

Preparedness and Attitude of Student Teachers Towards Teaching in Mother Tongue in Kenyan Primary School: Affecting Planning and Material Development

By: Veronica Munanie Mutinda

(Doctoral Student in Applied Linguistics at Machakos University)

ABSTRACT

The Kenyan language policy embraces a bilingual approach to education and thus instructs that all lower primary school learners be taught in the mother tongue of the catchment area. The present multilingual Kenyan situation has most of the under twenty years old secondary school leavers who are either not competent or totally cannot speak their mother tongue. This age group can only communicate in the national and official languages (Kiswahili and English respectively). This is the same age group that will be joining or has already joined the teacher training colleges. This study investigates the preparedness of the teacher training colleges towards preparing the student teachers to teach in their mother tongue and the attitudes of the student teachers towards mother tongue instruction. A questionnaire was administered to 100 students, the dean of studies and to the heads of departments in Kitui teachers' college. This study found that the teacher training colleges were ill-prepared towards preparing mother tongue instructors. The training colleges had neither a curriculum policy nor instructional materials for preparing mother tongue instructors. The student teachers were found to generally have a negative attitude towards mother tongue instruction and others seemed not to be aware of what the language policy requires of them. The study discusses the findings and their implications for educational language planning and teacher education.

Keywords: Language Policy, Mother Tongue Instruction, Catchment Area, Language Competency, Attitude And Preparedness.