



DTE - DC - INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

FURTHER READING

THE LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION POLICY

The Language in Education Policy

Matters related to the Language in Education Policy date back to the education commission after independence.

Ominde Commission (1964) recommended that the schools include a daily period for story-telling in the vernacular up to class 3.

The Bessey Report (1972) noted that half of Kenya's schools used vernacular as their medium of instruction. The report further noted that there are important developmental benefits to the children and cultural benefits to the community when school life begins without the shock of confrontation with a new language. The report recommended the use of mother tongue, English and Kiswahili in schools. The report saw the ideal language situation as every Kenyan being able to enjoy a good command of his or her mother tongue, competence in Kiswahili and competence in English.

The Gachathi Report (1976) recommended that instruction should be the predominant language spoken in the schools' catchment area for the first three years of primary education.

The Presidential Working Party on the Second University of 1981 (Mackay Commission) advised that the mother tongue be used in lower grades of primary schools, in areas where this was possible.

The Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya of 1999 (Koech Commission) recommended that the medium of instruction in lower primary be the learner's mother tongue or the dominant language within the schools' catchment area and in urban centers (where population is made up of people from different ethnic groups), Kiswahili be the medium of instruction. The Commission noted that the use of the learner's mother tongue would enhance concept formation and articulation in linguistic communication.

The Language in Education Policy

The Language in Education Policy (1976) provided guidelines on language in education. It envisaged that the language of the school's catchment area would be the language of instruction in lower primary. Learners from a single ethnic group in the school's neighbourhood should be instructed in the language they use at home. This provides a smooth transition from home to school. Similarly, learners from a mixed ethnic (multilingual) neighbourhood, should be instructed in Kiswahili, while a few schools mainly in urban centres may use English as a medium of instruction. English would become the Medium of Instruction (MOI) from Standard 4 onwards.



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Implications of the Language in Education to learning at pre-primary and lower primary school level

Pre-primary level

The language of catchment area (Indigenous Languages) shall be used in all pre-primary school for communication and instruction, with gradual introduction of English and Kiswahili.

Lower Primary

1. All the subjects in the school curriculum should be taught using the learners' Indigenous Language except English and Kiswahili.
2. In urban schools where Kiswahili is the language of the catchment area, all the subjects should be taught in Kiswahili except English
3. In urban schools where English is the language of the catchment area, all the subjects should be taught in English except Kiswahili
4. As a subject Indigenous Languages, should be taught in lower primary to establish the basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing and be practised in a language that learners can speak well.

Note: The language of the catchment area is learners mostly use during play.