



Language Policy and Education in Multilingual Tanzania: Impacts on Outcomes

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Abstract

Language diversity is a significant characteristic of multilingual African states like Tanzania, where multiple languages coexist within educational systems. Qualitative analysis of existing data on language policies and their impact on school enrollment rates and student performance across Tanzanian regions with varying language compositions. Findings indicate that schools using a dominant local language as the medium of instruction have higher enrollment rates, particularly among marginalized communities who speak minority languages at home. This effect is most pronounced in regions where education is predominantly conducted in English or Swahili. The study underscores the importance of aligning language policies with educational outcomes and suggests that a bilingual approach could enhance inclusivity and effectiveness across Tanzania's diverse linguistic spectrum. Recommendation for policymakers includes tailoring language policies to support both minority languages and English/Swahili, thereby improving access and equity in education systems.

Keywords: *Tanzania, Multilingualism, Bilingual Education, Language Policy, Linguistic Diversity, Ethnography, Sociolinguistics*

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