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Abstract

The language of instruction used in teaching and learning activities is taken as an important aspect that improves the quality of school deliverables. Well maintained language of instruction promotes the level students' learning skills and school outcomes. Therefore, English as a language of instruction can be influenced by the students' mother tongue that usually use. This paper therefore, sought to examine effects of English as a language of instruction on the mother tongue (Kinyarwanda) mastery in private primary schools in Rwanda. Correlation research design was employed. The target population was 310 people with a sample of 175 got using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Data collection tools used were questionnaire, interview guide and document analysis review. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 21.0 was adopted for data management. The findings revealed that there is a statistical and significant relationship between English usage as a language of instruction and students' Kinyarwanda mastery in private primary schools of Gicumbi District with the P-value of .000, Adjusted R Square of .741 and the Pearson Coefficient of Correlation of .854**. The study recommended that all education stakeholders should work collaboratively in order to enhancing Kinyarwanda mastery among Rwandan primary school students at their early age.

Key words: *Language Mastery, Mother Tongue & Medium of Instruction.*

1.1 Introduction

Globally, English language like in China has been introduced since the early seventeenth century. It has been adapted as a language that might booster the economic and diplomatic development of China. Borton (2003) explains that English has expanded in China during seventeenth century to the extent the missionaries set up English language missionary schools in south China, in Macao as well as in Hong Kong. English language faced a rapid development and expansion in China especially, during the period that followed the Opium War of 1860.

This was done with the intension of equipping young Chinoises with modern world military skills and European technical knowledge which might help them to adapt to the situational challenges and to cope with international affairs ad to Western powers including England. Within 1870s only 20 English language schools with 230 students were available in China. In 1925 seven hundreds elementary English language missionary schools were started and 26000 middle English language schools were started in China by Christians (DENG, 2004). Since this period, English language faced a rapid expansion that facilitated it to become used as an instructional language in many schools. Bolton (2003) explains that the schools in which English has been being used as an LOI, students were found with a poor mastery of their mother tongue. This poor mastery were directly associated with the adoption of English language as the LOI over Mandarin (WANG, 2004).

In fact, many African countries have relied on the mother tongues usage in both informal and formal education. This has been fruitful in terms of mastering local languages among Africans across the continent. It is since the colonial period when various African countries welcomed English language and favored it over their local languages. Trundell (2007) argues that English language has presented negative impacts on the mastery of African languages. He goes on indicating that once English arrived in Africa, many countries especially the former British colony considered it as the only international language to be used in order to cope with their masters' requirements and develop their countries in terms of diplomatic affaires. During the colonial period, African governments failed to assume risks of investing in local languages mastery among Africans. They advanced the idea that local languages are channels towards their political and educational fallout. They also considered African local languages as the languages with little use within the colonial period on the agenda of civilization, modernization and globalization. This is why in 20th century, English was preferred as an LOI in British colonies and local languages became banish in some schools (Scholder, 2004). The value of local languages perished and the mastery of them became a dilemma especially for primary school students because English was chosen as a language of instruction, as it is highlighted by the International Reading Association (2001).

Moreover, the language historical perspective of Tanzania highlights that, before colonization, Kiswahili was a language used in training young Tanzanians in informal and formal education. Swilla (2009) explains that in 1964 there was a union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar and form the current Tanzania. During this time, Tanzania became independent. In this period the socialist ideology has expanded within Tanzania lead by Mwalimu Julius Nyerere and English language was adapted as a LOI which replaced the mother tongue (Kiswahili). Kiswahili remained an instructional language in primary schools for first five years and English were to be used from primary six upward. Mukulilo (2012) says that in in 1980 the socialist ideology were replaced by

capitalist ideology and presented many effects on education sector within Tanzania. He goes on showing that new policies like privatization, market economy, liberalization and democratization of education were set. The new language policy allowed English to be used in educational activities in private primary schools. At that time Kiswahili remained an instructional language in public primary schools (Swilla, 2009). The schools which chose English language as a language of instruction got challenges because for students and teachers as they were not using the language of their mastery. UNESCO (2016) indicates that English usage as a language of instruction in different private primary schools affects the mastery of Kiswahili language among private primary schools pupils.

English language has been adapted in Rwanda since 1960. It cannot be forgotten to mention that during this period the government of Rwanda made it an official language in 1964. In 2009 it was made a LOI; from this period, English language was to be learnt by Rwandans in addition to Kinyarwanda, French and Kiswahili (MINEDUC, 2013). Considering the role of English language at the international level of foreign relations, Rwandans have no other choice apart from learning English in order for Rwanda to be admitted to English speaking communities such as Easter African Community and Common Wealth (Majyambere, 2009). Since then, English replaced French and became a medium of instruction from primary four upward. Kinyarwanda remained an instructional language only in primary one, two and three depending upon the owners of schools (Tabaro, 2014). The adoption of English as LOI within Rwandan schools has motivated entrepreneurs to invest construction of private primary English focused schools in order to equip Rwandans with English language skills at the early age. Samuelson (2010) says that these private primary schools which started with the objective of putting their effort on mastering English language adopted English language as an instructional language regardless of Rwandan language policy. Kinyarwanda language lost its values and potentialities as Rwandans' mother tongue and it was accorded with no place within this schools. In order to highlight English language master among students, some private primary schools adopted a language micro- policy of barning Kinyarwanda language from being used in the school compounds. Tabaro (2013) notes that the mixture of languages especially in lower primary schools affects the mastery of Kinyarwanda language.

1.2 Problem Statement

The big concern is where we are as Rwandans right now in terms of minimizing factors hindering the mastery of Kinyarwanda language within private primary schools. Tabaro (2015) argues that Banyarwanda's first language is Kinyarwanda; Kinyarwanda is the language that they learnt from their birth. Kinyarwanda language is a mother tongue in Rwanda and it is a unique local language used by all Rwandans (Karara2024). According to Niyomugabo (2007) Rwandans in their history, have made a tremendous achievement in terms of Kinyarwanda language acquisition.

In 2008 the Rwandan government made English language of instruction from prom upper primary (GAHIGI, 2008). The cabinet meeting held in 2010 decided that Kinyarwanda has to be used as the only language of instruction in lower primary schools. This means that others were to learn using English language as an instructional language and Kinyarwanda was to be taught only as a subject in upper primary upward. Magogwe (2007) says that English language was adopted in Rwandan education system in order to facilitate Rwandans to get easily integrated within regional and international communities for Rwandan development and sustainability.

When English was adopted in Rwanda and favored of French and Kinyarwanda languages in Rwanda, the mastery of Kinyarwanda language became an issue due to various reasons (Niyibizi 2010). In order to inculcate Kinyarwanda language skills many strategies have been put into place. It is within this line in which different private primary schools were started in order to inculcate English language skills among Rwandans at the earl age. Private primary schools decided to use English as a language of instruction in both lower and upper primary in order to attract a big number of students. For the purpose of looking smart and attracts their potential customers, some private primary schools of Rwanda made a policy of using English language everywhere in school compounds (Kosendal, 2009). This paper therefore, sought to examine effect of English a language of instruction on the mastery Kinyarwanda in private primary schools of Rwanda.

1.3 Objective of the Paper

The objective of this paper was to examine the effect of English as a language of instruction on the mother tongue (Kinyarwanda) mastery in private primary schools in Rwanda.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 English in Private Primary Schools of Rwanda

In Rwanda, the languages of instruction were French and Kinyarwanda. These languages were not only the languages of instruction but also the official languages until 1994 (Tabaro, 2012). During the period of that followed the year 1994, English has been introduced as a third language to be used in Rwanda. English language has been adopted as an official language besides French and Kinyarwanda which were the languages of instruction for a long time.

On 12th December 2008 the cabinet of Rwanda decided to make a language transition policy that removed French as an LOI in favor of English. The cabinet decision was to use only English as a language of instruction in upper primary, in secondary schools and in universities besides Kinyarwanda from nursery to primary three. This sudden language transition policy produced no fruits at the beginning because Rwandan who were used to French as a language of instruction acquired from their colonial masters did not adapt themselves to the new sudden policy (Tabaro, 2012)

Lydn (2010) says that English was adapted in Rwanda because it was considered as the only language to help Rwandans to be connected to their English speaker neighbors and enables them to become welcomed into the Anglophone world. The government of Rwanda considered English as a language of future which will lead Rwanda and make it a knowledge based economy, a dream of all Rwandans. This is why English became a useful language of instruction, communication, trade, business and official issues (Lydn, 2010).

When English has been made an LOI in Rwanda in 2008, various hindrances have been manifested. Scarcity of competent teachers, Rwandan attitudes towards English language, lack of native speaker role models, scarcity of English learning and teaching materials were the major issues which requires tackles (Tabaro, 2012).

The new government change from French to English as LOI was welcomed by many parents who wanted their children to become eloquent in English in order to be competitive worldwide. This has pushed parents and guardians to take their children into schools which able to prepare Rwandan children for Anglophone elites. In such schools English was the only language to be used in school

compounds and Kinyarwanda as well as French had no place in schools. Starting from the year 2008 up to now, many English language based private primary schools have been built in all districts of Rwanda in order to equip Rwandans with English language skills at the early age (Ntakirutimana, 2012).

Even though, some researchers accused the government of destroying Rwandan culture by favoring English over Kinyarwanda, English language has expanded in education sector of Rwanda and it is a language of instruction at all levels of general education especially in many private schools (Rosandel 2010).

2.1.2 Kinyarwanda in Private Primary Schools of Rwanda

Kinyarwanda has been a language of formal and informal education for a long time as it is explained by the history of Rwanda. Kinyarwanda has been a language of all Rwandans. Therefore, it has been used by all Rwandans in all domains of their every day's life. Kinyarwanda was the language of instruction in informal and formal education before precolonial period in Rwanda (Majyambere, 2009).

Looking back to the history of Rwanda, education was informal and it was based on home and family. This informal education was fully provided in Rwandan mother tongue which is Kinyarwanda. Mutwarasibo (2003) indicates that in post- colonial period, Rwandan children were taught by community members around them. They were taught in Kinyarwanda language through evening gathering known as "IGITARAMO". This evening gathering was a wonderful opportunity for children and teenagers to acquire Kinyarwanda language because the main purpose of all evening gatherings "IBITARAMO" was to show the mastery of Kinyarwanda language that was considered as a store of Rwandan culture and Rwandan- ness (Tabaro, 2014). During this period, Rwandans adapted formal education system known as "ITORERO" for boys and "URUBOHERO" for girls in which the participants were taught different skills based on their gender. The participants of this formal education system were called "INTORE" (the selected or the chosen). In "ITORERO" and "URUBOHERO", courses were provided in Kinyarwanda and trainings were passed once a participant displayed a high level of Kinyarwanda language mastery as well as cultural values called "INDANGAGACIRO" (Mutrwarasimo, 2003). Thus in pre-colonial period, Kinyarwanda was advanced among all Rwandans.

When Germans and Belgians entered Rwanda, they slowed down Rwanda mother tongue language mastery as they came with foreign languages such as Kiswahili, French, Germany, Flemish, Greek and others which interfered with Kinyarwanda and challenged its mastery (Sibomana, 2010). During the colonial period "ITORERO" and "URUBOHERO" were removed and became replaced by formal schools started by colonial masters for their own interests. In these formal schools, Kinyarwanda was considered as indigenous language which is useless. In Belgian schools, Kiswahili and Germany were the languages of instruction. During this period Kinyarwanda teaching and learning was banish and Rwandans were forced by circumstance to learn French language and Kinyarwanda language mastery started to become a dilemma on the agenda of things.

When Rwanda got its independence from Belgians in 1962, the constitution of 1962 made Kinyarwanda an official language and national language. In this period Kinyarwanda regained its lost value as language of Banyarwanda and as a language that preserves Rwandan culture. Kinyarwanda was made a language of education for all levels of education in Rwanda. This is the

period in which Kinyarwanda got a greatest valorization (Freedman et. all, 2004). The Rwandan constitution of December 1962 revised in December 1978 and in June 1991 highlights that Kinyarwanda is a National Language and indicates that official languages in Rwanda are Kinyarwanda and French. It also clarifies that the LOI in education is Kinyarwanda (Mutwarasibo, 2012).

When English was adopted in Rwanda and favored of French and Kinyarwanda languages in Rwanda, the mastery of Kinyarwanda language became an issue due to various reasons (Niyibizi 2010). In order to inculcate Kinyarwanda language skills many strategies have been put into place. It is within this line in which different private primary schools were started in order to inculcate English language skills among Rwandans at the early age. For this private primary schools to successful, they decided to teach all subjects in English language in both lower and upper primary. For the purpose of looking smart and attracts their potential customers, some private primary schools of Rwanda made a policy of using English language everywhere in school compounds (Kosendal, 2009). This has caused affected the mastery of Kinyarwanda language in this private primary schools of Rwanda. Therefore there is a poor mastery of Kinyarwanda in private primary of Rwanda.

2.1.3 The Effect of English on Kinyarwanda Mastery in Rwanda

English language has been adapted by many Rwandan private primary schools in order to inculcate English language skills among Rwandans starting from young generation. This adaption of English as a language of instruction ha effected the mastery of Kinyarwanda. Ogbuehi (2001) presents that English utilization of as a language of instruction in African countries causes conflicts between English and indigenous languages which are totally different from English in nature. These language conflicts were observed especially among students who are at the aery age of schooling. The English usage as a language of instruction in Rwanda has brought various hindrances in terms of mastering the mother tongue especially for private primary school students. The following are some of them.

i. Code- Mixing

Code- mixing means the mixing or placing different units of linguistic such as affixes, words, phrases and clauses such as two or more different grammatical system within one sentence and speech context (Shana, 2001). When children at their very early age are learning using the language of instruction which differs from their mother tongue, the problem of code- mixing in inevitable because the language of instruction affects the mastery of the mother tongue. This effect of mixing language codes is resulted from different motives.

Shana (2001) explains that the primary cause of code mixing is the languages contact within one community. When two or more languages are being used within the same community, those languages get connected to each other; this languages' contact leads to code- mixing. Shana (2001) goes on indicating that another cause of code mixing is the bilingualism. He says that the bilingualism resulted from physical interaction of language speakers, social media interactions and other facilitate language code- mixing in academic and non- academic interactions. Thus the first effect of English as a language of instruction on Kinyarwanda language mastery is code- mixing.

The influence of English and Kinyarwanda code- mixing is a serious issue in Rwandan private primary schools in which English has been adopted as a language to be used in school compounds. The students from these schools tend to mix Kinyarwanda and English language codes in their Kinyarwanda speech and writing because English is the only language around them. Therefore, they become more likely to remember many English words for common things. This is why many of them fail to use situational Kinyarwanda language accordingly without mixing codes.

ii. Code- Switching

Code- switching is referred to by different researchers as a cross- linguistic influence of one language towards another. It is done through borrowing, pidginization and creolization as well as calques. This presents effects in the language lexicon which means words that make up a language (Rosendal, 2009).

When two people from different societies with different languages come into contact, they intermingle and form an intermediate language which is called a third language. When they are fluent in both languages, they tend to mix words intentionally from different languages. This is what is referred to as code- switching. Kelly (2009) argues that code- switching has been listed among effects of English language as a language of instruction on the mastery of Kinyarwanda language among private primary schools' students in Rwanda, because in these private primary schools students gain enough time and materials enabling them to become competent in English language and lack Kinyarwanda language competency. The situation is like that because Kinyarwanda language has been given a less various in these private primary schools based on English language. Students from these private primary school get challenged in terms of speaking and writing Kinyarwanda language as they mix English languages words with Kinyarwanda's, this mixture is referred to as code- switching.

iii. Vagueness Resulting from Poor Vocabulary

Vagueness in writing or in a speech means the unclear or imprecise use of a given language. Vagueness is in contrast with specificity and clarity. Vagueness can be associated with so many reasons, among them, poor vocabulary and lack of grammatical lures competency can be listed. Tuggy (2006) argues that the language is an essential ingredient and important tools of communication among human beings. He explains that the language and its skills are mastered when the language is frequently used in every day's communication. Tuggy (2006) says that when the language is not used frequently by a given speaker, it leads to vagueness in terms of using that language.

Arthur (2005) says that it is very difficult for a bilingual community to overcome vagueness resulting from the poor vocabulary because in a bilingual community languages influence each other and the community members lack the choice about which language to prioritize. In such ambiguous situation, the language with low significance becomes left behind. In many bilingual African society, it is a mother tongue that is accorded with the less value in favor of the second language which is considered to be an international language of education, politics, business and diplomatic affairs. These local languages left behind became neglected and lose their value among community members and by educational planners. This leads to their poor mastery.

Tuggy (2006) highlights that one way of overcoming the challenge of vagueness among language speakers is to focus on vocabulary competence because the poor vocabulary is the main cause of vagueness. The essential step to advance forward in the process of vocabulary mastery is the frequent use of a language without using it in competition with another. Thus, vagueness resulting from the poor vocabulary is listed among effects of English as a language of instruction on Kinyarwanda language mastery in private primary schools of Rwanda because Kinyarwanda is given the less value in promotion of English language which is thought to be an international language that will enable pupils to achieve more in their future. Doubtlessly, this is why the mastery of Kinyarwanda language in such schools is still a dilemma regardless the effort of Rwandan government of instilling Kinyarwanda language skills among Rwandans at the tender age.

iv. Language Interference

The language interference is explained as the influence of one language over another in speaking or in writing of bilinguals who speak and write both languages. According to Ringbom (2007) the language interference is more likely to occur for bilingual communities in which the mother tongue or the local language is not mastered in childhood. The effects of language interference is observed especially in the usage of a given language with the less value in the community. The language interference occurs at all levels of linguistic chain *id est* in phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics and lexicon.

Håkan (2007) differentiates different types of language interference. The phonological interference is the influence of one language on another at the level of phonology, morphology interference is the influence of one language on another at the level of morphology, syntax interference is the influence of one language on another at the level of syntax, semantic interference is the influence of one language on another at the level of semantics, pragmatic interference is the influence of one language on another at the level of pragmatic and lexicon interference is the influence of one language on another at the level of lexicon.

Ellis (2008) advances his view that linguistic influence of a second language on a mother tongue takes place and becomes more serious among children who are challenged by acquiring two languages at the same time. This influence can be caused by linguistic negative and positive transfers. In Rwanda various private primary schools in which pupils are forced to use English in their every day's life, the mastery of Kinyarwanda language can't be easy. This is why English language interferes with Kinyarwanda in the frequent use of Kinyarwanda among students from such English based primary schools in both speaking and writing.

v. School Environment

The school environment that is being talked about is not the weather, furniture availability or enough and appropriate classrooms and other school infrastructures. The school environment which is being talked about here, is what takes place inside the classrooms and inside the school compounds. In Rwanda various private primary schools have taken a decision of using English language everywhere in the school compound in order to boost students' proficiency levels in

English. This micro- policy adapted by various primary schools has presented numerous effects on students' mastery of Kinyarwanda language.

Majyambere (2009) highlights that the mastery of Kinyarwanda language in some private primary schools of Rwanda is still a great challenge because students do not hear people conversing Kinyarwanda inside their schools. This is therefore a considerable hindrance that affects the mastery of Kinyarwanda language for students from such private schools.

The school environment to which some private primary school students are exposed does not motivate them to display a high level of Kinyarwanda language mastery (Ado, 2012).

2.1.4 The Other Factors Affecting the Mastery of Kinyarwanda

i. Attitudes towards Kinyarwanda

When the colonial masters reached Rwanda during the colonial period, they introduced new languages in Rwanda. Kinyarwanda had to compete with those newly introduced languages; Kinyarwanda did not win the competition because it was undermined and was considered as an indigenous language which was trivial. Many Rwandans especially intellectuals shifted their focus towards English and French languages because they considered these two languages as languages which will help them to compete worldwide (Rosendal, 2009). Starting from the colonial period, Kinyarwanda has lost its value among Rwandans and some of them have developed negative attitudes towards it. Until now, some parents and guardians do not put much effort on the mastery of Kinyarwanda language for their children. This negative attitude is a challenge that hinders the mastery of the mother tongue among Rwandan children.

ii. Educational Curriculum

For students in particular, it is a must that the totality of their education experience is appropriate for their needs. The language of instruction is an important ingredient in enabling students to attain a certain level of academic achievement (Kell, 2009).

In certain moment, people consider the curriculum entirely in terms of lessons and subjects to be taught and forget that the curriculum must contain wider goals of competence and students' personal development. This is why the curriculum framework is important and should be well designed in order to facilitate the attainment of instructional objectives easily (Kelly, 2009). In Rwanda, primary teachers especially the teachers of Kinyarwanda claim that the time allocated to Kinyarwanda subject is not adequate comparing to what has been planned in the syllabi. This is a great challenge for teachers of Kinyarwanda who are required to increase the levels of Kinyarwanda mastery among primary school students who do not have a place where to use Kinyarwanda language in their school compounds apart from during the periods allocated to Kinyarwanda subject. This is an additional issue that lower the mastery of Kinyarwanda language among primary schools' students in Rwanda.

iii. Lack of Motivation

Motivation is explained as the willingness of doing a given action especially in behavior (gardener, 2006). During the process of acquiring languages, there must be both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in order to attract learners. For the language to be acquired in a motivating manner, there must be an atmosphere energy and enthusiasm that create drives among individuals which push them to acquire the language willingly.

In some private schools of Rwanda, the priority has been put on international languages such as French and English. Students are motivated and forced to use these international languages wherever they are inside the school compound. Kinyarwanda is considered as a local language of non- educated individuals who can't compete worldwide as far as the globalization struggle is concerned. Samuelson (2012) says that some students in private primary schools of Rwanda are not interested in acquiring their mother tongue because it has no place in their surroundings. Once a child is being forced to use English over Kinyarwanda language, he or she becomes demotivated in acquiring Kinyarwanda language.

iv. Scarcity of Kinyarwanda Teaching and Learning Materials

One of the complaints among most Kinyarwanda language teachers in primary schools of Rwanda is the scarcity of adequate educational materials for Kinyarwanda language. This effect is persistent in both lower and upper levels of primary education in which students are assigned with wider topics to cover in a limited period of time (Heitin, 2016).

For primary school students to acquire Kinyarwanda language accordingly, the book ratio of one Kinyarwanda book for student must be considered because such students need to interact with the books and become familiar with them. The challenge is that in many primary schools of Rwanda, the book ratio 1:1 is not implemented. When a book is shared by many students, it can't be possible for a student to take a book at home and continue revising being at home. This is why the mastery of Kinyarwanda language continues being non- addressable issue.

2.1.4 English Language as a Medium of Instruction

i. Classroom Interaction in English

A mother- tongue is an important element for every society in providing community members with cultural values and belief. Since the mother- tongue is referred to as a language that children speak when they enter the education system, children should be taught using the mother- tongue at the early age in order to build a bridge connecting home and school learning (Openjur, 2005)

Even though, the mother- tongue has been considered to be important by many experts as an important tool for providing children with various skills, in most of Sub- Saharan countries including Rwanda, local languages have been considered as languages of informal schooling. Within such countries the languages of formal education are international languages such as English, French, Portuguese or Spanish. It is within this line that many of private primary school

leaders have adapted English as a language teaching and learning activities regardless of the government policy that highlights that the mother- tongue should be the language of instruction in both kindergarten and lower primary levels of education. Tabaro (2012) argues that in some primary schools of Rwanda, English language is the language of teaching and learning activities; within such schools during teachers' recruitment, English language mastery is an important requirement which they focus on.

ii. English Everywhere in School Compounds

A big number of people worldwide considers English as a language of literacy as well as a language of formal schooling. Schroeder (2004) says that most of educated and non- educated people believe that the mastery of English language is a sine qua none for economic achievement. They suggest that the best mean of cherishing this achievement is to be taught in English and being motivated to use it everywhere.

Marmer (2007) highlights that some intellectuals assume that local languages are dangerous to the mastery of international languages as they cause the language interference. For years, bilingual education scholars explained that there is a connection between mother- tongue and other languages acquired by an individual; the language that mostly used is the one that is mastered easily. This is why some private primary schools have adopted the micro- policy of banning Kinyarwanda from being used inside their compounds and force students and other school members to use English wherever they are inside the school.

iii. Exams in English

The education system of Rwanda stipulates that languages of instruction are Kinyarwanda for lower primary and English for upper primary (Samuelson, 2012). This means that students of lower primary should learn using Kinyarwanda for all syllabi apart from French and Kinyarwanda subjects. This language policy adapted by Rwandan government is somehow cumbersome because what is explained by the policy contains a gap especially in terms of examination.

The primary leaving examinations are set in English. Students who learn using Kinyarwanda from primary one up to primary three and English in upper primary are subjected to exams set in English and they are required to answer using the language of examination. This forced school leaders to adopt English in teaching and learning activities from lower primary levels in order to equip students with language skills that may enable them to achieve more academically in primary leaving national exams.

iv. Educational Curriculum in English

For students in particular, it is a must that the totality of their education experience is appropriate for their needs. The language of instruction is an important ingredient in enabling students to attain a certain level of academic achievement (Kelly, 2009).

In certain moment, people consider the curriculum entirely in terms of lessons and subjects to be taught and forget that the curriculum must contain wider goals of competence and students' personal development. This is why the curriculum framework is important and should be well

designed in order to facilitate the attainment of instructional objectives easily (Kelly, 2009). In Rwanda, the curriculum framework is designed in English this is why all teachers are required to master English language. Even though it is like that primary teachers especially the teachers of Kinyarwanda claim that the time allocated to Kinyarwanda subject is not adequate comparing to what has been planned in the syllabi. This is a great challenge for teachers of Kinyarwanda who are required to increase the levels of Kinyarwanda mastery among primary school students who do not have a place where to use English language in their school compounds apart from during the periods allocated to Kinyarwanda subject.

2.1.4 Poor Mastery of Kinyarwanda

i. Speaking

The policy of stopping Kinyarwanda to be used in some private primary schools was supported by some government elites who believe that a pupils attains an effective competency of education once they are fluent in a language (Gakwaya, 2014). This caused negative attitudes towards Kinyarwanda language among students and lower this willingness to acquire Kinyarwanda language because it has no place in their schools. This has affected various Rwandans and lowers their proficiency in the mother tongue. This is the main reason why the mastery of Kinyarwanda is still a dilemma especially among private primary school students.

ii. Reading and Writing Skills

The survey of Chemonics Soma Umenye conducted in 2015 within 85 primary schools randomly selected from 102 primary schools of GICUNBI District reports that among 2118 pupils sampled from primary four to primary six, only 35.02% of them have Kinyarwanda language reading and writing skills; 64.08% of them failed to read and write in their mother tongue. This study reveals that the poor writing and reading skills was found to be worse in private primary schools in which read and write Kinyarwanda as they do for English which is totally a great issue to tackle. This study suggested Rwandans' Ministry of Education to contact various researches intended to investigate and tackle factors behind this low level of Kinyarwanda mastery especially among private primary schools students.

iii. Comprehension

The change from Kinyarwanda to English language as LOI in private primary schools has made students to remain behind in terms of Kinyarwanda language mastery. DeStepfano et al (2012) report that reading, writing and comprehending Kinyarwanda language are at low level in primary schools of Rwanda. DeStepfano et al (2012) found that 26% primary four students in Rwanda could hardly read a single word of primary one, two and three textbooks. They also found that only 32% of primary six students in Rwanda could read 50 words of primary one, two and three textbooks in a minute. The standard minimum requirement is 60 words in a minute.

3.1 Methodology

This paper employed correlation research design. The correlation research was helpful to indicate the extent to which are correlated. The target population was 310 people with a sample of 175 got

using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Data collection tools used were questionnaire, interview guide and document analysis review. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 21.0 was adopted for data management.

4. Research findings and discussions

This paper was maintained to examine the effect of English as a language of instruction on the mother tongue (Kinyarwanda) mastery in private primary schools in Rwanda. This paper performed descriptive and correlation analysis in order to describe the factors associated English as a language of instruction and mother tongue mastery especially in private primary schools in Rwanda.

4.1 English Language in Private Primary Schools of Rwanda

The questionnaires were distributed to teachers to identify the level at which English language is used in teaching and learning activities in private primary schools of Rwanda. The interview guide was conducted to school head teachers to get findings supporting the quantitative data from the study.

Table 1: English Language in Private Primary Schools of Rwanda

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean	Std
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
Classroom interaction is done in English	10	6.1	5	3	20	12.1	65	39	65	39.4	4	1.1
English is used every where in the school	9	5.5	2	1.2	13	7.9	79	48	62	37.6	4.1	0.9
Students express their ideas in English	3	1.8	5	3	24	14.5	70	42	59	35.8	4.2	0.9
Students are encouraged to speak English	1	0.6	3	1.8	13	7.9	74	45	74	44.8	4.3	0.7
English is the language of examination	6	3.6	6	3.6	6	3.6	70	42	59	35.8	4	0.9
English based educational curriculum is used	5	3	4	2.4	16	9.7	68	41	72	43.6	4.2	0.9
Teaching and learning materials are set in English	1	0.6	3	1.8	13	7.9	74	45	74	44.8	4.2	1

Source: Primary data, 2020

The findings from Table 1 indicate responses provided by teachers on how English language is used in private primary schools of Gicumbi District in Rwanda. The majority of respondents with a total of 148 (89.6%) agreed that students are encouraged to speak English language in their private primary schools with a mean of 4.0 and the standard deviation of 1.1. This shows that the fluency of private primary school students in English is associated with schools micro policy of forcing students to speak English. Furthermore 148 (89.6%) respondents agreed that teaching and learning materials are set in English language with a mean of 4.2 and the standard deviation of 1.1 which shows the great significance attributed to English language in private primary schools as an international language that will enable students to become competent on the labor market worldwide in future. According to Swilla (2009) a language is mastered easily when it is frequently used in everyday life.

The results from the same table also indicates that 141 (85.5%) teachers agreed with the mean of 4.1 and the standard deviation 0.9 that English language is used everywhere inside the school compound. This implies that students are highly motivated to acquire all English language skills. The table 4.5 also highlights that 140 (84.8%) respondents agreed that in their schools English based curriculum is used with the mean of 4.4 and the standard deviation 0.9; this means that the usage of English based curriculum facilitates school leaders to enhance English language among teachers and students. It also indicates that 130 (78.8%) teachers with the mean of 4.0 and the standard deviation of 1.1 agreed that classroom interactions are done in English, it implies that both teaching and learning activities in respondents' schools are mandatory conducted in English language, this evidences that English has a considerable place within private primary schools of Gicumbi District which facilitates students to master it accordingly. When a child is put in an environment in which a given language is used, the child master that language easily (Skinner, 1957).

On the other hand 129 (78.2%) respondents with a mean of 4.2 and the standard deviation of 0.9 agreed that students can express their ideas and feeling in English language; this implies that students from private primary schools of Gicumbi district are competent in English language. Finally, 129 (78.5%) teachers with 4.0 of mean and 0.9 of standard deviation agreed that English is a language of examination in their private primary schools. This is in line with the micro policy adapted by different schools in order to increase English language mastery among students. The findings of the current study did not go far from the findings of the study conducted by Lieven (2011) who finds that students who learn I English based educational system has additional chance of mastering English language effectively.

The current research wanted to examine the level at which English language is used in private primary schools of Gicumbi District through interview with Head Teachers of Gicumbi District. They answered as follows:

The interviewee 1 said: *"In various primary schools of Gicumbi District, English language has dominated other languages including Kinyarwanda because school leaders are required to use English language inside schools compound in order to motivate their students to be more fluent in English as a language of instruction"*.

The interviewee two said: “*In Private primary schools English language is the language of instruction used in teaching and learning activities of all subjects apart from French and Kinyarwanda subjects. The utilization of English based curriculum encourages school principals and managers to avail more English teaching and learning materials which will facilitate their students to increase the level of English language mastery*”. Kosendal (2009) says that private primary schools decided to use English as a language of instruction in both lower and upper primary in order to attract a big number of students. For the purpose of looking smart and attracts their potential customers, some private primary schools of Rwanda made a policy of using English language everywhere in school compounds.

4.2 Kinyarwanda Mastery in Private Primary Schools in Rwanda

The findings on the level of Kinyarwanda mastery in private primary school in Rwanda were obtained due to the questionnaires and interview guide distributed to the respondents of the study.

Table 2: Kinyarwanda Mastery in Private Primary Schools in Rwanda

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean	Std
	Freq	%	Fr eq	%	Fr eq	%	Fre q	%	Fr eq	%		
Students are not fluent in Kinyarwanda	3	1.8	8	4.8	19	11.5	76	46.1	59	35.8	4	0.9
Students are not free to express feelings and ideas in Kinyarwanda	5	3	9	5.5	15	9.1	55	33.3	81	49.1	4.2	1
Students mix Kinyarwanda with English in conversation	3	1.8	6	3.6	24	14.5	73	44.2	59	35.8	4	0.8
Students' Kinyarwanda writing skill is low	5	3	5	3	17	10.3	59	35.8	79	47.9	4.2	0.9
Students mix Kinyarwanda and English code in writing Kinyarwanda	4	2.4	12	7.3	14	8.5	59	35.8	76	46.1	4.1	1
Students are not able to write Kinyarwanda correctly	5	3	4	2.4	12	7.3	70	42.4	74	44.8	4.2	0.9
Students can't comprehend Kinyarwanda easily	5	3	6	3.6	20	12.1	64	38.8	70	42.4	4.1	0.9
Students' Kinyarwanda comprehension level is low	3	1.8	7	4.2	15	9.1	74	44.8	66	40	4.1	0.8
students' Kinyarwanda reading skills are low	5	3	7	4.2	16	9.7	72	43.6	65	39.4	4.1	0.9
Students do not feel comfortable while reading Kinyarwanda	3	1.8	5	3	15	9.1	75	45.5	67	40.6	4.2	0.8
Students are influenced by English while reading Kinyarwanda	7	4.2	3	1.8	13	7.9	72	43.6	69	41.8	4.4	1

Source: Primary Data, 2020

Through the questionnaire, the researcher analyzed the researcher analyzed the level at which Kinyarwanda is mastered in private primary schools of Gicumbi District and the results are presented in the Table2 which indicates that 136 (82.4%) respondents agreed that students are not free to express feelings and ideas in Kinyarwanda with the mean of 4.2 and the standard deviation

of 1.0, 135 (81.9%) respondents agreed that students are not fluent in Kinyarwanda with the mean of 4.0 and the standard deviation of 0.9, and 132 (82.4%) respondents agreed that students mix Kinyarwanda with English in Kinyarwanda conversation with the mean of 4.0 and the standard deviation of 0.8. this implies that students from private primary schools of Gicumbi District are not able to speak Kinyarwanda correctly; this means that the Kinyarwanda speaking level is very low. The findings of the current study do not contradict the findings of Reasbe (2013) who conducted a research about effects of English as a language of instruction on the mastery of the mother tongue. The majority of his respondents with a total of 215 (79.3%) agreed that students who learn using English as a language of instruction face challenges in speaking their mother tongue (Sependi, 2013).

The Table2 shows that 144 (87.2%) teachers with the mean of 4.2 and the standard deviation of 0.9 agreed that students are not able to write Kinyarwanda correctly, 138 (83.4%) teachers with the mean of 4.2 and the standard deviation of 0.9 agreed that students' Kinyarwanda writing skill is low and 135 (81.9%) teachers with the mean of 4.1 and the standard deviation of 1.0 agreed that students mix Kinyarwanda and English code in writing Kinyarwanda. These results indicate explains the students from private primary schools of Gicumbi District are unable to write their mother tongue due to the lack of Kinyarwanda writing skills. Chemonics Soma Umenye (2015) reveals that 2118 pupils sampled in Gicumbi District from primary four to primary six, only 35.02% of them have Kinyarwanda language writing skills; 64.08% of them failed to read and write in their mother tongue.

In addition, the above table highlights that 140 (84.8%) respondents with the mean of 3.7 and the standard deviation of 0.8 agreed that students' Kinyarwanda comprehension level is low, and 134 (81.2%) respondents with the mean of 4.1 and the standard deviation of 0.9 agreed that students can't comprehend Kinyarwanda easily. This clarifies how students from Gicumbi District private primary schools are still facing various challenges in terms of comprehending Kinyarwanda as far as it is concerned as their mother tongue. DeStepfano et al (2012) argue that Kinyarwanda language comprehension is at low level in primary schools of Rwanda.

Finally, the Table2 presents that 142 (86.1%) teachers agreed that students do not feel comfortable while reading Kinyarwanda with the mean of 4.2 and the standard deviation of 0.8, 141 (85.4%) teachers agreed that students are influenced by English while reading Kinyarwanda with the mean of 4.0 and the standard deviation of 1.0 and 137 (83.1%) teachers agreed that students' Kinyarwanda reading skills are low with the mean of 4.1 and the standard deviation of 0.9. This shows the poor Kinyarwanda reading skills among private primary schools' students in Gicumbi District and in Rwanda generally. According to DeStepfano et al (2012), 26% primary four students in Rwanda could hardly read a single word of primary one, two and three textbooks. They also found that only 32% of primary six students in Rwanda could read 50 words of primary one, two and three textbooks in a minute. The standard minimum requirement is 60 words in a minute.

In this study, it was important for the researcher to collect information about the mastery of Kinyarwanda among private primary school students of Gicumbi District by questioning Head Teachers through interview which enabled the researcher to gain useful information. The following are answers provided by Head Teachers about the mastery of Kinyarwanda among private primary schools in Gicumbi District of Rwanda.

Among ten interviewed Head Teachers, nine of them (90%) witnessed private primary school students are not allowed to use Kinyarwanda in their school activities because the internal regulations of their schools require every students to use English language everywhere. This is why Kinyarwanda mastery is still a dilemma in such schools.

Concerning the fluency and how students are encouraged to use Kinyarwanda, the study key informants answered as follows:

One of the interviewees said: “*Students from private primary schools of Gicumbi District are not allowed to speak Kinyarwanda inside their school compounds. Various primary schools have adopted school micro-policy of banning from being used inside the school, this is the major reason which explains why students from private primary school of Gicumbi District are still behind in terms of Kinyarwanda language mastery*”. Furthermore, the interviewed Head Teachers answered that there is shortage of strategies intended to enhance Kinyarwanda language mastery because some school managers have adopted punishments to every student who tends to speak Kinyarwanda at school. This is why the survival of Kinyarwanda in such environment can’t be easily granted. Kinyarwanda language lost its values and potentialities as Rwandans’ mother tongue and it was accorded with no place within this schools. In order to highlight English language master among students, some private primary schools adopted a language micro- policy of banning Kinyarwanda language from being used in the school compounds (Samuelson, 2010).

4.3 Correlation between English and Kinyarwanda Mastery in Rwanda

The findings related to relationship between English and Kinyarwanda mastery in Rwanda are presented in Table3.

Table 3: Correlation between English and Kinyarwanda Mastery in Rwanda

		English as a language of instruction	Students’ Kinyarwanda mastery
English as a language of instruction	Pearson Correlation	1	.854**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	165	165
Students’ Kinyarwanda mastery	Pearson Correlation	.854**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	165	165

Source: Primary Data 2020 **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Findings from the Table3 indicate that there is a statistical significance relationship between English language usage as language of instruction and the mastery of Kinyarwanda among private primary schools of Gicumbi District since the P-value = .000 which less than 0.01 as the level of significance and Pearson coefficient of correlation (r) is .854** which is very high. This also implies that there is an association on the effect of English language as language of instruction on the mastery of Kinyarwanda among private primary schools of Gicumbi. Ogbuehi (2001) presents

that English as a language of instruction in African countries causes conflicts between English and indigenous languages which are totally different from English in nature.

4.4 Regression Analysis between English and Kinyarwanda Mastery in Rwanda

This research carried out a regression analysis between English as a language of instruction and Kinyarwanda Mastery in private primary schools located in Gicumbi District of Rwanda. The following Table shows a regression analysis, through a summary of model and analysis of variance.

4.5 Regression Analysis between English as a Language of Instruction and Kinyarwanda Mastery

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.832 ^a	.751	.741	.29306

Source: Primary Data, 2020 a. Predictors: (Constant), English as a language of instruction

From the Table4, the value of Adjusted R Square is .741 an indication that 74.1% of the variation in students’ Kinyarwanda mastery can be explained by one level of independent variables (English based educational curriculum, English usage everywhere in the school, Classroom interaction in English, and Students encouragement to speak English). This implies that there is a strong relationship between English language as a language of instruction and students’ Kinyarwanda mastery.

This paper did not forget to present information about effects of English as a language of instruction on Kinyarwanda mastery in private primary schools of Gicumbi District. This is why the researcher conducted interview with Head Teachers of Gicumbi District order to get vital information indispensable for the current research activity.

All ten (100%) interviewed Head Teachers answered that English usage as a language of instruction in the major hindrance of students’ Kinyarwanda mastery. They associated the low Kinyarwanda language mastery with schools micro-policies of banning Kinyarwanda from being used in favor of English as an international language. This is why students have a great tendency of mixing Kinyarwanda with English language in Kinyarwanda codes conversation, writing and reading. Once a child is being forced to use English over Kinyarwanda language, he or she becomes demotivated in acquiring Kinyarwanda language. Samuelson (2012) says that some students in private primary schools of Rwanda are not interested in acquiring their mother tongue because it has no place in their surroundings.

5.0 Summary of findings

The objective of this paper was to examine the effect of English as a language of instruction on the mother tongue (Kinyarwanda) mastery in private primary schools in Rwanda. The responses from respondents indicated that there is a correlation between classroom interaction in English, English usage everywhere in the school, students’ expression of their ideas in English, students’ encouragement to speak English, English as a language of examination, English based educational curriculum, English Teaching and learning materials and Kinyarwanda mastery (Kinyarwanda speaking, comprehension, writing and reading) was positive. This shows that the relationships

were all positive and statistically significant. Each of these elements significantly influences Kinyarwanda mastery among private primary school students within Gicumbi District in Rwanda.

6.0 Conclusion

In establishment of the relationship between two variables (independent and dependent variables), it has been found that classroom interaction in English, English usage everywhere in the school, students' expression of their ideas in English, students' encouragement to speak English, English as a language of examination, English based educational curriculum as well as English Teaching and learning materials affect students' Kinyarwanda mastery. The current research also revealed that the pre-mentioned English language factors are the main stimuli to students' poor mastery of Kinyarwanda. The correlation between the mentioned above English language factors and students' Kinyarwanda mastery was found meaningful. This shows that the relationships between independent and dependent variables were positive and statistically significant. Each of the discussed English language factors affects students' Kinyarwanda mastery.

7.0 Recommendations

This paper indicates the following recommendations:

All people involved in education sector in Gicumbi are recommended to work collaboratively in order to enhance the mastery of Kinyarwanda among all primary school students in both public and private primary schools.

MINEDUC through Rwanda Education Board is recommended to avail enough Kinyarwanda teaching and learning materials including charts, textbooks and dictionaries which are adequate in enhancing Kinyarwanda mastery among students at their early age. MINEDUC also have to increase the time allocated to Kinyarwanda subject in order to provide teachers and students enough time of mastering various Kinyarwanda skills.

All stakeholders of education sector are recommended to support Kinyarwanda teaching and learning activities in Rwanda, as it is the only and one shortcut for making Rwandans master their mother tongue.

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