

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 behaviourist 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 under-utilization 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 policy makers 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

INTRODUCTION

Kiswahili is rated among major languages of the world today (Chiraghdin & Mnyampala, 1977). It is broadcasted widely in the media and taught by many universities worldwide (Chiraghdin & Mnyampala, 1977). The language has continued to receive appraisal both locally and globally. In Eastern Africa, for instance, it is lingua franca and as such facilitates communication among several people of diverse linguistic background. In Kenya, the teaching of Kiswahili dates back to 1909 when the then United Missionary Conference (UMC) decreed vernacular languages and Kiswahili to be used as media of instruction in classes four and five in African schools. English was adopted for optional instructions in those classes while it remained strictly the medium of instruction in European and Asian schools (Chiraghdin & Mnyampala, 1977).

Various Education commissions later on came up with varied recommendations concerning language use in schools. The Beecher Report of 1948 laid

emphasis on teaching vernacular languages with English replacing Kiswahili as Kenya's lingua franca. The use of English as a medium of instruction would depend on how qualified teachers were to handle the subject successfully. By 1953, English was made a compulsory medium in examination held at the end of the eight years primary cycle. Kiswahili was developed to become a second language in secondary schools, while gradually fading so that by 1958, it was no longer taught extensively in primary schools (Whiteley, 1974). The Kenya Education Commission of 1964 recognized Kiswahili both as being of a unifying national influence and also as a means to the emergence of a Pan-African Community. Subsequently, it proposed that Kiswahili be made a compulsory subject in primary schools (Shiundu & Omulando, 1992).

After independence, Kiswahili started permeating various fields and quarters in the nation of Kenya. In 1969, the constitutional sector made knowledge of Kiswahili compulsory for one to register for

citizenship. In the judiciary, Kiswahili and vernacular languages were made the official languages in the lower courts whereas English remained the official language in high courts. In the civil service, officers qualified for colonial service after successfully going through a preliminary oral examination and a written test in Kiswahili. The local government appreciated the significance of Kiswahili when in September 1969, the Mombasa council agreed that Kiswahili becomes the official language in their deliberations (Whiteley, 1974). The parliament later on amended the constitution to be able to conduct proceedings of the National Assembly in Kiswahili which had initially been done in English (Mbaabu, 1985). Formal recognition of Kiswahili as a national language was declared in August 1969 by the National Governing Council of, the then ruling party, Kenya African National Union (KANU). In 1976, the Gachathi Report recommended Kiswahili to be taught as a compulsory and examinable subject in primary schools. This was not realized until much later in 1985 with the inception of the 8-4-4 system of education.

Public universities, Kenyatta University included, taught aspects of Kiswahili under the Department of Linguistics and African languages. Moi University started a department of Kiswahili as recommended by the Mackay Report of 1981. Recommendations by various education commissions have paved way for Kiswahili language and composition to form part of the mandatory Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination papers to date (Shiundu & Omulando, 1992). This status quo has been implemented in all school categories including special schools. Today, the new constitution has made Kiswahili a second official language of Kenya after English. Specifically, children with hearing impairment have had to compete favorably with their hearing peers, hence the adaptation of the regular school curriculum to suit their need (Kilei, 2003). Schools had first to address their communication needs to facilitate the competition.

Critical Issues

It is arguable that Kiswahili has increasingly become prominent due to its demand and use not only as a national and international language in Kenya, but also as a medium of instruction in lower primary and as a compulsory examinable subject (Shiundu & Omulando, 1992). Since the existing curriculum did not give special preference to children with hearing impairment, it posed many challenges to its teaching/learning. Hence, the study focused on challenges to learning of Kiswahili among children with hearing impairment as was necessitated by the fact that performance in Kiswahili had remained dismal (Kilei, 2003). Further, there was need to

establish the prerequisite issues that had to be addressed within the academic curriculum to make it possible for the learners with hearing impairment to compete favourably. The purpose of the study was to investigate challenges to learning of Kiswahili among children with hearing impairment. Specifically the study sought to find out teaching learning strategies used in teaching Kiswahili, educational resources available and how they were utilized as well as conditions requisite for excellence in Kiswahili.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The study was carried out in Mumias Primary School for the Deaf. The school is one of the oldest schools established in Kenya in 1961. Out of the thirty-four schools for learners with hearing impairment in Kenya, it would do well in most subjects but Kiswahili. The informant scope included upper primary classes four to seven pupils, Kiswahili teachers and the head teacher. The content scope considered the four language skills: listening (receptive skills), speaking (expressive skills), reading and writing and teacher's official documents that were scrutinized.

Data collection was almost hindered by two factors: Kiswahili being rendered an optional subject at K.C.P.E. which led the school into leaving the subject out of the time table in favor of K.S.L. A second factor was financial constraints experienced by the researcher as a postgraduate, self-sponsored student which delayed commencement of the data collection and data analysis process till September, 2011.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was guided by the behaviourist theory of language learning which emphasizes the major role played by the environment in language learning or acquisition. Infants learn language from human role models through a process involving imitation, rewards and practice. In 1904, Pavlov carried out an experiment of ringing a bell signalling provision of food to a dog, causing it to salivate. He did this severally till the dog got conditioned and would salivate on hearing the bell ring without provision of food.

In Pavlov's classical conditioning, the meat powder is considered an unconditioned stimulus (UCS). The dog's salivation is unconditioned response (UCR). The bell is a neutral stimulus until the dog learns to associate it with food. The bell becomes a conditioned stimulus (CS) which produces the conditioned response (CR) of salivation after repeated pairings between it and food. Pavlov's language learning theory had a significant role to play in this study. The Kiswahili visual aid was considered an unconditioned stimulus. The learner's performance of reading or signing of Kiswahili words was unconditioned response (UCR). The candy

(reinforcer) was a neutral stimulus until the pupil learned to associate it with Kiswahili language. The candy became a conditioned stimulus (CS) which produced the conditioned response of signing or reading Kiswahili after repeated pairings between it and the visual aids.

Barchier (1994) posited that application of behaviourist theory of language development had affected education at many levels. The best known was the practice of reinforcement. Reinforcing correct utterances in severely language- delayed children by giving them chocolate caused a repeat of the utterances. Michael (2005) offered a simple explanation for changes in behaviour as the connection of environmental stimuli with certain responses. He explained that when a hungry infant was fed with milk, the milk became the stimulus of an unconditioned response. If the mother said the word "milk" prior to or during feeding of the infant, the word milk (unconditioned stimulus) caused a conditioned response in the child that was similar to the unconditioned response to the milk perhaps with the salivation or cessation of crying. Once the word "bottle" was connected to the word "milk" that word might cause a conditioned response. The framework of response to stimuli accounted for the behaviourist theory of language acquisition. The environment provided the stimuli during the child's early years usually in the form of a parent or care taker talking and later on the teacher. The learner would respond with utterances, presumably imitated or generalized from the stimuli. The environment would provide a reward in the form of acknowledging or rewarding this language. These chains of Stimulus-Response-Reward (S-R-R) would result in generalizations that lead to other S-R-R chains. Watson, an American behaviourist observed that infants acquired words along with understanding of their functions through a system of experimental trials and requisite rewards. This emphasized the role of reinforcement in language acquisition. Inappropriate learner's responses to stimuli were extinguished through lack of recognition or rewards.

The S-R-R chains were tenets by which the study was guided. In a class for learners with hearing impairment, both the teacher and the learner should be endowed with total communication proficiency. The teacher (environment) would use TC to provide stimulus, in this case, Kiswahili words to the learner. The learner would use his receptive skills to observe lip movements or signs or listen to the utterances elicited. The learner then would respond as the teacher listens or observes the signs made. The environment (teacher) would acknowledge or reward the appropriately made attempts or responses. These rewards could be tangible or social. The process would be done repeatedly for the words or language patterns to be made permanent. Use of rewards

encouraged formation of S-R-R chains and the process would be repeated to facilitate teaching/ learning other Kiswahili words. Inappropriate responses would be extinguished by withholding rewards or failing to recognize the responses.

The behaviourist theory has three distinct but related tenets: Stimulus, Response and Rewards. The first tenet led to realization of the second and fourth objectives on variables of teaching/ learning methods and educational resources used in teaching learners with hearing impairment. A teacher (environment) would present a stimulus by selecting appropriate teaching/ learning methods and educational resources to use in teaching/ learning Kiswahili. Data was collected and analyzed according to the themes already identified under teaching/ learning methods as well as educational resources.

The second tenet on response assisted on realization of objective number one where performance in Kiswahili by learners with H.I was rated. Data was collected and analyzed under the theme of performance in Kiswahili. Document analysis of records elicited H.I learner's performance at school level and national level (K.C.P.E.)

The third tenet on rewards facilitated realization of objective number three. Use of rewards after evaluation of learner performance; acted as a motivating factor in teaching and learning. Data was collected on conditions requisite for learning Kiswahili such as teacher/ learner attitude, enriched learning environment, evaluation and learning experiences. The data was then analyzed under the theme already identified. Appropriate use of reinforcement would encourage formation of more S-R-R chains. Inappropriate responses were not rewarded.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework shows interrelationships between variables of the study and the three tenets of the behaviourist theory of language learning. The variables of teaching/ learning methods, educational resources and conditions requisite for teaching/ learning Kiswahili were necessary in the variable of Learning Kiswahili. The tenets of Stimulus, Response and Rewards (S-R-R) were also necessary in influencing learning of Kiswahili. The stimulus from the environment (teacher) would be provided through appropriate teaching/ learning methods and use of relevant educational resources. If the learning environment was conducive, the learner would respond to the stimulus either appropriately or otherwise. The environment (teacher) would reward the appropriate responses. The inappropriate responses were neither acknowledged nor rewarded. Once the teacher reinforced the appropriate responses, the cycle of S-R-R chains would most

likely begin again and more words in the language would be learnt.

RESEARCH APPROACH

Sampling is a process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals selected represent a large group. Purposive sampling on the other hand is a procedure where subjects are chosen according to a certain specified criterion (Orodho, 2004). Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) confer that cases of subjects are handpicked because they possess the required characteristics. In this study, purposive sampling was used to select the school, the head teacher, Kiswahili teachers and pupils for focus interview groups and observation classes. This was necessitated by the fact that all learners in the school had H.I. Classes, four to seven were purposively selected on the basic assumption that learning of Kiswahili had taken off from class four and communication/ teaching methods already established. Class eight would be precluded from the study. As a summative evaluation class, strategies put in place to prepare them for their KCPE candidature needed not be interfered with. Focus interview groups were purposively selected by gender and academic performance in Kiswahili.

Data collection adopted three methods: observation, interview guide and document analysis. Triangulation of six instruments was employed to increase chances of depth and accuracy of data. The six instruments were non-participant observation guide, three interview guides, and document analysis guide and data sheet.

The investigator obtained a letter of authority from the university and a research permit from the Ministry of Education before proceeding to the field for the data collection process. Thereafter, preliminary visits were paid to the District Education Officer (DEO) Mumias District to inform him/her about the purported study in the respective school. Reconnaissance visits to Mumias School for H.I were made for familiarization before commencement of the data collection procedure. The head teacher and Kiswahili teachers were informed about the study. They were assured of confidentiality of the data collected to be used for the purposes of this study only. Official documents and data sheets were collected for study and collection of data.

Data collection in the field ensued two weeks later beginning with non-participant observation. The Kiswahili teachers were observed teaching their respective classes and qualitative data recorded following the observation guide prepared beforehand. Each class was observed twice in two alternate weeks. Brief discussions of the lessons were held with the teachers concerned and prepared for the interviews to ensue.

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were held with the Kiswahili teachers after the lesson observations so as to synchronize the findings. Focus group interviews with pupils followed where the researcher and assistant signed the items from the interview guide to the four groups, one at a time. The learners signed their responses one by one. The researcher took notes using pencil and pad.

Interview with the head teacher was held at his own discretion in his office on the same day. Each informant was interviewed twice within two alternate weeks. Finally, data collected using all the instruments was put together for analysis.

Raw data collected was categorized, ordered, coded and then tabulated. This was done according to themes from which objectives were generated as follows: analyzing academic performance, teaching/learning methods, conditions requisite for excellence and educational resources. Qualitative data collected using observation guides was categorized under the last three themes indicated above.

Data gathered from the head teacher's interview guide was categorized under conditions requisite for excellence in Kiswahili and educational resources. Specific sub-themes under this theme were the learning environment, learning experiences, evaluation modes, attitude and reinforcement.

Data gathered from teacher's interviews was categorized under: teaching and learning methods, educational resources and conditions requisite for excellence whereas data from the focus groups discussion was categorized under all the four themes. From the document analysis, data gathered was categorized under analyzing academic performance of Kiswahili by learners with H.I. Quantitative data gathered from data sheets was categorized under the first objective: academic performance of Kiswahili by learners with H.I. It was later analyzed using a measure of central tendency- the mean score.

After categorization of the raw data, analysis was done in descriptive nature. Data interpretation was done in light of objectives of the study and on the basis of the three tenets of the guiding theory of the study: Stimulus-Response-Reward. Findings of the study were presented descriptively through narrative passages as well as in frequency distribution tables, pie charts and histograms.

In this study, ANOVA was run to statistically assess whether the observation that Kiswahili was poorly performed compared to other subjects in K.C.P.E. was indeed a pattern or just a phenomenon that occurred by chance. Since ANOVA showed that the means between the K.C.P.E. subjects were indeed

statistically significant with Kiswahili having a lower mean than the other subjects, it was concluded that Kiswahili more than any other subject was indeed poorly performed amongst learners who are hearing impaired.

DISCUSSION

Results of the study indicated that Kiswahili was the worst performed subject both at school and within the national context. The difference in mean score was relatively small. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test that was performed established that the difference between the means was indeed statistically significant thus answering the first research question that Kiswahili was poorly performed.

To address the second research question, teachers' most preferred method of teaching Kiswahili was demonstration. Only one teacher employed Total Communication, whereas no teacher at all used Individualized Education Program (IEP), which is the most highly recommended method of teaching learners with H.I. On the other hand, learners preferred learning through finger spelling, storytelling, signing and writing. They did not rank learning by observation as highly, showing a disconnect in the learning methods preferred by pupils and the teaching methods preferred by teachers. In order to optimize pupils' learning, it is important that teaching and learning methods align so as to cater for pupils' needs and abilities.

Several conditions requisite for learning were investigated under the third objective: learning environment, learning experiences, evaluation, reinforcement and attitude. Findings established that classroom seating arrangement was in rows rather than horse shoe. This arrangement hampered optimal teacher-learner as well as learner-learner interactions. Concerning learning experiences, pupils were good at receptive experiences, but were limited in their expressive capabilities. This stemmed from two factors: shortage of learning materials such as toys, playthings, poems and sign stories as well as lack of exposure to Kiswahili language prior to their enrolment into formal school. The former would provide opportunities for learning the language and the latter would form a foundation for the language.

Analysis of teachers and pupils' responses on reinforcement, attitude and evaluation revealed that a few learners who received reinforcement in Kiswahili were encouraged to continue learning it. They would do this for future community interactions, job placements especially in the teaching fraternity and to embrace the language as a national as well as an official language of the nation. Teachers' and learners' attitude towards learning of Kiswahili was positive for the post-lingually deaf and negative for the prelinguals. The post-linguals were assumed to

have had a background of the language before onset of deafness and as such it would not be so hard to continue learning it. It was also imperative for them to be given an equal opportunity to study the national as well as official language. It was assumed that the post-linguals would find it impossible to learn a language other than their natural language; KSL.

Both formative and summative evaluation was carried out in the school. However, administration of the latter did not allow for comprehensive evaluation. This was because KIE dictated conditions under which to organize the evaluation that did not take cognizance of HI learners. First, learners were allocated thirty minutes extra, during examinations but teachers argued that this time was not sufficient. Secondly, although the examination invigilators were trained in Special Education and KSL, the supervisors were not necessarily trained in the field. This discrepancy inhibited proper administration and evaluation taken by learners with HI since the supervisors were not aware of the nuances that govern KSL and communication with HI learners.

To address the fourth and final research question on educational resources, three categories of resources: visual aids, assistive technology and human resources were analyzed. The study established that the visual aids available in the classroom were greatly underutilized since they were used less than fifty percent of the time. There were very few pieces of assistive technology. Learners were hesitant of making use of the few individual hearing aids available as they complained of irritation and the discomfort they caused. There were no group hearing aids. The school had only two cassette players. No computers and no television sets. Learning activities would be more effective if these technologies were available and put in use. On the requisite condition of human resource, the study established that the ratio of KSL competent teachers: learners stood at 1:20 instead of the KIE recommended ratio of 1:12. Teachers were overloaded and as such could not provide the one-to-one attention so much required in teaching learners with HI. Teachers were left with the option of adopting learning styles of majority of learners hence any learners with a different learning style could not learn optimally thus slowing the learning process for them.

Lastly there were only five group actors available to the whole school. They too were overwhelmed while directing group activities such as drama and coaching of large groups. It was clear that the number of resource persons was not enough to individualize learning experiences for pupils at the school. This factor coupled with the afore-mentioned, contributed to learners' poor performance in Kiswahili. These findings confirmed the Ministry of Education's report of 2005 which showed that KCPE performance in

deaf schools was “dismal” and that Kiswahili was the worst performed subject in the national examinations.

CONCLUSION

Academic Performance in Kiswahili

In 2005, the MOE released a report that showed that KCPE performance in deaf schools was “dismal” and that Kiswahili was the worst performed subject in the national exams. This poor performance was attributed to: Inadequate internal and external curriculum supervision and quality advice; unstable curriculum and examinations offered for learner with H.I; and lack of adequate skills and training amongst teachers. In line with this report, this study affirmed the MOE’s claims. Kiswahili was indeed the worst performed subject in KCPE. The researcher investigated and showed that the entire curriculum was not covered by teachers, not all the teachers in the school were KSL trained and the time allocated for examination of learners with H.I was not adequate.

Teaching and Learning Methods

During this case study, it was noted that only some elements of Total Communication were used in Kiswahili lessons. In fact, only one teacher incorporated TC in its entirety to meet individual learner’s need. The other teachers mainly used demonstration, description, probes, participation and lecture to teach. On the other hand, learners preferred learning by finger spelling, storytelling, signing, writing, question and answer, observation, cued speech and discussion. Since teaching and learning methods did not incorporate all elements of TC, learning for these pupils was not flexible enough to accommodate different needs that the learners might have had to allow them to learn at their full capacity. The original expectation of T.C. was for teachers to use the communication methods most appropriate for a particular child’s need at a particular stage. This type of individualized teaching was difficult to achieve at this particular school because it was dictated by the number of learners in each class. At the time of the study, the ratio of KSL-competent teacher: learner was 1:20 which far superseded the 1:12 ratio recommended by the Ministry Of Education. Consequently, teachers found it hard to adjust their teaching methods to those appropriate to the whole class and to each individual learner.

Furthermore, individualized Education Programme (IEP) – a teaching method designed to meet the unique needs of each learner - was not in use in any of the classes at the school. This implies that the learners were taught as per the demands of the curriculum without putting into consideration their learning abilities as dictated by the extent of their impairment.

CONDITIONS REQUISITE FOR TEACHING KISWAHILI

Learning Environment

The researcher observed that the learners’ seating arrangement in the classroom was the traditional row arrangement as opposed to the recommended horseshoe arrangement. The horseshoe seating has been recommended as means to facilitate maintenance of eye contact between learners-learner and between teacher-learner, thus enhancing learning from both the teacher and other peers. Contrary to this, the seating arrangement at this school allowed pupils’ eye contact with the teacher but not with one another. It was therefore difficult for the learners to follow each other’s responses during lessons; consequently, learning amongst peers was greatly inhibited.

Learning Experiences

The researcher established that the learners’ most preferred expressive activities were finger spelling, storytelling, writing and signing, while observation was the most preferred receptive activity. It was noted that discussions were least popular amongst learners due to their limited Kiswahili vocabulary. This led the research to conclude that not all elements of TC were used to enhance learning of Kiswahili and was a factor that would contribute to the poor performance.

Evaluation

Student’s performance and program effectiveness are assessed through evaluation. In line with this, the researcher established that the school was involved in both formative and summative evaluation. Formative evaluation was carried out daily, weekly, fortnightly or monthly by individual teachers in different classes whereas whole school evaluation was done at the end of each term and each year. It was established that the most frequently used evaluation tools were short answer questions, Continuous Assessment Tests, essays and observation. Summative evaluation was carried out annually by KNEC in which evaluation of learner’s performance in class eight in KCPE and the curriculum effectiveness were both assessed. However, three main shortcomings associated with evaluation of learners with H.I were the limited time allocated to the examination, a shortage of KSL-trained examination officials, and lack of skills on tackling examination questions as reported by pupils.

Reinforcement

It was established from the informants as well as by observation that both verbal and non-verbal reinforcement was used in the Kiswahili lessons. Teachers offered compliments or tangible reinforcement such as food whenever positive efforts or correct responses were elicited by learners. Learners would clap hands to those who deserved to be rewarded. Physical messages such as facial

expressions, eye contact, nodding of the head in approval and body positions were used as well. It was reported that at the end of term, tokens like text books, pens and utensils such as glasses were presented to a few learners who merited for them. Those who received reinforcement were interested in pursuing Kiswahili further as learners and eventually as teachers. As a result of this observation, the researcher concludes that positive reinforcement is key in getting learners interested in Kiswahili and consequently improving their performance. This finding concurs with the fact that various aspects of praise and issuance of corrective feedback are positively correlated with pupils' achievement and positive attitude. It is notable that reinforcement is a great determinant of success in the learning process.

Attitude

Amongst the learner informants, majority (three focus groups) had a negative attitude towards Kiswahili. They conceded that learning Kiswahili was too hard for them no matter how much they tried to learn it. They preferred learning KSL. The groups cited comprehension, long answer questions in examinations and interpretation of English signs into Kiswahili as the most difficult aspects of learning the language. These informants wished Kiswahili scrapped off the curriculum for them to excel in other languages.

One of the focus groups had a positive attitude towards learning Kiswahili. In fact, they showed interest in pursuing Kiswahili to higher levels in order to become teachers, like two of their own teachers that have H.I. or to be able to interact in the community. This group wished that the curriculum continues to be inclusive of Kiswahili for them to learn more of it.

The teacher informants looked at learning of Kiswahili as two sides of the same coin. They were sympathetic to the learners' burden of learning three languages: English, KSL and Kiswahili at the same time, especially for the prelinguals. They argued that the prelinguals should be exempted from learning of Kiswahili. On the other hand, they were empathetic to the postlinguals and hard-of hearing learners for whom they argued that they needed to learn Kiswahili to be able to integrate into the society, or for job placements in the teaching fraternity or to embrace the national and official language of the nation. This finding affirms the claims that teachers' attitudes towards both learning and the learner, whether positive or negative will affect the learner's performance.

The findings of the study confirmed that learning of Kiswahili needed a positive attitude. Those learners whose attitude was negative towards Kiswahili could not be convinced to learn it for whatever benefits and

given an optional language to study, they would readily embrace it. Those learners whose attitude was positive were intrinsically motivated to study the language in addition to other languages.

When teachers sympathised with the learners for their burden of three languages to study, this attitude did not motivate learners to learn Kiswahili. On the other hand when they empathized with them this impacted positively on the learners and encouraged them to learn the language.

Educational Resources

It was observed that the school had adequate visual aids for Kiswahili such as charts, flash cards, posters, drawings, pictures, object labels and others on display. Nonetheless, these visuals were hardly used during the lessons. Text books for Kiswahili, which are among the most useful learning devices, were not adequate in number and were not used optimally. Visual aids are helpful since vision is the pupils' primary means of receiving information. Visuals provide memory links and thus learners' recall mechanism is boosted. When visuals aids are not fully utilized in the learning process, learner's memory is not enhanced. This reduces their retention of material learnt, thereby contributing to the learners' poor performance.

In addition, it was observed that there were very few assistive technologies available at the school. At the time the research was conducted, there were only two cassette players that were used by teachers to carry out speech training, no group hearing aids were available, and the few individual hearing aids available were not fully utilized. In addition, only twenty teachers out of thirty-six were competent in speech training as well as in KSL. Subsequently, the researcher concluded that the educational resources available in the school were not enough to cater to the needs of the entire school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Academic Performance in Kiswahili

Based on the findings from this study, the researcher recommends the following action steps if Kiswahili learning is to be enhanced amongst learners with H.I:

1. Teaching methods need to be tailored to meet each individual learner's needs. In particular, all elements of TC and IEP should be incorporated in the teaching of learners with H.I
2. All teachers and examination officials should be trained on how to interpret English signs into Kiswahili.
3. The MOE should revise its policy to remove Kiswahili from the syllabus. It is imperative that learners, particularly postlingually deaf and hard of hearing, become proficient in Kiswahili in order to provide them with the necessary

communicative skills to integrate into the community.

4. Time allocated for examination of learners with H.I should be increased more to allow them to take their examination without their disability becoming a hindrance to their performance.

Teaching and Learning Methods

In order to optimize teaching and learning at the school, the researcher recommends:

1. Employing TC and IEP as teaching methods that are more individualized and designed to meet each pupil's needs and abilities.
2. Hiring more KSL-competent teachers in order to reduce the burden placed on the teachers thus allowing them to further individualize their teaching.
3. Splitting classes into smaller manageable groups to match the approved ratio of 1:12.
4. Carrying out an educational assessment of each pupil to determine postlinguals and prelinguals in order to identify academic areas of concern that would again allow teachers focus on those specific needs.

Conditions Requisite for Teaching Kiswahili

1. *Learning environment:* Encouraging teachers to revert to the horse-shoe seating arrangement as this would inevitably shift the passive class atmosphere to one that is more interactive and cordial, allowing peer-peer learning to take place.
2. *Learning experiences:* The classrooms should be flooded with play things especially in lower classes to facilitate more Kiswahili language experiences.
3. *Evaluation:* A change in policy that would provide KSL training for examination officials in order to improve examination standards and that teachers train learners with H.I on how to tackle examination questions.
4. *Reinforcement:* Teachers find out ways to incentivize each pupil in order to inspire them to work harder to improve their Kiswahili skills.
5. *Attitude:* Teachers adopt an empathetic attitude rather than a sympathetic one such that they can encourage their pupils to learn Kiswahili in order to improve their performance in national examinations and embrace it as a national as well as an official language.

Educational Resources

Teachers fully utilize the resources available in order to enhance pupils' learning capabilities as well as improve their expressive skills. These are imperative in comprehension and communication using Kiswahili language.

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