

Influence of School Language Policy on Pupils' Achievement in English Language Composition in Public Primary Schools in Trans-Nzoia West Sub-County, Kenya

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DOI: [10.21276/sjhss.2019.4.2.9](https://doi.org/10.21276/sjhss.2019.4.2.9)

| Received: 13.02.2019 | Accepted: 23.02.2019 | Published: 28.02.2019

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of school language policy on pupils' achievement in English composition in public primary schools in Trans-Nzoia West sub-county. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The target population was 1,715 class 8 pupils, 120 teachers of English and 91 head teachers. Purposive sampling techniques were employed to select 73 head teachers and 92 teachers of English who were involved in the study. The 313 pupils who participated in the study were selected using proportionate stratified sampling procedures. Data were collected using the teachers' questionnaires, the head teachers' interview schedule and pupils' English composition achievement test. The content and face validity of the three instruments were examined by the researcher in consultation with experts from the department of Curriculum and Education Management of Laikipia University. The English teachers' questionnaire and the English composition achievement test were piloted in 5 schools in Kwanza Sub-county and their reliabilities estimated using the Cronbach coefficient alpha method and the Kuder-Richardson 21 formula respectively. The reliability coefficients of English teachers' questionnaire and the English composition achievement test were .898 and .916 respectively. Data were analyzed with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. The hypothesis was tested at the .05 level of significance using simple regression. The results of the study revealed that school language policy influences pupils' achievement in English composition. The results of the study should assist teachers to manage and improve the quality of instruction in English composition. The results of the study should also help the policymakers in the Ministry of Education Science and Technology to develop a suitable language policy for implementation in all schools in Kenya.

Keywords: English, Language, Policy, Composition, Performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a distinctive feature of human beings which makes them different from other animals. It is a means of communicating ideas, emotions and desires using words, symbols and gestures [1]. It is one of the most useful tools humans have without which it would be neither possible to express our thoughts nor engage in the activities that take place in society [2]. Language is very important in education as effective communication is critical to teaching and learning. Malekela [3] asserts that if the learner is handicapped in the language of instruction, then learning may not take place at all as the instructor or the teacher and the learner will not be communicating.

English is the most widely spoken language out of the 4,000 to 5,000 living languages in the world [4]. English plays an important role in society as it is the language of globalization, international

communication, academics, commerce, trade and media [3]. This shows how critical the spoken word is. According to Mahu [4], over 40% of top firms transact their businesses in English and over 52% of books and films are authored in English. Morris and Maxey [5] observed that expertise in English is a requirement in most work places. Mosha [2] established that more than 30 out of the 52 countries in Africa use English as the official language. A study by Thuku (2015) established that holders of political power prefer speaking and writing in English because it is the most widely used language internationally.

The use of English language in Kenya can be traced back to the colonial times. During this period, English was the official language and the medium of instruction in schools. After independence in 1963, the position of English as the official language in Kenya remained while Kiswahili became the national language

[6, 7]. The constitution of Kenya of 2010 identifies English as the official language. Due to the aforementioned critical position of English in the country, it is a compulsory subject in the curricula of both primary and secondary schools in Kenya. The objectives of teaching English in primary schools are stipulated in the subject's syllabus. It is expected that at the end of the course, pupils should have acquired both spoken and written skills to enable them cope with English language demands at higher levels of education and the world at large [8].

Writing is considered as the most important component of English language because most examinations and assignments that pupils undertake are assessed through writing [9]. Writing skills enable pupils to express ideas clearly and effectively [10]. The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) [11] observed that writing is a lifelong process and part of personal development whose usefulness stretches beyond the classroom. It is imperative for pupils to acquire such skills for them to survive in the ever changing and competitive technological world.

Writing is a skill that draws from other language skills of listening, speaking and reading. It influences the way people think and learn. Writing also encourages pupils to be organized, logical and creative in their thinking. It is because of this reason that the

primary school syllabus singles out the ability to write as essential to pupils' success, personal development and building of relations with other people [10]. The syllabus also encourages pupils to be competent in writing using language structures. Writing is the chief means of recording knowledge and ideas accurately and carrying out inquiry in order to discover and invent [10]. The primary school English syllabus also requires pupils to write a composition paper at the end of the eight year primary school cycle to ascertain their level of competence in English [12].

Most primary school pupils lack basic writing skills despite the significant role it plays in the school curriculum [13]. KNEC [14] noted that pupils are weak in both mechanical and stylistic writing skills. They are also weak in punctuation, word choice and construction errors. According to KNEC [15], most pupils in the year 2007 wrote compositions that were irrelevant, sketchy and gave dull accounts thus rendering them unintelligible. KNEC [16] observed that many KCPE candidates of the year 2009 showed low levels of content mastery since they wrote irrelevant compositions, demonstrated poor word choice, wrong grammar, spelling, lacked logical argument and coherence. The KCPE national mean scores in English language composition for the years 2006 to 2015 in Table-1 supports the observations of KNEC.

Table-1: National Mean Scores in KCPE English Language Composition for the years 2006 to 2014

| Year | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Mean (%) | 42.70 | 42.89 | 40.48 | 32.40 | 42.70 | 42.45 | 42.43 | 41.90 | 41.45 |

Source: Kenya National Examination Council, Newsletter (2015).

The data in Table-1 shows that the mean scores of composition for the years 2006 to 2015 ranged from 32.40% to 42.89%. The mean scores were considered to be below average given that they were below the 50% mark.

Pupils in public primary schools in Trans Nzoia West Sub County have also been attaining low scores in English composition over the past years. Their achievement in KCPE English composition paper for the years 2006 to 2014 are depicted in Table-2.

Table-2: KCPE English Language Composition Percentage Mean Scores for Trans-Nzoia West Sub-County for the years 2006 to 2014

| Year | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Mean (%) | 16.92 | 17.44 | 16.25 | 16.50 | 16.25 | 14.21 | 15.54 | 15.44 | 15.61 |

Source: Kenya National Examination Council, Newsletter (2015) [17].

Data displayed in Table-2 reveals that the KCPE English language composition mean scores range between 14.21 and 17.44%. The achievement in English composition writing was considered very low given that it is marked out of 100%. The very low performance is an indication that writing in English is a major challenge to primary school pupils in Trans-Nzoia West Sub-county.

Research has shown that several factors affect pupils' achievement in English. These factors are student-related, teacher-related or school-related. Among the school related factors, Lawrence and

Vimala [18], noted that school environment plays a critical role in influencing pupils' achievement as school is where children spend most of their time. Lawrence and Vimala [18] assert that a supportive and favorable school environment enriched with enough learning facilities and a favorable learning climate makes pupils more comfortable and enables them concentrate on their academic activities that result in high academic performance. One of the most important aspects of school environment is the school culture. Omboto [19] defined school culture as the shared ideologies and collaborative missions in a school

community setting. School language policy is a critical component of school culture.

According to Omboto [19] the term policy refers to decisions made and taken by bodies that have administrative and juridical responsibilities of such nature that their decisions affect procedures and practices in a given domain. Wango [20] observes that a national policy on language is a set of nationally agreed principles which enable decision-makers to make choices about issues of language in a rational, comprehensive and balanced way. For example, the education policy in Nigeria stresses the use of the local language of the community in instruction at the lower level of primary education and use of a combination of English and local language of the community at the upper primary level. Language policy in Kenyan education system has been influenced by a number of government policy documents. Among these are: The Kenya Education Commission Report also referred to as Ominde Report of 1964, the Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies or the Gachathi Report of 1976, Presidential Working Party on the Second University in Kenya also known as Mackay Report of 1981, Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond or the Kamunge Report of 1988 and the Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the System of Kenya popularly known as the Koech Report of 1999.

The Ominde commission recommended use of English as the medium of instruction from the first class in primary school to university arguing that it would expedite learning in all subjects by ensuring smooth transition from 'vernaculars', and owing to its intrinsic resources. Gachathi Report [21] recommended the use of English for instruction from class four in primary level to University. The commission also declared Kiswahili an important subject in primary and secondary classes. Following the recommendations by the Gachathi Commission [22], the Ministry of Education gave clear policy guidelines that allowed the use of mother tongue as the language of instruction in lower primary school while English and Kiswahili were taught as subjects [23]. English was to be adopted as the medium of instruction from standard four and beyond [24]. Kiswahili and English have been the national and official languages respectively since independence [25]. However, the current constitution has uplifted Kiswahili to an official language position together with English [26].

Schools have language policies that aim at helping pupils to be proficient both in spoken and written English [27]. These policies are implemented with the belief that if pupils speak in English, their written English will also improve. Teachers and parents believe that early exposure of pupils to English enhances the learning process since English is the

medium of instruction in Kenyan schools [28]. In his book on language policy in schools, Carson [29] found that school language policies are viewed by many in education as an integral and necessary part of the administration and the curriculum practice of schools. He defines language policy as a document compiled by the staff of a school, often assisted by other members of the school community, to which the staff members give their assent and commitment. Kimani [30] underscores the importance of language policy in defining the rules and procedures to follow in the teaching and learning languages.

Bwire [31] emphasizes that the language policy has implications for teaching and learning. He adds that the language a learner listens to most of the time is the language in which he/she will be most interested to learn. Bwire recommends that there is need to sensitize teachers on the importance of communicating in English when in the school compound so that they act as role models and provide pupils with enabling environment for listening to the target language. According to Grima cited in Chomba [32], it is the responsibility of every school to have a school language policy because it assists in ensuring that schools remain focused in providing language education. It provides a framework for coping with change and helps schools in taking stock of their needs, success and failures in achievement of language. Muthwii cited in Chomba, [32] found that teachers develop school language policies without consulting national language policy, parents and ministry of education officials. As a result, language policies in the school are not well coordinated. Barasa [23] recommends that schools should come up with inclusive policies that will help to change the attitudes of all, staff and pupils, towards English and other languages.

All schools in Kenya are regulated by the Ministry of Education and are required to adhere to the education policy including those that follow foreign curriculums. However, the location, type of school and management influence the extent to which a given policy is adopted. Studies by Mundia [33] and Muthwii [34] found that rural and urban, private and public schools have made varied choices on language of instruction. The private schools appear not to be fully controlled by Ministry of Education regulations. The private and urban schools use English language as the medium of instruction right from pre-primary school level.

A study conducted by Adhiambo [35] found that teachers of English use a mixture of English, mother tongue and Kiswahili in teaching the English lessons. Adhiambo adds that use of the mixture, yields poor results and further notes that pupils in some schools are punished for not using the official language of communication. Okwara [36] investigated and found

that in many primary schools, English language is forced on pupils through rewards and punishment for using or not using it. A study by Njeri [37], also found out that teachers preferred to use English because school policy dictates its use. Njeri established that the school language policy was not favorable to pupils since they preferred to be taught in Kiswahili or mother tongue and communicate and write in the same instead of English. The conflict between policy and pupils preferences affected learners' achievement in English.

Studies have shown that the choice of language of instruction influences academic performance as pupils who are taught in their mother tongue language perform better than those taught using the official language of instruction [38]. Gathumbi [39] recommends that language policy be strictly adhered to during teaching and learning. Adhiambo [35] found that pupils in private schools prefer reading and storytelling in Kiswahili and perform better in it even though they are taught in English. Wanjiku-Omolo's [40] study conducted in former Kapseret division, Uasin-Gishu County, Kenya indicated that policies that promote frequent use of English and Kiswahili enhance achievement in those subjects. The foregoing studies confirm that there is an association between language policy and achievement. However, there are hardly any

studies that link language policy and achievement in English composition in Trans-Nzoia West Sub-county.

Research Objective

The objective of the study was to assess the influence of schools' language policy on pupils' academic achievement in English language composition in public primary schools in Trans-Nzoia West Sub County, Kenya.

Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho1: School language policy has no statistically significant influence on pupils' academic achievement in English language composition in public primary schools in Trans-Nzoia West Sub County, Kenya.

RESULTS

Instrument Return Rates

The study had proposed that data be collected from 73 head teachers, 92 English teachers and 302 class eight pupils. Consequently, 73 head teachers were invited for interview while the questionnaires and composition test were administered to 92 English teachers and 302 pupils respectively. Table-3 shows the return rates of each of the instruments.

Table-3: The Study Questionnaire Return Rates

| Sample group | Instrument | Respondents Involved | Provided data | Return rate (%) |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Head teacher | Interview guide | 73 | 72 | 98.6 |
| English teacher | ETQ | 92 | 91 | 98.9 |
| Pupil | CAT | 302 | 302 | 100.0 |

Source: Field data (2017)

Table-3 reveals that the instruments return rates were very high as they ranged from 96.5% for head teachers to 100.0% for the pupils. The overall return rate for the three instruments was 99.2%. The return rates were deemed adequate for analysis.

Influence of Schools' Language Policy on Pupils' Academic Achievement

The objective of the study examined the influence of schools' language policy on pupils' achievement in English composition. This influence was determined using simple linear regression. The test was preferred because it is ideal for establishing the causal relationship between constructs measured at interval scale [41].

Prior to establishing the influence of schools' language policy on pupils' achievement in English composition, information on status of school language policy was gathered from the head teachers and teachers of English. The head teachers were asked during the interviews whether their schools had a language policy. Nearly all (88.7.6%) schools had a language policy while very few (11.3%) did not. The heads were also asked to indicate the languages taught in the schools. Nearly all of them indicated that English (98.85%) and Kiswahili 97.2%) were taught while only a few indicated that mother tongue (12.7%) was taught. The teachers were also asked to state the medium of communication during staff meeting. Their responses are summarized in Table-4.

Table-4: Medium of Communication during Staff Meetings (n = 88)

| Medium | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| English | 64 | 72.7 |
| English and Kiswahili | 22 | 25 |
| Kiswahili | 1 | 1.1 |
| Kiswahili and mother tongue | 1 | 1.1 |

The results indicate that close to three quarters of the school use English as the medium of communication while a quarter used Kiswahili. The results indicate that English is the preferred medium of communication during staff meetings. The teachers

were further asked to indicate the mediums of instruction in their schools for both upper and lower classes. The mediums of instruction are summarized in Table-5.

Table-5: Medium of Instruction (n = 88)

| Medium | Lower classes | | Upper classes | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| English | 35 | 39.8 | 78 | 88.6 |
| Kiswahili | 25 | 28.4 | 1 | 1.1 |
| English and Kiswahili | 27 | 30.7 | 9 | 10.2 |
| English, Kiswahili, Mother tongue | 1 | 1.1 | 0 | 0 |

Table-5 indicates that English (39.8%) and a combination of English and Kiswahili (30.7%) were the most commonly used medium of instruction in lower classes. The table also indicates that English is the medium of instruction in upper classes in majority (88.6%) of the schools. The results are not in harmony with language policy recommended by MOEST [42]. According to the Policy Session Paper 14 of 2012, the

language of the catchment area (mother tongue) should be used for instruction in child care centers, pre-primary and lower primary.

Lastly the teachers were asked to indicate the medium of communication by teachers and pupils when in school. The results are displayed in Table-6.

Table-6: Medium of Communication in Schools

| Medium | Staff n = 88 | | Pupils n = 86 | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| English | 55 | 62.5 | 49 | 57.0 |
| English and Kiswahili | 23 | 26.1 | 21 | 24.4 |
| Kiswahili | 6 | 6.8 | 15 | 17.4 |
| English, Kiswahili, Mother tongue | 3 | 3.4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Kiswahili and mother tongue | 1 | 1.1 | 1 | 1.2 |

The results in Table-6 reveal that English (62.5%) and a combination of English and Kiswahili (26.1%) are the most frequently used modes of communication by staff when in school. The results also reveal that a majority of pupils use English (57.9%) and a combination of English and Kiswahili (24.4%) to communicate when in school. The results

indicate that mother tongue is rarely used in schools. This may perhaps be due to the cosmopolitan nature of Trans- Nzoia West Sub County. According to the County Government of Trans- Nzoia [43], the Sub-county is inhabited by several ethnic communities that speak different languages.

Table-7: School Language Policy Index (Maximum Mean = 5)

| Item | N | Mean | SD |
|--|----|------|------|
| My school has a language policy | 88 | 4.39 | 0.69 |
| The policy document was developed by the school administration in consultation with English teachers, parents and pupils | 90 | 3.96 | 0.87 |
| Teachers are aware of the language policy | 90 | 4.50 | 0.52 |
| The language policy is clear and easy to understand | 91 | 4.21 | 0.84 |
| The rules and procedures to follow in teaching and learning languages are clearly defined in the policy document | 91 | 4.07 | 0.94 |
| The policy document adequately covers the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking | 87 | 4.09 | 0.77 |
| The policy stipulates that English is the language of instruction in lower (standard 1 – 3) and upper (Standard 4 – 8) classes | 91 | 4.10 | 0.79 |
| It is policy that English is the language of communication within the school | 91 | 4.21 | 0.59 |
| The language policy is relevant | 91 | 4.31 | 0.77 |
| All teachers use English as the medium of instruction as per the policy | 91 | 3.86 | 1.03 |
| Implementation of the language policy has led to an improvement in pupils mastery of English | 91 | 4.35 | 0.72 |
| The language policy contributes to pupils achievement in English in national examinations | 90 | 4.44 | 0.69 |
| School language policy index | 91 | 4.17 | 0.59 |

School language policy was measured by a set of 12 closed ended Likert items based on the extent to which the English teachers agreed (strongly disagree to strongly agree) with them. The responses to the items were assigned scores, averaged and then transformed into language policy index as shown in Table-9.

Table-7 shows that the means of the items on school language policy ranged between 3.86(SD = 1.03) and 4.50 (SD = 0.52). The item means were relatively high given that they were out of 5. For instance, the means of 'Teachers are aware of the language policy' was very high, an indication that most

of the teachers were aware of school language policy. This means that the teachers agreed with the statements, an indication that the policy contributes towards the teaching and learning of languages. The school language policy as measured by the index ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.59$) was also high. On the basis of the index, the language policy was rated as good for guiding the teaching and learning of languages in schools.

The head teachers were requested during the interviews to suggest ways of strengthening schools language policies. The suggestions given by school head teachers are illustrated in table 8.

Table-8: Suggestions by Head Teachers on ways of Improving Schools Language Policies

| Suggestion | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Include in school language policy provisions (debates, writing contest, motivation) that promote writing and speaking in English | 22 | 31.0 |
| Effectively implement the policies | 17 | 23.9 |
| Involve all stake holders (school administration, teachers, pupils and parents) in the implementation of policy | 15 | 21.1 |
| Provide for more teaching learning materials | 9 | 12.7 |
| Include in policy library services (equipping, management, utilization) | 5 | 7.0 |

Table-8 indicates that the head teachers suggested that language policies be reviewed to include provisions that promote practicing English through speaking and writing (31.0%). The heads also suggested effective implementation of policy (23.9%), involvement of all stakeholders (21.1%), provisions for adequate instructional materials (12.7%) and library services (7.0%) in the policies documents.

After examining school language policies, the pupils' achievement in English composition was

determined using the English composition achievement test (CAT). The test assessed pupils' competence in four English composition domains namely, sentence construction, ability to generate ideas and organize and express ideas clearly and logically in writing. The pupils were awarded a maximum of 5 points for sentence construction, 5 points for ability to generate ideas, 5 points for organization of the ideas and 25 for expressing themselves clearly and logically in writing. The pupils mean scores are summarized in Table-9.

Table-9: Pupils Mean Scores in English Composition Achievement Test (n = 302)

| Domain | Mean | SD |
|--|--------------|-------------|
| Sentences construction (maximum score = 5) | 2.18 | 0.99 |
| Ability to generate ideas (maximum score = 5) | 2.12 | 0.95 |
| Essay organization (maximum score = 5) | 2.47 | 0.94 |
| Clarity and logical writing (maximum score = 25) | 8.38 | 3.10 |
| CAT scores (maximum = 40) | 15.14 | 4.95 |

The results in Table-9 show that the pupils mean scores of the first three English composition domains were very low as they ranged between 2.12 (SD = 0.95) and 2.47 (SD = 0.94) out of a maximum of 5. Clarity and logical writing ($M = 8.38$, $SD = 3.10$) and the overall CAT ($M = 15.14$, $SD = 4.95$) means were also low given that they were out of 25 and 40 respectively. The results indicate that pupils have challenges writing in English. The results support those of Uwezo [44] that showed that learning outcomes among children in Kenya are low. The study further noted that English literacy levels among children aged 7-13 years have

remained almost unchanged over the five years between 2011 and 2014. Ogada, Oracha, Matu and Kochung [45] also noted that policies which lead to allocation of time and teacher participation in demonstration, storytelling and dramatization boosted pupils English composition abilities.

Data on Head teachers and teachers' views on pupils' achievement in English composition and the subject were also sought during the study. The head teachers' rating of the pupils in English writing is summarized in Table-10.

Table-10: Head Teachers rating of Pupils' Achievement in English Composition

| Rating | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Good (Above average) | 16 | 22.2 |
| Average | 21 | 29.2 |
| Low (Writing is a challenge) | 33 | 45.8 |

Table-10 shows that majority (45.8%) of the head teachers rated the pupils achievement in English composition low while close to a third (29.2%) were of the view that the pupils' performance was average. These results mean that the school heads were of the view that pupils performance in composition was not

good as the nearly two thirds (65.0%) of them rated pupils performance as average and low.

The head teachers and teachers of English were also asked to rate the pupils' achievement in English composition. Table-11 gives a summary of their responses.

Table-11: Teachers of English Rating of Pupils' Achievement in English Composition

| Rating | Head teachers (n = 72) | | Teachers of English (n = 91) | |
|---------|------------------------|------------|------------------------------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| High | 21 | 29.2 | 31 | 34.1 |
| Average | 25 | 34.7 | 26 | 28.6 |
| Low | 28 | 38.9 | 19 | 20.9 |

Table-11 reveals that a majority (38.9%) of the head teachers were of the view that the pupils' achievement in English composition was low. The teachers however held contrary opinion as majority (34.1%) of them were of the view that the pupils' achievement in English composition was high. An examination of information in the table reveals that only a few of head teachers (29.2%) and teachers of English (34.1%) rated the pupils' achievement as high. It can therefore be concluded that the pupils' achievement was unsatisfactory.

The head teachers and teachers of English were also requested to give suggestions for improving achievement in English composition. The head teachers suggested that language policy be effectively implemented (47.9%), teachers should adopt appropriate instructional methods (29.6%), teachers should create a favorable learning climate in class (learners comfort, discipline, organized classes and motivation of pupils) (23.4%) and provision of instructional materials for effective curriculum implementation (21.1%). The English teachers recommended that learners be given more opportunities

to practice speaking, writing and reading (79.1%) and strict implementation of school language policy (34.1%). They also suggested that positive attitudes towards English composition and the language in general be inculcated in learners (20.9%) and introduction of library sessions (9.9%) to enhance learner reading skills.

The influence of school language policy on pupils' achievement on English composition was determined using linear regression. Prior to conducting regression analysis, tests were conducted to ensure that the regression assumptions were not violated. The test included; normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. The one sample Kolmogorov Smirnov test was used to assess the normality distribution of the variables, while the scatter plots and standardized residual scatter were used to check for linearity and homoscedasticity respectively. The test results showed that no assumptions were violated. The school language policy indices were then regressed on the pupils CAT mean scores. The results of the regression test are given in Table-12.

Table-12: Regression Analysis Results on Influence of School Language Policy on Pupils' Achievement in English Composition

| Model | Un standardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t-value | p-value |
|---|------------------------------|------------|---------------------------|---------|---------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| Constant | 8.054 | 2.046 | | 3.936 | .000 |
| School language policy | 1.698 | .486 | .198 | 3.494 | .001 |
| R = .198, R ² = .039, F(1, 300) = 12.205, p < 0.05 | | | | | |

The results of the regression analysis in Table-12 show that the relationship ($r = .198$) between school language policy and pupils' achievement in English composition was positive but weak. The table also shows that school language policy accounted for 3.9%

($R^2 = .039$) of the total variance in pupils' achievement in English composition. The variation of the outcome explained by the predictor variable was however significant, $F(1, 300) = 12.205$, $p < .05$. This implies that school language policy influences pupils'

achievement in English composition. These results do not support the first hypothesis which states that school language policy does not significantly influence pupils' achievement in English composition. The hypothesis was rejected on the basis of these results.

The study established that school language policy influenced pupils' achievement in English composition. The results are in line with the views of Usen [46] that it is one thing to develop policy and plan and another to effectively implement strategies to serve the purpose for which they are developed for realization of the expected learning outcomes. Bello [47] also noted that policy and planning for instruction facilities cannot bring about improvement in pupils' academic performance if they are not well implemented. The results support those of Uko and Ayuk [48] study which noted that management activities such as policy, planning and coordination alone do not lead to better performance. The study noted that use of appropriate teaching facilities and teaching method is critical to the successful teaching and learning.

The results in Table-14 indicated that school language policy does not significantly influence pupils' achievement in English composition. These results do not concur with those of a study conducted in Tanzania by Kinyaduka and Kiwara [38]. Kinyaduka and Kiwara observed a decline in academic achievement among pupils when the mode of instruction was changed from Kiswahili to English language due to policy change. They noted that pupils had problems understanding concepts when taught in English and this led to a decline in their achievement. Wanjiku-Omolo [40] also noted that policy that allows more than one language leads to teachers using Kiswahili only in the process of teaching while the rest mix it with other languages. Such a policy affects the learners as they imitate the languages of the teacher and end up not being fluent in Kiswahili. Additionally, the writing of Kiswahili is affected since the learners end up using other languages like "sheng" together with Kiswahili in the process of writing.

The results in Table-14 contradict those of Njogu [49] who established that policies which allow use of mother tongue as medium of instruction in lower primary school contributes positively towards acquisitions of English language. The study established that teaching and learning is best done in pre-schools using mother tongue since skills gained using mother tongue can be transferred to English. Njogu concluded that both languages; mother tongue and English, nurture each other and boost children's self-esteem and confidence. The study noted that combining mother tongue and English produced best performance in the English language among pre-school children.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the hypothesis test showed that school language policy had a statistically significant relationship with pupils' achievement in English composition. On the basis of this finding, the conclusion was made that school language policy influences pupils' achievement in English composition. The finding has both practical and theoretical implications on school management and English composition achievement. In Kenya, according to the Session Paper Number 14 of 2012 [42], the language of the catchment area (mother tongue) should be used as the medium of instruction in child care centres, pre-primary and lower primary schools. English and Kiswahili should be taught as subjects at primary school level [23]. The government policy thus exposes learners to mother tongue, English and Kiswahili. Njogu [49] noted that use of mother tongue contributes positively towards acquisitions of English language. Njogu argues that teaching and learning is best done in pre-schools using mother tongue as skills gained can be transferred to English. Teachers of English could benefit from the observations of Njogu. However, bilingual national or school language policy affects language acquisition if a child's foundation in the local language is not well laid for transfer to the second language (English). Owu-Ewie [50] observed that the Ghanaian child was not doing well in English despite bilingual language policy because, the child's foundation in the local language is not well laid for transfer to the second language besides other achievement factors.

On the basis of the finding, this study recommends that schools that do not have a language policy should develop one. The schools should implement their language policies given that it enhances achievement in English composition and the subject in general. However, in development of the policies, the schools should take caution to ensure that the policies developed are in tandem with the national language policy and that there is pedagogical and philosophical justification of the policies in terms of structure and their implementation strategies. The general aim should be to help the learner to acquire the skills of reading, speaking and writing in fluent and correct English as well as think critically and logically.

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