

## **The Impact of the Medium of Instruction on Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Simanjiro District, Manyara Region: A Comparative Study**

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### **Abstract**

This study focused on the investigation on the impact of the Medium of Instruction (MOI) on student's academic performance in secondary schools in Simanjiro District, Manyara Region. It tried to compare performance of the students who went through English medium versus those from Kiswahili medium schools. The study was interpretative and utilized both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The data collection methods used includes the questionnaire items, in-depth face to face interview and documentary analysis. The overall results show that, a group of the students who went through English medium found to perform better than those from Kiswahili medium schools. Therefore, a familiar language should be used during teaching and learning process for the purpose of maximizing student's performances. Furthermore, gradual transition from Kiswahili medium of instruction in the lower grades and focused government educational policy are posed as being among immediate solution for the problem. The conclusions of the study calls for the government to come up with the focused language policy and suggest further research on the same area to be done using other levels of education in assessing student's academic performance.

## **1. Introduction**

Medium of instruction (MOI) is a language used in teaching; it may or may not be the official language of the country or territory. Where the first language of students is different from the official language, it may be used as the medium of instruction for part or all of schooling and universities. Bilingual or multilingual education may involve the use of more than one language of instruction (Mazrui, 1997).

In a comparative study between Tanzania and Kenya on high school students' performances, the Tanzanian language policy is questioned by the World Bank (WB) because the results were not quite impressive (Mazrui, 1997). The World Bank (WB) stated that the Tanzanian education system of using Kiswahili throughout the seven years of primary school education has shown how difficult it is for students to learn in English in secondary school (Mazrui, 1997). This is seen in their academic achievement in high school where Kenya has done remarkably well while Tanzanian students results were very low.

Tanzania as one of the few African countries is endowed with a local national language Kiswahili that is used by about 95% of the entire population, while English is spoken fluently and used by only about 5% of the population (Brock-Utne, 2002).

Batibo (1990) found that Kiswahili is a fast growing language in Tanzania. Although it is a second language to many children after their vernacular languages especially those who live in rural areas while remaining the first language to the urban children, at present, has become a tool of communication to facilitate national interactions in business, in Parliament, in the various Ministries, in the lower judicial courts as well as in all of public primary school as a medium of instruction since independence as compared to English which is used as the medium of instruction in post primary education and in few ministries. Currently a Tanzanian child receives seven years of primary education in Kiswahili medium while English is taught as a compulsory subject. According to Rubagumye (2002) as the children complete their primary education and continue to secondary schools they switch from Kiswahili to English which seems to be difficult for most of them. He found that the students' level of English proficiency in secondary schools was completely inadequate for teaching and learning of other subjects and suggested for immediate measures to be taken.

Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct a study on the impact of the language used as the medium of instruction in secondary schools on student's academic performance particularly by comparing the academic performance of secondary schools students who went through English medium schools versus those who went through Kiswahili in Simanjiro District, Manyara Region which to a great extent has attracted serious attention from scholars, administrators and other educational stakeholders about the language used as MOI and the student's academic performance and therefore created a need which called for this study.

## **2. Literature Review**

This study was guided by Vygotsky's theory which places more emphasis on the role of language in cognitive development. Vygotsky's (1962) emphasized the role of language and culture in cognitive development and in how we perceive the world, and claimed that they provide frameworks through which we experience, communicate, and understand reality. He demonstrated the importance of language in learning by demonstrating that in infants, communication is a pre-requisite to the child's acquisition of concepts and language. But, he suggests that people learn with meaning and personal significance in mind, not just through attention to the facts.

According to Vygotsky, (1962) all fundamental cognitive activities take shape in a matrix of social history and form the products of socio historical development. In this process of cognitive development, language is a crucial tool for determining how the child will learn how to think because advanced modes of thought are transmitted to the child by means of words (Murray, 1993). Therefore this theory will be used to show how languages of instruction influence the student's academic performance. To Vygotsky, a clear understanding of the interrelations between thought and language is necessary for the understanding of intellectual development. There is a fundamental correspondence between thought and speech in terms of one providing resource to the other; language becoming essential in forming thought and determining personality features.

In fact these theories are adopted from different types of theoretical and empirical literature relating to language in relation to teaching and learning within the constructivist paradigm. Among the theories include those by the prominent educational psychologist Piaget, (1961) who contends that, a child development occurs in four stages and it is during the fourth stage of

formal operations that language becomes progressing instrument in shaping rational scientific thinking of an adult. Moreover, language use acquires a greater importance as the child's initial personal and autistic thinking becomes gradually socialized. Kozulin, (1990) recapitulating on Vygotsky idea on cognitive development in children explains how Vygotsky theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) claims. According to Vygotsky, (1962), the constructivism is related to social aspect of learning, he defined the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) according to which students solve problems beyond their actual developmental level (but within their level of potential development) under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers, that is, children learn through their interception with adults or more capable peers. The theory holds that because learning occurs in a social context, language plays a very important role in conceptualization of those ideas. In his paper, Theoretical and Practical Challenges in Tanzania English Medium Primary Schools, Rugemalira (2006) compares the effects bestowed on culturally Kiswahili oriented students and those of English orientation only to establish differences. So far this may be the fact why Ndamba (2008) predetermine that students in Tanzania favor the usage of Kiswahili because they could hardly express themselves in English due to infringed attitude towards English as a second language in the nation. Building on the same conception Rwezaura (1994) asserts that, this tendency of speaking of Kiswahili by Tanzanian teachers while they well recognize the language of instruction in secondary schools is English consequently lead to falling of student's academic performance because this attitude makes them to internalize Kiswahili as being legitimate.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted the correlation design because the study involved data to be enumerated, interpreted, analyzed and finally assumptions made from the collected data. The researcher used questionnaires to the students and teachers and guided interview to the heads of schools, District Inspector of schools and the District Secondary Education Officer (DSEO). The questionnaires had been distributed to both the teachers and students while the guided interview used to the head of schools, District Inspector of Schools and the District Secondary Education officer.

This study used purposive sampling particularly homogeneous sampling to pick up a small sample with similar characteristics to describe some particular sub group in depth. In this sample method, the researcher purposely targeted a group of people believed to be reliable for the study.

The power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information rich cases for in depth analysis related to the central issues being studied. It can be used with both quantitative and qualitative studies.

Therefore, the targeted population involved 1,440 respondents from Mererani Township, Moipo division in Simanjiro District council of which the sampled participants were 153 respondents including 12 teachers (3 teachers from each secondary school), 100 students from a group of those who went through Kiswahili medium schools (i.e. 25 students from each secondary school), 40 students from a group of those who went through English medium schools (i.e. 10 students from each school). It composed of a sample size of four secondary schools among them 3- government secondary schools and 1-private secondary school which have been carried out using a descriptive survey by comparing the degree of academic performance of secondary school students who went through English medium schools versus those who went through Kiswahili of Which the method or techniques for collecting the information that had been employed in the initial identification process involved questionnaires, interviews and the use of examination records. Others who have been involved in this research were teachers, head of schools, District Inspector of schools (DIS) and District Secondary Education Officer (DSEO) of Simanjiro District, Manyara Region. The major aim of this study was to see whether the language of instruction has any contribution towards students' academic performance which had been assessed by the National form two examinations done by all the schools of which the selected subject (Geography) has been used for assessment. The study mainly compared and contrasted the academic performance of the secondary school students who went through English medium Primary school and those who went through Kiswahili in order to reveal their similarities or differences in their performances.

In this study, quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS of which counts and frequency distribution and frequency tables will be derived from the responses to the research questions. Then, Pearson product moment correlations have been used to determine the existing relationship between medium of instructions and student's academic performance since the study involved the variables. Qualitative data from interviews would also be analyzed descriptively and information be presented in the narrative form.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Table1: Frequency (F) and percentage (%) of the response from students with Kiswahili medium versus those from English medium background**

| Items   | Category of schools    |        |          |     |    |      |                        |      |          |        |          |      |
|---|------------------------|--------|----------|-----|----|------|------------------------|------|----------|--------|----------|------|
|   | Swahili Medium Schools |        |          |     |    |      | English Medium Schools |      |          |        |          |      |
|   | F                      | %      | F        | %   | FA | %    | F                      | %    | F        | %      | F        | %    |
|   | <b>D</b>               |        | <b>N</b> |     |    |      | <b>D</b>               |      | <b>N</b> |        | <b>A</b> |      |
| Only English as a Medium of Instruction   | 1<br>4                 | 1<br>4 | 1<br>0   | 10  | 74 | 76   | 8                      | 20   | 3        | 7.5    | 2        | 72   |
| English as MOI from Primary Schools   | 2<br>0                 | 2<br>1 | 8        | 8   | 69 | 71   | 3                      | 7.6  | 4        | 10     | 3        | 82   |
| Speaking English only in the classroom can improve English standards              | 7<br>8                 | 8<br>1 | 4        | 4   | 14 | 15   | 2<br>9                 | 74   | 0        | 0      | 1<br>0   | 25.6 |
| Annoyed when the Teacher use Swahili in an English lesson                         | 4<br>1                 | 4<br>4 | 8        | 8.5 | 45 | 47.8 | 2<br>2                 | 56   | 2        | 5      | 1<br>5   | 39   |
| The Medium of Instruction used in Secondary Schools is not Supportive to Learning | 4<br>9                 | 5<br>3 | 1<br>0   | 11  | 33 | 36   | 2<br>1                 | 55   | 4        | 1<br>1 | 1<br>3   | 34   |
| Funny listening to fellows speaking English in the class.                         | 5<br>2                 | 5<br>4 | 6        | 6   | 38 | 40   | 1<br>5                 | 37.5 | 4        | 1<br>0 | 2<br>1   | 52.5 |

Sources: Researcher: 2014

The response on the question which asked, whether they enjoy it when their English teacher only uses English as the medium of instruction, the result shows that 74 out of 98 respondents (76%) from Kiswahili background and 29 out of 40 respondents (72%) from English backgrounds, respectively agreed that they like it when their English teacher only uses English as the medium of instructions while 14% from Kiswahili background and 20% from English backgrounds,

respectively disagreed. On the other hand 10% from Kiswahili background and 7.5% from English backgrounds respectively were neutral. Thus, the majority of the students from both groups agreed on the use of the only language used as the medium of instruction during teaching and learning process. This result is supported by the study done by Murray, (1993) who insisted that, in the process of cognitive development, language is a crucial tool for determining how the learner will learn because advanced modes of thought are transmitted to the child by means of words, thus also coincide with the theory of vygotsky which shows how language of instruction influence the student's academic performance.

The result from the students respondents on the question which sought to find that, if given a chance whether they would prefer English as the medium of instruction to start from primary level, shows that 71% and 82% of the students from Kiswahili and English backgrounds, respectively agreed with the statement, 21% and 7.6% from Kiswahili and English backgrounds, respectively disagreed while 8% and 10% from Kiswahili and English, respectively were neutral. This facts show that given chance the majority of respondents from both groups led by the group of the students from English background (82%) prefer English as the medium of instruction to start from primary level a thing which justify that continuity of the language used as MOI is a crucial tool in facilitating effective teaching and learning in secondary schools. This fact is also concur with the article written by Rabbin, (2011) who argued that: "The use of Kiswahili in primary school education and English in post- primary education not only excludes some from the job market, but also dilutes teaching and learning standards in Tanzania".

The students with 25.6% and 15% from Kiswahili and English background respectively, agreed that Speaking English only in the classroom can improve their English standard, 74% and 81%, respectively disagreed with the statement while 0% and 4% were neutral. This result conclude that majority of the respondents led by the students from English background with 81% disagreed on the item above. This finding is supported by the study done by Murray, (1993) who argued that, in the process of cognitive development, language is a crucial tool for determining how the child will learn how to think because advanced modes of thought are transmitted to the child by means of words, it is therefore vital to consider introducing English as a medium of instruction right from primary schools so that students could get used to the language from early

stages of their learning and hence being able to use that language for interaction both inside and outside the classroom so as to improve their academic standards.

The students with 47.8% and 39% from Kiswahili and English background respectively agreed with the statement that, If the teacher uses Kiswahili to conduct an English lesson they will be annoyed, 44% and 56% from Kiswahili and English, respectively disagreed on the statement while 8.5% and 5% respectively were neutral. This result shows that the majority of the respondents with 44% and 56% from Kiswahili and English groups, respectively disagreed with the statement that says, if the teacher uses Kiswahili to conduct an English lesson they will be annoyed, in other words it implies that for them if the teacher uses Kiswahili in conducting an English lesson they will be comfortable and hence proved that both of them lack adequate proficiency in the language used as MOI in secondary schools a thing which forced them to demand code switching in their learning which led them into partial achievement. This finding contradicts with the study done by Ishumi (1994) who argued that, mastery of language is a key in the efficiency and eventual effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. He warns that a dilemma over usage options can seriously suppress the acquisition of knowledge and skills.

On the question which says, the Language used as the medium of instruction in secondary schools in Tanzania is not supportive to learning, 36% and 34% from Kiswahili and English groups, respectively agreed with the statement, The students with 53% and 55% from Kiswahili and English groups, respectively disagreed while 11% from each group were neutral. Thus, the result shows that the majority of respondents disagreed on the item above, that is to say the Language used as the medium of instruction in secondary schools in Tanzania is supportive to learning. This finding is supported by Criper & Dodd in Rubagumye (2002).

Senkoro (2004) found that a number of studies done concerning the Language of instruction and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Tanzania shows the deterioration of education standards year after year because most of the students enrolled in secondary schools lack proficiency in the language used as MOI which ultimately alerted on the need of putting more emphasis on the language used as MOI so as to facilitate achievement of the set educational goals.

About 40% and 52.5% of the students from Kiswahili and English groups, respectively agreed that, It is fun listening to their fellows speaking English in the class, 54% and 37.5% from the



same groups respectively disagreed while 6% and 10% from Kiswahili and English, respectively were neutral. These findings show that the majority agreed with the statement that it is fun listening to their fellows speaking English in the class. This is supported by Mwinsheikhe (2003) who says, the language problem inhibits students to clearly express themselves in writing what they have learned during National examinations which resulted into poor performance. Building on the same conception Kadeghe (2003) states that, English language is a major hindrance towards effective teaching and learning and thus affected school performance in both science and arts subjects of which regardless of all these findings still English is being used as the medium of instruction in secondary schools in Tanzania.

**Table 2: Performance of students by Category of School background**

| Category of School      |                                    | Performance of students |              |              |              |             | Total         |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|
|                         |                                    | F                       | D            | C            | B            | A           |               |
| English Medium Students | Count                              | 0                       | 8            | 18           | 13           | 1           | 40            |
|                         | Expected Count                     | .9                      | 17.7         | 13.9         | 6.7          | .9          | 40.0          |
|                         | <b>% within Category of School</b> | <b>.0%</b>              | <b>20.0%</b> | <b>45.0%</b> | <b>32.5%</b> | <b>2.5%</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |
|                         | % of Total                         | .0%                     | 5.8%         | 13.0%        | 9.4%         | .7%         | 29.0%         |
| Swahili Medium Students | Count                              | 3                       | 53           | 30           | 10           | 2           | 98            |
|                         | Expected Count                     | 2.1                     | 43.3         | 34.1         | 16.3         | 2.1         | 98.0          |
|                         | <b>% within Category of School</b> | <b>3.1%</b>             | <b>54.1%</b> | <b>30.6%</b> | <b>10.2%</b> | <b>2.0%</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |
|                         | <b>% of Total</b>                  | <b>2.2%</b>             | <b>38.4%</b> | <b>21.7%</b> | <b>7.2%</b>  | <b>1.4%</b> | <b>71.0%</b>  |

Sources: Researcher: 2014

Based on the data above, the performance of students who went through English Medium in the National Form II Examinations, grade F were 0 (0%), D were 8 (20%), C were 18 (45%), B were 13 (32.5%) and A were 1 (2.5%) while on the other hand, those who went through Kiswahili medium their results revealed that F were 3 (3.1%), D were 53 (54.1%), C were 30

(30.6%), B were 10 (10.2%) and A were 2 (2.0). Thus, these data proved out that students who went through English Medium performed better than those from Kiswahili background because the majority of their performance lies between A, B, and C while for students with Kiswahili background the majority lies between B, C and D. Also in the group of the students who went through English medium there were no student who scored 'F' while in the group of students who went through Kiswahili medium, 3 students (3.1%) scored 'F'. This result concurred with the study hypothesis which claimed that, there is significant relationship between language used as MOI and students academic performance. This result is also supported by Roy-Campbell, (1997) who found out that, Language used as MOI in Tanzania lacked the element of continuity of students learning experiences and in essence forced some students to lose progress in their performance standards.

Thus, result above shows that, the chi-value of 18.9 with 4 degree of freedom concluding that there is significant relationship between change of medium of instruction and student's academic performance at  $p \leq 0.05$  significance level.

**The transition from Kiswahili to English medium of instruction**

Table 3: Shows the impact of change of the medium of instruction from Kiswahili in the primary schools to English which is being used as MOI in secondary schools towards student's academic performance

**Table 3: Shows impact on Change of the medium of instruction**

| <b>Impact of change of MOI from Kiswahili to English</b>       | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Hinder students from maintaining continuity in their learning. | 54               | 37.0           |
| Affects both students regardless of their language background. | 27               | 18.5           |
| Affects only students with no English proficiency.             | 56               | 38.4           |
| Others   | 4                | 2.7            |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>146</b>       | <b>100.0</b>   |

Sources: Researcher: 2014

On this item of change of the medium of instruction, the respondents with the frequency of 56 (38.4%) shows that this change affects only students with no English proficiency while others composed of the frequency of 4 (2.7%). This result is highly supported by Vuzo, (2007) who conducted a research on how language of instruction affects learning and assessment. She recommends that a familiar language should be used for learning, teaching and assessment purposes in order to maximize students' academic performance.

### **English language before starting secondary school**

Table 4: Shows the prior experience possessed by students on English which is the language used as MOI before starting secondary school

**Table 4: Student's English language experience before starting secondary school**

| <b>Student's prior English experience before starting secondary school</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Used as the medium of instruction  | 33               | 22.6           |
| Taught as a subject  | 68               | 46.6           |
| A and B are correct answers  | 42               | 28.8           |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>146</b>       | <b>100.0</b>   |

Sources: Researcher: 2014

On this item concerning the use of English language before starting secondary school, the result shows that the aspect of taught as a subject had a frequency of 68 with 46.6%. Thus, with this finding the majority asserted that in relation to the use of English language before starting secondary school this language was just taught as a subject. Few of them with the frequency of 33 (22.6%) responded that it was just used as the medium of instructions starting in secondary school. This finding is supported by Swilla, (1992) who argued that, most Tanzanian children have access to learning English theoretically; it is only those attending good quality English Medium private schools that attain competence in the language and perform well as compared to students from poor background of English language who attend public schools. The students with good quality English background are the children of about 5% of the population who

created a class of their own. The rest of them about 95% receive instructions in substandard English which affects their academic performance.

### **Students who perform better in the national form two examinations**

Table 5: shows the group of students who performs better in the National form II Examination Results in Geography subject.

**Table 5: Students who perform better in the National form two Examinations**

| <b>The group of students who performs better in Geography subject</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| Those who went through English medium school                          | 102              | 69.9           |
| Those who went through Kiswahili medium school                        | 4                | 2.7            |
| Both of them  | 38               | 26             |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>146</b>       | <b>100.0</b>   |

Sources: Researcher: 2014

On this aspect of the students who perform better in the National Form Two Examinations the results show that, those who went through English medium school performs better in their national form two Examinations with the frequency of 102 (69.9%) while the minority with the frequency of 4 which is equivalent to 2.7% responded that students who went through Kiswahili medium school are also performing better. This finding is supported by Komba, (2012) who conducted a study on the link between English language proficiency and academic performance in Tanzanian Secondary schools who found that, English the language used as the medium of instruction (MOI) in secondary schools has fallen victim of blame from some scholars as the cause of poor performance in secondary schools in Tanzania. The blame is directed at English, the language used as MOI strongly up until recent years 2010 and 2011 when the results of National Examinations have been extremely worst.

### **Contribution of MOI in student's academic performance**

Table 6: shows the contribution rate of the language used as MOI in secondary schools towards student's academic performance.

**Table 6: Contribution of the language used as a medium of instruction in secondary schools towards student’s academic performance**

| <b>The contribution of MOI towards student’s performance</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Very high  | 53               | 36.3           |
| Very low   | 15               | 10.3           |
| Moderate   | 72               | 49.3           |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>146</b>       | <b>100.0</b>   |

Sources: Researcher: 2014

The results on this item about contribution of the language used as a medium of instruction in secondary school show that, the majority of the respondents said it is moderate with frequency of 72 ( 49.3%). On the other hand, those who responded ‘very high’ had a frequency of 53 (36.3%) while those who said ‘very low’ had a frequency of 15 (10.3%). This result is supported by Muhdhar, (2002) who argued that, a major problem in this respect is rather unrealistic expectations from many parents that children be forced to speak only English as soon as they set foot in the school. Some parents have very strong opinions on enforcement of the English only policy and any mitigation by the school is seen as a sign of incompetence. They also believe that through this move the country should excel into the global market place, competing with the likes of India and China with its own skilled English language work force. To chart the country’s development path along these lines, however, does not reflect realities of economic development as it is disrespectful to the legacy of Kiswahili in its continued shaping of Tanzanian civil society.

**Language used by students to interact in the classrooms**

Table 7: shows the language used by the students to interact in the classroom.

**Table 7: Language used by students to interact in the classrooms**

| <b>The language used by students to interact in the classroom</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| Kiswahili   | 33               | 22.6           |

|              |            |              |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| English      | 29         | 19.9         |
| Both         | 81         | 55.5         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>146</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Sources: Researcher: 2014

On this aspect of the Language used by students to interact in the classrooms, the result shows that both languages are used with the frequency of 81 (55.5%). On the other hand those respondents, who said English, had the frequency of 29 (19.9%), while Kiswahili the frequency was 33 (22.6%). Thus, the findings revealed that students used both languages to interact in the classroom as supported by Roy-Campbell & Qorro (1997) who identified the problems that results from using English as a medium of instruction in secondary schools as being little knowledge gained from the subject matter since learners do not understand English well, that is to say, learners are restricted from adequately acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes intended in their academic studies because of using a foreign language as a medium of instruction in secondary schools instead of using Kiswahili language as a medium of instruction which they are more familiar with than English, and that is why they are forced to use both languages to interact in the classroom due to lack of English proficiency that could help them communicate frequently in the classroom and hence applied the system of code switching mode that in one way or another found to hinder mastering of the contents of the subject matter learned.

**Using the same language of instruction from primary to secondary school level**

Table 8: shows whether the use of the same language of instruction from primary to secondary school level contributes positively towards student’s academic performance.

**Table 8: using the same language of instruction from primary to secondary school level**

| S/N | Items on the extent to which MOI contribute towards student’ performance      | SD |     | D  |     | N  |      | A  |    | SA |      |
|-----|---|----|-----|----|-----|----|------|----|----|----|------|
|     |   | No | %   | No | %   | No | %    | No | %  | No | %    |
|     | Using the same language of instruction from primary to secondary school level | 9  | 6.2 | 6  | 4.1 | 17 | 11.6 | 57 | 39 | 51 | 34.9 |

Sources: Researcher: 2014

On this aspect of using the same language of instruction from primary to secondary school level, the result shows that 10.3% disagreed, 73.9% agreed on the use of the same language of instruction from primary to secondary school while 11.6% were neutral. This finding revealed that the majority of respondents agreed on the usage of the same language of instructions from primary to secondary school level. This finding complies with the study done by Rabbin (2011) which states that: “The use of Kiswahili in primary school education and English in post - primary education not only excluding some from the job market, but also dilutes teaching and learning Standards in Tanzania”.

This is a proof that students who used different languages of instruction in different level of education like the case of Tanzanian education system which uses Kiswahili in primary school and English in secondary school level as a medium of instruction their performance standards are highly affected.

**Language policy**

Table 9: shows the perceptions of respondents on the language policy implemented in Tanzanian Education system.

**Table 9: The focus of the Respondents on the language policy**

| <b>Respondent’s perception on the Language policy</b>            | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Should contribute positively towards academic performance        | 33               | 22.6           |
| Should seek to improve English in Government primary Schools     | 64               | 43.8           |
| Primary school leavers to prepare for English medium instruction | 44               | 30.1           |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>146</b>       | <b>100.0</b>   |

Sources: Researcher: 2014

The response for this question which asked about the Language policy show that the majority of the respondents with frequency of 64 (43.8%) said that, the language policy should seek to improve English in government primary schools while respondents with frequency of 33 (22.6%) said that, language policy should contribute positively towards academic performance. Others

with the frequency of 44 (30.1%) said that, the language policy should help the primary school leavers to prepare for English medium instructions. Therefore on the issue of the language policy, the majority of respondents said that, language policy should seek to improve English in government primary schools as revealed by the 1997 Education and Training policy where the Ministry of Education and culture issued a policy document called “Sera ya Utamaduni” (Cultural policy). This document addressed the question of the language to be used as the medium of instruction particularly the position of the Tanzanian government regarding the two languages used within the formal education system. Brock-utne, (2009).

The policy states that: ‘A special programme that shall enable the use of Kiswahili at all levels of education and Training shall be prepared and implemented, Furthermore, English shall be a compulsory subject in pre primary, primary and secondary education and shall be encouraged in higher education and its teaching shall be enhanced.’ URT (1997).

Transfer of knowledge gained in class to the community and vice versa can be enhanced due to the use of the same language in class and home. These findings underline what UNESCO (2003) says that instruction in the mother tongue or familiar language contributes far more to the cultural, affective, cognitive and socio-psychological development of the child than instruction in the official /foreign language. If we are to exploit this outcome, it can dramatically improve education standards. Furthermore, findings from this study provide highlights on some of the foreseeable benefits of learning in a familiar language. This indicates that it is most likely that if the familiar language could be used as the medium of instruction the majority of the Tanzanian secondary school students could benefit from such a policy.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Research Findings**

The study revealed that, there was significant difference found between students from English medium background and those from Kiswahili in terms of their performance in National Form II examinations,  $t(65) = 4.25, p = 0.00$ . On a five-point scale with one being extremely fail with F grade and five being extremely high pass with A grade, English medium averaged 3.18 ( $SD = 0.78$ ) and Swahili averaged 2.54 ( $SD = 0.80$ ). Since, the significant level is 0.01; there is significant difference between students whose background is English medium and those from Kiswahili medium background. Thus, proved out that, there is significant relationship between



change of medium of instruction and student's academic performance at  $p \leq 0.05$  significance level and since the statistical analysis shows that the significance level is below the cut-off value we have set, then, the null hypothesis is been rejected.

Language policy show that the majority of the respondent with frequency of 64 (43.8%) said that, the language policy should seek to improve English in government primary schools.

The majority of respondents said that they like it when their English teacher only uses English as the medium of instruction which implies that both teachers and students are required to master the language used as the medium of instruction so as to achieve the intended specific objectives during the whole process of teaching and learning.

Also the majority of respondents about 73.2% prefer English as the medium of instruction to start from primary level so as to maintain continuity in learning insteady of using Kiswahili in primary school education and English in post primary education which found to dilute teaching and learning standards in Tanzania.

Furthermore the results from the guided interview from the heads of schools, district inspector of schools as well as District Secondary Education Officer show that recommendations on how to improve the language used as Medium of Instruction are as follows: Create English Clubs and conducting regular English debate in schools, English language to be used by both teachers and students inside and outside the classroom, English teachers should be well prepared in teachers college, Government to create conducive Environment to facilitate the use of English language at all levels of Education, workshop for English teachers, Motivation should be provided for good performers in English subject.(for teachers and students), English supporting clubs to be established and conducted in secondary schools and ultimately English to be used as the medium of instruction since primary level of which all these results match with the ones obtained from the quantitative study hence justify the relevance of the study.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that students who went through English medium schools performed better than those from Kiswahili background; therefore in order to comply with the Education and Training Policy of the country which emphasizes on the provision of quality education, the language used as MOI should be grounded on the UNESCO (2003) recommendation that a careful balance needs to be made between enabling people to use local languages in learning, and

providing access to global languages of communication through education. This means that a familiar language should be used for learning and assessment.

### **Recommendations**

1. The secondary schools within Simanjiro District Council should support programs that focus to educate students, teachers and society at large on how best they can do away with the dilemma in the medium of instruction used.
2. The Ministry of Education and vocational training should seek to develop language policy that could help students to maintain continuity in their learning in order to help them excel in their academic performance. For this reason to opt for either Kiswahili or English to start from primary school level is should be considered vital. Furthermore, the MoEVT should ensure that teachers are well trained in the language used as the medium of instruction in the country so as to help them deliver the intended knowledge and skills to the learners.
3. The parents and community at large should maintain effective communication with teachers and other educational stakeholders so as to be able to make decision on whether to send their children to English or Kiswahili medium schools as well as making regular follow up on the student's academic performance.
4. Teachers must empower themselves academically in terms of mastering the language used as MOI as well as content of the subject matter so as to become mentors in their subject of specialization and hence be able to help students to acquire adequate knowledge and skills that could help them improve their academic performance.
5. This study was specifically carried out in Simanjiro District, Manyara region. However there are many other Regions/Districts in the country where the same research can be carried out. Further research of the kind can be carried out focusing on contrasting the impact of the language used as MOI in secondary schools on student's academic performance using the examinations result of other levels of education for making comparative analysis and assessment.

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