

Language Factors in the Transition from Pre-School to Lower Primary School in Nyeri South District, Nyeri County Kenya

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Abstract: *The transition of children from pre-school to primary school is not a single event of change with not just immediate but also, far reaching consequences. Language factors and specifically the language of instruction is a key feature of children's early learning understandings. The study aimed to establish the influence of language factors on the transition of children from pre-school to STD 1 in public primary schools in Nyeri South Sub-county. The study was anchored on the Ecological Developmental Model by Bronfenbrenner (1979) using the descriptive survey design. The target population was all the 56 public primary schools, their head teachers and STD 1 class teachers. A sample size of 18 public primary schools/ head teachers from the 56 targeted public primary schools and 18 STD 1 teachers out of 84 was used. To collect data, interviews were administered on head teachers and questionnaires on STD 1 teachers. Descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies and percentages were used to analyze quantitative data while qualitative information from head teachers and STD 1 teachers sampled was organized and described according to study themes. Findings were presented in form of frequency tables and graphical illustrations. The study found out that Kiswahili was the language used for instruction as well as communication, which suggest that vernacular was not used for either instruction or communication. The main challenge faced by teachers in teaching language to STD 1 pupils was the lack of use of mother tongue which interfered with children's ease of communication and understanding. Language factors emerged as barriers to a smooth effective transition process. The study recommended that teachers should adhere to the Ministry of Education's guidelines to have mother tongue as the medium of communication in lower primary to ease transition.*

Keywords: *Early Childhood Development Education, Language Language factors, Vernacular, Pre-School*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Good early childhood care and education has strong, long lasting, positive effects on children's development (Hendrick & Weismann, 2010). Early learning experiences have a decisive impact on how children function as adults and subsequently on how they affect society. Positive experiences and warm responsive care can enhance brain development. Negative experiences can do the opposite. During these formative years, there are prime times for acquiring different kinds of knowledge and skills. As children move from preschool to primary school, many are able to easily navigate the change but for some it can be quite daunting (Skouteris, 2012). This experience is perceived to have long term effects on their future development and learning, extending through all subsequent levels of education. Successful transitions enable children to adapt to new settings where they quickly grasp teaching and learning methods, the processes, rules and regulations which will enhance their performance in school.

Regardless of age, each child's response to transition is unique. Individual qualities and differences are most evident in times of change. Some children find change harder to deal with than others. Children's different responses to transitions are explained, in part, by individual temperament (Harrison, 2017). According to Fabian and Dunlop (2002), transitions are viewed differently by children in their early months of a new school environment and have a far reaching impact for the extent, to which they feel fruitful in the main move and are liable to impact ensuing encounters. In a new environment, it can particularly be very difficult for children with less than optimal circumstances being in pre-school or primary school because they are supposed to behave in a certain manner and understand the teacher, classroom environment, reading and classroom language.

Language factors and specifically the language of instruction is a key feature of children's early learning understandings (Abdazi, 2006; Benson, 2005). Many children only grasp instruction when it is made in their mother tongue or the popular language in the catchment area. The child is therefore able to grasp concepts because they are presented from known to unknown. Mackenzie (2010) posits that a high learning achievement can be achieved by teaching in a curriculum developed in a child's mother tongue or language of catchment area. Using such language motivates the child to participate in the classroom activities. The child has no

problems in grasping concepts. It also enables the child to enhance fluency in the said language and later in other languages. Sanagavarapu (2010) found that language barriers precluded many Bangladeshi parents from accessing information on school curriculum and transition to school and from collaborating with school teachers. The language barriers also hindered a few children's smooth transition to school.

Research shows that young children learn best in their mother tongue as a prelude to and complement of bilingual and multilingual education. These practices also promote the learning of all children. UNESCO (2007) indicate that primary schoolteachers with early childhood training are more effective in the early grades. Equipped with information on how young children learn and develop, they help ease the transition of children and families to schools much more than teachers who lack this background. Continuity in learning expectations between early childhood and primary school environments can ease the transition from home to school. It can also help connect families, community-based service providers, teachers and school administrators.

With regard to preschool children's transition to STD one in Kenya, in the year 2006 the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) noted that there were no formal measures to quantify a child's readiness for standard one. The survey also noted that the big gap between preschool and primary school resulted in challenges during the transition process. ADEA (2006) further found that there was high dropout rate, repetition and absenteeism in lower primary that had been attributed to improper transition from pre-school to primary school. In Some areas however, child friendly environment encouraged children to revert back to pre-primary which implies that if such a surrounding was provided in standard one, the situation could most likely improve for the best. Further, Osero, (2012); Katam, (2015); Kandie, (2015); Kagwiria (2015) and Omweri, (2016) show dismal performance among students in public primary schools which they relate to poor preparation by preschool teachers and transition problems. However, studies focusing specifically on the transition of preschool children to standard one are scanty and available ones appeared to focus on transition from primary to secondary school.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Transition from pre-school to primary school can be emotionally distressing to children as global studies by Dockett and Perry (2007); Einarsdottir (2007); Merry, (2007) show. However, the studies were carried out in Europe and America which have more resources for education as compared to Sub-Sahara Africa where UNESCO (2007); Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports (2007) revealed a desperate situation. They reported that children moving from pre-school to school either repeated STD one or dropped out altogether and moreover, the number of drop out was highest in STD one. They further showed that a child's transition from preschool to primary school had the potential to impact on their future educational achievement.

In Kenya, the situation is neither different and the problem majorly appears to emanate from poor pre-school transition to primary school. In Some areas however, child friendly environment appeared to encourage standard one children to go back to pre-primary school. There was therefore, need to study the school environment and what could be borrowed from pre-school to see whether its application could yield better prospects for the minors. Further, majority of studies conducted locally appeared to focus on transition from primary to secondary school leaving out preschool yet they are the most vulnerable group of learners It was therefore important to understand the challenges faced in the transition from pre-school to primary schools in regard to language.

1.2 Objectives

- To assess influence of use of mother tongue/ language of catchment area in standard one classrooms on children's smooth transition from pre-school to primary school
- To determine the influence of use of multiple languages in standard one classrooms on children's smooth transition from pre-school to primary school

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The intents of the current study were guided by the Ecological Developmental Model by Bronfenbrenner (1979), due to the absence of a relevant theory. The model focuses on the balance within our environment. Bronfenbrenner divided individual's environment into five (5) different levels namely, the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem chronosystem. According to the model, the microsystem is the most influential system closest to humans and one in which they have direct contacts with those around them. Further, the relationships in this level are bi-directional. The second level of Bronfenbrenner's theoretical model is the mesosystem. In ordinary terms, "meso" means middle and thus the system acts in connecting two or more systems in which an individual lives or his/her interactions with others and him/herself. Thus, the microsystem does not function by itself, the mesosystem provides interconnectedness between the two systems and they influence one another.

The exosystem is the third level in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. As the term suggests, "exo" means external and refers to a system or outside force/ situation that does not involve the individual person but which still affects him/her. The fourth level of the ecological systems model is the macrosystem, meaning large in scale, scope or capacity. The macrosystem therefore constitutes all cultural environments in which the individual lives as well as all other systems that affect them such as the economy of the country, cultural/ societal values and political systems. Finally, the chronosystem is the last level of Bronfenbrenner's theoretical model and it has to do with time or order in which things occur. The chronosystem therefore demonstrates the influence of both change and constancy in the individual's environment. It encompasses all the experiences that an individual has had during his or her lifetime, including environmental events, major life transitions, and historical events.

Bronfenbrenner's theoretical model was deemed the most suitable in analysing the interaction of a child specifically from preschool to primary school within the ecosystems. This is because it clearly shows how the different systems (micro, meso, exo, macro and chrono) interrelate and work together within the child's living/ learning environment in which he/she receives information/ learning content from parents/ teachers, other people or fellow children and vice versa because no one person is a custodian of knowledge. For example, the child's school environment involves presence of teachers. Specifically, their competence with regards to training they have undergone or work experience may affect how they relate with children. Similarly, the language used during instruction or communication with others and materials used in teaching language may affect how well or not children learn. In addition, parental involvement as well as attitude towards their children's education and also their level of education level may affect how well or not they support their children to learn.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Use of Mother Tongue/ Language of Catchment Area

Use of mother tongue or familiar language of the school's catchment area has the potential to reduce the psychological stress children face during teaching and learning (Cummins, 2007). This is because children can express their ideas more freely and also communicate fluently in a language they know. According to Ball (2010), instruction in one's home language or that of the catchment area fosters inclusion in education. The Summer Institute of Linguistics (2006) also concur that children learn best when they are taught in a language they understand well. When children comprehend the language they are instructed in; they will most certainly engage much more meaningfully with learning content and further, question what they do not understand. Moreover, such children can develop the love for challenges in school or in new things they encounter as they move on to school. Bindman, Hindman, Bowles and Morrison (2013) study investigated relations between preschoolers' emergent executive function skills and their interactions with parents, with particular focus on the verbal utterances parents use to guide children's behavior (management language). Management language was observed during a pretend birthday party play task. Suggestion language predicted higher age three executive function but slower growth. Direction language predicted lower age three executive function. Management language contributes to preschoolers' executive function development.

There is a new realization that indeed the use of the language familiar to children or language of the school's catchment area is useful in helping children transit from pre-school to school. In Hong Kong, for example, Lao & Krashen (1999) indicate that most primary schools in the country use Cantonese, which is their mother tongue as a medium of instruction while English is used as a medium of instruction in higher levels. Lao and Krashen (1999) further reveal that learners who received instruction in their local language performed much better than those in English-medium classes in the Hong Kong Certificate of Examination. This clearly shows that those who did better in their examinations must have done so due to the fact that they comprehended the language they were instructed in and thus the brilliant performance. Using longitudinal information collected in two consecutive years, Ames (2012) showed that children's language and culture are excluded from school premises and their very identity as children and indigenous people is disregarded, negatively affecting their educational performance.

In a Tanzanian study, Rubagumya (2000) pointed out that the success of the transition process in this exercise was marred by challenges such as the low status of indigenous languages, poor development in standardization and shortage of teachers as well as materials. Despite the challenge, use of mother tongue or language of catchment area has proven to elicit more positive and lasting impact and should not be under rated. According to Traore (2001), Mali which inherited French education policy, realized that its children were not performing well academically. The Mali government thus introduced the use of mother tongue as the language of instruction throughout the primary education alongside the use of French. However, findings showed that children's academic performance was higher in schools where the indigenous language was used as compared to those that received instruction using French as the school language of instruction. In another study conducted in Africa and specifically in Eritrea by the Ministry of Education in 2002 also reveals that mother tongue education fashioned or produced competent readers in 2 – 3 years.

In Kenya, the language policy indicates that mother tongue or language of the catchment area should be used as the language of training in pre-primary and lower primary schools. While this is beneficial as global and regional studies have revealed, Begi (2014) in a training on the usage of mother tongue in rural schools in Kisii, Kericho and Bondo pointed that most schools did not use mother tongue as medium of instruction. Although children in Nyeri Sub-county are predominantly Kikuyu speakers, they perform poorly in standard one examinations. This could imply that the children are probably not being taught in mother tongues as the language policy dictates. During the study, efforts were made to find out the discrepancy in these children's performance in standard one classes in Nyeri South Sub-county could be attributed to their not being taught in mother tongue/ language of the catchment area at this level. It was also established whether or not there is any relationship between the poor performance of standard one children in their examinations and transition from pre-primary to primary school.

2.2.2 Use of Multiple Languages

Multilingual programs (certified or uncertified) can be effective, then this is problematic, and frequently unbearable, in cases where there are a numeral of dialects in the class. The significance of the dialectal of instruction is acknowledged in many studies (Abadzi, 2006; Benson, 2005) as well as in a cumulative number of administration policy brochures and national plans. However, pressure on education finances means that, although many projects progress learning resources in marginal vernaculars, few essentially end up in the hands of classroom teachers and children. Research proves that youthful youngsters study excellent in their mother tongue as a prologue to and supplement of multi-lingual and bilingual education. As measured by test scores and self-esteem, Wood head et al. (2007) found that children who learn in their mother tongue, when they are 6 to 8 years old, achieve well than those educated in the certified verbal past or entirely.

In New Zealand, Peters (2010) finds that children who belong to a different culture or speak another language from that of the catchment area have problems adjusting to school life. Key findings from an American study by Nemeth (2009) research provided evidence supporting the hypothesis that children should be instructed in their first language while gradually being introduced to English. The study found that introducing English during the transition process impacts negatively on the exercise. O'Kane (2013) found that children who had not achieved fluency in their first language did not perform as well as children who had mastered their mother tongue. This further shows the importance of children learning in a language they understand.

Owodally (2013) explored ways in which preschool teachers expose children to print and decoding skills and some of the factors shaping their choices and pedagogical practices. The author argued that in foreign language contexts such as Mauritius, children's exposure to the printed word is often cosmetic and educational, with emphasis on the direct teaching of some decoding skills. He also argued that the relationship that the children build with print is one of seriousness, associated with schoolwork, thus playing down the meaning-making, more playful and more entertaining functions and uses of print. This is related to local linguistic, sociocultural and educational factors.

Schwartz (2013) examined language policy and models in bilingual preschools from immigrant parents' and bilingual teachers' perspectives. The study revealed that questions regarding input in each language, ratio between Russian and Hebrew, and changes of this ratio in different age groups are central concerns for both the pedagogical staff and parents. The parents viewed their children's Hebrew-Russian bilingualism as obligatory, rather than as an elite privilege. They believed in the tremendous power of early language acquisition and, based on this belief, constructed plans for managing their children's bilingual development, which were not always coherent or consistent with scientific data

Back (2004) studied bilingual education in Puno, Peru reveals growth of vernacular language usage, enhanced cultural integration and greater pupil participation in classroom activities were observed when the local language "quechua" was reintroduced in instruction alongside Spanish This once again points to the fact that when children learn in mother tongue or a language that they understand, they are bound to do well since they do not struggle with the language which they commonly use at home and school. The majority of the reviewed studies have been carried out in Europe and America. Due to the varying cultures, economic levels and education systems, an understanding of the same is needed in the Kenyan context. This study sought to determine the influence of use of multiple languages in standard one classrooms on children's transition from pre-school to primary school.

Reviewed literature also indicates that language of instruction is an important tool for communication and, therefore, critical in the transition process; it becomes a challenge when there's an abrupt change of the language of instruction. However, although an affluence of literature was studied, there is inadequate evidence locally in Kenya in relation to many of the queries of interest upstretched for this research. It seemed that more Kenyan research was needed for all of the variables discussed above.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Research design is a conceptual framework within which research is conducted. It is a plan or structured framework on how one intends conducting the research process in order to solve a research problem and to expand knowledge and understanding (Babbie, 2002). The study adopted a descriptive research design which involves collecting data in order to answer questions on current status of phenomena of the study. This design was preferred as it enabled the researcher establish an association between the independent variables and transition of children to primary school.

3.2 Target Population

The study targeted all the 56 public primary schools in the sub-county and therefore 56 head of their teachers and 84 standard one teachers. These persons were targeted because they were directly involved in the management or teaching of standard one pupils. They were therefore resourceful persons regarding transition of students.

3.3 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Multistage sampling procedures were used to conduct sampling. Nyeri South Sub County in Nyeri County, Kenya, was purposively selected. Out of the 56 schools, 18 (32%) of them were selected. The schools were first stratified according to their zones and a sample size of 18 (32%) out of the 56 public primary schools was randomly decided upon by writing on different pieces of paper a sample size 30% to 40% after which 32% was randomly picked while eyes were closed. by rotary according to their proportion, per zone (strata). As for head teachers of the above 56 schools, they were purposively selected because they oversee the affairs of the school and, therefore, were resourceful persons in giving the information that this study seeks. Out of the 84 teachers in charge of STD 1 class in Nyeri South Sub-county, 18 (21%) of them were purposively selected but where there was more than one teacher, random selection by rotary, prevailed. The sample was calculated proportionately, according to the target population per strata/zone. A total number of 18 (32%) public primary schools in Nyeri Sub-county, head teachers, and STD 1 teachers formed the sample size, but they were selected proportionately according to their total number per zone thus 6 from Iriaini and Karima and 3 from Chinga and Mahiga.

3.4 Data Collection

The study collected primary data. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from STD 1 teachers. It was suitable for use because the responses in the questionnaires were gathered in a standardized way, and the tool offered more objectivity. An interview schedule was developed and it was conducted on head teachers of primary schools. The interviews were suitable for use because they helped to capture in-depth information.

3.5 Data Analysis

The raw data collected was sorted and cleaned to free it from incompleteness and inconsistencies. Qualitative data were organized into themes, and presented using descriptive methods or narratives. Quantitative data were organized using descriptive statistics which included frequencies and percentages and findings were presented in form of tables and figures. Descriptive methods such as frequency distribution and percentages were used to analyze quantitative data. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This was done by identifying information that was relevant to research questions and objectives, developing a coding system based on samples of collected data, classifying major issues or topics and, identifying major themes and the association between them (Kombo & Tromp, 2006).

3.6 Logistical and ethical considerations

Clearance to conduct the study was sought from Graduate School, Kenyatta University. Thereafter, issuance of research permit to allow conducting of the study was then sought from the National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Similarly, approval to visit the public primary schools for research was sought from the D.E.O and head teachers in Nyeri South Sub County). The researcher sought consent from the participating head teachers and STD 1 teachers. They were not asked to identify their schools, nor themselves, and the questionnaires did not bear any indicators connected to their personality. The information was stored in a password protected computer which was only be accessible to the researcher. They were also assured that the findings of the study was solely used for academic purposes only.

IV. FINDINGS

4.1 Response rate

A maximum (100%) response was registered among STD 1 teachers while a response rate of 83% was found among head teachers. The response rate for the study is therefore 92%, which is above the 70% recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (2010). This response rate is therefore considered high and helps to ensure that survey results are representative of the target population. According to Baruch and Holtom, (2008), the advantage of having high response rates is that it indicates larger data samples and higher statistical power, leading to a greater probability that the sample is representative of a population. This improves acceptance and credibility of the research findings amongst key stakeholders in the area under study.

Table 1 Response Rate

| Population | No. Sampled | No. interviewed | Response rate |
|---------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Teachers | 18 | 18 | 100% |
| Head teachers | 18 | 15 | 83% |
| Total | 36 | 33 | 92% |

4.2 Language used for instruction and communication in school

The teachers in the study were asked to indicate the language(s) used in the school for instruction and communication in school. Majority, (61%) of teachers used Kiswahili for instruction. The findings also show that majority (56%) of teachers indicated that communication was done in Kiswahili. The findings therefore show that Kiswahili was the language used for both instruction and communication. The findings also suggest that vernacular was not used for either instruction nor communication. This is in contrast to Nemeth (2009) whose research provided evidence supporting the hypothesis that children should be instructed in their first language while gradually being introduced to English. The findings are in agreement with Woodhead et al. (2007) who found that children who learn in their mother tongue, when they are 6 to 8 years old, achieve well than those educated in the certified verbal past or entirely. The findings are in agreement with findings of a study by Ames (2012) who showed that children's language and culture are excluded from school premises and their very identity as children and indigenous people is disregarded, negatively affecting their educational performance.

Table 2 Language used for instruction and communication in school

| Purpose | Language | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Instruction | English | 7 | 39 |
| | Kiswahili | 11 | 61 |
| | Total | 18 | 100 |
| Communication | English | 8 | 44 |
| | Kiswahili | 10 | 56 |
| | Total | 18 | 100 |

4.3 Proficiency of Pupils in Language of Instruction

The teachers in the study were asked to indicate how proficient the pupils were in the language of instruction when joining STD 1. Majority (89%) of teachers indicated that pupils were fairly proficient in language of instruction when joining STD 1. This shows that although pupils could speak and understand Kiswahili they needed to improve to enable them understand instruction in STD 1. This lends support to Wood head et al. (2007) finding that children who learn in their mother tongue, when they are 6 to 8 years old, achieve well than those educated in the certified verbal past or entirely. The finding also supports findings by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (2006) that children learn best when they are taught in a language they understand well. When children comprehend the language they are instructed in; they will most certainly engage much more meaningfully with learning content and further, question what they do not understand. The findings are in agreement with Back (2004) that when children learn in mother tongue or a language that they understand, they are bound to do well since they do not struggle with the language which they commonly use at home and school.

Figure 1 Proficiency of pupils in language of instruction

4.4 Teachers' responses on the effect of mother tongue on pupil's proficiency in language of instruction

Teachers were asked to indicate how mother tongue affected proficiency in language of instruction among pupils. Majority (78%) of teachers in the study indicated that mother tongue affected pupils' proficiency in the language of instruction to a large extent. This shows that mother' tongue had a significant influence on language of instruction and communication in primary schools. This is in agreement with Abdazi, (2006) and Benson (2005) who found that many children only grasp instruction when it is made in their mother tongue or the popular language in the catchment area. It is also in agreement with Wood head et al. (2007) who found that

children who learn in their mother tongue, when they are 6 to 8 years old, achieve well than those educated in the certified verbal past or entirely.

Table 3 Effect of mother tongue on pupil's proficiency in language of instruction

| Extent | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Very large | 5 | 28 |
| Large | 9 | 50 |
| No | 1 | 6 |
| Small | 1 | 6 |
| Very small | 2 | 10 |
| Total | 18 | 100 |

4.5 Head teachers' responses on the effect of mother tongue on pupil's proficiency in language of instruction

Head teachers were asked to indicate how mother tongue affected proficiency in language of instruction among pupils. *Mother tongue affects transition since in the pre-school they are taught in mother- tongue and are expected to learn English in STD 1. Mother tongue slows learning and interest of learning due to alack of communication especially in first term.*

Some pupils become disoriented when they join STD 1 due to change of language.

Pupils face difficulties in understanding the concept which is written and explained in English and Kiswahili.

The finding therefore show that mother tongue was a challenge in transition of pupils because it affected their learning using another language. The finding is in agreement with Peters (2010) who found that children who belong to a different culture or speak another language from that of the catchment area have problems adjusting to school life. The finding is in agreement with Wood head et al. (2007) who found that children who learn in their mother tongue, when they are 6 to 8 years old, achieve well than those educated in the certified verbal past or entirely. The finding is also in agreement with Cummins (2007) that use of mother tongue or familiar language of the school's catchment area has the potential to reduce the psychological stress children face during teaching and learning.

4.6 Readiness of pupils to be instructed in English or Kiswahili

The teachers were asked whether in their opinion pupils transitioning to STD 1 were ready to be instructed in English or Kiswahili. Half (50%) of the teachers in the study agreed while the other half (50%) disagreed that pupils transitioning to STD 1 were ready to be instructed in English or Kiswahili. The findings therefore shows that students could understand English and Kiswahili but not well enough for either both of the languages to be used throughout. When teachers needed clarity or to emphasize a point, they used mother tongue. This supports Mackenzie (2010) argument that a high learning achievement can be achieved by teaching in a curriculum developed in a child's mother tongue or language of catchment area. The finding is supported by findings of Traore (2001) that children's academic performance was higher in schools where the indigenous language was used as compared to those that received instruction using French as the school language of instruction. The finding is also consistent with Abadzi (2006) who found that youthful youngsters study excellent in their mother tongue as a prologue to and supplement of multi-lingual and bilingual education.

Figure 2 Readiness of pupils to be instructed in English or Kiswahili

4.7 Readiness of Pupils to Be Instructed In More Than One Language

The teachers were asked whether in their opinion pupils transitioning to STD 1 were ready to be instructed in more than one language. Majority (83%) of teachers in the study indicate that pupils transitioning from preschool to STD 1 were ready to be instructed in more than one language. This shows that pupils are well prepared to be taught and communicate in more than one language from their training in preschool. However, what they have is just the basics and STD 1 teachers need to do more to enhance their proficiency. This lends support to Lao and Krashen (1999) finding that learners who received instruction in their local language performed much better than those in English-medium classes in the Hong Kong Certificate of Examination.

Figure 3 Readiness of pupils to be instructed in more than one language

4.8 Effect of Use of Multiple Languages on Transition

The study sought to find out from the head teacher how use of multiple languages in STD 1 affected pupils' transition.

Preschool pupils would not understand instructions where more than one language is used.

The pupils get confused and fail to understand one language fully

Pupils lack mastery of language when they are introduced to two languages at the early stages of their life; they therefore confuses syllables.

Use of multiple languages confuses learners and this affects proper transition of pupils to standard one

The findings therefore show that use of multiple languages affected transition in that students get confused by the many languages making them disinterested in learning. This is in agreement with Rubagumya (2000) who pointed out that the success of the transition process in this exercise was marred by challenges such as the low status of indigenous languages. Peters (2010) also found that children who belonged to a different culture or speak another language from that of the catchment area have problems adjusting to school life.

4.9 Challenges Experienced By STD 1 Teachers in Teaching Language

Teachers in the study were asked to list challenges they experienced in teaching language to STD 1 pupils. An overwhelming number (90%) of teachers indicated that the main challenge they had in teaching language to STD 1 pupils was the interference of mother tongue. The findings therefore show that mother tongue was a significant problem in transition of pupils from preschool to STD 1. This finding is consistent with Sanagavarapu (2010) found that language barriers precluded many Bangladeshi parents from accessing information on school curriculum and transition to school and from collaborating with school teachers. The finding is also in agreement with Rubagumya (2000) who pointed out that the success of the transition process in this exercise was marred by challenges such as the low status of indigenous languages.

Figure 4 Challenges experienced by STD 1 teachers in teaching language

4.10 Effect of Languages Factors on Transition of Pupils from Preschool to Standard One

The teachers in the study were asked to indicate the extent to which language factors affected transition of pupils from preschool to STD 1. Majority (65%) of teachers in the study indicated that language factors affected transition of pupils from preschool to standard one by a large extent. This shows that language factor were an important factor influencing transition in public primary schools. The findings are therefore in agreement with Abdazi (2006) who indicated that language factors and specifically the language of instruction is a key feature of children's early learning understandings. The findings are also in agreement with O'Kane (2013) who found that children who had not achieved fluency in their first language did not perform as well as children who had mastered their mother tongue.

Table 4 Effect of Languages Factors on Transition of Pupils from Preschool to Standard One

| Extent | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Very large | 4 | 24 |
| Large | 7 | 41 |
| Small | 6 | 35 |
| Total | 18 | 100 |

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The findings showed that Kiswahili was the language used for both instruction and communication. The findings also suggest that vernacular was not used for either instruction nor communication. Majority (78%) of teachers in the study indicated that mother tongue affected pupils' proficiency in language instruction to large extent. use of multiple languages affected transition in that students get confused by the many languages making them disinterested in learning. An overwhelming number (90%) of teachers indicated that the main challenge they had in teaching language to STD 1 pupils was the interference of mother tongue.

5.2 Conclusion

Language factors emerged as barriers to a successful transition. This is because pupils were instructed largely in their mother tongue while in the pre-school. However, on joining standard one they were not only expected to be instructed and communicate to in other languages but they were also expected to use multiple languages (English and Kiswahili) and abandon their mother tongue. This sudden change in language of instruction coupled with the student's communication in mother tongue made teaching in STD 1 very hard for both student and teacher thereby slowing the learning process and retarding the success of transition.

5.3 Recommendation

Teachers should adhere to the Ministry of Education's guidelines to have mother tongue as the medium of communication in lower primary to ease transition.

5.4 Suggestion for Further Study

The current study did not involve pre-school teachers and parents, future studies should therefore incorporate these two groups to enhance understanding of the pupil's preparedness of transiting to standard one.

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