Challenges of Enforcing English as the Medium of Instruction in Upper Primary Classes in Kenya

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges of enforcing English as the medium of instruction in upper primary classes based on Vygotsky's social constructivism and language theory. Mixed methods approach was used in the study. The focus of this study was on public primary schools because they use mother tongue in lower primary school classes. Simple random sampling was used to select 21 out of 70 public primary schools that took part in the study. Purposive sampling was used to select standard seven classes on the premise that they have already had an experience with various languages in school and are also already aware that the official language of communication in school is English. Twenty standard 7 pupils from the selected schools were randomly selected to take part in the pupils' focus group interviews and one teacher of English language from the selected class in each school was automatically selected to take part in the study. Data was collected using pupils' focus group interviews and teacher questionnaires. The study found out that teachers face challenges in enforcing English as the medium of instruction in upper primary schools, all the teachers agreed that they make efforts to make their pupils aware of the need to use English for communication both in and outside class and finally most of the pupils reported that they experience difficulties in using English only during English lessons.
Keywords: Challenges, Enforcing, English, Medium of Instruction, Upper Primary

1.0 Introduction

Language policy refers to "all the language practices, beliefs and management decisions of a community or polity" (Spolsky 2004, p. 9). Language policy therefore determines which languages should get status and priority in society by being labelled 'official', 'local', 'national' and which languages are to be used as media of instruction in the country's education system. Language policy also has the potential to legitimise marginalised languages hence manipulating and imposing language behaviour (Shohamy 2006). The language policy that any country adopts greatly affects language learning in one way or another. Most developing countries are characterised by multilingual societies yet foreign languages pervade most of education systems as medium of instruction. A system where instruction is carried out in a language children do not speak is referred to as submersion, as it is comparable to forcibly holding a child under water (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). However, research has shown that mother tongue-based schooling significantly improves learning (Benson 2004b; Trudell 2005; SIL 2006; UNESCO 2006; Kosonen 2009; Young 2009). The use of a familiar language to teach children literacy is more effective than a submersion system as learners "can employ psycholinguistic guessing strategies" to learn how to read and write (Benson 2004a). This means that since children can already speak the language, they can learn to associate sounds with the symbols they see, thus facilitating understanding. When literacy skills, such as reading, are taught in a foreign language, the children first have to gain familiarity with the sound before they can master the symbol. Such cognitive development takes time, which is a luxury submersion does not allow. This forces learners and teachers to resort to rote teaching and learning, where the children merely memorise what the teacher says without necessarily understanding the meaning.

Despite the poor learning outcomes associated with submersion education, it is wrongly regarded the fastest way to teach children the L2 (Trudell 2005; Kosonen and Young 2010). Baldauf and Kaplan (2004) note the prevalence of the myth that the more time spent educating a child via a language of wider communication, the more they master it. But in most cases, such practices tend to push children out of schools as learners fail to find meaning in what they are hearing and intellectually disengage. This makes it much harder to regain their attention later on, or even retain them in the schooling system beyond the primary level. Teaching in a child's home language however means that the learning of new concepts does not have to be postponed until learners grasp L2. As a result, teachers and learners are able to negotiate meanings together, thus competency in L2 is gained through mutual interaction rather than memorisation and rote learning.

Cummins (1979) proposes the interdependence theory to explain the positive transfer of literacy skills from L1 to L2. He argues that the level of literacy competence in L2 that a child attains is partially a function of the level of competence the child has in L1 at the time L2 teaching begins intensively. Thus, if an education system submerges learners in L2 without first trying to further develop the skill they already have in L1, the school risks impeding their competency in L2 for years to come, while also limiting continued, autonomous development of their L1. This is because the sustained use of a foreign language of instruction in schools negatively impacts the way children learn to think, thus interfering with their cognitive development. Wigglesworth and Simpson (2008)

support the idea that a child's initial acquisition of language is vital to their learning how to think. Therefore, when an education system imposes a foreign language on children, disregarding their initial contact with language and pattern of processing new information, it inhibits their development of cognitive function.

2.0 Historical Development of Language Policy in Kenya
During independence in 1963, Kenya inherited an education system that was racially segregated. This kind of education dates back to the recommendations of Frazer in 1908. Nelson Frazer was appointed as the Education advisor to the governments of East Africa in the same year. His report recommended that:
    i.   A Department of education be set up in the government
    ii.   Education be segregated along racial lines; the Europeans, the Asians and Africans.
    iii.   The Africans be given technical education to provide labour which was cheaper than that of Asians.
These recommendations were totally accepted and implemented because they were suitable to the needs of settlers. In 1924, the colonial government set up a commission to co-ordinate education; it came to be known as "The Phelps stroke commission" among the recommendations were:
    i.   Emphasis should be placed on the kind of education which suited the needs of Africans.
    ii.   Africans should be given an education which would fit them for a life in the rural environment.
    iii.   Education provided to Africans should not divert them from their traditional cultures and not encourage them to migrate to towns in search of white-collar employment.
    iv.   Teaching instruction should be in local mother tongue
    v.   Education to continue being racially segregated.

It can be observed here that emphasis has been put on the provision of education along racial lines; also the teaching instruction should be in local mother tongue. Other colonial commissions which followed later like the Beecher Report (1949) and the Binns Group (1950) did not mention much on language policy, but still recommended education on racial lines.

In 1963 when Kenya got independence there was need to develop an education policy which could give the best education to the Kenyan child. With this fact in mind the government set up an education commission which came to be known as Kenya Education Commission Report in 1964, chaired by Ominde. The commission's recommendation on language policy was as follows: Recommended the universal use of English as a medium of instruction from primary 1. This view was agreed upon for the following reasons:
    a.   The English medium makes possible a systematic development of language study and literacy which would be very difficult to achieve in the vernaculars.
    b.   Because of the systematic development possible in the English medium quicker progress is possible in all subjects.
    c.   The foundation laid in the first three years is more scientifically conceived and therefore provides a more solid basis for all subsequent studies, than was ever possible in the old vernacular teaching.
    d.   The difficult transition from a vernacular to an English medium, which can take up much time in primary 5, is avoided.
    e.   The resulting linguistic equipment is expected to be much more satisfactory, an advantage that cannot fail to expedite and improve the quality of post-primary education of all kinds.

On vernacular languages, the commission recommended vernacular languages as essential languages of verbal communication and recognized no difficulty including a daily period for story-telling in the vernacular, or similar activities in the curriculum of primary 1, 2 and 3. The Commission further observed that vernacular would continue to serve their historical role of providing a means of domestic verbal communication. The commission, however, saw no need for assigning to them a role for which they are ill adapted, namely, the role of educational medium in the critical early years of schooling.

With regards to Kiswahili the commission observed that, there was a general spread of Kiswahili, not only as to provide an additional and specifically African, vehicle for national co-ordination and unification but also to encourage communication on an international basis, not only within East Africa, but also with the Eastern parts of Congo and parts of Central Africa. Kiswahili was therefore recognized both as a unifying national influence and as a means of pan-African communication over a considerable part of the continent. Kiswahili was therefore made a compulsory subject in primary school.

The introduction of Kiswahili as a subject in school had some difficulties as there were no competent Kiswahili teachers, and a crash training of Swahili teachers during the holidays was recommended. The commission also recommended the establishment of a department of Kiswahili in the University College, Nairobi to greatly assist in the promotion of Kiswahili as a national language in Kenya. The New Primary Approach and the English medium approach recommended by the Ominde Commission could not be fully implemented owing to numerous logistical problems. The approach was abandoned even by the schools that had been implementing it, (Kembo- Sure, 1994). This situation led to the establishment of a committee to look at the educational objectives and policies in 1976. This came to be known as "Report of the National Committee on

Educational Objectives and policies" chaired by Gachathi, (GOK, 1976). Its recommendation on language policy was as follows:

> "To use as a language of instruction, the predominant language spoken in the schools' catchment area for the first three years of primary education. To introduce English as a subject from primary 1, and to make it supersede the predominant local language as a medium of instruction in primary 4." (pp. 54-55)

The rationale for this change in language policy was on the premise that; most of the children in the rural areas can only speak their vernacular language at the time of starting primary education. Yet, they are expected to have learnt adequate English by the end of seven years to be able to do the certificate of primary education in English. The committee came to the conclusion that the education system should make much better use of the local languages for instruction at the beginning of primary education. English should however, be taught as a subject from primary 1 and then used as a language of instruction in the upper primary classes.

The above situation is still the norm as far as language policy is concerned to the present. The policy is silent on Kiswahili as a language of instruction, however, it can be presumed to be one of the languages of the catchment area in urban areas, and can thus be used as a medium of instruction in lower primary. The competition between English and Kiswahili has risen higher ever since the latter was given a new impetus as it was reaffirmed as the national language of the Republic of Kenya, apart from being declared the official language of the Republic alongside English, (GOK, 2010). Given this linguistic situation in Kenya, this study sought to establish challenges of enforcing English as the medium of instruction in upper primary classes in Kenya having in mind the development of language policy in Kenya and how it has influenced the learning and teaching of English in upper primary classes.

2.1 English Language Teaching in Kenya

Kenya has more than 40 indigenous languages (termed mother tongues), apart from that it has two official languages; English and Kiswahili (Githiora, 2008). Official educational policy has mentioned above states that the first three years of schooling (Class One to Three), should be in the mother tongue, or the indigenous language spoken in the respective catchment areas where the schools are located; and that in Class Four, English should be used as the medium of instruction (Nabea, 2009). Students begin learning English as a second language as a subject at the beginning of primary school that is Class One, although in some schools, teachers begin instruction in English from Class One because they want to give their students a head start with the language (Gathumbi, 2008). Research has found, however, that most Kenyan students are not sufficiently proficient in English at the end of Class Three to effectively learn content in English in Class Four (Bunyi, 2008; Gathumbi, 2008). Additionally, Kiswahili (the national language and mother tongue of a small section of the population) is also taught as a subject from Class One, so that most students after Class 3 are learning content through English at the same time that they continue to learn Kiswahili language as a subject. Since all the subjects, except for Kiswahili, are taught in English, Kenyan students learn English language while using the English language to learn the curriculum. Unlike some former British colonies where English is the language of wider communication, Kenya has a language of wider communication other than English, since all students learn Kiswahili as a subject throughout primary and secondary school. Many Kenyans, therefore, rarely use English outside of school. Young people communicate with each other in their mother tongue, Kiswahili, or Sheng (Kioko and Muthwii, 2001).   Sheng, a language form developed by young people in the urban areas of Kenya, includes words from English and Kiswahili, mixed with the mother tongues and utilizing Kiswahili morphosyntactic structure (Mbaabu and Nzuga, 2003).

2.2 The use of Code-Switching in Language Classrooms

In multilingual language classrooms, both teachers and learners switch from one code to another. This phenomenon performs different functions. The teachers' use of code switching is not always performed consciously, which means that the teacher is not always aware of the functions and outcomes of the code switching process. In some cases it is regarded as an automatic and unconscious behaviour. Nevertheless, either conscious or not, it necessarily serves some basic functions which may be beneficial in language environments. These functions are noted as topic switch, affective functions, and repetitive functions (Mattson and Burenhult, 1999). In topic switch cases, the teacher alters his/her language according to the topic that is under discussion. This is mostly observed in grammar instructions, that the teacher shifts his language to the mother tongue of his students in dealing with particular grammar points, which are taught at that moment. In these cases, the students' attention is directed to the new knowledge by making use of code switching and accordingly making use of native tongue. At this point, it may be suggested that a bridge from native language to foreign language is constructed to transfer the new content and meaning is made clear in this way, as it is also suggested by Cole (1998). A teacher can exploit students' previous L1 learning experiences to increase their understanding of L2.

In addition to the function of code switching named as topic switch, the phenomenon also carries affective functions that serve for expression of emotions. In this respect, code switching is used by the teacher in order to

build solidarity and intimate relations with the students. In this sense, one may speak of the contribution of code switching for creating a supportive language environment in the classroom. As mentioned before, this is not always a conscious process on the part of the teacher. However one may also infer the same thing for the natural occurrence of code switching as one cannot take into guarantee its conscious application. Another explanation for the functionality of code switching in classroom setting is its repetitive function. In this case, the teacher uses code switching in order to transfer the necessary knowledge to students for clarity. Following the instructions in target language, the teacher code switches to native language in order to clarify meaning and in this way stresses importance on the foreign language content for efficient comprehension. However, the tendency to repeat the instruction in native language may lead to some undesired student behaviors. A learner who is sure that the instruction in foreign language will be followed by a native language translation may lose interest in listening to the former instruction which will have negative academic consequence as the student is exposed to foreign language discourse limitedly. As it is the case for teachers' code switching, the students also are not always aware of the reason for code switching as well as its functions and outcomes. Although they may unconsciously perform code switching, it clearly serves some functions either beneficial or not. Eldridge (1996) names these functions as equivalence, floor - holding, reiteration, and conflict control.

The first function of students' code switching is equivalence. In this case, the student makes use of native equivalent of a certain lexical item in the target language and therefore code switches to his/her native tongue. The process may be correlated with the deficiency in linguistic competence of target language, which makes the student use the native lexical item when he/she does not have the competence of using the target language explanation for a particular lexical item. So "equivalence" function as a defensive mechanism for students as it gives the Student the opportunity to continue communication by bridging the gaps resulting from foreign language incompetence.

The next function to be introduced is floor-holding. During a conversation in the target language, the students fill the stop gap with native language use. It may be suggested that this is a mechanism used by the students in order to avoid gaps in communication, which may result from the lack of fluency in target language. The learners performing code switching for floor holding generally have the same problems they cannot recall the appropriate lexicon structure of the target language. It may be claimed that this type of language alternation may have negative effects on learning a foreign language; since it may result in loss of fluency in the long term.

The third consideration in students' code switching is reiteration, as Eldridge (1996) observes "Messages are reinforced, emphasized, or clarified where the message has already been transmitted in one code, but not understood", (p.306). In this case, the message in the target language is repeated by the student in native tongue through which the learner tries to give the meaning by making use of a repetitive technique. The reason for this special language alternation case may be two- folds: first, he/she may have transferred the meaning exactly in target language. Second, the student may think that it is more appropriate to code switch in order to indicate to the teacher that the content is clearly understood by him/her.

The last function of students' code switching is conflict control. For the potentially conflictive language use by a student, meaning that the student tends to avoid a misunderstanding or tends to utter words indirectly for specific purposes; the code switching is a strategy to transfer the intended meaning. The underlying reasons for the tendency to use this type of code switching may vary according to students' needs, intentions or purposes. Additionally, the lack of some culturally equivalent lexis between the native language and target language- which may lead to violation of the transference of intended meaning may result in code switching for conflict control; therefore possible misunderstandings are avoided.

Cook (2002), handles the subject matter considering multilingual classrooms; he says that the application of code switching in classes which do not share the same native language may create problems, as some of the students   though few in number will somehow be neglected. So, at this point it may be suggested that the students will share the same native language, if code switching will be applied in instructions. Another point to consider in this respect is the competence of the teacher in the mother tongue of the students, as this plays a vital role, if positive contribution of code switching is expected. A further discussion is put forward by Eldridge (1996), who suggests that learners have no guarantee that their audience will share knowledge of their mother tongue. This perspective concerns the interaction of students with native speakers of the target language, as mutual intelligibility may not be possible if the learner switches his language during communication.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study was based on social constructivism and language also referred to as social development theory of learning by Levy Vygotsky (1978). It postulates that people use language based on various social factors within the environment and that the adult is the major facilitator and determiner in language acquisition and use. Thus the teacher in this study was viewed as the adult who should facilitate language acquisition and learning within the school environment and that there are varied factors within the school environment that determine how learners and teachers use the various languages they are exposed to Social constructivism theory is ideal in this

study on the influence of multilingualism on the teaching and learning of English in upper primary. It focuses on the connections between people and the sociocultural context in which they act and interact in shared experiences. According to him, humans use tools that develop from a culture, such as speech and writing, to mediate a social environment. Initially, children develop these tools to serve solely as social function to communicate their needs. In primary schools children develop such tools like speech and writing using the various languages they are exposed to in their environment. First they develop speech in mother tongue which is the language spoken within their homes; and also the language used as a medium of instruction in lower primary. They develop speech and writing in Kiswahili and English as the former is learned as a subject in school and it is also a lingua franca in the community, while the latter is learned both as a subject and is also used as a medium of instruction from Standard 4 onwards. Following this discussion, it can thus be argued that, this theory is ideal in this study in that pupils in Kenyan primary schools use various languages to interact among themselves and with their teachers. They also think through these languages in and outside class as they use language to form concepts. It can thus be argued that if learners think in the three languages, it affects their use of language. The learners think more in mother tongue and Kiswahili, this affects their use and learning of English. This situation in turn affects their performance in English language.

3.0 Methodology
The study adopted mixed methods research approach. According to Cresswell and Clark (2011) mixed methods research approach provides trends that offset the weakness of both qualitative and quantitative research. It also provides more evidence for studying a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative research alone and finally it helps answer questions that cannot be answered by quantitative and qualitative approaches alone. This study adopted descriptive survey design where random sampling was carried out to ensure the sample is representative. Kothari (2004) observes that surveys are concerned with conditions that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are ongoing, effects that are evident or trends that are developing. In the study, teacher questionnaire and pupils' focus group interview schedule were used to collect data from the teachers and pupils respectively. Cohen and Manion (1992) observe that in a descriptive survey, the collection of information typically involves structured or semi-structured interviews and self completion questionnaire among other instruments. In the study, multilingual language learners and social context of language were taken into account.
 The study was concerned with public primary schools in Marakwet East Sub County. This was on the premise that in this region mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction from standard 1-3. To obtain the actual sample of schools that took part in the study, the researchers used simple random sampling. Cozby (2001) observes that simple random sampling is a sampling technique in which each and every member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected for the study. The researcher selected 21 schools which is 30% of the total number of public primary schools that are 70 in number. Kerlinger and Lee (2000) observe a sample of 30% is representative of the population to be studied. Standard seven pupils were purposely selected on the premise that they are already aware of the language to be used as a medium of instruction in upper primary school classes. The study adopted a combination of two instruments in order to capture both qualitative and quantitative data. The instruments included the teacher questionnaire and the pupils' focus group interview schedule. These instruments were used to obtain information from both teachers and pupils on language use in school. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) observe that a questionnaire is a research instrument used to obtain important information about the population. Each item in the questionnaire was developed to address a specific objective or a research question. In this study the researcher used the questionnaire to obtain data from the teachers of English in the schools under study. Kothari (2004) observes that some of the advantages of using a questionnaire are: "there is low cost even when the universe is large and is widely spread geographically. It is free from the bias of the interviewer; answers are in respondents own words and large samples can be made use of and thus the results can be made more dependable and reliable", (pp.100-102).
    Fraenkel and Wallen (2010) observe that in a focus group interview, the interviewer asks a small group of people to think about a series of the questions. The participants sit together in a group to hear one another's responses to the questions. Often, they offer additional comments beyond what they originally had to say, once they hear the other responses, they may agree or disagree; consensus is neither necessary nor desired. The objective is to get at what people really think about an issue or issues in a social context where the participants can hear the views of others and consider their own views accordingly. It should be stressed however that a focus group interview is not a discussion. Neither is it a problem solving session, nor is it a decision making group. It is an interview. In this study, the researchers grouped the pupils in groups of 20 and carried out a focus group interview to ascertain their language use and the challenges they face in using English as the medium of instruction in upper primary school classes.

4.0 Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data drawn from closed ended items in the teacher questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Cresswell and Clark (2011) observe that quantitative data analysis proceeds from descriptive analysis to inferential analysis and multiple steps in the inferential analysis build a greater refined analysis. The data was compiled in frequencies and then converted into percentages. For easy interpretation, the information was tabulated. Information from open ended items was analyzed qualitatively into themes guided by the study objectives.

Data from pupils' focus group interview were coded and analyzed descriptively in identified themes based on study objectives as (Kumar 2011, Cresswell and Clark 2011) point out qualitative data analysis involves coding the data, dividing the text into small units that is phrases, sentences or paragraphs, assigning a label to each unit and then grouping the codes into themes and finally a discussion of evidence for the themes or categories; or diagrams presenting frameworks, models or theories.

5.0 Results and Findings

The study established that teachers face challenges in enforcing English as the medium of instruction in upper primary as they switched from one language to another during their teaching. It was established that 5 (23.8%) of the teachers strongly agreed that during the teaching of English they switch to other languages unconsciously, 7 (33.3%) agreed, 3 (14.3%) disagreed, and 6 (28.6%) strongly disagreed. This information is summarized in Figure 4.1. It can thus be concluded that teachers switch unconsciously during the teaching of English.

Table 4.1: Teachers' Opinions on whether they switch Unconsciously to Other Languages when teaching English

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	7	33.3
Strongly Agree	5	23.8
Disagree	6	28.6
Strongly Disagree	6	28.6
Total	**21**	**100**

In the study, it was found out that 5 (23.8%) of the teachers strongly agreed that it is hard for learners to use English only during English lessons, 5 (23.8%) agreed, while 7 (33.3%) disagreed and 4 (19%) strongly disagreed. It can therefore be concluded that it is hard for teachers to enforce the use of English as the medium of instruction in primary schools in Kenya.

Table 4. 3: Teachers' Opinions on the Enforcement of English as a Medium of Instruction

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	5	23.8
Strongly Agree	5	23.8
Disagree	7	33.3
Strongly Disagree	4	19
Total	**21**	**100**

From the study it was established that all the teachers, 21 (100%) agreed that they make efforts to make their pupils aware of the need to use English for communication in and outside class. On the frequency on how they do this, 16 (76.2%) reported that they do this all the time while 5 (23.8%) reported they do this sometimes. This is summarized in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Occurrence Teachers Remind Pupils of the Need to Communicate in English

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
All the time	16	76.2
Sometimes	5	23.8
Total	**21**	**100**

5.1 Challenges Pupils face when using English during English Lessons

From the study, majority of the pupils reported that they experience difficulties in using English during English lessons and a few reported that they do not experience difficulties. Pupils reported that they experience difficulties during speaking, when writing, when pronouncing words, others reported they translate words directly from other languages to English. Other learners reported that they code switch and code mix English words and those of either mother tongue or Kiswahili. the reasons given by the pupils as to why they face difficulties in using English during English lessons are varied, however, most of them cited they do not practice speaking in English in and outside class, this is because at home they speak mother tongue most of the time while in school they either speak in mother tongue or Kiswahili as English is only spoken during English lessons. Others reported that they lacked foundation when they were in lower primary classes, this is because they were

taught in mother tongue, others explained they lacked exposure to English language as only a limited number of people use English for communication in the community and others reported there are limited reading materials in their schools.

5.2 Discussions

The results from the teacher questionnaire indicated that slightly more than half of the teachers, 12 (57.1%) agreed that during the teaching of English they switch to other languages unconsciously. This reflects the findings of Mattson and Burenhalt (1999) who established that the teachers' use of code switching is not always performed consciously. The same number of teachers, 12 (57.1%) agreed that it is hard for learners to use English only, during English lessons. These findings support those of Saxena (2009) who established that in those classes which do not allow the use of Malay "students use mother tongue in classes against the norms of interaction set out by the teachers" (p.176). He noted that in these classes teachers face a degree of resistance from the students.   It can thus be concluded that teachers face challenges in enforcing English as the medium of instruction in upper primary schools.

On the other hand, 5 (23.8%) of the teachers agreed that it is hard for them to enforce the use of English as a medium of instruction when teaching English. This contradicts the earlier assertion that it is not hard for learners to use English only, during English lessons. Results from the study indicated that all the teachers, 21 (100%) agreed that they make efforts to make their pupils aware of the need to use English for communication both in and outside class.

Results from the pupils' focus group interview schedule indicated that most of the pupils reported that they experience difficulties in using English only during English lessons. They reported that they experience difficulties during speaking, when writing, pronouncing words, direct translation of words from other languages to English while others reported that they code-switch and code mix English words and words from either Kiswahili or mother tongue. These findings support those of Masinde (2005) who established that learners had great problems in pronunciation. He cited that students pronounced most of the English words with deep Kalenjin accent. It also supports the findings of Saxena (2009) who found out that in English only medium classes students claimed they did not like their English lessons as they found them boring because of the fact that they do not really understand English well. All these can be seen as part of interference within language. This view is supported by Kembo-Sure (2000) in Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000) who observes "negative transfer is interference by a mother tongue or other well-known language in the use of the target language" (p.300). In the same vein, Brown (1987) observes that when first learning a second or foreign language, speakers transfer many characteristics of their native language to the new language. The target language in this case is English. Crystal (1987) suggests that code or language switching occurs when an individual who is bilingual alternates between two languages during his/her speech with another bilingual person. In this case both teachers and learners code switch mostly from English to Kiswahili and less to mother tongue.

The above arguments support the notion that teachers face challenges in enforcing English as the medium of instruction in primary schools in Kenya as multilingualism influences the teaching and learning of English in one way or another.

6.0 Conclusions

From the study it can be concluded that teachers face challenges in enforcing English as the medium of instruction in upper primary as more than half of the teachers reported that during the teaching of English they switch to other languages unconsciously. Similarly, majority of the teachers reported that it is hard for the learners to use English only during English lessons. It can thus be concluded that teachers face challenges in enforcing English as the medium of instruction in upper primary. Second, all the teachers reported that they make efforts to make their pupils aware of the need to use English for communication both in and outside class. However, most of the learners could not adhere to this and most of the time they were found either using mother or Kiswahili even within the school compound and also in English language classes.

Third, it can also be concluded that majority of the learners experience difficulties in using English during English lessons. They reported that they face difficulties during speaking, when writing, pronouncing of words, direct translation of words from other languages to English while others code-switch and code mix English and words from other languages.

Finally, it can be concluded that the teachers as well as the pupils in upper primary school are multilingual as they speak mother tongue, Kiswahili and English. It was also established that these other languages spoken by pupils in upper primary schools influence the teaching and learning of English language. It was also established that teachers use other languages apart from English when teaching English in upper primary school classes and thus they face challenges in enforcing English as a medium of instruction in upper primary schools.

Recommendations

The study recommends that teachers should promote English language proficiency among the learners to enhance the teaching and learning of English in the school curriculum and Language policy makers should review the use of first language as a medium of instruction in lower primary school classes, so that English can be introduced to learners at an early stage and age.

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