district namely: Ng'ombe, Kalingalinga and Kabulonga. (Abdulaal, 2020)), describes population as the entire group of individuals or items under consideration in any field of inquiry and have a common attribute. The sample consisted of sixty (90) respondents. A representative sample of 60 adolescents and 30 parents, that is 20 adolescents from each named compound and 30 parents, that is, 10 from each compound were randomly selected from the three compounds in the district (Bartlett, 1932).

3.4. Data Analysis

Makinde (1994) defines data analysis as the examination of the given problem in the light of the information collected after which some tentative inferences were possibly made. The researcher had after field work, transcribed qualitative data, checking for completeness and consistency as well as for various omissions, incomplete or unusual responses. Since data analysis involves editing, cleaning, transformation and tabulation of the data collected, micro-soft Excel and Google forms was used to analyze the data collected and to represented it in the form of graphs, tables and charts.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Since qualitative research involves direct interaction with respondents, the researcher upheld the principles of honesty, integrity and mutual trust between himself and the participants in order to yield objective and quality information. The researcher furthermore assured the respondents regarding the data which was collected and their identities that they remained or were kept confidential and that the information was used only for academic purposes.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. The Correlation Between Natural Surroundings And The Prevalence Of Offensive Language In Various Settings

The researcher intended to find out the correlation between natural surroundings and the prevalence of offensive language in various settings. According to the findings, the natural surroundings (environment) do influence the use of offensive language or profanity rather as indicated in the table below.

Table 1 The Correlation Between Natural Surroundings and the Prevalence of Offensive Language in Various Settings

Natural surroundings	Use of offensive language
Cultural and social factors	Cultural and societal norms within a specific environment have a more permissive attitude toward offensive language (profanity)
High density vs Low density residential environments	People in density environments use more offensive language due to factors like stress, over-crowding, and anonymity. In contrast, individuals in low density environments experience a calmer environment, potentially reducing the frequency of offensive language (profanity).
Psychological well-being	Natural surroundings are often associated with positive effects on mental health and well-being. Individuals in serene natural environments may experience lower stress levels, which could contribute to a decrease in offensive language.
Personal dispositions	The use of offensive language is also influenced by an individual's personality, upbringing, education, and personal values. These factors may be more influential than the physical surroundings.
Environmental awareness	People in natural settings are more attuned to their surroundings, leading to a greater awareness of their impact on the environment and potentially affecting their language choices.
Media influence	The prevalence of offensive language in various settings is also influenced by media including movies, television, and online content. Exposure to offensive language in media contributes to its use in everyday communication.

Source: Research Findings

The table above revealed the correlation between natural surroundings and the prevalence of offensive language in various settings. The findings in the above table revealed the existence of a very profound correlation between the environment and it how it influences the use of offensive language (profane words) by individuals from various spheres of Lusaka as a case in point. From the three residential compounds of interest, it was discovered that cultural and societal norms within specific environments where certain languages such as Bemba, has a more permissive attitude toward offensive language (profanity). The curse word "Chikamba" in Bemba language meaning "a piece of cloth used for mending toned clothing" was often used by parents as an expression of anger, giving emphasis to a parent's utterance. Also, the researcher reviewed through the findings that majority of respondents sampled (mothers) used sarcasm "Nde kunyesha" meaning "I will beat you till you defecate" as a way of expressing displeasure/anger towards a child's bad behavior. To conclude this fact that cultural and societal norms influence language in relation to the use of offensive words, Vygotsky (1987) confirmed that "different cultures and communities may have varying levels of tolerance for certain types of language".

In relation to the aspect of high density and low density residential environments, the findings indicated that highly populated areas were prone to the prevalence of offensive or profanity as opposed to low populated areas. What the findings suggests from table 1 is that the sampled respondents living in these highly dense populated environments circumvent to using more offensive language due to factors such as stress, crowding, and anonymity. This proves Abdulaal (2020) line of thought that,

…high population density in an area can lead to stress and frustration, potentially increasing the use of profane language, while less crowded areas may foster more positive communication.

In contrast to this, it was equally noted that respondents living in low density environments experience a much calmer environment, thereby reducing the frequency of offensive language use.

In addition, the psychological well-being and personal dispositions are key elements that were recognized as a bridge in light to the correlation between the natural surroundings and the prevalence of offensive language (profanity). It was discovered through the findings of this research that the sampled respondents living in serene natural environments experienced a positive effect on their mental health and well-being, resulting into lower stress levels which then translates to a decrease in the use of offensive language. Fasold (1993) affirmed that, "natural surroundings are often associated with positive effects on mental health and well-being" and Palmer et al. (2017) additionally postulated that, social aspects, such as education or contact with other languages and even technologies like writing can affect utterance

production." It was then observed that the use of offensive language among the respondents was influenced by an individual's personality, upbringing, education, technology and personal values. It was inferred therefore that these factors are more influential than the physical surroundings.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that the correlation between the natural environment and the use of offensive language is seen deeply and beyond the environmental awareness and media influence. Through observations, the noticeable prevalence of offensive language in the targeted captioned areas by the sampled respondents was influenced the environmental condition. Jay (1992) postulated that, "well-maintained and clean environments may promote positive behavior, while neglected or dirty surroundings could contribute to negative expressions, including profanity." Arising from this quotation, respondents residing in Kabulonga exhibited a positive and moderate behavior on the use of offensive language as they were more attuned to their clean surroundings, leading to a greater awareness of their impact on the environment and potentially affecting their language choices as opposed to respondents from Ng'ombe and Kalingalinga. Similarly, a correlation was established through the findings between the natural surroundings and the prevalence of offensive language through media influence. It was unveiled that the prevalence of offensive language in various settings that were under observation was also influenced by media, including movies, television, and online content. This then means that exposure to offensive language in media can contribute to its use in everyday communication as founded by the findings.
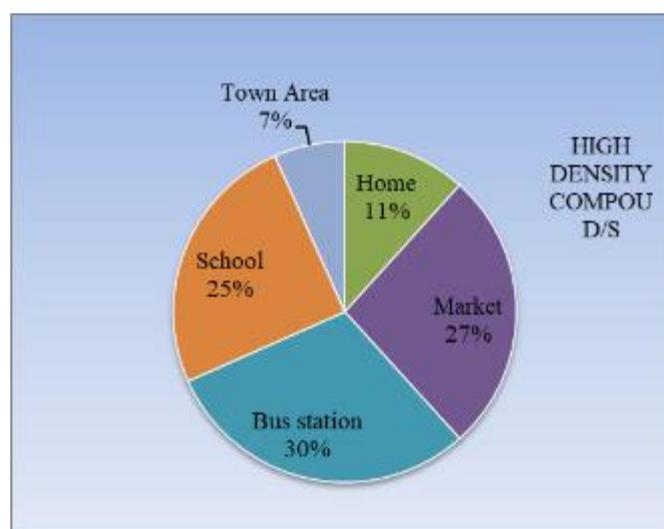
Source: Research Findings

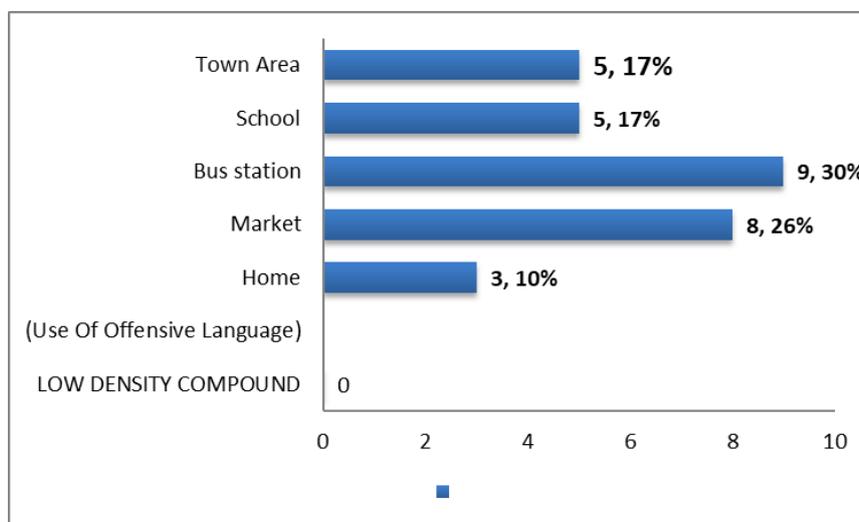**Figure 1** Prevalence Of Offensive (profane) Language In High Density Residential Compounds: Ng'ombe and Kalingalinga.

The study showed through the above chat the prevalence of offensive (profane) language in both Ng'ombe and Kalingalinga high density residential areas. The use of offensive language in Homes was 11%, in Markets 27%, in Bus stations 30%, Schools 25% and around Town area 7%.

It is clear as revealed from the findings that the use of offensive (profane) language within the environments in question was influenced by several factors. Majority of the respondents that were sampled, bus stations and markets found in the two localities were dominant places prone to the prevalence of profanity due to the high noise levels which translates to frustrations and an increased likelihood of profanity, neglected or dirty surroundings and high levels of activity which enables the respondents to experience more profanity due to increased stress, competition, and diverse interactions.

The below chart shows the prevalence of offensive language in low density populated compound: Kabulonga of Lusaka district. The results show that the use of offensive (profane) language in homes was at 10%, either a situation where parents address children or among children themselves, 26% for markets, 30% for bus stations, 17% for schools and another 17% within town area.

It is evident as revealed from the findings that the prevalence of offensive language by respondents in Kabulonga which is a low density residential compound stood at 30%, arising from markets within the locality. What underpins the correlation the natural surroundings and the use of offensive (profane) language emanate from several factors. Through

the findings, the study showed that Kabulonga is less crowded and the environment fostered a more positive attribute towards the use of offensive language among the respondents. Because the environment was well-maintained and clean, this had a ripple effect on language use thereby promoted positive behavior on both parents and children. Therefore, the moderate or rather low levels of the prevalence of offensive language in Homes, Schools and Town area in low density residential compounds is attributed to factors including green and clean surroundings, low population, adequate lighting which creates a positive atmosphere among other things. An inference was made that the aforementioned influence language use in a positive manner as opposed to high density areas.

Source: Research Findings

Figure 2 Prevalence of Offensive (profane) Language In Low Density Residential Compound: Kabulonga.

Comparatively, the findings showed that markets and bus stations from both high and low density compounds sampled in the study had similar results, depicting 26% and 30% on the use of offensive language. This was attributed to the fact that environmental factors such as those in fig 1 were notably evident in the natural surroundings of both high and low density residential compounds under survey. Thus, it is clear that the state of an environment does influence language use either positively or negatively.

4.2. The Impact of Psychological Mechanisms Underlying the Relationship Between The Natural Environment And Offensive Language

The study revealed that psychological mechanisms underlying the relationship between the natural environments do immensely impact the use of offensive or profane language in diverse ways that could not be possibly imagined. Overall, the interplay between the natural environment and psychological mechanisms in relation to their impact on language use provides insights into human behavior, communication patterns, and the contextual factors influencing the use of offensive language (Mabry, 2008). It was therefore noticed that the majority of the respondents who were using offensive language in various speech settings, their behavior was negatively impacted by a wide array of factors basing on the geographical configuration. For example, the vocabulary that was used by female parents to address their children's unacceptable behavior, depicted filthy dirt that was in their immediate surrounding as a case in point. This proves what Holmes (1992) said that the natural environment can affect an individual's stress levels. Through this, it was concluded that the high stress levels emanating from the environmental pressure, significantly resulted into heightened emotional responses, thereby using offensive language as a way to vent frustration or cope with stress. However, the positive behavior deduced from the smaller percentage of respondents that used non-offensive language was attributed to their exposure to a clean environment, access to nature which is believed to have calming positive effect on an individual's language behavioral pattern among other things.

Equally, the results established that 86% of the of the people in both Ng'ombe and Kalingalinga often found around markets, bus stations including schools and homes, had their vocabulary negatively impacted by both psychological and environmental mechanisms. This was owed to the influence by the natural environments that adversely shape an individual's cultural and social norm, and in turn, influencing what language is deemed acceptable or offensive within a community (Stone et al, 2015). As far as the impact of the psychological and environmental mechanisms on language use is concerned, it was concluded that where people often seek tranquility and a break from the stressors of daily life, offensive language was perceived as violating social norms. Thus, a disconnection between the expected behavior in a

natural setting and the use of offensive language might trigger reactions from individuals who are present in that environment.

Table 2 Impact of Psychological Mechanisms Underlying the Natural Environment On The Use Of Offensive (Profane) Language

Impact Of Psychological Mechanisms Within The Natural Environment On The Use Of Offensive Language.	Frequency	Percentage	
		Yes	No
Natural environment affect individuals' stress levels.	18	92%	06%
Natural environment shape cultural and social norms, influencing acceptable or offensive language in society.	14	86%	14%
Exposure to environmental stressors may be more prone to expressing negative emotions through offensive language.	13	85%	15%
Natural environment impact cognitive processing	16	88%	12%
Coping mechanism as response to threats in the natural environment	17	90%	10%
Exposure to environmental threats contribute to aggression	12	84%	16%

Source: Research Findings

Furthermore, results confirmed that the natural environments and its mechanism impact cognitive processes such as attention, memory, and decision-making. Arising from the literature reviewed in this study, exposure to virtual and physical environmental factors stemming from objects, dirt among others brings about a common shared effect of a gradual cross-language transfer in phonological properties and vocabulary Paradise, et al (1980). It is suggested that the majority of respondents that were caught in the habit of using profanity, had been exposed to movies and other contents in which explicit language was often used. On another hand, a general statement that is made from the findings is that people are influenced into speaking offensive language due to personal factors, such as one's upbringing or past experiences that significantly contribute in shaping a person's language choices. For some individuals, offensive language may be a habitual or reflexive response to certain situations.

5. Conclusion

The conclusion drawn in light of the correlation between natural surroundings and the prevalence of offensive language is that environmental factors, including the natural surroundings do influence human behavior and emotions thereby adversely affecting language use in various contextual settings. Therefore, the findings of the study revealed that exposure to nature or green spaces has a positive effect on the mental well-being, reducing stress and promoting positive mood amongst people living in low density residential compounds where the use of offensive language is less. In other words, it is suggested that living in clean and friendly environments, people become less inclined to use offensive (profane) language. It was also established that in high density residential compounds however, offensive (profane) language is heavily influenced by numerous social, cultural, and personal factors, although this may not have a straightforward correlation with natural surroundings.

Recommendations

The following are some of the measures that should be taken on the basis of the findings of this study to curb the use of offensive language and promote healthier communication in diverse environmental contexts:

- There is need to develop and enforce policies against the use of offensive language in workplaces, educational institutions, and online platforms clearly outlining consequences for violating these policies, including disciplinary actions and educational interventions.
- Develop programs that enhance cultural competence, helping individuals understand and respect diverse communication styles. This can include training on cultural norms, values, and appropriate language use.
- There is need to organize or offer workshops on effective conflict resolution strategies. This could involve teaching individuals how to express themselves assertively, listen actively, and find common ground with others, fostering a more positive communication climate.

- Efforts should be made to incorporate modules on environmental sensitivity within communication training programs. This may involve educating individuals on the impact of language use in different settings, emphasizing the importance of respectful communication in natural or public spaces.
- Mindfulness and stress reduction programs should be introduced to help individuals manage their emotions in diverse environments. This can contribute to reducing the likelihood of using offensive language as a coping mechanism and promote more thoughtful communication.
- There is need to launch educational campaigns that highlight the importance of respectful communication in various settings, including natural environments. These campaigns can focus on creating awareness about the impact of language on others' experiences and well-being.
- Develop programs that enhance media literacy, helping individuals critically assess the impact of media and popular culture on communication styles. This can contribute to reducing the influence of offensive language portrayed in various media forms.
- Encourage community-building activities that bring people together in positive ways. Activities such as community gardening, clean-up events, or outdoor recreation can create a sense of shared responsibility and enhance communication within diverse groups.
- Implement communication skills training in schools to equip young individuals with the tools they need for effective and respectful communication. This can contribute to the development of positive communication habits from an early age.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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