

# **Implementation of Bilingual Education in Tanzania: The Realities in the Schools**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Tanzania is a multilingual country with 150 ethnic languages spoken within its boundaries. However, Kiswahili is the language most frequently used in government offices, as well as in everyday activities countrywide. Despite the adoption of one of Africa's largest languages as an official language, the government has constantly insisted that English should remain the only medium of instruction at post-primary level, because of its tremendous power and prestige in the global market. The government's stance reveals a limited understanding of what a system of promoting bilingualism and bi-literacy in education should involve. This paper presents the findings on a study conducted in primary and secondary schools in Tanzania with regard to language-in-education policy implementation. Therefore, the practice in schools is that monolingual education dominates and the idea of bilingual education appears far-fetched to practitioners in the education sector. This paper proposes the 50–50 Model as a way forward for implementing strong bilingual education in Tanzania.

*Keywords:* *bilingual education, language planning, medium of instruction.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This paper is a result of a PhD study (Tibategeza, 2009) conducted in relation to language planning in Tanzania focusing on the implementation of bilingual education. After Tanzanian independence in 1961 a form of bilingual education as ideal for the new state was envisaged. In this form of bilingual education it was anticipated that learners would be bilingual and biliterate in both Kiswahili and English. This means Kiswahili would be used as the medium of instruction (henceforth MoI) in the school career alongside English, which would serve as another language of education. To begin with, Kiswahili was declared a national and official language after independence and MoI in primary schools in 1967. For the case of English, it was declared a co-official language and was taught as a compulsory subject in primary schools. However, English has remained the only MoI at post-primary level in education until now leading to a situation which does not really enhance bilingualism.

Researchers and educators in Tanzania have shown great concern regarding the country's language-in-education policy that does not effectively promote bilingualism. Kiswahili, a language both learners and teachers master, is not seen as useful resource to be used in education but as a problem to be eliminated in the educational settings particularly at post-primary level. This makes

English, an “imported” foreign language, to be the only medium of instruction in post-primary education. The language experience the students acquired in primary school through the use of Kiswahili, which is at that level used as the only MoI, is not used as a springboard in secondary schools but rather the medium of instruction is changed to English.

Previous studies (Rubagumya, 1991, 2003; Rubanza, 1996, 2002; Qorro, 2005; Brock-Utne, 2005, Rugemalira, 2005; Mpemba, 2007; Swilla, 2009) undertaken on the language-in-education issue in Tanzania have clearly indicated that students are affected negatively by the current subtractive system of bilingual education. The above studies have predominantly focused on describing the variety of problems arising from the language-of-instruction dilemma at post-primary level. Unlike the above studies which have consistently advocated a switch to Kiswahili as the sole language of instruction at all levels of education in Tanzania, this paper proposes a 50–50 dual language model for implementing bilingual education.

The analysis is presented against the background of sociolinguistic principles of bilingual education put forward by García (1997). Specifically the paper intends to critically look at the practice in Tanzanian schools with regard to the implementation of a strong bilingual education policy in Tanzania, review the corpus of language-in-education policy documents created by the relevant Tanzanian authorities and finally introduce the 50–50 Dual Language Model for the implementation of strong bilingual education in Tanzania.

The paper holds significant implications for the educational system in Tanzania, because it produces a viable and relevant model for the implementation of strong bilingual education in the Tanzanian sociolinguistic environment, which guides policy-makers tasked with language-in-education planning. Additionally, students, parents and other education stakeholders are to benefit from the findings indicated in this paper regarding a bilingual education policy that cultivates linguistic proficiency and academic literacy in both Kiswahili and English.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Language experiences after colonialism indicate how African languages have been ignored in the educational settings. Additionally, studies indicate that there is a need to consider the use of African languages alongside “imported” languages for learners’ cognitive development and promotion of bilingualism and biliteracy in education. In the following section, I will outline the main arguments debated in relevant academic contributions. Language planning in Africa is a critical issue especially in educational settings. Bamgbose (2000: 99) submits that language planning in Africa takes place against the background of several factors. These factors include societal multilingualism, the colonial language legacy, the role of education as an agent of social change, high

incidence of illiteracy and concerns for communication, national integration and development.

Since most African countries are multilingual, they are faced with a challenge when it comes to language planning. The challenges range from language choice for purpose of administration, communication and education, cost of language development, the role of minority languages and the place of multilingualism in the overall language policy. A common practice in African countries has always been that funding language issues is not a priority and language issues rank low in comparison with unemployment, crime prevention, housing, corruption, health services, infrastructure development and good governance (Wright, 2002: 172; Kamwendo, 2006: 64). Simala (2002: 48) therefore asserts that the resources African governments put in language issues are limited.

Reacting on why specifically English in Africa has gained prominence, Canagarajah (2005: 196) submits that globalisation has made the state borders permeable and therefore reinserted the importance of the English language for all communities through multinationals, market forces, popular culture, cyber space and digital technology. He underscores that apart from the pressure the nation state is facing from outside, it is also facing pressure from within.

With regard to negative language attitudes towards African languages, Wolff (2006: 42) points out that the post-colonial African elite are defined by their linguistic behaviour of preferring the use of ex-colonial language(s). The reason of this is because they have succeeded in a foreign language based education system in which the colonial language was the dominant language of instruction. Judging from their own educational experience which shows success through using colonial languages, the idea of using indigenous African languages in education tends to meet strong opposition from such political elites.

Pointing out one of the major challenges to educational language planning in Africa, Bamgbose (2000: 88) asserts that there is widespread negative attitude to African languages among Africans themselves of all walks of life. Therefore, as Owino (2002: 29) precisely puts it, the African future in using the indigenous languages in education has a lot to do with linguistic attitudes of the elite ruling class which favours the use of western languages. However, Wolff stresses that their success cannot guarantee efficiency of the system today. Many of such elite have come to accept the fallacy that real education can only be obtained in a world language such as English, French or German.

In connection with modernisation of African languages, Kembo-Sure (2002: 28) makes it clear that all languages have a creative and infinite capacity to develop in order to meet the communicative needs of their speech communities. He stresses that if there are any lexical gaps in a particular language then borrowing can be the best alternative to fill up such gaps. Nevertheless, such languages need to be put into use for them to get a chance to grow and develop. That is why Simala (2002: 80–81) laments that African languages have been condemned to low status positions and have not been empowered to perform any significant roles beyond speech forms in intra-community speech.

The roles of African languages are determined by African leaders for the sake of national unity. They are quite unique in declaring “imported” foreign languages to be unifying languages which they consider to be neutral in terms of ethnic and linguistic rivalries because of their foreign origin (Mateene, 1999: 177). The fear that to promote many African languages may threaten national unity is unjustified because political unity is not guaranteed by monolingualism. Mateene (1999: 166) gives the example of India with about 1600 languages and yet being politically more stable than Burundi, Somalia and Rwanda which are basically monolingual states but politically unstable.

On the appropriate language for learning, Brock-Utne (2005: 173) argues rather convincingly that if the child’s major learning problem is linguistic, then all the attention of African policy makers and aid to the educational sector from donors ought to be devoted to strengthening the African languages especially in basic education. Experience in most schools indicates that children are considered incompetent when they just lack knowledge of the language used in instruction, and as it has been explained above, such a language is always foreign to the learners. That is the language they hardly hear and seldom use outside the school. Brock-Utne is emphatic that the aim of education for all becomes a completely empty concept if the linguistic environment of the learners is not taken into account.

Clegg (2007: 1) proposes that it is high time Africans stopped teaching through European languages alone and introduce bilingual education, where learning will take place in two languages throughout schooling. He stresses that an African language in which a learner feels comfortable should be used alongside English or any European language in education. Clegg is mindful of the cost involved in bilingualism but he stresses that it is lower than the overall cost of ineffective L2-medium education. Clegg submits further that parents may be wary of education in two languages and feel that bilingual education marginalises L2.

Since Africa is virtually multilingual, the advocacy by researchers above for the use of African languages in education implies bilingual education. However, there are some obstacles which can be anticipated as far as implementation of bilingual education in African countries is concerned. The most common obstacle is status quo maintenance by the political elite which ensures that the class reproduces itself. The other obstacle is related to language attitudes people have where English or other foreign languages are seen as languages of power and those who can master them have a chance of being successful in life.

Although students in Tanzania, as a study by Rubagumya (2003) indicates, admit that they understand their teachers better when teaching is carried out in Kiswahili, the majority of them still think that English should be maintained as the medium of instruction in secondary schools. Explaining this controversy, Wolff (2006: 186) asserts “decades and centuries of marginalisation have created deep-rooted negative prejudice in the minds of many Africans towards their own indigenous languages which stems from traumatic experiences during colonial times”. Education stakeholders in Tanzania such as parents, teachers,

students and policy makers have the impression that home languages do not enhance the performance of pupils in their examinations and their ultimate success in education. This explains why parents who can afford it take their children to schools where instruction is carried out in English as early as possible.

Rubanza (2002: 40) points out a weakness in the language-in-education policy, namely that the demand for the use of Kiswahili and English at primary and secondary school levels respectively disconnect the students' experiences in Tanzania. He stresses that what students bring from home, whether an ethnic language or Kiswahili, is not built upon but rather wiped out and they are forced to begin with "a clean plate". This definitely affects their concept formation in their education.

Rubagumya and Lwaitama (1990: 143) suggest that a point of departure in language planning should be that language be placed within the framework of a wider political and economic context of society. They argue that the policy which is imposed from above is likely to fail as the society members will not feel that they own it in any way. This coincides with what Msanjila (2004: 44) proposes with regard to the language of education. He argues that the medium of instruction should be accepted by a good number of people in a particular speech community.

Looking at the language policy in Tanzania, Swilla (2009: 6) points out three key contradictions arising between ideology, language policy and actual implementation of language of instruction. Firstly, while the government statements maintain that Kiswahili is the medium of instruction of primary education, English has been legalised as MoI in private primary schools. The majority of students in English medium schools are Tanzanians. Secondly, the Ministry of Education offers the English version of the primary school syllabus for use in English medium schools. Government primary schools use a Kiswahili version of the syllabus. Thirdly, since 2000 the government administers the English version of the national Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE) in English medium schools unlike in the past when the examinations were only provided in Kiswahili in such schools.

In addition Swilla (2009: 7) faults a mismatch which appears in the government documents, the *Education and Training Policy* and the *Cultural Policy* of 1995 and 1997 respectively in connection with language of instruction in the educational system. She therefore concludes that having legalised private primary schools and the use of English as MoI in such schools, the government was not ready to state openly that English had also become MoI in primary schools. She associates the current language policy and practices as elite closure, a social mobilisation strategy by which people in power establish and maintain their powers and privileges. Due to various language policy contradictions pointed out in her article, Swilla (2009) proposes that it is high time the government stated in its education policies and related documents that both English and Kiswahili are to be languages of education.

Similarly, Rubagumya (2007: 7) points out some weaknesses in the implementation of language policy. He stresses that “whereas initiative to extend linguistic rights to citizens come from the state, the same state puts in place impediments to the implementation of these initiatives”. He gives an example of the *Cultural Policy* document released by the government in 1997 recognising the importance of all home languages of Tanzania but the same languages remain banned in the mass media.

Commenting on the English situation in Tanzania, Rubanza (2002: 45) asserts that students do lose their English skills after completing their studies because the society they work and live in does not demand the use the English language. This suggests a major effect of poor implementation of the bilingual education in Tanzania.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

As is typical for this type of evaluation research, the study applied a variety of research instruments to collect relevant data. Documentary review was used to review language policy documents to provide information on overt language policy, planning and implementation in Tanzania. The documents reviewed were the *Education and Training Policy* (1995), the *Cultural Policy* (1997), *Education Circulars 2001–2005* (2006), staff meeting files (1995–2008), daily report logbooks (2005–2009) and correspondence files (1999–2008)

Interviews were conducted with relevant education stakeholders for the purpose of capturing information on their views and perceptions regarding the concept of bilingual education as well as their understanding of the current policy and implementation. Additionally, I wanted to solicit information on schools’ language policy on the use of both Kiswahili and English in carrying out their day-to-day businesses and the punishment meted to students speaking Kiswahili in secondary schools.

The linguistic landscape was also subjected to observation in connection with bilingual education principles. Observation in general was meant to supplement the information gathered from interviews and serve as a cross-checking device. Lastly, focus group discussions were used in this study to unveil language-in-education policy implementation challenges in the schools. This provided for further cross-checking and assisted to inform the development of a model for strong bilingual education.

### 4. FINDINGS

In this section, findings pertaining to the implementation of bilingual education in the Tanzanian education system are presented.

#### 4.1 DOCUMENTS RELEASED BY THE GOVERNMENT

The Education and Training Policy (1995) explains in chapter five, “Formal Education and Training”, the language policy which focuses more on the medium of instruction to be used at different levels of education. Language-in-education policy, as stipulated in this document, stresses the use of only one language as a medium of instruction. With regard to the medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools, the document stresses that the medium of instruction in pre-primary schools shall be Kiswahili, and English shall be a compulsory subject (United Republic of Tanzania – URT, 1995: 35).

It is emphasised in this document that English is to be taught to pupils from their first year of primary education with anticipation that at the end of the seven years of primary education, pupils will have acquired and developed the English language proficiency demanded at post-primary levels and the world of work.

As for the secondary schools’ medium of instruction, the document stipulates that the medium of instruction for secondary education shall continue to be English, except for teaching of approved languages, and Kiswahili shall be a compulsory subject up to ordinary level (henceforth O’Level) (ibid, 45).

The rationale given in the document why English is to be used as the medium of instruction at post-primary education is that most instructional media and pedagogical materials are written in the English language and it is assumed that the situation is likely to remain so for a long time in the foreseeable future.

Additionally, the government through the Ministry of Education issued another document basically on cultural issues in Tanzania referred to as *Sera ya Utamaduni* (henceforth Cultural Policy) – URT 1997. The language issue is presented in chapter three in this document. As indicated in this document, languages in Tanzania have been categorised into three groups, namely ethnic languages, which are more than 150, the national language (Kiswahili) and foreign languages.

Kiswahili is described as a language spoken and understood by the majority in the whole country. It is stated in the *Cultural Policy* document that in spite of various government pronouncements and directives, Kiswahili does not have a legal status as an official language. It is pointed out that for Kiswahili not to have a legal status as official language has led to various problems in communication in the government. It is therefore stipulated that Kiswahili shall be pronounced the national language and this pronouncement shall be incorporated in the constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, the National Kiswahili Council and other institutions responsible for the promotion of Kiswahili shall be strengthened and adequately resourced in order to enable them to discharge their functions and ethnic languages shall continue to be used as resources for the development of Kiswahili (URT, 1997: 16–17).

The *Cultural Policy* document further stresses on the medium of instruction to be used at all levels of education in Tanzania. It is asserted that the use of English at post-primary education levels has tremendously affected education in

general and Kiswahili in particular in the country. The document takes into account the fact that few people can understand, speak and write in foreign languages. It is therefore stressed that continuing to use English as a sole language of instruction at post-primary level is denying the opportunity for many people in the country to benefit from science and technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is therefore stated that a special programme to enable the use of Kiswahili as a medium of instruction in education and training at all levels shall be designed and implemented and Kiswahili shall be a compulsory subject in pre-primary, primary and secondary education and shall be encouraged in higher education. In addition the teaching of Kiswahili shall be strengthened (ibid, 20).

## 4.2 LANGUAGE POLICY IN SCHOOLS

The school language policy can be through different ways depending on the researcher's purpose. In this particular study I was interested in the languages which are used to document the staff meeting minutes. The researcher wanted to establish whether bilingual education is implemented in the schools which formed the case study. In this case the claim that Tanzanian education is bilingual, that is, using Kiswahili and English as languages of education, could be revealed on the languages used to document the minutes. The researcher reviewed files from 1995 to 2008 for academic staff meetings in primary and secondary schools in the case study. It was established that teachers conduct their discussions mostly in Kiswahili but the secretary documents the minutes in either English or Kiswahili in secondary and primary schools respectively.

In the primary schools, the staff-meeting minutes were written in only Kiswahili while in secondary schools the case was different because only in one school, prior to 1998, English was the only language used to document the minutes because there were foreign teachers who could not understand Kiswahili. However, from 1998 they changed to Kiswahili after the departure of foreigners. The rest of the secondary schools have been using only English to document their minutes. Asked why that was the case, teachers and heads of schools maintained that English, according to the *Education and Training Policy* (1995) document, is the medium of instruction and the only language of communication in secondary schools and that is why they have no option but to use it.

The review of the staff meeting files unveiled that all the schools do not consider the use of both Kiswahili and English in documenting their minutes. This can on the one hand be attributed to the fact that schools rely solely on what is included in the *Education and Training Policy* (1995: 35, 39 & 45) with regard to the medium of instruction in primary and secondary education. On the other hand, the schools do not have their own language policies which promote bilingualism in connection with which language has to be used, why and when it should be used.

The researcher also perused the daily report logbooks to find out the languages teachers use. In the study, the researcher was interested in the language used to write the daily report of the schools. This was to establish whether bilingualism features in such schools through the daily report logbooks and if it is the school objective to promote bilingualism in the daily reports' writing. In all the four primary schools, the language used was Kiswahili only. It was as well discovered that even the comments made by the heads of schools to whom such logbooks are submitted daily are in Kiswahili. However, English was the only language which was used in all four secondary schools. As in the primary schools, the comments from the heads of schools were also in the language used to write the report, in this case English. Enquiring why that is the case in a cross-checking question, all eight heads of schools said Kiswahili and English are official languages in primary and secondary schools respectively.

As it is revealed above the language used to write the daily reports by teachers on duty is characteristically monolingual. The use of two languages, Kiswahili and English, in writing the daily report was not encountered in any of the eight primary and secondary schools. This implies that bilingualism is not the schools' objective they want to achieve.

Furthermore, the researcher perused the correspondence files of 1999 to 2008 in all primary and secondary schools involved in the study. This was to establish whether the Ministry of Education or the local governments constantly give directives on the implementation of the language-in-education policy and the language(s) which is/are used in such correspondence.

It was discovered that no single circular was given in connection with how the language policy is to be implemented in and outside the classroom, the language to be used in documenting the staff-meeting minutes, the language to be used in correspondence between the Ministry of Education or local governments with schools, the language to be used in the school motto, mission and vision and in linguistic landscape within the school premises.

Moreover, the researcher went through different correspondence files to establish the language(s) used in correspondence between the schools and the Ministry of Education or local governments. The aim was to see if bilingualism is encouraged in the schools through correspondence. It was noted that all the primary and secondary schools in the study used only Kiswahili as a language of communication. All letters sent to or received from the Ministry of Education or local governments were written in Kiswahili.

### 4.3 TEACHERS' VIEWS

It is also established from interviews held with teachers and heads of schools that punishment is meted out to students who speak Kiswahili in the school premises in secondary schools. It is like a tradition in most secondary schools to see signboards written "Speak English" all over the schools involved in this study. Students are expected to speak English all the time except when they are

in the Kiswahili class. Teachers and heads of schools had various views regarding the tendency of punishing students speaking Kiswahili.

First, all teachers and heads of schools were of the view that the aim of punishing students is not bad as it endeavours to help them improve their language skills. They claimed that if the students are allowed to speak Kiswahili, they will get problems in the examinations which they have to write in English, as per the current language policy. They therefore said punishment helps students to understand what they are taught, understand instruction given in examinations and to be able to write something intelligible in their essays.

Secondly, they said that punishment is meted out in realisation that Kiswahili is well understood by students but they need to take much of their time and effort in a foreign language, English. They stressed that they can speak Kiswahili at home and in the streets where English is never heard according to the sociolinguistic environment in Tanzania.

Thirdly, punishment was not seen as a hindrance to learning as they unveiled that it is like a tradition in Tanzania for learners to be punished to get them to learn what the teacher wants them to. They said if students are left to do what they want; it is obvious that English will remain a barrier to learning. They insisted that what is needed is carefulness in administering the punishment to ensure there are no physical injuries.

Generally, the information gathered from teachers and students in secondary schools reveals that students get punished when they speak Kiswahili. This is a contradiction from what is expected in connection with promotion of bilingual education in Tanzania.

The linguistic landscape observations were conducted in primary schools and secondary schools. The researcher was interested in observing the linguistic landscape in the schools to establish whether the designing of signboards within the school premises adhered to bilingual education criteria and whether it was the schools' objective to design bilingual signboards as a way of implementing bilingual education within the school premises.

#### 4.4 LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE

In the linguistic landscape observation, the researcher was guided by the hypothesis that there is poor comprehension of the concept of bilingual education, where having some signboards written in English and others in Kiswahili is enough for them to claim there is bilingualism. However, in order for bilingualism to be noted, the two languages, Kiswahili and English have to be used on the same signboard.

Linguistic landscape observation focussed on the language used to name classrooms, offices, laboratories and other school buildings like stores, kitchens and recreational centres. The focus was also on the language used on the school signboards within or outside the schools. Table 1.1 indicates the signboards observed in relation to the language used.

**Table 1:** *Linguistic Landscape Observation.*

TYPE OF SCHOOL	SCHOOL	SIGNBOARDS OBSERVED				
		ENG	%	KISW	%	TOTAL
Primary	PA	0	0	9	100	9
	PB	0	0	10	100	10
	PC	0	0	8	100	8
	PD	0	0	8	100	8
Secondary	SA	12	75	4	25	16
	SB	14	87.5	2	12.5	16
	SC	18	81.8	4	18.1	22
	SD	16	80	4	20	20

Key: Eng = English, Kisw = Kiswahili, PA-D = Primary school 1–4, SA-D = Secondary school 1–4

It was noted that in primary schools as indicated in Table 1 above, all 35 (100%) signboards were written in Kiswahili while in secondary schools about 81% were written in English, 19% in Kiswahili and none at all was bilingual. It was noted that signboards in Kiswahili were mostly in the offices of the heads of secondary schools. The justification given by heads of secondary schools following a cross-checking question on the signboards on their offices was that they preferred Kiswahili because such offices were meant for the public, the people conversant in English and those not, and because Kiswahili is a national and official language spoken by the majority in Tanzania.

Asked another cross-checking question whether there is any clause in the policy or whether there is any directive from the Ministry of Education regarding the language that has to be used in signboards within the school premises, teachers and heads of schools contended that it is normally the common sense of the school administration or a teacher responsible to designing the signboard in question.

The findings from linguistic observations and responses for cross-checking questions give the impression that bilingualism is not the schools' objective when signboards in the schools are designed. This can be attributed partly to lack of understanding of the criteria for bilingual education and lack of guidelines from the Ministry of Education on the implementation of language-in-education policy in the schools.

#### 4.5 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Lastly, the focus group discussions concentrated among other things on the discouragement of the use of Kiswahili particularly in secondary schools despite its recognition in the current language policy. The discussion focused on the punishment meted out to students caught speaking Kiswahili and its implications in promoting bilingual education. Regarding the implications to bilingual education, the majority of group members admitted that the punishment would compromise the envisaged bilingual education but stressed that under the

language circumstances prevailing in Tanzania, encouraging students to speak Kiswahili is tantamount to killing English irretrievably.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

From this study it was observed that exclusive use of one language in education leads to monolingualism while the use of two languages in instruction could lead to bilingualism and biliteracy. Language-in-education policy in Tanzania as stipulated in the *Education and Training policy* (1995) official document stresses on one language at a time as a medium of instruction in pre-primary, primary and secondary education. Kiswahili is emphasised in pre-primary and primary schools while English is the sole language of instruction in secondary schools. This contradicts what Torres-Guzmán (2007: 50) recommends regarding enrichment programmes which are synonymous to dual language programmes. She stresses that the ideology of dual language programmes is to have another language added to the one the children already have and that children's academic growth in both languages should be encouraged.

The envisaged goal to have bilingual and biliterate citizens can be difficult to achieve in the educational settings if only Kiswahili or English is allowed to dominate as a sole language of instruction in primary and secondary education respectively. This effectively leads to monolingual instruction which cannot bring about bilingualism and biliteracy in education.

Views from interviews with education stakeholders vividly suggest that English, a minority language in Tanzania, carries a symbolic power and it is protected from Kiswahili in the education settings for fear of losing the language of wider communication. Education stakeholders favour monolingual instruction as the only way students can learn and use English for educational purposes. They are of the view that using two languages, in this case, Kiswahili and English, would bring confusion on the part of learners. This line of thinking concurs with what is implied in Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP), a theory of bilingual education where two languages apparently work against each other. However, as Baker (2006: 168) argues, research has suggested that it is wrong to assume the brain as having a limited amount of room for language skills to make monolingual instruction preferable to bilingual instruction.

Poor comprehension of the concept of bilingual education with regard to additive<sup>1</sup> and subtractive<sup>2</sup> types of bilingual education manifested itself through the interviews with education stakeholders. It is commonly held that if English

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<sup>1</sup> *Additive bilingual education* occurs in an environment in which the addition of a second language does not replace the first language but rather promotes it.

<sup>2</sup> *Subtractive bilingual education*, occurs where students are initially instructed in both their mother tongue and a second language. Eventually, however, instruction in the mother tongue ceases, with the second language becoming the sole medium of instruction and ultimately the only language of the student (Lambert, 1980).

or Kiswahili is taught as a compulsory subject in primary or secondary education respectively, then bilingual education is said to exist. However, according to García (1997: 405) bilingual education is taken to mean the use of two languages in instruction.

A subtractive system of bilingual education is apparent in primary and secondary schools in Tanzania. Pupils' mother tongues are not accepted in primary schools and likewise Kiswahili receives strong opposition in secondary schools. Native language loss is always associated with lower levels of second language attainment, scholastic underachievement and psychosocial disorders. In view of this, Lindholm-Leary (2001: 62) submits that successful language development programmes seem not only to prevent the negative consequences of subtractive bilingualism, but also to effectively promote the beneficial aspects of additive bilingualism.

The punishment meted out to students who speak Kiswahili in secondary schools is a clear manifestation that bilingualism is seen as a problem and every effort is made to ensure Kiswahili does not become a language of instruction. Kiswahili in this case is seen as interfering the learning of English, a language viewed with high prestige in the society. Contrary to what research findings in theories of bilingual education point out that an individual can learn and use two or more languages in education without cognitive problems, parents, teachers and students maintain that English-only policy is the best alternative to master and use English in education.

The current language policy in Tanzania, as far as bilingual education is concerned, calls for transitional language programme, where Kiswahili is used in pre-primary and primary schools but immediately eliminated at the post-primary level of education. This encourages subtractive instead of additive bilingual education which could have promoted proficiency in two languages, Kiswahili and English.

As García (1997: 418) puts it, in the school context administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals and clerical and custodial staff must be bilingual or willing to work towards becoming bilingual for school achievement of bilingualism and biliteracy. My own data (Tibategeza, 2009) indicate that one of the principles of bilingual education as developed by García (1997: 418) that requires all staff members in the school to be bilingual is a far-fetched objective. In secondary schools it is only teachers speak both English and Kiswahili.

In primary schools, where the members of staff available are only teachers, the only language in almost all school business, except in teaching English as a compulsory subject, is Kiswahili. Data from interviews with heads of primary schools indicate that there is not much emphasis on one's proficiency in English before employment because the language of instruction is Kiswahili and teacher training colleges for primary schools teachers use Kiswahili as a medium of instruction.

Members of staff in secondary schools who are not teachers do not have English as one of the job requirements. Nobody bothers, as data from interviews with heads of schools point out, to ask them during the job interviews about

their bilingual status. Additionally, despite the signboards around secondary schools as indicated in the linguistic landscape that students and staff have to speak English, it is only teachers and students who are targeted. Therefore, the bilingual principle requiring staff members to be bilingual or working towards becoming bilingual is not taken into account in the school setting.

García's (1997) sociolinguistic principles of bilingual education require that there must be active parental participation and support in order for bilingualism and biliteracy in education to be promoted. Parents, being the core education stakeholders, must actively involve themselves in the choice of bilingual education for their children. They need to be well informed and committed to bilingualism and at the same time be active participants in their children's education. Similarly, Lindholm-Leary (2001: 76) considers parental involvement and collaboration with the school as an important factor in dual language programme. She underscores that parental involvement develops a sense of efficacy that communicates itself to learners.

However, parents prefer their children to be taught in English only and strongly oppose the proposal to have Kiswahili being one of the languages of education. The argument they put forward is that bilingual education would cripple the efforts of their children to learn English.

This suggests that the parental support needed for the promotion of bilingualism and biliteracy in education is lacking among these education stakeholders. They consider the use of Kiswahili and English as likely to confuse their children. In this regard, parents seem to be holding a misconceived perception of how bilingual education works in the mind of a learner. Theoretically, they think in terms of the Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP) as developed first by Cummins (1978). In this theory, people have a feeling that two languages operate separately and they do not support each other. However, this theory does not hold water in connection with bilingual education as it fails to comply with the common fact where bilingual people constitute the majority of the world's speakers. Bilinguals live in their context without any detrimental effects from their multilingualism.

Furthermore, for bilingual education to be a success, the entire school must be designed in a way that can promote bilingualism and refrain from promoting monolingualism. According to one of the principles of bilingual education (García, 1997: 419), a bilingual context in the school must be encouraged, where two languages have a life of their own around the school campus beyond the classrooms.

In secondary schools, where all subjects except Kiswahili are taught in English, code-switching seemed to be rampant. Inasmuch as code-switching helps the learners to understand what they are taught; it also poses great challenges to the learners. It is understood that a teacher may code-switch to the native language or a language understood by learners in order to clarify meaning for learners' efficient comprehension. However, such code-switching of repeating the instruction in the native language can lead to some undesirable behaviour among students. For example, a learner who is sure that the

instruction in a language difficult to him/her will be followed by a native language translation may lose interest in listening to the former instruction and this in turn limitedly exposes the learners to the target language discourse. This tallies with what Rugemalira (2005: 77) says that when code-switching amounts to translation of what is said in class using a target language, learners tend to tune out and wait for the translation in the first language.

Torres-Guzmán (2007: 53) is convinced that avoidance of simultaneous translation is another way in which dual language policy is to be maintained. She highlights that teachers are encouraged to trust the long-term language-learning process and therefore focus on the target language in a particular subject. This, according to Torres-Guzmán, helps the learners to pay attention to what is presented in the target language. As such the learners get used to the target language and develop language skills in that language. Additionally, focusing on the target language reduces the burden to the teacher as it is tiring to teach everything twice.

However, it was discovered that linguistic landscape within the school premises does not adhere to the requirements of bilingualism which dictates that each and every signboard should use more than one language. Monolingualism seemed to be preferred to bilingualism as all signboards in four primary schools were written in Kiswahili while in secondary schools; almost 81% were in English and the rest in Kiswahili. It was therefore established that monolingualism in linguistic landscape design dominated in all schools which were included in the case study. For some few signboards (19%) which were written in Kiswahili around the secondary school premises, bilingual promotion was not the schools' objective but only that Kiswahili was a language which could be understood by most people visiting the school offices.

As a principle of bilingual education, for bilingualism and biliteracy to be achieved there needs to be an educational language policy that aims at making students bilingual and biliterate (García, 1997: 419). In this principle of bilingual education, a requirement is that educational language policy has to acknowledge the interdependency that exists between the two languages. This stresses one thing that Developmental Interdependency Hypothesis (DIH) and Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) theories of bilingual education have to be taken seriously.

However, it was established that the Tanzanian language policy does not favour bilingualism and biliteracy in education. A subtractive type of bilingual education features most in the educational settings, where Kiswahili, a language used and understood by 95% of the Tanzanian population, is not given space as a language of education in secondary schools.

Similarly, one of the objectives of education in Tanzanian secondary schools is to promote students' linguistic ability and effective use of communication skills in Kiswahili and English. This objective is apparently geared towards promotion of additive bilingualism in Tanzanian education settings. Nevertheless, it was discovered that subtractive mode of bilingual education is

preferred in the educational system and Kiswahili and English do not have the same status in the school system.

Another major challenge on the language-in-education policy is the fact that bilingualism is not an issue which gets support from other government sectors apart from education. The language policy needs to be a cross-cutting issue in all the government institutions. Most government businesses are run in Kiswahili and everybody in the office uses Kiswahili as an official language. However, when one goes to secondary schools the position of Kiswahili changes and whoever speaks it gets punished. In this situation bilingualism cannot be successful if the government, through the Ministry of Education, does not take deliberate measures to harness the situation.

Based on what obtains in the *Education and Training Policy* (1995) and the *Cultural Policy* (1997) one realises that the current policy documents are not in accordance with criteria for bilingual education and therefore the language policy itself is not based on principles of bilingual education as developed by García (1997). For that matter implementation of such a policy in our schools becomes problematic.

Moreover, there is a problem with the conceptualisation of bilingual education. It is taken for granted by education stakeholders and policy makers that the teaching of English and Kiswahili as compulsory subjects in primary and secondary schools respectively is enough to constitute bilingual education. However, in order to have bilingual education proper there is a need for both Kiswahili and English to be used as languages of instruction. The policy makers may be aware of the insufficiency but have tended to play a low key.

It can also be seen that because there is no support from the parents in connection with bilingual education implementation, promotion of the same is a hard objective to achieve in Tanzania. Parents maintain their misconception that in order for their children to learn a foreign language the same language should be used as a sole language of instruction in the educational settings. For them, to introduce two languages in education is equal to confusion on the part of their children.

## 6. A WAY FORWARD

One of the objectives of this paper is to develop a model for implementing strong bilingual education in Tanzania as was envisaged by the founding ideals of the state. Additive bilingualism, one of the strong forms of strong bilingualism, cannot be achieved while the language, Kiswahili, the majority of students and teachers both in primary and secondary schools master is eventually eliminated in the education system and only English, a second and foreign language is favoured as a medium of instruction in post-primary education.

There is therefore a need for deliberate efforts and resources to be taken on board to have a model that can shed light on the promotion of strong bilingualism and biliteracy in Tanzanian education. The model to cater for the implementation of the language programme needs a strong language policy based on research findings. The policy has to state categorically the intention to promote additive bilingual education and systematically show how that intention is achievable.

The model which is proposed in this study for the purpose of promoting bilingualism and biliteracy is the *50–50 Dual Language Model* (see figure 1.1), where both Kiswahili and English are to be used as languages of education in primary and secondary education.

The 50–50 Dual Language Model is both comprehensive and detailed, covering various variables and activities that take into account the academic and linguistic development of learners who need to maintain their first language, Kiswahili, and at the same time adding a second language, English. Learners develop literacy in Kiswahili while developing academic proficiency in English through content-area instruction.

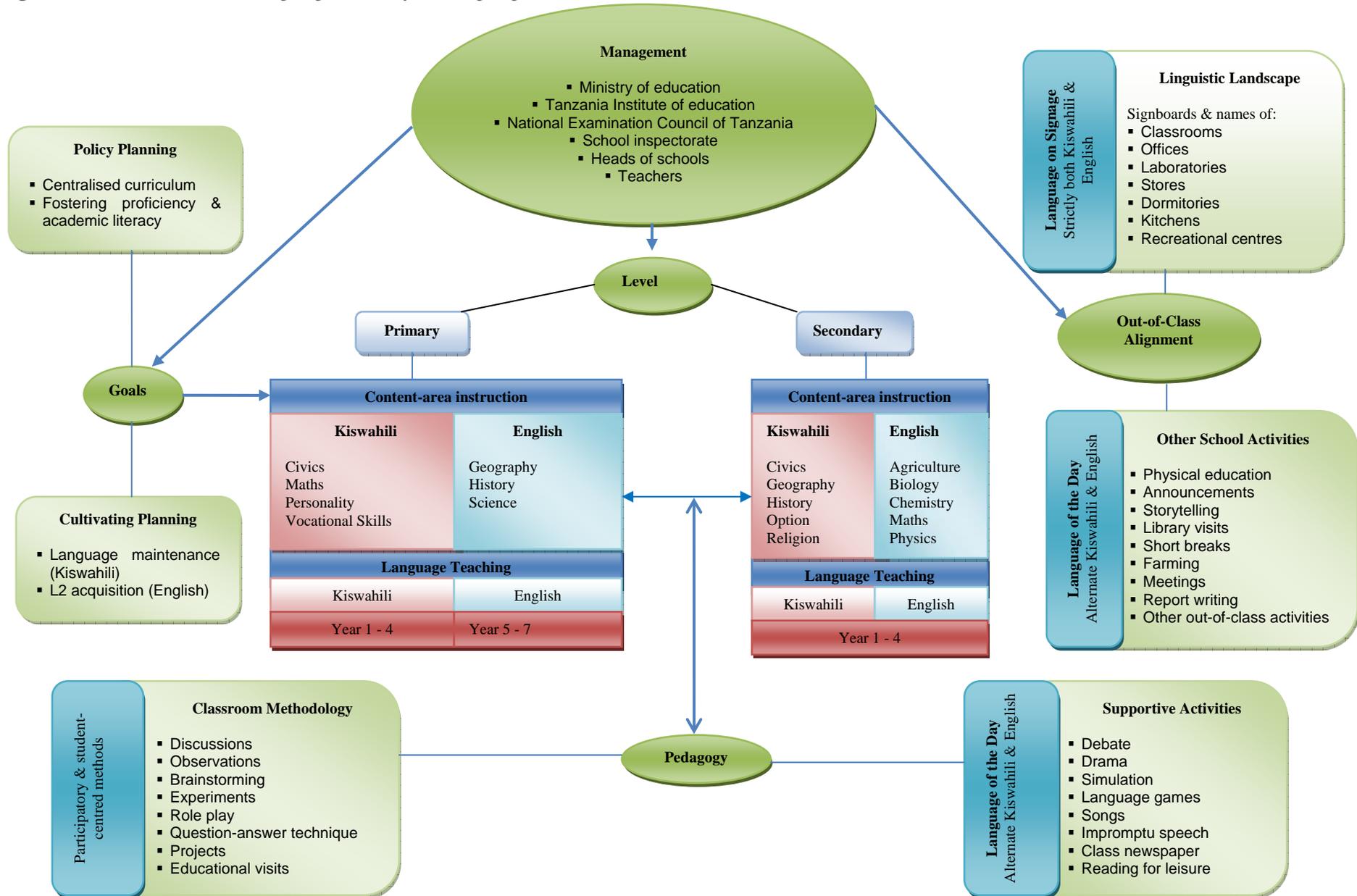
The model has the following variables: level of education, pedagogy, out-of-class alignment, goals and management. The model is managed centrally by the Ministry of Education and its core departments. In addition, heads of schools and teachers are directly involved for implementation of this model. The Ministry of Education is responsible for policy issues informed by this model and training of teachers who are bilingual enough to implement the model.

The model is primarily designed to function in primary and ordinary level (henceforth O'Level) secondary schools. For pre-primary schools, it is proposed that Kiswahili continue to be used as the medium of instruction and English a compulsory subject. This would give pupils the opportunity to learn and master Kiswahili. From the Tanzanian linguistic context, children have the opportunity to learn Kiswahili outside the class unlike English which is limited in the classroom.

In primary education, the 50–50 Dual Language Model is used in two phases. Phase I applies to the first four years of primary education while phase II extends over the last three years. As indicated in Figure 6.1 some subjects are taught in Kiswahili and others in English at 60–40 level. The decision to have more subjects taught at this level using Kiswahili has been taken on the grounds that Kiswahili is a language intelligible to most children and teachers in primary schools. We need, therefore, to use it as a springboard for the learners' academic excellence.

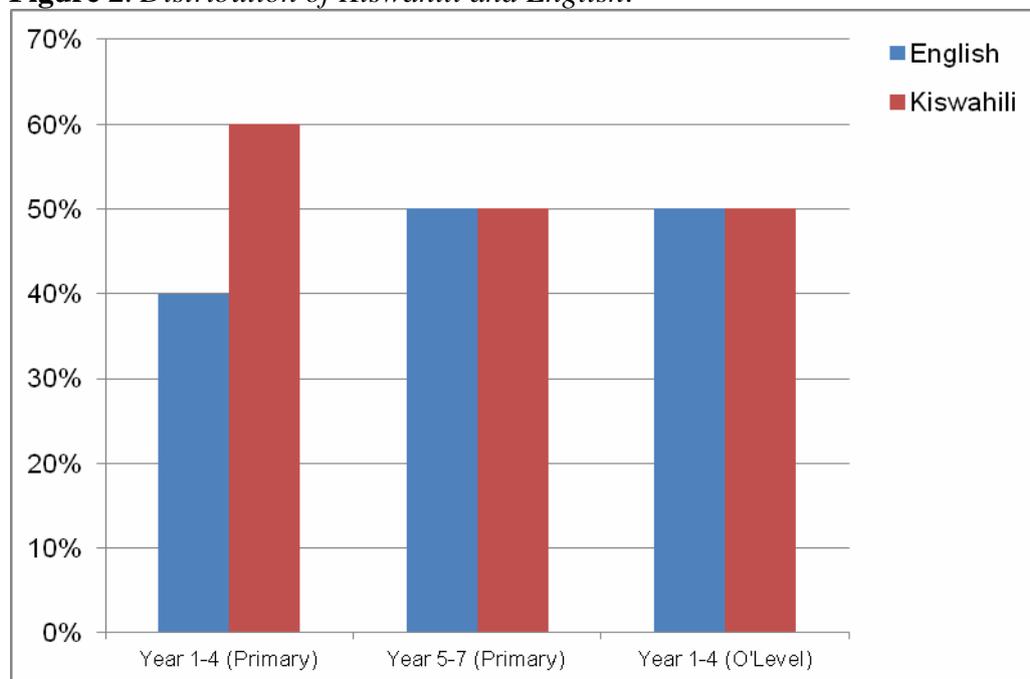
In Phase II the model is applied at 50–50 level, where half of the subjects are taught in English and the other half in Kiswahili. The model, where Kiswahili and English are taken as languages of education and communication on equal status, is to be applicable as well in secondary schools. The language command gained in primary schools is expected to be used to help students understand the subject contents in secondary schools.

Figure 1. The 50-50 Dual Language Model for Language-in-Education in Tanzania.



At advanced level (henceforth A'Level<sup>3</sup>) the languages of instruction are solely dependent on subjects of the students' choice at this level. For example, if a student takes a subject which is taught in Kiswahili at O'Level, then it is proposed that the same language be used at A'Level. The distribution of subjects is indicated graphically in figure 1.2 below.

**Figure 2.** *Distribution of Kiswahili and English.*



Another important variable of the 50–50 Dual Language Model is the pedagogy. The content-area instruction and language teaching uses the participatory and student-centred approaches, where the focus is on the students' needs, abilities, interests and learning styles. The teacher here plays only a peripheral role of giving advice and guidance to the learners. The approach includes various teaching techniques such as discussions, observations, brainstorming, experiments, role play, projects and educational visits. The classroom instruction is supplemented by supportive activities, which are drama, debates, simulation, language games, songs, impromptu speech, class newspaper and reading for leisure. These supportive activities, which aim at fostering language proficiency and academic literacy, use the language of the day, where Kiswahili and English alternate. Language teaching refers to teaching of Kiswahili and English as languages per se.

Out-of-class alignment is another variable in the model, which involves linguistic landscape within the school premises and other school activities. Currently schools do not have a language policy regarding activities outside the class. In this model, it is recommended that the linguistic landscape in the schools consider both Kiswahili and English to promote the school bilingual

<sup>3</sup> A'Level takes two years in the Tanzanian education system which is 2-7-4-2-3/4 for pre-primary, primary, O'Level, A' Level and university education respectively.

context. Additionally, out-of-class activities should use the language of the day. The purpose here is to promote bilingualism across the school and develop vocabulary in both languages, hence conversational and academic language development.

Finally, the model takes cognisance of the ultimate goals, which to a large extent informs what goes into the programme. The goals are adopted from Kaplan and Baldauf's (2003) framework for language-in-education planning, focusing on policy planning and cultivation planning. The model is used in a centralised curriculum where proficiency and academic literacy are key objectives. In cultivation planning, the model envisages to help learners maintain their home language, Kiswahili but add to it a second language, English, within the school set-up.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Through the use of the 50–50 Dual language model presented in this paper, it is anticipated that the envisaged ideal to have Tanzanian citizens bilingual both in Kiswahili and English through the educational set up can be realised. The education stakeholders need to be educated on how important and possible it is for Tanzanian learners to master both Kiswahili and English and do away with misconceived ideas that bilingualism is tantamount to confusion on the part of learners.

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