

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

## Role of Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction in Rural ECDE Centres in Nandi County, Kenya

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### **Abstract:**

*A mother tongue-based education system with a sufficient number of well trained teachers and instructional materials may not fully implemented if the Language instruction policy is weak or ill thought-out. Despite this policy stating that a child's native language be used only until Class 3, teachers do switch the instruction without any concern. The purpose of this study was to establish the role of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in rural ECDE centres in Nandi County. The study adopted the interdependence theory by Cummins (1979). The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study targeted 4 Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (QASO), 200 head teachers and 400 teachers from 200 ECDE centres in the county. The sample size was 241 respondents. Simple random sampling technique was used to select ECDE centers to take part in the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 79 head teachers and 4 Sub County QASOs. Simple random sampling technique was used to obtain 158 teachers from the sampled schools. The instruments for data collection were interviews and questionnaires. Questionnaires were administered to the ECDE teachers, while interview schedules were administered to the county Quality assurance officers and head teachers. The instruments were piloted in Uasin Gishu County that share similar characteristic as the study area. Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to test reliability of the instruments. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. There was a positive influence of mother tongue as a medium on classroom instruction ( $r = .200, p < 0.05$ ), which implies that the more the mother tongue is used as a medium the classroom instruction improved. The role of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in rural ECDE centres in Nandi County was to create opportunities for students to develop effective cognitive skills. The Ministry of Education should ensure that schools should comply with language of instruction policy which states that mother tongue or language of the catchment area should be the medium of instruction in preprimary. Teacher training institutions should help teacher trainees to understand the benefits of mother tongue and train teachers on how to design and develop relevant mother tongue instructional materials.*

**Keywords:** Role, mother tongue, medium, instruction

### **1. Introduction**

Historically, mother tongue instruction has been used by many ex- British colonies to encourage separation and unequal development amongst people of different races (Heugh, 2006). Today, mother tongue education is applied in many countries, including South Africa on the basis of reducing poor performance (Dumatog & Dekker, 2003), increasing parent involvement (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009), promoting bilingualism/multilingualism (Chick & McKay 2001) and promoting equal schooling for all learners (Heugh, 2003). Mother tongue instruction creates opportunities for students to develop effective cognitive skills, which serve as a strong base to successfully learn a second language. Thus, "despite serious discrepancies in expenditure between white and black children, there was surprisingly significant education success for black South African learners before 1976" (Heugh, 2002). Heugh (2002) further noted that after the 1976 Soweto Uprising the period of learning through the mother tongue declined steadily to a point where home language instruction was reduced to the first three years. The reduction of the mother tongue period for black learners heralded "a cycle of ever-decreasing educational competency" (Heugh, 2000).

The involvement of parents in the educational activities of their children contributes to their good performance in schools. This is supported by O'Connor & Geiger (2009) in their study of working with English Second (or other) Language (ESOL) learners in the Western Cape that when parents help their children with school work at home, there is good progress towards children's learning. Parents cannot help their children with school work if they do not understand English, or are unable to read and write English (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009). Hence, the use of a familiar language for instruction facilitates parental involvement and strengthens community support for education (Pfleppson, 2011). Parental involvement as defined by Kohl, Lengua, & McMahon (2000) encompasses three areas: direct contact with teachers, parental actions at school, and parental actions at home.

Dumatog & Dekker (2003) further indicate that parents are able to become their children's consultants for the daily inquiries that their children have from school and this is "great compared to being shamed by their lack of knowledge of English". The use of mother tongue in the early years offers children opportunities to learn two or more languages. Chick & McKay (2001) emphasize

bilingual/multilingual programmes on the account of maintaining the first language, which is used as a base for learning another language. Effective bilingual/multilingual programmes help children to be able to read and write through their mother tongue and the target language. This is what makes education policies in many countries (e.g. Nigeria, Tanzania and Zimbabwe) strongly support the use of mother tongue medium of instruction and/or bilingual instruction (Meirim, Jordaan & Kallenbach 2010). If the First Additional Language (FAL) is given priority at the expense of the home language, the First Additional Language will not be adequately learned, hence, language proficiency for both languages will be compromised (Molepo, 2008). Thus, discouraging children from developing their mother tongues urges the practice of monolingualism as opposed to bilingualism/multilingualism.

The Middle Years Programme in Switzerland (2004) further maintains that a genuine development of mother tongue and the acquisition of a second language have the capacity to enhance students' cognitive abilities and can aid understanding when concepts are studied in both languages. Cummins (1996) similarly maintains that bilingual/multilingual education has a positive effect on a child's social and cognitive development. Studies conducted by Hakuta, Friedman & Diaz (1987) demonstrate that bilingual/multilingual children perform better on tests of analytical reasoning, concept formation and cognitive flexibility than children whose L2 is learned at the expense of the L1 (Ndamba, 2008).

Mother tongue education during early learning is used as a valuable resource in the promotion of equal access to meaningful education. The adoption of a more appropriate school language (the mother tongue) makes a positive difference and this is equal to making educational opportunities more equitable for all learners (Benson, 2005). Heugh, Benson, Bogale & Yohannes (2007) emphasize that mother tongue medium of instruction reinforces the equitable delivery of quality education to which all learners have access. However, when the L1 is not valued and supported by the education system, the child's sense of identity was completely destroyed.

Mother tongue is the language that a youngster gains first from the mother before joining school. It is additionally the language utilized by the dominant part of individuals in a given territory or group. Learning occurred at all times and anyplace and it was the obligation of the entire family and group to instruct kids not at all like today when the obligation has been left principally to educators (Bogonko, 1992). In Kenya, there are more than 42 groups, implying that there are more than 42 languages. Kenyan groups had an arrangement of instruction called 'Customary Arrangement of Training' which gave indigenous instruction to kids. The principle objective of indigenous training was to transmit and save family and group society. Training was intended to bestow crucial learning, aptitudes, and qualities to children.

The utilization of primary dialect as a language of instruction makes showing and learning compelling. As indicated by Walter (2010), learning is compelling when both learners and the instructors talk well the language of instruction. Sadly, does not happen in creating nations like Kenya. Walter includes that creating nations have kept on utilizing provincial languages as essential languages of training from the soonest years of formal school, and educators in the nations are likewise poor in the language and children talk little of the language or not under any condition when have they began school. This is the circumstance in Kenya today. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) includes that demoralizing children from building up their Mother tongue is an infringement of the privileges of the kid. As per UNESCO (2005) the utilization of primary language as a medium of instruction helps kids' certainty and scholastic execution. This implies kids who begin their training in their Mother tongue have a decent begin, and perform better, than the individuals who begin school in an outside language.

As per Fullan (2001), for educators to actualize another change in instruction like the language approach, they ought to comprehend its targets and significance and in the event that they don't, they will oppose the development. This implies another change if presented in a random way won't bring the sought changes. An instructive change is a dynamic procedure including numerous associating variables and if one or a greater amount of the variables are conflicting with the usage, the procedure will be less successful. The more factors supporting the implementation, the more change in practice will be accomplished. Thus this study sought to establish the implementation of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in ECDE.

UNESCO (2005) includes that consistently, no less than 10 languages vanish and of the 6,000 presently talked on the planet, about half are undermined. To advance training in first language and to enhance the nature of instruction, 21st February of consistently was proclaimed by UNESCO Global Mother Language Day. The languages of Kenya Bill, 2013 was likewise gone to secure the differences of languages of the general population of Kenya and to advance the improvement and utilization of indigenous languages (Administration of Kenya, 2013). Instruction approaches in Kenya bolster society based training. As indicated by Sessional paper No.1 of 2005, training in Kenya ought to advance admiration for and improvement of Kenya's rich and shifted societies (Legislature of Kenya, 2005). Children ought to learn utilizing socially important instructional materials to offer them some assistance with appreciating their way of life and advance a smooth move from home to class. Early Adolescence Advancement and Training (ECDE) National Strategy System (2006) additionally asserts that pre-essential instruction ought to be founded on the way of life of the kid to guarantee that the way of life of the group is transmitted to kids (Republic of Kenya, 2006).

As per language arrangement of training, primary language ought to be the medium of instruction in the early years of school to protect Kenyan society (Legislature of Kenya, 1976). Nonetheless, it has been found that numerous pre-grade schools in country territories in Kenya use English language as a medium of instruction (Administration of Kenya, 1999). Benson (2004) comments that creating nations Kenya included have numerous languages, yet they keep on permitting a solitary outside language to command the training part. As indicated by Skutnabb-Kangas (2000), this is known as "submersion" that is showing kids through a language that they don't talk. Benson keeps on reporting that when submersion is aggravated by different variables like ineffectively prepared educators, inadequately composed educational programs, and absence of instructional assets, it makes educating adapting exceptionally troublesome for instructors and children. The mother tongue-based education has sound pedagogical advantages and

various developing countries have attempted to institute various models of it (Benson 2004b; Trudell 2005; Kosonen 2009; Sure and Ogechi 2009). However, for its effective use in the Kenyan system, a number of challenges need to be addressed.

The role of language as a medium of instruction in promoting an effective teaching and learning is an issue that has occupied many scholars all over the world for many years (Deyi, Simon, Ngcobo, & Thole 2007). This role of language as a medium of instruction has been a concern mostly in countries where immigrant children are in the minority such as United States and Canada (Krashen, 1981 as cited by Deyi, *et al.*, 2007). It is in these countries where research has been widely conducted and a number of legislations have been passed and amended throughout the years. Despite such developments, debates on the use of language persist. Kenya's language policy is however weakened by its assumption that language is a discrete entity whose use can be manipulated. Despite this policy stating that a child's native language be utilized just until Class 3, educators and learners will do the switch with no worry. When policy lays down strict limits on how language should be used trainers neglects the everyday reality of usage and largely becomes irrelevant to them and unresponsive to their needs. This therefore made the researcher to establish the role of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in rural ECDE centres in Nandi County.

### 1.1. Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the interdependence theory by Cummins (1979) to explain the positive transfer of literacy skills from L1 to L2. Cummins argues that the level of literacy competence in L2 depends on competence on L1 at the time L2 teaching begins intensively. Thus, if an education system submerges learners in L2 without first trying to further develop the skill they already have in L1, the school risks impeding their competency in L2 for years to come, while also limiting continued, autonomous development of their L1. This is because the sustained use of a second language of instruction in schools negatively impacts the way children learn to think, thus interfering with their cognitive development. Wigglesworth and Simpson (2008) support the idea that a child's initial acquisition of language is vital to their learning how to think.

In reference to Jim Cummin's theory of language exchange, she contends that learners have the capacity to exchange intellectual aptitudes from L1 to L2 adapting however she alerts that exchange from L1 to L2 must be conceivable if L1 is adequately settled. In African instruction frameworks on the other hand, the issue that may block L1 mastering is deficiently settled orthographies, for all the L1 consequently learners are not liable to accomplish adequacy in their L1. Likewise, they contend that learners see better in a recognizable language and have the capacity to partake in the learning procedure. New languages power instructors to utilize traditional and teacher-centred teaching methods, for example, chorus, repetition, memorization and recall and learners are diminished to detached audience members (Alidou and Brockute 2006).

African states have received changed models to the utilization of indigenous/postcolonial languages as media of instruction. Some have received the subtractive models where learners are inundated into the utilization of indigenous language from early school years, others withdrawn (Uganda and Zambia) where children obtain indigenous language after pre-school then shift to the use English but decline to adopt in Tanzania. Alidou *et al.*, (2006) advocate for a movement to neighborhood languages at an early stage and prescribe that it reached out to a later stage however much as could reasonably be expected for better results. One of the focuses brought up for Primary language use for instruction is that vernacular can advance etymological abilities that encourage the obtaining of indigenous languages (L2) at a later phase of the learning procedure. Learners' language abilities and skill in their home language can be further produced for use in formal scholastic connections all the more particularly in perusing and composing for inventive and psychologically difficult purposes (Heugh 2006).

Cummins (2001) states that when folks and different parental figures have the capacity to invest energy with their children and let them know stories or examine issues with them in a manner that adds to their mother tongue vocabulary and ideas; kids come to class very much arranged to take in the second language. Children acquire the first language by picking it up from their parents or caregivers around them – this makes them learn how to listen, understand and speak the language used in their social environment (Archarya, 2009). The children's experience of their mother tongue from home based learning may not be sufficient to provide them with the academic knowledge (such as reading and writing) that is required of that language.

As indicated by the approach, the medium of instruction in provincial pre-essential and lower grade schools ought to be primary language; Kiswahili is to be the medium of direction in urban zones of blended groups, while English ought to be the medium of instruction in none indigenous groups. The National Advisory group on Instructive Goals and arrangements prescribed that to safeguard the Kenyan society, vernacular languages ought to be the medium of instruction in country pre-essential and lower elementary schools (Legislature of Kenya, 1976). This is on account of primary language is effectively lost in the early years of school and when kids lose their first language, they likewise lose their way of life and self-personality (Cummins, 2001).

Today in numerous families in Kenya, children are not told stories in mother tongue which is an imperative medium of instruction. Regardless of the numerous advantages of utilization of mother tongue as a language of instruction and the language approach plainly expressing that mother tongue or language of the catchment range ought to be utilized as a medium of instruction in preprimary and lower elementary schools in Kenya, the strategy is yet to be actualized in numerous schools. Research in the academic literature, reported that bilingualism/multilingualism as opposed to monolingual schooling offers significant pedagogical advantages to both teachers and learners (Cummins, 2000; Baker, 2001; CAL, 2001). In Kenya, the part of instilling qualities in children has been left to educators; the instructors who are come up short on and de-persuaded. The grandparents, who have sufficient indigenous of the stories, tunes, and adages as they get old, go on with the stories and axioms that are rich with indigenous learning. Consequently, there is have to protect the indigenous collecting so as to learn the stories, melodies, and precepts and compose books for children. Be that as it may, the principle test is absence of assets for doing the superb employment. Stories with characters that had corrupt practices

were likewise described in mother tongue to children. Through the stories described in mother tongue, children effectively gained estimations of graciousness, liberality, and affection.

In other words, classes with bilingual/multilingual education promote effective interaction between teachers and learners and the environment undoubtedly encourages what Quane & Glanz (2010) call 'active learning'. This exposes children to learning through English as the medium of instruction; hence, the need for a strong foundation in the mother tongue is significant (Cummins, 2001). This is what makes a child arrive at school with knowledge of his/her mother tongue, an opportunity, which according to Cummins (2001) may be used by schools to build on what children already know. Additionally, despite the fact that studies have obviously demonstrated that when a second language is utilized as a medium of instruction in ahead of schedule years of school the outcomes are poor, numerous schools have kept on utilizing a second language as the medium of instruction.

## 2. Literature Review

Learning to read and write is easier in a familiar language. It makes reading and writing easier in the target language. Thomas & Collier (2004) emphasize that children may experience cognitive difficulties in their second language (L2) if they do not reach a certain threshold of literacy in their first language (L1). Thus, literacy, according to Pretorius (2002), may either function as a key to academic achievement or remains impenetrable barrier to access higher education. MacKenzie (2008) asserts that everywhere in the world, children who learn through their mother tongue are able to learn to read and write efficiently. Nolasco (2010) highly recommends mother tongue for beginner learners as it enables them to immediately construct and explain their world without fear of making mistakes.

Teaching children to read in their first language helps them to learn to read in the second language. A good example to this effect is supported by Craig, Hull, Haggart & Crowder (2001) when they assert that story reading is the main basis for helping children connect and experience prior knowledge with the larger world of text. Thus, through stories, learners are afforded opportunities to practice working out meaning through a context (Gauteng Department of Education, 2001). Loukia (2006) adds that a story reading book is also good when complemented with pictures. She further argues that pictures in a story reading are better associated with words. Thus, a reading story, according to Loukia (2006) is more memorable if it is related to a sequence of pictures.

The theory of reading is also supported by Jackson (2003), drawing on Vygotsky's notion of spontaneous and scientific concepts. According to Vygotsky (1986), spontaneous concepts are learnt from one's home environment whereas scientific concepts are learnt from school. Thus, it implies that spontaneous concepts are learned unconsciously through everyday experiences, whilst scientific concepts are schooled concepts that are mediated through cognitive academic language (Jackson, 2003). Thus, it is evident that mother tongue education plays a vital role during early childhood learning. It offers learners the best introduction to literacy and helps them to acquire English as a second language. The reality to this effect is revealed by the impact of L1 literacy knowledge on L2 reading development (Bernhardt, 2005; Koda, 2005, 2007). Research (e.g. Carson, Carrel, Silberstein, Kroll & Kuehn, 1990; Upton & Lee-Thompson, 2001) shows clearly that reading in a second language enables readers to access their first language and often use their L1 as a reading strategy.

When learners are given more opportunities for reading in the L1, they stand a good chance of improving their reading skills and language proficiency. However, when children begin reading through a second language, they are at risk of encountering reading difficulties in their home language and the target language (Verhoeven, 1990). A good example to this effect is provided by Williams' (1998) study of "straight for English" approach in Zambia, which showed that children in their third year of school barely read because they were supposed to learn through a second language, English as their medium of instruction. Based on the views and examples mentioned above, it is evident therefore that teaching children to read through their first language helps them to learn to read in their second language (Rasana, 2002).

Learners need to write in order to establish their understanding of curricular concepts. However, getting low proficient English second language learners to write in the L2 classroom can be a daunting task. Thus, Stapa & Majid (2009) emphasize that writing in the second language classroom can be demoralizing to learners when the process of generating ideas is far more complicated. Therefore, they insist on the use of L1 to assist learners in generating ideas for L2 writing. They further argue that allowing learners to generate ideas in the L1 helps them to identify the linguistic structures that assisted in transferring their ideas into the L2.

Thus, L2 writing capitalizes much on the L1 available resources to develop accuracy in writing. This idea is supported by Vethamani (2004) who advocate that accuracy in writing can be developed by exposing learners to their mother tongue literature. The significant role of mother tongue in facilitating writing is also supported by different research studies (Woodall, 2002) which revealed that writers use their first language (L1) while writing in L2. In the case of experiencing cognitive overload while writing in the L2, writers are said to apply what (Manchón, Roca de Larios & Murphy, 2000) call "back-tracking" as a means to prevent cognitive overload (reverting to L1 use). This makes L1 useful when communicating ideas that are abstract.

Stapa & Majid (2009) argue that generating ideas for writing is crucial and they further indicate that "it falls in the realm of the pre-writing stage which evokes complex cognitive skills." Thus, when learners decide on what they want to write about, they use long-term memory to retrieve information and that is where they rely on their L1 to release knowledge and experiences stored in the long-term memory. On this note, Thomas & Collier (2003) contend that cognitive and academic development in the first language is essential to the development of second language. Therefore, it is vital for children to be proficient in their mother tongue so that they may be able to utilize the literacy skills that they have acquired in their first language to develop accuracy in their second language writing.

### 3. Research Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive research design that involved gathering of facts or obtaining pertinent and precise information concerning the current status of phenomenon and whenever possible draw possible conclusions from the facts discovered (Orodho 2008). Descriptive methods are widely used to obtain data useful in evaluating present practices and providing for decision. This method was appropriate as it gave a description of the role of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in ECDE centres in Nandi County which can be generalized to other parts of Kenya. By involving a broad category of head teachers and teachers, the study fitted within the descriptive survey study designs.

This research was carried out in Nandi County. The County and its surroundings enjoy the best weather which is relatively moderate in terms of rainfall and temperatures; compared to other parts of the country. The favourable weather has endowed the region with fertile farming lands. A number of agricultural activities such as dairy, food and cash crop farming are carried out. The availability of large production of food crops aids in enhancing food production in most homes. Nandi County is selected since it was a representative of the country Kenya. It was therefore believed that the study area gave a wide and varied view of the problem under study. This area is selected to assessment on the mother tongue based language implementation in ECDE classroom instruction in Nandi County. In addition to this, there is no similar study having been done in the study area. It was therefore believed that the study area gave a wide and varied view of the problem under study. The area was chosen because it is within reach by the researcher.

Target population of a study is a group of individuals taken from the general population who share a common characteristic, such as age, and sex. The researcher targeted 4 QASO Officers, 200 head teachers and 400 teachers from 200 ECDE centres in the county. Sampling is a procedure of selecting a sample from a population as representative of that population (Orodho, 2008). Gay (2003) recommended that when the target population is small (less than 1000 members), a minimum sample of 20% is adequate for educational research. The researcher used Yamane formula ( $n=N/1+Ne^2$ ), to calculate the sample size. The sample size was 241 respondents Simple random sampling technique was used to select ECDE centres to take part in the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 79 head teachers and 4 Zonal QASOs. Simple random sampling technique was used to obtain 158 ECDE teachers from the sampled schools.

The research instrument that was used in this study is a questionnaire and interview schedule. The questionnaire choice was based on the fact that they are free from bias of the interviewer and respondents have adequate time to give well thought out answers. It was appropriate for literate, educated and co-operative respondents where in this case all respondents of the study are considered meeting this requirement. The researcher constructed closed- ended and open- ended questionnaires, which was administered to teachers. The questionnaire which was used in this study contained both structured and closed ended items. This allowed the researcher to draw conclusions based on comparisons made from the responses.

According to Kumar (2006), the advantages of using a structured interview is the level of incomplete questionnaires is reduced. The researcher was able to clarify any queries concerning the questions. This ensured that answers are reliably aggregated and that comparisons can be made. A structured interview schedule was used to gather information from the head teachers and QASOs. The interview schedule designed was structured according to research objectives.

Before the actual data is collected, the researcher conducted a pilot study in Uasin Gishu County among 20 head teachers. The purpose of the pilot study enabled the researcher to ascertain the reliability and validity of the instruments, and to familiarize him with the administration of the questionnaires and therefore improve the instruments and procedures.

According to (Paton, 2002) validity is quality attributed to proposition or measures of the degree to which they conform to establish knowledge or truth. The content validity of the instrument will be determined by the researcher using expert judgment. This was done by discussing the items in the instrument with the supervisors, lecturers from the department and colleagues. Advice given by these people helped the researcher to determine the validity of the research instruments. The advice included suggestions, clarifications and other inputs. These suggestions were used in making necessary changes.

According to (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2008) the reliability is the measure of consistent results of an instrument after a retest. Reliability is the capability of an instrument to yield similar results after repeated trials in areas with same conditions (Kaul, 1997). The test- retest method was used as the questionnaire administered was during the pilot study at Uasin Gishu County. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the research instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.7 and above was assumed to reflect the internal reliability of the instruments (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). The entire questionnaire deemed as reliable after several typographical errors and omissions detected are corrected in the instrument confirming that it is sufficient to be used in the main study.

After all data has been collected, the researcher conduct data cleaning, that involved identification of incomplete responses and correct to improve the quality of the responses. The data was coded and entered in the computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The research yielded both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative techniques such as descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to understand relationships between different variables. Qualitative data was analyzed qualitatively using content analysis based on analysis of meanings and implications emanating from respondents information and documented data. Simple descriptive statistics was employed to analyze quantitative data. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to establish the influence mother tongue usage on classroom instruction in rural ECDE in Nandi County. It was appropriate to use the technique for interval and ratio-scaled variables. After analysis, data were presented in tabular form using frequencies and percentages alongside inferential statistics. Percentages used to determine and explain proportions.

## 4. Results

### 4.1.1. Role of Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction in ECDE Centres

The aim of the study was to establish the role of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in rural ECDE centres in Nandi County. This was established using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics involved the use of frequencies and percentages. The inferential statistics involved the use of Pearson correlation coefficient.

### 4.1.2. Descriptive Statistics on Role of Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction

The descriptive statistics on the statements representing role of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in rural ECDE centres was computed using the mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentages according to the 5-point likert scale as shown in table 1. Majority of the teachers 93 (63.7%) of the agreed that mother tongue instruction creates opportunities for students to develop effective cognitive skills, with 26.7% undecided and 9.6% disagree. Most of the teachers 76(53.4%) of the agreed that parents cannot help their children with school work if they do not understand English, or are unable to read and write English, with 21.2% agree and 11.6% undecided. Also 51 (43.1%) of the agreed that effective bilingual/multilingual programmes helped children to be able to read and write through their mother tongue and the target language, with 19.2% disagree and 27.4% undecided. At least 66 (45.2%) teachers agreed that mother tongue instruction serves as a strong base to successfully learn a second language, with 28.1% undecided and 26.7% disagreed. Most of the teachers 63(43.2%) of the agreed that the use of a familiar language for instruction facilitates parental involvement and strengthens community support for education, with 31.5% disagree and 25.3% undecided.

Most of the teachers 98 (67.1%) of the disagreed that parents cannot help their children with school work if they do not understand English, or are unable to read and write English, with 21.2% agree and 11.6% undecided. Majority 105 (71.9%) of the teachers disagreed that mother tongue education during early learning is valuable resource in the promotion of equal access to meaningful education and 28.1% agree. Majority 80 (54.8%) of the teachers disagreed that development of mother tongue and the acquisition of a second language have the capacity to enhance students' cognitive abilities and 45.2% agree. Also 67 (45.9%) of the teachers disagreed that mother tongue medium of instruction reinforces the equitable delivery of quality education to which all learners have access, with 28.1% undecided and 26% agreed.

Mother tongue as a medium of Instruction.....	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	Sd
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
Creates opportunities for students to develop effective cognitive skills,	66	45.2	27	18.5	14	9.6	39	26.7			3.82	1.26
Serves as a strong base to successfully learn a second language.	26	17.8	40	27.4	41	28.1	39	26.7			3.36	1.06
Parents cannot help their children with school work if they do not understand English, or are unable to read and write English	6	4.1	25	17.1	17	11.6	91	62.3	7	4.8	2.53	0.97
The use of a familiar language for instruction facilitates parental involvement and strengthens community support for education	60	41.1	3	2.1	37	25.3	16	11.0	30	20.5	3.32	1.58
Use in the early years offers children opportunities to learn two or more languages.	27	18.5	37	25.3	60	41.1	16	11.0	6	4.1	3.43	1.04
Effective bilingual/ multilingual programmes help children to be able to read and write through their mother tongue and the target language.	26	17.8	52	35.6	40	27.4	28	19.2			3.52	1.00
The education policies strongly support the use of mother tongue medium of instruction	25	17.1	38	26.0	49	33.6	28	19.2	6	4.1	3.33	1.10
The development of mother tongue and the acquisition of a second language have the capacity to enhance students' cognitive abilities	15	10.3	51	34.9			40	27.4	40	27.4	3.28	0.98
The bilingual/multilingual education has a positive effect on a child's social and cognitive development.	26	17.8	25	17.1	55	37.7	28	19.2	12	8.2	3.17	1.18
Mother tongue education during early learning is valuable resource in the promotion of equal access to meaningful education.	15	10.3	26	17.8			52	35.6	53	36.3	3.02	0.98
Reinforces the equitable delivery of quality education to which all learners have access.	12	8.2	26	17.8	41	28.1	38	26.0	29	19.9	2.68	1.21

Table 1: Mother tongue as a medium of Instruction

From the research mother tongue instruction creates opportunities for students to develop effective cognitive skills and parents cannot help their children with school work if they do not understand English, or are unable to read and write English. Effective bilingual/multilingual programmes have helped children to be able to read and write through their mother tongue and the target language and mother tongue instruction serves as a strong base to successfully learn a second language. The use of a familiar language for instruction facilitates parental involvement and strengthens community support for education. The parents always help their children with school work when they do not understand English, or are unable to read and write English. Mother tongue education during early learning was not a valuable resource in the promotion of equal access to meaningful education. The development of mother tongue and the acquisition of a second language do not have the capacity to enhance students' cognitive abilities. The mother tongue medium of instruction does not reinforce the equitable delivery of quality education to which all learners have access.

#### 4.1.3. Correlations between Mother Tongue as a Medium on Classroom Instruction

The influence of mother tongue as a medium on classroom instruction was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient as shown in table 2. There was a positive influence of mother tongue as a medium on classroom instruction ( $r = .200$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), which implies that the more the mother tongue is used as a medium the classroom instruction improved.

		Classroom Instruction	Medium of instruction
Classroom Instruction	Pearson Correlation	1	.200*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.015
Medium of instruction	Pearson Correlation	.200*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	

Table 2: Correlations of mother tongue as a medium on classroom instruction

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

b. Listwise N=146

These findings indicated that mother tongue as a medium on classroom instruction. This agrees with Woodall, (2002) that there is a significant role of mother tongue in facilitating writing and writers use their first language (L1) while writing in L2. This makes L1 useful when communicating ideas that are intellectual. This also agrees with Thomas & Collier (2003) that cognitive and academic development in the first language is essential to the development of second language. Therefore, it is vital for children to be proficient in their mother tongue so that they may be able to utilize the literacy skills that they have acquired in their first language to develop accuracy in their second language writing.

#### 5.1. Conclusion

Mother tongue instruction creates opportunities for students to develop effective cognitive skills as parents cannot help their children with school work if they do not understand English, or are unable to read and write English. Effective bilingual/multilingual programmes has helped children to be able to read and write through their mother tongue and the target language and mother tongue instruction serves as a strong base to successfully learn a second language. The use of a familiar language for instruction facilitates parental involvement and strengthens community support for education. Mother tongue education during early learning was not a valuable resource in the promotion of equal access to meaningful education. The development of mother tongue and the acquisition of a second language do not have the capacity to enhance students' cognitive abilities. The mother tongue medium of instruction does not reinforce the equitable delivery of quality education to which all learners have access. There was a positive influence of mother tongue as a medium on classroom instruction. Mother tongue was a medium of classroom instruction.

The role of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in rural ECDE centres in Nandi County was to create opportunities for students to develop effective cognitive skills. The use of a familiar language for instruction facilitates parental involvement and strengthens community support for education. The mother tongue was a medium in classroom instruction.

#### 5.2. Recommendations

The county government should provide funds for the development and acquisition of culturally-relevant materials to promote culturally relevant teaching. Also they should ensure that culturally-relevant learning materials are produced to promote culturally-relevant teaching-learning

Quality Assurance and Standards Officers should organize seminars for teachers on the importance of mother tongue as a medium of instruction. Also organize capacity-building and sensitization meetings for parents to help them to understand the importance of mother tongue as a medium of instruction.

The Ministry of Education should ensure that schools should comply with language of instruction policy which states that mother tongue or language of the catchment area should be the medium of instruction in preprimary.

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