

Attitude of Teachers towards Use of Mother Tongue as Medium of Instruction in Lower Primary Schools in Bungoma South Sub- County, Kenya.

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Abstract

This study set out to investigate the attitude of teachers towards use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in lower primary schools in Bungoma South, Kenya. Although the language policy in

Kenya is that mother tongue should be the medium of instruction from primary 1- 3, the repeated directives by the government on the same indicate that there may be a mismatch between policy and implementation. This mismatch may be hinged on the attitude of critical implementers of this policy. The study was guided by the Theory of Planned Behaviour which predicts deliberate behaviour and proposes a model which can measure how human actions are guided. It predicts occurrence of a particular behaviour provided the behaviour is intentional. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The target was 119 public and private primary schools which were stratified into three categories namely: urban, peri- urban and rural. A total of 36 schools representing 30% were randomly selected. The study sample comprised 108 lower primary teachers out of which 96 responded to the questionnaire and 12 additional teachers were sampled for interview. Findings indicated that teachers did not favour a mother tongue medium of instruction at lower primary school level. Most teachers 70 (75.26%) indicated that they did not use mother tongue as a medium of instruction due to lack of instructional materials, differences between the teachers' L1 and learners' mother tongue and lack of specific training on how to teach in mother tongue at lower primary level. There was a strong feeling among the teachers that mother tongue did not add any value to the academic performance of the learners while some teachers indicated that teaching in English prepared the pupils better for excelling in examinations and consequently getting good jobs. It was recommended that the Kenyan government invests more in mother tongue medium instructional materials. To enhance the teaching in mother tongue at lower primary school, it is proposed that a deliberate effort be made to employ more teachers who speak the language of the catchment area.

Key words: Attitude, Mother tongue, medium of instruction and lower primary.

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