Language of Instruction and Students' Access to Secondary Education in Kakuma Camps, Kenya

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A B S T R A C T

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of the language of instruction on refugee students' access to secondary education. In order to identify the barriers preventing refugee students in Kakuma camps from accessing secondary school, the research used an ex post facto design. The study was guided by the social justice theory in educational contexts. Nine (9) principals and 180 teachers from nine (9) refugee schools were target population. The study employed census sampling to determine a sample size of 189, which were made up of 9 principals and 180 teachers. Questionnaires and an interview schedule were used to gather data. Validity and reliability of the tools were established through a pilot study that employed the test-retest methodology. A regression analysis was used to analyse the data. The study established that the language of instruction has statically significant effects on refugee students' access to secondary education in Kakuma camps. Therefore, the study recommended that government and non-governmental organizations should cultivate ways of enhancing refugee students' access to secondary education in Kakuma camps.

1. INTRODUCTION

The teaching-learning process of languages for migrants and refugees is a challenge that goes beyond getting them to develop communication skills and moves toward inclusion through education (Ureta, et al., 2024; Euzebio, 2021; Tokunaga & Dirceu, 2022). To achieve this objective, teachers should be clear about the importance of the focus on communication (Slade & Dickson, 2021). Students need, from the beginning, to learn how to behave within a new community of speakers (Arteaga, 2011). Therefore, it is necessary to go beyond the traditional perspective of teaching and think about an approach that pays special attention to multiple and different communicative scenarios (Sosinski, Young-Scholten, & Naeb, 2020). Therefore, teachers have to ensure that their students, migrants, develop their communication skills (Sharkey, 2018; Baralo, Leralta, & Gómez, 2016).

Children from non-dominant language groups are historically excluded from education, the economy and social mobility. Internationally it has become evident that marginalized and minority people are the most likely to experience forcible displacement, and that language issues impact them wherever they go (UNESCO, 2020). Decades of research on language and education support the need to develop explicit and inclusive language policies that meet the needs of all learners. The right to education and the right to language are enshrined in many international conventions, declarations and charters. However, the international community has not sufficiently addressed the intersection between migration, education, and language in the context of forced displacement. Indeed, the SDGs, while encompassing educational rights, fall short in explicitly identifying language as a source of concern, largely due to a more general failure to recognize the consequences, both positive and negative, of linguistic diversity among vulnerable populations' (UNESCO, 2018c).

For instance, most of the refugees who came to Kakuma don't speak English or Swahili, a lot of children aren't going to school (Emmanuel, 2024). This means that not many children finish primary school and even fewer make it to middle school. As a result of efforts to help refugees quickly integrate into national school systems, many of which use languages other than the students' home languages, languages have once again become a major educational issue for refugee children and teens.

Language obstacles and learning a new language have always been important issues of Kanno and others did study on refugee students in schools after they had been resettled (Watkins et al. (2012). The innovative "Tasfiri" schooling project is being carried out right now in Kenya's Kakuma refugee camp. The main goal is to help refugee students, especially young ones, who don't know how to speak English or Swahili, which are the two languages used in Kenya's school system, do better in school (Emmanuel, 2024). The project looks for ways to include home languages in the system and puts parents and caregivers of refugees at the center of making that happen. It also works on psychosocial support to help people learn better, and refugees themselves tell stories of change, mostly in video form.

When people first come to a country, language has also been named over and over as one of the biggest problems with the level of education and how well students do in school (Dryden-Peterson, 2016; Mendenhall et al., 2015). Even though it is known that learning a language is a big problem for

refugee children, current studies and policies on refugee education have rarely looked at how to help children and teens. It looks like the usual setting is to encourage learning the host country's language(s), based on the simple instrumentalist view that this will positively affect the lives of refugees by allowing them to join markets and People live in groups (Ameen & Cinkara, 2018). Such as, in the only place. When "language" is used in the UNHCR's Global Education Strategy 2012–2016, it means Talk about "language training" as one of the most important things that can be done to help refugee children will Get smarter. Not long ago, the 2019 GEM Report, which was about mobility, "Limited language proficiency" is once again brought up as a major problem by displacement. The problems refugee children face when they try to get used to a new school system. This follows a meta-framework for making language policies that only thinks of language-as-problem, where the main goal is to help children from minority groups not being able to speak the main language well enough and help them fit in to live with other people (Jong et al., 2016).

On the other hand, learning a language is never neutral. Functionalists would say that it's just a matter of learning the normal grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and rules for how to use the language. This is because learning a language is tied to an order of values that people have, and not everyone has the same "right" to speak and be heard (Norton & Toohey, 2011). Language choices also have a big impact on how people feel about themselves, their identities, and the groups they belong to. Language practices, especially in minority groups, can be a powerful way to build community, exercise power, and claim one's own agency (Valentine et al., 2008). So, decisions about language-in-school policies are political ones that should only be made after a lot of thought by everyone in the community. They shouldn't just be based on the practical solution of teaching refugees' language(s) to help them fit in with their new communities.

Previous study (Perry, 2008) has talked about how languages are used and maintained politically in refugee communities that have already been resettled. But this kind of research has rarely been done in refugee camps before they are resettled. People from all backgrounds and cultures have been compelled to leave their native nations due to ethnic and population shifts, adapt to a new society, and pick up a language in order to start over. Refugees frequently have to begin and stop their schooling in the foster nation because of the numerous challenges they confront. The quality of education that refugee children can receive is influenced by the language of instruction because children learn literacy more easily in their first language and then transfer those skills to the language of instruction (Dankova & Giner, 2011). Nonetheless, the education that is provided to refugees living in exile frequently does not come in their own tongue. Youngsters deal with not grasping what their peers or the teachers are saying. In these circumstances, their inability to speak the instruction language well leads to their frequent demoting to lower courses rather than their cognitive growth or topic mastery (Dryden-Peterson, 2006).

These measures not only have an influence on quality, but they also have protective implications that negatively affect the social development of the children of refugees. Additionally, these actions have an impact on access and retention as a result of enrollment dropouts and lack of interest. Foreign languages are such a big obstacle that sometimes migrants start their own informal schools to provide instruction in their own tongue. In Eastern Sudan, for instance, a sizable portion of refugees choose to attend unofficial schools under trees where instruction was in Tigrinya rather than UNHCR-established schools where instruction was in Arabic (UNHCR,2010). The power dynamics of refugee children's situations are emphasized through language choices. Although it is not a possibility, many Congolese refugees in Uganda would like to study French. Parents and children of refugees worry that their lack of proficiency in French will cause them to have significant challenges upon their return to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where they will be viewed as "useless people" (Wettstein, 2011). According to Kenya's constitution, English and Kiswahili are the official languages and should be taught in schools. This is the GOK language policy. This policy has made English extremely desirable.

The Refugee Act of 2006, which governs GOK's encampment policy, stipulates that refugees must live in camps and have proper documentation and registration. The GOK continues to enforce refugee encampments even after urban refugee settlement has been permitted. On the other hand, UNHCR is the main organization that offers services to refugees in Nairobi's metropolitan setting. The UNHCR Urban Refugee Policy of 2009, which dedicated the organization to analyzing and meeting the needs of refugees residing in Kenya's capital, serves as the foundation for UNHCR's operations in Nairobi. In addition to establishing a system that allows refugees and asylum seekers to be registered and documented in urban areas, UNHCR has also been successful in increasing the enrollment rates of refugee students, working with CBOs and NGOs in Nairobi, and offering educational services, such English classes, in urban schools. Two interagency working groups were also called by UNHCR to promote the fulfillment of the Refugee Act of 2006 and the right of refugees to receive a primary education (UNHCR, 2011). Language is largely neglected in policies on migration and education. The issues of language ought to be streamlined within national education planning, with clear guidance on not only integrating migrant and refugee students into schools, but also providing access to home language learning' (UNESCO, 2018c).The current study sought to address the gap.

2.0. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

The study adopted an ex-post facto research design. Overall, the ex post facto research design is a suitable and strategic choice for this study, offering a balance between ethical considerations, practical feasibility, and the ability to generate meaningful insights into the factors influencing refugee students' access to secondary education in Kakuma Camps. Ex post facto research involves the researcher starting from the beginning and looking back at the dependent variable(s) to see if there are any potential relationships or impacts on the independent variable(s) after the independent variable(s) have already occurred (Patten, 2012). Therefore, expost facto design was the most appropriate research method to answer the research hypothesis. The design attempts to determine a cause- and- effect relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable. This entails particular characteristics of participants they cannot be manipulated. It also focuses on how actions that have already occurred can predict certain causes.

2.2 Study Populations

Prior to starting a study, researchers should educate themselves about the population, according to Uprichard (2013). As a result, 180 teachers and nine (9) school principals from the nine (9) secondary schools in Kakuma Camps made up the study population. There were 189 respondents in the population overall (N=189). All of the respondents took part in the study using the census approach.

2.3. Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

According to Creswell (2014), a sample is a subset of the target population that is utilized to produce the data needed for the study. For this study, census sampling was adopted. According to Scheaffer et al. (2011), a census survey is the method when the population is the same as the sample. It involves collecting data from every member of the population under study. Census survey is justified in this study because it offers a comprehensive, accurate, and inclusive approach to understanding the factors influencing refugee students' access to secondary education. While it is more resource-intensive than a descriptive survey, the benefits of complete data and the potential for more effective policy and intervention development make it the preferred choice in this context. As a result, 180 teachers from nine (9) refugee secondary schools and all nine (9) principals took part in the survey, according to the census. Orodho (2012) asserts that a researcher can sample the complete population when the target population is small. Bailey (1978) asserts that research findings are given greater weight when the full community is studied. Similarly, Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) suggested that a researcher should take as big sample as possible to reproduce the salient features of the target population to an acceptable level. Since they act as these children's second parents in addition to being their teachers, the teachers are regarded as important informants. Teachers are in a better position to respond because they work with refugee students for the majority of their time and have some professional knowledge of their precarious circumstances. Table 1 displays the respondents' distribution.

Table 1. Sample Size of the Study

Respondent Category	Target Population	Sample	Sample proportion	Sampling Technique
School Principals	09	09	100%	Census
Teachers	180	180	100%	Census
Total	**189**	**189**	**100%**	

Source: Turkana West Education Office (2024)

2.4. Instruments of Data Collection

The study utilized two research instruments for data collection in order to be able to gather relevant data accurately. A variety of measuring instruments provides researchers with several options to choose the one that best suits characteristics and needs of the study (Ntisa, 2015). Hence questionnaire and interview schedule were used in data collection process so that they complement each other to ensure very reliable data was captured from the respondents.

2.5. Questionnaire

Data collection for this study was done through a standardized questionnaire. A questionnaire, according to Babbie (2013), consists of questions and other things intended to gather relevant data for data analysis.

3.0. RESEARCH FINDINS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Descriptive Statistics Results of Language of Instruction

The objective of the study sought to determine the effects of the language of instruction on refugee students' access to secondary education in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei integrated settlement. In this section, the objective was assessed by soliciting and analyzing views from teachers and Principals on various themes, aspects and indicators. As such, various statements from the respondents related to language of instruction on refugee students' access to secondary education in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei integrated settlement were presented in tables, statements and on a five-point Likert scale. Language of instruction in the following scale: Strongly Agree (1.0-1.44), Agree (1.5-2.44), Undecided (2.5-3.44), Disagree (3.5-4.44) and Strongly Disagree (4.5-5.0) and results displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Language of Instruction

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std
Language barriers hinder	37	51	13	24	16	2.511	1.253

education and learning opportunities to the refugees	26.2%	36.2%	9.2%	17.0%	11.3%		
Communication among refugee students is a setback to learning	42	36	14	23	26	2.681	1.054
	29.8%	25.5%	9.9%	16.3%	18.4%		
Refugees adapt easily to the language of instruction	18	16	15	53	39	3.560	1.301
	12.8%	11.3%	10.6%	37.6%	27.7%		
It's difficult to accommodate refugee student in school because of the language used	38	34	18	33	18	2.291	1.114
	27.0%	24.1%	12.8%	23.4%	12.8%		

KEY: SA–Strongly Agree [5] A- Agree [4] U Neither agree or disagree [3] D-Disagree [2] SD– Strongly Disagree [1]

Table 2 shows that (62.4 %) of the teachers agreed (strongly agreed and agreed) that language barriers hinder education in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei integrated settlement (Mean =2.511, std. =1.253). 37 (26.2 %) teachers strongly agreed and 51 (36.2%) teachers agreed respectively. 40 (28.3%) teacher disagreed that language barriers hinder education in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei integrated settlement. This implies that communication is difficult in these regions among the children of school going age. More over the views of one of the interviewees in this study resonate with this. Principal 6 had this to say;

"*Most of the refugees have language barriers. Kakuma is a multi-ethnic camp hence communication and social integration is a   challenge*"

The study further shows that 55.3% of teachers agreed (strongly agreed and agreed) that communication among refugee students is a setback to learning in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei integrated settlement (Mean =2.681, std. =1.054). 42 (29.8 %) teachers strongly agreed and 36(25.5%) teachers agreed respectively. About one third (n=49, 34.7%) of the teachers disagreed that communication among refugee students is a setback to learning. The results imply majority of the students do not speak English or Kiswahili, for the students attending a school which English is the chief language of instruction, can be alienating.

A majority 55.3% of teachers disagreed (strongly disagreed and disagreed) that Refugees adapt easily to the language of instruction in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei integrated settlement (Mean =3.560, std. =1.301). 39 (27.7 %) teachers strongly disagreed and 53 (37.6%) teachers disagreed respectively. About one quarter (n=44, 24.1%) of the teachers agreed that Refugees adapt easily to the language of instruction.

Lastly over half (51.1 %) of the teachers also agreed that it's difficult to accommodate refugee student in school because of the language used in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei integrated settlement (Mean =2.291, std. =1.114). 38 (27.0 %) teachers strongly agreed and 34 (24.1%) teachers agreed respectively. About one third of the (n= 51, 36.2%) teacher disagreed that it's difficult to accommodate refugee student in school because of the language used.

3.2. Spearman's rank correlation of language of instruction on refugee students' access to secondary education

The above survey on language of instruction and refugee students' access to secondary education in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei integrated settlement showed variations. Some variables were aligned while others were not. It was imperative to determine whether language of instruction had any effect on refugee students' access to secondary education. To achieve this, spearman's rank correlation analysis was used to find out if there existed a relationship. The study findings are shown on Table 3.

Table 3. Spearman Correlation of language of instruction and refugee students' access to secondary education

	Statement	Spearman Correlation	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Refugee students' access to secondary education.	Correlation	1				
		Sig.					
2.	Language barriers hinder education and learning opportunities to the refugees	Correlation	.724**	1			
		Sig.	.000				
3.	Communication among refugee	Correlation	.624**	.243	1		

	students is a setback to learning	Sig.	.000	.685			
4.	Refugees adapt easily to the language of instruction	Correlation	-.531**	.582**	.482**	1	
		Sig.	.000	.035	.004		
5.	It's difficult to accommodate refugee student in school because of the language used	Correlation	.459**	.398**	.389	.124	1
		Sig.	.003	.034	.042	.852	

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

Source: Author 2024

Based on this correlation matrix in Table 3, there exists a correlation between language of instruction and refugee students' access to secondary education in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei. All the four factors of the independent variable correlated with the dependent variable (refugee students' access to secondary education in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei). The correlations coefficients were between the values -0.531 to 0.724; therefore, refugee students' access to secondary education was likely affected language of instruction. Indeed, language of instruction correlated with refugee students' access to secondary education.

The spearman's correlation index obtained on the first variable "*language barriers hinder education and learning opportunities to the refugees*" is r= 0.724. Being a strong positive value with ρ<0001which is less than alpha = 0.05 it means that language barriers hinder education and learning opportunities to the refugees.

The second variable "*communication among refugee students is a setback to learning*" is strongly correlated with refugee students' access to secondary education. ((r =0.624, ρ<0.0001 at α= 0.05)). Indicating that communication among refugee students is a setback to learning.

The third variable "*refugees adapt easily to the language of instruction*" moderately and negatively correlated with refugee students' access to secondary education ((r =-.0531, ρ<0001 at α= 0.05)), indicating that refugees do not adapt easily to the language of instruction.

The fourth variable "*It's difficult to accommodate refugee student in school because of the language used*" moderately correlated with refugee students' access to secondary education ((r =0.459, ρ=0.003 at α= 0.05)) indicating that language is a barrier for curriculum instruction in these camps

3.3. Testing of hypothesis, HO

The null hypothesis stated

HO: *There are no statistically significant effects of language of instruction on refugee students' access to secondary education in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei integrated settlement*

Information for testing this null hypothesis, **HO** was sought from teachers. Analyzed information from both categories of respondents on fitness of the model and goodness-of-fit is presented in Tables 4.

Table 4. Model fitting information for language of instruction on refugee students' access to secondary education

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Pseudo R-Square (Nagelkerke)
Intercept Only	625.325				.613
Final	423.596	201.729	179	.000	
Link function: Logit					

Results in Table 4 shows p = 0.000 from the teachers, which is less than 0.05, hence, rejection of the underlying null hypothesis that, there is no significant difference between the baseline model and the final model. The baseline model (intercept only) is the model without any independent variables (predictors) while the final model is the one with all possible independent variables.

The results in Table 4 also shows that the model has statistically significant predictive capacity, which means that, the variable language of instruction statistically and significantly explain the variations in the refugee students' access to secondary education in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei integrated settlement.

The results in Table 4 further shows that variable language of instruction predicts 61.3% as regards to the variations in the refugee students' access to secondary education in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei integrated settlement, as indicated by the Nagelkerke R square values. However, the results are based on one independent variable; that is, the language of instruction; hence, the inclusion of other predictors in the model may result to a high Nagelkerke R square value.

Having obtained a valid goodness of fit information, the study further sought to establish goodness of fit with the fitted model. In ordinal logistic regression, the Pearson Chi-square goodness-of-fit test is used to determine whether a model exhibit good fit of the data, that is, it tests whether the

observed data is having goodness of fit with the fitted model. The decision rule is to reject the underlying null hypothesis if p value is less than 0.05. The null hypothesis state that the observed data is having goodness of fit with the fitted model. Table 5 shows the result on goodness-of-fit based on responses from the teachers.

Table 5. Goodness-of-Fit for language of instruction on refugee students' access to secondary education

	Chi-Square	**df**	**Sig.**
Pearson	632.358	364	1.000
Deviance	352.276	364	1.000

Link function: Logit.

The results in Table 5. Show χ2 (df 364) = 632.358; p= 1.000. In this case, therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis that, the observed data for teachers is having goodness of fit with the fitted model. This means that the model fit the data very well. This further implies that the data from teachers on language of instruction is fit for predicting refugee students' access to secondary education. The estimates are critical in showing how this independent variable is influencing the dependent variable.

The parameter estimates results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Language of instruction parameter estimates refugee students' access to secondary education

	Estimate	**Std. Error**	**Wald**	**df**	**Sig.**	**95% Confidence Interval**	
						Lower Bound	**Upper Bound**
Location X1	4.321	.256	125.365	1	.000	4.125	4.628
Link function: Logit.							

From Table 6, it can be observed that a marginal increase in language of instruction positively increases the logit of refugee students' access to secondary education. This indicates that as the scores of the independent variable increases, there is an increased probability of falling at a higher level on the dependent variable while holding all other factors constant.

The results in Table 6 shows that language of instruction is a statistically significant predictor of refugee students' access to secondary education, where, for every one-unit increase on the language of instruction, there is a predicted statistically significant increase of 4.321 (P= .000) in the log odds likelihood (logit) of falling at a higher level on the refugee students' access to secondary education.

Since the p-values in Table 4 and Table 6 were less than the alpha level (p<0.05), the third null hypothesis of this study, which stated that "*There are no statistically significant effects of language of instruction on refugee students' access to secondary education in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei integrated settlement*" was rejected. Language of instruction had statistically significant effect refugee students' access to secondary education in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei integrated settlement. Language of instruction on its own as independent variable accounts for 61.3 % of variation in refugee students' access to secondary education in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei integrated settlement.

The findings in Table 6 supports those of the previous scholars (Cun, 2020; Koyama & Chang, 2019; Miller et al., 2018; Ratković et al., 2017; Short & Boyson, 2012) who established that refugee children are often in schools that do not meet their linguistic needs and thus diminishes their learning experiences in the host countries. Similarly, Obondo et al., (2016) records that teachers in host countries are also likely to be ill-prepared to work with students who are unfamiliar with the language of instruction and who have experienced disruptions in their schooling.

4. CONCLUSION

The study therefore concludes that the language of instruction has statistically significant effects on refugee students' access to secondary education in a host country.

5. RECOMMENDATION

In view of the study findings and the conclusions arrived at, the study therefore recommends that the government should develop and enforce policies that should offer refugee students educational possibilities and also implement learning strategies that provide individualized support to refugee students, especially those who may struggle with language barriers or have had interruptions in their education. Remedial classes and peer support systems can be particularly effective.

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