

Challenges to Learning of Kiswahili among Children with Hearing Impairment: A Case of Mumias Primary School for the Deaf, Kakamega County, Kenya

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Abstract

This paper is premised on a study that investigated challenges of learning Kiswahili amongst pupils with hearing impairment. This was driven by the fact that Kiswahili is important, not only as a national and official language in Kenya, but as a compulsory subject in primary and secondary school curricula. There had been an outcry from stakeholders on the poor performance in Kiswahili in both local and national examinations, with some arguing that Kiswahili overburdened learners and should be deleted from the curriculum. This study focused on academic performance of learners with H.I. in Kiswahili, methods employed, conditions requisite for excellence and educational resources used in teaching and learning Kiswahili. The study was carried out at the Mumias School for the Deaf in Kakamega County, Kenya. A sample size of six teachers and thirty-two pupils' were involved in the study. The study was guided by the behaviorist theory of language acquisition. K.C.P.E results between Kiswahili and other subjects in the school were compared. Using non-participant observation, interviews, document analysis and data sheets, data was collected, analyzed and interpretation done as per the guiding theory of Stimulus-Response-Rewards (S-R-R). The study found that performance in Kiswahili was poor due to several reasons: non-inclusive teaching methods, non-conducive conditions at the school, and underutilization of educational resources available at the school. By investigating teaching and learning strategies used in teaching Kiswahili, educational resources available and how they were utilized as well as conditions requisite for excellence in Kiswahili, this study's findings and consequent discussion are of import to policymakers in the education sector. In theory, a new way of evaluating H.I education might be considered. In practice, teachers might be assisted to evaluate their system and take up active roles in creating change in teaching Kiswahili for learners with hearing impairment. Learners might be introduced to signing skills, reading and writing Kiswahili in their early years in life even before getting enrolled in formal school. This would help improve performance.

Keywords: Kiswahili, learning, hearing impairment, stimulus-response-reward, performance

Full text:

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