

# Evaluation of Implementation of the Revised Kiswahili Curriculum: A Case of a Teachers' College in Kenya

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## Abstract

The revised Kiswahili curriculum is a curriculum in which Kiswahili subject is compulsory and a teacher trainee is expected to pass in the subject in order to be awarded the certificate of Primary Teacher Education (PTE). This is opposite to the previous Kiswahili curriculum where it was not a must for one to pass in Kiswahili to be awarded PTE certificate. The evaluation study aimed at providing important information to curriculum implementers and management for making informed decisions on teaching, learning, assessment process and improvement of the subject. Combinations of ex post facto and naturalistic designs were utilized. Many of the participants believed that to great extent the curriculum was realistic and practical; and the implementation was effective though with some difficulties. It was concluded that if the all the hindrances were eliminated then the implementation would be perfected.

**Key words:** evaluation, implementation, revised, curriculum, Kiswahili, teachers, college, Kenya

## 1. Introduction

Kiswahili is an indigenous African language of Bantu origin spoken by over 65% of Kenya's population (Heine, quoted in Mazrui & Mazrui, 1995: 19. Kiswahili language is used in East and Central Africa. Kiswahili is the national language of Kenya and official language according to the Constitution of Kenya 2010 (Republic of Kenya, 2010). Kiswahili has been a compulsory and examinable subject from the first year of primary school up to the last year of secondary school and in primary teacher training colleges. This language is also used for instruction in the lower primary school in urban areas and in areas where it is the common. The main advantage of Kiswahili in Kenya is that it is considered ethnically 'neutral' (Mazrui & Tidy, 1984:300). It is not associated with any particular ethnic community.

The revised Kiswahili syllabus in primary teacher training colleges in Kenya expect learners at the end of their course to, among other things, be able to: listen with understanding, express themselves clearly, logically and coherently in writing and speech, to read with comprehension, and to communicate appropriately and be able to teach the subject effectively (Kenya Institute of Education, 2004).

In research done by Olasya (1988), it was found that over 60% of the teachers in one of Kenya's provinces had not attended any seminar or course for the teaching of Kiswahili for several years. This could adversely affect the quality of instruction and learning of the language. However, this evaluation it was establish whether or not it was one of key concerns of the subject trainers.

In some books, the content is not well graded (Olasya, 1988). This could be hindrance to effective implementation of the Kiswahili curriculum. This evaluation was to establish whether quality of recommended Kiswahili textbooks was of concern to both teacher trainees and Kiswahili lecturers in the college and the possible remedy to the challenge.

In a study done by Salim (1992), it was found that there was an average of one book for every four or more learners. This evaluation was to establish whether learning materials were one of the main challenges faced by teacher trainees in learning under the revised Kiswahili curriculum. Hence, the management was to make informed decision.

Many of the Kiswahili teachers may not have had good basis of the subject prior to their training (Kangatunyi, 1990). With the fact that Kiswahili is a compulsory subject in primary teacher training colleges in Kenya, many teacher trainees could have become Kiswahili teachers although they would under different circumstances have chosen to teach other subjects. This state of affairs could have likely affected the quality of Kiswahili teaching and learning. This evaluation sought to establish the teacher trainees' background in Kiswahili subject and their preference for the revised Kiswahili curriculum. This was to assist the subject lecturers and the college management in making informed decision on implementing the revised Kiswahili curriculum. From the literature reviewed, there was no systematic evaluation of the implementation of the revise Kiswahili curriculum that had been done in the college or even the previous curriculum. The studies referred here were based on pure research not on evaluation. They were on general learning and teaching of the subject in the country. Since some of the studies were done a lot of changes could have occurred, however, they formed comparison basis of the findings and the conclusions, bearing in mind that the facts could have not changed.

## 2. Purpose of the Evaluation

Though Kiswahili was a compulsory subject in the former curriculum, it was not mandatory for one to pass in the subject so as to be awarded the primary teacher education (P1) certificate. In the former curriculum, the teacher trainees in the college had often performed poorly in the subject during the Primary Teacher Education (PTE) examination at the college. The subject was tested in a single paper during the national examination. In the revised curriculum the subject is compulsory, in addition it is mandatory for one to pass in it in order to be awarded PTE (P1) certificate. The subject is tested in two papers; paper 1 and paper 2. Paper 1 is mainly grammar while paper 2 is literature and methodology.

Through literature review it was established that there was no systematic and comprehensive evaluation that had been done on the implementation of the revised Kiswahili curriculum at the college. An evaluation study could provide important information to curriculum implementers and management for making informed decisions on teaching, learning, assessment process and improvement of the subject. This evaluation could help curriculum implementers to make concrete decisions concerning implementation and improvement of the revised Kiswahili curriculum. Information on the curriculum objectives, implementation, strength, weakness, challenges, attitudes and improvement of the curriculum were sought. With such information a variety of decision alternatives were provided. If the best decision alternative could be used, then there could be improved implementation of the curriculum. As well it could be possible to predict the performance in the subject.

## 3. Evaluation Questions

The study sought to respond to the following questions:

1. To what extent are the objectives of the revised Kiswahili curriculum realistic, achievable and relevant?
2. To what extent is the revised Kiswahili curriculum being effectively implemented?
3. What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the revised Kiswahili curriculum?
4. What challenges are lecturers and teacher trainees experiencing in implementing the revised Kiswahili curriculum?
5. What are the attitudes of teacher trainees and Kiswahili lecturers towards the revised Kiswahili curriculum?
6. What are the recommendations for the improvement of the implementation of the revised Kiswahili curriculum?

## 4. Research Methodology

This evaluation used a combination of ex post facto and naturalistic designs. According to Kerlinger (1986), ex post facto design is recommended for educational and social studies. It can be used to establish the cause and effect. As far as this design is concerned variables such as Kiswahili entry grade, entry aggregate grade, sex of student, year of study and the like were evaluated in relation to their effects on the implementation of the revised Kiswahili curriculum.

Naturalistic design is used where the evaluator studies an educational activity as it occurs naturally without manipulating, or controlling it (Ogula, 2002). In this evaluation case study design as a type of naturalistic design was adopted. A case study involves an exploration of an event, activity or individuals over time, through detailed in depth data collection from multiple sources. In this, data was collected from the lecturers of Kiswahili, teacher trainees and from documents. This gave first hand information of what was really happening at the ground in relation to the implementation of the revised Kiswahili curriculum.

There were about 600 teacher trainees and 7 Kiswahili lecturers in the college. In 2006 about 300 teacher trainees graduated having gone through the revised Kiswahili curriculum. For the evaluation the Kiswahili subject lecturers were involved. All the teacher trainees in the college and those who graduated in 2006 under the revised curriculum qualified to participate.

To ensure that the first year and second year teacher trainees were adequately represented in the sample, stratified sampling method was applied. Then simple random sampling method was applied to get 30 teacher trainees from 2<sup>nd</sup> year and 30 teacher trainees from 1<sup>st</sup>. Systematic random sampling was used to get 30 participants from those teacher trainees who graduated in 2006. Six Kiswahili lecturers were included in the sample; this was because one of them was involved in data collection and analysis.

Three instruments were used in this evaluation. These included questionnaire for teacher trainees, interview guide for lecturers and a document analysis guide on teacher trainees' details. The questionnaires were administered directly to participants through the office of dean of curriculum. The questionnaires were given and filled immediately to avoid consultations. The interview guides were administered by the evaluator to the participants. The evaluator used the document analysis guide to extract the required information on teacher trainees in relation to the revised Kiswahili curriculum.

In data analysis, the data was classified according to demographic variables, which included year of study, sex, Kiswahili subject grade at KCSE among others. The demographic variables were analyzed using frequencies and

percentages. Tables were used to demonstrate the distribution of variables. To test the stated hypotheses means, standard deviations, standard errors, t-test, one-way analysis (ANOVA), regression analysis and correlation statistical methods were used. For closed ended items frequencies and percentages were calculated. The open-ended items were coded, and then the frequencies calculated.

## 5. Results

### 5.1 *The Extent to which the Objectives of the Revised Kiswahili Curriculum are Realistic and Achievable*

A total 57.8 percent of the teacher trainees believed that the curriculum was either practical or very practical. The Kiswahili lecturers were equally divided on whether the curriculum is practical and achievable, that is 50 percent were for and 50 percent were against. Majority of the teacher trainees' that is, 77.8 percent jointly rated the curriculum as either very relevant or relevant. While majority of the Kiswahili lecturers that is, 75 percent believed not all aspects of the revised Kiswahili curriculum were realistic. The Kiswahili lecturers unanimously agreed that all important topics were included in the revised Kiswahili curriculum. While 75 percent of the Kiswahili lecturers believed that all topics included in the curriculum were necessary.

The Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between the teacher trainees' Kiswahili entry grade and their Kiswahili performance in PTE examination were calculated. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient  $r$  was 0.248 which indicated there was a weak positive linear correlation. The  $P$  value was 0.232 which is greater than  $P = 0.05$ , hence did not reject the null hypothesis. And it was concluded that, there was no sufficient reason to reject the null hypothesis that, there is no significant relationship between teacher trainees' Kiswahili entry grades and their Kiswahili performance in PTE examination. Therefore, the Kiswahili entry grade did influence the Kiswahili performance in PTE examination.

On the relationship between teacher trainees' subject combination (arts or sciences) and their Kiswahili performance in PTE examination, the one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results showed that, the observed value of  $F$  was 0.158 and  $P$  value was 0.478. The  $P$  value was greater than  $P = 0.05$ , hence did not reject the null hypothesis. It was concluded that, there was no sufficient reason to believe that there was any significant relationship between teacher trainees' subject combination and their Kiswahili performance in PTE examination.

The Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between the teacher trainees' entry grades and their Kiswahili performance in PTE examination showed that the correlation coefficient  $r$  was 0.227 which indicated there was a weak positive linear correlation. The  $P$  value was 0.254 which is greater than  $P = 0.05$ , hence did not reject the null hypothesis. And it was concluded that, there was no sufficient reason to reject the null hypothesis, that, there is no significant relationship between teacher trainees' aggregate entry grades and their Kiswahili performance in PTE examination.

### 5.2 *The Extent to which the Revised Kiswahili Curriculum was Being Effectively Implemented*

Majority of the teacher trainees that is 75.6 percent said either they had learnt a lot or had learnt something. A total of 91.1 percent of the teacher trainees said the college was fair, good or very good in its preparedness for the implementation of the curriculum in terms of teaching personnel. While a total of 84 percent of the teacher trainees said the college was fair, good or very good in its preparedness for the implementation of the curriculum in terms of teaching facilities. The Kiswahili lecturers were equally divided on whether the examination criteria was taking care of all objectives or topics that is 50 percent were for and 50 percent against. Majority of the Kiswahili lecturers that is 75 percent rated the implementation of the curriculum as above average, where 25 percent rated it as average.

The Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between teacher trainees' Kiswahili performance in mid-course examination and their Kiswahili performance in PTE examination indicated that, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient  $r$  was 0.460 which tended to depict there was a strong positive linear correlation. The  $P$  value was 0.016 which was less than  $P = 0.05$ , hence rejected the null hypothesis. It was concluded that, there was a significant relationship between Kiswahili performance in mid-course examination and Kiswahili performance in PTE examination.

The Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between teacher trainees' Kiswahili performance in mock examination and their Kiswahili performance in PTE examination showed the Pearson Correlation Coefficient  $r$  was 0.795 which pointed out there was a strong positive linear correlation. The  $P$  value was 0.000 which is less than  $P = 0.05$ , hence rejected the null hypothesis. And it was concluded, there was a significant relationship between teacher trainees' Kiswahili performance in mock examination and their Kiswahili performance in PTE examination.

### 5.3 *The Main Strengths and Weakness of the Revised Kiswahili Curriculum*

The strengths identified by the Kiswahili lecturers included the inclusion of the social linguistics (language register); examination emphasis on methodology; and separation of examination papers into paper 1 and paper 2. The teacher trainees identified several strength which included: radio programmes enhanced learning of Kiswahili, it was easy to understand, simplified curriculum, enriched vocabulary variety, it was well organized, it took care of emerging issues, it had a lot to be learnt, it was practical, different classification of nouns, it was

relevant to real life situation, there were approved books for the curriculum, examination emphasis on methodology, among others. While the weakness identified by Kiswahili lecturers was there was too much to be covered. At the same time teacher trainees noted that: it was too wide, it was exam or theory tailored in expense of applicability, assumed every learner had a good basis of the subject and inadequate time for the curriculum among others. The strengths could boost the implementation of the curriculum on the other hand the weaknesses could hinder the implementation process.

#### *5.4 Challenges Lecturers and Teacher Trainees Experience in Implementing the Revised Kiswahili Curriculum*

The subject lecturers identified challenges which included lack of adequate books and learning materials; lack of adequate time and lack of adequate updates on new trends in learning and teaching of Kiswahili; while the teacher trainees identified cited the following challenges: much time was required to cover the content, mother tongue/ un-standardized Kiswahili interference and lack of adequate Kiswahili learning materials e.g. textbooks among others. The identified challenges could have been a drawback to the process of the implementation of the curriculum. The resolution to the challenges could boost implementation of the curriculum.

#### *5.5 The Attitudes of the Teacher Trainees and Kiswahili lecturers towards the Revised Kiswahili Curriculum*

Positive attitudes towards the curriculum were portrayed by both teacher trainees and the subject lecturers. The teacher trainees express positive attitudes towards the revised Kiswahili curriculum. The lowest rated attitude item by teacher trainees was 3.60 and the highest was 4.56 out of the highest possible mark of 5. The Kiswahili lecturers expressed positive attitudes toward the curriculum. The lowest rated attitude item by Kiswahili lecturers was 4.00 and the highest was 5.00. A total of 96 percent of the teacher trainees would include Kiswahili in their choices of subject if it were optional.

The one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on relationship between teacher trainees' Kiswahili entry grades and their attitudes towards Kiswahili subject showed that, the observed value of F was 1.950 and P value was 0.307. The P value was greater than  $P = 0.05$ , hence did not reject the null hypothesis. It was concluded that, there was no sufficient reason to believe that there was any significant relationship between teacher trainees' Kiswahili entry grades and their attitudes towards Kiswahili subject. On relating teacher trainees' aggregate entry grade and their attitudes towards Kiswahili subject, the one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated the observed value of F was 1.095 and P value was 0.382. The P value was greater than  $P = 0.05$ , hence did not reject the null hypothesis. It was concluded that, there was no sufficient reason to believe that there was any significant relationship between teacher trainees' aggregate entry grades and their attitudes towards Kiswahili subject.

The t-test results on relationship between teacher trainees' sex and their attitudes towards Kiswahili subject revealed that, the calculated t-value was 0.788. The assumed t -value for 43 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance was 0.791. The calculated t-value was less in absolute value than the assumed t value; hence the null hypothesis was not rejected. It was concluded that, sex did not influence the teacher trainees' attitudes towards Kiswahili subject. On relationship between teacher trainees' year of study and their attitudes towards Kiswahili subject, the t-test results of the hypothesis revealed that, the calculated t - value was 1.259; the assumed t -value for 43 degree of freedom, at 0.05 level of significance was 1.232. The calculate t - value was greater in absolute value than the assumed t - value; hence the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, it was concluded that the year of study influenced the attitudes towards Kiswahili subject.

On relationship between teacher trainees' attitudes and their Kiswahili lecturers' attitudes towards Kiswahili subject, a regression analysis with teacher trainees' attitudes as the dependent variable and the lectures' attitudes as the independent variable revealed that Probability (F – Statistics) was 0.866. This was greater than  $P = 0.05$ , hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Then it was concluded that Kiswahili lecturers' attitudes did not influence the teacher trainees' attitudes towards Kiswahili subject. Further it was found that  $R^2 = 0.0052$ , this meant that, only 0.52 percent of the dependent variable was explained by the independent variable. This was very minimal and could be neglected.

On whether to make some subject compulsory or not, the Kiswahili lecturers were equally divided on the issue, that is 50 percent were for it while 50 percent of them were against. The Kiswahili lecturers observed that, teacher trainees were more aware of the drawbacks of the curriculum. And the the trainees tended to read for examination in expense of application of the knowledge due to much workload. With positive attitudes, it could be concluded that, the curriculum implementation could be successful if all the hindrances were removed.

#### *5.6 Suggestions for improvement of the implementation of the revised Kiswahili curriculum*

The Kiswahili lecturers' suggestions included publishers to accept new authors for Kiswahili; reduce content and emphasize on methodology; organize seminar for Kiswahili lecturers and provision of adequate learning materials among others. The teacher trainees gave the following suggestions among others: Kiswahili lessons be increased; provide adequate learning materials; provide more opportunities for practicing Kiswahili; eliminate unapproved textbooks from learning institutions; reduce the content to be covered; set books reduce to either novel or play; emphasize grammar; organize in-service courses for Kiswahili teachers; publish more approved

Kiswahili reading materials and government to publish and distribute Kiswahili books. The implementation of the suggestions provided could improve the implementation of the curriculum.

#### 6. Conclusions of the Evaluation

- a. The data collected tended to confirm to a large extent that the revised curriculum was applicable and feasible; however, there were some discontentment. Therefore there was need for the curriculum developers to polish up those areas which could have needed revision for effective implementation.
- b. It was established that there was substantial effort in implementing the curriculum; however, it was not perfect. Therefore there was need for the curriculum developers and implementers to establish the hindrances for perfect implementation of the curriculum and eliminate them.
- c. There were weaknesses and challenges faced in the implementation of the curriculum. Therefore there was need for conscious effort to eliminate the weaknesses and overcome the challenges for effective implementation of the curriculum.
- d. Positive attitudes towards the curriculum were portrayed by both teacher trainees and the subject lecturers. With positives attitude, it could be concluded that, the curriculum implementation could be successful if all other hindrances were removed.
- e. Suggestions for improvement of the implementation of the curriculum were given. Therefore it was concluded that with the application of the best alternative solutions, the implementation could succeed.

#### 7. Recommendations

- a. The curriculum developers should consider revising the Kiswahili curriculum with an aim of making it manageable and more applicable for effective implementation.
- b. The management should organize or facilitate update seminars and workshops for Kiswahili lecturers.
- c. The management should provide adequate facilities and materials like books for the implementation of the curriculum.

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