

**CHALLENGES FACED IN EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION IN LOWER CLASSES IN PUBLIC  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MATHIRA EAST DISTRICT, KENYA**

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## ABSTRACT

The Language in education policy has the potential to make primary education contextually located and locally accessible, particularly to the ethnic minority and marginalized groups, improving the reach and quality of education. The application of language of instruction policy in lower primary classes in Kenyan public schools has not been effectively implemented. With the recent public declaration of opposition towards the Language in education policy from the teachers body in Kenya is evidence of this. The purpose of this study was to examine the challenges faced in effective implementation of the language of instruction in lower classes in public primary schools in Mathira East District, Nyeri County. The objectives of this study were, to: determine teacher based challenges the on effective implementation of the language of instruction, assess challenges posed by instructional materials on effective implementation of language of instruction, establish the challenges associated with education policy and planning on effective implementation of the language of instruction and investigate the role of the language status on effective implementation of the language of instruction in lower classes. The study adopted a descriptive design and was located in Mathira East District. The target population was 38 primary school head teachers and 114 lower primary teachers. The study used simple random sampling to technique. The study selected a sample size of 15 head teachers and 45 lower class teachers. The main research instrument was the questionnaire. An interview guide was also used to collect data from the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. The questionnaire was pilot tested to a selected sample of four teachers and two head teachers in the District and who were excluded in the final study. A reliability coefficient of 0.82 was acceptable for this study. Data was analyzed using descriptive analytical methods which included percentages and charts. To enhance clarity the results were presented in tables, charts and graphs. It was hoped that the findings of this study would assist education planners, the policy makers, school managements, teachers and other interested parties initiate necessary intervention measures to make implementation of the use of first language in the classes a reality. The study established that a relatively small population (11.4%) of teachers was well conversant with the local language. The study also established that majority of the teachers had not undergone language training in the sampled schools as 81.8% of the teachers indicated they had not undergone any first language training in college. The study also established that the government does not give adequate support for application of first language in lower primary as majority of the head teachers (78.6%) and teachers (68.4%) indicated they receive least support from the government. Majority of the teachers (93.18%) indicated that the first language materials are not adequate in the schools. The study recommends that awareness should be done in order for the parents and other education stake holders understand and appreciate the role of first language in cognitive development of lower primary learners. The study also recommends that Lower primary teachers should undergo first language training in the training institutions. Therefore the lower primary teacher training curriculum should be expanded or overhauled to accommodate this change. More instructional materials must be availed in school. The publishing houses should publish first language instructional materials.