

Postcolonial Language-in-Education Policies in Africa: The Case of Kenya

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Abstract

The issue of language-in-education policy in postcolonial countries is of paramount importance in regards to their development, social, cultural and political concerns. Due to the multilingual situation of the sub-Saharan African countries and the legacy of colonialism, among other factors, these countries are faced with unresolved questions regarding the choice of language(s) that would best support economic and social development. It is a common practice in African countries to adopt former colonial languages (French, English and Portuguese) as languages of teaching and learning at all levels of education. Drawing mainly on studies which have been conducted in Kenya and, to a limited extent, in other African countries, this conceptual article aims to problematize this practice, to illustrate its negative effects on different areas of life and to stimulate reflection and debate on this practice among educational policy makers and practitioners in different countries in Africa.

Key words: Language policy, language in education policy, medium of instruction, economic and social development.

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