

The Influence of Multilingual Classroom Communication on Pupils' Performance in English Language at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Non-Formal Schools in Korogocho, Kenya

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to determine the influence of pedagogical practices on pupil's performance in English language in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Non Formal Schools in Korogocho, Nairobi, Kenya. The objective of the study was to investigate the influence of multilingual classroom communication on pupils' performance in English Language in Kenya Certificate of Education in Non formal schools in Nairobi, Kenya. The study was based on Instructional Theory. Seventy eighty (78) Non formal schools were targeted, 780 pupils, 78 directors and 180 teachers of English. The study employed descriptive research design. Purposive sampling was used to select 23 Non formal schools from which one director was drawn and two teachers of English were obtained. The sample size of the pupils' was selected using Solvin's formula. Data collection was by means of questionnaires, focus group discussion and lesson observation guide. Basing on the questionnaires of the objectives of the study, established the validity of the questionnaires. Data was analyzed using SPSS and Excel program, Pearson's Correlation coefficient was used to test the relationship. Data was presented in text, tables, bar and pie charts. The study established that performance in English language was based on the use of multilingual classroom communication. Teachers used multilingual classroom communication during the English lessons which enhanced performance. It was also established that performance was affected by pedagogical practices used by teachers of English. The regression and inferential statistics showed that multilingual classroom communication method had significant relationship with performance in English language. This study is expected to provide useful information on instructional methods to be used in Non formal schools. The study concludes by stating that teachers in Non formal primary schools should be exposed to modern methods of teaching. Similar studies should be conducted in other subjects across the primary schools in Kenya. The study further recommends workshops for teachers and in-service courses for teachers of English to have more exposure and knowledge on what to do when teaching young people.

Keywords: Multilingual, Communication, Classroom, performance, English Language

1.1 Introduction

Multilingual classroom communication is the use of English as the medium of instruction and any other language. There are different forms of multilingualism; one form focuses on how languages function in a society, such as playing a specific role in a society (Kimamo 2012). However, some nations have more than one official language, while other languages are used in social contexts just like in Kenya where English and Kiswahili are official languages and Sheng and mother tongue are used in social contexts. Another form is individual multilingualism or a person's ability to communicate in different languages is by deciding to learn it on their own. An example of this is when someone takes a foreign language in high school or in college. Students learn the official language and two other languages with intent of becoming multilingual in the classroom.

Multilingual education stresses teaching children while supporting their mother tongue or native language. Students or pupils learn better and outcomes are better when taught in their native languages to all of learners but supporting the primary language with of the country and in each pupil's native language. However, in multilingual classroom communication a teacher spends most of his or her time passing on messages and instructions, in this way, a teaching and learning relationship is established whereby communication plays a crucial role. Communication in the classroom implies that knowledge is socially constructed and shared information or knowledge enhances individual learning. In the classroom, communication takes place through a language referred to as the language of instruction (LOI) (Kimamo 2012).

In Kenya, the most common practice is the use of a mixture of mother tongue, Kiswahili and English as language of instruction in primary schools. In the classroom, teachers are constantly faced with the dilemma regarding what language to use in the course of teaching English. The dilemma is due to a combination of factors, such as the inability of pupils to understand and communicate in the first language of the catchment area (James & Polland, 2011). Studies by (Muthwii, 2002), established that in both Kenya and Uganda, there was no situation where English or mother tongue were solely used as a languages of instruction. Mixing of languages occurred in all schools from an early age in both rural and urban schools. Mother tongue languages were extensively used with English and or Kiswahili in Kenya. This situation was necessitated by lack of materials to

teach all subjects in Mother tongue and the children's inability to understand English or Kiswahili used in the school textbooks. Although the teacher switched codes to sort out the language problems in the class, pupils were not allowed to use the gymnastics in the examinations where they required using only English (Kazeem, 2010). Teachers and pupils at primary school level have a burden of using three languages in the course of ensuring that learners are competent enough to use it as language of instruction in upper primary and national examinations. This implies that learners' performance in English is curtailed by having to use two languages. They therefore, performed poorly in examinations because they were forced to write them in English, a language they are not proficient in (Kimamo 2012). Researchers established that there was severe lack of books written in Sheng' or Kiswahili for teaching of various curriculum subjects including English language hence poor performance in English language (Muthwii, 2002).

In inaugural lecture on language policy Okombo (2011), asserted that the current development and governance needs of Africa require that international languages such as English and French be given a place in African countries. Further Okombo (2011), stated that Africans must not be denied chances to receive information and express themselves in languages in which they feel competent. International language such as English can co-exist with indigenous African languages in a non- antagonistic relationship where all the languages serve the development and governance needs of multilingual nation and where multilingualism becomes a resource rather than a problem. As Okombo (2011), recognizes the importance of English and national languages he does not suggest a cure for antagonistic relationships among various languages in the education sector in Kenya today. The challenge of multilingual classroom communications impedes discussions among learners and teachers and this affects performance in English language.

Mutisya (2013), poor communication curtails not only performance in English which is the official medium of instruction but also performance in all subjects across the curriculum. In the recent times, 'Sheng' (a mixture of Kiswahili and local languages) has also found its way into schools and classrooms thus complicating the language problem. Performance in English subject has consistently been poor to some extent below average due to poor instructional practices used by teachers such as lecture method, ineffective lesson planning and the use of mixed languages while teaching and communicating to learners in a classroom set up (Ruto,2004). The table below illustrates how English language has been performing using the means scores for the past seven years at National Examinations in the two major slums.

Table 1.1 Comparison of mean score in English at KCPE Nationally, Nairobi, kibera and Korogocho from 2009 to 2014

KCPE Mean (%) / year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
National's KCPE Mean	51.23	53.84	54.12	54.2	53.2	49.2	50.2
Nairobi County's KCPE	45.94	46.70	46.78	46.66	47.7	47.85	45.6
Kibera	40.5	32.4	42.7	43.5	42.5	43.6	45.3
Korogocho	36.5	32.4	39.7	43.5	42.5	42.8	43.1

Source: The year 2015 KCPE Examination report (KNEC 2014)

The mean percentage in English language in KCPE in Korogocho is below average that is below 50 percent. Table 1.2 compares the performance in English Language and other subjects.

Table 1.2

KCPE Mean Scores in English from 2013-2015 at Korogocho

Year	Eng	Kisw	Maths	Sci	S/ST
2013	49.40	53.32	65.45	61.44	60.34
2014	48.35	56.76	64.56	60.56	62.55
2015	47.89	51.5	68.88	60.72	61.47

Source: **Kasarani Education office, 2015**

The performance in English language in Korogocho is lower compared to other subjects as indicated in Table 1.2 Therefore the study set to investigate the causes of poor performance in English language.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Performance in English language in National examinations has remained an uphill task despite the Government's efforts of providing teachers and teaching learning resources. Performance in English language has consistently been poor. These has been largely attributed to the results of ineffective teaching methods by teachers of English and ineffective use of multilingual classroom communication

1.3 Objective of the Study

To establish the influence of multilingual classroom communication on pupils' performance in English language in KCPE in Non-formal primary schools in Korogocho Nairobi, Kenya

1.4 Research Question.

In what ways does multilingual classroom communication influence pupil's performance in English language in KCPE in Non –formal primary schools in Korogocho, Nairobi, Kenya

1.5 Literature Review

Multilingual classroom communication is the use of English as the medium of instruction and any other languages which include Kiswahili, ' Sheng' and mother tongue (Kimamo 2012). A teacher spends most of his or her time passing on messages and instructions in this way, teaching and learning relationship is established whereby communication plays a crucial role. Communication in the classroom implies that knowledge is socially constructed and shared information or knowledge enhances individual learning. In the classroom, communication takes place through a language referred to as the language of instruction (LOI) (Kimamo 2012). In Kenya, the language policy states that the child's first language either Mother tongue (MT) or the language commonly spoken in the schools catchment (usually Kiswahili or English). Should be used as the language of instruction in the lower primary up to the end of standard three. The policy also states that English and Kiswahili should be taught as subject in lower primary and English should be used as the language of instruction, from standard four (Republic of Kenya, 1976). The policy in Kenya is similar to that of Uganda but the language of catchment in Uganda is Luganda and not Kiswahili (Muthwil, 2002). In Kenya, various policy statements have supported this language policy over the years (Republic of Kenya, 1999). But the policy is not always adhered to.

1.6 Research methodology

The study adopted cross sectional survey design. Cross-sectional surveys collect data at one point in time from a sample selected to represent a larger population. The participants were 23 directors, 54 teachers of English and 264 pupils. Questionnaires for directors and teachers while focused group discussion and lesson observation were used for pupils to gather the needed data. Data obtained was analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation and regression.

1.6.1 Results

The following results were obtained from the study

The study examined aspects of multilingual classroom communication among other factors Sheng' mother tongue, Kiswahili , speaking English at school, fluency in the language of communication, and language policy. Multilingual classroom communication is the use of English as the medium of instruction and any other languages.

It is in this regard that teachers were asked whether Sheng', Kiswahili and mother tongue were used in English lesson. The findings are shown in table 1.3

Table 1.3 Teachers' responses on use of Sheng', Kiswahili and mother tongue during English lesson

Responses	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%
Use of Sheng'	9	17	9	17	8	15	10	19	17	31
Use of Kiswahili	2	4	13	24	6	11	13	24	19	35
Mother Tongue	5	9	7	13	5	9	16	30	19	35

Table 1.3 established that most teachers 31% did not acknowledge that pupil's used Sheng' in English lesson and were supported by 19%, as 17% acknowledged that sheng' was used during English lesson and 15% of teachers were undecided. These implied that Sheng' was used during English lesson. It seemed as if teachers of English did not discourage the use of Sheng because learners understood Sheng' better than other languages. This was supported by the use of Kiswahili as most teachers of English 35% acknowledged the use of Kiswahili in an English lesson in order to reinforce pupils' understanding of what is taught, this was also supported by 24% of teachers, although 24% strictly said Kiswahili was not used during English lessons. Studies by Kimosop (2015), stated that although Kenya has two national languages that is Kiswahili and English, Sheng' was more popular among the youth than the two official languages. This was the same with data on use of mother tongue in English lesson. The Table revealed that most teachers 35% disagreed with the use of mother tongue in an English lesson, as 13% supported the use of mother tongue in an English lesson, as 30% of teachers totally disagreed with the use of mother tongue in an English lesson. This implies that a combination of languages was used during English lessons to reinforce learning hence poor performance in English language.

This brings us to another aspect of pupils' speaking English while at school. Teachers were asked whether pupils spoke English while at school. The findings are shown in Table 1.4

Table 1.4 Teachers' responses on pupils speaking English and being fluency in it

Responses	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%
Teachers responses	2	9	7	30	4	17	2	9	7	30
Pupils' fluency	6	11	12	22	3	6	17	31	15	28

Table 1.4 reveals that most teachers 30% did not acknowledge that pupils speak in English while at school and were supported by 9% although 30% acknowledged that pupils speak in English while at school and were supported by 17% were supported by 9% as 9% were undecided. This implies that pupils were not trained to speak English while at school hence low performance in English language.

It can be concluded that schools that had strict directors had pupils speak English in schools while other directors allowed pupils to use multilingual languages which is an embedment to performance in English. Table also shows that most teachers 31% did not acknowledge that pupils in non formal schools were fluent in speaking English language, as 22% acknowledged that pupils were fluent in speaking English language, 6% were undecided. This implies that pupils in NFPSs were able to speak fluent English even though they learned in English language. It can therefore, be concluded that pupils in non formals schools were able to speak English even though it was not fluent despite poor performance.

It is in this connection that pupils were asked about the language of communication by teachers while teaching. The findings are shown in table 1.5

Table 1.5 Pupils' responses on language of communication in class

Language of comm.	Frequency	Percentage
Sheng'	10	43
Kiswahili	5	21
Mother Tongue	2	9
English	5	22
Total	23	100

Data on the language of communication by teachers show that 43% of teachers used Sheng' in teaching English, 9% mother tongue 21% Kiswahili, as 22% used English. This implies that there is stiff competition in the language use in Non-formal primary schools. The common language used by pupils was 'Sheng. This was proved through lesson observation where by both Sheng and English was applied for the greater part of the lesson. It can be concluded that there was no strict language use applied in Non formal schools, several languages were used to enhance communication and concepts. Teachers had to lower themselves to the level of learners' in-order to help them.

It is in this regard that pupils were asked whether they enjoyed learning in English language. English is one of the instructional languages in Kenyan curriculum owing to its importance as a language of communication in business, technology, education and science as well as a tool to economic advancement (Enever, 2010). The findings are shown in table 1.6

Table 1.6 Pupils' responses in learning in English

Responses	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%
Pupils responses	0	00	5	22	10	43	6	26	2	9

Table 1.6 indicates that most pupils 43% did not enjoy nor like learning in English as 22% enjoyed learning in English, while 26% did not acknowledge enjoying learning in English as the same with 9%. This implies that pupils enjoyed learning in English despite the obstacles encountered. It can be concluded that most learners found Learning in English enjoyable as they learnt new words. Therefore learners needed to be more motivated by providing them with reading materials and encouraging them to speak in English

It is in this regard that directors were asked to state whether they had some policy governing the use of English in non formal primary schools. The findings are shown in Figure 1

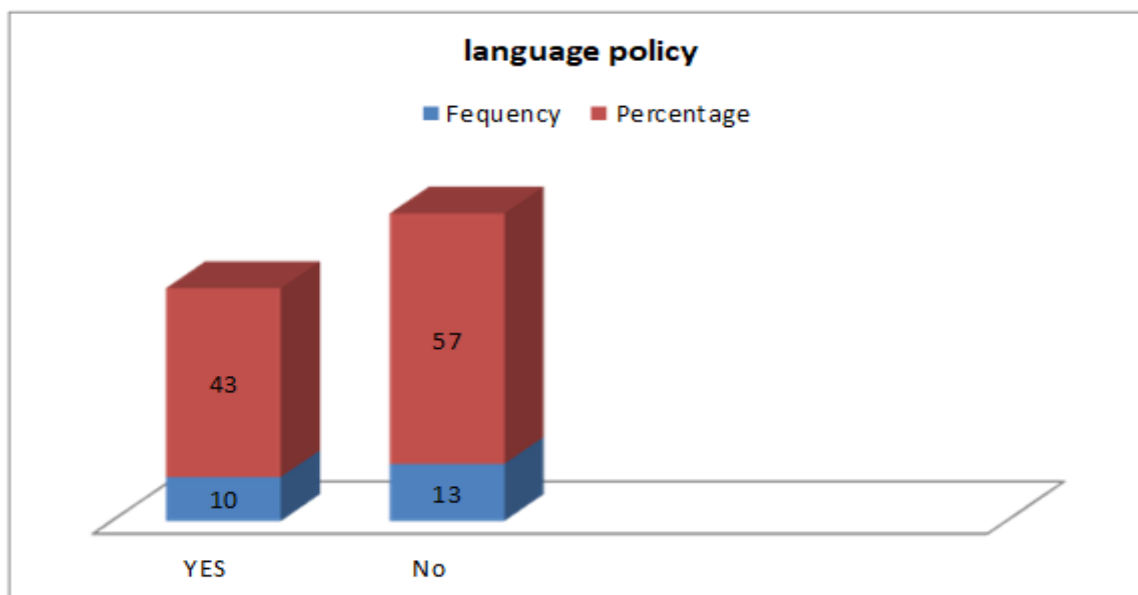


Figure 1 Directors' responses on Language Policy in NFPSs

Data on figure 1 shows that most directors 57% did not have governing policy in English in their schools, as 43 % of their counterparts had policies in place. The 57% further asserted that they reserved four days per week for speaking English and one day per week reserved for Kiswahili. Monday to Thursday was reserved for English and defaulters were punished while Fridays were reserved for Kiswahili language and defaulters were also punished. But 'Sheng' was commonly used in school illegally. This implies that directors needed to enforce the policy in schools to make the education viable. It can be concluded that directors needed to reinforce the use of National languages and make it compulsory so that it could contain the use of 'Sheng' in schools. In any case sheng' should be outlawed in schools in order to realize good performance in English language.

4.7.1 Correlation analysis on the multilingual Classroom Communication and performance in English language at KCPE 2016

The objective was to establish the relationship between the use of multilingual classroom communication and pupils' performance in KCPE in non formal primary schools. Questions on classroom communication practice included the use of 'Sheng', use of Kiswahili, pupils' speaking in English in School all the time and whether many pupils were fluent in English or not Data obtained was correlated with performance in English language at KCPE 2016 and the Pearson correlation results are presented in Table 1.4

Table1.4 Correlation analysis between multilingual classroom communication and performance in English language in KCPE 2016

Classroom communication practices	performance in English 'r'	
Pupils Use Sheng in class	Pearson Correlation	-0.182
	Sig (2tailed)	.395
	N	23
Teacher uses Kiswahili During English lesson	Pearson Correlation	0.037
	Sig(2tailed)	0.864
	N	23
Pupils use Mother tongue During English lesson	Pearson Correlation	.432
	Sig (2tailed)	.035
	N	23
Teacher uses mother tongue During English lesson	Pearson Correlation	-0.212
	Sig (2 tailed)	.319
	N	23
Pupils always speak English In School	Pearson Correlation	0.175
	Sig(2tailed)	.413
	N	23
Many pupils are not fluent In English	Pearson correlation	.192
	Sig(2 tailed)	.368
	N	23

*.Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2tailed)

The use of sheng' in class had a correlation coefficient of -0.182. The relationship was negative implying that the use of shieng' language decreased performance in English. The small correlation coefficient 'r' value was however not significant due to a large significant value of 0.395 which is higher than the minimum value of 0.05.

The use of Kiswahili in class had a correlation coefficient of 0.037. The relationship is positive implying that the use of Kiswahili language increased performance in English. However, the relationship was not significant due to the large significant value of 0.864 which is higher than the minimum value of 0.05. The use of Mother tongue had a correlation coefficient of 0.43. The relationship was positive implying that the use of mother tongue increases performance in English. The relationship was significant at 95% confidence level. The study concluded that the use of Mother tongue increases performance in English language in NFPSs.

The speaking of English by pupils at school had a correlation of 0.175. The small correlation coefficient 'r' value of .413 implies that the relationship is positive hence when pupils speak in English in school performance in English language improves.

Many pupils are not fluent in English returned a small insignificant positive 'r' value of 0.192 meaning that it does not affect their performance in English language. However, the relationship was not significant due to the large significant value of .368 which is higher than the minimum value of 0.05. It can be concluded that multilingual classroom communication did not influence performance in English language.

Findings in this study established that English, Kiswahili, 'Sheng' and mother tongue were all used during English lessons. All directors agreed that speaking of other languages had a negative effect on performance in English Language. However, the use of Sheng' had a correlation coefficient of -0.182, the use of Kiswahili had a correlation of 0.037 which was positive. The use of mother tongue increased performance, speaking in English had a correlation of 0.413 implying that the relationship is positive. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of other languages boosted performance in English despite the discouragement of other languages by the directors of schools.

The analysis of multilingual classroom communication indicated that the use of sheng' in class had a correlation coefficient of -0.182. The relationship was negative implying that the use of sheng' language decreased performance in English language. Many pupils are not fluent in English returned a small significant positive 'r' value of 0.192 meaning that it does affect performance in English language.

Conclusion

The findings concluded that the use of different languages at school and in class affected performance both

positively and negatively, therefore effective and good results to be realized in the learning and speaking in English, the language should be strictly enhanced in non formal schools. The use of different languages by pupils affect performance both positively and negatively depending on what kind of language is more preferred in learning English language at KCPE.

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