LANGUAGES OF INSTRUCTION IN TANZANIA: CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN IDEOLOGY, POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

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ABSTRACT Contradictions exist among ideologies, language policy statements, and practice regarding the language of instruction (LoI) in primary education in Tanzania. In 1961, independent Tanzania inherited colonial education, using Swahili and English. When socialism was introduced in 1967, Swahili was declared the only LoI. The government legalized private and English-medium schools in the 1990s but maintained Swahili as the LoI. There is an English syllabus for English-medium schools, while the Primary School Leaving Examination is administered in Swahili and English. However, only the elite can afford English-medium education. The majority of children attend Swahili-medium government schools. The government needs to firmly establish that both Swahili and English are LoI of primary education, because English is the LoI of secondary and post-secondary education. The government must enable all children to master both languages in order for them to acquire an education that allows them to compete favourably for employment.

Key Words: Ideology; Language policy; Implementation of language policy.

INTRODUCTION

Ideology dictates the policies of a country in all major domains – social-cultural, economic and political. Tanzania has adopted capitalist and socialist ideologies at different times in its post-independence history. In education, policies have also changed according to whether the country was following a capitalist or socialist ideology. These ideologies have guided the choice of language policies and language(s) of instruction (LoI). This paper identifies three periods in the language policy of post-independence Tanzania. Contradictions between language ideology, language policy and actual implementation have occurred during the third post-independence period.

Tanzania is considered an example of a country that has a sound linguistic policy, with the elevation of an African language, Swahili, to a national and official language. This has been achieved despite the existence of about 120 other local languages. Missionaries and successive German and British colonial administrations laid the foundation for the use of Swahili as an official language and LoI (Whiteley, 1969; Mazrui & Mazrui, 1995). Since independence in 1961, both English and Swahili have remained official languages and LoI. Swahili is the LoI in primary education, and English is that in secondary and post-secondary education (United Republic of Tanzania, 1995). There is strong cultural, historical and nationalist support for the use of Swahili as a LoI. How-

ever, English is increasingly used as a LoI in pre-schools and private primary schools. This paper argues that there are contradictions between stated ideology, policies and implementation regarding LoI in primary education that the government needs to resolve.

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION DURING THE PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL PERIODS

During the 19th century, Christian missionaries introduced the first Western type schools in what was to become Tanganyika. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) established an educational centre at Mpwapwa in 1876. Thereafter, various denominations built other schools, but adopted different LoI. The United Missions to Central Africa (UMCA), CMS and Holy Ghost Fathers used Swahili, but others, such as the White Fathers and London Missionary Society (LMS), used vernaculars (Gottneid, 1976).

Both German and British colonial administrations were capitalist, and controlled the major means of production. They established schools, but education for Africans was restricted to a very small section of the population. The type of education provided for Africans and the LoI used in African schools were in consonance with the ideology. The curriculum developed by colonial administrations fitted the objectives and goals of colonialism, including the production of a few educated Africans for low-level posts in government (Swilla, 1992).

The German colonial administration established the first government school in Tanga in 1892 (Gottneid, 1976). Germans did not encourage the teaching of their own language in Tanganyika. Consequently, few schools were permitted to teach German. Instead, the colonial administration (1887-1918) encouraged the use of Swahili as an official language in local administration (Gottneid, 1976) and adopted it as the LoI in primary education (Whiteley, 1969).

From 1919 to 1961, the British colonial administration maintained Swahili as the LoI in the first four years of primary school education for Africans. A gradual transition to English-medium instruction took place in the fifth year, and English became the sole LoI from the sixth year through secondary and post-secondary levels. Swahili remained a compulsory subject in primary education and in the first four years of secondary education.

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION IN POST-INDEPENDENCE TANZANIA

I identify three periods in post-independence Tanzania based on ideology. During the first period from 1961 to 1966, Tanzania inherited capitalism. Then followed the second period of socialism from 1967 to mid 1980s. In the third period from the late 1980s to the present, the country has witnessed a return to capitalism. Each period has had major impacts on the education system and LoI.

I. First Post-independence Period, 1961-1966

During the early post-independence years from 1961 to 1966, the country inherited a capitalist system but made some significant changes in education, such as the abolition of secondary school fees in 1963, thus allowing more Tanzanian children to access secondary education. However, the government maintained the colonial curriculum and languages of instruction, using Swahili as LoI in the first five years of primary education, and English from the sixth to secondary and post-secondary levels.

II. Second Post-independence Period, 1967 to Mid 1980s

In 1967, the country adopted socialism. One of its major tenets was self-reliance in every aspect of Tanzanian life. Socialism introduced significant political and socio-economic changes, such as the nationalisation of major means of production and the provision of free social services including education at all levels. Nyerere (1967) argued that colonial education created unequal socio-economic categories among Tanzanians, comprising a small group of educated elite and the majority group of uneducated citizens. The socialist ideology was designed to steer the country towards the construction of an egalitarian society (Nyerere, 1967). The government nationalized schools and abolished racially and religiously segregated schools at all levels through the enactment of the Education Act 50 of 1969. Two major reforms in education under the socialist ideology occurred: the introduction of Education for Self-Reliance (ESR) and the adoption of Swahili as the sole LoI of primary education. ESR was a philosophy designed to produce primary school graduates equipped with an education suitable for integration into the predominantly rural Tanzanian society. It was argued that such education was best delivered in Swahili, the national and most widely spoken language. Use of Swahili would make primary education accessible to all children and prepare school graduates for a productive life in rural areas and communal villages, where it was envisioned the majority would live. A few English-medium international primary schools catering to expatriate children were maintained, but were not permitted to enroll Tanzanians. ESR emphasized practical skills and adapted the curriculum to the needs of the country as defined by the new socialist state, abandoning the colonial curriculum that was deemed elitist.

Having adopted a socialist ideology, the choice of Swahili as the sole LoI in primary education was logical, because Swahili was the most widely spoken language in the country and had been the major language of communication during the struggle for independence. Swahili was thus intimately linked with decolonisation. It also served to unite people from different ethnic and linguistic groups. Furthermore, Swahili was already a LoI in lower classes of primary education, and extending it to the rest of primary education posed few problems. The retention of English as the LoI in secondary and post-secondary education may have been influenced by the need to avoid the high costs in finan-

cial and human resources required in the preparation of teachers and teaching materials for Swahili-medium post-primary education. It may also have been an acknowledgement of the country's membership in regional and international communities, where knowledge of an international language is important.

The adoption of Swahili as the LoI contributed significantly to the implementation of Universal Primary Education in 1974, and helped achieve the target of enrolling nearly all school age children by the end of the 1970s. In ten years, the population of primary school pupils trebled, rising from 827,944 students in 1970 to 3,361,228 in 1980 (United Republic of Tanzania, 1985).

However, the sustainability of free social services proved untenable, due to major economic problems Tanzania faced in the late 1970s, such as rising oil prices, the falling prices of raw materials on the world market, drought, famine, and the war against Idi Amin of Uganda. Consequently, the government removed subsidies for education and health, and introduced user fees (Boesen et al., 1986). This contradicted socialist policies introduced by the Arusha Declaration in 1967. Gradual changes in the educational system occurred, paving the way for the introduction of English as a LoI in private primary education. One significant change was the introduction of private primary schools in 1995.

During this period, various sections of the society initiated the debate about using Swahili as the LoI in the entire education system. Many researchers and academicians, notably Mlama and Materu (1978) and Mvungi (1974, 1982) documented problems that secondary school students encountered in understanding and expressing themselves in English, the LoI of secondary education. The debate continues to this day, and opinions are divided. One group advocates for the use of Swahili as the LoI at all levels of education while the other wants to maintain the status quo. Although a presidential commission recommended the use of Swahili as LoI at all levels of education (United Republic of Tanzania, 1984), to my knowledge, the government has not adopted this recommendation, and it has not therefore been implemented. As I will show in the following pages, Swahili has remained the major LoI of instruction of primary education while English is also increasingly used as LoI, mainly in private primary schools.

III. Third Post-independence Period, Late 1980s to the Present

New contradictions arose regarding LoI during the third post-independence period. The country gradually abandoned the socialist ideology and embraced capitalism, but the constitution in force still stipulates that Tanzania is a socialist country. Tanzania has moved from a state controlled economy to a free market economy, accompanied by the liberalization and privatisation of the major means of production and state owned enterprises. Privatisation was extended to education in the 1990s, when private primary schools were legalized by passing the Education Amendment Act No. 10 of 1995. The government had already legalized the use of English as LoI in private primary schools in 1992, although Swahili remained the LoI in government primary schools. With these

changes, Tanzanians could own private primary schools and Tanzanian children could enroll in them, including the international schools which had previously been restricted to the children of expatriates. Currently, the majority of children attending private primary schools are Tanzanian. A situation developed whereby the majority of private primary schools used English as the LoI while Swahili remained the LoI in government schools. The legalisation of private primary schools led to a gradual increase in the number of private primary schools and enrollments in those schools.

According to Konga (personal communication on 24 July 2008), an official with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, there were 1,500 primary schools in Tanzania in July 2008, of which 503 were private and 997 were government schools. Four government and 480 private primary schools use English as LoI. Thus only 32.26% of the total primary schools in Tanzania use English as LoI and 67.74% are Swahili-medium. However, the majority of English-medium schools (95.42%) are private while the government owns the majority of Swahili-medium schools (88.97%). Taking each group separately, 99.17% of private primary schools are English-medium and 99.59% of government schools are Swahili-medium. Therefore, private primary education is synonymous with English-medium, and government primary education, with Swahili-medium education.

As Table 1 shows, the number of children enrolled in private primary schools has also increased steadily since 1995. In 1995, there were 5,170 students in private primary schools, 11,910 in 2000, and 64,558 in 2005, representing respectively 0.13%, 0.27% and 0.85% of the total number of students in primary schools in Tanzania. By 2006, that number had risen to 80,196 representing 1.0% of all primary school students in the country (United Republic of Tanzania, 2007). The primary schooling lasts for seven years. In 2007 alone, at least 11,640 students will complete primary education in private schools.

The majority of these students pass the national Primary School Leaving Examination and join secondary schools. We are not aware of any long term tracer studies conducted on students that complete primary education. I assume that those who attend English-medium primary schools have an advantage over those attending Swahili-medium schools, because English is the LoI of secondary education. One would therefore expect that students from English-medium

Table 1. Enrollment in private primary schools in Tanzania

Year	Number of students in private primary schools	Total enrollment in primary schools	Percentage of student in private primary schools
1995	5,170	3,877,643	0.13
2000	11,910	4,382,410	0.27
2005	64,558	7,541,208	0.85
2006	80,196	7,959,884	1.00

private primary schools perform well in secondary education and that as a group they have better chances of continuing with post-secondary education. This further means that they would be able to compete favourably in the job market.

The figures above show that English-medium is adopted in the majority of private primary schools. There has also been a marked increase in English-medium pre-schools in the last several years, probably because many good quality English-medium primary schools admit only the children who attended English-medium pre-schools. Total enrollment numbers in pre-primary education in Tanzania are low, mainly because the government only began providing pre-primary education a few years ago. Until then, non-government institutions and individuals owned pre-primary schools. Statistics from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training show enrollment numbers from the year 2004 onwards (United Republic of Tanzania, 2007). Total enrollment has increased from 547,543 students in government and 7,292 students in private pre-primary schools in 2004 to 775,313 students in government and 19,698 students in private pre-primary schools in 2007 (United Republic of Tanzania, 2007). These numbers are very low compared with those in primary education. Swahili is the LoI in government pre-primary schools while the majority of private pre-schools are English-medium. Although enrollment numbers are increasing each year, it will take many more years before pre-primary education reaches all Tanzanian children.

Several contradictions between ideology, language policy, and actual implementation of LoI are evident from preceding paragraphs. First, while government statements maintain that Swahili is the LoI of primary education, English has been legalized as the LoI in private primary schools. As mentioned above, the majority of students in English-medium schools are Tanzanian. Secondly, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training offers an English version of the primary school syllabus for use in English-medium schools. During a survey of 28 private English-medium primary schools, Mbise and Masoud (1999) found that 18 used the English version of the syllabus, either alone or in combination with other syllabi. Government primary schools use the Swahili version of the syllabus. Thirdly, since 2000, the government also administers the English version of the national Primary School Leaving Examination in English-medium schools, unlike in the past when the examination was only provided in Swahili.

Contradictions between policy and implementation appear also in some government documents. For example, in 1995, the government asserted the predominance of Swahili as the LoI in primary education as can be seen in the statements below:

(1) "The medium of instruction in primary schools shall be Swahili, and English shall be a compulsory subject" (United Republic of Tanzania, 1995: 39).

However, the government had already legalized English as LoI in private primary schools in 1992.

In 1997, following the redefinition of language policy in education, the dom-

inance of Swahili was no longer clear since English and Swahili were given more or less equal status, implied in the statements below.

(2) "English shall be a compulsory subject in pre-primary, primary and secondary education levels and shall be encouraged in higher education. In addition the teaching of English shall be strengthened" (United Republic of Tanzania, 1997: 2).

(3) "A special programme to enable the use of Kiswahili as a medium of instruction in instruction in education and training at all levels shall be designed and implemented" (United Republic of Tanzania, 1997: 3).

(4) "Kiswahili shall be a compulsory subject in pre-primary, primary and secondary education levels and shall be encouraged in higher education. In addition the teaching of Kiswahili shall be strengthened" (United Republic of Tanzania, 1997: 3).

Statements (1) to (4) above suggest some ambivalence towards Swahili as a LoI. In statements (2) and (4), the policy remained silent on LoI in primary education and instead reiterates what had existed since British colonial times, that Kiswahili and English were both compulsory subjects. It would appear that, having legalized private primary schools and the use of English as a LoI in private primary schools, the government was not ready to state openly that English had also become a LoI, thus permitting an ambiguous situation to exist.

Despite the policy statements to the contrary, English has clearly become another de facto LoI of primary education in Tanzania. As figures above show, the majority of private primary schools are English-medium. Furthermore, students in these schools are predominantly Tanzanian, in contrast to the second post-independent period when only foreigners could attend English-medium private schools.

More recently, the deputy minister of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training defended English-medium primary schools, arguing that they were legal (Anonymous, 2008). She asserted that Swahili was an optional subject in international schools established for the expatriate community while Swahili was a compulsory subject in other English-medium schools which were not of international standard. However, international schools now admit Tanzanian children, unlike during the second post-independence period when Tanzanian children had no access to such schools.

Contradictions between successive educational language policy statements and implementation are a consequence of changes in the social and economic fabric of Tanzania. Post-independence Tanzania has successively moved from capitalism, socialism and back to capitalism. The resurgence of English-medium primary schools has occurred at a time when Tanzania has returned to capitalism, although capitalism alone cannot explain the choice of LoI. Many capitalist countries in the world use their languages that are not English as official and national languages, as well as LoI. The colonial experience during which English was used and had prestige, the fact that English is the LoI of second-

ary and post-secondary education in Tanzania, and the need for an international language in this era of globalisation, may all have played an important part in the resurgence of English as a LoI of primary education.

The issue of LoI in Tanzania is an example of an inheritance situation, witnessed in former colonies where the colonial experience continues to shape the post-colonial practice (Bamgbose, 1991). Colonial governments created linguistic imperialism, the use of the colonial language to serve the objectives of the colonial power that were predominantly trade- or commercially oriented (Phillipson, 1992). In the post-independence period, the colonial language has continued to maintain its privileged status in education in many former colonies. Current policies and practices regarding the LoI in Tanzania promote elite closure, defined as a social mobilization strategy by which people in power establish and maintain their powers and privileges via linguistic choices (Scotton, 1993). I further argue that the elite employ official language policies to limit access of non-elite groups to political positions and socioeconomic advancement. I argue that Tanzania has important characteristics that favour strong elite closure. It is a multilingual state with a large gap between linguistic repertoires of the elite and of the masses. Furthermore, English is not the mother tongue of any segment of the population, and access to the language is limited. In Tanzania, the elite is composed of the politically powerful group and the economically advantaged groups often composed of educated people and people engaged in business who have middle to high incomes. The elite in Tanzania are what Scotton (1993) referred to as an education-based elite and a proto-elite of entrepreneurs. These people can afford fees in English-medium private primary schools.

The gap between linguistic repertoires of the elite and of the masses is evident in that although the majority of Tanzanians are competent in Swahili, only a small percentage are fluent in English, the other official language. The elite ensure their children attain competence in English by enrolling them in good quality English-medium primary and secondary schools, and/or in private tuition classes. Although all Tanzanian children theoretically have access to English, only those attending good quality English-medium schools or who receive good quality private tutorial in English attain competence in the language and perform well at secondary and post-secondary levels. Thus, decisions made by the government to facilitate the use of English in primary education benefit an education-based elite and a proto-elite of entrepreneurs (Scotton, 1993).

Parents who choose to enroll children in private English-medium primary schools attest to the increasing socio-economic gap between advantaged and disadvantaged groups in Tanzania. Only parents from advantaged socio-economic groups can afford to pay the high costs of English-medium pre-school and primary schools where fees range between about 300 and over 1,000 US dollars annually. The majority of parents cannot afford these amounts, given the current per capita income of about 370 US dollars in Tanzania (World Bank, 2006).

Socio-economically advantaged groups invest in English-medium schools because of perceived long-term benefits. They believe that children graduat-

ing from such schools have better chances of admission into good quality government or private secondary schools and into institutions of higher learning. Morrison and Lui (2000: 473) referred to such languages as linguistic capital, defined as "fluency in and comfort with a high-status, world-wide language which is used by groups who possess economic, social, cultural and political power and status in local and global society."

Proficiency in English is a crucial qualification in securing well-paid employment within Tanzania, the sub-region and beyond. Even in government, middle level and senior posts require a minimum of secondary education, for which English is the LoI. Doctors, engineers, lawyers and accountants must know English well, in order to qualify but also to succeed in their careers. Kaijage (2000) reported that the graduates of the Faculty of Commerce and Management at the University of Dar es Salaam and their employers considered mastery of English as crucial in their jobs. Currently, a good command of English is required even for junior posts such as drivers and office attendants in foreign-owned enterprises, embassies, and in regional and international organisations where remuneration is high. Advertisements for such jobs are published in English, even in Swahili newspapers.

Tanzania's membership in international, regional and sub-regional organisations creates a high demand for competence in English. The creation, strengthening, and reorganisation of regional institutions such as the East African Community (EAC), Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union, offer employment opportunities that are highly competitive. English is the only official language of the EAC and one of the official languages of SADC and the African Union. These organisations employ many people from member countries, offering competitive and attractive terms of service. Tanzanian candidates wishing to become legislators in the first EAC parliament were interviewed in English by members of the national parliament. Only candidates able to express themselves well in English were short-listed.

The Anglo-Saxon world leads in technological development and knowledge, accessible in English. This further entrenches the belief among the elite in Tanzania that English is the appropriate LoI. Emphasis on the use of computers, information and technology (IT), and e-commerce via the internet underlines the importance of English as LoI among the socio-economically advantaged groups. English will continue as the language of technology until Swahili versions of manuals, programs and teaching materials become available. The emphasis on the global nature of communication, technology and the use of electronic commerce to access global markets strengthens many people's belief that proficiency in English is necessary. The importance of English described above is not unique to Tanzania. It is true of all former colonies where the colonial language is often an international and official language as well.

COMPARISON WITH SOME SELECTED COUNTRIES

Contradictions in language policy regarding the appropriate LoI and implementation are not unique to Tanzania, but occurred in many countries particularly in former colonies. Several factors influence the choice of a language, including the relative value placed upon it. Laitin (1992) observed that competence in the language of the former colonizer remained the key to elite status, because it was crucial for social mobility. Thus the elite decide to invest in education delivered in a European language for their children.

Kayambazinthu (1998) observed that occupational and educational structures in Africa are tightly interwoven, and the occupational level of an individual was determined by the levels of educational qualifications. He reported that in Malawi, a former British colony, the system created a small minority of an elite group of urban dwellers who spoke English and/or other European languages. He cited Msonthi (1997), who reported that parents favour English rather than vernacular languages as LoI, because of the socio-economic prestige attached to English. However, it appears few Africans use European languages as primary languages, despite their high status and expected benefits (Laitin, 1992).

South Africa has eleven official languages, nine of which are African. Every South African is required to study at least one African language. However, English remains the language of socio-economic opportunities, within and outside the country. People marginalize vernaculars and consider a colonial language as empowering, favouring it as LoI for their children (van Tonder, 1999). De Klerk (2000) observed that there was a rush to enroll African children in English-medium schools after the abolition of apartheid in the 1990s. Findings of a study conducted among Xhosa-speaking parents whose children were attending English-medium schools revealed that parents from the elite class – professionals and the white-collar workers, 44% of whom had tertiary education – enrolled their children in English-medium schools (de Klerk, 2000). The author cited several factors that determined the choice of English-medium schools: English is an international language and prepares children for the modern world, it offers more and better job opportunities, it is the language of science and technology, and it is vital to educational success.

The government of Namibia declared English the official language at independence although English was not the colonizer's language (Tollefson, 1991). The language policy states that mother tongues are the LoI during the first four grades of primary education, while English becomes the LoI from grade 5 and beyond (Republic of Namibia, 2004). However, Wikan (2008) reported that many children were not taught in their mother tongues because parents preferred English.

French is the official language in the majority of former French colonies in Africa. In Côte d'Ivoire, parents opposed the use of vernaculars instead of French as LoI. Djité (1987) reported that the people in Côte d'Ivoire wanted to maintain French as the official language. They questioned the proposed change to use local languages as LoI when children of government officials studied in France.

In Mali, the proposed launching of a new education system that would use the mother tongue as LoI in the first three years of primary education instead of French was delayed because of resistance from teachers, students, and political parties (International Development Research Centre, 1997). Scotton (1993) observed that the ordinary people did not want to change the language policy. They wanted their children to be taught in French and not local or national languages.

A study conducted in Nepal where English was not a colonial language but had a high prestige, noted that English-medium schools were introduced in the 1840s for the children of the elite (Eagle, 1999). Wealthy families sent their children to schools in England or India. Today, middle and lower caste populations enroll their children even in very poor English-medium schools with the expectation that such education will provide socio-economic benefits that are inaccessible by birth (Jha, 1989). Education in English gives middle and low caste people access to jobs in the business and service industry, since those in teaching, university, journalism, civil service, and politics are reserved for high-caste Hindus. Nepali is the national and official language, but English is necessary because it is the medium of instruction in higher education. Jha (1989) observed that it was intriguing that the same vocal supporters of Nepali language and culture-based nationalism sent their children to the best English-medium schools. The author concluded that the use of English was maintained by those who do not want others below them socially, educationally and economically, to join them and their class.

A similar situation exists in Vanerasi, India, where there is a strong movement for the use of Hindi as India's sole official language. However, the elite proponents of Hindi send their children to English-medium schools (Laitin, 1992).

Morrison and Lui (2000) discussed the use of English or Chinese as LoI in Hong Kong. Parents opposed the recommendation of the Education Commission of 1986 to use Chinese as the LoI because they viewed English as linguistic capital, offering more opportunities in life. This was despite the results of a survey that had revealed that more than 90% of the students would achieve better academic results if Chinese was used as LoI. The Education Commission Report no. 4 of 1990 that opted for the mother tongue as LoI in 70% of the schools and English in the rest has led to a situation where English-medium schools are high-status schools and Chinese-medium ones have a lower status (cited in Morrison & Lui, 2000).

Examples from Hong Kong, Nepal, India, Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire and South Africa show the opposition of the general population to using local languages as LoI. Ordinary people distrust the elite who advocate for vernaculars while enrolling their children in schools using a European language as LoI. They believe that use of the local languages as LoI entrenches differences between them and the elite in social mobility. This partly explains the difficulty in adopting and implementing policies that advocate for the use of vernacular languages or a lingua franca as a LoI in many former colonies.

CONCLUSION

Post-independence Tanzania has successively moved from capitalism to socialism and back to capitalism. Since the British colonial period, both Swahili and English have been used as LoI, but major developments and shifts in language ideology, language policies and implementation have taken place in post-independence Tanzania. Contradictions have mainly arisen among the general ideologies, language policies, and the actual implementation of policies regarding LoI in primary education since the third post-independence period, stretching from the late 1980s to the present. One of the contradictions in the general ideology partly stems from the fact that the constitution in force maintains that Tanzania is a socialist country when in fact, the country has moved ever closer to capitalism. Its current free market policy accompanied with the privatisation of major means of production of social services are obviously the cornerstones of a capitalist system.

Current policies and statements quoted in section 3 above regarding language policies, LoI and the actual implementation underline some major contradictions that Tanzanian primary education faces. Statement (1) made in 1997 upheld Swahili as the LoI of primary education, when English had already been legalized as a LoI in private primary schools in 1992. Statements (2) and (4) gave the same weight to English and Swahili, but did not refer to the LoI. It would appear that while legalizing the private primary schools and also English as a LoI in private primary schools, the government was nonetheless reluctant to openly declare that English had also become a LoI of primary education. Lack of a clear government position on the matter has led to an ambiguous situation that has been exploited to expand the English-medium private primary schools. This is particularly important considering that English-medium primary schools are no longer the reserve of expatriate children but admit Tanzanian children as well. In fact, the majority of students attending English-medium primary schools are children of the Tanzanian elite.

The other contradiction resides in the government decision to prepare English translations of the primary school syllabus, and to administer the Primary School Leaving Examination in both Swahili and English, when policy statements show only Swahili as the LoI of primary education. These contradictions respond to the wishes of the elite for English-medium primary education for their children. At the same time, the government provides primary education only in Swahili for the majority of Tanzanian children from ordinary families.

I strongly believe that there is a need for the government to state clearly in its education policies and other related key documents that both English and Swahili are to be the LoI of primary education. The government needs to ensure that children in both English-medium and Swahili-medium schools acquire proficiency in both languages, to allow them to compete favourably in post-primary education and in the job market. Finally, the thirty-year old debate about LoI in Tanzania by various stakeholders needs to focus on advocating for the provision of improved resources in both types of schools to ensure that

Tanzanian students become proficient in both English and Swahili. Proficiency in English is crucial as long as English remains the LoI of secondary and post-secondary education. All Tanzanian children must be assisted to acquire an education that allows them to compete for education and employment opportunities in an increasingly competitive world. I particularly stress the importance of a balanced LoI policy because it does not appear that the government is ready to declare Swahili the LoI of secondary and post-secondary education.

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