

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE DETERMINANTS OF TEACHERS' MOTHER
TONGUE USE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN
MAVOLONI ZONE IN YATTA SUB-COUNTY,
MACHAKOS COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Use of mother tongue, as a medium of instruction in early childhood education has been wanting and has thus been a concern to many education stakeholders. Thus, the study intended to investigate the determinants of teachers' use of mother tongue in early childhood education in Mavoloni Zone in Yatta Sub-county. The literature for this study was based on the concept of mother tongue use in Kenya, the extent to which teachers use mother tongue, teachers' perception, teachers' demographic characteristics and school dynamics in relation to use of mother tongue. The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches of methodology since it involved collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. Questionnaires and observation checklists were used to collect data from the respondents. Pilot study was conducted amongst 5 ECDE teachers from 5 ECDE Centers in Mavoloni Zone. The results of pilot study were used to establish the validity and reliability of the instruments. The study applied explanatory sequential design in which researcher implemented the quantitative and qualitative method where qualitative data helped explain or build upon initial quantitative results. The target population for this study included 54 ECDE teachers. Using The Central Limit Theorem, the researcher sample 8 ECDE centers, that is, 30% of 27. Based on the same theorem, the researcher sampled 17 respondents, that is, 30% of 54. The researcher then applied stratified sampling to create 5 strata based on the number of sub-locations. From each stratum, 4 ECDE teachers were selected using purposive sampling. This sampling procedure enabled the researcher to realize a sample of 17 ECDE teachers. Data analysis began by identifying common themes from the respondents' description of their experiences. Frequency counts of the responses were then obtained to generate information about the respondents and to illustrate the general trend of findings on the various variables that were under investigation. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically along the study objectives whereas the basic quantitative data was analyzed descriptively using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS Version 21). The findings of the study were presented using tables. The study has established that there are various determinants of mother tongue use as a medium of instruction in early childhood education. These include; teachers' perception. Demographics and school-based dynamics. The study thus concludes that there are various determinants which determine teachers' use of mother tongue such as perception, demographics and school –based dynamics. The study thus recommends that teachers should develop a positive attitude and avoid faulty perception towards use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in early childhood education. The government should formulate regulations to enforce adherence to the Kenya National Language and Literacy Policy whose aim is to oversee linguistic growth and development amongst early childhood learners by adopting use of mother tongue.