

Chapter 25

Teaching and Assessment of Kenya's Indigenous Languages in the Competency- Based Curriculum (CBC): Challenges and Way Forward

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ABSTRACT

The chapter focuses on sampled education commissions in Kenya that recommended teaching and learning indigenous languages and if clear policy framework existed for implementation. With adoption of competency-based curriculum (CBC), indigenous languages are supposed to be taught from primary to secondary schools. However, there are existing challenges in the implementation such as inadequately skilled human resources, lack of teaching and learning resources, unspecified teaching and assessment methods, and also existing teachers are retrained within a short period. The chapter recommends an adoption of immersion strategy for teaching these indigenous languages and also strengthening formative and summative assessment by including topical tasks, namely: receptive, interactive, extended productive monologues and socio-cultural reading and writing. These can be achieved through benchmarking with successful immersion programs in the world that can be contextually adopted in the CBC system of education.

INTRODUCTION

The chapter exposes evolutionary stages and recommendations of various education systems in Kenya with special reference to indigenous languages. It brings to the attention of a reader various education commissions that shaped education systems in Kenya and recommended teaching of indigenous lan-

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guages in schools. The chapter resulted from desktop research that relied on the literatures on evolution of education systems in Kenya, and the observed contents of CBC system of education. Though numerous reports of education commissions, working committees, policy papers and task forces exist, the study purposively targeted selected reports from colonial to post-colonial era that recommended teaching and learning of indigenous languages in schools. The required data was collected through observation and analysis of library texts while observation checklist was used for data extraction. Thematic analysis was employed in the data analysis that was later presented textually. Ethical considerations were adhered to by acknowledging sources of data. In order to successfully achieve the scope of this chapter, the following objectives were relied on first, to briefly outline evolution of education systems in Kenya from colonial to post-colonial era with focus on indigenous languages. Second, to define the concept of indigenous language and its significance to society. Third, to analyze components of CBC in Kenya with regard to indigenous languages. Fourth, to outline practical models of teaching and assessing indigenous languages and their applicability to the Kenyan CBC context. The chapter is subdivided into background, literature review, findings and conclusion.

BACKGROUND

Education systems in Kenya have been influenced by reports of commissions, working committees and task forces that made proposals for revamping and or altering them altogether. As was practiced in many African traditional ways of learning, education systems in Kenya also evolved from the apprenticeship model that was carried out in the local indigenous villages then later came formal education held in classrooms and carried out by the trained teachers who used approved syllabi to deliver the contents. Though numerous systems of education have been used in Kenya from the colonial and post-colonial periods, the 8-4-4 system of education (8 years of primary, 4 years secondary and 4 years of university learning) stayed for many years since 1985 until the establishment of CBC that stressed on re-entrenchment of indigenous languages (Republic of Kenya, 2019). However, very elusive and unclear policy framework exist for teaching, learning and assessment of these indigenous languages. CBC system adopted 2-6-3-3-3 model (2 years in pre-primary, 6 years in lower and upper primary, 3 years in lower/junior secondary, 3 years in upper/senior secondary, and 3 years in university) (Wanjohi, 2017). This background covers various areas for discussion such as: adoption of CBC in Kenya; problems inherent in the implementation of CBC; and some proposed ways of overcoming CBC implementation challenges in Kenya.

The need to change education system in which CBC was adopted was occasioned by several reports such as: Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) 2009 summative evaluation of primary and secondary curricula; KICD 2016 report on national needs assessment study; the Kenya Vision 2030 requiring the government to review its education system; and evaluation of 8-4-4 system of education that did not allow learners to focus on their career paths after candid assessment of their interests, abilities and also aptitudes (IBE-UNESCO, 2017). These career paths depended on competencies of learners. According to Kouwenhoven (2003) as cited in Areba (2019), competency refers to a learner's ability to be able to choose and also perfectly execute integrated knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to obtain good results of various assigned tasks. For the Kenyan case, the national needs assessment was based on benchmark visits to countries like South Korea, Canada, China and Netherlands with universities' intelligentsia collaborative engagements, ministry of education officials, Teachers Service Commission, and various employers (IBE-UNESCO, 2017). The rationale for CBC adoption was that learners

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