## Challenges of Teaching the Revised Kiswahili Syllabus in Secondary Schools, a Case Study of Bungoma West District Kenya

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### 5.1 Abstract

The purpose of this study was to find out the challenges facing the teaching of the revised syllabus of Kiswahili in secondary schools in Bungoma West District. The performance of Kiswahili language dropped in the recent years after the revision of the syllabus, (KNEC, 2007, 2008). The objective of the study was to establish teacher preparedness in teaching the revised Kiswahili syllabus. The study was based on Krashen's input hypothesis and affective filter theory which is relevant to the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The study targeted secondary schools in Bungoma West District. Purposive sampling was used to get the respondents from 6 schools of the 18 secondary schools in the district. Simple random sampling was used to select 6 Head teachers, 6 Kiswahili teachers and 300 form three students. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics where frequency distribution tables and percentages. The findings revealed that 22.2% of the teachers in Bungoma West district have diploma qualification, 33.3% of the teachers have a Bachelor degree, and 44.4% of the teachers were untrained. With regard to in-service training 16.67% of teachers often received in-service training on the teaching of the revised Kiswahili syllabus. Teachers who had not received in-service training "quite often" were 50% while 33.33% of the teachers had never received inservice training on the revised Kiswahili syllabus. On how often teachers received in-service training, 11.11% of the teachers had received in service training often while 33.33% had received in service training "less often", and 55.56% had not received any in service training at all on the teaching of the revised Kiswahili syllabus. On the issue of professional records, 16.7% of teachers prepared their professional records on time, 33.3% of the teachers didn't prepare their professional record on time and 50% of teachers at times prepare their professional records on time.

Keywords: Kiswahili, Syllabus, Preparedness, Performance.

#### **5.2 Introduction**

Scholarly evidence provided in the extant literature points out that Kiswahili language has made enormous strides in many different areas. Be it finding a place in cyberspace technology, being rolled out as a foreign language in universities in different parts of the world, the popularity of Kiswahili language has been gaining momentum in the recent past across the world. Perhaps as an indicator of how popular the language is especially in other continents other than Africa, More than 100 universities in the USA offer Kiswahili as a taught subject which is a big boost for the language; these universities include Harvard, Yale, and Cornell among others. Kiswahili computer language is now a reality (Chimera, 2000). Alamu (2017) revealed that in Asian countries such as Japan, Kiswahili is among the foreign languages that is being taught at major universities such as Osaka University. Njoroge and Ndirangu (2018) also affirm the notion that Kiswahili language is taught in many other universities around the world especially in the Middle East, Europe, China as well as USA. Such studies therefore highlight the fact that Kiswahili is among the languages that is gaining popularity in various parts of the world.

In the context of Kenya, Kiswahili was elevated to the level of a national language. The language is crucial especially in political circles, together with English yet at the same time it dominates socialization and day-to-day communication between individuals and groups and it is a medium that is preferred in both rural and urban areas. Chimera (1998) clearly outlines the importance of Kiswahili as a symbol of national unity particularly against the backdrop of a multiplicity of ethnicity. Barasa (2005) is agreement with Chimera, notes that with regard to learning and instruction, English and Kiswahili are second languages which hold significant positions in the curriculum. Kiswahili is especially in the urban areas less o in the homogenous rural areas. It is a national language and therefore it is a language that unifies the large multi lingual society

and it is the second official language after English. Following Mackay recommendation of 1981 Kiswahili is an examinable subject taught and both at primary and secondary levels of education. Kiswahili is taught and examined up to university level.

In other countries Kiswahili is offered as a foreign subject in approximately 100 universities in USA, Britain, Germany, South Korea, Ghana, and Japan among others. Many countries send their students to Kiswahili speaking countries especially Kenya and Tanzania for intensive study of the language. Participants of these programmes are university students, (Chimera, 2000). Kiswahili has ascended in status in being a National language and our future medium of instruction. Due to this various scholars have suggested different challenges facing the teaching and the learning of Kiswahili at different levels. Some of the factors include; motivation of teachers and learners, lack of facilities increased student population compared to the number of teachers among others. It's therefore important to look for ways and means of improving Kiswahili language as a medium of communication by alleviating any challenges that may hinder its process. It thus becomes imperative to explore the challenges facing the teaching and learning Kiswahili revised syllabus. Kiswahili is a national language in Kenya since 1969.

The language is widely used in urban and rural areas (GOK, 1988; Mbaabu, 1978) since 1975. The language is used in several official circles in parliament. In Kenyan context, Kiswahili language has gone through various stages especially following various recommendations by commissions set up by the Government. Following Ominde recommendation of 1964 Kiswahili was to be taught in schools for communication purpose. In 1981 the Mackay commission recommended that Kiswahili be examined at o-levels of education. Kiswahili is taught to University level and offered at the undergraduate, Masters and doctoral degree levels. Worldwide Kiswahili is broadcasted in several stations like British Broadcasting Corporation, Voice of America, Radio China, Radio German radio overlooked and Moscow among others, all of which are a clear indicator that popularity of Kiswahili language is spreading in many corners of the world. It therefore becomes apparent that an investigation aimed at improving the usage of Kiswahili language both as a national language and medium of instruction is critical in its development, and hence the current study is aimed at making recommendations geared towards improving the usage of the language in various aspects.

While conducting an empirical survey in Tanzania, Tilya and Mafumiko (2018) recently acknowledged the fact that a shift from one form of curriculum to another is always faced with challenges especially on the side of the teachers. In Kenya as well, the picture is not so different with the implementation of new curriculum and more so with the new Kiswahili curriculum. As a matter of fact, teaching of Kiswahili language has been faced with a number of challenges especially with regard to introduction of the new curriculum. In a report by the Kenya institute of education (KIE) highlighted in the Daily Nation of June 21, 2010 it is clearly pointed out that even as teachers have basic qualification to teach secondary schools, they lack the right competencies to tackle the new syllabus that was introduced in the year 2002. This is especially in light of the fact that most of the training of the teachers has been aligned towards implementation of the old teaching curriculum. The aim of the current study therefore was to find out some of the challenges that affect the process of implementation of the new Kiswahili syllabus in secondary school especially in Bungoma County.

Language teaching trends tend to change from one standpoint to another seemingly with no particular disposition. Griffiths (2006) and Nunan (1991) particularly point to the fact that language teaching strategies are important but keep changing and being developed too often. This poses a great challenges to teachers of language at various levels of teaching and learning. Language teaching in the African classroom is handled extremely formally thus contributing to ineffective teaching (Kembo, 2000). Kembo notes that such a practices is aimed at corrosiveness, (rather than successfully communication or appropriateness), sometimes to the communication. Kenya as African state is not exempted. This particularly point to the very specific classroom instruction ,whether of Kiswahili are prepared to teach the revised syllabus

,appropriately in fostering the attained of stated objectives, especially aimed at producing communicatively competent learners at the end of the four year study of Kiswahili at secondary school level.

It follows thus that, the teachers of the revised Kiswahili syllabus should be prepared to use the most appropriate methods within the specific learning context.it is this orientation that prompted the researcher into investigating the various the challenges which the teachers of the revised syllabus face during instruction in the implementation of the revised syllabus. It is a view of this research that teachers of Kiswahili in Kenyan secondary schools are not sufficiently and efficiently manipulating appropriate strategies at their disposal, to effectively address the issues of the leaner centered instruction, and attained of communicative competence among the learners.

Carolyn (2009) citing Nunan (1989) emphasize the fact that the language teachers should be able to find out about strategies, plan the learning and then use the most appropriate and preferred language teaching strategies to enhance efficient learning. Therefore this study sought to establish the extent to which the teachers of Kiswahili teaching tasks and materials encourage learners to explore and apply content during the language instruction process. Barasa (2006) in regard to issues of the teacher cognition in Kenyan secondary schools observes that the new teacher lacks the culture of the appropriate language necessary to form 'teaching culture'. The researcher sought to find out whether this applies to Kiswahili as a language in regard to teaching to the revised syllabus.

Although the status of Kiswahili language has been emphasized in Kenya education system, performance of this subject in some areas is wanting.as a compulsory subject, students are expected to pass in order to boost their KCSE mean grade. There has been a nationwide outcry about the performance of Kiswahili language at secondary school level.

Analysis done by KNEC last four years since the revision of the Kiswahili revised syllabus (2006-2009) reveals that candidates sitting for the Kiswahili papers perform poorly. The performance has been cited by Prof. Ongeri the present minister of education while officially releasing the KNEC results. Various reasons have been attributed to this dismal performance among them are;

- i. Teacher preparation, how are teachers are prepared to teach this language?
- ii. Material provision, do schools acquire the necessary facilities to enable implement the new programme?
- iii. Administrative support, what role do education stake holders play in preparing teachers to receive and implement the new syllabus?
- iv. Inappropriate and wanting instructional methods.

Although the failure of classroom practice to reflect knew renovation in teaching could be attributed to multitude of varied of factors, no other variable appears to be more central to this phenomenon than the teacher. In support of this Rombo (1989) states that, teachers are major agents of any curriculum implementation, as they receive interpret and implement the curriculum package.

The teacher's central role in the implementation of the curriculum was also captured by the Katz (1989) who emphasized that there is a general agreement among the specialist in the field that, the competence of the teacher is a central determinant to quality and effectiveness of a programme. Competence in this contest refers to the ability of revised Kiswahili syllabus teacher to integrate the revised Kiswahili content and the application of a variety of instructional methods to enable the leaner understands what it entails.

Fullan (1991) argues that there is need for a teacher to be informed of the intended changes in education for it to achieve its desired objectives. Various scholars like Wallah Bin Wallah (cited) in Daily Nation 24th July, 2003, Maranga (1993) and Shiundu and Mohammed (1996) underscore the importance of the teacher

training in relation to competence change of attitudes and awareness of teacher in instructional. According to Maranga 1993, a review of state pedagogy in Kenya reveals that despite efforts to improve teachers efficacy through training, teachers have replete complains from numerous sectors. Complaints from parents, employers, educators the public and other interested groups are that the general performance in education is still wanting. There are incompetent teachers in schools, inadequate content coverage, presence of ignorant teachers' poor teaching and training strategies.

The KNEC reports indicate a decline in performance of Kiswahili language since the implementation of revised Kiswahili curriculum. In KCSE results of the year 2006 Kiswahili is one of the subject that had drooped in performance. In 2007 KCSE Examination report there was a marked drop in performance. The performance of Kiswahili affects the student's career choices in the university level and other institutions of higher learning. The researcher was interested in finding out the major setbacks causing a decline in performance in Kiswahili under the revised syllabus. the scenario describe above could be prevalent in Bungoma West district owing to dismal performance in Kiswahili language whose national mean score at 38.57 KNEC 2009 report. This is a performance below average.

This could be an indication that teachers of revised Kiswahili syllabus are ignorant of the procedures and skills of disseminating content to the learners. The nuclear situation as far as the teacher competence and preparedness to deliver the revised content calls for further investigations to establish the actual challenges these teacher's face in teaching the Kiswahili syllabus. The objective of this research was to investigate the teacher's preparedness to teach the revised Kiswahili syllabus.

### **5.2.1Theoretical review**

## **Krashen's Input Hypothesis**

The study was based on Krashens input Hypothesis and Affective Hypothesis. According to Krashen (1988) the second language learning depends on the provision of appropriate and comprehensive in-puts. The Hypothesis postulates that "humans acquire language in only one way, by understanding messages or by receiving 'comprehensible input" ... we move from *i*, own current, to i + 1, the level along the natural order, by understanding input containing i + 1. *i* is the initial state of the learner's knowledge before any learning of the language takes place and 1 is the next level of the learner's knowledge after language acquisition has taken place. He further proposes that the amount of input learners take in is one of the most important factors affecting their learning.

He advanced the concept that the language input would be at the i + 1 level just beyond what the learner can understand. It is important for the learner not to receive input that exceeds his level of competence. It comes out clearly that if the learner is given comprehensible information with instructions and enough resources language learners will gain competence. Krashen (1985) stresses that when learning transpires, there is always an influencing factor, such as guide books, teachers, peers or an instruction sheet, guidance needs to take place for learning to follow.

As per Krashen if a student is present with information that is not in the slightest bit comprehensible and no assistance for understanding is provided, chances are that the student will give up! Simply because the input was not comprehensible to them and appropriate assistance was not offered at the crucial time of need. Krashen (1988) indicates that a learner needs more input to what he already has in order for language to develop relevant inputs helps the learner develop competence in a language. The use of relevant instructional materials in this case will help learners develop the relevant input in the language learning process.

### **Affective Filter Theory**

The researcher also used the Affective filter Hypothesis to complement the input Hypothesis. According to this hypothesis comprehensible input is important since they play a very vital role in acquiring a second language. Second language learners may utilize comprehensible input if there is a 'mental block', which prevents them from fully benefiting from it. This filter acts as a barrier to acquisition.

If the filter is 'down' the input reaches the language acquisition device and becomes acquired competence. If the filter is "up", the input is blocked and does not reach the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) Krashen insists that the acquirer needs to be open to the input and when the filter is up the learner may understand what is seen and read, but according to Krashen, the input may sometimes not reach the (LAD). This occurs when the acquirer is unmotivated, lacking in confidence and concerned with the failure. When the filter is down the acquirer is not anxious and is intend on becoming a member of the group speaking the target language.

According to Krashen those learners whose attitudes are not positive for 2nd language acquisition will seek less input and will have high affective filter. It is said that even if they understand the message the input will not reach that part of the brain responsible for language acquisition device. Those with a true attitude to 2nd language learning will obtain more input and will also have more input and will also have a lower filter Krashen 1982.

Dulay and Burt (1982) agree with Krashen that affective filter is something that determines to what degree a person learns in a formal or informal situations. The language a learner is exposed to through listening and reading is the input and the language the learner produces by talking and writing is the output. Krashen therefore deduces that the role of the classroom teacher has changed "...Our better pedagogical goal should not only include supplying comprehensive input but also encourage a situation that encourages a low filter...Input hypothesis and the concept of affective filter defines the language teachers in a new way". The affective language teacher is one who can provide input and help make it comprehensible in a low anxiety situation. (Krashen, 1994).

Various linguists (Lessard – Closton, 1997, Criffiths, 2006, 2004) agreed with Krashen and a test to the fact that good language teaching contributes immensely towards the development of the communicative competence of the student, thus helping them become better language learners especially in situation where the teacher train the learners to develop and use the language appropriately can be the appreciated characteristic of a good language teacher.

### 5.3 Methodology

### 5.3.1 Research design

The study employed a descriptive survey design. This was preferred because according to Koul (1986) the design is sufficient in collecting a large amount of information within a short time. The descriptive survey design is the only measure through which views, opinions, attitudes and suggestions for improvements regarding challenges facing the teaching of the revised Kiswahili syllabus can be collected.

# **5.3.2 Data collection Techniques**

The researcher took sets of questionnaire in person to all the selected schools. They were issued by the researcher to the teachers and students to fill and later they were collected from the office. The researcher also carried out document analysis and gave assurance to all participants of confidentiality of data collected. Data was collected and sorted out to check completeness and clarity from the tools received. Data was analyzed qualitatively. Descriptive statistics methods such as frequencies and percentages were employed to describe the data. Data was be presented in form of frequency distribution tables to facilitate description and explanation of study figures.

### **5.4 Results and Interpretations**

## **5.4.1 Teacher Qualification**

The researcher found it necessary to establish the level of qualification of the teachers of Kiswahili in Bungoma West District.

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In most cases the level of education of a teacher determines qualification, quality of teaching, use of instructional resources in teaching frequency of evaluation of students, therefore effecting students' achievement. (Kiragu, 1986). The percentages shown in the table 4.1 are in relation to the number of teachers in the district at that level of academic achievement.

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage	
Diploma	2	22.22 %	
Graduate	3	33.33 %	
Untrained	4	44.44 %	
Total	9	100.00 %	

 Table 1 Teachers qualification

The finding reveal the 2(22.2%) of the teachers in Bungoma West district have diploma qualification, 3(33.3%) of the teachers have a Bachelor degree, 4(44.4%) of the teachers are untrained. This implies that more than half the teachers in Bungoma West district receive training to teach Kiswahili at College or University levels. The main question comes to the revised syllabus which was implemented in the year 2005, was they trained to handle the contents infused in the new syllabus. The researchers sought to find out whether the teachers were trained to teach the revised syllabus. The responses are indicated in the Table 4.2.

Response	Frequency	Percentage	
Trained	0	0%	
Untrained	9	100%	
Total	9	100	

Table 2 Teachers response on training to teach the revised syllabus

The finding indicates that no teacher received training on the teaching of the revised syllabus, this scenario is quite a challenging in itself, because if the teacher did received the training, the each teacher is bound to have his/her own approach to teaching the revised Kiswahili syllabus. This diversity in the way of teaching may contribute to the dismal performance in the subject.

### 5.4.2 In-service training and workshops

Teachers are central to change process and therefore their training is quite crucial as depicted in chapter II of this report. Eshiwani (1986), noted that the success or failure of any educational programmes depends on the competence of teachers. He noted that there were 3 cycles in teacher education in which the teacher first gets preparation in his academic subjects followed by a pre-service training and finally in-service training.

The second and third stages should be considered for effective teaching. It thus follows that any successful educational change in built on effective teacher training and in-service courses of which the teaching of the revised Kiswahili syllabus is not an exceptional. The researcher sought to find out whether the teachers of Kiswahili received in-service training and continued to have workshops and seminars to enable them teach the revised Kiswahili syllabus effectively. The findings are summarized in the table below.

Response	Frequency	Percentage	
Quite often	0	0%	
Often	1	16.67%	
Not often	3	50.00%	
Not at all	2	33.33%	
Total	6	100%	

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Table 3. Head	teachers	responses on	m-service	u annig

The responses above show that 1(16.67%) of teachers often receive in-service training on the teaching of the revised Kiswahili syllabus in Bungoma West district. Teachers who had not received in-service training quite often were 3(50%) and 2(33.33%) of the teachers had never received in-service training on the revised Kiswahili syllabus.

This implies that some teachers were not prepared to teach the revised Kiswahili syllabus. The head teachers had the following to say, when asked to comment on the effect of refresher courses on the teaching of the revised Kiswahili syllabus.

- i. Refresher courses for Kiswahili language are very few. The few available are conducted mostly in urban centres. Bungoma West district schools have been disadvantaged because they are rural based and many a times hardly receive communication or receive information when it is long overdue.
- ii. Lack of in-services courses has been a major set-back to the teachers of Kiswahili because majority of them were trained to teach Kiswahili before it was revised for instance the issue of the integrated approach to teaching and other aspects like sociolinguistics, this implies that such teachers find it difficult to teach the Kiswahili revised syllabus.
- iii. In-service courses boots the teachers' morale and service delivery to the students.
- iv. Through in-service courses, teachers are updated of new teaching techniques as well as relevant testing skills.
- v. In-service courses improve the teachers 'effectiveness and the performance in class.
- vi. In-service courses improve the teachers' confidence.

The researcher also sought to find out from the teachers themselves on in-service training and their responses are shown in the table below.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Quite often	0	0%
Often	1	11.11%
Not often	3	33.33%
Not at all	5	55.56%
Total	9	100%

#### Table 4. Teacher responses on in-service training

The findings from the above table shows that 1(11.11%) of the teachers had received in service training often. Also 3(33.33%) had received in service training less often and 5(55.56%) had not received any in service training at all on the teaching of the revised Kiswahili syllabus.

This implies that a good number of teachers are not well versed with the revised Kiswahili syllabus. For those who had attended some in-service courses the researcher sought to find out which areas were emphasized. This was important since in the revised syllabus there are new contents that were introduced of which the teachers need to be abreast with to teach effectively.

Shiundu and Omulando (1992, pp.232-233) indicated that in-service courses acquaint the practicing teacher with the latest innovations in the curriculum of his subject. In this way the teacher is most able to cope with new demands in his area of specialization as well as new approaches and methodology intended to enhance teaching and learning. The findings above indicated that teachers need in-service to teach the revised syllabus effectively.

Thompson and Cooley (1984) emphasized that if achievement is to be improved teachers need to attend inservice courses regularly. The research was interested in finding out whish areas were emphasized for those who had attended some in-service courses. The findings are shown in the table below.

Genre	Frequency	Percentage
Grammar	3	33.33%
Literature	2	22.22%
Oral literature	1	11.11%
Composition	1	11.11%
Poetry	1	11.11%
Social-linguistics	1	11.11%
Total	9	100%

Table 5. Teachers	' responses on areas	emphasized	during in-serv	vice training
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The findings above show that grammar and literature were more emphasized during the in-service courses compared to other genres in the Kiswahili revised syllabus. Areas which needed great attention like social-linguistics and oral literature had only 1 respondent representing 11.11%. It expected that despite the fact that they revised some in-service training, they may not have been well prepared to teach the revised Kiswahili syllabus.

# 5.4.3 Preparation of professional records in teaching the revised Kiswahili syllabus

The preparation of professional records is a key element in the teaching process. How well the preparation is carried out determines the end process. The researcher sought to find out whether teachers prepare their professional records on time before the actual teaching is carried out. This includes schemes of work, lesson notes and lesson guidance, records of work covered and the evaluation records. These are necessary and important for effective content delivery as stipulated in the syllabus. The finding are shown in the table below.

# Table 6. Head teachers' responses on teacher's preparation of professional records

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1	16.7%
No	2	33.3%
Sometimes	3	50.0%
Total	6	100%

The responses from the above table indicate that 1(16.7%) of teachers prepare their professional records on time, 2(33.3%) of the teachers don't prepare their professional record on time and 3(50%) of teachers at times prepare their professional records on time and at times they don't. The findings imply that the preparation of professional records by teachers of Kiswahili in Bungoma West district not satisfactory. This may impact negatively on the teaching of the revised Kiswahili syllabus.

#### 5.5 Conclusions

The major conclusion drawn in this study is that research on the promotion of African language such as Kiswahili should focus more keenly on the challenges that are likely to hamper the promotion and development of this language.

- Kiswahili teachers are qualified and capable of teaching and managing the teaching of Kiswahili effectively, however there is lack of refresher courses and other forms of training that can continuously improve the learning of Kiswahili and updating teachers on any new developments. Majority of teachers predominantly to vary their teaching methods.
- 2) Teachers are not able to prepare their Kiswahili content adequately and evaluate their students thoroughly because the time allocated for teaching the revised Kiswahili syllabus is not sufficient.
- 3) According to Taba (1962) and Shiundu and Omulando (1992) teachers need in-service education in order to successfully implement curriculum innovations in schools. In service training is intended to improve the teachers' professional knowledge, skills and attitude in order that they can educate students' through integration effectively.
- 4) It can also be added that in the implementation of a new programme, in-service education helps to cater for those deficiencies that may arise as a result of the attempt to implement the innovation. This deficiency could professionally be dealt with through teachers' education and in-service.

#### **5.6 Recommendations**

Following the conclusion reached, the researcher wishes to make the following recommendations and suggestions.

- 1) Specific course units should be introduced at the teacher training colleges and universities to give Kiswahili teachers specialized training on specific genres on the integrated approach.
- 2) There should be frequent and intensive in-service programme to all teachers of Kiswahili to equip them with knowledge and skills to teach effectively the revised Kiswahili syllabus.
- 3) The number of Kiswahili lessons should be increased from 5 to 6 in forms one and two and from 6 to 8 in forms three and four.
- 4) The ministry of Education should recruit more Kiswahili teachers to ensure that teachers have a reasonable teaching load as per the curriculum based establishment.
- 5) The ministry of Education and Kenya Institute of Education should recommend appropriate teaching materials which are effective in teaching the Kiswahili revised syllabus.
- 6) The Quality Assurance and standards (QUAS) department of the ministry of Education should carry out frequent inspection of Kiswahili teachers to ensure that they are actually implementing the

revised Kiswahili syllabus, follow-up programmes and support should be given to them to ensure the success of the curriculum implementation.

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