

The use of English as a Language and Medium of Instruction in Higher Learning Institutions: A Case of one Private University in Tanzania

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Abstract: - This paper examined the use of English as a language and medium of instruction at the University of Bagamoyo in Tanzania. The study applied case study design. It was guided by four research questions. Mixed approaches were utilized. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 60 students from three Colleges (College of Law, College of Education, and College of Science). Five lecturers teaching at the Colleges were included in the study. The study had a sample of 65 people. Interview guides and questionnaires were used to collect data from the students and the lecturers.

Results from the study showed that students had difficulties in understanding the content presented in English, the medium of instruction at the three Colleges. The problem was partly contributed by difficulty English terminologies and students' poor English background from lower levels (primary to secondary schools). Additionally, students were not confident and competent in using English in classroom discussions as well as communicating to each other and other staff outside classrooms. Most of the time students used Kiswahili because it was found easier and familiar compare to English on one hand; on the other hand; some of the lecturers used difficulty vocabularies and broken English that hindered students understanding of the content taught. However, findings from lecturers indicated that students had minimal English vocabulary and their English grammar was poor. In addition to that, students' level of the English language reached before entry into University was found low. Kiswahili was found a viable alternative to the English medium because it would contribute to students' high performance at the institution. Moreover, Kiswahili language was found simple and understandable to all students selected in the study. Despite the fact that Kiswahili was suggested to be used as a medium of instruction there were some of the students who thought that it would be difficult to translate and explain English concepts in all subjects in Kiswahili. The fact that one can understand better when taught in his/her language, and there had been long debates on language of instruction in Tanzania, there is a need for the government to rethink about the use of its own national language (Kiswahili) to be medium of instruction from nursery schools to tertiary education to minimize the problem.

Keywords: Policy, performance, instruction, education, communicative approach.

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most useful tools we have as humans. Without it we could not think thoughts

expressible to others, nor could we engage in the activities that commonly take place in the society we build ourselves (Di Pietro, 1994). Language is very important in education. For instance, Roy-Campbell and Qorro (1997) assert that education is carried out largely through the medium of language, thus, language is very significant in the education process. Additionally, Association for the Development in Africa (ADEA) (2005) argues, "Language is not everything in education, but without language, everything is nothing in education" (p. 5). Language plays a crucial role in learning, and if the learner is handicapped in the language of instruction, then learning may not take place at all as the instructor or teacher and the learner will not be communicating (Malekela, 2003).

Language, communication, and the underlying culture are without doubt the very basis of learning, due to which they must be given primary attention throughout a child's schooling, specifically during the first years. The importance of focusing on becoming fluent in one's first language is a consensus supported by numerous studies (Wilmot 2003; Mwinsheikhe 2003; Alidou, Aliou, Brock-Utne, Diallo, Heugh 2006; Shin, Sailors, McClung, Pearson, Hoffman, Chilimanjira 2015; Debreli & Oyman, 2016).

English language is one of the most prominent legacies left behind by the British Empire. Despite the unceasing global debate on English as the international lingua franca or as "killer language" Coleman (2006), the adoption of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) has been sweeping across the higher education landscape worldwide (Crystal, 2004). Presently the most significant educational trends world-wide is the teaching of a growing number of courses in universities through the medium of English. The move towards English-medium higher education is having a number of long-term consequences. First, it accelerates and broadens the second-language use of English in both developed and developing countries, creating a constituency of college graduates, many of whom come to use English more extensively for social communication amongst themselves (Graddol, 1997). For instance, Vuzo (2010) explained in her study that learners and teachers may have difficulties in using the language with adequate proficiency at the secondary schools. Gee (1992)

added that it is language that the business of schooling is still primarily accomplished, whether that is spoken or written.

The structure of the Tanzanian education system

The formal education system of Tanzania is structured according to four successive levels as follows:

- **Pre-primary education** is for 5-6 years old children which aims at promoting the children's overall development and prepare them for primary school.
- **Primary education** is a seven year compulsory level for all Tanzanian children. The major objectives of primary education are to lay the socio-cultural foundations of the Tanzanian citizen and nation, and to prepare the children for secondary education or work. It is seen as a means to self-reliant personal and national development.
- **Secondary education** which is divided into two levels; ordinary level (Form 1-4) and advanced level (Form 5-6). Students completing ordinary level are expected to commence vocational training, professional training or join the workforce. Advanced level graduates may continue with tertiary and higher education, training institutions or join the workforce.
- **Tertiary and higher education and training** which encompasses all post ordinary level secondary education leading to certificates, diplomas and degrees. The aims and objectives of education at this level include preparing middle and high-level professional human resources and preparing the students to join the world of work (URT, 1995).

Language policy: The context

Tanzania official languages are Kiswahili and English. English is considered as an academic language while Kiswahili as a language of daily communication (Telli, 2014). At the school level, Kiswahili is the language of instruction in public primary schools while English is taught as subject (URT, 2005). Unlike in public schools, the language of instruction in private schools is English throughout. When students advance to secondary school the language of instruction changes from Kiswahili to English where all subjects except Kiswahili are taught in English in secondary schools (MoEVT, 2008). Apparently, the learning process becomes challenging for most students in secondary schools as the majority of them largely lack a basic command of English language (Qorro, 2006).

Tanzania language policy differs from that from Saudi Arabia. For instance, Ryhan (2014) reported that Arabic is the medium of instruction in all the schools and colleges up to the secondary level. While Arabic is the native as well as the official language in the region, English is not known to the students until they enter the post secondary program. Consequently, students with no prior knowledge of English language end up completely confused, threatened,

demotivated, and lost in translation. This sudden change takes a direct hit on their knowledge and learning, performance, and learning outcomes. Students have to struggle to understand instructions in English and cope with the shift.

Policies and practices concerning medium of instruction

Education and Training Policy (1995) of Tanzania states that learners who complete primary school are expected to have adequately mastered English to be able to cope with it as the medium of instruction throughout secondary school while English is a foreign language – a language children are not exposed much to outside of school – yet it is the language of instruction in secondary and tertiary education (Brock-Utne, 2004). Puja (2003) adds that English is to most Tanzanians a truly foreign language that they do not feel comfortable communicating in even after having had it for nine years as language of instruction. In the foreign language-learning context the language is not spoken in the learner's immediate environment and although the mass media may provide opportunities for practicing receptive skills of the language there is little or no opportunity for the learner to use the language in a natural communicative situation (Holmarsdottir, 2003).

With regard to language of instruction in the Tanzanian school system, the Education and Training Policy specifies that:

- In pre-primary schools the medium of instruction shall be Kiswahili, and English shall be taught as a compulsory subject.
- In primary school the medium of instruction shall be Kiswahili, and English shall be taught as a compulsory subject.
- In secondary education the medium of instruction shall be English except for the teaching of other approved languages, and Kiswahili shall be a compulsory subject up to ordinary level (URT, 1995).

The main feature of Tanzania's education system is the bilingual policy, which requires children to learn both Kiswahili and English. English is essential as it is the language which links Tanzania and the rest of the world through technology, commerce, and also administration. The learning of Kiswahili enables the Tanzanian students to keep in touch with their cultural values and heritage. English is taught as compulsory subject in the primary education whereas at post primary education it is the medium of instruction. With regard the Kiswahili, it is the medium of instruction at primary education. It is taught as compulsory subject at secondary education and as option at tertiary education (URT, 2006).

Statement of the Problem

The medium of instruction has always been a key issue among educational institutions across the world especially in those nations who were once British colonies. In Tanzania, English is a medium of instruction at secondary schools and higher

learning institutions. It is the government that decides on which language should be the instructional medium in all levels of education. However, English is the second language to many Tanzanians. For instance, Saville-Troike (2006) asserts that second language is typically official or societal demand language needed for education, employment, and other basic purposes. In education, researches (Roy-Campbell & Qorro; 1997; Nyamubi, 2003; Yohana, 2012) reported that students' performance in English Language National Examination has been consistently poor and nearly half of the students fell into divisions four and zero both rural and urban secondary schools students. That meant that the students whom we are expecting to join A-level and thereafter continue with tertiary education are not competent in the language of instruction. There have been debates on whether to use English or Kiswahili as a medium of instruction in Tanzania. Researchers like (Roy- Campbell & Qorro, 1997) claimed that the switch from Kiswahili to English as a medium of learning in secondary schools was no longer a viable medium of instruction. They suggested the use of Kiswahili instead of English since students are not able to use it correctly and effectively. They added that Kiswahili is a national language; and it is spoken in the entire country, therefore, it could suit to be used as a medium of instruction at all levels of education. However, Omari (1997) asserts that to use Kiswahili will not solve the problems in the system but rather worsen them through horrible expenses for translating the books, teaching teachers to use Kiswahili terms, depress motivations of pupils and parents who preferred English despite of all. From that time Tanzania has not yet been able to use Kiswahili as a medium of instruction in educational institutions above primary schools despite several declarations intending to do so.

Many studies have been done on medium of instruction in Tanzanian secondary schools Campbell & Qorro (1997); Nyamubi (2003); Malekela (2003); Vuzo (2010) and higher learning institutions particularly at the University of Dar es Salaam by Mwinsheikhe, (2002); Brock-Utne (2004) but little empirical research has been conducted on students' use of English as a language and medium of instruction at higher learning institutions particularly in private universities. Therefore, the aim of this study was to fill that existing gap. The study was guided by four questions:

1. Are students learning efficiently with the English medium?
2. Do students like to use English in the classrooms settings?
3. Are they able to discuss subject matter contents in English?
4. Is Kiswahili a viable alternative to the English medium?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Medium of Instruction

Mkwizu (2003) defines 'medium of instruction' as the language that is used in the process of teaching and learning. She describes it as a tool for transferring skills and knowledge. She draws on the work of Rubanza who said that a language that qualifies as a medium of instruction is the one that both teachers and learners understand well. Furthermore, it is the language which enables students to apply knowledge and skills they have acquired and to think critically and creatively.

English as a Medium of Instruction

The English language is one of the most geographically widely spoken languages in the world and serves multiple purposes in a rapidly globalizing world. Its wide use extends from politics and economy to technology, science, media, and communication. Its mastery opens doors to more information than the mastery of any other language (Crystal, 2003). The importance of English language learning and its usage as a medium of instruction divides opinions. While some prefer using English as a medium of instruction as opposed to the mother tongue, others are suspicious of English language learning from an early age (Kavonen, 2017).

Although the factors for English medium of instruction growth vary depending on the country, in higher education, the move towards teaching in English comes at grassroots level. For instance, many governments believe that English medium of instruction programmes will improve students' English proficiency, and therefore result in a workforce that is more fluent in English. EMI is seen to give students a double benefit: knowledge of their subject, plus English language skills. Governments, and students for that matter, think that this will make them more attractive in the global job market (Galloway, 2017).

One of the major problems in using English as a medium of instruction in the African context is that, regardless of academic qualifications, teachers lack the adequate language proficiency and competence to teach the language (Dearden 2014). In Tanzania, this problem was recognized Qorro (2002); Brock-Utne (2004); Mwinshehe (2003) and Vuzo, (2010) but it is still today very present in the schools where English is used as a medium of instruction.

Education systems in Africa predominantly use subject content teachers to teach specific subjects. While their priority is to teach their own subjects, they are also all language teachers, increasingly so when the medium of instruction is not the mother tongue of the students. Although many subject content teachers may acknowledge their responsibility for the teaching of language skills in the subject content classroom, they lack the training and competence to carry out this duty (Uys, van der Walt, Van den Berg and Botha 2007). This lack of language proficiency and competence in language teaching, combined with the challenges students face when learning in a

language unfamiliar to them, causes both teachers and students in African classrooms to face serious communication and learning problems on a daily 16 basis (UNESCO 2010: 28).

Effective Learning of the Subject Matter

The teaching and learning process involves two active participants in the classroom the teacher and the learner, and that language learning does not fall entirely on the teacher. The students must also assume more responsibility for the learning process (Quist, 2000). For example, Vuzo (2010) reported, "It is through interactions with each other that teachers and students work together to create intellectual and practical activities that shape both the form and the content of the target subject. However, such situation is not commonly found in secondary schools in all subjects due to the fact that lecture method dominates the teaching and learning process which leads to passive learning" (p.18).

Second Language and Foreign Language

Second language is any language that a person uses other than a first or native language while foreign language is a language that is learned in an area where that language has no presence or is not commonly spoken by the community as a whole (Nordquist, 2017). It is a language originally from another country. It is also a language not spoken in the native country of the person referred to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_language. In this context Kiswahili is second language and English is foreign language in Tanzania. Foreign language is typically taught as school subjects for the purpose of communicating with foreigners or for reading printed materials in the language (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 206).

Ringbom (1987) suggests that in the situation of second language acquisition the language is spoken in the immediate environment [emphasis added] of the language learner and in this environment the learner has positive opportunities to use the language in natural communicative situations and that it may or may not be supplemented by classroom teaching. On the other hand, in the foreign language-learning context the language is not spoken in the learner's immediate environment and although the mass media may provide opportunities for practicing receptive skills of the language there is little or no opportunity for the learner to use the language in a natural communicative situation.

According to numerous studies, UNESCO (2005); Qorro (2006); Rajan (2006) assert that, learners can only actively participate in knowledge creation if they are allowed to use the language they understand very well, which, in most cases, is the language they usually speak in their day-to-day life. This is one of the reasons why researchers and activists in Tanzania support the idea that the medium of instruction to be Kiswahili from primary to secondary schools, and eventually to tertiary level (Qorro, 2006). Significant number of the Tanzanian policy makers opposes this notion by defending the

status quo (Qorro, 2006). These policy makers argue that the best way for students to learn English is to use it; otherwise they will lose it. In reality, according to educational advocacy groups and scholars, using Kiswahili as a language of instruction does not mean English is ignored (Rajan, 2006). In fact, learning and understanding better the language students are familiar with (that is, Kiswahili) is the key to master the second language proficiently.

Thus, it is crucial for every country to have a clear policy on language of instruction in its education system in order to achieve both goals, that is, quality of education as a result of the use of local languages in schools and acquiring proficiency in the global languages through education. While there are strong educational arguments in favour of mother tongue (or first language) instruction, a careful balance needs to be made between enabling people to use local languages in learning and providing access to global languages of communication through education (UNESCO, 2005).

Students' English competence

Numerous research projects and publications show that students as well as lecturers in many cases are not at a level of competency in English that allows for effective learning and teaching through that medium (Roy- Campbell, 1992, Brock-Utne and Halmarsdottir, 2003; Mwinsheikhe, 2001, Puja, 2003; Malekela, 2003; Mkwizu, 2003). For instance, in 1984 during July and August, a study funded by the British Government was conducted on the levels of English currently existing across the educational system in Tanzania. The study was carried out by Clive Cripser, a linguist from Edinburgh University and Bill Dodd, an administrator with long experience from Tanzania. Their study confirmed that the levels of competence in English were insufficient in most schools for effective learning to take place (Brock-Utne 2000; Malekela, 2003; Peterson 2006). Regarding the students' proficiency they observed:

The number getting within reach of being able to read unsimplified text is less than 10%. It is extremely worrying to find that nearly one third of all students are at the picture book level after four years of official English medium education. These results are a clear indication that throughout their secondary school career little or subject information is getting across to about 50% of the pupils in our sample. Only about 10% of Form IVs are at a level where one might expect English medium education to begin (Malekela 2003:104).

In 1986, following this report, the Tanzanian and the British Governments agreed to start the English Language Teaching Support Project. This 10 year project was administered by the Overseas Development Administration through the British Council in Dar es Salaam. In order to assist teachers, materials

were distributed to schools. Limited funding meant that not enough material were produced, thus all schools did not benefit from this aid. Other problems such as management difficulties, and the size of the country apparently hindered the implementation of the project (Malekela, 2003).

Studies done in Tanzania on Language of Instruction

Halima Mwinsheikhe (2001, 2002) in her Master thesis, she found teachers teaching some biology lessons solely through the medium of English, and later had the same teachers teach some other biology lessons solely through the medium of Kiswahili. She tells that during the experimental lessons one could easily see that teachers who taught by using English only were exerting a great effort not to succumb to the temptation of code mixing or switching. They seemed to be very tense and their verbal expressions were rather “dry”. Those who taught in Kiswahili were much more relaxed and confident. Those who taught through the medium of Kiswahili also seemed to enjoy teaching. They found it easy to make the lessons lively by introducing some jokes.

The National Examinations Council of Tanzania, NECTA (1993) maintains that the problem of language incapacitates students such that they fail to express themselves clearly in writing. This leads to low performance in National Examinations. Some students opt to use Kiswahili to give their answers in examinations even though they know that this is not allowed and that their answers will not count.

Puja (2002) in her study found that students in three universities did not speak English in class where the medium of instruction was English but as soon as the class was over both teachers and students switched to Kiswahili and communicate freely. Another observation was done by Brock-Utne (2004) at the University of Dar es Salaam. Here is what she said:

“While I was lecturing to large classes of a couple of hundred students and more at the University of Dar es Salaam, I often tried to liven up the lectures and activate the students by giving them buzzing questions to discuss in small groups for three to five minutes. I wrote the questions on the blackboard in English but very soon realized that all the buzzing groups were buzzing away in Kiswahili” (p.10).

Poor communication skills in English was cited as one of the three problems that contribute to students lack of participation in class, comprehension and overall academic performance by all the 22 teachers Puja interviewed in the course of her study. In the article based on her study, she found that only 8 of the 34 students she interviewed chose to be interviewed in English. The remaining 26 chose Kiswahili. One of the participants explained her preference for Kiswahili in the following words:

“I do not like to speak English because I cannot speak fluent English...when I am speaking English, which is not my everyday language, I speak very slowly, and, therefore, first, I feel uncomfortable, I do not enjoy speaking and second, I may not succeed in communicating what I want to say... (Puja, 2003:120).

Qorro claims that it is the prevailing situation in the secondary schools in Tanzania, where most teachers teach in incorrect English that forces her to argue for the change of medium of instruction to Kiswahili. She feels confident that students can, in fact, learn English better than is currently the case when it is taught well as a subject, and eliminated as the medium of instruction. In her own words:

The use of English as a medium actually defeats the whole purpose of teaching English language. For example, let us suppose that, in the school mentioned above the 3 teachers who use English correctly are the teachers of English language, and the other 42 are teachers of subjects other than English. Is it not the case that the efforts of the 3 teachers of English are likely to be eroded by the 42 teachers who use incorrect English in teaching their subjects? If we want to improve the teaching and learning of English in Tanzania secondary schools, I believe, that has to include the elimination of incorrect English to which students have been exposed from the time they began learning it (Qorro, 2002).

In her article Martha Qorro argues for the elimination of incorrect English by not using it as a medium of instruction. She knows that many people are put off by this suggestion because of the belief that by using it as a medium of instruction students would master English better. Though she agrees that mastering English is important she feels that the best way to.

Peterson (2006) study explores the use of an African language as the medium of instruction at the University. It focuses on the reasons behind the establishment of the Kiswahili department, the strategies employed by the Kiswahili department, and the extent to which students and teachers are either comfortable or uncomfortable with using the Kiswahili medium. All the students Peterson interviewed indicated that they understand the courses which are given in Kiswahili a lot better than the courses offered in English. The reasons given by the students were the availability of Kiswahili terminology, and secondly, the fact that Kiswahili is the first or second language to most of the students. It is thus the language they use outside the classroom, and encounter everywhere as part of their daily lives, like at the market, at home, in churches and mosques and school. When English is used as the medium of instruction, on the other hand, students expressed that they

learn very little. The main reasons for these difficulties as perceived by the students included problems with understanding the English language structure, for example, the difference between writing and pronunciation, and that some of the books provided in English employ complicated language. The students also expressed that the problem is enhanced by the fact that many English words are culturally not understandable due to cultural differences for some of the students.

From the mentioned studies done at secondary schools and at the University of Dar es Salaam in particular results indicate clearly that there was communication problem that was caused by English, medium of instruction. Students were not fluent and conversant in English that is why they switched to Kiswahili. As mentioned by Mwinsheikhe even teachers use Kiswahili when teaching contents written in English contrary to 1995 Education Policy. This might be interpreted in two ways: firstly, English is difficult to students that are why teachers use Kiswahili or secondly, teachers themselves are not fluent in using English, the medium of instruction in the classrooms. So here we clearly see a problem that students run into who by their teachers have been used to code-switching and code-mixing, strategy teachers have used in order to have them understand the subject matter. It is strange to find NECTA claiming that some of the students were not able to answer questions in the National Exams in English. They used Kiswahili instead of English. However, according to the official marking regulations such answers are not supposed to be awarded any marks at all. That meant that they did understand the questions but failed to write it in English. This has now been a serious problem for many years in Tanzania.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study was done in one of the private institutions in Tanzania with the aim of examining the extent to which English language is used as a Language and medium of instruction. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires and interviews were for both students and lecturers. Purposive sampling technique was used to select students, assistant lecturers, and senior lecturers that would provide relevant and valuable information to the study. The sample in this study included 60 students selected from three colleges (education, law, and science). There were two assistant lecturers and three senior lecturers. They were purposely selected in order to meet the specific needs of the study. For instance, there were questions that were similar to both students and lecturers to ensure reliability of the given information. Mixed approaches were used. For instance, Kothari (2004) maintains that qualitative methodology puts emphasis on the qualities; process, and meaning that cannot be experimentally examined while Cresswell (2005) maintains that quantitative approach measure attitude and information which is analyzed using statistical procedures. The combination of qualitative and quantitative in this study was necessary because each had advantage and disadvantage

(Bryman, 2006). Data were organized according to the research questions. Item analysis was used in qualitative data. In quantitative data, tallies were converted into percentages. Case study design was used because it focuses on one particular study area or issue such as one region or one school, even if this has been criticized as descriptive and takes more of a qualitative than quantitative approach. Kothari (2004) asserts that the case study approach allows participants to speak for themselves, thereby enabling the situation to be seen through the eyes of participants. This triggered the researcher to use the case study design because it is often the best methodology for improving practice.

IV. RESULTS

Results in this study are presented according to research questions. The study had four questions in total. Data were collected from three Colleges; College of Law, College of Science, and College of Education. Each question is addressed separately in order to meet the objective of the study.

Are students learning efficiently with the English medium?

Findings in question one showed that students were not efficient in using English, the medium of instruction when learning in the classrooms. For instance, 24 students out of 60 (40%) admitted to have problem with the medium of instruction. It was found out that some of the problems were contributed by the lecturers and assistant lecturers. Here is what students wrote in the questionnaires:

Student 1: Some lecturers use difficulty vocabularies which is not easy to understand.

Student 2: Some lecturers use broken English.

Student 3: Some of them are not well prepared before teaching.

Student 4: They have poor background.

Student 5: Some of them seem to have no experience in the field of specializations.

Student 6: Some of them are not competent in delivering content.

Student 7: They are shallow in English competence.

Student 8: His English is not proper.

The problem for students not to learn efficiently with the medium of instruction was also contributed by the nature of the language itself. For example, one student said that some of the terminologies in English were difficult to understand. Another student added that, English words were very difficult to them, and lastly English terminologies were complicated particularly in legal Law courses.

From the findings data showed that lecturers' incompetence and difficult terminologies in English were main causes of students not to learn efficiently in English, the medium of instruction at the selected University. The remaining 36

students out of 60 that were (60%) said that they understood the content presented in English at the Colleges. That meant that majority of the students did not have problem with the language of instruction. However, findings from the senior and assistant lecturers were found different from those of the students. Here is what some of them said:

Senior Lecturer 1: Students competency level in English is low.

Senior Lecturer 2: Students lack English proficiency.

Assistant Lecturer 1: Most of them have poor background in using English from secondary schools.

Assistant Lecturer 2: Poor background in using English language as a medium of instruction.

The study investigated if senior lecturers and assistant lecturers encountered problems when using English language in teaching and learning process in the classrooms. All of them said 'yes' and reasons being:

Senior Lecturer 1: Students have serious language problem.

Senior Lecturer 2: Students do not understand the content delivered.

Assistant Lecturer 1: Students are not competent in English

Assistant Lecturer 2: The level of the English language reached before entry into university is low.

The study went further by finding out whether lecturers were able to use English only when teaching in the classrooms. Two of them said 'yes' but two said 'no'. Reasons for them not to use English only when teaching are as follows:

Assistant Lecturer: Students do not have ability in understanding when English is used as a medium of teaching.

Senior Lecturer: Sometimes students just look at you showing that they have not understood what you are saying. In that case, I switch to Kiswahili or explain concepts in Kiswahili.

The same question was asked to the students. Results from the students showed that some of the senior assistant lecturers were not able to use English only when presenting lessons in the classrooms. For instance, 42 students out of 60 (70%) said that they were not able while 18 students out of 60 (30%) said they were able. When students asked which language they used instead; the answer was 'Kiswahili'. That meant that either they did so because they were not competent in the language of instruction or lecturers had problems similar to those of the students. However, students who said that senior and assistant lecturers were able to use English only had this to say:

Student 1: Nature of subjects demands them to teach in English.

Student 2: English language is international.

Student 3: English is a media of communication.

Student 4: Language competence.

Student 5: Because they want us know English and the subjects too.

In another development, the study examined if students were confident, capable, and competent in using English in the subjects taught at the three Colleges. Data from senior and assistant lecturers indicated that students were not confident, capable, and competent in English as expected. Here is what they said:

Assistant Lecturer 1: English is not their mother tongue.

Assistant Lecturer 2: Most of them think in Kiswahili and write in English.

Assistant Lecturer 3: English is not familiar to them.

Senior Lecturer 1: They have very minimal English vocabulary and their English grammar is poor.

Senior Lecturer 2: Poor background of English from secondary schools.

The fact that students were found with language problem the study investigated on measures taken by senior and assistant lecturers in addressing the problem. Findings revealed that the assistant lecturers used Kiswahili in order for the students to understand the content. This result was found different from that of the senior lecturers. For instance, one of them said that she encouraged the students to meet in her office after class hours for help. Another one said that she tends to switch and code mix as strategy for the students to understand the content taught.

Do students like to use English in the classrooms settings?

This question was addressed to students, assistant, and senior lecturers. Findings showed that some of the students said 'yes' and others said 'no'. Those who said 'yes; reasons were as follows:

Student 1: To add more knowledge in English terms.

Student 2: It helps us to be *more competence* in English conversations (Incorrect sentence).

Student 3: To become perfect and confident.

Student 4: It helps me to follow source of information.

Student 5: To become competent in it.

Student 6: The more I speak English I know some words in English.

Student 7: More practice make perfect.

Student 8: I gain more confident when talking.

Student 9: I want to improve my English and vocabulary.

Student 10: It improves my ability of speaking English.

Student 11: English is *much thought* to me (Incorrect tense).

Student 12: English is international language *due to situation*. (Complicated sentence).

Student 13: All subjects are taught in English.

Students who did not like to use English in the classroom had this to say:

Student 1: Most of us are Tanzanians who speak good Kiswahili and understand each other well than using English.

Student 2: I am used of Kiswahili so I use it confidently to express what I want to say in the class.

Student 3: *We are asking cooperation between students* (Not respond to the asked question.)

Student 4: Lack of confidence to speak English.

Student 5: English is not my mother tongue.

Student 6: Not competent in English.

Student 7: Kiswahili is our key language for everyone.

Student 8: I know Kiswahili *much over* English (Incorrect sentence).

Furthermore, the study wanted to find out if students were able to use English in classroom and outside. Findings from lecturers showed that students were not competent in using English in classrooms and outside classrooms as expected. It was also found out that students used Kiswahili when outside classrooms and not English. For instance, one of the senior lecturers said, "In class I insist on English, outside most students prefer to communicate in Kiswahili". Another senior lecturer said, "When outside classrooms students don't feel that using English is a requirement".

Are the students able to discuss subject matter contents in English?

This question sought to find out whether students were able to use English only in their discussions when in groups/pairs. Results indicated those 30 students out of 60 (50%) were not able to use English only in their discussions and some of the reasons being:

Students 1: *It is not used as the media to communicate* (Not true).

Student 2: *Different capacity and interpretation of content between the groups/pairs* (The sentence did not address the question).

Student 3: *There is no motivation between us* (The question did not ask about motivation).

Students 4: *English is not our culture* (English cannot be culture but part of culture).

Student 5: English is difficult. To understand the idea Kiswahili must be used first, and later English.

Student 6: Kiswahili is a most understandable language to everyone.

Student 7: We use code switching.

Student 8: We use Kiswahili for better understanding.

Student 9: *English we don't use everywhere compare to Kiswahili* (Incorrect grammar).

Student 10: We share in English but we mix with Kiswahili because we are not good in English.

Student 11: Kiswahili is major communication language.

Student 12: We cannot explain in detail the ideas.

Student 13: Language problem.

Student 14: *We always use English and Kiswahili for more understanding* (Did not address the question).

Student 15: We don't have that tendency.

Student 16: It is not easy for my fellows to understand all points clearly in English.

Student 17: Most of the students in Tanzania are good in writing than in speaking English.

From the findings one can note that half of the students were not able to discuss given tasks in English in pairs/groups. It was strange to find out that 60% of the students admitted to understand the content presented in English language earlier (question number one) but failed to discuss the same content in English in groups/pairs.

The study also investigated whether students were able to ask questions in English during teaching and learning process. Results indicated that 28 students out of 60 (46.7%) said that they were able to ask questions in English but 38 (63.3%) were not able to do so. Here are some of the reasons for them not to ask questions in English in the classrooms:

Student 1: *The language I use depends on the subject/question* (Did not answer the question).

Student 2: It becomes very difficult to ask everything in English.

Student 3: *It depends on nature of the subject* (Did not answer the question).

Student 4: Sometimes no.

Student 5: *I use both English and Kiswahili* (Double sided).

Furthermore, the study posed the same questions to assistant and senior lecturers. Results from the three assistant lecturers showed that they were able to ask questions in English.

However, two of the senior lecturers said 'no' and the reasons being students' poor background in using English as a medium of instruction from secondary schools, lack of proficiency, and low level of competency in English. It was found strange that assistant lecturers had no problems in asking questions in English while senior lecturers had. This is not normal.

Is Kiswahili a viable alternative to the English medium?

This question was addressed to students, assistant, and senior lecturers at the three Colleges. Data collected indicated that there were students who thought that Kiswahili would be a viable alternative to the English medium and others did not think so. Those who thought Kiswahili would be a viable alternative to the medium of instruction had this to say:

Student 1: It is time for Kiswahili to be used in teaching since most of the students understand the language easily.

Student 2: *It will good to be good but will could not have more knowledge from abroad since English is the worldwide language* (Incorrect grammar and meaningless sentence).

Student 3: It will increase the rate of performance.

Student 4: It will be good but it will limit the chance of employment since *Kiswahili is not a technology language* (How can a language be technology?).

Student 5: The understanding capacity and performance of students will increase.

Student 6: It will help students to understand the lesson easily.

Student 7: It could be good but Kiswahili is harder than English.

Student 8: The use of Kiswahili will make students poor in English.

Student 9: Kiswahili should be used in teaching since most of students *are understand and easy to remember* (Wrong tense).

Student 10: *It good be good but will could not have more knowledge from abroad since English is the world language* (Wrong grammar used and meaningless sentence).

Student 11: The subject *will be more known* and understandable than English (Wrong grammar used).

Student 12: The subjects *are being understood* to the students (Wrong tense).

Student 13: Students will understand and even participate in *some all* discussions because Kiswahili is simple (Wrong grammar used).

Students who preferred the use of English as a medium of instruction rather than Kiswahili at the Colleges had these to tell:

Student 1: Not all staff will be elaborated perfectly.

Student 2: If Kiswahili is used to teach at the Colleges it will minimize students' competence because English is an international language.

Student 3: It will be difficult to understand *even to go with world wide*. It needs to be internationally *so kindly English be progressed* (Complicated sentence and not meaningful).

Student 4: It should be used but not in all subjects. There should be code switching.

Student 5: Misunderstanding may increase since *Kiswahili is too narrow* some terms *have no meaning in Kiswahili* (How can a language be narrow?).

Student 6: Kiswahili is not a *competent language* in teaching Law courses because there *are a lot of terminologies* (How can a language be competent?).

Student 7: It will be difficult to translate some of the English words to the exact meaning in Kiswahili.

Student 8: It will be difficult to translate all subjects in Kiswahili.

Student 9: English will help us improve because *it is the National language of the world* (Wrong concept).

Student 10: It will be difficult to explain some concepts in Biology in Kiswahili.

Student 11: It could be difficult because most of the subjects which we study have the background of O and A levels which we studied by using English language.

Student 12: Not all cases because at university or college *is the level where by students pass all primary bases*. This should start all primary level to study Kiswahili (Complicated and meaningless sentence).

The same question was asked to assistant and senior lecturers. Four of them did not support the statement that Kiswahili should and could replace English as a viable language of instruction while one supports. Here is what they said:

Assistant Lecturer 1: Kiswahili should not replace English because in learning most issues are taught in English.

Assistant Lecturer 2: Kiswahili should not replace English as a viable language of instruction in Tanzania due to East African competition.

Assistant Lecturer 3: There are hardly books written in Kiswahili for technical subjects like law.

Assistant Lecturer 4: In the long run Kiswahili can be a technical language if

(a) lecturers are oriented in to that and, (b) most books are translated into Kiswahili.

Senior Lecturer 1: English is widely spoken all over the world. There are benefits to be fluent in both English and Kiswahili. It will be very expensive to translate all the text books, journals, etc.

Senior Lecturer 2: Research findings worldwide indicate that students learn better and acquire relevant knowledge when they use their native language.

V. DISCUSSIONS

Results from the study indicate clearly that English is used as a Language and a medium of instruction in Tanzania. It is taught as compulsory subject at primary schools while the remaining subjects are taught in Kiswahili. The situation contradicts that of secondary schools whereby all subjects are taught in English except Kiswahili. Here are the questions one might ask is, how could one expect students to master English taught as subject in primary schools and use the language as a medium of instruction when join secondary education? In the same vein, how would students in secondary schools learn all subjects in English while they were taught in Kiswahili in primary schools? How could one expect secondary school students to have good foundation in English language which is a medium of instruction at higher learning institutions? For instance, Education and Training Policy (1995) of Tanzania states that learners who complete primary school are expected to have adequately mastered English to be able to cope with it as the medium of instruction throughout secondary school. How could this be achieved while English is taught as second language in Tanzania? This result is similar to those of Brock-Utne (2004) and Puja (2003) that English to most Tanzanians is a truly foreign language that they do not feel comfortable communicating in even after having had it for nine years as language of instruction.

Findings from the study showed that students had problems in understanding and using English the medium of instruction at the selected university. It was strange to find out that most of the problems were associated with the lecturers than students themselves on one hand; on the other hand; lecturers' findings were almost similar to those of the students that they were not competent and had poor background in English. For instance, students' results showed that lecturers used broken English and others were not competent in English language. This means that even lecturers were not conversant in using English language the medium of instruction when teaching in the classrooms. In such a case, how would they teach efficiently in order for the students to understand the content presented in English? For example, all subjects in Colleges of Law and Science are taught in English. In the College of Education it is Kiswahili subject only that is taught in Kiswahili. Keeping in mind that students were not competent and conversant in English language, then how would they learn subjects taught in English and perform well? This

finding concurs with those of Malekela (2003) that language plays a crucial role in learning, and if the learner is handicapped in the language of instruction, then learning may not take place at all as the instructor or teacher and the learner will not be communicating. The results are also similar to those of Roy- Campbell (1992), Brock-Utne and Halmarsdottir (2003); Mwinsheikhe (2001) Puja (2003) and Mkwizu (2003) that students as well as lecturers in many cases are not at a level of competency in English that allows for effective learning and teaching through that medium. From teaching point of view, it is a language which enables students to understand, apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired, and to think critically and creatively.

Despite the fact that lecturers were found not competent and conversant in English, results demonstrate clearly that most of the students were not able to communicate in English in the classrooms and outside classrooms and the reason being English was difficult for them. They prefer Kiswahili to English because Kiswahili was found easier to them. Even lecturers admitted to use Kiswahili because students did not understand all contents presented in English. For instance, when students asked whether they like using English in the classrooms most of the answers given by them were not correct. That meant three things: firstly they were poor in English itself; secondly, they did not understand the question that was asked in English, and thirdly, they had poor writing skill. This is shown clearly in question number two where students' responses had many grammatical mistakes, errors, and meaningless sentences. If one looks at the following responses from the students can find that they were very poor in English.

Student 2: It helps us to be *more competence* in English conversations.

Student 3: *We are asking cooperation between students.*

Student 7: Kiswahili is *our key language* for everyone.

Student 8: I know Kiswahili *much over* English

Student 11: English is *much taught* to me.

Student 12: English is international language *due to situation.*

The question here is; if they failed to answer one simple question correctly at a time, how would they cope with content taught in English in the classrooms for two hours in each lecture? How would they discuss subject matter contents presented in English in groups and pairs while they did not understand the content itself? This result is similar to those of Rhyana (2014) that the medium of instruction has always been a key issue among educational institutions across the world.

In the study Kiswahili was found a viable alternative to the English medium because it would enable students to understand content easily and improve performance on one hand; on the other hand it would minimize students' competence in English, and become difficult to translate some

of the English words to exact meaning in Kiswahili. Take a look of the answers picked from few students' responses in question number four. Again there are many grammatical mistakes, errors, and meaningless sentences. It is difficult to believe whether the answers were provided by the university students whom some of them were at the final year of the study:

Student 2: *It will good to be good but will could not have more knowledge from abroad since English is the worldwide language.*

Student 4: *It will be good but it will limit the chance of employment since Kiswahili is not a technology language.*

Student 9: *Kiswahili should be used in teaching since most of students are understand and easy to remember.*

Student 11: *The subject will be more known and understandable than English.*

Student 12: *The subjects are being understood to the students.*

Student 13: *Students will understand and even participate in some all discussions because Kiswahili is simple.*

From the evidence provided it shows that students had problems not only in understanding English language itself, but also in writing correct and meaningful sentences. For instance, an Education Policy (1995) state that Kiswahili is the medium of instruction at primary education while at tertiary education is taught as option. This means that if English language is not taught from lower levels of education how would students be able to cope with it at higher levels? There is no way one can expect students to become competent when they lack basic commands of English language. Therefore, there is a need for the government to rethink about English the medium of instruction to be used from nursery schools to tertiary education. Alternatively, the government might decide to use Kiswahili which is national language, common, and understandable to all students in the country and English to be taught as compulsory subject.

Furthermore, lecturers in the study had different views on the use of Kiswahili. They did not agree Kiswahili to replace English because in learning most issues are taught in English at the Universities, and there are hardly books written in Kiswahili for technical subjects like law. It was also found that in the long run Kiswahili could be a technical language if lecturers are oriented into that and, most books are translated into Kiswahili.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study investigated on the use of English as a Language and Medium of instruction in Higher Learning Institutions. Results indicated that some of the lecturers were not competent and conversant in using English when teaching in the classrooms. Students had serious problems in

understanding and using English the language the medium of instruction. They were not competent and conversant as expected. Most of their responses were written in poor English in such a way that it was difficult to grasp the intended meaning. It was also strange to find out that some of the third year students were not able to write correct and meaningful sentences while they were about to complete their studies. The problem to some extent was contributed by the Education Policy whereby Kiswahili is used as a medium of instruction in primary schools and abruptly switched to English at secondary schools and tertiary education. However, Kiswahili was found a viable medium of instruction to majority of the students. Lecturers insisted the use of English because it would be expensive to translate all the text books, journals, and other related educational materials in English. It can be concluded that students learn better and acquire relevant knowledge when they use their native language. Therefore, there is a need for the government to have a clear policy on language of instruction in its education system in order to achieve aims, goals, and objectives of education that would lead to quality education as other nations in the world.

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