



**THE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON LANGUAGE OF
INSTRUCTION IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: AN
EXPERIENCE FROM TANZANIA**

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ABSTRACT

Globalization process has brought a change on the language of instruction in the developing countries across the globe. This change is made by shifting from using vernacular/native languages to English language as their medium of instruction. The emergence of English as a language of instruction threatens the survival of vernacular/native

languages as well as quality education in the developing countries. Additionally, culture and national identity are gradually diminished by the so called globalization. This paper attempts to answer the following questions: 1. what is the best way of embedding English language as a medium of instruction without affecting the existence of the first language (vernacular), culture and national identity in the countries where English is not the first language? 2. What is the best way of embedding English language as a medium of instruction without affecting the quality of education in the countries where English is not the first language?

KEYWORDS: language, globalization, instruction, English.

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization process has brought a change on the language of instruction in the developing countries across the globe. This change is made by shifting from using vernacular/native languages to English language as their medium of instruction. The emergence of English as a language of instruction threatens the survival of vernacular/native languages as well as

quality education in the developing countries. Additionally, culture and national identity are gradually diminished by the so called globalization (Celik & Gomleksiz, 2000).

Vernacular/native language, on one hand, plays a vital role in knowledge acquisition. This is in conformation with the language theory that asserts that the development of the second language depends on the level of the first language proficiency at the time when rigorous introduction to second language starts Cummins (1979). On the other hand, quality education depends on mastering of the language of instruction. It is apparent that without mastering the language of instruction, it will be difficult to attain quality education.

“The role of language of instruction can be likened to that of pipes in carrying water from one destination to another or that of copper wires in transmitting electricity from one station to another. Just as a pipe is an important medium in carrying water, and a copper wire an important medium for transmitting electricity, the language of instruction is an indispensable medium for carrying, or transmitting education from teachers to learners and among learners.” (Qorro, 2006).

However, the use of English as a medium of instruction has both positive and negative impacts. For some, it has been beneficial while for others it has made them confront challenges (Marsh, 2006). There are a number of reasons why English language has been raised and dominated as the language of instruction in different countries in the world. These include:

1. English is the language of Internet/technology
2. Most developing countries were colonized by the British Empire and are members of the British Common Wealth of Nations
3. English is the language of business and it offers an added value for employment opportunities in the global markets

English language is embedded into technology. Technology in this era is another force that shapes the world to behave in a certain way favorable to the global trends. To cope with the new trends, English language has a great role to play in this world which has a diversity of cultures and languages across the continents. (Celik & Gomleksiz, 2000). The major factor that leads English to be the language of instruction is that English is considered as a language of the Internet and technology (Rosnani, 2008). People use technology to communicate

across the continents. They also use Internet to retrieve learning materials which are written in English. The language which is widely used in the Internet is English

English is a language of business in the globalized world. The perception of “interconnectedness” and interactions among business people across the continents has been geared up by English language. Globalization according to Celik and Gomleksiz (2000) sounds like a “magic” word that brings about changes in every aspect of life such as economics, politics, social policies, language and culture.

In the developing countries, particularly, those which were colonized by British Empire and currently members of the British Common Wealth of Nations, English is used as a language of communication within and between countries. Perhaps this trend has paved the way for English to be the language of instruction in many countries in the world.

2. A brief History of Languages of Instruction in Tanzania

Before colonial regimes, Tanzania used Swahili and vernacular languages. During colonial regimes, missionaries and successive German and British colonial administrations laid the foundation for the use of Swahili as an official language and Language of instruction (Whiteley, 1969; Mazrui & Mazrui, 1995). From 1919 to 1961, the British colonial administration maintained Swahili as the language of instruction in the first five years of primary school education for Africans. From the sixth year of primary school, English became the sole language of instruction through secondary and postsecondary levels.

After independence, Tanzania has undergone change, adopting capitalist and socialist ideologies at different times. This led educational policies to be changing according to the ideology that is in place such as a capitalist or socialist ideology. During the early post-independence years from 1961 to 1966, the country inherited a capitalist system. However, the government maintained the colonial curriculum and languages of instruction, using Swahili as language of instruction in the first five years of primary education, and English from the sixth to secondary and post-secondary levels.

In 1967, the country adopted socialism. One of its major tenets was self-reliance in every aspect of Tanzanian life. Nyerere (1967) the first president of Tanzania, argued that colonial education created unequal socioeconomic categories among Tanzanians, comprising a small group of educated elite and the majority group of uneducated citizens. Thus, he introduced

Swahili as the sole language of instruction in primary education. English-medium primary schools were maintained for expatriate children but were not permitted to enroll Tanzanians.

In 1992, the government legalized the use of English as language of instruction in private primary schools, although Swahili remained the language of instruction in government primary schools. Currently, Tanzanians can own private primary schools and their children can enroll in them, including the international schools which had previously been restricted to the children of expatriates.

3. Theoretical Background

This paper relies on the theories of second language acquisition. Additionally, studies which are related to the second language as a medium of instruction are presented for the analysis of this study. Krashen's theory (1982) consists of five hypotheses: 1) The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis; 2) The Natural Order Hypothesis; 3) The Monitor Hypothesis; 4) The Input Hypothesis; 5) The Affective Filter Hypothesis.

In this paper, the Input Hypothesis is referred for the analysis. In this hypothesis, Krashen describes how the learner acquires a second language and how the second language acquisition takes place. This hypothesis assumes that the learner improves and progresses when he/she receives a second language "input" that is one step ahead of his/her current stage of linguistic competence. For instance, if a learner is at a stage "I" then acquisition takes place when he/she is exposed to "comprehensible Input" that belongs to level "i+1". This means that learning a second language needs an extra effort from the learner. Eventually, it needs a competent teacher who will utilize a proper method for a second language learner.

4. Media of instructions in different countries across the globe

Most countries in the world both in developed and developing categories offer education by either bilingual or multilingual languages. In the African continent most countries use more than a medium of instruction. In South Africa, students are taught primarily in their home language from grade zero to 3 and English starts from grade 4 onwards. In Zimbabwe, *Shona* and *Ndebele* are used from grade zero to grade 4 where English is the medium of instruction. In Canada, almost all public schools use either English or French as the medium of instruction. The official language is taught as a compulsory subject in primary school and becomes optional for most secondary school students. In Brazil, all public schools use Brazilian Portuguese as the medium of instruction and other European languages such as

English, German, Italian or French. Other countries like China, India, Russia, Israel, Malaysia, and Thailand, to mention a few, also use more than a language as medium of instruction (From Wikipedia).

In Tanzania, all secondary education must be taught in English with exception of Kiswahili class. Even though, Swahili for many students is the second language. Thus, English is their third language. Even though Kiswahili is the national language, there are more than 120 languages spoken in Tanzania. Especially in rural areas, a tribal language is often the first language learned by children (SACMEQ, 2005).

5.0. VIEWS FROM THE LITERATURE ON USING ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

5.1. The threat of English language to vernacular languages

According to Cavallaro (2005) one of the common reasons for languages to die is through shifting and its aftermath. When more than a language is in a place or country, one or more powerful languages become dominant at the expense of the others. In this situation, the languages of the minority are most likely to die. This is certainly the case regarding English in the developing countries. A study was done by Coluzzi and David (2009) to examine the policies towards minority languages in Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and the Philippines. The results show that language programmes in these countries show that languages of minority are endangered by the powerful languages in institutional or community settings.

Crystal (2000) contends that maintaining mother tongues is very important due to the following reasons: 1) linguistic diversity enriches human ecology 2) languages are expressions of identity 3) languages are repositories of history 4) languages contribute to the amount of human knowledge: each language provides a new angle on how the human mind works, perceives and records human observation and experience.

A study was conducted by Shrestha (2008) on the state of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepal, to examine how the English language has affected the society as a whole, particularly the vernacular (Nepali). The results reveal that English appears to be replacing Nepali as people in urban areas prefer speaking English or mixing 50 per cent English and 50 per cent Nepali.

5.2. The threat of using English language as a medium of instruction to the existence of quality education

The Juba Language-in Education Conference agreed upon nine principles and recommended them to be applied in language policies across Africa. These principles read:

1. *“We believe in linguistic equity: all languages must be protected, respected and developed*
2. *We value the multilingual nature of African society. It is a resource to be celebrated and used.*
3. *African languages should be used in partnership with international languages such as English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic, both through strong models of mother tongue-based multilingual education and throughout African society.*
4. *Parents, the state, and civil society must be informed of the educational, social, cultural, economic, and political benefits of the use of African languages alongside European languages and included in discussions concerning multilingual education.*
5. *Learners should be taught in basic (i.e. up to lower secondary level) formal and non-formal education through the language they know best. This gives them the best basis for developing academic language proficiency required in all subjects. Unfamiliar languages should be taught through second language teaching methodologies.*
6. *Other languages (including further African languages or European languages) should only be used as a medium of instruction after learners have developed academic reading and writing competency in the language they are familiar with, and after they have gained a sufficient level of academic proficiency in the second language through studying that language as a subject. This principle applies to all languages that are not a learner’s mother tongue. When the language for education model chosen requires transition from one language of instruction to another, that transition should be gradual and not sudden.*
7. *Effective teaching, with a socio-culturally relevant curriculum, is the most important element in quality education. African societies should use a variety of ways to develop and value good teachers.*
8. *The teaching of reading and writing is particularly important and must be improved – increased training is needed in this area.*
9. *Non-formal education should form part of the education system. It includes community based early childhood education, alternative basic education for out-of-school children, youth and adults, and skills training for youth and adults. Effective approaches use*

bi/multilingual language models and are connected to the community and world of work.” (The Juba Language-in Education Conference, March, 2012).

Nunan (2003) conducted a study on the impact of English as a global language on educational policies and practices in the Asia-Pacific region (China Hong Kong Japan Korea Malaysia Taiwan Vietnam). The researcher used governmental documentation and interview instruments to retrieve the data. The results of the study show that English language has a significant impact on policies and practices in all countries surveyed. The results also disclose the instability of policies pertaining to age of initial instruction, lack of access to effective language instruction, and poor skills of teachers.

In Vietnam, Burns & Vu (2014) conducted a study on English as a medium of instruction: Challenges for Vietnamese Tertiary Lecturers. They used interview instrument to investigate the issue. The results reveal that lecturers were challenged by their own language abilities, students’ language competence and learning styles, pedagogical issues, and resource availability.

In Namibia, Cantoni (2007) has done a study on the role of language of instruction for the successful education. The researcher used a qualitative method to explore the use of English among teachers and students and the consequences of shifting from a mother tongue to English language. The results show that many pupils speak English after fourth grade. The process of shifting from mother tongue to English instruction hinders pupils to participate fully in learning. Teachers on the other hand, showed ambiguous opinions concerning English as a medium of instruction.

Li and Shum (2008) carried out a study on using English as medium of instruction in Hong Kong and the sociolinguistic impacts. The researchers were investigating to find whether English medium of instruction fosters Anglo centrism and US colonialism and English medium of instruction maintains social inequality through the learning process. The results show that socio-cultural impacts are quite apparent in post-colonial areas.

Telli (2014) has done a study on the language of instruction issue in Tanzania: pertinent determining factors and perceptions of education stakeholders. The researcher used a qualitative method using interview instrument. Twenty-seven education stakeholders were interviewed from five districts across the country. The results reveal that education

stakeholders aired their different views regarding whether the language of instruction should be Swahili or English. Additionally, factors such as financial and human resources seemed to be the greater determinants to whether to use Swahili or English as language of instruction in Tanzanian schools.

Language of instruction is a pre-requisite factor for determinacy of quality of education. Quality education is threatened if a language of instruction is not well understood by both teachers and students.

“As a matter of efficiency and efficacy, only the language which teachers and students understand can effectively function as the language of instruction. Only when teachers and students understand the language of instruction are they able to discuss, debate, ask and answer questions, ask for clarification and therefore construct and generate knowledge,. These are activities that are a pre-requisite to learning and whose level determines the quality of education. Thus, the language of instruction is an important factor in determining the quality of education” (Qorro, 2006).

Thus, the quality of education can be in decline due to improper selection of language of instruction as well as the method used to implement that language.

Neke. (2003) conducted a study on English in Tanzania an anatomy of hegemony. His investigation was about the value of English and the social, cultural, economic and political consequences of its dominance in Tanzanian society. His study shows that:

1. English language has been used to establish “hegemony” through education and other socio-economic, cultural and political structures.
2. The language policy and education in Tanzania have been pushing the dominance of English by excluding Swahili and vernacular languages from being the language of the knowledge, such as science and technology.
3. The hegemony of English in Tanzania has hindered Swahili language to be internalized by the students into scientific and technological innovations
4. The domination of English as language of instruction widens the gap of social and economic inequalities among Tanzanians.
5. “Language policy” is about “language politics” in which languages are categorized hierarchically based on domains of use.

6. English is associated with good quality education while Swahili is linked with language of 'Education for Self-Reliance, politics, adult literacy, poor quality education and poverty.
7. The linguistic resource such as English has been used to create and preserve the social and economic disparities between developed and the developing countries.

Another study was done by Tibategeza (2010) on the Implementation of Bilingual Education in Tanzania: The Realities in the Schools. The researcher used documentary, interviews and observations instruments to gather the data. The results of the study show that the idea of bilingual is not yet in place as the dominance is monolingual education.

A study conducted by Rosnani Hashim (2008) on Japan's English Language Policies in the Face of Globalization: Lessons for Malaysia reveals that there are challenges in implementing English as a medium of instruction in both two countries. There are challenges in both countries. In Japan, the researcher points out the following challenges:

1. The lack of English materials;
2. lack of competent Japanese English teachers and
3. Preserving Japanese culture and their identities.

In Malaysia, the researcher's findings show that

1. There is a lack of motivation among Malaysians toward learning English language;
2. There is an issue of cultural preservation;
3. There is an issue of maintaining Malaysian identity and national language;
4. There is an absense of professional English teachers as well as the proper method of teaching English.

Another study was done by Dearden (2014) on English as a medium of instruction: a growing global phenomenon. The study aimed at mapping the size, shape and future trends of English as a medium of instruction across the globe. The study involved British Council staff in 60 countries to act as informed respondents for the countries in which they were resident. Out of 60 countries 55 of them managed to participate in the study. The researcher used semi-structured interviews, and written questionnaires instruments. Open-ended questionnaires were sent to these respondents and they were asked to provide information on the current state of English as a medium of instruction under a number of headings. The results show that:

1. There is a speedy growth of English as a medium of instruction worldwide;
2. Governments have authorized the use of English as medium of instruction but with some reluctant/dilemma;
3. Public opinion is not fully in support of English as medium of instruction, especially in the secondary phase, this condition is expressed as ‘equivocal ‘or ‘controversial’;
4. There is fear that instruction through English may hinder education access from disadvantaged groups and that the first language or national identity will be diminished.

6. DISCUSSIONS AND ANALYSIS

As it is apparent from the related studies presented above, English language has become a big issue which raises debates among scholars, parents and educational stakeholders almost across the globe. The salient issue here is whether to continue using English as medium of instruction, embedding both mother-tongue and English or to abandon English and use mother-tongue as medium of instruction. This is due to the globalization hegemony. The notion of making the world as a village is continuing to take place.

Some developing countries like Turkey have shown that it is beneficial to use English as medium of instruction as to cope with the current global trends (Isisag, 2012). These benefits include communication; being able to use ICT applications, learning using materials/resources provided by the Internet; enabling students to have an insight into the culture of English people.

A study by Sekhar (2012) on the impact of English language on contemporary world reveals that English is gaining a status of a global language. It has great impact in terms of communication, technology, education, information technology, scientific researches and societal transformation. He asserts that education system at international level, has adopted English as a medium of instruction to cope with the new trend (globalization) in education. Students believe that their bright future depends on their ability to speak English. For them English is very vital particularly in the developing countries where English is an official language such as in India. English is viewed as a vehicle to excel in education and thus gain connectivity across the globe i.e. employment and trade. Crystal (2003) states that:

“There is the closest of link between language dominance and economic, technological and cultural power”

This obviously suggests that the developed countries such as America and Britain are the most beneficial pertaining to the use of English as the medium of instruction. Both countries are leading economically, politically and technologically in the international and global stage.

However, most developing countries such as Vitnam, Hong Kong, Namibia, Malaysia, Tanzania etc. have been experiencing challenges in embedding English as a medium of instruction (Nunan,2003; Burns & Vu, 2014; Cantoni, 2007; Li & Shun, 2008; Telli, 2014; Qorro, 2006; Neke, 2003; Tibategeza, 2010; Rosnani, 2008; & Dearden, 2014). These challenges include incompetence in English language in both teachers and students, scarcity of learning resources/materials and teaching methods. Additionally, policies of these countries are not stable pertaining to age of initial instruction. As such, some countries use their mother-tongue from grade one to three or four; others from grade one to seven like Tanzania and other countries use both languages (mother-tongue and English) from grade one onwards. English as medium of instruction retains social inequality through the learning process. This has negative impact on socio-cultural dimensions. Other countries are still continuing to preserve their cultures and national identities as is the case of Japan and Malaysia. This led to instability towards language policies of the countries. Sometimes it has been derived by political motives.

Despite the rapid spread of English as a medium of instruction in the world, some governments have been authorizing the use of English as medium of instruction with dilemma! For instance, the language policy of Tanzania, allows both languages (Swahili and English) to be used from kindergarten onwards for private and international schools with selected government schools located in urban areas. But the mass primary schools are taught through Swahili language and English is taught as a subject. This hinders the mass of pupils/students who come from poor families to access quality education. Both groups are treated equally when they join secondary schools where English is the medium of instruction. They will be given the same examination papers together with English medium pupils/students. Perhaps the government fears to authorize both languages from lower levels onwards as it will incur costs. This is why English has been liked as quality education in many countries. A student who shifted from using mother-tongue to English language is challenged by two things: struggling to master the language of instruction (English) and grasping the content. This is in conformity with the views of Martha Qorro (2006).

Thus, the impacts of globalization on language of instruction are viable. As such, due to domination of English as language of instruction in the world, vernacular languages have been diminished. English culture or western culture is overwhelming indigenous ones. The gap of social and economic inequalities in the developing countries increases. Thus, English has been used to create and preserve the social and economic disparities between the developed and the developing countries.

The best way to overcome or lessen this disparity between well off and poor families regarding English language as a medium of instruction in Tanzanian context is to authorize both Swahili and English languages to be used from kindergarten level onwards countrywide. This narrows the gap that leads to generate elites originating from the minorities (rich families) and ignores the mass that come from poor families. If this issue is not tackled it will pave way for both private and international schools to continue to portray English as a medium of instruction as the “unique feature” of their educational offer. As a result, many public schools may therefore be continuously playing “catch-up” to compete and survive as places where quality education can be attained.

David Crystal states in his book “English as a global language” about the dangers of dominance of global language (English) as follows:

1. It will generate an elite monolingual linguistic class who will ignore other languages;
2. Those who have English as a mother-tongue will be more able to think and work quickly in English to their own advantages at the expensive of others. Eventually this may lead to widening the gap between rich and poor countries;
3. It will demoralize people to learn other languages;
4. It will accelerate the vanishing of minority languages or make all other languages useless.

(Crystal, 2003)

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is apparent that the use of English language as a medium of instruction in the developing countries is increasing daily (Sekhar, 2012) and it is anticipated to dominate in the world for many years to come in the 21st century. As such, trade and communication between Asia and South America, Europe and North America and other bordering countries are the factors that sustain the dominance of English and its reputation across the globe. According to Crystal (2003), 85% of the world ‘s international organizations use English as their official language in communication, and about 85% of the world ‘s important film

productions and markets use English as well and 90% of the published academic articles are in English language. This suggests that there is a wide spread in the use of English language in educational, economic and cultural aspects in the world.

Thus, developing countries cannot be isolated and stand aside ignoring the globalization trends taking place. They are part and parcel of this globe. But the questions to be raised are: 1. what is the best way of embedding English language as a medium of instruction without affecting the existence of the first language (vernacular), culture and national identity in the countries where English is not the first language? 2. What is the best way of embedding English language as a medium of instruction without affecting the quality of education in the countries where English is not the first language?

Responses to the above questions might vary based on the particular context. But responses from Tanzanian context might include the following:

1. To implement the Juba Conference's agreements on language policies across Africa.
2. Language policy should articulate clearly the particular age to start learning English and using it as a medium of instruction to all schools in the country;
3. Train language teachers by infusing them adequate skills of teaching language acquisition and transforming teaching methodology;
4. Using native speakers (English) in training language teachers;
5. Prepare conducive learning environment by supplying adequate teaching and learning materials/ resources;
6. To preserve the first language (mother-tongue) some subjects should be taught in Swahili, e.g. civics;
7. All subject teachers should be trained on linguistic skills to strengthen their linguistic competences as students will be interacting with them during school hours. At home students use their mother-tongue to communicate. This can be done through offering short-term training for all primary and secondary in-service teachers.
8. There is a need to allow pupils/students to opt for a convenient language (English/Swahili) during examination. As such, pupils/students will be in a good position to answer questions. Sometimes, students might have an answer about the question asked but due to language barrier, s/he ends up with failure! This will help to avoid the country from being discriminatory and divisive.

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