



**THE STATUS OF ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF
INSTRUCTION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: A SYSTEMATIC
REVIEW OF NIGERIA AND TANZANIA (2002-2023)**

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Abstract:

While research has considered the effectiveness of language policies on English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Nigeria and Tanzania, no comparative studies of both countries currently exist. To address this gap, this paper adopted a systematic review approach. One of the principles arising from the British Council Jubal Language-in-Education Conference (2012), a key point of reference for language policy in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), states that the transition from one language to another as a medium of instruction should be a gradual process and not a sudden one; the change should take place after learners have become competent in their mother tongue and proficient in the second language. Arising from this, the aim of this study was to determine why students in Tanzania, who spend a longer time learning in their mother tongue before transiting to English (Kumar, 2015), still face significant challenges with English compared to Nigerians who follow the early transition model (NPE, 2014). The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) approach was used to ensure a robust analysis was undertaken (Sarkis-Onofre, Catala-Lopez, Aromatris & Lockwood, 2021). The paper concludes that the challenges in the Tanzanian context are not related to the policy but to its ineffective implementation. Recommendations for Nigeria's use of the late exit model (NLP, 2022), stress that policymakers should draw lessons from the weaknesses of the Tanzanian case and develop strategies to implement the model effectively.

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Keywords: English language, systematic review, Medium of Instruction, Nigeria, Tanzania

1. Introduction

Language is an indispensable tool, which impacts nations individually and collectively. Education is a tool for development in every country and governments are expected to provide education for their citizens. However, the language used as a medium of instruction is of utmost importance. According to George (2013), there is a correlation between a medium of instruction and students' achievement. Moreover, Williams (2011), argues that quality education entails teaching students in a language that they are familiar with as there is a positive link between a medium of instruction and quality education. Therefore, it has been advocated that students should learn in their mother tongues for a longer period of time before transitioning to English (Owu-Ewie, 2006). While this is the case in Tanzania, many students still encounter significant challenges learning English (Yogi, 2017). To consider the relationship between the research that underpins this policy and the practical reality, this paper reviews the status of English as a medium of instruction in Nigeria and Tanzania based on the premise that the language of instruction "*is integral to quality education*" (Adamson, 2016, p. 5).

The paper aims to fill a gap in research by comparing the use of EMI in the two countries and to draw key lessons for language education policymakers. The objectives are to compare the language policies of both countries and identify the challenges facing the use of EMI and its future prospects.

1.1 Background

Nigeria and Tanzania are multilingual countries and the most populated in Western and Eastern Africa respectively (World Factbook, 2021). Proportionally, Tanzania has a population that is one-third the size of Nigeria's. Geographically, the United Republic of Tanzania comprises three islands—Zanzibar, Pemba, and Tanganyika—and was formed from an amalgamation of the Tanganyika and Zanzibar Archipelago (UNICEF, 2017). The actual number of languages in Tanzania is an issue of contention, with Kiswahili being the national language, though Gordon (2005) has identified more than 127 languages spoken throughout the country.

Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir (2004) assert that 97% of Tanzanians speak Kiswahili. The language occupies a place of pride in the linguistic landscape of Tanzania, while other ethnic community languages are restricted in their use (Muzale & Rugemalira, 2008). In comparison, over 500 languages are spoken in Nigeria, and there are three national languages: Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa. The country has 36 states and Abuja is its capital. Given such diversity, language is a volatile issue in both countries. English is an official language in Nigeria and Tanzania and the medium of instruction, though at various levels. Most Nigerians are multilingual, while the majority of educated Tanzanians are trilingual (Malekela, 2010).

Table 1: Language Profile

Country	Demographics	Ethnic Groups	Languages
Tanzania	Population: 62, 092,761 (July, 2021 est.). Independence: 1962. More than 127 languages (Gordon, 2005).	Ethnic groups in the mainland: - African 99% (of which 95% are Bantu consisting of more than 130 tribes; - other 5%, consisting of Asian, European and Arab, African, mixed Arab and African).	Kiswahili or Swahili (official), English (official, primary language of commerce, administration, and higher education). Arabic (widely spoken in Zanzibar). Many local languages. Kiswahili (Swahili) has become the lingua franca of central and eastern Africa. The first language of most people is one of the local languages.
Nigeria	Population: 219,463,862 (July 2021 est.). Independence: 1960. More than 500 languages.	- Hausa 30%, - Yoruba 15.5%, - Igbo (Ibo) 15.2%, - Fulani 6%, Tiv 2.4%, - Kanuri/Berberi 2.4%, - Ibibio 1.8%, - Ijaw/Izon 1.8%, - other 24.7% (2018 est.).	English (official), Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo (Ibo), Fulani, and over 500 additional indigenous languages.

Source: World Fact Book, 2022.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 English as a Global Language

English is currently spoken as a native and a second/foreign language by 1.5 billion people (Statista, 2023). It is the most studied foreign language in the European Union (Gohil, 2013), one of the official languages(s) of some international organisations, such as the Commonwealth, NATO, and the United Nations, and is also the language of the Internet. It helps to aid career advancement and social mobility, is associated with economic, political, social, and military power and its spread has become a fundamental factor for its consideration as a global language (Mtallo, 2015).

Presently, the word 'Englishes' depicts the various versions of English spoken in different parts of the world. Gohil (2013) documents five key aspects of English: it is the language with the most copious vocabulary in the world; it is a global language as a result of its widespread use; most of the world's publications are stored in English; and basic knowledge of English is taught in some countries as a necessity for some occupations. English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and English as a Second Language (ESL) are related acronyms associated with the teaching and learning of English. In many countries of the world, students take tests to demonstrate their proficiency in English to support migration to English-speaking countries. EMI entails teaching and learning with English as the language of transmission.

English is also used "to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions, where the first language (L1) of the majority of the country is not English" (Dearden, 2015, p. 4). EMI is a growing phenomenon and non-Anglophone countries are now adopting it (Galloway

and Ruegg, 2022). The debate on EMI in Africa centres on the need for students to learn in their native languages as Africa is the only continent in which children learn in a foreign language.

2.2 English Standards in Nigeria

English was introduced into Nigeria in the 16th Century (Alhassan, 2017) and it is currently spoken by approximately 60 million Nigerians (Statista, 2022). In Nigeria, it plays a number of roles: it is the official language and its multilingual nature has given currency to its official status (Mishina & Iskandar, 2019). It is the language of the judiciary, commerce, diplomatic missions, and politics and significantly, the medium of instruction in the country from upper primary (pupils aged 9 years and above) NPE, 2014). The decline in the standard of English usage in the country has been noted by researchers such as Akinnaso (2018). Research shows that only approximately 30% of the candidates who completed the West African School Certificate Examination (WAEC) between 2010 and 2011 passed English Language (Ape, 2013). The poor academic background in English language, reflected in this low pass rate, is evident in the spoken and written English of students in higher institutions in the nation according to Moyo and Galadima (2020) and Akinnaso (2018), and this has an impact on the quality of education in the country as *“language is integral to quality education”* (Adamson, 2016, p.5)

2.3 English Standards in Tanzania

The standard of English in Tanzania is evident mainly in the educational sector as it is a ‘classroom language’, which is taught at the secondary and tertiary levels. The value placed on English in Tanzania is a consequence of globalisation and the teaching and learning of the language at the tertiary level entails code-mixing and code-switching as some notions are taught using Kiswahili (Mtallo, 2015). Research has revealed that students and teachers have limited proficiency in the language (Qorro, 2008; Tibategeza, 2009; Ideh, 2021).

According to the EF Proficiency Index, Tanzania ranks #67 of 113 countries, with a low proficiency band, while Nigeria ranks 27, with a high proficiency band in 2023. Moreover, students, who learn English in Tanzania acquire linguistic rather than communicative skills, and the educational level of English textbooks in Tanzania, which are usually authored by foreigners, are too high for the students (Mtallo, 2015).

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Research Questions

The paper was guided by the following research questions:

- 1) What factors shape the educational language policies of Nigeria and Tanzania?
- 2) What are the challenges of English in formal education as a medium of instruction in Nigeria and Tanzania?

- 3) What are the challenges of indigenous languages in formal education as mediums of instruction in Nigeria and Tanzania?
- 4) How does English in formal education as a medium of instruction promote the achievement of quality education in Nigeria and Tanzania?
- 5) What are the differences in the prospects of English in formal education as a medium of instruction in Nigeria and Tanzania?

3.2 Methodology

A systematic review, which “is a means of identifying, evaluating and interpreting all available research relevant to a particular research question or topic area, or phenomenon of interest” (Garnace, 2018, p. 1323), was adopted for this study. The PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) was chosen to provide a rigorous methodological approach (Moher, Librati, Tetzlaff & Altman, 2010, p. 336). The review was conducted in two phases. The first phase, conducted between September 2022 and June 2023 included approximately 70 publications. The second phase, conducted in July, 2023, updated the data. The first review phase adopted a process based on Garnace (2018). The updated review involved a review of the title, background, eligibility criteria, information sources, search terms, and study selection as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Systematic Review Protocol

Title	This report is a systematic review and meta-analysis
Background	The objectives of the review were to: - examine the educational language policies of Nigeria and Tanzania; - explore the challenges of English and indigenous languages in formal education in both countries; - examine the link between English as a medium of education and quality education in the two countries; - consider the future status of English in the two countries.
Methods Eligibility Criteria	Type of research: books, monographs, conference proceedings, reports and journal articles. Language: English medium materials. Time frame: 2002-2023. Articles were limited to European and African countries. Exclusion Criteria: blogs and webinars. Non-English medium publications. Articles and books published beyond and before the timeframe. Non-European and non-African articles were excluded.
Information Sources	The following databases were searched: - Academia. - ResearchGate. - Google Scholar.
Search Terms	The search terms were: - Language policies in Nigeria and Tanzania. - English and quality education in Nigeria and Tanzania. - Prospects of English in Nigeria and Tanzania. - Challenges of English and indigenous languages as medium of instruction.
Study Selection	Approximately 70 articles were reviewed. The articles and abstracts were read and the selection criteria were applied. A number of research paper were rejected for reasons such as the timeframe, the scope, non-European/non-African articles and non-accessible.

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Table 2: Study Selection Table

Type of research	Research items included	Author's name	Year	Selected/ Rejected	Reason (criteria as shown on table above)
Monograph	Language, Literacy, and Learning in Tanzanian Secondary Schools	Laela Adamson	2016	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Language Policies and Practices in Tanzania and South Africa: Problems and Challenges	Birgit Brock-Utne & Halla Holmarsdotir	2004	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Researching and Documenting the Language of Tanzania	Henry Muzale & Josephat Rugemalira	2008	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	English as a Medium of Instruction in Post-Primary Education in Tanzania	George Malekela	2010	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	The Interrelationship of Language and the Brain and Language Disorders in Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ACC): Findings from a Systematic Review of Literature	Xenia Ribaya Emperador-Garnace	2018	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Globalisation, Language and Tongue-Tied American: A Textual Analysis of American Discourses on the Global Hegemony of English	Christof Demont-Heinrich	2007	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	English as a Global Language	Parimal Gohil	2013	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Teaching and learning in English in Tanzania: A Practical Review of Phan Le Ha's Teaching English as an International Language	Godson Robert Mtallo	2015	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Monograph	English as a Medium of Instruction: A Growing Phenomenon	Julie Dearden	2015	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Wrong Usage as Threat to English Language in Nigeria	Habiba Oma Alhassan	2017	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	The Role of English Language in Nigerian Development	Ushuple Lucy Mishina & Iskandar Iskandar	2019	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Monograph	National Policy on Education	Federal Government of Nigeria	2014	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Four Radical Panaceas in Reversing Mass Failure in Certificate English Language Examinations in Nigeria	Fasisi Khabry Alowonle Amadi Gloria U	2015	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Factors Responsible for Poor Academic Performance of English Language in Senior Secondary Schools in Enugu South Local Government Area	Anya Patience Ngozi & Okoyeukwu Ngozi	2021	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Problem of English Language Proficiency in Tanzanian Schools: The Causes and the Way Forward	Amaka Edith Ideh	2021	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Book	The Characteristics of a Language Policy and Planning Research: An Overview	Goundar P	2017	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Book	Language Policy	David Cassels Johnson	2013	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled

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Journal Article	The Relevance of the Language Policy for Instruction and Assessment of Secondary Education in Tanzania: A Comparative Analysis between the Former Swahili and English Medium Students	Peragia Bikongoro	2015	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Newsletter	Language Education and Development	Chiator, B.	2005	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Language Policies and Practices in Tanzania and South Africa: Problems and Challenges	Birgit Brock-Utne & Halla Holmarsdottir	2004	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Overview of Policies Concerning the Use of African Languages	Halaoui,	2005	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Language Policy on Education in Nigeria: Challenges of Multilingual Education and the Future of the English Language	Jalaludeen Ibrahim & Sadiya, Gwandu	2016	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Language Policy Provisions and Curriculum Issues: The Challenges for Secondary Schools in Nigeria	Amuseghan Sunday Adejmolau	2010	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Language Planning in Nigeria: A Case for Late Exit Transitional Bilingual Education	Adebiyi Adekemi	2012	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Monograph	The Impact of Language Policy and Practice on Children's Learning: Evidence from Eastern and Southern Africa	Barbara Trudell	2016	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Towards Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: Revisiting Language of Instruction in Tanzanian Secondary Schools	Vuzo, M	2018	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
M.A Thesis	The Pedagogical Implications of Using English in Teaching Civics in Tanzanian Secondary Schools	Mkwizu, M.	2002	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Teaching and Learning English in Tanzania: Blessing or Curse?	Mtallo, G.	2015	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	The Use of English as a Language and Medium of Instruction in Higher Learning Institutions: A Case of One Private University in Nigeria	Mosha, M.	2019	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Challenges of Effective Teaching and Learning of English in Secondary Schools in Nigeria	Murana, O.	2019	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Tackling the Challenges of Teaching English Language as a Second Language in Nigeria.	Fatiloru, O.	2015	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Challenges Facing the Teaching of English Language in Secondary Schools in Aniocha South Local Government Area of Delta State Nigeria	Augustine Evue	2013	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Prospects of Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction in Nigerian Primary Level Education.	Ozoemena, J, Ngwoke, F & Nwokolo, B.	2021	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
M.A Thesis	English as a Medium of Instruction: Benefits and Challenges as Viewed by Founders of International Schools in Ethiopia	Kavonen, H.	2017	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Newsletter	Learning? But in which language?	Quane, A.	2005	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Multilingualism in Urban Africa: Bane of blessing.	Prah, K.	2010	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled

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Journal Article	Language-in-Education Policy Development in Tanzania: A Review	Tibategeza Eustard & Lodewyk Theodorus Du Plessis	2012	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Master's Thesis	Challenges of Using English as a Medium of Instruction in Tanzanian Universities: A Case of the University of Dodoma and St. John's University of Tanzania	Shariff, M	2018	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Book	Science and Language Barrier: Using Kiswahili as a Medium of Instruction in Tanzanian Secondary Schools as a Strategy of Improving Student Participation and Performance in Science	Mwinsheikhe, H.	2003	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Promoting Indigenous Language in Nigeria: Issue and Challenges for the Library and Information Professionals.	Benson, O. Anyalebechi, L. & Ariole, I.	2017	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Issues in Introducing Indigenous Languages in Higher Education Africa: The Example of Nigeria	Oloruntoba-Oju, T. & Pinxteren, L.M.	2022	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Exploiting the Blessing of Multilingualism for National Development in Nigeria	Odekunbi, K., Shittu, A. & Omowon, A	2022	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Emerging Sociolinguistic Teaching Trends of English as a First language in Nigeria	Uwen, G., Bassey, V., Nta, E.	2020	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
	Tanzania's Language of Instruction Policy Dilemma: Is There a Solution?	Nyankomo Marwa	2014	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Newspaper Article	The Importance of English to a Quality Education in Nigeria.	Bamgbose, G.	2022	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Report	Special Report: How English Disrupts the Education of Nigerian Children	Omeje, C.	2018	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Language of Instruction and its Impact on the Quality of Education in Secondary Schools: Experiences from Marogoro Region, Tanzania.	Kinyaduka, B. & Kiwara, J.	2013	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Book	English as a Global Language	Crystal David	2003	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Monograph	The Future of English?	Graddol, D.	2000	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Euromonitor Report	English Quantitative Indicators: Cameroon, Nigeria, Rwanda, Bangladesh, Pakistan	Euromonitor	2010	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	The Impact of Mother Tongue on Students' Achievement in English Language - Only Policy on Education	Owu-Ewie, C.	2006	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Language Preference Among Nigerian Undergraduates and the Future of English	Gabriel Bassey Egbe	2014	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Researching and Documenting the Languages of Tanzania	Muzale, Henry & Rugemalira Joseph	2008	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	Language Policy in Education: The Practicality of its Implementation and Way Forward	Awuor, Quin Elizabeth	2019	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled
Journal Article	The Use of English Language as a Medium of Instruction in Tanzanian Secondary Schools: Threat or Opportunity? The Case of Secondary Schools in the Dodoma Municipality	Godson Robert Mtallo	2019	Selected	All Criteria Fulfilled

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 What Are the Provisions of the Educational Language Policies of Nigeria and Tanzania?

4.1.1 Language Education Policy

Language policy and planning is a sub-discipline of Applied Linguistics; this paper is concerned with language policy and planning in relation to education, or in other words, the teaching and learning of language (Goundar, 2017).

According to Johnson (2013, p. 9), *“a language policy is a policy mechanism that impacts the structure, function, use or acquisition of language”*. By implication, an education language policy is a device that dictates the acquisition of an educational language, its composition, operation, and functions. Moreover, an *“education policy among other things refers to the collection of rules, law and principles that govern the education system”* (Bikongoro, 2015, p. 3). It is also *“the language used in disseminating knowledge at varied levels”* (Awuor, 2019, p. 94). In other words, the policy stipulates the medium of instruction at the school level. Research shows that education language policy in Africa that favours an indigenous language would be an advantage to the mass of the population (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2004). However, most educational language policies in Anglophone African countries have favoured English. Language policies in English-speaking countries have been described as explicit, while in French, Spanish, and Portuguese-speaking countries, they are implicit (Halaoui, 2005).

4.1.2 Nigeria

The history of educational language policy in Nigeria dates back to 1927 when an Advisory Committee on native languages established by the British government recommended the use of local languages for instruction at the lower elementary stages of schooling (Musa, 2010 cited in Ibrahim & Gwandu, 2016). Nigeria does not have a single document recording its national policy on language. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and the National Policy on Education 1977 (revised 1981, 2004, and 2014) contain provisions on language policy and more broadly on education (Trudell, 2018). The National Policy on Education (2014, p. 11) states that *“The medium of instruction in primary school shall be the language of immediate environment for the first three years in monolingual communities. During the period, English shall be taught as a subject”*.

One problem associated with the provisions of this policy is implementation, as it is not implemented in urban areas and private schools. Pupils learn English from kindergarten to the end of primary education. Research shows that the main challenge associated with the policy is the non-implementation of the provisions of the policy with regard to multilingual language education (Ibrahim and Gwandu, 2016). This is one of the driving forces for the widespread promotion of English in Nigeria alongside the poor quality of teachers, the non-development of curriculum materials, negative student attitudes, and vagueness in the policy with regard to its provisions (Olagbaju, 2014; cited in Ibrahim & Gwandu, 2016). In addition, language policies in Nigeria promote

inequality between indigenous languages and English (Amuseghan, 2014). In contrast, Adebiyi (2012) has proposed the adoption of the late exit model for Nigeria to address these challenges, taking into consideration, other factors such as the non-provision of learning materials, overpopulated classrooms, and poor motivation of teachers. Moreover, the Nigerian government recently in 2022 published a new National Language Policy (NLP, 2022) which aims to: *“ensure effective delivery of instruction and attendant positive learning outcomes, [and that the] Mother Tongue (MT) or the language of the immediate community shall be used as the medium of instruction from Early Childhood Care and Development Education to the six years of primary education.”* (NLP, 2022, p. 17)

While the Nigerian government has approved the adoption of the late exit model for the country, it is necessary to examine its future prospects as one major concern is the problem of policy implementation on this scale. Several earlier policies from 1977, 1981, 2004, and 2014 (Owojecho, 2020, Duze, 2011) also suffered from the same problem with implementation. The new policy has no timeframe and guidelines for implementation.

4.1.2 Tanzania

The current language policy for Tanzania states that *“The medium of instruction in pre-primary schools shall be Kiswahili, and English shall be a compulsory subject”* (MEC 1995; cited in Malekela, 2010, p. 2). This applies to the primary level too, while for secondary education it is stated that: *“The medium of instruction for secondary education shall continue to be English except for the teaching of other approved languages and Kiswahili shall be a compulsory subject up to ordinary level”* (MEC1995; cited in Malekela 2010, p.2). In other words, the medium of instruction for pre-primary and primary is Swahili, while for the secondary level, it is English. The language policy of Tanzania *“was based on demographic, historical, political, economic, and linguistic factors”* (Ngoyani, 1997; cited in Yogi, 2017). This shows that the educational factor is missing as corroborated by Bikongoro (2015, p. 1), when he asserted that the decision on the language of instruction in Tanzania is impacted by *“social political factors rather than by educational”*.

In the same vein, Brock-Utne and Holmarsdoir (2004) confirmed this view when they noted that the option of a language of instruction was influenced by political factors. This is a critical point as there is a need for the appropriate medium of instruction to be chosen and for the right purpose. Some of the words used to describe Tanzania’s language policies are ‘perplexing’, ‘antithetical’, and ‘vague’ (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdoir, 2004). This can be regarded as a fundamental problem as it is bound to affect the resultant policy. The constitution of Tanzania (1962; cited in Brock-Utne & Holmarsdoir, 2004) provides for the use of Kiswahili at the elementary level and English at the secondary level. Research shows, however, that this is an issue of controversy (Trudell, 2016) as the policy was strongly criticised because pupils could not learn in English by the end of primary school (Vuzo, 2018). While there have been numerous changes in the language policy in Tanzania (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdoir, 2004), it is not the intention of this paper to chronicle them; however, it has been noted that currently, there are English medium primary schools in the country (Mkwizu, 2002) and that these benefit the wealthiest in

the society Bikongoro (2015) and as Yogi (2017) observed, the current policy is not effectively enforced.

4.1.3 Comparison

Tanzania and Nigeria have education language policies but while the indigenous languages are used in the first three years of primary school in Nigeria, Kiswahili is used throughout primary school in Tanzania. English becomes the language of instruction in primary four (from 9 years of age) in Nigeria, while it is the medium of instruction in secondary schools in Tanzania. In both countries, indigenous languages are not used in English medium schools.

4.2 What Are the Challenges of English in Formal Education as a Medium of Instruction in Nigeria and Tanzania?

A good starting point for answering this research question is the argument from Qorro (2006; cited in Macecela, 2020, p. 319), namely, that *“The EMI is an indispensable medium for carrying, or transmitting education from teachers to learners and among learners.”* The global status of English has strengthened its position as a medium of instruction. EMI has been defined as *“the use of English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English”* (Dearden, 2015, p. 4). By implication, it is the educational medium of instruction in countries where English is a second or third language. English enjoys this status due to a number of factors: its position as the language of a coloniser, the language of the Internet, and business (Macecela, 2020). One hinderance of EMI in Africa is that the teachers of the language are not proficient and competent to teach it (Dearden, 2015). Research indicates that EMI in developing countries poses a threat to the quality of education (Malecela, 2020) as pupils do not learn in a familiar language.

4.2.1 Nigeria

Murana (2019, p. 51) describes English *“as the language of Nigeria’s creation, unification and sustenance”*. This emphasises the prominence of English in the Nigerian Linguistic landscape. Nigeria has over 500 indigenous languages and English is a second language in the country; as a result, there are several challenges for the speakers of English as a second language in the country. One major problem is mother tongue interference. Most Nigerians learn the language after acquiring their mother tongue and this affects the acquisition of the language. Moreover, some English language sounds are not present in Nigerian languages, thereby preventing effective mastery. Two central challenges confronting teachers of English in Nigeria are grammatical incompetence of students in the language, and inadequate knowledge of English vocabulary (Hamisu, Aliyu & Hassan, 2018).

Murana (2019) identified the challenges of teaching and learning English as a lack of competency of teachers, poor pedagogical methods, and the undermotivation of learners. Other challenges are overcrowded classes, lack of English specialists, the

interference of the mother tongue, and the passive attitude of students (Fatiloro, 2015). It is no surprise that research suggests that consequently there has been a noticeable decline in English proficiency (Evue, 2013).

4.2.2 Tanzania

This limited knowledge of English by Tanzanian students stems from the fact that English is the medium of education in Tanzania at secondary school. Two main factors have been given for the choice of EMI in Tanzania: its global nature and “*the political expediency of the super powers*” (Mtallo, 2019, p.6). Mosh’a’s (2019) study on EMI in higher learning institutions in Tanzania revealed that students lacked proficiency in English as they did not understand the content. Research shows that it is a major challenge for students as their knowledge base of English is poor from primary school onwards (Bikongoro, 2015). The challenge of English as a medium of instruction in Tanzania is a consequence of the sudden change from Swahili in primary school to English language at the secondary level. Shariff (2018) also conducted a study that involved the University of Dodoma and St. John’s University in Tanzania (SJUT) and showed that the challenges of English as a Medium of Instruction (MOI) were poor English proficiency of lecturers and students, code-mixing, incorrect spelling and tenses, inadequate vocabulary, poor pronunciation and sentence construction.

In the mid-1970s, it was noted at the University of Dar es Salaam that the resultant effect of the language policy was students’ poor knowledge of English (Malekela, 2010) and this affected students’ performance (Bikongoro, 2015). Learners in secondary schools do not acquire knowledge as they do not understand the subject matter (Masudi, 2006; Kaduma, 2006; Brock-Utne, 2006; Qorro, 2006; Kadege, 2006; cited in Bikongoro, 2014). The global nature of English constrains the use of Swahili concerning ICT and the policy change that has allowed the establishment of English medium schools at the primary level does not favour more disadvantaged students due to the high cost of education (Bikongoro, 2015). Furthermore, Adamson (2016) identified several factors that hinder the learning of English in Tanzania and using it as a medium of instruction: environmental factors, the provision of resources, government policy, low levels of teacher and learner confidence, poor foundations in the language, and peer support.

4.2.3 Comparison

English is a medium of instruction from primary four in Nigerian schools. Some private schools do not implement the mother tongue policy, while in Tanzania, it is a medium of instruction in secondary schools, though there are also private schools that implement the English-only policy from primary school. Researchers have always recommended the use of the mother tongue for a longer period of time as “*research in second language (L2) acquisition shows that the level of proficiency in the mother tongue has a direct influence on the development of proficiency in the L2 and that a disruption in first language (L1) development has been found in some cases to inhibit second language proficiency and cognitive growth*”

(Lewelling 1991, Benson 2000 cited in Adebisi, 2012, p. 3). In other words, while the late exit model is practised in Tanzania, EMI is fraught with many problems.

4.3 What Are the Challenges of Indigenous Languages in Formal Education as Mediums of Instruction in Nigeria and Tanzania?

UNESCO is an ardent supporter of the use of indigenous languages, the mother tongue or first language in early formal education (Ozoemena, Ngwoke & Nwokolo, 2021). Mother tongue as a medium of instruction is fundamental to all other student learning (Kavonen, 2017).

Africa is characterised by a multiplicity of languages and some scholars have argued that the multicultural nature of Africans is an advantage as a result of the fact that the need for communication is causing them to learn cross-border languages (Prah, 2010). In addition, the multilingual nature of Africa should be seen as a blessing and not a threat. Research indicates that 1,200 to 2,500 African languages are contending for recognition (Quane, 2005). Nigeria and Tanzania are multilingual countries; Nigeria has more than 500 languages, while Tanzania has 150 ethnic languages, with Kiswahili attaining the status of a national/official language and the language of instruction in primary schools since the late 1960s (Tibategeza, & Theodorus Du Plessis, 2012).

A major factor in the use of indigenous languages for education is the English language; the global status of English makes it the most desired language in all spheres of life today. The problems of Africa such as unemployment and starvation have been attributed to the limited use of African languages for educational purposes in the continent (Chiatoh, 2005). This results from the fact that Africans do not think in their own languages, thereby finding solutions to their problems. For example, a study conducted in Tanzania reveals that students, who learned science concepts in Kiswahili performed better than students who learned it in English (Mwinsheikhe, 2003). However, there are several factors that hinder the use of African languages in education: incongruous language policies, the non-implementation of policies that promote indigenous languages, inadequate educational materials, inadequate teachers, inconducive environments, low preference given to the funding of the development of African languages and the non-standardisation of the languages (Chiatoh, 2005).

4.3.1 Tanzania

Kiswahili attained the status of a medium of instruction in Tanzania in 1967 (Vavrus, 2002, cited in Yogi, 2017). Research has noted that fifteen percent of Tanzanians do not speak English or Kiswahili. This population is normally identified with mostly rural school-age children and this raises the question: what is the role of indigenous languages in Tanzania? (Rubagumya, 2007; cited in UNICEF, 2017). This situation has a resultant effect on education, and political and economic advancement (ibid). Is this not a violation of the linguistic rights of the African people? Indeed, due to the sudden transition from Swahili to the English language, as many as 1.5 million pupils miss secondary education in Tanzania each year thereby hindering their educational advancement (Yogi, 2017). The

use of Swahili as the medium of instruction up to the tertiary level has been shown to impede the attainment of higher education by Tanzanians (Brock-Utne, 2004). Kiswahili has not been fully developed for higher education (Ngoyani, 1997; cited in Yogi, 2017) and research suggests that it denies Tanzania a competitive educational standard when compared to its neighbouring African countries (Mazuri 1997; cited in Yogi, 2017). In other words, since English is a global language, using Swahili as a medium of education at all levels causes Tanzanians to lose out on the dividends of English.

4.3.2 Nigeria

The use of indigenous languages as a medium of instruction in Nigeria is fraught with many problems. While some languages are used as mediums of instruction at the primary level in the country, the majority of the languages lack documentation, thereby making them undeveloped. Another challenge is the pluranimous nature of Nigeria. In other words, there are too many languages and a lack of proficiency in the languages and attitudes toward English (Benson, Anyalebechi & Ariole, 2017). The decision as to which particular indigenous language to use (Oloruntoba-Oju & Pinxteren, 2022) has led to a volatile situation due to the problem of marginalisation.

Another problem is the negative attitude of Nigerians toward their indigenous languages (Odekunbi, Shittu & Omowon, 2022); this is the nexus between Nigeria and underdevelopment. Presently, research shows that the youths in Nigeria are monolinguals (Uwen, Bassey & Nta, 2020) and this stems from the fact that parents in Nigeria do not pride themselves on the use of indigenous languages. The use of indigenous languages as a medium of instruction in Nigeria has been viewed as infeasible due to a number of factors, such as the limited development of languages as well as course books (Ozoemena, Ngwoke & Nwokolo, 2021).

4.4 How Does English in Formal Education as a Medium of Instruction Promote the Achievement of Quality Education in Nigeria and Tanzania?

Quality education is defined as *“the correspondence between the goals or expectations of society and the changes that take place among the learners, the education system, and the society at large”* (Qorro, 2008; cited in Marwa, 2014, p. 1264). In other words, quality education entails a positive change in the behaviour of the learner. Education quality is associated with quality teachers and quality learning (Chiator, 2005). The global status of English is a critical factor in the achievement of quality education. For the English language to be properly taught, the teachers must be sound in terms of pedagogy, personal qualities, and subject matter.

4.4.1 Nigeria

Bamgbose (2022) examined the importance of English to quality education in Nigeria. His research explored English as a subject in relation to the types of education in Nigeria and emphasised that since English is the medium of instruction and the language of instruction for other subjects for formal education as stated in NPE (2004), attention

should be given to it so that it is effectively taught in schools. In addition, English is also important in vocational education in order for students of such schools to understand the technical words in their subject and be useful to society. Finally, the knowledge of English helps students in non-formal education to understand morals and opinions. On the other hand, research has shown that English as a medium of instruction impedes education in the country (this is mainly associated with children in the rural areas); pupils are not taught in their mother tongue, and this results in poor understanding and literacy as well as a slow process of learning, leading to rote learning practices (Omeje, 2018).

4.4.2 Tanzania

There is a link between quality education and the medium of instruction in Tanzania as low proficiency in the medium of instruction appears to affect achievement in a second language and other subjects (Cummins 1979, 1975; Krashen 1985 cited in Marwa, 2014). Studies abound in Tanzania that have proven that EMI does not promote quality education; on the contrary, it is an obstacle to the academic achievement of the students (Qorro, 2005; cited in Kinyaduka & Kiwara, 2013). However, significantly, a study conducted by Kinyaduka and Kiwara (2013) which explored the language of instruction and its impact on the quality of education in secondary schools reveals that of the 408 participants, the parents (53%), students (78.1%) and teachers (64.5%) preferred EMI. A significant majority of students (69.5%) lacked understanding when English was used as the language of instruction and 71.4% of students opted for the use of English and Swahili. In addition, it has been asserted that teachers “*who teach students solely in English were found to be confusing the students*” (MEC, 1998; cited in Marwa, 2014, p. 1262).

4.5 What Are the Differences in the Prospects of English in Formal Education as a Medium of Instruction in Nigeria and Tanzania?

English has attained the status of a global language. Three categories of English speakers have been identified: native speakers of the language, and those who speak and learn it as a second or additional language, and people who learn it as a foreign language (Graddol, 2000). More people speak English as a second language than as a native language (Crystal, 2003). The importance of English cannot be over-emphasised; its influence in the world can be seen in Zambian English, Ghanaian English, and East Asian Englishes.

4.5.1 Tanzania

Research shows that the number of Tanzanians who speak English is lower than 5% of the population (Senkoro, 2005; cited in Ideh and Tibategeza, 2022). Ideh and Tibategeza (2022) reviewed research conducted in Tanzania on the use of EMI and highlighted how the low achievement of students in English was typically attributed to several factors such as the dearth of English language teachers, lack of educational materials, poor usage of the language, overcrowded classrooms, inconducive educational environments, restricted support from home and poverty (Moshia, 2014). Another study by Brock-Utne

(2006) demonstrated that teachers 'played safe', when teaching in English and that the students were passive learners due to their low proficiency in English.

Malekela (2006) also revealed that most students (78.4 %) had problems with subjects taught in English, while Qorro (2006) concluded that students performed poorly in English and that Tanzanian secondary students had low proficiency in English. These studies show that though the use of EMI leaves much to be desired, English is a language of prestige in Tanzania, and it remains the most desired medium of instruction as parents and students have a positive attitude towards it.

4.5.2 Nigeria

English is an official language in Nigeria and it performs different functions in the country. However, it is a tool for social integration. Nigeria is a multilingual state and therefore, English is a symbol of integration in the country. It is the language of trade and commerce, diplomacy, and the judiciary. English advances social mobility and the use of English has enabled Nigerians to dominate various sectors in different English-speaking countries. Some of the benefits of English in Nigeria are the large Foreign Direct Investment (FDII) received by the country from English-speaking countries, and Nigerian professionals are better remunerated than countries such as Rwanda and Cameroun as a result of their English skills (Euromonitor, 2010). Research reveals that Nigerian undergraduates have a preference for English as the medium of communication at home and English has good prospects in Nigeria due to its global status.

4.5.3 Comparison

English is an official language in Nigeria and Tanzania, both of which are multilingual states. The future of English is determined by the language policies in both countries and though English is equally viewed as a prestigious language, Nigerians seem to have benefitted more from its use as an official language as it has become a symbol of national integration. In Tanzania, the importance of English has been realised; however, the low proficiency of students and teachers in the language leaves much more work to be done to improve proficiency to the expected levels nationally.

5. Recommendations

Arising from the research presented in this systematic review, there are seven main recommendations relating to Nigeria and Tanzania:

- 1) This research highlights the ineffective implementation of the language policy of Tanzania. As stated in the Jubal Conference on Education (2012) principles, the introduction of English to Tanzanian students should be shaped by a gradual and evolutionary process.
- 2) Local authors are required to design and write English course materials that depict the socio-cultural setting of the Tanzanian people.

- 3) The situation in Tanzania requires a proactive solution for children in rural areas to take advantage of higher education and challenge disadvantages and inequalities.
- 4) The late-exit model is recommended for Nigeria and although it has been promoted by the Nigerian government, it is necessary to underline that it requires effective implementation and more longitudinal research on the topic to fully understand these developments and their potential.
- 5) The teaching and learning of English should consider the use of evidence-based digital technologies and digital pedagogies to bring Nigerian policy-making in this area into line with other African nations and to improve digital literacy across the country.
- 6) The teacher factor is critical to the success of the students as highlighted by UN SDG 4. Therefore, competent teachers should be employed to teach English to students at all levels in both countries' educational systems.

6. Conclusion

Education quality is not determined solely by any one single factor; there are many contributing factors and one of these is the medium of instruction. This factor is crucial to quality education and it requires consideration in an age of globalisation for the citizens of any particular region to communicate with the wider world.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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