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Abstract of my paper for the LOITASA Workshop whose theme is: Language of Instruction: What are the investment choices?

Title of my paper: Investing in ELT at an early age in Tanzania Primary Schools: Challenges, Prospects and Policy Implications

The current language in education policy in Tanzania stipulates the use of Kiswahili as the language of instruction (LOI) at primary school level and English as LOI at secondary school and tertiary levels. Contrary to most research findings and recommendations that Kiswahili should be used as LOI in all levels of education in the country, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) has proposed a new policy that requires English to be used as LOI from nursery school, all the way up to tertiary education. In order to make this new policy workable and a reality in all government primary schools in the country (both urban and rural), the government needs to invest in English language teaching (ELT) at an early age. This study attempts to find out what would be the extent of this investment (in general terms), whether the investment in ELT is compatible with earlier national policies such as the Cultural Policy of 1997. The study will also attempt to find the challenges, prospects and policy implications of such an investment in early ELT.