

**EFFECTS OF LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION ON STUDENTS’  
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN COMMUNITY SECONDARY SCHOOLS  
IN BUNDA DISTRICT**

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**2020**

**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned certifies that she has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania a dissertation titled: *“Effects of Language of Instruction on Students’ Academic Performance in Community Secondary Schools in Bunda District”* partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Administration, Planning and Policy Studies of the Open University of Tanzania.

.....

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Date

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## DECLARATION

I, **Maiga Samwel Patrick**, do hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work, and that it has not been presented, and will not be presented to any other University for a similar or any other degree award.

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Signature

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Date

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to all who, in one way or another, helped me to reach this stage. First is my late father Mr. Maiga Kubebeka for being a responsible father and my late mother Nyafuru Bojeresha for her great care and support which she gave to me unconditionally. Second, I dedicate this work to the whole family for encouraging me when I faced challenges; my beloved wife Happiness Sena, my daughters Dainess and Gertruda and my sons Allen and Baraka who often prayed for my success. I finally dedicate this work to my relatives and friends as well.

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## ABSTRACT

The study examined the effects of language of instruction on students' academic performance in community secondary schools in Bunda District. The study employed a mixed research design and employed purposive and random sampling for getting 105 respondents including teachers and students to respond to semi-structured questions related to language difficulty experienced in secondary school; how language of instruction contributes to their success or failure in schools and possible strategies for improving students' proficiency in the language of instruction in secondary schools. The key findings show that despite English language being essential to students' academic success in secondary education, many struggled in writing, speaking and reading during lesson discussions and in examinations. Indeed, one of the major barriers towards students' academic performance was the language used to instruct learning. The study also found that both teachers and students had developed various coping mechanisms for dealing with language barrier such as use of code-switching. Generally, this study recommends that there is a need to officiate English as the language of instruction from pre-primary to secondary education. Also the government should invest in teacher language training and use of multimedia in classrooms in order to improve English as a language of instructions in public schools.

**Keywords:** Community secondary schools, language of instruction, students' academic performance

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COM	Change of Medium
CSEE	Certificate of Secondary Education Examination
EWST	English Writing Skills Test
English ST	Students said English
GPA	General Performance Average
KNL	Kiswahili is Native Language
LOI	Language of Instruction
MoEV	Ministry of Education Vocational and Training
MOI	Medium of Instruction
MT	Multilingual Teaching
NECTA	National examination council of Tanzania
NS	Native Speakers
NNS	Non-Native Speakers
SCT	Socio-cultural Theory
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
UNESCO	United Nation Education and Cultural Organization
URT	United Republic of Tanzania
PISA	Program For International Students Assessment

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Chapter one presents the background to the study, statement of the problem and research objectives. In addition, the chapter presents research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study and limitations of the study. Finally, definitions of the key terms used in this study are provided.

#### **1.2 Background of the Study**

The importance of the language of instruction in facilitating the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values for students cannot be overemphasized (Mlay, 2010). It mediates knowledge acquisition even when the content of education is not language (Nyaga, 2015). Over forty years ago, United Nation Education and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommended that best language for teaching children at lower levels of education is their mother tongue. This has been followed by subsequent United Nations' initiatives such as World Education for All and Sustainable Development Goals which emphasized on removing language barrier to education even when students have to transit from mother tongue to second language in their educational circle (Crawford, Schmeister, & Biggs, 2008).

In this regard, the question of language of instruction is at the top of the educational agenda in many countries around the world. Decisions about language of instruction what mother tongue languages to teach, in what grades, when to transit to the national language or international language vary from one country to another (Collier &



Thomas, 2004). In some multilingual countries such as Turkey and India, mother tongue is a preferred language of instruction in lower levels of education such as pre-school, primary and secondary education while second language or international languages such as English are commonly used in universities. Indeed, such policies are supported by scientific studies such as Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) which indicated that native speaking (NS) students outperform non-native speakers in examinations therefore making first language of learners a preferred medium of instruction in early grades (Li, 2005).

However, due to some historical reasons many African countries are struggling effectively device and implement language of instruction policy. For instance, in Kenya, the language-in-education policy supports the use of the learner's first language as the language of instruction in the first three years of school before transitioning to English. However, research shows that, the policy is not implemented in schools due to a number of reasons including the plurality of children's first languages in one classroom. Similarly, research in South African education system indicates that shifting from first-language in the early years of schooling instruction to second language (English) is a very big challenge for many students.

Like many African countries, language of instruction policy in Tanzania has been influenced by a number of historical factors. Firstly, Tanzania inherited English as a medium of instruction from British colonial rule. Indeed, in early years after independence (From 1961 to 1966), the government maintained the colonial curriculum and languages of instruction, using Swahili as language of instruction in the first five years of primary education, and English from the sixth to secondary and

post-secondary levels. Later, following the adoption of socialism policy in Tanzania, which emphasized Africanization of education, system and the economy, several changes were made in language of instruction policy. Kiswahili officially became the medium of instruction in primary schools in 1967. Also, although English remained as the medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary education, it was not given high prominence as Kiswahili. Likewise, in late 1960s and early 1980's, there were a number of attempts by educational stakeholders to influence a shift from English as a language of instruction to Kiswahili in secondary education though with no success (Mlay, 2010).

These efforts failed partly because of lack of political will and the economic cost of making such dramatic changes (Brock-Utne, 2003). As the result, subsequent educational and cultural policies such as the 1995 education Training Policy, the 1997 Cultural Policy and the 2014 Education and Training Policy maintained that Kiswahili would remain as the language of instruction in pre-primary and primary level while English continued to be the language of instruction in post- primary education with an exception of Certificate teacher training colleges and Adult education where Kiswahili was maintained as the language of instruction.

However, despite these policy shifts, research shows that there are two major problems in the language of instruction used in secondary education. First, many students struggle to transition from using Kiswahili as language of learning in early years of education to using English in Secondary schools (Qorro, 2006). As the result, overall performance of secondary schools, as measured by national examinations, has been dismal. For instance, the proportion of students passing with divisions 1, 2 and 3

has been declining since 2001 (Sumra, 2014). On the other hand, those with division 4 and those failing have increased. Even more problematic, is that many students who have been in six years of secondary education are still struggling to master English language (Mlay, 2010). Therefore, this study aimed at investigating effects of using English as the language of instruction on students' academic performance in secondary schools.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Researchers believe that only the language which teachers and students understand can effectively function as the language of instruction (Qorro, 2006). In fact, only when teachers and students understand the language of instruction are able to discuss, debate, ask and answer questions, ask for clarification and therefore construct and generate knowledge.

Despite the fact that the Education and Training Policy insists on the use of English as the language of instruction in secondary schools, research shows that both teachers and students are not competent in the language (Mlay, 2010). The teaching and learning process has been gradually deteriorating because of the English language barrier. There could be a link of the barrier of language that leads to poor academic performance in secondary schools. Indeed, research shows that students' performance in English subject itself is not satisfactory (Sumra, 2014). For instance, In 2012 CSEE, only 26.1 per cent of all the students sitting for the English passed. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the impact of language of instruction on students' academic performance. It attempted to unveil various areas in which students are

experiencing difficulty in understanding what they are taught in class thereby hindering their performance.

#### **1.4 Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of language of instruction on students' academic performance in community secondary school in Bunda District.

##### **1.4.1 Specific Objectives of the Study**

- (i) To determine difficult language skills for students in community secondary schools in Bunda District.
- (ii) To examine the extent to which language of instruction contributes to students' success or failure in community secondary schools in Bunda District.
- (iii) To establish possible strategies for improving students' proficiency in the language of instruction in community secondary schools in Bunda District?

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following research questions

- (i) Which language skills are perceived to be difficult among students in community secondary schools in Bunda District?
- (ii) To what extent does the language of instruction determine the performance of students in community secondary schools in Bunda District?
- (iii) What are the possible strategies for improving students' proficiency in the language of instruction in community secondary schools in Bunda District?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study on the effects of language of instruction on the students' academic performance is expected to give the following significances.

First, insights from this study are expected to inform policy makers on LoI challenges that prevent students from performing to their full capabilities so that they can device appropriate measures for ensuring that language of instruction promotes access to quality education and not the opposite.

Second, this study is expected to stimulate policy dialogue among researchers about the most appropriate language of instruction in secondary education. More importantly, how to bridge language skill gap that exist among students who are transitioning from primary to secondary education.

Third, the classroom teachers may find this study of value to them because it unveils various ways of enhancing students' understanding of the language of instruction. They may also learn difficult language skills for students that need to be addressed.

Generally, teachers may benefit from this study in terms of improved English instruction thereby improving students' academic performance.

## **1.7 Scope of the Study**

In order to make the study more manageable and feasible the study was delimited to investigating the effects of LoI on students' academic performance in community secondary schools in Bunda district. It investigated English language difficulty experienced by students and how students' competence in LOI influenced school performance. Moreover, this study covered Bunda District. Bunda is among 6 districts

of Mara Region. Other districts of Mara Region include Butiama, Serengeti, Tarime, Rorya and Musoma. It would have been ideal to cover the whole of the Mara Region or perhaps the whole of Tanzania. However, it is worth noting that the findings and recommendations from this study could be adapted by areas of similar characteristics in the region and outside the region for the purposes of decision-making.

Moreover, this study also employed mixed research approach for gathering data from teachers and students. Finally, the study was conducted in a period of one year, that is, from August 2018 to August 2019. The period of one year set aside for this study was sufficient for a researcher to examine effects of language of instruction on students' performance before arriving to a significant conclusion.

### **1.7 Delimitation of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of the language of instruction on students' academic performance in community secondary schools in Bunda District. The study employed three data collection methods. namely: questionnaires, Sem-structed interview and the documentary analysis. Furthermore: random and purposive were sampling techniques used to get 105 respondents included teachers and students.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

There were some limitations which the researcher encountered in this study. Time, financial crisis and weather condition like rainfall in general these were among the barriers Which could prevent the study. Therefore, the researcher overcomes this

situation for instance time used minimum data collection methods and samples size.

Rainfall problem: The study was conducted during the dry period and financial crisis:

The reasecher managed to budget the available fiscal resource and ensuring completion of the all planned activities for this study. This study used sample size of teachers and students from the community secondary schools located in Bunda district which is one of the six districts of Mara region. This size of sample restricted several possibilities for generalization. this study employed three data collection methods namely: questionnaires, documentary analysis and sem-structed interview.

### **1.9 Operationalization of Key Concepts**

The following concepts are applied for the purpose of this study only.

**Academic Performance:** Students' performance in examinations. It reflects the extent to which students have attained certain short-term educational goals. In the context of this study academic performance is measured by students' performance in tests and other school and national examinations.

**Community Secondary Schools:** government schools which are run by both the government and local community.

**Language Difficulty:** Learners' inability to use various forms of language such as Written, Spoken etc.

**Language Proficiency:** Being skillful in the language of instruction. Ability use all for language constructs i.e. Reading, Writing, speaking and listening without experiencing difficulties.

### **1.10 Effects**

In this study, effects are expected to be the results that come as a result of the influence of problems on language of instruction on the students classroom achievement measured in terms of academic performances. They may include failure to comprehend the sentence or question of illustration or the general demand of the asked question that will result fail of that particular student in examinations.

**Language of Instruction** In this study, the language of instruction will mean the English Language, which is used in teaching in secondary schools.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents literature related to this study. The first part presents the theoretical literature that is framed within the perspectives of Socio-Cultural Theory. The second part presents a critical review of empirical literature that revolves around the three objectives developed in chapter one.

#### **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

The study was investigated through the lens of Social Cultural Theory developed by Lev Vygotsky.

##### **2.2.1 Socio-Cultural Theory (SCT)**

Lantolf (2000) assert that, Socio-Cultural Theory (SCT) has its origins in the writings of the Russian Psychologist L. S. Vygotsky and his colleagues. This theory suggests that, the main goal of education is to internalize culture and social relationships through social learning (George, 2013). The importance of past experiences and knowledge in interpreting present experiences is stressed. Students' culture particularly their home surroundings have a great deal of contribution towards new knowledge and skills that one acquires. In this regard, language skills that students develop earlier in their development stages are particularly critical for creating meaning and linking new ideas to past experiences and prior knowledge (Nel & Müller, 2010).

Vygotsky claims that language played an essential role in cognitive development this is due to the fact that it is through language a child learns how to think and it is through words a child internalizes complex concepts (Mlay, 2010).

Similarly, Padilla and Gonzalez (2001) suggest that language for communication be it in the family or in school should be a native language by which children think and act at early stages of genetic development with the help of the words of adults. According to Luria and Yudovich (2008), subordination of the child's language and thinking to adult speech lifts the child's mental and language proficiency to a new and qualitatively higher stage of learning development towards the subject matter.

Generally, Socio-Cultural Theory best explains the impact of Language of Instruction on students' academic performance because it shows learning takes place through the use of language in which an external experience transforms into internal process. In relation to the current study, English language is considered means of communication that promotes learning based on the current Education and Training Policy. However, if teachers and students are not very competent in English language, learning can barely take place effectively. Therefore, the theory helps to highlight various language difficulties experienced by students and how they contribute to their success or failure.

### **2.3 Empirical Literature**

This section presents empirical review of literature supporting this study. The empirical literature review is organized around three research objectives/themes including: - student language difficulty, effects of the LoI on teaching and learning, strategies for enhancing students mastering of LoI. To begin with, this introductory

section provides a brief conceptualization of language policy and language of instruction.

### **2.3.1 Language-in-Education Policy**

Nyaga (2015) emphasizes that language policy is essential component of an educational system. It informs educational policy formulation, educational program design, teacher capacity-building and research. However, in many multilingual countries, development of language-in-education policy is a very contentious issue. Many governments find it very difficult to develop language-in-education policy that supports development of globally competitive workforce while maintaining cultural relevance of education (Trudell, 2016). Generally, the following patterns have been observed by scholars in many language-in-education policies.

#### **2.3.1.1 Early Exit Transitional Bilingual Policy**

This language-in-education policy mandates the use of one or more local language in the early primary grades, after which an international language becomes the medium of instruction for the remainder of primary, secondary and higher education (Trudell, 2016). This policy is used by far in many African countries such as Botswana whereby Tswana is used **as** a language of instruction from grade one to four. Thereafter, there is a shift to English whereby it is used as medium of instruction from grade five to higher education while local languages may be taught as subjects. Although this policy does provide space for the use of local languages in the formal school system, it has been criticized by scholars who question its efficacy and efficiency. First, several studies have shown that the level of English proficiency by

Grade 3 students is not adequate to support them for English medium learning in Grade 4 (Brock-Utne, 2002, 2003; Heugh, 2008; Mutasa, 2002; Nel & Müller, 2010; Prah, 2003; Trudell, 2016). For instance, Brock-Utne (2003) who examined language issues in Africa in the era of globalization, she found that, even in education systems where English is used as medium of instruction in primary and secondary education, many graduates feel very uncomfortable to communicate in English.

#### **2.3.1.2 Late Exit Transitional Language Policy**

This policy aims at maintaining local language as medium of instruction through at least the primary years (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010). This model is by far the most common language learning model used in multilingual environments of Europe (Wright & Taylor, 1995). However, this model like many other models have raised concerns about the cost of materials development, teacher training and infrastructure development for multiple language communities often present the most powerful argument against multilingual policy choices (Mkohlwa & Afungmeyu, 2015).

#### **2.3.1.3 Gradual transition to National and International Language**

Burton (2013), explains that in order to overcome complexity surrounding development of language-in-education policy in multilingual setting, some governments have managed to design mother tongue based multilingual education systems with some years of transition to national/international LOI. For instance, after trying many policies with limited success, the Philippine government introduced multilingual language-in-education policy that would be used from kindergarten to grade three. This is followed by a transition period from grade four through six in which Filipino and English are gradually introduced until they become the primary

languages of instruction at the secondary level (Mutasa, 2002). This implies that students are given enough time to learn and understand national language gradually before they start using it as the only medium of instruction at the secondary level.

### **2.3.2 Language of Instruction**

Language of instruction (LOI) refers to the language designated for teaching in schools. It is sometimes called the medium of instruction. Education systems may designate the local and/or national language as the LOI in schools (Burton, 2013). Previous studies have shown that there is a huge gap between language of instruction instructed by education policy documents and actual practices in classrooms (Chun et al., 2017). For instance, McGlynn (2013) conducted an ethnographic study in Gambia to assess LOI practices in schools and concluded that the Gambian language-in-education policy was regularly subverted by the teachers and students in order to meet the pragmatic and pedagogic needs of the classroom. In many situations, McGlynn observed that, despite English being the official LOI in Gambian education system many teachers and students preferred discussing by using indigenous or local languages. This indicates that despite the domination of European language policies in many African education systems, actual instruction is done by mixing both local and international languages. This can be partly attributed to ideological and financial constraints of using international language as the medium of instruction.

Similarly, Mose (2017) examined implementation of language of instruction policy in Kenya and unveiled that there was huge disparity between, intention government policy on the medium of instruction in schools and actual implementation. First, policy makers' intentions were not well understood by teachers. Second some

pragmatic reasons such as language used in National exams and multiplicity of languages in one classroom prevented teachers from implementing mother tongue instruction in primary schools.

### **2.3.3 Students' Perceived Language Difficulty**

Various researchers have examined various language difficulties experienced by Non-native language speakers in using official LOI. These challenges often stem from the shift from using native language to national or international language at a certain level of education due to the dictates of language policy or students' individual choice. The following difficulties have been reported.

#### **2.3.3.1 Inability to Properly Use Productive Language Skills**

There is overwhelming evidence that many students struggle to master language of instruction which is not their mother tongue (Chun et al., 2017). For instance, Berman and Cheng (2001) conducted a study aimed at finding out students' (self-assessed) difficulties with various language skills including reading, writing, listening and speaking and concluded that, the most difficult language skill for Non-Native language Speakers students is the productive skill of speaking. This has negative impact on students' ability to actively participate in teaching-learning activities such as group discussion or question and answers sessions. A similar study done by carried out by Jiménez Muñoz (2016) on language challenges faced by international students in Canadian universities and discovered that, many international students found speaking and writing to be somewhat of a problem or a big problem. This implies many second language students find language productive skills very difficult for them compared to receptive activities such as reading and listening.

### **2.3.3.2 Failure to Master Receptive Language Skills which are Essential to Meaningful Learning and Better Academic performance**

Nel and Müller (2010) investigated the impact of teachers' limited English proficiency on English second language learners in South African schools and unveiled various problems learners encountered when reading, writing, listening or spelling English.

The frequently encountered problems included listening problems such as learners did not understand instructions. Speaking problems included limited vocabulary of learners. Reading problems revealed that learners were unfamiliar with phonics. Finally many learners experienced some difficulties in spelling during writing. These are essentially major problems which hindered many students from performing to their full capability. Receptive skills such as ability to listen and read instruction are essential in enhancing students' academic performance in various examinations.

### **2.3.3.3 Language Anxiety and Lack of Confidence**

Chun et al. (2017) investigated South Korean students' responses to English-medium instruction courses. In this study, it was unveiled that many students avoid taking courses taught in English because of language anxiety and lack of confidence. The study's results also indicated that many students were worried about their instructors' poor language competence.

As the result, many students had unfavorable attitude towards English-medium courses. Indeed, research shows that students' confidence in their own abilities tends to decline as they shift from mother tongue instruction to national/international language.

#### **2.3.3.4 Inability to participate in Classroom Activities**

Several studies on the language of instruction in Tanzania have unveiled that many students are very inactive during classroom interaction because of their limited English language confidence. In a theoretical paper titled “Does Language of Instruction Affect.

Quality of Education” Qorro (2006) complained that in secondary school classrooms, only a handful of students take part in active learning. The majority of students simply sits and copy notes that their teachers have written on. Unfortunately, even when teacher’s handwriting is not legible students do not ask but simply copy words incorrectly since they are not able to distinguish correct from incorrectly spelt words. This indicates that many students find it difficult to distinguish between what is true in teacher’s lesson and what needs to be corrected. It is appalling that in this age where classroom instruction is supposed to be learner-centered, many students are handicapped of their ability to participate in creating meaningful and enjoyable teaching-learning experience because of language difficulties.

Brock-Utne (2005) conducted a study comparing learning by using a known language against studying by using a foreign language. In situation to some Tanzania’s secondary school classrooms, it was found that, teachers instructed the content by using English in one way and in Kiswahili in the other way. It was further revealed that, in the English lessons, students were not participating; they kept silent, serious and looked scared. The students also tried to predict the correct points, which the teacher required. Additionally, the students did not pronounce the words correctly, they miss-spelt, they indicated poor support when they were observed. For example, a



teacher would say to students that speak loudly but it could be echoed as lovely. Also, one among the boys who stood for a long time when asked to read a word known as bird he pronounced it as beard. Then the teacher asked that boy to spell the same word. Finally, the teacher had to write it on the chalkboard and somehow managed to pronounce it. Surprisingly, in Kiswahili sessions, the situation was different, the students were happy, eager and much amusement to learn during the lesson presentation (for the teacher, the students and the observers) as well as students were contending to respond.

#### **2.3.4 The Effect of Language of Instruction on Student Academic Performance**

Galabawa and Lwaitama (2005) carried out a study at secondary school level in selected Tanzanian schools on comparative analysis of performance in Kiswahili and English as the media of instruction and it was revealed that, instructing the subject matter was picked from the national secondary school syllabi in Biology and Geography. It was further indicated that, the normal test scores provided at the end of the instructional term were in general higher in the Kiswahili subject than those attained in the English subject. Kinyanduka and Kiwara (2013) conducted a study about language of instruction and its impact on quality of education in secondary schools. The experiences from Morogoro region, Tanzania' and found that 69.5% of students could not understand when taught in English language.

Furthermore, 78.9% of teachers said that English language was a setback to a student academic achievement. Surprisingly, 64.5% teachers, 53% parents and 78.1% student respondents preferred teachers to use English as a language of teaching and evaluation. In the meantime, 71.4% of students felt that it was better for teachers to

use both Kiswahili and English during classes. The previous study had suggested the application of both English and Kiswahili in instructing and evaluation of teaching.

According to Peterson (2006) in his study about the use of an African language as language of instruction at University rank distinguished affirmative observations to Kiswahili. According to this scholar, the students reported that, they understood very much the contents, which were instructed in Kiswahili than contents, which were taught in English. Furthermore, the students argued that, Kiswahili language provides them with the accessibility of expressions or vocabulary and it is the language they apply in different contexts as part of their daily routine like the market, home, in churches, mosques and schools.

Moreover, Peterson argues that, the application of English as the medium of instruction had a negative consequences as it hindered students' meaningful learning. The students failed to express themselves freely. The students claimed that, they did not understand the English language's structure. There was a mismatch between Kiswahili language's structure and English language's structure. For instance, the mismatch between orthographic systems of the two languages, phonological constrains and some of the English subject books used difficult vocabularies, which were irrelevant to the academic levels of students.

Nyaga (2015) conducted a study about early grade Multilingual classrooms in Kenyan primary schools and found that though the language-in-education policy supports the use of MTs, no resources were allocated towards producing textbooks and other school materials in the languages advocated for by the policy. Instead, materials were

published exclusively in English except those for teaching Kiswahili as a language subject despite the fact that the recommended MoI for urban schools is Kiswahili and a variety of indigenous languages in the rural areas. English is preferred as the MoI over all other languages as reflected in the textbooks and examinations, which are printed and written, respectively, in English.

Similarly, initial teacher preparation does not prepare the teachers for multilingual teaching environments. Thus, government policy may have good intentions in terms of support of early learning through the medium of the MT, but policy implementation is undermined by limited supportive actions beyond the policy public speaking. Furthermore, the findings of this study provide a need for restructuring the teacher education curriculum to include aspects of language awareness such as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, language planning, language and education. This would offer teachers a broader basis from which to make language choices in their classrooms.

Mlay (2010) conducted a study on the contribution of the language of instruction on students' academic performance in secondary schools. Under this comparative study between urban and rural schools in Arusha-Tanzania' and it was revealed that, the most motive which make students to face challenges in learning by using English language is their unwillingness and negligence. Furthermore, Mlay contended that, students are shy to actively engage in class discussions by using English language because teachers would discourage them or their fellow students would laugh at them because of their failure to communicate fluently. Nevertheless, students who have had

early introduction to English from the start of primary school, they normally manage to learn smoothly by using English as a medium of instruction in secondary schools.

Additionally, such students tend to perform better in comprehension examinations than who began learning English from standard three and therefore lack experiences and exposure in the language as well as their performances tend to be poor. On other hand, Vuzo (2002) argues that, students may not be able to reply to the questions correctly because they fail to comprehend the questions but not because they do not know their answers. The language may have a detrimental effect on students' learning capability as well as the interpretation of instructions and questions. Furthermore, the language may cause students not be able to provide their ideas properly.

Therefore, it can be argued that, there were divergences in the instruction as when the different MOI were applied (Vuzo, 2002). The student –teacher communication in Kiswahili MOI was high since most of students actively gave a positive participation and got the correct response and most of them also asked questions to the teacher or among themselves. Contrarily, in English, MOI sessions, it was least as most of students were quiet, not asking questions or providing any replies. Additionally, the results clearly indicated that, during their secondary school career small or subject information is approaching across to about 50% of the pupils in the selected sample size. Simply, about 10% of form IVs is at a point where one might anticipate English medium education to start. Rubanza (2002) opines that, normally, students drop their English abilities and competencies after finishing their studies since the community they work and live in does not require the application of the English language. Based

on the above mentioned reasons, it recommends the most important consequence of poor realization of the bilingual education in Tanzania.

Adam (2014) in his ethnographic study titled “language, literacy and learning in Tanzanian secondary schools”. An ethnographic perspective on the student experience found out that the issues of language in education in Tanzania have been described as confusing, contradictory and ambiguous. The motivation behind this research came from an observation on students’ frustrations. It was crucial to choose an approach through which their perspectives could be adequately represented. Taking an ethnographic approach implies certain beliefs about the construction of society.

In this case, language and literacy attitudes and practices are socially and culturally embedded and so need to be carefully observed in order to identify patterns and structures Adam (2014) continues to advice that, the issues to do with language of instruction should be fundamental to any classification of quality instruction or learning. It is the medium through which learning is communicated and most often demonstrated inside and outside the classroom. Yet a significant proportion of the world’s students are being taught using a language of instruction than is neither their mother language, nor the lingua franca in their nations or regions and Tanzania English language is commonly used rather than Kiswahili the lingua franca for the majority in Tanzania. Vuzo (2002) in her study concerning pedagogical implications of using English as a language of instruction in secondary schools in Tanzania concludes her analysis of all the 80 scripts she has gathered and compared by stating that, the 40 students in her sample narrate the story quite well at all the three levels in secondary school when they are allowed to write in Kiswahili. They have in most

cases no mistakes in Kiswahili. This signifies a favorable command of Kiswahili. For all students, stories were better in Kiswahili than it was done in English stories. Mkwizu (2002, 2003) in her studies found that, a total of 20 secondary school students participated, half of the students from a rural area and half from an urban area. The findings of these two studies involved 60 secondary school students from mainland Tanzania. In the studies some students wrote incomprehensible English passages that were full of grammatical errors and spelling mistakes. In general, all students performed poorly in the English story (Brock-Utne, Desai, Qorro & Pitman, 2010).

The standard of English used by Form VI students were somewhat better than that used by Form IV and Form I students, but the difference in the English proficiency level of the students between the different levels of secondary education was surprisingly small. Most of the scripts from students in the upper levels of secondary education showed that they still do not express themselves adequately, despite the higher number of years that they have spent using English as language of instruction. The differences in Kiswahili were very minimal between the grade levels of secondary education. Thus, all the students expressed themselves adequately at all grade levels in Kiswahili.

Roy- Campbell (1992) through the study on power or pedagogy: choosing the medium of instruction views the anomaly of preference of little understood languages as Mol over familiar languages as indicative that language preference is not simply a matter of pedagogical effectiveness but is also linked to the wider political and socio-political factors, amongst them the perceived status of different languages. Adamson (2014) through this study found that, English is used as an the official medium of instruction

in Tanzania and was reflected in the reality that, teachers give students notes to copy into their exercise books and the notes are in English but they teach using Kiswahili.

In the majority of classrooms, however, notes were verbally translated into Kiswahili and most explanations were given either in Kiswahili or in both languages. One student in Form 2 at the urban school explained that, the language of examinations is English. And English is for all subjects except for Kiswahili. But most people are speaking Kiswahili. When the teacher is teaching in the classroom, the students speak Kiswahili. Even the teachers themselves speak Kiswahili in the staff room. We are already used to Kiswahili. Similarly, the use of Kiswahili was crucial for students to develop understanding of the content being covered. This was particularly the case in the rural school where the level of English was consistently low. In urban schools, most classes had at least one student with a higher level of English who took on a great deal of responsibility for translating and explaining to their peers, both during and after lessons. “When the teacher enters the classroom and speaks first English and after in Kiswahili it helps. Because even if you won’t understand in English, in Swahili you will know what this topic is about or the meaning of this word.

However, students describe a number of common, negative experiences that are directly related to the requirement to use English as the language of learning. During this research I observed, and pupils explained, that Kiswahili is crucial for their learning. When Kiswahili is used, it transforms students’ engagement in the classroom and improves the quality of their learning experience. Giving Kiswahili a more prominent role in the teaching, learning and assessment processes at secondary level

would make better use of the linguistic resources of both students and teachers and would give students the opportunity to demonstrate understanding in a language with which they feel comfortable. Thus, it is my call for Tanzania policy makers to view the worth of shifting from using English as a medium of instruction for secondary schools to Kiswahili, which is familiar to the majority.

### **2.3.5 Strategies for Improving Students' LOI Proficiency**

It is obvious that more needs to be done in order to enhance students proficiency in the language of instruction particularly when transition from one level of education to another entails shift from using native language in teaching and learning to a second language. In this regard, various researchers have suggested various ways to improve students' proficiency in LOI.

#### **2.3.5.1 Maintain a Single and Uniform Language of Instruction in Primary and Secondary Education**

Since many students' tend to struggle in transitioning from one language of instruction to another in higher levels of education, researchers such as Komba and Bosco (2015).have urged governments to maintain a uniform language of instruction from primary education through secondary education. This will help to reduce students' academic performance gap that caused on by their different background in the language of instruction. For instance, In Tanzania, studies have shown many students who go through English-medium primary schools tend to perform better than students who went through public primary schools where Kiswahili is the only medium of instruction.



### **2.3.5.2 Provide Remedial Language Classes to Struggling Students**

One of the most effective interventions in helping to enhance students who are already struggling to master language of instruction used in secondary schools has been through provision remedial language classes (Bedi & Sharma, 2006; Kinyaduka & Kiwara, 2013; Mose, 2017; Peterson, 2006). Mwinsheikhe (2002) examine language challenges in enhancing students' performance in science subject in Tanzania and recommended that, the Students who have difficulties in comprehending the language of instruction at secondary school level should be assisted to enable them cope with the language. Indeed, this could be done by conducting English language remedial sessions for students whose background in English language is poor in all secondary schools, in order to enhance their academic performance.

### **2.3.5.3 Recruiting and Developing Competent Language Teachers**

There is an overwhelming evidence that teachers play essential role in helping students to transfer their skills across languages (Galabawa & Lwaitama, 2005; Padilla & Gonzalez, 2001). Collier and Thomas (2004) investigated effective intervention strategies for improving dual language education for students of Mexican origin in USA and concluded that Children need explicit instruction and support in transferring skills from one language to the other, and they need high-quality instruction from teachers who are highly proficient in both or all of the languages involved. In this regard, more efforts need to be done in pre-service and in-service training of teachers to ensure that they are very competent in the language of instruction used in various levels of education they are teaching or expected to teach (Holmarsdottir, 2005; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2008). This means that the government

should focus in developing teachers who are highly proficient in the languages in which instruction is provided.

#### **2.3.5.4 Ensure Adequate Supply of Curriculum and Instructional Materials**

It is obvious that both students and teachers struggle to find language-appropriate materials for teaching and learning (Batibo, 1990; Ngonyani, 1997; Prah, 2003). For instance, Crawford et al (2008) examined various challenges facing language-in-education policies in Southern Africa and concluded that school financial situation is one of the major causes of language-in-education policy in many Sub-Sahara countries. As a result, many schools are struggling to acquire adequate and appropriate instructional materials enough materials for such as textbooks, workbooks, pencils and papers. Therefore, experts in education language planning have always emphasized on the need for ensuring adequate supply of error-free instructional materials. Therefore, materials based on national curriculum standards/competencies should be developed in each language and for the relevant grade levels and subjects; language teams and subject specialists can work together to create similar materials in different languages.

#### **2.3.6 Synthesis Research Gap**

The review informed the present study about previous studies on the effects of Language of Instruction on students academic performance. In this regard, the literature showed that language difficulty experienced by students contributes to lack of confidence in learning, inability to actively participate in classroom activities, failure to master language productive skills which are essential in achieving students' academic excellence (Chun et al., 2017; Crawford et al., 2008; Galabawa &

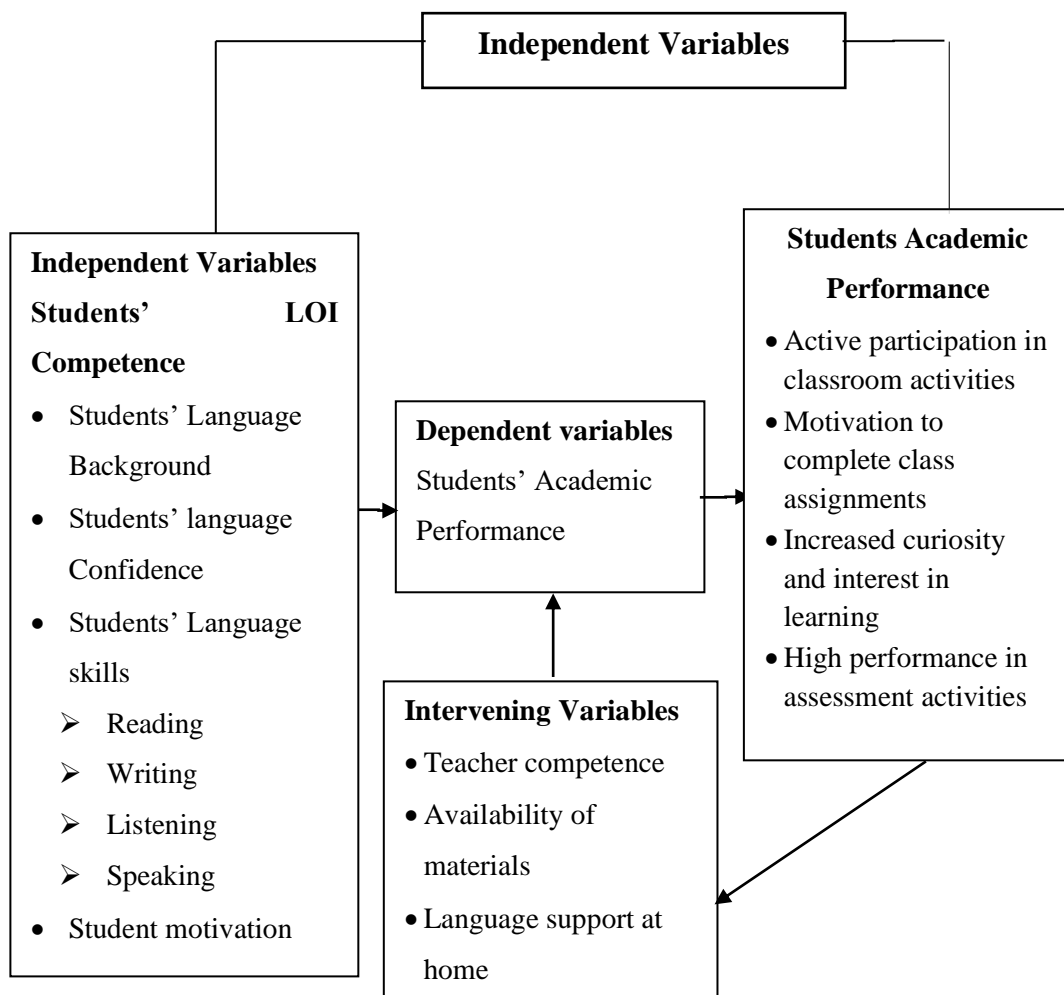
Lwaitama, 2005; George, 2013; Kinyaduka & Kiwara, 2013; Mwinsheikhe, 2002; Prah, 2003; Qorro, 2006).

As a result researchers have shown that many students perform better when instructions and assessments are done in their native languages compared to when instruction is taking place in Non-native languages such as English (Civan & Coskun, 2016; Komba & Bosco, 2015; Lantolf, 2000; Prah, 2003). However, no study has been carried out to investigate the impact of LOI on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bunda district specifically. Also, in most of previous studies the impacts of LOI on students' academic performance was briefly discussed because it emerged as a minor theme and not the main research question addressed. The lack of previous studies on the effects of LOI on students' academic performance in Bunda district implies that educational stakeholders lack crucial knowledge for developing various strategies for enhancing students' academic performance through designing better language-in-education policy.

Methodologically, most studies done in other countries did not apply the theories and approaches that were used in this study in order to gain an understanding of effects of language of instruction on students' academic performance. Furthermore, few of the previous studies carried out in developed and developing countries used the mixed methods approach, or used different techniques for collecting data, as this study was carried out (Burton, 2013; Chun et al., 2017; Mose, 2017; Nyaga, 2015; Rugemalira, 2005). This study used the mixed methods approach (qualitative and quantitative approaches), as well as interviews and questionnaires as instruments for collecting data to discover the impacts of language of instruction on students' academic

performance in secondary schools. This approach also helped to elucidate, verify and validate the language challenges undermining students' ability to perform to their full capabilities, which was not done in most of the reviewed studies. In brief, there was a gap in the knowledge of the effects of language of instruction on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bunda district, which this study sought to bridge.

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1.1: Conceptual Frameworks showing Impacts of LOI on Students Academic Performance**

Source: Researcher, Literature Review

This conceptual framework (Figure 1.1) shows the impacts of language of instruction on students' academic performance. It shows that Students understanding' of the LOI as manifested by their ability to read, write, listen and speak in LOI. Also, students' language confidence and background have significant impacts on their academic performance. They influence dependent variables such as how students participate in classroom activities, their motivation to complete class assignments, their curiosity and ability to find useful learning information which in turn leads to better performance in various student assessment tests. However, availability of appropriate learning materials, teacher, competence and home-language support are strong intervening that can shape students academic performance in relation to LOI. The opposite of this notion can be also true. Students' language difficulty can lead to lack of confidence, poor participation in classrooms and lack of motivation for learning, which in turn can lead to poor academic performance.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This methodological chapter illustrates how data were collected in relation to this study. The chapter presents research design approaches, population, sampling and sampling procedures. It also presents methods of data collection, procedures for data analysis, interpretation and ethical issues and students' performance in community secondary schools in Bunda District.

#### **3.2 Research Approach**

In this study, the researcher used a mixed research approach. The use of mixed method helped the researcher to be well-grounded in the study; it provided broader perspective and enabled a researcher to avoid biases. Besides, a mixed method enabled the researcher to get different answers from participants and respondents and helped the researcher to learn and apply multiple methods effectively (Creswell, 2012). Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009) hold that the use of mixed methods design enables the researcher to get divergent view that enrich the research results than if the data could have been drawn from a single design.

#### **3.3 Research Design**

Research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. This arrangement of conditions requires harmonizing the planned

possibilities with workable and coherent practices (Kothari, 2004). Consequently, the research design is regarded as the conceptual structure within which research will be conducted in the field and it stands as advance planning of the methods to be adopted for collecting the relevant data and the techniques to be used in their analysis (Kothari, 2004). This research employed embedded research design, which contains more than one sub-unit of analysis (Yin, 2003). This research design provides a means of integrating quantitative and qualitative methods into a single research study (Scholz and Tietje, 2002). Embedded research design is a second form of mixed methods design that focuses on collecting both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously (Creswell, 2012).

According to Creswell having one form of data plays a supportive role to the other form of data, the reason for collecting the second form of data is that it supports the primary form of data. The supportive data may be either qualitative or quantitative. For example, during a quantitative experiment, the researcher may collect qualitative data to examine how participants in the treatment condition are experiencing the intervention. Also, the researcher may collect qualitative data either before or after the experiment to help support the experimental study. Collecting data before the experiment can help to design an intervention that is adapted to the participants. Collecting data after the experiment can help to explain and follow up on the quantitative outcome results.

Embedded research design was selected on the basis that it provided an opportunity for a researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data during a single study (Yin, 2003). The research design enabled a researcher to analyze two data sets

separately since the data addressed different research questions. For example, the quantitative data addressed the question on whether the intervention had an impact on the outcomes, whereas the qualitative data addressed the question on how the participants experienced the intervention (Creswell, 2012).

### **3.4 Area of the Study**

The researcher conducted this study in Bunda District. Bunda district (BD) is one of the six districts of Mara Region. It borders to the North by the Musoma Rural District, to the South by Lake Victoria and Mwanza Region, to the East by the Serengeti District, and to the West by Lake Victoria (Mwantimwa, 2017). Like many districts in Tanzania Bunda has many ethnic groups. Also, Kiswahili is the most common language used by different ethnic groups to communicate and the only language of instruction in Primary schools. Bunda has a very limited number of English medium schools. Indeed, overwhelming majority of students study their early education in public primary schools using Kiswahili as a medium of instruction.

They only encounter English at secondary schools whereby students starting encounter difficulties for learning in speaking classroom discussions, reading concepts written in English, answering examination questions and listening skills and understanding their teachers all these emerged because there was a gap for the language of instruction among the students. Therefore, this makes Bunda an interesting study area to investigate various language difficulties experienced by secondary school students and how they influence their academic performance. Also there was no a study has been carried out to investigate the impact of LOI on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bunda district specifically.



Additionally, Bunda was selected as a study area for pragmatic reasons such as the area is familiar to the researcher. Therefore, the researcher easily collaborated with participants in order to get essential information for this study.

### **3.5 Population**

According to Adam (2008) a population is the totality of the objects under investigation, which consists of all the cases of individuals, things or elements that fit a certain specification. The target population of this study comprised teachers and students in community secondary schools in Bunda district. Teachers were selected because they were supposed to be aware of the various language-related factors influencing students' academic performance. Therefore, they could help to suggest various measures for improving students' proficiency in the language of instruction. Indeed, specific language teachers such as Kiswahili and English language teachers were selected in order to explain various language difficulties experienced by students in their schools. Additionally, students were selected in order to give accurate self-assessment of their language skills and provide information about how their language competence influenced their performance in various assessment tests.

### **3.6 Sampling Techniques**

The researcher used both simple random and purposive sampling techniques to obtain the respondents (or participants) for this study. Simple random sampling is a type of sampling in which all elements in the population have equal chance of participating in the study (Kothari, 2004). Creswell (2014) asserts the advantage of using random sampling technique is that each member in the target population has equal probability of being selected therefore making fair representation of the population.

Additionally, simple random sampling allows the generalization of research findings (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2012). Random sampling technique was used to sample 96 students. All students in community secondary schools in Bunda district had equal chance of participating in this study. Therefore, the findings from this study represented views of all community secondary schools students on effects of language of instruction on their academic performance.

This study use purposive sampling technique to get nine participants mainly language subjects' teachers. According to Edmonds and Kennedy (2012), in purposive sampling "the researcher selects individuals to participate in based on a specific need or purpose" (p. 20). In this study, teachers were selected by using purposive sampling based on criteria that they possess deeper knowledge and extensive experience implementation of language-in-education policy in schools in Bunda district. Therefore, they were expected to provide even more relevant and rich information about advantages and disadvantages of using English as a medium of instruction in community secondary schools.

### **3.7 Sample Size**

According to Kothari (2004), sample size is the number of individuals to be selected from the target population. It is important to select a sample that present the target population because it is impossible and expensive to collect data from the whole population (Creswell, 2012). In this research a sample of 105 respondents (i.e. 96 students and 9 teachers) were involved. 96 students were sampled from form three and form four classes in 4 community secondary schools in Bunda district. In this study, Random sampling and Purposive sampling were used to select the respondents. In

a descriptive research, a sample size of 10-50% is acceptable (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The researcher applied the sampling error formula (Creswell, 2011 pp. 609-612) to get a sample size of 105 respondents. These comprised of 96 Students and the language subjects teachers 9. This formed a sample size of 41.8% of the target population because the larger the sample, the better the representative of the mean and standard deviation of the target population.

**Table 3.1: Representation of the Sampling Matrix**

<b>Population Description</b>	<b>Target population</b>	<b>Sample size%</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
Students	192	50%	96
Teachers	23	40%	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>41.8</b>	<b>105</b>

### **3.8 Methods of Data Collection**

Data collection is the process, which involves how the information for a particular study is grouped (Kagashe & Good luck, 2013). There are different data collection methods such as questionnaires, individual interviews, focus group discussions, or telephone based on how the study was framed (Kagashe & Goodluck, 2013). In this study, the researcher employed questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and documentary review techniques. For more detail, the data collection methods are clarified as follows:

#### **3.8.1 Questionnaires**

Polit and Beck (2004) as cited in Nkuba (2007), define a questionnaire as a method of gathering information from respondents about attitudes, knowledge, beliefs, and feelings. Denscombe (2014) outlines five circumstances for using questionnaire.

First, when using large numbers of dispersed respondents in a study. Second, when the information required is fairly straightforward, relatively brief and uncontroversial. Third, when there is a need for standardized data from identical questions and there is no need of face-to-face interaction. Four, when the respondents are able to read and understand the questions when considered by their age, level of intellect, language and eyesight. Fifth, when the social climate is open enough to allow full and honest answers.

Semi-structured questionnaires were selected as primary research instruments because they are reliable, relatively cheap and quick means of collecting data from a high population in a reasonable period. Also, questionnaires enabled the researcher to obtain standardized data from students. The researcher used both closed-ended (Likert scale) and open-ended questions in gathering data. The questionnaires were self administered whereby the researcher distributed questionnaires to students with the guide and assistance from class teachers. After questionnaires to students with the guide and assistance from class teachers. After waiting for half an hour, the researcher collected his questionnaires back from students. The information collected from questionnaires included section A: Demographic information; Section B: Student's self-assessment of their language skills Section C: Perceived effects of language difficulty on student academic performance Section D: Strategies for enhancing students proficiency in LOI.

### **3.8.2 Interview**

According to Patton (2002) interviews are done with the intention of finding out things that cannot be observed. In this study semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from teachers. It aimed that gathering qualitative data about various

challenges facing students when using English as the language of instruction in various curricula and extra activities, which could not be captured by questionnaires filled, by students. Bryman (2008) contends that flexibility associated with the use of interviews enables the researcher to ask questions in different order as well as search for clarity on answers that were not clear.

The interview questions were direct and clear and were prepared in Kiswahili, the language which was familiar to most of the respondents and allowed them free expression. A total number of 8 language teachers (for English and Kiswahili) and two academic masters were interviewed. The researcher had 9 different interview sessions with research participants. Approximately 15 minutes was used to conduct each interview.

### **3.8.3 Document Review**

This method was employed as a secondary source of data whereby official assessment records were used which would be analyzed along with data from interviews and questionnaires. Documentary review involves data collection technique refers to analysis and deduction of relevant information from primary and secondary sources. Primary source contained records of events or records of original information, which provided information and data from authentic source (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Denscombe, 2014; Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2017). The documents were form two and form mock and national examination results, which were obtained from the Heads of the Academic Office in selected schools. Documents are used to support and supplement evidence from other sources. The reason for using assessment documents was to substantiate the evidence from various literatures regarding the

influence of language on students' performance. Documentary analysis was basically limited to data related to students' performance but yet essential to the study.

### **3.9 Procedure for Data Collection**

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes (Nkuba, 2007). The researcher obtained permission from the Open University of Tanzania's administration and sent a request letter to the Regional Administrative Secretary asking for permission for conducting research in Bunda. Then the letter was sent to the District Administrative Secretary for information. Then Town Director sent the letter to the Head of department of secondary education and lastly to the heads of schools. Besides, the researcher distributed questionnaires to the respondents and collected them after they had been filled, ready for interpretation and presentations.

### **3.10 Data Analysis Procedure**

This is the process of extracting useful information from the given data series that has been useful in taking an important decision. It is a practice in which unorganized or unfinished data is ordered and organized so that useful information can be highlighted (Philemon, 2007). This study used both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods as follows.

First and foremost, the researcher used notebook and sound-recorder to record qualitative data during face-to-face interviews with teachers while questionnaire forms

were used to record responses from students. Data recorded using sound recorder were later transcribed and cleaned for analysis.

Thereafter, quantitative data were analysed by using computer software (SPSS) Version 20. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, that is, frequencies and percentages. Respondents' views collected from open ended questions were coded and analyzed accordingly into frequencies and percentages. Additionally, quantitative data were presented using tables.

Qualitative data collected by using interviews were analysed by using thematic analysis method. According to Adams and Lawrence (2015), thematic analysis is a process of identifying the main ideas in the responses given by the participants and then put the common themes together. In this study, qualitative data were manually organized in relation to the specific objectives into major and minor themes in order to reveal and explain dominant patterns. Finally, qualitative data obtained through open-ended questionnaires and interviews were presented in words using verbatim quotes.

### **3.11 Pilot Study**

The pilot study was conducted to ensure validity and reliability of the research instruments. A pilot study is a research project that is out without the expense and effort of a full-fledged study (Yin, 2011). The pilot study test questionnaires which enables the Researcher to make changes in an instrument based on feedback from a small number of individuals who complete and evaluate the instruments (Creswell, 2012).

Orodho, (2010). Alludes that effective pilot study is typically conducted with a small representative sample identical but not including the group that intended in the study. The researcher carried out a pilot study with 10 students and 2 language teachers in Lamadi town in Busega District in order to assess the validity and reliability of the research instrument.

### **3.12 Validity and Reliability of Instruments**

#### **3.12.1 Validity**

Refers to the extent to which a test measures what it actually has to measure. It is the most significant standard and reveals the degree to which an instrument measures what it is expected to evaluate. Furthermore, it refers to the extent to which variations found with a measuring instrument reveal true variations among those being tested (Kothari, 2004). ). In this study, the validity of the research instruments was improved based on the opinion from the research supervisor and feedback from pilot study. First, the instruments were evaluated for ensuring content validity as the extent to which the questionnaire or test content is representative of the domain of content/skills.

There are basically two ways of assessing content validity: (i) ask a number of questions about the instrument or test; and/or (ii) ask the opinion of expert judges in the field (Mishra, 2005). The instruments were therefore submitted to the supervisor for further scrutiny and advice in terms of content validity. In addition to advice from research supervisor, the results of pilot study were used to improve clarity and suitability of the research instruments. More specifically, by administering



questionnaires on non-participating members of the target population, the researcher was able to observe how participants were responding to the instruments and how the questions were answered. This enabled the researcher to correct his instruments before going to the field.

### **3.12.2 Reliability**

A measuring instrument is reliable if it provides consistent results (Kothari, 2004). Reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results; it is a way of assessing the quality of the measurement procedure used to collect data in a dissertation. The researcher used split-half method during the piloting study in order to establish the internal consistency of the instrument to assess the reliability of the research instruments. The split-half technique assesses reliability of the research instruments in only one testing session (Drost, 2011). It involves splitting the test into two halves and finding the extent of reliability between the halves. In this study, the Spearman Rank Order Correlation was used to compute the correlation coefficient in order to establish the extent to which the contents of the questionnaires were consistent in eliciting the same responses when the instrument was administered. The instrument yielded a co-efficient of 0.80, which implied a high degree of reliability of the data and thus suitability of the research instruments.

### **3.13 Ethical Consideration**

The current researcher obtained a research clearance letter from the Directorate of the postgraduate studies at the Open University of Tanzania. This letter introduced the researcher to the Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS). RAS further introduced the current researcher to District Administrative Secretary (DAS) to allow the current

researcher to access the school for investigation. The researcher involved the respondents with their free mind to participate without forcing them so as to make sure that the result are obtained while participants had informed consent. The researcher ensured confidentiality of the information collected to anybody throughout the process of collecting data. The names of the participants in this study were not mentioned or recorded anywhere in this study. Respondents were free to discontinue or withdraw with this study. Besides, the researcher did not convince the respondents in any way in order to make them participate.

Furthermore the researcher was aware of the responsibility to protect respondents' basic rights. This study was therefore conducted with fairness and justice by eliminating all potential risks that could violate respondents' basic rights. Ethical issues taken into consideration include, right to anonymity, confidentiality, respect for persons, informed consent, right to privacy and justice. Furthermore, researcher treated all respondents and participants with respect. Still to ensure anonymity, steps were taken to protect the identity of the individuals by not giving out their names when presenting research results. In addition, this study involved adults mainly with few children (students). All the information conferred will be confidentially held and no one who is not part of this schoolwork should have right to use these findings without permission from the university concerned.

### **3.14 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter the researcher illustrated on how the data were collected. The chapter describes research design approaches, population, sample and sampling procedures, methods for data collection, procedures for data analysis and interpretation. The

chapter also explains on how ethical issues were taken into consideration so as to protect the rights of respondents. Moreover, the researcher indicated why it was important to use mixed method and embedded research design. Besides, the researcher described the methods involved in data processing, data coding, data distribution, data verification and editing; as well as validity and reliability.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This study sought to investigate the effects of language of instruction on students' academic performance. This chapter presents the findings and analysis of data collected based on the three research objectives guiding this study including: To determine difficult language skills for students in community secondary schools: To examine the extent to which language of instruction contributes to students' success or failure in community secondary schools: and to establish possible strategies for improving students' proficiency in the language of instruction in community secondary schools.

In this chapter, quantitative data are presented using tables while qualitative data obtained through open-ended questionnaires and interviews are presented in words using verbatim quotes. In presenting the findings, some citations are presented in Kiswahili as which is one of the languages used during the study. The purpose is to capture and maintain the essence of what was said by the participants. In order to ensure confidentiality in this study pseudonyms are used in place of actual names of interview participants. Codes such as Student One, Student Two, Student Three.... are used instead of the actual names of students who responded to open-ended questionnaires.

#### **4.2 Questionnaires Return Rate**

This section presents the response rate from the target population. A total of 96 questionnaires were distributed to students and 9 interviews were scheduled for

teachers from four selected community secondary schools in Bunda District. The researcher obtained 97% response rate as illustrated in the Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Response Rate**

<b>Target population</b>	<b>Target number</b>	<b>Response rate</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Students	96	92	95%
Teachers	9	8	99%
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>97%</b>

Table 4.1 shows the population size and response rate. In this study, the researcher anticipated to have 105 respondents including 96 students and 9 teachers. However, 92 out of 96 questionnaires were completed by students and returned to the researcher. Also one language teacher was not available for the interview. This represented a return rate of about 97%. This success is attributed to researcher's commitment to the study as two weeks were spent on repeated trips to schools to collect data. The information collected led to deeper analysis and understanding of the research problem.

### **4.3 Demographic Information of Respondents**

This study sought to obtain the demographic data of students in order to identify their gender, age groups, class and primary education background. The aim of collecting respondent's background information was to assist interpretation of the findings. Table 4.2 outlines demographic information of the respondents.

**Table 4.2: Demographic Data for Students**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Gender	Male	50	54.3
	Female	42	45.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Age	14-16 years	45	48.9
	16-18 years	40	43.7
	Above 18	7	7.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Primary Background	English-medium schools	10	10
	Public	82	90
	<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Class	F3	48	53.3
	F4	43	46.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Researcher, Field Data Collection

As shown in Table 4.2, 54.3 percent of the students who participated in this study were male while 45.5 percent were female. This implies that there were more male students in the study area than female. This may be partly attributed to the fact that there are fewer girls enrolled in secondary schools than boys. The results also indicate age distribution of students who participated in this study. Majority of respondents (48.9%) belong to 14-16 year category, while the rest are in 17-18 (43.7%) and above 18 (7.3%) age groups. This implies that majority of secondary school students are very young.

Moreover, the **data show** that majority of the students (90.0%) attended public primary schools where Kiswahili is an official medium of instruction, while 10.0% students attended English-medium schools. This indicates that majority of the students

are learning secondary education in a language that they have had very limited exposure to. A Slight majority of respondents (53.3%) were form three students while the remaining (46.7%) were form four students. This study indicates both form three and form four classes which were selected for this study were fairly represented.

#### 4.4 Students' Perception of Important Language Skills

First and foremost, students were asked to rate importance of various language skills that are crucial to their academic success. Importance scale ranged from 1= “Not important at all” 2 = “Slightly important” 3 = “Important” 4 = “Very Important”. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The results are shown in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Students' Perceptions of Important Language Skills**

Skills	Responses				Total
	Not Important at all	Slightly Important	Important	Very Important	
Writing	-	4 (4.3%)	39 (42.3%)	50 (54.3%)	92
Reading	-	7 (7.6%)	38 (41.3%)	47 (51.0%)	92
Speaking	10 (10.8%)	34 (36.9%)	26 (28.2%)	22 (23.9%)	92
Listening	12 (13.0%)	24 (26.0%)	20 (21.7%)	36 (39.1%)	92

Source: Researcher, Field Data Collection (2019)

The findings on perceived language difficulty by students from closed ended-questionnaire indicated that overwhelming majority of respondents considered writing (89, 96.7%) and reading (85, 92.3%) language skills essential (or very essential) for academic success in community secondary schools. Surprisingly, a significant number of students considered speaking (44, 47.8%) and listening skills (36, 39.1%) not important (or slightly important) for learners. The findings correlate with those of

Coyle et al. (2010) on students' attitudes toward the use of English as the medium of instruction in Philippines junior secondary schools. Coyle et al. students who have good English writing and reading skills tend to perform better than those who have good speaking and listening skills.

Responses from open-ended questionnaires filled by students on why they considered some language skills significant over the other revealed similar pattern. Many students put more emphasis on mastering language skills that are essential for passing examinations. For instance, Student One commented that:

*“Writing skills are essential if one wants to pass examination, in most examinations there are no places where students are required to demonstrate speaking or listening skills”.*

Making similar observation Student Two narrated that:

*“Reading plays important role in one academic success, since most of preparations for examinations require extensive reading”.*

This indicates many students consider only skills that would help them pass examinations as essential. Otherwise, some communication skills, which might be significant in long-term career-wise are, not considered important. Indeed, advocates of “Education for 21<sup>st</sup> Century” have for long time complained that many graduates have a very narrow skill set in language (Holmarsdottir, 2005; Nilseng et al., 2014; Prah, 2003). They lack essential speaking and listening skills, which are essential for developing meaningful interpersonal relationships in the workplaces.

Though with varying degree of emphasis, teachers who participated in interviews commented that listening and speaking skills may be of great benefit to students. For instance, one language teacher commented that:



With regard to language of instruction (English), Reading and writing are the most important skills for students in secondary schools. This is because our classroom instructions are always flexible; we take into account that some students may not be able to understand or contribute to the discussion in a fluent English. So we usually encourage code-switching to give students an opportunity to contribute to the lesson as well as understand teachers' instruction. However, based on the format of National Examinations, reading and writing are essential for students' academic achievement. (Kilwa, English Teacher Interview, June 20, 2019).

This implies that majority of students' shared similar views with students that the reading and writing are essential skills for students because of dictates of National Examinations format. In these examinations, students are partly assessed by their ability to write in good English various concepts that they might have learnt in classrooms or independently by reading various materials. The findings correlates with those of Nyaga (2015) observation aims of the education will always dictate which aspects of the language of instruction matter to students. Nyaga further contends that for countries with competence based curriculum education, it is not common to see student preferring a limited range of language skills. They will always strive to master all four language skills i.e. speaking, listening, reading and writing because the assessment takes into account a broad range of skills.

#### **4.5 Difficult Language Skills for Students**

The first objective of this study was to find out difficult language skills for students in community secondary schools in Bunda district. Semi-structured questionnaires and

interviews were conducted to address this research question. The data presented in this section were obtained from students and teachers.

In a closed-ended question, students were required to rate difficult language skills based on a Liker Scale. The scale ranged from 1 = ‘not difficult’, 2 = ‘Difficult’, 3 = ‘Slightly difficult’ and 4 = ‘very difficult’. This section presents Students’ self-assessment of difficulties in four language construct which are Speaking, Writing, Reading and Listening. The results are shown in the Table 4.4.

#### 4.5.1 Speaking Skills

**Table 4.4: Difficult English Speaking Skills**

Speaking Skill	Responses				Total
	Not Dif	Slightly	Difficult	Very Dif	
Answering questions in class	15	32	27	23	92
Taking part in class discussions	11	31	25	25	92
Making presentations in Class	13	22	30	27	92
Asking questions in class	7	14	34	37	92

Source: Researcher, Field Data Collection (2019)

As shown in Table 4.4, majority (71) of students identified “asking questions in class” as the most difficult English language skill when speaking during lesson discussion. This was followed by “Making presentation in class” as identified by 57 respondents. Also a significant number of students considered “answer questions in class” and “taking part in class discussions” difficult language skills as suggested by 50 respondents each. This indicates that majority of students do not have confidence in taking part in lesson discussion. Many students do not have language competence to actively participate in lesson discussion such as asking questions or making

presentations. Making a similar observation, Mlay (2010) noted that in many public secondary schools in Tanzania, students are shy to actively engage in class discussions by using English language because teachers would discourage them or their fellow students would laugh at them because of their failure to communicate fluently.

#### 4.5.2 Writing Skills

**Table 4.5: Difficult English Writing Skills**

Writing Skill	Responses				Total
	Not Dif	Slightly	Difficult	Very Dif	
Taking notes	55	25	17	13	92
Ability to choose appropriate words	11	23	37	21	92
Ability to write an essay examinations	13	30	27	22	92
Writing correct spelling	11	21	20	40	92
Writing Letters	10	18	38	26	92

Source: Researcher, Field Data Collection (2019)

The results in the Table 4.5, indicates that a significant majority (64) of students consider “writing letters” in English language a difficult or a very difficult language skill. This was followed by 60 respondents and 58 respondents who indicated that they have problems in “writing correct spelling” and “choosing appropriate words” respectively. This implies that despite the fact that both teachers and students consider “Writing” an important language skill for students’ success in secondary education, majority of students are not well versed in various writing skills. This is very worrying situation due to the fact students are expected to be assessed in national examinations by how well they explain various concepts through writing. Indeed, Komba, Kafanabo, and Njabili (2012) concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between the students’ abilities in the English Writing Skills Test (EWST) and their

University GPAs. Additionally they noted that students demonstrated serious problems in spelling, using appropriate forms of adjectives, punctuation marks, simple present tense, recognizing passive voice and using relative pronouns and prepositions.

### 4.5.3 Reading

**Table 4.6: Difficult English Reading Skills**

Reading Skill	Responses				Total
	Not Dif	Slightly	Difficult	Very Dif	
Understanding written instructions	33	25	22	12	92
Understanding textbooks	17	22	24	29	92
Understanding the main points of a text	6	24	30	32	92
Understanding vocabularies used in subjects	35	16	26	15	92
Comprehending teachers' notes	36	30	20	6	92

Source: Researcher, Field Data Collection (2019)

The findings on students' perceptions of difficult language skills when reading revealed that, many learners experience difficulties when attempting to “understand main points in the text” and “understanding textbooks” as suggested by 62 respondents and 53 respondents respectively. However, a significant number of students did not consider “understanding teachers' notes” (66) and “understanding written instructions” (58) difficult language skills for them. Surprisingly, a significant number minority (41) indicated that they experienced difficulties in understanding “vocabularies used in subjects”. This implies that, there is a significant number of students who struggle to understand basic concepts taught in various

subjects because they are unable to understand various vocabulary used in explaining those concepts. This is supported by Sumra (2014) who argued that many students in Tanzanian secondary schools fail to pass examinations because they are unable to read and comprehend various materials in English.

#### 4.5.4 Listening

**Table 4.7: Difficult English Listening Skills**

Listening Skill			Responses				Total
			Not Dif	Slightly	Difficult	Very Dif	
Understanding Teachers oral instructions			34	39	10	9	92
Understanding small group discussions			18	30	24	20	92
Understanding classmates' questions/contributions in class			43	36	7	6	92
Understanding everyday English outside class			16	35	26	15	92

Source: Researcher, Field Data Collection (2019)

From the findings in Table 4.7, it can be established that, overwhelming majority of students (79) do not consider “understanding classmates’ questions/contributions in class” a difficult language skill. Also, 73 respondents considered “understanding teachers oral presentation in class” a slightly difficult or not difficult listening skill in classroom.

However, a significant minority (44) of the respondents considered “small group discussions” a difficult language skill. Similarly, 41 respondents considered “understanding everyday English outside class” a difficult language skill. This implies

that many students do not consider listening their teachers or peers talking in English a very difficult skill. Indeed, a previous study by Berman and Cheng (2001) have indicated that for many non-native language students listening is perceived to be significantly easier than either reading and speaking or writing. However, in Tanzania this can be partly attributed to the fact teachers themselves speak easy to comprehend English mixed with Kiswahili (Kinyaduka & Kiwara, 2013).

#### **4.6 Effects of the Language of Instruction on Students' Academic Performance**

This objective examined the impact of the language of instruction (English) used in secondary education on students' academic performance. The Findings from questionnaires, documentary reviews and interviews are presented in this section. First and foremost, students were asked to rate the extent to which various problems related to language of instruction affected their academic performance in the last three examinations including Terminal and Mock examinations. Students were required to rate the extent to which they agreed on the following statements: These variables were measured in a 5-point Likert scale which included 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Disagree and 4=Strongly Disagree. The study findings are summarized in Table 4.7.

As summarized and shown in Table 4.8, majority of students strongly agreed that common language problems that affected their performance in previous examinations included: - failure to find appropriate words when explaining concepts (79), spelling errors (70), grammatical errors (70), failing to understand vocabularies used in questions (69). Also, a significant number of respondents agreed with the statement that they had problems in understanding various reading materials during

preparations. However, the table showed that a majority of these students disagreed with the statements that they had problems in understanding the instructions (76) and did not have enough time to respond to questions in English (70).

**Table 4.8: Language Problems Affecting Students' Academic Performance**

Language Problem	Responses				Total
	SA	A	D	SD	
I made several spelling errors	56	14	16	6	92
I could not find appropriate English words for writing answers	72	5	10	5	92
I could not understand various materials provided by the teacher or related textbooks during preparations	54	7	28	3	92
I could not understand the vocabularies used in questions	63	6	10	13	92
I made grammatical errors	59	11	15	7	92
I could not understand the instruction	6	10	64	12	92
I did not have enough time to respond to questions in English	15	7	32	38	92

**SD-Strongly Disagree, D-Disagree, A-Agree, SA-Strongly Agree**

Source: Researcher, Field Data Collection (2019)

It can be established from the findings that English is a very big challenge affecting students' ability to successful prepare for and attempt various questions in examinations. Worse even, the study's results indicate that some students might have right answers in their minds but they find it difficult to express their ideas in English. This means that despite the fact that Education and Training Policy insists English as the language of instruction in secondary education, many students are not very

capable of successfully attempting examinations written in English. This has also been documented by Mkwizu (2002) who carried out a comparative study to track students' academic performance in secondary schools based on their primary education background. Mkwizu noted that many students who had poor English background wrote incomprehensible English passages that were full of grammatical errors and spelling mistakes. In general, many students performed poorly in secondary school tests due to language errors such as failure to understand instructions, use of inappropriate words and poor written language structure.

In this direction, records of examination results that were unveiled to the researcher indicated that students' performance in two language subjects reflected students' struggles in using English as the language of learning. See the English Subject and Kiswahili Subject in the Table 4.9.

**Table 4.9: Comparison of performance in English and Kiswahili Subjects in Form Two National Assessment and Form Four Mock Examinations from School C**

Form Two National Assessment Results 2018												
Subject	Kiswahili						English					
Grade	A	B	C	D	F		A	B	C	D	F	Total
No. Candidate	15	39	48	29	12		4	13	44	50	32	143
Percent %	10.5	27.3	33.6	20.3	8.4		2.8	9.1	30.8	35.0	22.4	100
Form Four Mock Examinations Results 2018												
Subject	Kiswahili						English					
Grade	A	B	C	D	F		A	B	C	D	F	Total
No. Candidate	6	16	57	32	13		2	11	46	30	35	124
Percent %	4.8	12.9	46.0	25.8	10.5		1.6	8.9	37.1	24.2	28.2	100

Source: Researcher, School C Academic Records (2019)



Table 4.9 shows that majority of the students in both form Two and Form Four classes display a good-to-average performance in Kiswahili. For instance, 71% of form Two students scored between the grade A and C in Kiswahili. Similarly, 64% of form four students who participated in Kiswahili Mock Examination last year scored between A and C. However, students' performance in English shows a grim picture. For instance, majority of students 66% and 52% scored grade D and F in past English examinations for form Two and Form Four respectively. In other words, a majority of students performed at unsatisfactory level in English compared to Kiswahili where many students managed to score at least average or above average. Overall, students performed better in Kiswahili Examinations than in English. Indeed, previous comparative studies on students' performance between English-medium and Kiswahili-medium instructions have shown that students tend to score higher in the Kiswahili instruction subjects than in subjects taught in English (Galabawa & Lwaitama, 2005).

Indeed, interview with language teachers revealed that many students who lack English language background do not perform well in many secondary school subjects.

For instance, Teacher Benno who teaches both Kiswahili and English narrated that: -

*I have come to notice that many students, who did their primary education in private English-medium schools in Tanzania or have some background in Kenyan school system, tend to perform far better in English subject than their peers who went through public primary education in Tanzania. (Teacher Benno interview, June 16, 2019)*

Supporting this argument Teacher Rajabu who is the Head of the Academic Department noted that many students fail in English-medium examinations such as History and Geography partly because they did not understand the instructions or

sometime they may recall answers but fail to express them correctly because of language barrier. Extending on this claim, another teacher had this to say: -

*Huwa wakati mwingine nashangaa wanafunzi wangu wanakosa mambo ambayo nimewafundisha na kurudia rudia. Huenda kweli kuna uzembe wa wanafunzi kutosoma ila pia kuna wanafunzi wana bidii sana ila wanashindwa mitihani kwa sababu ya lugha. Nahisi ilitakiwa wawe wanaanza kujengewa msingi wa lugha ya kiingereza tangu shule za msingi. (Teacher Nashon interview, June 15, 2019).*

Author's translation sometimes wonders how students fail to attempt some questions that I have repeatedly solved in classrooms. It might be because of negligence one can say. But some hard-working students tend to fail as well because of LOI related challenges. I think students' proficiency in English language should be cultivated in early grades. This implies that some students fail in examinations not because they are not taught by teachers or laziness factors such as lack of preparation but because the language of instruction act as a barriers to meaningful learning and application of the learnt concepts in attempting examinations or in real life situation. Indeed, Peterson (2006) once observed that use of English in Tanzania often discouraged meaningful learning. Many students could not find places where they could discuss various concepts learnt in English language outside classrooms. As the result, many students lack opportunity for a deep reflection and consolidation of what they learnt in classrooms outside the school setting.

Another Senior Academic department leader was of the view that use of English as the language of instruction only encourages rote learning whereby students memorizes concepts taught by teachers in order to pass examinations but they can not apply such knowledge elsewhere.

She had this to say:

*Nimekuwa nikiona hata wanafunzi wetu wanaofanikiwa kufaulu kutoka kwenye shule zetu hizi za kata wakihangaika kuendelea na masomo. Hii inatokana na sababu kwamba wengi walifaulu kidato cha nne kwa kukalili mambo bila kuayaelewa. Hivyo wakifika form five inakuwa ni vigumu kwao kufaulu masomo yanayohitaji uelewa mpana wa lugha kama vile Historia, Geografia au hata yale ya sayansi kama Biology.*  
(Head of Academic Department, Interview, June, 17, 2019)

Author's Transition I have seen our graduates who manage to pass form examination to subsequent levels of education struggle to continue with their education. This is attributed to the fact many students pass Form four examinations by memorization/not clearly understanding concepts taught in O-level. But once they get in A-level they find it very difficult to learn and pass examination in language demanding subjects such as History, Economics, Geography, even some science subjects such as biology.

This implies that poor English language proficiency is a problem that has a very long term impact on students' education circle. Indeed, poor English language background encourage a mere rote learning instead of deep learning whereby students can be able to apply what they learnt classroom to pass their examination let alone solving real life problems. Making similar observation Komba and Bosco (2015) who examined the influence language background on students, academic performance concluded that, student who had their English language skills developed in English-medium schools tend to perform better in various essay-intensive courses in colleges compared to their counterparts who went through public primary school. This implies earlier exposure to English as the language of instruction increases the chances of some students to perform better than their peers who went through Kiswahili-medium primary education.

## **4.7 Strategies for Improving Students' Proficiency in the Language of Instruction**

In this section, the researcher sought to investigate the strategies that can be used to improve students' proficiency in the language of instruction. This section presents research findings on coping strategies used by both students and teachers to address language related challenges hindering learning in schools and suggestions for future interventions.

### **4.7.1 Coping Mechanisms**

By using the data from open-ended questionnaires and interviews, this section presents some of the coping mechanisms used by both students and teachers to overcome language barrier in learning that undermine students' academic performance.

#### **4.7.1.1 Encouraging Code-Switching during Classrooms Interactions**

Teachers who participated in interviews indicated that they often encourage instruction by using both English and Kiswahili languages. For instance, one participant explained that they tend to be flexible during classroom instruction; not to use too much English while students get lost along the way. Teacher Barua had this to say.

If you want to have a boring class, try to lead the discussion in English. It is real a very challenging issue to many teachers. You teach English-medium subject to the audience that is not so competent in English. As the result, most of our classes involve allowing students to contribute in English mixed with Kiswahili. Otherwise, one may end having a very cold lesson discussion. (Interview Participant, June 17, 2019).

Adding on this comment, Teacher Boazi who teaches art subjects in one of the selected schools narrated that: -Most of our form one students came to encounter English instruction in secondary schools. It is very difficult to teach using English as the medium of instruction. Sometimes, I give notes to students written in English but I elaborate them by using Kiswahili. So that they can easily understand the various concepts covered the in the topic. (Interview Participant, June 16, 2019).

The findings reveal that the teachers and learners have developed various strategies in order to overcome English language barriers to learning by switching to Kiswahili in order to facilitate classroom discussion. This means that despite the fact that English is the official medium of instruction Kiswahili still have a very strong place in day to day teaching and learning processes in schools. In a study titled “Language, Democracy and Education in Africa” Brock-Utne (2002) observed that in Tanzanian classrooms, code-switching is the teachers’ main classroom strategy for coping with their own unfamiliarity and the unfamiliarity of their students with the language of instruction.

#### **4.7.1.2 Students’ Self-Regulated Language Learning**

Many students who responded to open-ended questions suggested that they cope with language difficulties by reading repeatedly about various concepts taught in classrooms or covered in textbooks. Many students suggested that to them language learning starts with memorization of various concepts learnt in classes and re-writing them again in a summary form. For instance, Student Five wrote that “I mostly prepare for exams through intensive reading, particularly reading repeatedly about

concepts taught by teachers in classroom or covered in various materials”. Reiterating on this observation Student Nine insisted that “I often break notes about various concepts taught in class into small pieces of texts that can be memorized easily”.

In other words, many students believe that the best way for overcoming English language barrier in learning is by memorizing small pieces of the information taught in classes and writing them back when required during examinations. This is supported Lee and Heinz (2016) who examined strategies used by Non Native students to learn English language. Lee and Heinz observed that such as reading-aloud and text analysis were frequently used by foreign speakers to learn English. Indeed, majority of students developed strategies for learning English independently including spending time on summarizing teachers’ notes and re-writing them in their own simple language.

#### **4.7.1.3 Group Activities**

Both teachers and students indicated that group activity is one of the coping strategies for helping learners’ internalize various concepts covered in the lesson. Many students indicated that by discussing various concepts with their peers, they easily internalize the lesson. For instance, Student Ten noted that: - “I often seek assistance from my fellow students who might have understood the lesson better than me for illustration”.

Extending on this observation one teacher narrated that:

*Huwa tunawaomba wanafunzi waliopo kwenye madarasa ya mitihani warudi jioni kujisomea na kujadiliana. Tunaamini kuwa mbinu pekee ya kuwasaidia waweze kuelewa masomo waliyofundishwa na kuyaweka kichwani ni kujadiliana wenyewe kwa wenyewe kwa msaada wa mwalimu wa somo. (Teacher Kilwa, June 20, 2019)*

Author's Translation we encourages our students who are in expected to sit for national examinations to come back for extra classes in the evening. We believe that it is only through continuous students' discussions with the guide of the subject teacher; learners can be able to understand and internalize what they are taught.

This implies that group discussion is one of the effective interventions for helping understand various English-medium subjects. In this direction, previous studies have shown that students tend to understand and internalize what they are taught by their teachers when given enough time to reflect, debate and discuss with their peers (Peterson, 2006; Trudell, 2016; Wilson & Komba, 2012). Small group discussions present an opportunity for students to ask questions to their fellows concerning areas that might not been well taught during the lesson.

#### **4.7.2 Strategies for Future Intervention**

This study also investigated the strategies that can be adopted to improve students' proficiency in language of instruction in the future. The participants in this study had various suggestions concerning what should be done in order to improve LOI proficiency. Multimedia instruction, effective language learning at the early grades and training of teachers were commonly identified strategies as illustrated in details below.

##### **4.7.2.1 Use of Multimedia Instruction**

Many teachers who participated in this study believed that students can learn English when exposed to various instructional channels that helps them to visualize and practice the lesson. Many teachers suggested that the use of computers, charts, maps

and audio devices could help students to easily understand various concepts discussed in English. For instance, one teacher observed that:

I think rather than attacking people who support use of English as a medium of instruction, educational stakeholders should focus on how to equip schools with various modern teaching and learning equipments such as computers, Televisions, charts and audio players which can help students to see (or even interact) with real objects during the lesson. There is no doubt that students learn more effectively when they are presented with various visual objects that helps them to see how various things taught in classrooms operate in real world. I don't think that even if language of instruction was Kiswahili students could perform any better in science subjects without having modern laboratories where students are enabled to see and practice various theoretical concepts taught in classrooms. (Katoya, Biology Teacher interview, June 16, 2019).

This implies that there are many teachers who believe that the problem of poor students' academic performance cannot be solved by changing language-in-education policy i.e. the switch from English to Kiswahili as the language of instruction. Successful school reforms should be geared towards helping students learn better by using a wide range of modern instructional tools. More specifically, the government should invest in educational resources to ensure that learning takes places in various media such as computers, televisions and print media. In this direction Collier and Thomas (2004) insist use of multimedia in classrooms instruction makes the lesson very entertaining and informative, thereby enabling students to remember the academic concepts for a long time. Multimedia instruction often serves as a



motivating factor for learners to improve their English competence because it provides great learning experience.

#### **4.7.2.2 Focus on Language Learning in Early Grades**

All secondary school teachers who participated in this study were of the view that effective investment needs to be made on language learning in early grades. They believed that between Kiswahili and English, one language of instruction should be used from primary education to secondary level. For instance, A junior academic master who participated in this study narrated that:

It really annoying that students have to switch from one language of instruction to another as they transition from primary to secondary education while they are past age of language learning. I think language of instruction should be uniform from primary schools to secondary schools with more options at the university level. (Interview Participant, June 18, 2019).

Making a similar observation one Teacher who participated in the interview noted that: - I have been very lucky to have some classes with students who studied their primary education in Kenya. They are usually far ahead of their fellows during classroom discussions and tend to perform better examinations because of their strong background in English from Kenyan primary schools. Therefore, our country should learn from Kenya the importance of having a single language of instruction from early grades through secondary education. (Teacher Boazi, June 16, 2019).

Indeed, many teachers seemed to believe that switching the language of instruction in secondary schools from English to Kiswahili will be merely a political decision.

For instance, one teacher lamented that:

*“even the advocates of Kiswahili as LOI, take their kids to private English-medium schools. Then, who will be willing to take kids through Kiswahili-medium secondary education, if they themselves are afraid of it”. He added that “Investment in English language instruction from primary schools is the only practical and sustainable solution for developing a competitive workforce in Tanzania”*

This implies that many teachers are not persuaded that change of the medium of instruction from English to Kiswahili could make a big difference in students’ academic performance. They instead believe in effective investment in English as medium of instruction from early grades. Similar comments were made by Lupogo (2007) who examined how language of instruction hinders teaching and learning process in Tanzania. In this study, Lupogo proposed officialization of English as LoI from pre-primary and primary schools in both public and private schools. Lupogo further contended intensifying English teaching and learning in secondary schools and building a culture of using English can improve students’ English proficiency in Tanzania.

#### **4.7.2.3 Providing Language Training to Teachers**

Majority of teachers who participated in the interview believed that incompetence in the language of instruction is not only a student problem; English is also a very big problem for teachers. Many teachers lack language fluency required to confidently deliver an exciting lesson to students. For instance, one Head of the Academic department complained that: -Sometimes, if get an opportunity to see what is going on in classrooms, you can get very disappointed. Teachers are ill prepared for a fully English-medium instruction. Sometimes, we introduce “Speak English” policy in our school. Guess what, teachers are the ones who violate it first. It is therefore, important

that teacher language-training should be priority if the government wants to improve students' English language proficiency. It takes skill to do something remarkable, you cannot educate in a language that you yourself you are not competent.

Therefore, developing teacher English language skills should be a priority for the government. (Senior Academic Master Interview, June 20, 2019). Supporting this argument one teacher was of the view that even language teachers themselves are not very competent in the LOI. Teacher Kilwa was of the view that: -“I think language training to teachers is a necessity if the government is determined to improve students' competence in English language. It is not surprising sometime to have teachers teaching English by using Kiswahili. All of us here, we are aware that we have the very limitations when it comes to English language” (Interview Participant, June 20, 2019).

These comments indicate that many teachers are aware that they are not competent in the current LOI. They would often like to get language training that would enhance their own communications with learners. They believe that teachers should be at the center of language-in-education policies and programs. The government should always focus on training teachers in English language so that they are better equipped to confidently and fluently deliver the lesson in classrooms. Indeed, researchers such as (Holmarsdottir, 2005) believe that more efforts need to be done in pre-service and in-service training of teachers to ensure that they are very competent in the language of instruction used in various levels of education they are teaching or expected to teach.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This study aimed at investigating the impact of LOI on students' academic performance. This chapter presents a summary of major research findings. It also presents a general conclusion and implications of this study to different educational stakeholders. Finally, limitations and recommendations for further studies are presented.

#### **5.1 Summary of the Study**

This study sought to examine the effects of the language of instruction on students' academic performance in community secondary schools in Bunda District.

**The first of objective of the study was to examine difficult English language skills for students in community secondary schools.**

This study results revealed that many students experienced difficulties in language productive tasks such as speaking and writing than in receptive tasks such as reading and listening. When it comes to English speaking skills, many students do not have necessary language competence for actively participating in lesson discussion activities such as asking or answering questions and making oral presentations in class. Moreover, despite the fact that both teachers and students consider "Writing" an important language skill for learner' success in secondary education, majority of students were not well versed in various English writing skills. Many students have

difficulties in ‘choosing appropriate words’ and ‘writing correct spelling’ during essay writing. Also a significant majority of students reported to have problems in ‘writing English letters’. Similarly, many students experienced difficulties in understanding main ideas in a text. Many experienced difficulties when reading textbooks than when reading teachers’ notes.

**The second objective of this study was to determine the effects of LOI on students’ academic performance.**

This study found that language of instruction is a very big challenge hindering teaching and learning process in community secondary schools thereby negatively affecting students’ academic performance. Additionally, many students explained that they failed some past examinations because they could not understand various English language materials during preparations. Also, language problems such as ‘inability to find appropriate words when explaining concepts’, ‘spelling and grammatical errors’, and ‘failure to understand vocabularies used in questions’ contributed to poor performance of students in examinations.

**The final objective of this study was to find out possible strategies for improving students’ proficiency in LOI**

First, this study revealed that due to various language problems experienced by students and teachers in their day-to-day instructional activities, schools have devised coping mechanisms for navigating language barrier in education. For instance, students reported that they often mastered LOI by reading about academic concepts repeatedly. They tend to break a big text into small pieces that can be memorized

easily. Additionally, teachers reported that code-switching and students' group discussions were among the effective strategies used in schools. Teachers often relied on code-switching speaking technique (mixing English and Kiswahili) in order to deliver their lessons to learners who were least familiar with English such as Form One students.

Also, teachers organized group discussions and remedial classes to help students reflect on and internalize various concepts covered in classrooms. Moreover, teachers who participated in this study were of the view that investment in multimedia instruction for enhancing students mastery of LOI should be done. They believed that use of various instructional resources such as video, audio materials, computers, charts and pictures could enhance students mastery of various concepts taught in English language by seeing actual objects. Also, many teachers suggested that teacher training is essential for enhancing students' competence in English.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The study has established that learners at Secondary school level in Bunda are facing difficulties in using the language such as comprehending English text, poor choice of vocabularies, incorrect spelling that make them fail to ask or contribute to the learning in the classroom. The study also established that the learners at secondary schools level in Bunda District faced with poor ability to use English words, write English text, ask question and form the correct concepts in learning, this impair their ability to learn in the classroom thus fail in their examinations, as the English is the used language of instruction LOI. The study established the strategies to improve the

English proficiency in secondary school in Bunda to be capacity building to the English teachers, use of code switch in the learning process, study drill for language to students and more practices associated with use and listening of English audio and video would improve the English ability in learning.

#### **5.4 Recommendation from the Study**

This study sought to find out the impact of language of instruction on students' academic performance. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendation should be observed in order to improve language-in-education policy and LOI in schools. The recommendations are to the government, educators and non-state educational stakeholders. The government through Ministry of Education should develop language-in-education policy with major aim of promoting use of English as the language of instruction from pre-primary through secondary education.

In additional, the government should strengthen English instruction in secondary schools. There is a need for developing teachers English language competence in order to foster meaningful instructions in classrooms. This would have trickle down effects on students' language competence. School Heads should take deliberate measures in promoting the use of English in classrooms and day-to-day interactions within the school. School heads should organize various professional development activities aimed at strengthening teachers English language skills. Non-state actors such as NGO's, development agencies and private companies can contribute in improved students' language competence. They can fund or organize language training to teachers as well as provide language appropriate instructional materials.

### **5.5 Recommendations for Further Research**

This study contributes to raising awareness about impact of LOI on students' academic performance in secondary schools. Despite the fact that, this study's findings and recommendations are posted to contribute to the literature on language-in-education policy, additional researches need to be undertaken to accumulate more knowledge that can be used as a means to support efforts aimed at improving English instruction in schools. Further research studies can be carried out in the following areas:

Investigation of the impact of multimedia instruction on students' language competence; household factors contributing to students' language competence; and the impact of Kiswahili-medium instruction on students' academic performance in science subjects.



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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix I: Questionnaires Guide for Students**

My name is Maiga Samwel Patrick. I am a master's student at Open University of Tanzania. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study. This research is meant for academic purpose; its results will contribute to my dissertation. The aim of the study is to investigate effects of language of instruction on students' academic performance. I request your support and cooperation in completing this questionnaire by providing the correct information. All responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used for the defined purpose of the study and not otherwise. Please, do not write your names in this questionnaire.

#### **SECTION A: Demographic Information**

Insert a tick in the box with appropriate answer

1. Gender a. male (   )   b. Female (   )
2. (a) Age 14-16 (   )   b. 17-18 (   ) c. Above 18 (   )
3. Class .....
4. Primary education background
  - a. Public Primary (   )   b. Private (English-medium)

**SECTION B: Students' Language Difficulty**

5. Put a tick where applicable by indicating how important you consider the following English language skills in your academic success.

	<b>Skill</b>	<b>Responses</b>			
		<b>Not Important at all</b>	<b>Slightly Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>
1	Writing				
2	Reading				
3	Speaking				
4	Listening				

**Explain why you consider some language skills important**

.....

.....

6. The table below presents various language skills. Put a tick by indicating where you experience difficulties in using English as a language of instruction.

<b>English Speaking skill</b>	<b>Not Difficult</b>	<b>Slightly Difficult</b>	<b>Difficult</b>	<b>Very Difficult</b>
1. Answering questions in class				
2. Taking part in class discussions				
3. Making presentations in Class				
4. Asking questions in class				
English Writing Skills				
5. Taking notes				
6. Ability to choose appropriate words				
7. Ability to write an essay examinations				

8. Writing correct spelling				
9. Writing Letters				
English Reading Skills				
10. Understanding written instructions				
11. Understanding textbooks				
12. Understanding the main points of a text				
13. Understanding vocabularies used in subjects				
14. Comprehending teachers' notes				
English Listening Skills				
15. Understanding Teachers oral instructions				
16. Understanding small group discussions				
17. Understanding classmates' questions/contributions in class				
18. Understanding everyday English outside class				

8. Explain other ways in which language of instruction hinder your learning

.....

.....

**SECTION C: Effects of Language of Instruction on Students' Academic Performance**

9. Indicate by putting a tick on a statement that explains best your language in past three examinations.

<b>Language Problem</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
I made several spelling errors				
I could not find appropriate English words for writing answers				
I could not understand various materials provided by the teacher or related textbooks during preparations				
I could not understand the vocabularies used in questions				
I made grammatical errors				
I could not understand the instruction				
I did not have enough time to respond to questions in English				

**SECTION C: STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING STUDENTS' ENGLISH PROFICIENCY**

10. What coping mechanism are you using to improve your English Proficiency?

**Thank You**

**Appendix II: Interview Guide for Teachers****Challenges facing students when using English as the language of instruction**

1. What is your experience with using English as the language of instruction?
2. How do you explain your students' competence in language of instruction
3. What are the challenges/problems teachers faces in teaching using English as LOI?
4. What are the effects of using English as LOI in student's performance?
5. Do they all understand when you are teaching in the classroom using English only?
6. How do you help them to understand the subject matter?
7. To what extent do students perform when a teacher uses English as LOI?
8. What are other factors that contribute to student's high/low performance?
9. Do you think that language is important for good performance?

**Thank you**

### Appendix III: Permission Letter from OUT to Access Data

The Open University of Tanzania,  
Mara Regional Centre,  
P. O. Box 217, Musoma,  
Tel. No. 255-28-2620401,  
Musoma – Tanzania,  
E-mail: [drcmara@out.ac.tz](mailto:drcmara@out.ac.tz),  
<http://www.out.ac.tz>



Chuo Kikuu Huria Cha Tanzania,  
Kituo Cha Mkoa wa Mara,  
S. L.P. 217,  
Simu – 255 – 28 – 2620401,  
Musoma – Tanzania,  
E-mail: [drcmara@out.ac.tz](mailto:drcmara@out.ac.tz),  
<http://www.out.ac.tz>

Ref: NO. OUT/MRC/SG/1/27/139

05/06/2017

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY,  
P.O. Box 250,  
BUNDA.

**RE: INTRODUCING THE STUDENT: SAMWEL PATRICK MAIGA  
WITH REG. No. PG201400706, MED- APPS PROGRAMME**

Kindly refer to the above title.


This is to introduce to you the above mentioned student from The Open University of Tanzania, Mara Regional Center.

Mr. Samwel Patrick Maiga will be at Bunda District for the activity of data collection for research on “effects of language policy on quality of education and academic performance in secondary schools in Tanzania, a case of selected community secondary schools in Bunda District” as part of his academic study.

Kindly allow him to collect those data for academic purposes.  
With kindest regards.

Yours Sincerely,

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA**

  
Mr. Steven J. Assenga

**FOR: DIRECTOR OF MARA REGIONAL CENTRE**

**DIRECTOR  
OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA  
MARA REGIONAL CENTRE  
P. O. BOX 217 MUSOMA**

**JAMHURI YA MUUNGANO WA TANZANIA  
OFISI YA RAIS  
TAWALA ZA MIKOA NA SERIKALI ZA MITAA**

**MKOA WA MARA**

Simu: 028 2621056

Nukushi: 028 2620158

Baruapepe: [dcbunda@yahoo.com](mailto:dcbunda@yahoo.com)

Unapojibu tafadhali taja:

Kumb. Na: AB.225/267/02/23



Ofisi ya Mkuu wa Wilaya,  
S. L.P. 250,  
**BUNDA.**

12 Julai, 2017

Mkurugenzi,  
Halmashauri ya Mji,  
S.L.P. 219,  
**BUNDA.**

Mkurugenzi Mtendaji,  
Halmashauri ya Wilaya,  
S.L.P. 126,  
**BUNDA.**

**Yah: UTAMBULISHO WA KUFANYA UTAFTI WA MWANACHUO  
SAMWEL PATRICK MAIGA**

Tafadhali rejea somo tajwa hapo juu.

Mtajwa hapo juu ni Mwanachuo kutoka Chuo Kikuu cha 'Open Universtiy of Tanzania, Mara Region Center ambaye ameruhusiwa kwa barua ya Katibu Tawala wa Mkoa wa Mara kufanya Utafiti katika Wilaya ya Bunda. Utafiti wake ni kuhusu 'Effects of language policy on quality of education and academic performance in secondary schools in Tanzania a case of selected community secondary schools in Bunda District'. Utafiti huo ni mwendelezo wa masomo yake kule chuoni hivyo apewe msaada utakaohitajika kwa ajili ya kufanikisha.

Natanguliza shukrani kwa ushirikiano.

A.S. Miyaye

**KNY: KATIBU TAWALA WA WILAYA  
BUNDA**

**Nakala:** RAS – Mara – Barua yako Kumb.Na. OUT/MRC/SG/1/27/139  
ya tarehe 5 Juni, 2017.

✓ SAMWEL PATRICK MAIGA

–

Kwa ufuatiliaji.



**HALMASHAURI YA MJI WA BUNDA***(Barua zote zitumwe kwa Mkurugenzi wa Mji)***MKOA WA MARA**

Simu Na. + 255 (028) 2621264  
 Nakushi Na: +225(028)2621055  
 Email: [td.bunda@mara.go.tz](mailto:td.bunda@mara.go.tz)



Ofisi ya Mkurugenzi wa Mji,  
 Halmashauri ya Mji wa Bunda,  
 S.L.P 219.  
**BUNDA**

**Unapojibu tafadhali taja:**

Kumb.Na.HMB/T:30/21/6

17 Julai, 2017.

Mkuu wa Idara,  
 Idara ya Elimu Sekondari,  
 Halmashauri ya Mji,  
 S.L.P 219,  
**BUNDA**

**YAH: UTAMBULISHO WA KUFANYA UTAFTI WA MWANACHUO  
 SAMWEL PATRICK MAIGA**

Husika na mada tajwa hapo juu.

Ofisi ya Mkurugenzi Halmashauri Bunda imepokea barua yenye Kumb.Na.AB.225/267/02/23ya tarehe 12 Julai, 2017 yenye somo tajwa hapo juu.

Mtajwa hapo juu ni mwanachuo cha Chuo Kikuu cha Uria Tanzania anahitaji kufanya utafiti katika Halmashauri ya Mji wa Bunda kuhusu **"Effects of Language Policy on Quality of Education and Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Bunda Town Council"** atafanya utafiti huo kwa muda wa mwezi mmoja.

Nakutakia utekelezaji mwema.



**Nakala:** Mkuu wa Wilaya,  
 S.L.P 250,  
**BUNDA**

-"

Samwel Patrick Maiga,  
 S.L.P 219,  
**BUNDA**

- unatakiwa kuripoti kwa Afisa Elimu Sekondari mara upatapo barua hii.

## Appendix IV: Plagiarism Report

### EFFECTS OF LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN COMMUNITY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BUNDA DISTRICT

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