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Negative Attitudes of Teacher Trainees Toward Teaching Indigenous Languages: A Study of Machakos Teacher Training College, Machakos County, Kenya

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Abstract

This study examined the negative attitudes of teacher trainees toward teaching indigenous languages at Machakos Teacher Training College in Machakos County, Kenya. The study was motivated by the continued challenges facing the implementation of Kenya's indigenous languages as medium of instruction in lower grades of primary in education policy, despite government recognition of the importance of indigenous languages in promoting literacy, cultural identity, and effective learning. The study sought to identify the factors contributing to negative attitudes from teacher trainees toward indigenous language as medium of instruction in lower grades of primary schools and propose strategies for improving teacher preparedness and policy implementation of using indigenous as medium of instruction. A descriptive survey research design was employed, involving 500 first year teacher trainees in Machakos teacher training college. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings revealed that negative

attitudes toward teaching indigenous languages were influenced by limited learning resources, inadequate teaching materials, difficulty in teaching technical concepts, lack of standardized terminology, parental resistance, learners' embarrassment in using their mother tongue, shortages of experts in the learning area, ethnic diversity among learners, and challenges in transitioning to English and Kiswahili. The study concludes that these challenges are largely institutional and societal rather than personal. It recommends strengthening teacher education programmes, developing quality resources, having tutors who are experts in teaching indigenous language to teacher trainees, standardizing indigenous language terminology, increasing community awareness, and enhancing government support for indigenous language education. The findings contribute to ongoing discussions on improving teacher preparation and promoting the effective implementation of indigenous language instruction in Kenya.

Keywords: Indigenous Languages, Teacher Trainees, Mother Tongue Education, Language Policy, Teacher Education, Kenya, Machakos Teacher Training College

Background of the Study

Language is central to communication, identity, cultural preservation, and the transmission of knowledge across generations. In multilingual societies such as Kenya, indigenous languages play a significant role in promoting cultural heritage, social cohesion, and early childhood learning. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) ^[4] recognizes the importance of indigenous languages and calls for the promotion and protection of the country's linguistic diversity. Similarly, the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) and the Basic Education Act (2018) encourage the use of learners' first language, particularly in lower primary education, where mother tongue serves as the language of instruction whenever it is the language of the catchment area.

Research has consistently shown that children learn more effectively when instruction begins in a language they understand. Mother tongue instruction enhances literacy development, improves cognitive abilities, strengthens classroom participation, and creates a bridge for learning additional languages such as Kiswahili and English. International organizations, including UNESCO (1953; 2003) ^[16, 17], have long advocated for mother tongue-based multilingual education as a means of improving

educational outcomes while preserving linguistic and cultural diversity. Despite these educational benefits and supportive policy frameworks, the implementation of indigenous language instruction in Kenya continues to face numerous challenges. Many schools struggle with inadequate teaching materials, limited reference books, insufficient teacher preparation, and the absence of standardized terminology for teaching modern concepts in indigenous languages. In urban and cosmopolitan regions, ethnic diversity further complicates the selection of an appropriate language of instruction, making the implementation of mother tongue education inconsistent across schools.

Teacher trainees occupy a critical position in addressing these challenges because they represent the future teaching workforce. Their beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes toward indigenous language instruction influence their willingness to teach these languages and their effectiveness in implementing national language policies. Negative attitudes among teacher trainees to use indigenous languages as a medium of instructions may undermine government efforts to promote indigenous languages in schools, thereby affecting learners' academic achievement and weakening the preservation of Kenya's linguistic heritage.

Several factors contribute to these negative attitudes. Some teacher trainees perceive indigenous languages as having limited economic and professional value compared to English and Kiswahili. Others experience difficulties teaching technical and scientific concepts due to limited vocabulary and the lack of standardized educational terminology. Teacher trainees also report shortages of instructional resources, inadequate training in indigenous language pedagogy, and challenges in transitioning learners from mother tongue instruction to English or Kiswahili. In addition, social attitudes toward indigenous languages have led some learners to feel embarrassed about using their mother tongue where by people consider speaking indigenous as unschooled, uneducated uncivilized, while some parents prefer instruction for their children exclusively in English, believing it offers greater educational and career opportunities.

Machakos County provides an appropriate context for examining these issues. Although Kamba is the predominant indigenous language in the county, teacher trainees at Machakos Teacher Training College prepare to teach learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Understanding their attitudes toward teaching indigenous languages is therefore essential for strengthening teacher preparation programmes and supporting the effective implementation of Kenya's language-in-education policy.

This study sought to examine the attitudes of teacher trainees toward teaching indigenous languages at Machakos Teacher Training College. Specifically, it explores the challenges that shape these attitudes, including limited learning resources, lack of teaching materials, inadequate technical vocabulary, expert teacher shortages, parental resistance, ethnic diversity among learners, trainees' embarrassment in using their mother tongue, difficulties in transitioning to other languages, and the absence of standardized linguistic terminologies. The findings are expected to contribute to discussions on improving teacher education, language policy implementation, and the preservation of Kenya's indigenous languages through education.

Statement of the Problem

Kenya's language education policy recognizes the importance of indigenous languages as media of instruction, particularly during the early years of learning. The policy is intended to improve learners' comprehension, literacy development, and academic achievement while preserving the country's rich linguistic and cultural heritage. Despite these policy provisions, the implementation of indigenous language instruction remains inconsistent in many schools. The success of this policy largely depends on teachers who are adequately prepared, motivated, and willing to teach using indigenous languages.

Teacher training colleges are expected to equip future teachers with the knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes necessary for implementing language policies effectively. However, evidence suggests that many teacher trainees have negative attitudes toward teaching indigenous languages. These attitudes may arise from inadequate instructional resources, lack of teaching materials, limited technical vocabulary, insufficient preparation in indigenous language pedagogy, parental preference for English, ethnic diversity among learners, and negative societal perceptions associated with the use of mother tongue.

Negative attitudes among teacher trainees discourage them use of indigenous languages in classrooms, reduce learners' opportunities to benefit from mother tongue instruction, and ultimately weaken efforts to preserve Kenya's indigenous languages. Despite the central role of teacher trainees in the implementation of language policy, limited research has focused on the attitudes of teacher trainees in teacher training institutions, particularly within Machakos County.

This study therefore sought to investigate the negative attitudes of teacher trainees toward teaching indigenous languages at Machakos Teacher Training College and identify the factors contributing to these attitudes. The findings are expected to provide evidence that can inform teacher education programmes, curriculum development, and policy implementation aimed at promoting indigenous language education in Kenya.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the negative attitudes of teacher trainees toward teaching indigenous languages at Machakos Teacher Training College in Machakos County, Kenya. The study sought to identify the challenges influencing these attitudes and propose strategies that can strengthen teacher preparation and improve the implementation of indigenous language instruction in Kenyan schools.

Objectives of the Study

General Objective

To examine the attitudes of teacher trainees toward teaching indigenous languages at Machakos Teacher Training College in Machakos County, Kenya.

Specific Objectives

1. To identify the factors contributing to negative attitudes toward teaching indigenous languages among teacher trainees.
2. To examine the challenges teacher trainees, encounter when using indigenous languages as a medium of instruction.
3. To determine how institutional, social, and cultural

factors influence teacher trainees' willingness to teach indigenous languages.

4. To propose strategies for improving teacher trainees' attitudes toward indigenous language instruction.

Research Questions

1. What factors contribute to negative attitudes toward teaching indigenous languages among teacher trainees at Machakos Teacher Training College?
2. What challenges do teacher trainees encounter when using indigenous languages as a medium of instruction?
3. How do institutional, social, and cultural factors influence teacher trainees' attitudes toward teaching indigenous languages?
4. What strategies can be adopted to improve teacher trainees' attitudes and strengthen the implementation of indigenous language education?

Literature Review

The Role of Indigenous Languages in Education

Language is a fundamental tool for communication, learning, and cultural transmission. Indigenous languages serve not only as a means of communication but also as repositories of history, identity, values, and indigenous knowledge. According to UNESCO (1953; 2003) ^[16, 17], learners achieve better educational outcomes when they begin schooling in a language they understand. Mother tongue instruction improves literacy, critical thinking, classroom participation, and overall academic performance while facilitating the acquisition of additional languages such as English and Kiswahili.

In Kenya, the Constitution of Kenya (2010) ^[4], the Basic Education Act (2013), and the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) recognize the importance of indigenous languages, particularly in early childhood and lower primary education. These policies recommend the use of the language of the catchment area as the medium of instruction during the early years of schooling. Despite these policy provisions, implementation remains inconsistent due to various institutional and societal challenges.

Teacher Attitudes Toward Indigenous Language for Instruction

Teachers play a critical role in the successful implementation of language policy. Their attitudes influence classroom practices, learners' motivation, and the effectiveness of instruction. Positive attitudes encourage teachers to integrate indigenous languages into learning, while negative attitudes often result in a preference for English or Kiswahili, even where mother tongue instruction is recommended. In urban setting and cosmopolitan areas in Kenya Kiswahili language will serve as the first language of the learners in lower primary and hence the indigenous language to be used in instructing learners. But most teachers would still prefer to instruct learners in English (Khajeri, 2014).

Research has shown that many teachers parents and teacher trainees perceive indigenous languages as having lower social and economic value compared to English. English is often associated with employment opportunities, higher education, and social mobility, leading some educators and parents to consider indigenous languages less important. These perceptions reduce teachers' confidence and

willingness to teach in indigenous languages (Nyarigoti & Ambiyi, 2014) ^[11].

Challenges in Teaching Indigenous Languages

Several studies have identified challenges affecting the teaching of indigenous languages in schools. One of the most common challenges is the shortage of teaching and learning materials. Many indigenous languages lack sufficient textbooks, readers, dictionaries, and curriculum support materials. As a result, teachers often rely on improvised resources, which limits the quality of instruction (Omusanga *et al*, 2023).

Another challenge is the limited availability of standardized terminology for teaching modern concepts in subjects such as science, mathematics, and technology. Teacher trainees may struggle to explain technical concepts using indigenous languages, making instruction difficult and reducing their confidence in using these languages as the medium of instruction (Khajeri, 2014).

Teacher shortages also affect the implementation of indigenous language education. Many schools lack teachers who are adequately trained to teach indigenous languages, while teacher education programmes often devote limited time to indigenous language pedagogy. Consequently, graduates may feel unprepared to teach using mother tongue. (Nyarigoti & Ambiyi, 2014) ^[11].

Ethnic diversity in many Kenyan schools presents an additional challenge. Urban and peri-urban schools often enroll learners from multiple linguistic backgrounds, making it difficult to determine which indigenous language should be used as the language of instruction. This situation frequently results in schools adopting English or Kiswahili instead of the learners' first languages. In such a case the recommendation is Kiswahili should serve as medium of instruction and as an African language that embodies the Kenya cultural diversity and not a mixture of Kiswahili and English (Okal, 2022) ^[12].

Social attitudes also influence indigenous language education. Some learners feel embarrassed to speak their mother tongue because it is perceived as less prestigious than English. Similarly, some parents discourage the use of indigenous languages, believing that exclusive exposure to English provides better educational and economic opportunities for their children. It is such attitudes that have robbed the Kenyan child the grasp of vital values, attitudes and life skills. Such attitudes negatively affect teachers' motivation to implement indigenous language instruction (Chenge, 2023).

Empirical Review

Studies conducted in Kenya and other African countries consistently report similar challenges in implementing mother tongue education. Research indicates that inadequate instructional resources, insufficient teacher preparation, negative societal perceptions, and inconsistent policy implementation hinder the effective use of indigenous languages in schools. Although previous studies have focused primarily on classroom teachers and language policy implementation, relatively few have examined the attitudes of teacher trainees preparing to enter the teaching profession.

Understanding the perceptions of teacher trainees is important because they represent the future teaching

workforce. Their beliefs and attitudes will significantly influence whether indigenous language policies will be effectively implemented in Kenyan schools.

Research Gap

Previous studies have largely concentrated on the implementation of mother tongue education in primary schools and the experiences of practicing teachers. Limited research has specifically investigated the attitudes of teacher trainees toward teaching indigenous languages within teacher training institutions. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the attitudes of teacher trainees towards indigenous language at Machakos Teacher Training College and identifying the challenges that shape these attitudes. The findings will contribute to improving teacher education programmes and supporting the successful implementation of indigenous language policies in Kenya.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey research design. A descriptive survey design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect information from a large group of teacher trainees regarding their attitudes toward teaching indigenous languages. The design facilitated the collection of data on participants' perceptions, experiences, and challenges without manipulating any variables. It also allowed the researcher to describe existing conditions and identify patterns relating to the teaching of indigenous languages at Machakos Teacher Training College.

Study Area

The study was conducted at Machakos Teacher Training College, located in Machakos County, Kenya. The college prepares pre-service teachers for deployment to primary schools across the country. As a teacher education institution, it provides an appropriate setting for examining teacher trainees' attitudes toward indigenous language instruction because its graduates are expected to implement Kenya's language-in-education policy.

Target Population

The target population comprised teacher trainees enrolled at Machakos Teacher Training College. A total of **500 teacher trainees** participated in the study. These respondents were considered suitable because they are directly involved in teacher preparation and are expected to teach indigenous languages and instruct their learners in lower grades between grade 1-3 using indigenous during their professional practice.

Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire contained both closed-ended and open-ended questions designed to gather information on teacher trainees' attitudes toward indigenous language instruction and the challenges they encounter when using mother tongue as a medium of instruction.

The questionnaire focused on issues such as:

- Availability of teaching and learning resources.
- Adequacy of instructional materials.
- Difficulty in teaching technical concepts using indigenous languages.

- Learners' attitudes toward mother tongue.
- Parents' perceptions of indigenous language instruction.
- Teacher preparedness.
- Challenges arising from ethnic diversity.
- Availability of standardized terminology.

The questionnaires were administered physically to the respondents after obtaining the necessary permission from the college administration.

Validity and Reliability

To enhance content validity, the questionnaire was developed based on the objectives of the study and existing literature on indigenous language education. The instrument was reviewed to ensure that the questions adequately addressed the research objectives and were clear and relevant to the study.

Reliability was enhanced by using simple, consistent, and unambiguous questions. Respondents completed the questionnaires independently, minimizing interviewer bias and ensuring consistency in data collection.

Data Collection Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the relevant college authorities. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the respondents before administering the questionnaires to the teacher trainees. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured that the information collected would be used solely for academic purposes. Completed questionnaires were collected immediately after completion to maximize the response rate.

Data Analysis

The completed questionnaires were checked for completeness before analysis. Responses to closed-ended questions were organized according to the study objectives, while responses to open-ended questions were grouped into common themes.

Thematic analysis was used to identify the major challenges reported by the teacher trainees. The recurring themes included:

- Limited learning resources.
- Difficulty with technical vocabulary.
- Challenges in transitioning to English and Kiswahili.
- Learners' embarrassment when using their mother tongue.
- Resistance from parents.
- Shortage of teachers trained in indigenous language instruction.
- Lack of teaching materials.
- Ethnic diversity among learners.
- Lack of standardized terminology.

The findings were presented descriptively using narrative explanations and thematic discussions in relation to the objectives of the study and existing literature.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before data collection. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and no personal identifiers were included in the questionnaires. Participants were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequences. The information collected was used strictly

for academic purposes.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Age bracket of teacher trainees

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-20	60	12%
21-23	180	36%
24-26	120	24%
27-29	90	18%
Above 30	50	1%

The table above majority of the teacher trainees in this study where between 21 years and 26 years of age.

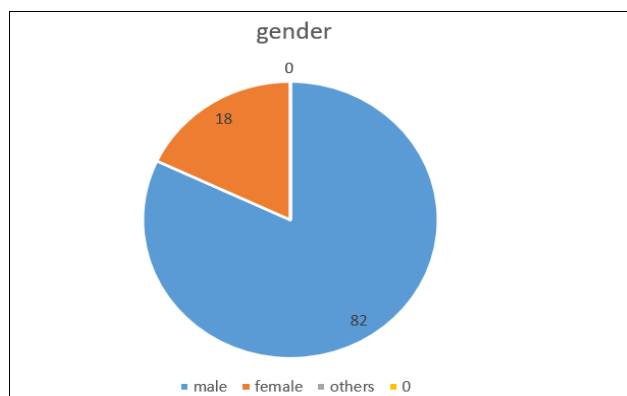


Fig 1: Pie chart for gender of teacher trainees

From Fig 1 above it shows that 82 percent of the teacher trainees who participated in this research were females and therefore it we can conclude that bigger population of teacher trainees in Machakos teachers' college are largely female.

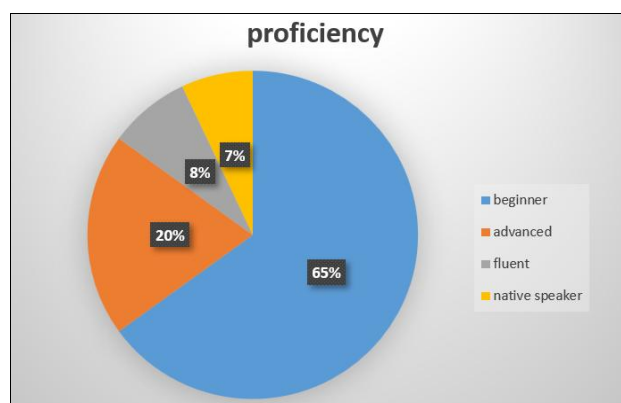


Fig 2: Proficiency level in mother tongue among teacher trainees

The pie chart above shows that 65 % percent of teacher trainees at Machakos teacher trainees are beginner of mother tongue languages, 20% are advanced in using mother language, 8% are fluent in the use of mother tongue and 7% are native speakers of mother tongue. This shows that majority will have difficulties while instructing learners in mother indigenous language even when they get posted in their own home village schools.

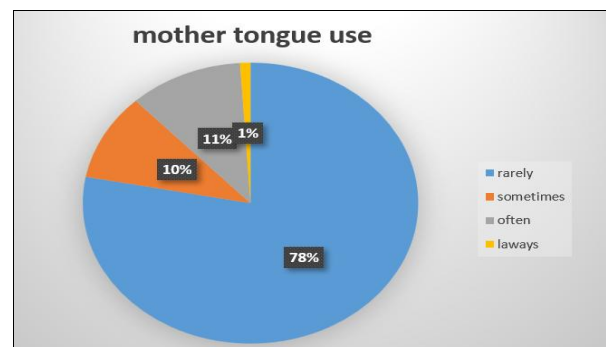


Fig 3: Frequency of using mother in communication

The figure above shows that 78 % of teacher trainees at Machakos teachers training college rarely converse using mother tongue, 11% use mother tongue often in their conversation 10% use mother tongue sometimes while conversing with others and 1% always use mother in conversations meaning these are the teachers who can easily use mother as a medium of instructions.

Results

The study sought to examine the negative attitudes of teacher trainees toward teaching indigenous languages at Machakos Teacher Training College. Analysis of the questionnaire responses revealed several recurring challenges that influence teacher trainees' perceptions and willingness to use indigenous languages as a medium of instruction. The major themes identified were limited learning resources, difficulty with technical vocabulary, challenges in transitioning learners to English and Kiswahili, learners' embarrassment when using their mother tongue, parental resistance, shortage of teachers trained in indigenous languages, lack of teaching materials, ethnic diversity among learners, and the absence of standardized terminology.

Limited Learning Resources

A significant theme emerging from the responses was the limited availability of learning resources for indigenous language instruction. Teacher trainees indicated that many indigenous languages have few textbooks, reference books, storybooks, dictionaries, and supplementary learning materials. This limitation makes lesson preparation difficult and reduces teachers' confidence in delivering instruction using indigenous languages.

The findings suggest that inadequate learning resources remain a major barrier to the effective implementation of Kenya's language-in-education policy. Without sufficient instructional materials, teacher trainees may perceive indigenous language teaching as difficult and less effective than instruction conducted in English.

Difficulty with Technical Vocabulary

Another challenge identified was the difficulty of explaining technical and academic concepts in indigenous languages. Respondents noted that many scientific, technological, and mathematical terms either lack direct translations or are unfamiliar to both teachers and learners.

This challenge creates uncertainty during classroom instruction and may encourage teachers to switch to English. The absence of standardized vocabulary also limits the development of quality instructional materials and contributes to negative attitudes toward indigenous language instruction.

Challenges in Transitioning to Other Languages

Teacher trainees also reported difficulties in helping learners transition from mother tongue instruction to English as required in higher grades/ levels of education. Some respondents expressed concern that prolonged use of indigenous languages could make the transition more challenging if adequate bridging strategies are not provided. Pronunciation in indigenous languages has adverse effect on acquisition of the English as a second language and which is the medium of instruction in all other level of education in Kenya.

These concerns demonstrate the importance of equipping teachers with effective multilingual teaching approaches that support learners in acquiring additional languages while maintaining competence in their mother tongue.

Learners' Embarrassment in Using Mother Tongue

The findings further revealed that some learners feel embarrassed when speaking their indigenous language, particularly in school environments where English is viewed as more prestigious. According to the respondents, such negative perceptions reduce learners' participation and discourage the use of indigenous languages during classroom activities.

These attitudes reflect broader societal beliefs that associate English with academic success and social status while undervaluing indigenous languages. Such perceptions may influence teacher trainees' own attitudes toward teaching these languages.

Resistance from Parents

Parental attitudes emerged as another important challenge. Respondents reported that some parents prefer their children to be taught exclusively in English because they believe it offers better educational and employment opportunities.

This resistance places pressure on teachers to minimize the use of indigenous languages despite government policy supporting mother tongue instruction. The findings indicate that successful implementation of indigenous language education requires greater parental awareness of the educational benefits of multilingual learning and the importance of indigenous languages in imparting values in children. Mother tongue carries deep moral, cultural and emotional codes of a community. Native words capture subtle and ethical feelings that can not be found in a second language like English. True feelings of children can easily be expressed in the language of the family. Identity and character building of a person develops well in mother tongue it is therefore important to encourage teacher trainees to change their attitudes towards teaching indigenous languages in lower grades of 1-3 so that they equip the learners with values that will help them become a rounded individuals in future.

Shortage of Teachers Trained in Indigenous Language Instruction

The study also found that teacher shortages of teachers who

are experts in indigenous languages contribute to negative attitudes toward indigenous language teaching. Respondents indicated that not all teachers receive adequate preparation in indigenous language pedagogy, making them less confident in teaching these languages. Most of the tutors. Lecturers in teacher training colleges teaching that learning area are not experts in indigenous languages and therefore this also becomes a challenge in instructing teacher trainees in this area effectively. There is need for universities to train tutors who are equipped pedagogy of mother tongue. Insufficient professional preparation reduces teachers' competence and willingness to implement indigenous language instruction effectively. Strengthening teacher education programmes could therefore improve confidence and promote positive attitudes.

Lack of Teaching Materials

Closely related to the shortage of learning resources was the lack of appropriate teaching materials. Respondents explained that many classrooms lack visual aids, charts, readers, and other instructional materials specifically designed for indigenous language education.

The absence of these materials limits the use of learner-centered teaching methods and makes classroom instruction less engaging. Consequently, teacher trainees may perceive indigenous language teaching as more demanding than teaching in English. There also need to develop online materials for all indigenous language that make learning and teaching easy and that may assist teacher trainees to facilitate CBC lessons in indigenous languages.

Ethnic Diversity Among Learners

Respondents identified ethnic diversity as a practical challenge in implementing indigenous language instruction. Schools often enroll learners from different linguistic backgrounds, making it difficult to determine which indigenous language should be used during instruction.

Teacher trainees observed that this diversity frequently leads schools to adopt English or Kiswahili as the common language of instruction, thereby reducing opportunities to use indigenous languages in classrooms. It should be noted that the basic education act requires that in place of diversity of ethnic learners Kiswahili which is considered a more African language should be used exclusively as a medium of instruction in lower grades of primary school and not a mixture of Kiswahili and English. It is therefore important for teacher trainees to understand that they should instruct learners in Kiswahili or indigenous language in lower grades.

Lack of Standardized Terminology

The final theme identified was the lack of standardized terminology across many indigenous languages. Respondents reported inconsistencies in spelling, vocabulary, and translation of modern educational concepts. These inconsistencies make lesson planning and curriculum implementation difficult and reduce teachers' confidence when delivering instruction. Developing standardized terminology would therefore strengthen indigenous language education and improve instructional quality.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the negative attitudes of teacher trainees toward teaching indigenous languages are

influenced more by systemic and institutional challenges than by a rejection of indigenous languages themselves. Limited instructional resources, inadequate teaching materials, lack of standardized terminology, and insufficient teacher preparation reduce teacher trainees' confidence in using indigenous languages as media of instruction in lower grades of primary education.

The findings are consistent with UNESCO (2016) [18] advocacy for mother tongue education, which emphasizes that successful implementation requires adequate teacher preparation, quality instructional materials, and supportive language policies. They also align with previous studies conducted in Kenya and other African countries, which have identified resource shortages, parental preferences for English, and limited institutional support as major barriers to indigenous language education.

The responses further demonstrate that societal attitudes continue to shape educational practice. The perception that English offers greater economic and academic opportunities contributes to learners' embarrassment in speaking/acquiring their mother tongue and encourages some parents to discourage indigenous language instruction. These social perceptions may ultimately influence teacher trainees' willingness to teach indigenous languages despite recognizing their educational value.

Overall, the study demonstrates that improving teacher trainees' attitudes requires more than policy directives. It requires investment in teacher preparation, development of teaching resources, public awareness campaigns, and stronger institutional support for indigenous language education. Addressing these challenges would enhance the implementation of Kenya's language policy while contributing to the preservation of the country's rich linguistic and cultural heritage.

Action Plan and Strategies

The findings of this study indicate that improving teacher trainees' attitudes toward teaching indigenous languages requires coordinated efforts from teacher training institutions, the Ministry of Education, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), school administrators, and local communities. The following strategies are proposed.

Strengthening Teacher Preparation

Machakos Teacher Training College should strengthen its teacher education curriculum by providing comprehensive training in indigenous language pedagogy. Teacher trainees should receive practical instruction on lesson planning, classroom management, assessment techniques, and multilingual teaching strategies. Teaching practice should also provide opportunities for trainees to teach using indigenous languages in authentic classroom settings.

Development of Teaching and Learning Resources

The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with KICD and language experts, should invest in the development of high-quality teaching and learning resources for indigenous languages. These resources should include textbooks, dictionaries, readers, teachers' guides, audiovisual materials, digital learning content, and classroom teaching aids. Adequate instructional resources would improve teachers' confidence and enhance learner engagement.

Standardization of Indigenous Language Terminology

Language experts, universities, and curriculum developers should collaborate to develop standardized terminology for scientific, technological, and other academic concepts in indigenous languages. Standardized vocabulary would enable teachers to explain complex concepts more effectively and promote consistency in curriculum implementation across schools.

Continuous Professional Development

Regular workshops, seminars, and in-service training programmes should be organized to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills in indigenous language instruction. These programmes should focus on innovative teaching methods, curriculum implementation, multilingual education, and the integration of indigenous knowledge into classroom instruction.

Community and Parental Sensitization

Public awareness programmes should be conducted to educate parents and community members about the educational, cultural, and cognitive benefits of mother tongue instruction. Community engagement can help challenge misconceptions that indigenous languages limit learners' academic or career opportunities. Increased parental support would strengthen the implementation of language policies in schools. Mother tongue as first language of a child is first taught at home by parents and caregivers.

Promoting Positive Attitudes Toward Indigenous Languages

Teacher training institutions should organize activities that celebrate Kenya's linguistic diversity. Indigenous language debates, storytelling competitions, cultural festivals, poetry recitals, drama performances, and language clubs can encourage teacher trainees to appreciate the value of their linguistic heritage. Such activities may help reduce the stigma associated with speaking indigenous languages.

Addressing Linguistic Diversity in Schools

The Ministry of Education should develop practical guidelines for implementing indigenous language instruction in linguistically diverse schools. Flexible multilingual approaches that combine mother tongue, Kiswahili, and English where appropriate can help accommodate learners from different language backgrounds while still supporting early literacy development.

Strengthening Policy Implementation

Education stakeholders should monitor the implementation of Kenya's language-in-education policy to ensure that schools comply with national guidelines regarding mother tongue instruction. Regular monitoring, supervision, and evaluation can identify implementation challenges early and provide schools with the necessary technical support.

Institutional Collaboration

Teacher training colleges should collaborate with universities, language research institutions, and cultural organizations to promote research and innovation in indigenous language education. Such partnerships can facilitate the development of teaching materials, curriculum

resources, and evidence-based teaching practices that improve indigenous language instruction.

Expected Outcomes

Implementation of these strategies is expected to:

- Improve teacher trainees' attitudes toward teaching indigenous languages.
- Increase teacher confidence and competence in mother tongue instruction.
- Improve the availability of quality teaching and learning materials.
- Enhance learners' literacy and academic achievement through effective mother tongue education.
- Increase parental and community support for indigenous language instruction.
- Promote the preservation and development of Kenya's indigenous languages and cultural heritage.
- Strengthen the implementation of Kenya's language-in-education policy across primary schools.

Conclusion

This study examined the negative attitudes of teacher trainees toward teaching indigenous languages at Machakos Teacher Training College in Machakos County, Kenya. The findings indicate that although teacher trainees recognize the educational and cultural importance of indigenous languages, several institutional, linguistic, and societal challenges contribute to negative attitudes toward their use as a medium of instruction.

The study identified limited learning resources, inadequate teaching materials, difficulty in teaching technical concepts, lack of standardized terminology, parental resistance, learners' embarrassment in speaking their mother tongue, shortage of trained teachers, challenges associated with multilingual classrooms, and difficulties in transitioning learners to English as the major factors influencing teacher trainees' perceptions. These challenges reduce teacher confidence and limit the effective implementation of Kenya's language-in-education policy.

The findings further demonstrate that negative attitudes are not solely a result of teacher trainees' personal beliefs but are strongly influenced by systemic barriers within the education system. Addressing these barriers requires collaborative efforts among teacher training institutions, curriculum developers, policymakers, schools, and local communities. Strengthening teacher education, increasing investment in instructional resources, and promoting positive societal attitudes toward indigenous languages will enhance the quality of indigenous language instruction while preserving Kenya's rich linguistic and cultural heritage.

Ultimately, indigenous languages should not be viewed merely as cultural symbols but as valuable educational resources that contribute to learners' cognitive development, academic achievement, and national identity. Investing in their promotion within teacher education is therefore an investment in quality education and sustainable cultural preservation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

Recommendations for Teacher Training Institutions

Teacher training colleges should strengthen indigenous language education within their curricula by providing more

practical training in multilingual teaching strategies, lesson preparation, and classroom implementation. Colleges should also expose teacher trainees to diverse teaching experiences during teaching practice to improve their confidence in using indigenous languages.

Recommendations for the Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education should allocate adequate resources for the production and distribution of indigenous language textbooks, teachers' guides, readers, dictionaries, and digital instructional materials. Greater investment in these resources will improve the quality of indigenous language instruction in schools.

Recommendations for the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD)

KICD should collaborate with linguists, educators, and universities to develop standardized terminology for indigenous languages, particularly in science, mathematics, technology, and other specialized subjects. This would enhance consistency in curriculum implementation and improve teachers' confidence.

Recommendations for Schools

School administrators should create supportive learning environments that encourage the use of indigenous languages without discrimination or stigma. Schools should also organize cultural activities that celebrate linguistic diversity and promote positive attitudes among learners, teachers, and parents.

Recommendations for Parents and Communities

Parents and community leaders should be sensitized on the educational, cultural, and cognitive benefits of mother tongue instruction. Community support is essential for successful implementation of indigenous language education and for preserving Kenya's linguistic heritage.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should investigate teacher attitudes toward indigenous language instruction in other teacher training colleges and universities across Kenya to determine whether similar challenges exist in different regions. Comparative studies between public and private teacher training institutions would also provide valuable insights. Researchers may further explore the impact of indigenous language instruction on learner achievement under the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC).

Final Remark

The successful implementation of indigenous language education depends not only on government policy but also on the preparedness and attitudes of teachers. By addressing the challenges identified in this study, Kenya can strengthen its education system while safeguarding the indigenous languages that form an essential part of the nation's cultural identity.

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