

Title: Challenges to Learning of Kiswahili among Children with Hearing Impairment: A Case of Mumias Primary School for the Deaf, Kakamega County, Kenya

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Abstract: The study investigated challenges of learning Kiswahili amongst pupils with hearing impairment. This was driven by the fact that Kiswahili is important, not only as a national and official language in Kenya, but as a compulsory subject in primary and secondary school curricula. There had been an outcry from various stakeholders that learners performed poorly in Kiswahili in both local and national examinations. Some stakeholders had even conceded that Kiswahili overburdened learners since they already had to learn two languages (English and KSL) and that it should be deleted from the curriculum. The focus of this study was academic performance of learners with H.I. in Kiswahili, teaching and learning methods employed, conditions requisite for excellence and educational resources used in teaching and learning Kiswahili. The study was carried out at the Mumias School for the Deaf in Kakamega County, Kenya. The school was purposively selected because all the pupils in the school had hearing impairments. A sample size of six teachers and thirty-two pupils were involved in the study. The study was guided by the behaviorist theory of language acquisition which emphasizes language learning through Stimulus-Response-Reward (S-R-R) chains. It employed qualitative approach as a major research methodology and was carried out in the form of a case study. Quantitative analysis was used to compare K.C.P.E results between Kiswahili and other subjects in the school. The six instruments used for data collection were: non-participant observation guide, three interview guides for the head teacher, Kiswahili teachers and learners with H.I., document analysis and data sheets. Raw data collected was categorized into themes from which the objectives of the study were derived. Accordingly, the analysis was done following objectives of the study and research questions. Data presentation was done using frequency distribution tables, pie charts, histograms line graph and descriptive passages. Interpretation of the study findings was done in the light of the tenets of the study guiding theory of Stimulus-Response-Rewards(S-R-R). The study found that performance in Kiswahili was poor due to several reasons: teaching methods did not include most of the elements of TC or IEP, conditions at the school were not conducive to effective learning of Kiswahili, and educational resources available at the school were greatly under-utilized. Lastly, recommendations on how to improve on the short-comings realized in the findings and topics for further research were made.