LANGUAGE RELATED BARRIERS AND TEACHER-CHILD INTERACTIONS IN PRESCHOOL: A STUDY OF KISUMU COUNTY, KENYA

JUDITH ATIENO OPINDE

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Signature ___________________________ Date 21/6/16

Opinde Judith Atieno

Registration number: E55/CE/26399/2011

Department of Early Childhood Studies

We confirm that this project was carried out by the candidate under our supervision as university supervisors

Signature ___________________________ Date 22/6/2016

Dr. Gladwell Wambiri,

Lecturer,

Department of Early Childhood Studies

Kenyatta University

Signature ___________________________ Date: 22/6/2016

Dr. Catherine Murungi

Lecturer,

Department of Early Childhood Studies

Kenyatta University
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother, Margaret, my husband Dr. Ochola and my lovely children Sharon, Luther, Noel and Tonny.
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First and foremost, I thank God for His faithfulness that has enabled me to come this far in this degree programme. I would also like to sincerely thank my supervisors Dr. Gladwell Wambiri and Dr. Catherine Murungi whose intellectual support and tireless concern has made me come this far. Their inspiration, moral and unwavering support provided the strength that made me complete the project.

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Last but not least, I would like to thank my children for their support and encouragement throughout the study. All those who participated in this work in one way or the other please feel appreciated.
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ECD     Early Childhood Development

NACOSTI National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation

MOE     Ministry of Education

MT      Mother Tongue

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

USA     United States of America
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ABSTRACT

There are difficulties faced by preschool teachers when instruction children. Some of these are occasioned by the differences in language of instruction used by the teacher from that spoken by the children. Language Policy in education demands that preschool children be taught in their mother tongue. This is challenging, particularly when the language of the teacher and that of the preschool children are different. Previous research studies both global and local have majorly concentrated on the importance of using mother tongue as the language of instruction in preschool, but do not identify the challenges faced by pre-school teachers in instructing children from diverse linguistic backgrounds. This study sought to identify the language related barriers in teacher–child interaction in preschools. The objectives of this study were to establish the linguistic diversity among pre-school children entering preschool, to find out language related barriers faced by teachers who do not speak language of the local community and to find out language related barriers experienced by the pre-school children who are not familiar with the language of instruction. The study is anchored on Linguistic relativity theory by Sapir and Whorf (1884-1939) which states that the way people think is strongly influenced by their native languages. This study used a descriptive research design using survey method to collect data through the use of questionnaires. Purposive sampling technique and simple random sampling was used to select target population. The study was conducted in Nyakach Sub- County in Kisumu County. Validity and reliability was established using pre-test trial and test-retest methods respectively. The study found that preschool children enrolled into the schools within Nyakach sub-county are linguistically diverse. The challenges faced by teachers who do not speak the language used by the local community were; language barrier, limited learning and inactive children in class activities. The language barrier impedes quality of learning and interaction between the teachers and the pre-school children. The study recommends that the education policy that states pre-school children to be taught using the language of the catchment area be strictly implemented to facilitate adequate interaction between the teachers and the pre-school children. In areas with homogenous language of catchment area, it is recommended that linguistic diversity be considered when employing pre-school teachers, while in areas and schools with diverse linguistic composition, teachers be equipped with skills to handle diverse learners.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction
This chapter provides information related to study background, problem statement, and purpose of the study, study objectives and questions. Also included in the chapter is significance of the study, limitations and delimitations, assumptions of the study, theoretical and conceptual frameworks and operational definition of terms.

1.1 Background to the study

Early Childhood Development programs serve children from different backgrounds all over the world. In Kenya, the ministry of education, which is responsible for development of policy guiding medium of instruction in schools, should therefore be in a position to respond to the children’s developmental, cultural, linguistic and educational needs. The educational needs of the children can only be satisfied when both the children and the teacher are in a position to communicate. For communication between the teacher and the learners to be effective, appropriate medium of instruction must be used.

Language is very important because it is basic to all communication. Halliday (1977) asserts that language occupies a special place in the education process since it is the means by which knowledge is transmitted. It plays an important role in promoting or limiting access to knowledge. This is because the ability to comprehend information depends to a large extent on language used. It is important to note that even the extremely intelligent person would be at a loss if information is communicated in a language they do not understand. This is why language occupies a very important place in education.
The language related barriers as a result of differences in language of instruction are experienced all over the world. Census data carried out in the United States of America (USA) from the year 2000 for example shows that the school age population is composed of children from different linguistic backgrounds. The report from the country’s Department of Education in 2003 indicated that 42% of their public school learners both from preschool and primary level pupils were from ethnic minorities, markedly up by 22% in 1972 (US Department of Education, 2006 ). These public schools are expected to teach a diversified group of children from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This shows that the teachers must be aware of linguistic diversity in their classrooms.

Teachers have sometimes expressed difficulties in dealing with children from diverse linguistic backgrounds. According to studies by Ray and Bowman (2003) and Ryan, Ackerman and Song (2005) in New Zealand, teachers felt that they had not been adequately prepared to handle children from diverse linguistic backgrounds different from their own and that they needed specific skills to do so. Most teachers have a feeling that they lack competence in dealing with diverse linguistic children and what they do is through their own initiative and not what they have learnt from their training Ray & Bowman (2003). This calls for a need to prepare preschool teachers on how to handle diverse learners in their classrooms.

Another study done in New Jersey indicated that nearly one third of preschool teachers did not have adequate preparation to work with children whose first language was not English. They described their course work in this area as one less applicable to their classroom context than their coursework on all other topics Ryan, Ackerman & Song (2005). In the above studies done in America, it was found that a number of teacher training colleges in some regions do not
prepare teachers for linguistic diversity in their classrooms but offer general course work. It thus appears that teacher training colleges should offer a specific training to aid the pre-school teachers in handling linguistic diversity in their classrooms if children are to be effectively prepared, Lobman, Ryan & McLaughlin press. This is because without the relevant skills to handle these children, they might lag behind in their learning as their needs will not be adequately catered for.

The language related barriers experienced by teachers when instructing diverse learners is not unique to Kenya. In South Africa for example, the teachers are expected to teach in English yet all the learners do not comprehend the content of their teaching as they do not understand the language Macdonald (1991). Teachers are therefore expected to understand multiple languages in order to help the learners. This scenario could be found in Kenyan classrooms.

Historically, Kenya uses English as official language to teach in upper primary because of British colonization while Kiswahili is the national language. The other languages spoken in the republic are only used in the restricted areas for intra-ethnic interactions. According to Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000), practically Kenyan children do not have a single language they can all speak when they enrol in school. This is brought about by the variety of languages spoken in different linguistic zones in the country. These zones include the rural areas which are occupied by ethnically homogenous communities speaking a similar language for example Abagusii and Dholuo spoken by the people from Kisii and Luo communities respectively. The peri-urban areas which though rural have diverse occupants hence use Kiswahili while the urban areas consisting of large towns and cities use both English and Kiswahili.
In 1976, the Ministry of Education (MOE) language policy stated that the language of instruction in classes one to three should be the language of the school’s catchment area until class four when English becomes the main Language of Instruction MOE (1976); Republic of Kenya, (2012). However, there has been a lot of urbanization and intermarriages whereby people from different communities work and live together. This has made people living in some areas, particularly in the more cosmopolitan urban centres and towns to use either English or Kiswahili to communicate hence the children cannot be taught in their mother tongue. These children when they come to school cannot communicate using either English or Kiswahili hence cannot speak or comprehend the language used in school Ngasike (2010). This reduces teacher-child interactions in the preschool.

Studies done by Wangia (1991) and Bunyi (2005) focused on language of instruction in the urban settings where English and Kiswahili are used for instruction in preschool. In the rural settings where language of catchment area is used, there could be poor teacher-child interaction especially where teachers find children in their classrooms who are not familiar with the language of catchment area.

Studies done by Kannan (2000) however showed that challenges faced by learners have been focussed on yet little attention has been paid to the language related barriers faced by teachers in the teaching process. Pre-school teachers face language related barriers when instructing learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds since language used by the teachers is not considered when recruiting teachers. The teachers find themselves classrooms with children whose language they are not familiar with. This might minimize their interaction with these children.
1.2 Statement of the problem

Language is a very important element in communication and understanding in the classroom. The use of local languages to teach children in preschool has proved to be very advantageous to children. This is because teaching in a language that is familiar to the child allows children to participate in classroom activities thus promoting understanding and quick learning. However, the requirement to teach preschool children using their mother tongue could present considerable challenges to preschool teachers who handle children from diverse linguistic backgrounds and whose mother tongues are different from that of the teacher. Studies show that children who join urban pre-schools for the first time from their rural home where only mother tongue is spoken and cannot communicate in either English or Kiswahili usually have interaction difficulties. It is on this basis that the study was conducted to establish language related barriers and teacher-child interactions in preschool.

Available research show that teachers who are not able to use the language the children are familiar with usually resort to mechanical teaching which do not provide children with opportunity to participate in classroom activities. When children are not active in the classroom, there is little learning taking place. If language used by these teachers to communicate with these children is not handled effectively, many children may be frustrated, not learn well and even drop out of school. The study therefore sought to establish the communication gap brought by differences in language and teacher-child interactions in preschool.
1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to identify the language related barriers in teacher-child interactions in preschool. It also sought to find out the experiences by children who enter preschool without the ability to use the language of instruction.

1.4 Research objectives and questions

The study used the following objectives and research questions.

1.4.1 Research objectives

The study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

(i) To establish the linguistic diversity among children entering pre-schools in Nyakach sub-county.

(ii) To determine language related barriers faced by teachers who do not speak language of the local community.

(iii) To find out language related barriers experienced by the preschool children who are not familiar with the language of instruction.

1.4.2 Research questions

(i) Is there linguistic diversity among children entering preschools within Nyakach sub-County?

(ii) What language related barriers are faced by teachers who are not familiar with language of local community?

(iii) What are the language related barriers experienced by preschool children who are not familiar with the language of instruction?
1.5 Significance of the study

The study may inform teacher trainers on the challenges of linguistic diversity in preschools. The findings may also be useful to the Ministry of Education in the development of policies relating to teaching and teacher preparation for linguistically diverse classrooms. The study may help in informing the employers to recruit teachers who can handle diverse classrooms. The study may inform parents who insist that their children be taught in a particular language without knowing the challenges these children experience.

1.6 Limitations and delimitations of the study

The following were the limitations and delimitations of the study.

1.6.1 Limitations

The study faced challenges of teachers not willing to fill in questionnaires. This was overcome by using those teachers who were willing to do so.

This study did not make use of interview schedules as the learners were not able to express their experiences due to limited language.

1.6.2 Delimitations

This study only included pre-school teachers and children who do not have the ability to use the language of the catchment area within Nyakach Sub-County. The study was conducted in an environment where Dholuo is the language of catchment area. The findings of this study may only be generalized to populations that use homogenous language of catchment area.
1.7 Assumptions of the study

The assumptions of this study were that there are pre-schools which enrol preschool children without the ability to speak or comprehend the language of the catchment area. It was also assumed that there were preschool teachers who do not speak or comprehend the language the children are familiar with. It was assumed that all pre-school teachers and school management are aware of the language policy that requires preschool children to be instructed using their mother tongues.

1.8 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study was anchored on linguistic relativity theory that points out that the language spoken by an individual has a strong influence of the person's world view. This theory was preferred because it explains how language influences perception. Today's teachers are faced with challenges of educating a growing number of children who speak a wide variety of languages, come to school with varied levels of formal schooling and come from different linguistic backgrounds. This brings in the critical task of developing the best and effective language of instruction that can address the various learning needs of these children.

1.8.1 Linguistic Relativity Theory (1884-1939)

The theory was first put forward by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf who stated that the structure of a language influences the manner in which its speakers view their world since language influences cognitive processes of its speakers. The theory was later expanded into two versions in which the strong version asserts that language influences thought, and that linguistic categories limit and determine cognitive categories, while the weak version of the theory states
that different linguistic categories and their utilization influence people's thought as well as some types of non-linguistic behaviour.

According to Sapir, no two languages are sufficiently similar to represent the same social reality. This means that if the teacher uses a language different from the one the child is familiar with, they may not understand each other since they come from different societies hence a barrier resulting in poor teacher-child interactions. Indigenous languages sometimes have several terms for a concept that is only described by one term in English. At times indigenous languages lack direct translation in English; this may make the child not to get the concept intended by the teacher. For this reason, difference in language used to teach will negatively affect teacher-child interactions in the learning process.

This theory was chosen since it upholds the importance of the first language which promotes the cognitive activities which are necessary in learning. People first conceive their ideas in their native language so learners should be helped to use the language they are familiar with to enhance learning.

1.8.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework shows the variables that influence teacher-child interactions.

Language of instruction is determined by the education policy. However, other factors like the teachers, school and even parents have a role to play in the language used to instruct the children.

Teacher–child interactions in the classroom depends on language the teacher uses to instruct learners and learners' ability to comprehend what the teacher is saying. When teachers' language of instruction and learners knowledge of language is hampered, there are poor teacher-child interactions.
The researcher used the conceptual framework outlined in figure 1.1 below to explain the teacher-child interaction emanating from language related barriers. In the framework, the arrows originate from the independent variable to the dependent variable.

**Dependent Variables**

**Teacher-child interactions**
- Poor class participation
- Poor performance of activities
- Poor interaction among learners and teachers

**Independent Variables**

**Language related barriers**
- Inability to speak or comprehend language of catchment area
- Inability to speak or comprehend English or Kiswahili

**Teacher Factors**
- Inability to teach in language of catchment area
- Lack of proficiency in language of the learner

Figure 1.1 A correlation of language related barriers and teacher-child interaction
1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

Diverse linguistic backgrounds; refer to children from different ethnic communities

Language of instruction; is the language of catchment area used to teach curriculum

Mother tongue/ native language; refers to the first language of the child.

Language barriers; this is difficulty in using school language.

Teacher-child interaction; refers to language teacher uses with the child during teaching and learning process.

Challenges; language related difficulties faced by teachers and children
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction
This chapter has the relevant literature related to the study. This includes outlining challenges faced by preschool teachers and children who do not comprehend the language of the catchment area and the linguistic diversity of preschool children.

2.1 Language related barriers faced by pre-school teachers
Early childhood Education covers all the experiences of young children from birth to eight years. According to K.I.E (2007), the foundation of learning and basic attitudes is laid down during the first six years of life. Early childhood educationists like Maria Montessori recognized the importance of this period of time in overall development and later stages in life. This is why there is a need to prepare teachers who will be in a position to help the children pass through their developmental stages successfully.

Research and experience shows that education is much better when it is built around how the child learns and develops. This is only possible when there is communication between the teacher and the learner, entire class or among the learners themselves Obanya (2004). Teachers usually have challenges in class participation because of language they use for instruction. Studies done by Kartz, 1987; Obanya (2004) noted that the environments in which children develop and learn are very important in any teaching and learning situation. It is therefore important to have a child friendly and child centred education to ensure school success.

Most of the language related barriers experienced by pre-school teachers in teaching children from diverse linguistic backgrounds have come as a result of several factors. The language in
education policy M.O.E (1976) recommended the use of the language of the catchment area of the child for instruction. In the rural areas, mother tongue is encouraged which is spoken by the ethnic group occupying the region. In the urban centres with mixed ethnic groups, English and Kiswahili are used. This may present challenges to those teachers whom for other reasons like migration and settlement get children who cannot speak or comprehend neither English nor Kiswahili in their classrooms yet they are expected to teach these children. These teachers lack language to use to instruct the child. The teachers sometimes mix languages to instruct the learners. This raises the concern on the fate of children and teachers from diverse linguistic backgrounds and quality of learning outcomes from preschools.

Studies done by (Makoti, 2005; Gumo, 2003; Waithaka 2003; Branyon (2002) showed that teachers have low motivation due to poor remuneration. This has led to exodus of teachers to different places where they often find themselves teaching in places where their language does not match that of the community. This makes learning quite difficult as they cannot use the language the learners are familiar with (mother tongue). The teachers are then forced to use either English or Kiswahili which again is not the native language of the learners Webb & Kembo-Sure, (2000). At times the teachers use their colleagues from the same community as the child in order to communicate with the child (ren). This limits teacher-child interaction since the teacher cannot effectively communicate with the learner. This slows learning process as they take a lot of time translating concepts which sometimes lack exact meaning in English.

Where teachers are not native speakers of a language, they tend to use other methods of teaching like repetitions and give children little room to participate in class activities like asking and answering questions or expressing any ideas they may have Benson, (2004). This makes lessons
to be dull and teacher centred. Bunyi (2005) also observed that when children are not actively involved in the lessons, learners engage in choral answers, repetition of phrases and copying notes. This results in mechanical teaching making the children to hate school and distance themselves from learning. This eventually leads to poor performance and school drop outs UNESCO, 2008; World Bank (2005).

Where teachers use English or Kiswahili to teach children who do not speak or comprehend the local language, the teachers usually face the challenge of realizing that not all the children understand the content of their teaching due to language barrier. Children cannot participate in classroom activities since they are not conversant with the language hence cannot pick up information. This therefore calls for an understanding on how these teachers could be equipped in order to deliver the content properly for learning to take place.

2.2 Language related barriers experienced by preschool children

All children deserve to have a conversation in their home language every day. This is necessary because if this does not happen, they are likely to take between four to eight years to reach their full academic potential or even longer Collier (1987). Research shows that children who do not receive support in learning in their mother tongue are likely to be isolated, victims of bullying and viewed negatively by the teachers Chang (2007). This therefore means that children need to be supported in learning in a language they are familiar with in order to avoid these problems. However, the use of mother tongue may only be possible in areas where the population is homogenous or indigenous languages are used as official language which is not the case in Kenya. Further, studies shows that children taught in unfamiliar language are likely to lose their expressive ability in their mother tongue.
Children who begin learning in unfamiliar language face several difficulties of first learning the new language and the new curriculum in a new language at the same time. Instruction should be done in the first language of the child since it forms the knowledge base for learning new ideas. Due to reasons beyond the child, children usually find themselves learning in unfamiliar language which is not used outside the educational system especially in the rural areas. The reasons for these could be employment where the child has to accompany the parent to the new environment or settlement in another land among others. This lack of experience on the language used in school usually makes the children to find the school very unpleasant. According to Wallach & Miller (1995) children with limited experiences in the school language often have hard time making transition from home language to formal classroom language. These children usually struggle to function in the learning tasks and activities within the group thus lowering their self-confidence. When children lack competence in the language, they are not able to participate in classroom activities and as a result there are poor learning outcomes.

Children who are unable to communicate in the language of instruction usually suffer as a result of limited communication abilities. This can lead to negative assumption by the teachers about the child resulting in lowered expectations for what the child can accomplish Hoover et.al. (2008). The teacher may mistakenly suspect that the child has a disability, for example a teacher got a child from the rural area to the urban preschool. The child could not speak in either English or Kiswahili. The child kept quiet when talked to. The teacher got annoyed and frustrated and labelled the child dumb and has a learning difficulty, Ngasike (2011). This can really be challenging especially when giving activities based on the child’s current knowledge and language proficiency.
Most children in these environments where the language used is not familiar to often have negative experiences while attempting to use the language in the classroom thus they remain silent and do not interact with others. They usually fear speaking in the classroom and unable to follow the flow of communication during learning activities Apps, McIntyre, and Juliebo (1996). This makes them appear isolated, lonely or frustrated as they seem incapable of communicating. The children usually become observers as they are unsure of how to express their needs to the people around them. This affects their self-esteem as they view themselves unworthy and this makes them lag behind in their learning White (1991). The teachers have to translate to the children the concept which sometimes does not have a similar word in their language to ensure learning is effective.

Ngasike (2011), found that children who cannot use the language they are familiar with usually fear to break English or Kiswahili and opt to remain silent in classroom activities and would not attempt to answer questions even if they knew the answers for fear of being ridiculed when they speak broken English or utter wrong words. This interferes with their self-esteem and learning as a whole. Researches done by World Bank and UNESCO on unfamiliar language of instruction suggest that language used in school is responsible for school drop outs. This is because the children feel frightened when they cannot understand what the teacher is saying to them and get bored and confused Bender, et.al& World Bank (2005).

In the learning process, language is very important for comprehension and making use of knowledge. Barnes (1971; 1976) emphasized the role of language in learning by saying that if there is a disparity in the amount of talk performed by teachers and learners, then there will be hindrance to learning. This puts language as a very important tool in classroom discourse. To
bridge the communication gap, teachers need to be prepared with skills to handle classrooms with learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

2.3 Linguistic diversity among children entering preschool

Linguistic diversity in many parts of the world has been brought about by migration of people to different parts of the country. Consequently, most people have been confronted by linguistic diversity as the world becomes a global village. Schools are the most important points of contact where speakers of all languages exist Edwards (1982). This therefore calls for a language that can be used to instruct learners at the same time enhancing healthy teacher-child interactions.

A child’s success in school can be as a result of several events including language related issues. The quality of a child’s language experiences in their preschool years is very important. This is because it is necessary for interaction in the learning environment as well as comprehension of curriculum content. Unfortunately some children experience language challenges when they enter preschools. Some of these challenges have been occasioned by linguistic diversity of children entering preschools.

Kenya is ethnically heterogeneous with a population of over 40 million people speaking over 50 languages Githiora (2008). The language policy recognized the challenges faced as a result of diversity and attempted to implement mother tongue in areas where one ethnic group resides. In areas with different groups Kiswahili or English was to be used Njoroge (1990). This policy however, does not mitigate on the challenges faced by children who due factors like migration to places where their languages are not used face. There are children who come to school and find that the language used in school is different from the one they are familiar with. This makes these children to use code-switching to other languages in order to communicate.
Studies done by Ball, 2010 & Mbaabu (1996) shows that admission of children to preschools is not pegged on the language of instruction hence all preschools admit children from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Further the language of instruction is not considered when recruiting preschool teachers. This means that there are preschool teachers teaching children with the language the children are not familiar with. Since learners linguistic background is not considered when admitting children to the preschools, it is common to find teachers who are unfamiliar with the child’s language in E. C.D. classrooms Githinji (2014).

This therefore means that there is curriculum content that are taught and not understood by the children. Efforts should therefore be made to ensure children are helped to understand what they are taught.

2.5 Summary of literature reviewed

This chapter reviewed the literature related to the language related barriers experienced by preschool teachers in instructing learners whose language they are not familiar with. This made the teacher–child interactions to be limited and class participation poor. Language promotes child centred learning which is important in school success. In the rural areas, classrooms are usually monolingual. However, there are some children whose language background differs from the rest of the children found in these classrooms. The language of instruction becomes a challenge to both the child and the teacher. The study established that teachers mix languages to teacher the children which negate the policy. There is also time wastage in translating to learners’ concepts for effective learning to take place. The study established that even in rural areas there is linguistic diversity hence there is need for intensive training for teacher to deliver effectively in mother tongue Ntsiki (2009).
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents methodology used in carrying out the study. The chapter outlines the research design, location of the study, target population, sample and sampling techniques. Further, it discusses the research instruments, establishment of reliability and validity of the data, data collection techniques and data analysis. It also has logistical and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research design

This study adopted a descriptive research design using survey method. The descriptive design was preferred because it allows the participants to describe the difficulties they face in an accurate way. The qualitative approach which entails the use of questionnaires to gain a deeper understanding on language related barriers in teacher-child interaction in preschool was used. The survey method allows participants to answer questions on issues affecting them hence was useful in the study. The qualitative approach was used because it is flexible hence allows the researcher to get in-depth information through the use of open-ended questions in the questionnaires.

3.2 Study variables

The independent and dependent variables of the study were as follows:

3.2.1 Independent variable

The independent variable was language related barriers brought by teachers’ unfamiliarity to use local language. Lack of proficiency to use local language made them teach in either English or Kiswahili. This was put on frequency table and tallied.
3.2.2 Dependent variables

The dependent variable was teacher-child interactions measured using nominal scale.

3.1.2 Research method

The study adopted qualitative approach where the questionnaires were used to collect data.

3.3 Location of the study

The study was conducted in Nyakach sub County in Kisumu County. Nyakach Sub County has three divisions, which are Lower Nyakach, Upper Nyakach and West Nyakach. The sub county is cosmopolitan in nature having several communities settling together for economic reasons. The area is predominantly occupied by the Luo community. The language of the catchment area is Dholuo. However there are other communities living among them with young children who are enrolled in the preschools within the sub- County. This therefore means that learning should be conducted in Kiswahili according to the language in education policy. This brings in the challenge to both teachers and children as the language (Kiswahili) is rarely used outside the school environment. The location therefore has challenges related to language of instruction.

The required data was sought from the preschools in the sub-county. This location was selected owing to its cosmopolitan nature, since it harbours Sondu town, Nyabondo Complex, Pap Onditi sub-county headquarters inhabited by people from various communities working and doing business in the region hence the schools have children and teachers who experience language related barriers in their classrooms.

3.4 Target population

The target population for this study constituted preschool teachers. They were selected because they were better placed to provide information on the challenges they face as well as those faced
by the children. All the preschools in both private and public comprised the target population from which the study sample was drawn. The teachers from public schools constituted 70% while the number of teachers from private preschools was 30% of the target population. This is because the majority of preschools are within the public primary schools.

Table 3.1 Distribution of target population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of school</th>
<th>Percentage (100%)</th>
<th>Number of teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: researcher

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Sampling technique is the process of identifying the entities to be included in a sample. Sample size on the other hand is the number of observations in a sample, Evans et.al. (2000).

3.4.1 Sampling technique

A sample is a small portion of the target population. Mugenda & Mugenda (1999) suggest that a sample between 10% and 30% of the accessible population is adequate to serve as a study sample. There are three divisions in Nyakach Sub County these are upper, lower and west Nyakach with eight zones. The study adopted purposive and simple random sampling technique to obtain the study sample. Out of the three divisions purposive sampling technique was used to select upper Nyakach division for the study. This is because it is more cosmopolitan. In the division there are eight zones. The researcher used simple random sampling using lottery method.
to select three zones for the study Tromp & Kombo, (2006). The three zones selected provided the schools where the teachers included in the study was obtained. Since there are both public and private preschools, each category was represented. 70% of the public preschool teachers were included while private preschool teachers constituted 30% of the study sample. Preschool teachers were purposively selected to get the ones to be included in the study. This was necessary owing to the classroom composition of the children in certain classes and the linguistic diversity of the teachers because these teachers are in a position to inform the study on their experiences due to linguistic diversity.

3.4.2 Sample size

This study used a sample size of 85 preschool teachers from both public and private preschools, this represented 70% and 30% respectively. All these came from upper Nyakach owing to its cosmopolitan nature.

Table 3.2 Distribution of sample size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Zones</th>
<th>Category of Schools</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
<th>Total Number of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Nyakach</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 Research instruments

The questionnaires were used to obtain information from the participating teachers. The questionnaire was used because it covers a large sample. The items in the questionnaire are
questions for preschool teachers designed to collect information on the objectives of the study. The questionnaire had both open-ended and close-ended questions. The close ended questions were chosen because they are easy to administer and analyze therefore economical both in terms of time and money. The open-ended questions are useful in collecting in-depth information from the respondents hence enriching the study. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher. The questionnaires were divided into two sections. Section one gathered general background information while section two gathered information on language related barriers in teacher-child interactions.

3.6 Pilot study
The pilot study was conducted in order to help refine the research instruments and check if items in the instruments adequately covered objectives of the study. Pre-test was conducted to assist the researcher to find out areas of weaknesses in the items in the instruments in order to improve validity and reliability. Piloting helped in establishing if the response to the questions could be interpreted in terms of the required information and if the questions could give the desired information. It also helped in rewording the questions that were not answered as expected. Two schools were randomly selected from both public and private. These were Kogola Primary and Amani Academy respectively and two preschool teachers respectively. The two teachers were given the questionnaires to fill. However, the pilot study results were not included in the main study.

3.6.1 Validity
Before conducting the study, pre-test was done whereby the instruments were distributed in two different schools to get the views from the two teachers from the two categories of schools who filled in the questionnaires.
Content validity was established by the researcher going through each item of the questionnaire checking whether the items in the tools related to the study and adequately focused on the research objectives. The researcher ensured that the items are fully comprehensible by the participants to increase validity. The experts in the study area also scrutinized the questions in the questionnaire to check if they captured the study objectives. Items found not relevant were eliminated. Such included: teacher code, name of school and professional experience.

Vague questions were rephrased and language modified to capture valid information during the study.

3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability of the research instruments and the findings is measured by the degree of consistency of the results when a study is repeated over and over again. The researcher used test-retest reliability method. The instrument (questionnaire) was prepared and administered to two groups of teachers from both public and private schools. The results from these were not included in the main study. This was necessary because it helps in gauging clarity and relevance of instruments so that those items found to be inadequate for measuring variables can be refined to improve quality of instruments. After one week, the researcher administered the questionnaire to the same group and responses coming from the first and second trials correlated mathematically using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. A correlation of 0.7 was accepted as reliable. According to Orodho (2009), a correlation of 0.7 or higher is good enough for establishing reliability of an instrument.
3.7 Data collection procedure

The data for the study was collected in two stages. The first stage was the pre-visit and the actual data collection.

The researcher pre-visited the schools where the data was to be collected to familiarize self with the schools and teachers. This was necessary to remove any anxiety and doubt among the respondents. It was also useful because it allowed the researcher to meet the teachers and guide them with the questionnaires to be used in the main study so that anything not understood could be clarified. To create rapport with the teachers, the researcher visited the teachers while in class and even helped in class activities like marking books, assisting children and asking general questions so that they may feel free with the researcher and fill in questionnaires honestly.

During the actual data collection period the researcher first went through the head teacher’s office to report her presence in the school and ask for permission to see the selected teachers who were to fill in the questionnaire. The researcher signed the visitor’s book and proceeded to the classes where the teachers were. In public schools, data was collected in the mornings as most schools break during lunch time. The private schools could be visited in the afternoon as they stayed up to 3.00 pm.

The researcher administered the questionnaire to the schools where the participating teachers were. The researcher assured the teachers of confidentiality and gave reasons for the study (appendix ii). To avoid loss of the instruments, the researcher requested the respondents to fill in the questionnaires in her presence and collected immediately.
3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis was done qualitatively. Data was first sorted and coded. The codes were assigned to each item in the questionnaire and a code list obtained. Data was then grouped into categories to get related items. After categorization data was interpreted, presented and discussed according to the objectives of the study and conclusions drawn from the issues addressed by the respondents.

3.9 Ethical and Logistical Considerations

Before going to the field to collect data, the researcher obtained approval from the dean, Graduate school of Kenyatta University to collect data. The approval was used to apply for research permit from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The approval was presented to the District Education Officer Nyakach Sub-County for notification of the study. Consent was also obtained from institutions and individuals who were involved in the study.

To ensure ethical considerations, the researcher sought consent of the respondents through signing a consent form in the field. Similarly, the researcher obtained the approval of head teachers to allow the research be done in their schools. Participation in the study was voluntary and any participant who wished to quit was allowed to do so willingly. Finally, the researcher guaranteed the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents, since identifying details such as name, national ID numbers, or phone numbers were not required in the questionnaires.
CHAPTER FOUR:
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction
The chapter presents data and findings of the study in tables, percentages and charts. The findings were presented thematically based on the objectives of the study which included; the linguistic diversity among children entering pre-schools; language related barriers faced by teachers who do not speak language of local community; and the language related barriers experienced by children who do not comprehend the language of instruction. The analysis is based on data collected from respondents who returned the questionnaires presented to them. The number of questionnaires returned constituted 90.7% of the total issued, which is within the acceptable levels of at least 90% turnout according to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003). Analysis of the findings is done in charts, tables, descriptive statistics and percentages. The chapter also gives brief discussions and interpretation of the findings.

4.1 Demographic Information
This section presents data to show how the respondents understood the questions. Data presentation covers biographical data, which outlines the composition of the teachers involved in the study in relation private or public schools, the qualifications of the teachers ranging from certificate, diploma, degree or any other qualification in early childhood education, and finally the teaching experience of the respondents. The demographic data is presented in table 4.1 below.
Table 4.1: Biographical data of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biographical data of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category of school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Research data

Table 4.1 above on the biographical data of respondents show that 54 of the teachers involved in the study were from public schools, while 24 from private schools within Nyakach Sub County.

The table also show that the majority of the teachers 41 out of 78 involved in the study hold a certificate qualification, 23 diploma qualification, 8 hold degree qualification in early childhood education, while only 6 teachers were untrained form four leavers employed by board of governors. This means that majority of the teachers are knowledgeable on how to handle and instruct pre-school children. The table also show the teaching experience of the teachers involved in the study. It is noted that 43 teachers (55%) have been teaching for less than five years after being employed by the county government of Kisumu, 32 (41%) have been pre-school teachers for a period between 5 and 10 years and only 3 have taught in preschool for over 10 years. The table helps the researcher to understand the qualification, experience and composition of teacher respondents in the preschools within Nyakach Sub County.
4.3: Findings for objectives

This section presents the findings of the study thematically in the order of the objectives of the study. The objectives were; the linguistic diversity among children entering pre-schools; language related barriers faced by teachers who do not speak language of the local community; and the language related barriers experienced by children who are not familiar with language of instruction.

4.3.1 Linguistic diversity among children entering pre-school

The collected data show that there is linguistic diversity among the children enrolled in the preschools within Nyakach Sub County. Table 4.2 presents the data on linguistic diversity of children enrolled in pre-schools in Nyakach Sub County, Kisumu County. The data indicate that 63 out of 78 teachers said that they had children from diversified linguistic backgrounds in their classes. Similarly, when asked the same question differently, nearly equal number of 62 out of 78 said that they have children in their classes who do not understand the language used in teaching. The data presented in table 4.2 below directly responds to objective one of the study that assesses the linguistic diversity of children enrolled in the pre-schools within Nyakach sub-county.
Table 4.2: Linguistic diversity of children entering preschool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language diversity in schools</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language diversity of children admitted in your class</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have children who do not understand the language you use to teach them?</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Research data

This indicates that it is a reality that there are children who are enrolled in preschools without the ability to use the language used by the teachers to instruct them. This therefore makes teacher-child interactions to be difficult as the teacher and the child are not able to have effective communication. When communication is not effective, learning is also minimal since language is fundamental to learning. Language is required for interaction in the learning environment and comprehension of curriculum content.

Analysis of the data showed that the children entering pre-school in Nyakach Sub-County are linguistically diversified. This is because Nyabondo zone is a cosmopolitan area with heterogeneous ethnic community from Kipsigis, Abagusii and Luo ethnic groups that border each other. Besides the three ethnic communities, other civil servants from different ethnic groups, especially in the ministry of health, ministry internal security among other ethnic groups are stationed in the area, thus send their children to the pre-schools in the area. When asked about the linguistic diversity, nearly more than 80.8% of the respondents agreed that the children admitted to the pre-schools in Nyakach sub-County are linguistically diverse, while only less
than 20% noted the preschool children admitted in their schools are not linguistically diverse. This is so because when children are admitted to the pre-schools, there is no consideration on language a child is familiar with. The children are also not aware of the language policy and therefore they receive education in the language they find in schools. This makes learning difficult as they have limited knowledge of English hence limited competency in the language of interaction with teachers and peers. This makes language barrier to be real in most preschools studied. Children who are unable to use language in schools tend to have negative experiences when attempting to express their views because they are not sure whether they will be understood by others. They fear to speak in the classroom and unable to follow the flow of communication during learning activities. This results in the children lagging behind in learning.

Further analysis indicated that more than two thirds of the teachers agreed that there are children who do not understand the language they use to teach them (table 4.3). The mean of children found not to understand the language used by the teachers is 5 children. This presents adequate challenge to the teachers who may be able to speak the language of the catchment area (Dholuo), but unable to speak Kipsigis or Abagusii languages that are well understood by some of the children. The fact that there are children that do not understand the language used by their teachers is a clear indication that there is limited interaction between the teachers and the children they teach. Such children were passive in class unless they see and copy what their class mates do. This severely impedes learning of the children. The findings are presented in figure 4.1.
4.3.2 Language related barriers and teacher-child interactions

The analysis of data collected from the field showed that teachers of pre-school children in Nyakach sub-County face difficulties related to the language of instruction. During the early age of schooling, children enrolled to the schools only understand their mother tongue and are unable to comprehend Kiswahili or English. This means that in many occasions, there is no communication taking place between the teachers who cannot speak the child’s mother tongue and the child. Data on language related barriers faced by teachers is presented in table 4.3 below, which shows that 62 out of 78 (79.5%) teachers involved in the study said there is language barrier while 16 (20.5%) said there is limited learning as a result of the language barrier.
Table 4.3: Language related barriers faced by teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges faced by teacher who do not speak language of local community</th>
<th>Language barrier</th>
<th>Limited learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do the children cope with class activities</th>
<th>They are silent</th>
<th>Active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which alternative language is used other than The local language</th>
<th>Kiswahili</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Research data

The main language related barriers faced by the respondents are presented in figures. These barriers include lack of comprehension of what is said by the teacher or among learners themselves or use of unfamiliar terms to explain a concept. There are children enrolled in the pre-school handed over to teachers who are unable to teach in the language they understand. When asked that question, 62 pre-school teachers said that the enrolment is done based on age but not the language. There are teacher-child interactions difficulties faced by teachers according to table 4.3 which includes language barrier, limited learning, and children being inactive in the class activities and are usually silent. The table also present the responses on the alternative languages the teachers often use when unable to teach using the language of catchment area.

When asked the challenges faced when instructing pre-school children, more than half of the teachers noted that language barrier is their main challenge. These finding tally with the statistics
of the number of children who do not understand the language used by their teachers to teach them, which is at 79.5%. The language barrier is on two fronts; first, the children being unable to understand either English or Kiswahili, which are languages used to teach; and two, the teacher being unable to speak and understand the language of the catchment area or the mother tongues of the children from other ethnic groups within the area such as the Abagusii and Kipsigis among others. As a result of the language barrier, 16 out of 78 making 20.5% of the pre-school teachers noted that there is limited learning taking place. The children are unable to speak and understand the language used by their teachers, unless they see or copy from their classmates. This raises the concern on the fate of the children and teachers from diverse linguistic backgrounds and quality of learning outcomes from preschools.

Further, when the teachers were asked how the children cope with class activities, 64.1% of the teachers said that as a result of the language barrier, children who do not understand the language used by the teachers to teach are always silent in class, while only 35.9% said that they are active in class activities. The analysis show that the majority of the children are silent and lonely, indicating that there is limited learning and poor interaction between the pre-school teachers and the children because of the language barrier.

This means that in classes where language barriers exist, minimal learning takes place. This means that a lot of learning time is spent on looking at ways and means of assisting the learner to get the concept being taught and as a result learning is slowed. On another level, the teacher gets frustrated and may ignore the child and only concentrate on the other children who get along. This results in the children missing out on important activities. The children sometimes become naughty in class in order to get the teacher’s attention thus disrupting learning activities.
The findings are presented in figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4.2: Challenges faced by teachers

The alternative language used by teachers to try to communicate with the children who do not understand the language of the catchment area or by teacher who do not speak the language of the catchment area are Kiswahili used by (71.8%) pre-school teachers who returned their questionnaires, while (28.2%) said they use English. Similarly, when teachers were asked their reason for choice of language, 42 (53.8%) reported that pre-school children should be instructed in English, with a reason that books used are written in English and exams are done in English thus teaching in English would start preparing the children early and be able to answer tests done in English. Twenty four (30.8%) of the teachers used Kiswahili as a language of instruction mainly from public schools, with a reason that other than mother tongue, Kiswahili is understood by a reasonable number of children compared to English. Lastly, 12 (15.4%) of the teachers used Dholuo with a reason that education policy states that the language of the catchment area be used when instructing preschool children. The choice of language used in teaching by 81.6% of the
teachers who do not use the language of the catchment area is a clear finding that children have language barrier and are largely unable to follow class activities. This impedes quality of learning among the preschool children in Nyakach sub-county Kisumu County. This analysis effectively responds to objective two of the study which was to determine the language related barriers faced by teachers who teach children whose language they are unfamiliar with.

These findings indicate that children are taught using either English or Kiswahili because this is the language the teacher understands. This is against the language policy as children should be taught using the language of catchment area. It was also found out that most private schools regardless of language policy require teachers to instruct children in English. This also hampered teacher-child interaction as most children do not understand the language (English) as it is not used outside the learning environment.

![Figure 4.3: Language used by teachers](image-url)

**Figure 4.3: Language used by teachers**

- **53.8%** English
- **30.8%** Kiswahili
- **15.4%** Dholuo
4.3.3 Language related barriers experienced by pre-school children

Analysis of the data shows that the pre-school teachers are aware of the language policy that requires pre-school children to be instructed using the language of the catchment area. The data indicated that only 6 out of 78 (7.7%) respondents who were particularly the untrained teachers were not aware of the policy by Ministry of education (MoE) that pre-school children be taught using mother tongue or the language of the catchment area. Despite the awareness by the majority of the teachers concerning the language policy, only 15.4% noted that there are lessons taught in mother tongue of the children, while the majority (84.6%) declined that there are no lessons taught in mother tongue in their classes. This finding is a confirmation that teachers use a language of instruction that is not fully understood by the children and not recommended by the ministry of education. Menken and Garcia (2010) also found out that not all policies on language of instruction are implemented as stipulated. The teachers in the schools studied showed that none of them upholds the policy of instructing children using mother tongue due to school factors. The children therefore face the challenge of inability to understand and follow the class instructions. When a child experiences difficulties in communicating, the child might fall behind in school activities and struggle with situations that rely on language like play.

When asked the challenges they face when teaching in Dholuo, a third of the pre-school teachers said that they experience no challenge since all the children they instructed were all from the Luo ethnic group. More than half of the teachers said that some of the children they teach do not understand Dholuo and as a result do not actively participate in the class activities unless the teacher repeats the instruction in Kiswahili. The challenge based on the language barrier is that learning is either slow or no learning at all. Further analysis found that (17.9%) of the pre-school teachers could not fully understand or speak the language of the catchment area (Dholuo). This
forces them to use either English or Kiswahili languages to teach. As a result, they are unable to instruct the children using mother tongue. The use of Kiswahili and English languages present significant language barrier to the children since it is not used outside the learning environment.

Similar findings are arrived at when English is used as the instruction language, since most of the children could not fully understand and speak in English. Most children remain quiet and nonresponsive when asked a question that needs response or do not participate in class activities. For instance, (39.7%) of the pre-school children partially understand and speaks English, (14.1%) fully understands and fluently speaks English, while 46.2% do not understand English completely during enrolment. This means that when English is used as the language of instruction, majority 85.9% of children, which is a combination of those who do not understand English completely and those that partially understand English will experience language barrier leading to slow or no learning at all. However, the 14.1% of the children who can speak English are not discouraged by the teachers. The findings are presented in figure 4.4.

![Figure 4.4: Language related barriers experienced by pre-school children](image-url)
The analysis also showed that less than half of pre-school teachers used real objects to handle the challenges faced by the children, particularly those who do not understand the language of instruction. The real objects allow the children to see and connect to what the teacher says, thus facilitating communication between the teacher and the child. The remaining 51.3% of the respondents said that they use Kiswahili language to communicate with the children who do not understand either the language of the catchment area or English. The analysis responds to research objective three that sought to determine the language related barriers experienced by pre-school children who do not understand the language of the catchment area.

These findings show that most children are taught using unfamiliar language. This because 15% of the children fully understand the language used by the teachers. This in essence means that most of the children do not understand what the teacher is saying and thus feel frightened by the school situation. This may lead to school drop outs. UNESCO, (2008) revealed that 50% of children are out of school because of language used in schools.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction
This chapter gives the conclusion of the findings of the study. It covers summary, conclusion of the study and recommendation.

5.1 Summary
The purpose of the study was to investigate the language related barriers and teacher-child interactions in preschool in Kisumu County, Kenya. The specific objectives that guided this study were; the linguistic diversity of children enrolled in pre-schools within Nyakach Sub-County; the language related barriers faced by the teachers who do not speak or comprehend the language of local community; and to identify the language related barriers experienced by the preschool children who are not familiar with the language of instruction. The study found that preschool children enrolled in the schools within Nyakach sub-county are linguistically diverse. It was also found out that the majority of the teachers noted that they have linguistically diverse children in their classrooms, and that the majority of the children do not understand the language used by the teachers to teach.

Analysis of the language related barriers faced by teachers of children who do not speak and comprehend the language used by the teachers, the researcher found that language barrier and limited learning and children being inactive are the major challenges faced by the teachers who do not speak the mother tongue of the children. Children facing language barrier resort to being silent in class and do not participate in class activities. This challenge is also experienced when using English as the language of instruction since most of the children either partially understand
English or do not understand English language completely when they join school. This language barrier impedes quality of learning and interaction between the teachers and the children. This is because teaching and learning that takes place through the language which is not understood by learners places the learners at a disadvantage. This often leads to significant linguistic difficulties which may contribute to school dropout UNESCO, (2008). It was noted that the teachers however, do not force children to use English or Kiswahili as was done during the colonial days. However, they ignore these children who are unable to speak the required language which frustrates the child.

Analysis of language related barriers experienced by children who do not speak or understand the language used by the teachers found teacher-child interactions to be a major challenge. It was confirmed that teachers have some children in their classes who do not speak or understand the language of the catchment area (Dholuo). As a result, the teachers are forced to use either English or Kiswahili (which the pre-school children do not fully understand) to teach. This limited their interactions with their teachers and peers in class activities.

Despite the teachers' knowledge of the education policy that states that pre-school children be instructed using language of the catchment area, a higher percentage of the teachers involved in the study still use English and Kiswahili respectively to teach, with a justification that books and exams are written and done in English and Kiswahili languages respectively and not Dholuo. This shows that the language policy in education is not completely followed by the teachers.

5.2 Conclusion

The study sought to investigate the language related barriers and teacher-child interactions in preschool in Nyakach sub county, Kisumu County. Based on the findings, the study concludes
that language barrier impedes interaction between the teachers and the pre-school children, leading to limited learning. There is no proper language of instruction as there is a lot of mixing of languages in preschools. Language of catchment area is rarely used by teachers as medium of instruction despite Dholuo being the language of catchment area. Most public schools used Kiswahili while private schools used English. The child who could not communicate in the language kept quiet most of the time or took cues from others. This makes the children silent and passive in class activities, thus slowing the learning process and quality.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Recommendation for policy

(i) Based on the findings that most teachers use English and Kiswahili to teach the children because books are written in English and most learners understand Kiswahili easily, the study recommends that the Ministry of education which stated that pre-school children be taught using mother tongue should refocus on need to implement the mother tongue policy in education to facilitate adequate interaction between the teachers and the pre-school children. This will eliminate the issue of language barrier that the children currently go through in the County and make children to actively participate in the class activities, like school and learn quickly. However, this may be possible only if County governments employ preschool teachers within their localities.

(ii) It is also recommended that in areas and schools with diverse linguistic composition, teachers to be equipped with skills to help them handle diverse learners in their classrooms. This is because most teachers find children from diverse linguistic backgrounds in their classrooms whom they are not able to handle.
(iii)In areas with homogenous language of catchment area as in the rural areas, the study recommends that the school management to consider language of instruction when employing pre-school teachers to ensure that teachers are able to communicate with the learners for better understanding.

5.3.2 Recommendations for further research

Based on the concern that language influences teacher-child interaction in preschools, the researcher suggests that a study could be done to assess training needs of preschool teachers who handle children from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Private schools mostly use English as the language of instruction ignoring the challenges the children go through. This is supported by the fact that tests are done in English. They should be informed on the benefits of using familiar language to teach in preschool.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Questionnaire for Pre-School teachers

(Information regarding the challenges faced by teachers)

(Where choices are provided, please tick one)

Section I: Background information

1. What is the name of the zone?

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

2. What is the category of the school?

   Public  
   Private  

3. What is your highest professional qualification?

   Untrained  
   Certificate  
   Diploma  
   Others  

4. What is your teaching experience?

   0-5 years  
   5-10 years  
   10 and above  

5. What is the number of children in your class?

   0-10  
   10-20  

50
Section II: Challenges faced by teachers

1. What is the policy for recruiting teachers in your school?
   (a) Through friends
   (b) Through interviews
   (c) By the county government
   (d) Others (specify)

2. When recruiting teachers what are some of the factors considered?
   (a) Language
   (b) Professional qualifications
   (c) Others (specify)

3. Are there cases where teachers are employed without regarding the language they are familiar with for teaching? If not, what happens?

4. In case there is a teacher who does not speak the language spoken by the majority of children, which language does the teacher use to communicate with the children?
5. Do you speak the same language as the children you teach? If not, which language do you use to teach?

6. Do you have children in your class who do not speak or comprehend the language you use to teach them? If not, which language do you use to communicate with the child?

7. Are there challenges faced by these children who do not speak language of the majority (local Language) when taught by teachers from other communities?

8. How do these children cope with their classroom activities?

9. As a teacher who do not come from the local community which challenges do you face in teaching these children? How do you overcome the challenges?
10. What is your understanding of language-in-education policy? Do all teachers in your school follow this policy? If not, which language do they use for instructing children?

11. In your opinion, what should be the language of instruction for children from diverse linguistic backgrounds?

12. Do the learners use the same language outside the school compound? If no, how does that affect learning?

13. What in your opinion should be done to address the challenges faced by teachers handling children from diverse linguistic backgrounds?

Thank you for your cooperation
Questionnaire for Pre-School Teachers

(Information on challenges faced by children)

(Where choices are provided, please tick one)

Section A: Background information

Linguistic background .................................................................

Section B: Topics

(1) Language policy

1. Are you aware of the language policy in education?

........................................................................................................

........................................................................................................

2. If yes, which language is recommended for teaching in preschools?

........................................................................................................

3. Which languages does the school encourage teachers to use when teaching children?

........................................................................................................

English, Dholuo or Kiswahili?

........................................................................................................

4. Are there challenges you encounter as a result of language in education policy?

........................................................................................................

(2) Mother tongue lessons

1. Are there lessons conducted in Mother tongue (Dholuo)?

........................................................................................................

........................................................................................................

2. If so how are they spent?

........................................................................................................

........................................................................................................
3. What difficulties do you experience when teaching Dholuo lessons?

(3) Language used in schools

1. Which language would you prefer to be used in preschools?

2. What reason would you give for your choice?

3. What language do other teachers prefer to be used? What is the reason for their choice?

(4) Teaching in English

1. Are there other learning areas taught in English? If so which ones?

2. What difficulties do you experience in instructing children using English language?

3. How do you handle the challenges?
(5) Mode of admission

1. What is the mode of admitting children in your school?
   (a) Age ☐
   (b) Language spoken ☐
   (c) Ability to pay ☐
   (d) Others ☐

2. What is the language spoken in the community around the school?

3. Are there children from other communities living around your school? If so, which language do they use to communicate with them?

4. What is the language used for teaching the children in your school?

5. What are the challenges faced by these children who do not speak or comprehend the local languages spoken by the other children?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lessons</th>
<th>Tally</th>
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<td>English</td>
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<td>Creative activities</td>
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</table>

Total: 57
APPENDIX II

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

My name is Mrs. Judith Atieno Opinde, a post-graduate student undertaking a Master’s of Education Degree (Early Childhood Studies) at Kenyatta University. I am conducting a study entitled “Language related barriers and teacher-child interactions in Pre-school: A study of Kisumu County”. The data for this study will provide knowledge on issues that surrounds challenges faced by both teachers and preschool children in relation to the language diversity and inform policy makers on interventions measures in the region and in Kenya at large. From my perspective, there are no foreseen risks associated with participating in the study. Therefore, I would like to request you to participate in this study through giving the needed data to make this study successful. Your personal details will not be needed for this study. The information you will provide for this study will be confidential. Participation in this study will require you to answer questions in the questionnaire that you will be given. Your participation is entirely voluntary.
Participant's statement:

I have been informed that the study purpose is to collect data for the study on “Language related barriers and teacher-child interactions in Pre-school: A study of Kisumu County”.

I have understood that there are no associated risks of participating in this study. In addition, I understand that all information from the study will be handled with utmost anonymity and confidentiality. I have also been informed that participation is voluntary.

Therefore, I hereby agree to participate in this study on my own accord and voluntarily.

_Date............................

Participant's signature............................................................

Investigator’s statement:

I, the undersigned have explained to the participant in a language he/she understands, the procedures to be followed in this study.

_Name of researcher.................................................................

Signature ..................................................Date........................................

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Our Ref: E55/CE/26399/11
Date: 11th March, 2016

Director General,
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation
P.O. Box 30623-00100,
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

MS. JUDITH ATIENO OPINDE - REG. NO. E55/CE/26399/11

I write to introduce Ms. Judith Atieno Opinde who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. She is registered for a M.Ed. degree programme in the Department of Early Childhood Studies in the School of Education.

Ms. Opinde intends to conduct research for a project entitled, “Language Related Barriers and Teacher-Child Interactions in Preschool: A Study of Kisumu County, Kenya.”

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

[Signature]

Lucy N. Karimba
Dean, GRADUATE SCHOOL

[Stamp]

Kenya University...ISO 9001: 2008 Certified

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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
State Department of Education

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION-MS. JUDITH ATIENO OPINDE

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "Language Related Barriers and Teacher – Child Interactions in Pre-School in Nyakach Sub-County, Kisumu County", you are hereby granted authority by this office to undertake research in this Sub-County for a period starting March 24th 2016 to 31st May 2016.

You are hereby asked to notify this office on completion of your research.

I wish you well during the said period.

ARO DURO
SUB-COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
NYAKACH SUB-COUNTY

Cc.
County Director of Education
Kisumu County

Kenyatta University
Graduate School.
Dear Sir/Madam,

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION-MS. JUDITH ATIENO OPINDE

Following your application for authority to carry out research on “Language Related Barriers and Teacher – Child Interactions in Pre-School in Nyakach Sub-County, Kisumu County”, you are hereby granted authority by this office to undertake research in this Sub-County for a period starting March 24th 2016 to 31st May 2016.

You are hereby asked to notify this office on completion of your research.

I wish you well during the said period.

ARO DURO
SUB-COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
NYAKACH SUB-COUNTY

Cc.
County Director of Education
Kisumu County

Kenyatta University
Graduate School.
THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MS. JUDITH ATISNO OPINDE
of KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, 43844-100
in NAIROBI, has been permitted to conduct
research in Kisumu, County

on the topic: LANGUAGE RELATED
BARRIERS AND TEACHER-CHILD
INTERACTIONS IN PRESCHOOL: A STUDY
OF KISUMU COUNTY, KENYA

for the period ending:
22nd March, 2017

Permit No: NACOSTI/P/16/90417/10205
Date Of Issue: 30th March, 2016
Fee Received: ksh 1000

Application Signature

Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation.

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CONNECTIONS

1. You must report to the County Commissioner and
   the County Education Officer of the area before
   embarking on your research. Failure to do that
   may lead to the cancellation of your permit.

2. Government Officers will not be interviewed
   without prior appointment.

3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been
   approved.

4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological
   specimens are subject to further permission from
   the relevant Government Ministries.

5. You are required to submit at least two (2) hard
   copies and one (1) soft copy of your final report.

6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to
   modify the conditions of this permit including
   its cancellation without notice.

RESEARCH CLEARANCE
PERMIT

National Commission for Science,
Technology and Innovation

Serial No. 8287

CONDITIONS: see back page