INFLUENCE OF FIRST LANGUAGE ON LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE IN

KISWAHILI LANGUAGE AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL IN LAMBWE

DIVISION PRIMARY SCHOOLS- KENYA.

BY

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DECLARATION

This manuscript is my original work and has never been presented to any institution of higher learning for any award whatsoever.

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APPROVAL

I confirm that this work of research was carried out by the student under my supervision as the university supervisor. It has been submitted with review of my approval.

NAME: MR. NURU TINDI SEJE

SIGNATURE .... DATE ....4TH JULY 2010 .

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents Mr. Joseph Ngare Kongere and the late mama Pamela Anyango Ngare for their strong academic foundation they laid for me.

I particularly present it to dad and Aunt Jane because they helped me make it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABSTRACT

This is an academic project that is likely to foster other research activities. It was specifically set out to investigate the unique characteristics of Luo language that put it as a barrier to communicate in others language especially Kiswahili. This arose from a great concern that Kenyan Local Language are greatly influencing the acquisition of second language (English and Kiswahili)

In this research, a total number of one hundred respondents have been contacted and they have given out their responses as per their capability. Amongst them were pupils, teachers, parents and head of schools who are directly, involved in the problem. The respondents used for the study. Among the used instruments were questionnaires which were administered to language teachers and parents, oral interviews conducted to pupils and head- teachers and direct observation by the researcher himself.

The data obtained shows that Kiswahili and other languages subjects in Kenyan Primary schools are at a stake. The major cause of this is the existence of numerous local languages which have not been fully integrated to produce the best effect. The study has therefore proposed some possible recommendations which if implemented, are likely to yield positive results.

ABBREVIATIONS/TECHNICAL TERMS

LI   First language (also Mother-Tongue)

L2   Second language (also Foreign Language)

KCPE   Kenya Certificate of Primary Education

KNEC   Kenya National Examination Council

F.M   Frequency Modulation

M.T   Mother Tongue

LAD   Language Acquisition Device

REALIA   Real objects used as teaching / learning aids.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

One of the greatest challenges facing primary school pupils and teachers in Kenya today is that of attaining the standard results in language subjects, especially at the primary level.

The Kenyan curriculum stipulates that pupils should sit for a national examination at grade eight, that is Kenya certificate of primary education (KCPE). Out of five subjects examined, two are language subjects that is English and Kiswahili. The two languages are both national and official languages of the republic of Kenya respectively. Both of them are foreign languages. Kenya is a multi-cultural state with numerous local languages like Luo, Kamba, Kikuyu, Kalenjin, Kuria, Abasuba, Abagusii etc. The most important function of Kiswahili and English in this case is to promote nationalism and National Unity.

However, following the official release of the results of the 2009 KCPE results on 27th December, a remarkable trend of substandard performance in language subjects has been noted in most schools for a number of years. The results which are always presented by the Kenya national examination council (KNEC) in every December were, however, received with a lot of reactions in the year 2009. Analysis by different media groups revealed that three quarters of the pupils who sit for these exams do fail to attain the average mark of 50% in language subjects, particularly Kiswahili.

Discussions and reactions which came from members of the public after the release of such results almost made Kenyans forfeit the life of young ones. A report of the daily newspapers on 16th January 2010 showed that some experts had suggested that Kiswahili should be replaced with sign language at primary level or it remains an optional subject. A thing like this may look simple but when narrowed down to the pupils' level, it is evident that Kenya is likely to lose one of her important factor that promote National Heritage.

Prior to this arguments (which aroused some hot discussions in the country), one of the leading radio stations in Nyanza province (Ramogi FM) had organized a special forum at 11pm of 28th of December 2009 to give an in-depth analysis of the academic performance of schools in the

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region. One of the participants in the forum reported jokingly that most children in Nyanza province have formed a defensive mechanism to account for their poor performance in spoken Kiswahili. They will say *'Kiswahili sio mdomo yetu'* which is a term used to imply Kiswahili is not our mother-tongue.

Lambwe division is part of Nyanza province which lies on the western part of Kenya. Most schools in this region are rural based and this explains why first language is frequently used rather than Kiswahili and English. The geographical and social setting is in great contrast with big towns and cities like Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Eldoret, Thika, Nakuru etc, where English and Kiswahili are largely used as a mode of communication. The local language in this region is Luo. Since pupils in this region were also affected by the problem mentioned above, some parents decided to confront the head teachers and language teachers to express their disillusionment.

In response to this situation, some language teachers who happened to talk to the angry parents identified the influence of mother tongue as the major source of problem. They argued that both teachers and parents have failed to create the natural environment for learning foreign languages like English and Kiswahili. However, they also mentioned other problems such as lack of appropriate teaching materials and inadequate number of teachers which has led to under performance.

This situation is a replica of what happened in the Division some four years down the line. Since then, many Educational Experts have been contacted to give their view on the situation. Probably one of the most recognized view is that of the then Suba District Education Officer who remarked on a Prize Giving Day at Lambwe primary school (2005) that '....the quality of language learning in a rural setting like this is mostly affected by the types of communication in which the learner is frequently engaged, which is Mother Tongue '.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Kiswahili is one of the major subjects in Kenya today since it does not only boost the learner's academic performance but also help them develop socially. On the other hand, the first language is also very vital in a child's development. This study was therefore set forward to determine how the first language influence the acquisition of Kiswahili and provide some possible ways of integrating both languages in the curriculum without one affecting the other.

1.3 General objective/purpose of the study.

The major purpose of this study was to investigate how first language has influenced the learners' performance in Kiswahili language at the primary level in Lambwe division.

1.4 Specific objectives

1.4.1 To determine the major differences that exist between first language (that is Luo), and Kiswahili.

1.4.2 To establish the attitudes of primary school pupils towards Kiswahili language.

1.4.3 To investigate how first language has been a barrier to learning Kiswahili.

1.5 Research questions

This study was guided by the following questions;

1.5.1 What are some of the differences that exist between the first language and the Second Language?

1.5.2 What is the attitude of pupils in Lambwe division primary school towards Kiswahili Language?

1.5.3 What barriers are there in the first language (Luo) which makes it difficult to learn Kiswahili?

1.6 Significance/ justification of the study.

This study would be significant in a number of ways. These were:

- It will assist school administrators and language teachers by giving them some tips on how to improve the performance in language subjects.

- By identifying the attitudes of learners towards Kiswahili language, teachers and administrators will be able to identify the appropriate methods and materials for teaching Kiswahili.

- The learners will benefit from this study since it will be able to point out their areas of weakness. As a result, the learners will be able to adjust their modes of study accordingly and work towards the accomplishment of the school objectives.

- The study will also help to provide ground for the education officers in the country to make appropriate amendments on the existing primary curriculum, especially on the language policy.

- Since this problem has been creating some rifts between language teachers and the society at large, the study is intended to provide appropriate measures which will not only lead to betterment but also socialization.

- The study is likely to form a basis for other scholars researching in the same field to acquire different skills for further studies.

1.7 Scope of the study

The study was basically concerned with investigating how Luo as a first language has influenced the learning of language, especially Kiswahili at the primary level. It was conducted in Lambwe division primary schools between November 2009and May 2010. The target population were head teachers, language teachers, parents and pupils since most of these people are either directly or indirectly involved in the problem.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 OVERVIEW

The first language (L1) is that which a child encounters immediately after birth. Owing to constant exposure to the spoken form of this language and the increasing need of conveying subtle types of information, a rapid acquisition usually occurs in the child's framework of spoken language. The acquisition is always unconscious. However, the grammatical morphemes are conspicuously absent in the children's early word combination but they develop gradually as they grow old.

On the contrary, learning the second language (L2) involves a conscious knowledge of rules being aware of them and being able to talk about them. L2 is mostly learnt in school, in this case, Kiswahili. Terry Piper (1944:96) gives the difference between language at home and that of school as thus '...language used in schools is significantly different from language used outside classroom....its demands are quite higher than that first encountered by children'.

2.1 THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is rooted on the behaviorist and generative theories of language acquisition. Behaviorists view language as a fundamental part of total human behavior. They focus on the immediately perceptible aspects of linguistic behavior (the publicly observable response) and the relationship or association between those responses and events in the world surrounding them. Classical condition view effective language behavior as the production of correct responses to stimuli. If a particular response is reinforced, it becomes habitual, learned or conditioned.

Verbal behavior is an extension of a general theory of learning by operant condition, popularized by B.F Skinner (1957). It stipulates that human beings do emit certain responses or sentences without necessary observable stimuli. The operant is maintained or learnt by reinforcement. When a child makes an utterance and adult approve of this (that's reinforcing the child's speech), the child ends up acquiring a language. Limitation is, therefore, one of the important strategies sued by children in language acquisition.

Behaviorists assume surface structure limitation where a child repeats or mimics the surface strings, attending to phonological code. As the child perceives the importance of the semantic level of language, he attends to meaningful systematic level of a language. A behaviorist model of language acquisition would claim that practice repetition and association are key to the formulation of habits by operant conditioning.

The later psychologists felt that stimulus-response theory of behaviorist's could not account for aspects of language such as meaning, abstractness and creativity. The term nativity is derived from their fundamental assertion that language acquisition is innately determined. They argue that children are born with a built-in device that predisposes them to language acquisition (Lenneberg 1967). The language acquisition device (LAD) has the ability to: distinguish speech sounds and other sounds in the environment, organize linguistic events into various classes which can later be refined, knowledge that only a certain kind of linguistic system is possible and that other kinds are not, engage in constant evaluation of the developing linguistic system so as to construct the simplest possible system out of the linguistic data that are encountered, (Mc Neill 1968).

Nativists claim that child's language at any stage is systematic. The child constantly forms hypothesis on the basis of input, perceives and then testing those hypothesis in his own speech and comprehension. As the child's language develops, those hypothesis get continually revised, reshaped or abandoned (Chomsky 1966). Theory view language acquisition as universal. All children are born with the ability to acquire language. Nativists acknowledge the importance of input, comprehension and production. Whatever one's position is on the innateness of input language, the speech that children hear (input) is undeniably crucial in the acquisition of language. Adults input shape the children's acquisition. Interaction patterns between children and adults input change according to the increasing language skill of the child.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Conceptual framework shows how various variables in he study (dependent or independent) interact to produce results. Muya (2000) defines conceptual framework as conceptualization of the relationship between variables in the study then presented graphically and diagrammatically by the researcher. The purpose of this is to help the reader quickly see the proposed relationship. The performance is Kiswahili as a foreign language, in this sense, is dependent on the influence of mother tongue.

The conceptual relationship in this study shows that the factors that influence the performance of language subjects at the formative stage. The major variable that account for this is the first language (L1) or commonly referred to as mother tongue (MT).

However, there are other factors such as government policy, lack of competent language teachers, poor administration and lack of enough teaching materials. The fact is that environmental factors do contribute more to language acquisition than any other.

It should be understood that the pupil's performance in a language subject is not solely a work of language teacher, but the entire community. Language teachers only lead the pupils to the right direction while the community is supposed to create a natural environment for the learning of that language. Unlike the science subject, language can be learnt naturally.

Figure 2.2

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┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
│ The syllabus │  │ Language teachers│  │ Teaching aids│  │ Administration   │
└──────┬───────┘  └────────┬─────────┘  └──────┬───────┘  └────────┬─────────┘
       │                   │                   │                   │
       └───────────────────┼───────────────────┴───────────────────┘
                           ▼
┌───────────────────────────────┐         ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                               │         │     Environmental factors           │
│      Government policy        │         │                                     │
│                               │         │   i.e. home language, school        │
│                               │         │  language, community language etc   │
└───────────────┬───────────────┘         └──────────────────┬──────────────────┘
                │                                             │
                └───────────────────┐     ┌───────────────────┘
                                    ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                    │  General performance in a   │
                    │      language subject       │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘
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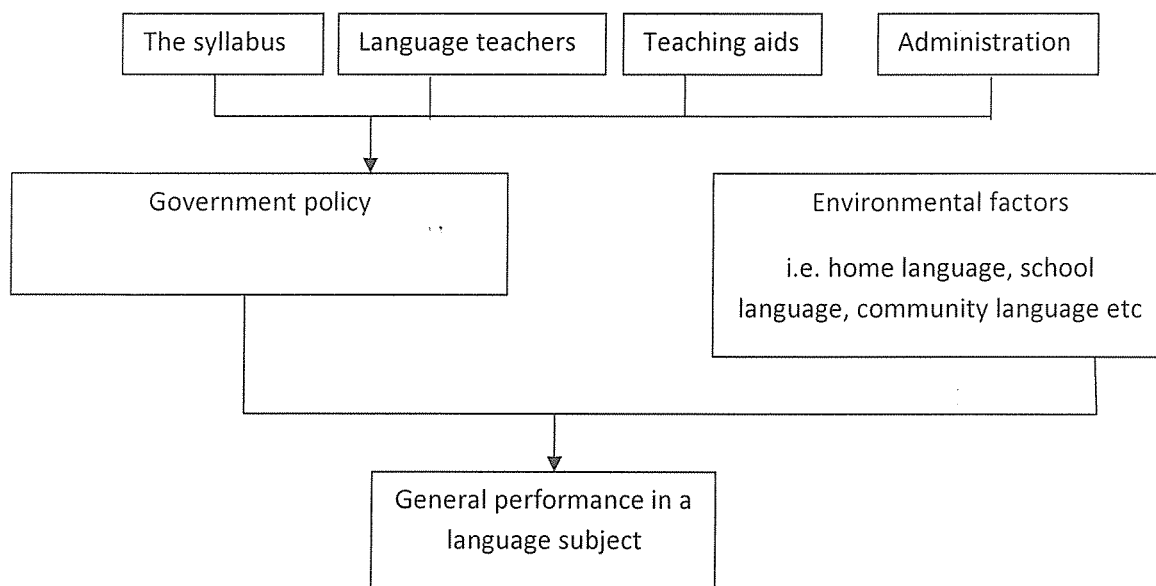
Factors influencing performance in a language subject

2.3 RELATED LITERARY WORKS

During the 1950's and 1960's, an approach known as 'contrastive analysis' attempted to account for learners errors by examining similarities and differences.

Frank &Kathryn (1994) explain that the influence of L1 and L2 may either be a negative transfer or a positive one. When it is negative, the properties of L1 interferes with acquisition of L2 while when it is positive, the L1 promotes the acquisition of L

In this chapter therefore, we shall try to analyze the differences that exist between the first language and the second language and in addition try to investigate the *negative transfer* faced by children while learning the second language.

2.3.1 The difference between first language (L1) and second language (L2).

Terry Piper (1944:96) argues that 'The most obvious difference between home (L1) and school (L2) language is the age of the learner and setting in which language is acquired'. From this we can deduce that the age at which children acquire first language is different from the age in which they acquire the second language (which is usually taught in school). This difference in age accounts for the way in which children acquire language. For instance, when children are young there is no need of correcting them but these changes drastically when they start learning the second language.

N.P. Pahuja (2001:48) also asserts that 'the mother tongue is learnt more easily because a natural environment exists for learning it. it is spoken in family and neighborhood. But this is not true for a foreign language. The child encounters with a foreign language in his class for about six periods a week and so it becomes difficult for him to learn it'. In this case, Pahuja is trying to say that environment is also another factor that accounts for difference in the first language learning from that of second language. Since the first language is what the child is constantly exposed to, it covers most of the child's thought than the second language which is only used for a specific purpose.

David W. Carol (1994:314) remarks that 'there is yet, of course, another major difference between language in school (L2) and language at home (L1). Schooled language is increasingly written language and the demands of written language pose a considerable challenge for most children entering formal school'. It is therefore evident that learning second language involves a great deal of conscious, analytical, effort instead of child's ready and facile imitation. This difference is probably the major task that children find difficult to cope with.

For this matter, Terry Piper (1994:96) suggests that 'learning a new language in school can only be made easier when children are exposed to the literary functions by being around people who read and by having books read to them.

P. Gurrey cited by N.P Pahuja (2001:50) asserts that 'when we learnt first language, we face the universe directly and learn to clothe it with speech; when we learn second language, we tend to filter universe through the language already known'.

In this case, Pahuja recognizes the first language as the base of learning the second language. Good knowledge of the first language will help the teacher to have a foundation on which to lay the second language.

2.3.2 Difficulties faced by children while learning the second language.

The difficulties experienced by children in trying to acquire second language, is at different linguistic levels which include morphology, phonology, semantics and syntax. Others are technical.

(i) Difficulties experienced at different linguistic levels.

According to Geoffrey Leech et.al (1982), 'there are a number of phonetic forms which may be present in the new language but are totally absent or rarely used in the native language....accounts for slow acquisition of the phonetic forms' it is therefore evident from this assertion that absence of certain sounds in the first language is likely to bring difficulties in pronunciation of the second language.

Besides, Geoffrey (1982) continues to remark that 'there is no one to one relationship between phonetic forms and the graphemes (written form)'. Since the second language learnt at school is usually full of writing, this gap is likely to make writing a difficult task.

morphologically, Stephen and Diane (1999) explains that there are some affixes, especially infix, which are present in most native languages but may be absent in the second language. When such a situation occurs, association between the first language and the second language may become a hill task. In this case, it is possible to find only one word in the native language describing a chain of actions but a different case in the second language.

'Semantics as a linguistic level is usually based on the common cultural experience and thus it is a product of a particular society,' says Victoria Fromkin, Robert Neil and Harry (2001). This assertion implies that the meanings we attach to symbols and objects are totally dependent on one's native language. It will therefore be difficult for a learner to comprehend the meaning of certain things which may only be found in the first language but not the second language.

According to Ben crane, et.al (1981:102), 'syntax is the way words are put together to form phrases and sentences; rules of syntax vary from language to language'. This pattern of arrangement may also lead to difficulty in learning the second language especially if its syntactic rules are different from that of the first language.

(ii) Other linguistic factors affecting the learning of second language

Frank and Kathryn (1994) identified language universals and developmental process *as* some of the factors affecting learning of language L2.

They define language universals as those properties (categories and rules) that nearly all human languages possess in common. The common obstacles that children meet with language universals while acquiring L2 are the *projection problem* and *non implicational property*. Projection problem implies that children are forced to acquire grammatical knowledge that cannot be inferred solely/directly from data already known to them.

Implicational universal property is that which explains the distribution of voiced sand voiceless stops in world language. This varies from language to language and so the variation becomes a hindrance.

Developmental process; Just like L1, L2 may also be forced to go through similar developmental process. Besides, language keeps on growing and so what is cherished at a particular time may be rejected in another time in the future.

Mr. Oketch, a Kiswahili teacher remarked during an education day on 15th May 2005 at Lambwe primary school that 'the Kiswahili of today is totally different from that of yesterday. It will therefore take time for both teachers and pupils to adapt to these new changes. We need more time to adapt to the system.....' this speech was released at the time when the Kenyan government made changes on the curriculum for both primary and secondary schools. These changes seemed to have brought with them a number of problems to the learning environment.

N.P. Pahuja (2001) is of the view that 'learning a foreign language is not an easy task especially if they are more than one'. This is quite appropriate to a larger extent. The Kenyan curriculum requires pupils to learn two foreign languages (Kiswahili and English) concurrently. The results of this will therefore be; the native language and one foreign language are influencing the learning of the other foreign language.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction.

This chapter consists of the various methods the researcher used to collect data for the study. It focused on research design, organization of the study, data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Research design.

A cross sectional survey was used to gather information from random samples of the target population.

3.2 The population size/area of study.

The target population of this study was the recognized primary schools in Lambwe division. The samples included the head teacher, language teachers, pupils and parents in the area under the study.

3.3 Sample framework.

3.3.1 Sample size.

The sample size comprised of one hundred respondents. The respondents were divided as follows; ten were head teachers, twenty language teachers, fifty pupils and ten parents. The pupils were given the highest percentage since they are more affected by the problem than any other in the list.

3.3.2 Sampling procedures.

First, I acquired introduction letter from the dean faculty of education then presented it to head teachers of selected primary schools to allow me conduct the study. The researcher also applied two sampling techniques for carrying out the study. These are cluster sampling and purposive.

Under the *cluster sampling*, two basic steps were involved; listing and taking a sample of the population. The list of primary sampling unit comprised of pupils, parents, language teachers and head teachers. The sampling of these units were selected then listed.

Purposive sampling was based on the researcher's own understanding and knowledge of the population being studied, its elements and the nature of the research designed. This was reflected on the initial design of questionnaire and interview plans where the researcher selected the variety of respondents to test. The broad applicability of the research questions designed.

3.4 Instruments of data collection

Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected. This was done in three ways;

3.4.1 Questionnaires

A written questionnaire was administered to the parents and primary language teachers of schools in Lambwe division since this gave them time to respond objectively to the questions as required.

3.4.2. Interview.

Oral interviews were conducted only to head-teachers and pupils. This enabled the respondents to give unlimited views supported by immediate feelings, facial expression and gestures. The major aim of using this method was to identify the pupils' attitudes towards learning Kiswahili.

3.4.3 Observation.

In this method, the researcher looked at what was happening in the identified areas and recorded the observation. The type of observation that was used was structured in nature. The major area of concern was determined the language used by the pupils while in school. The common mistakes they make in Kiswahili and the methods and materials used by teachers to teach Kiswahili.

3.5. Data processing

Data from the questionnaire was arranged according to the subjects who filled them. It was coded then laid out according to the information they addressed. Quantitative data was also arranged and organized according to the variables of the study identified.

3.6 Data analysis.

After coding the information from the questionnaire, interviews and observation, the data was quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. The analysis was in form of calculation of percentages, frequency tables and cross tabulation. The major aim of this was to present the findings in simplified form so that the researcher will be able to identify appropriate solution for them.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The researcher maintained a researcher- respondent relationship by treating the respondents with all due respect. Each respondent was treated as an individual and each was given equal rights of participation in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented as derived from the various instruments used to collect data. The data is then analyzed in form of percentages, tables of absolute numbers, bar graphs and pie-charts. Thereafter, these findings are discussed thematically and systematically in response to the specific research questions which were stated as;

1. What are some of the differences that exist between the first language and the second language?

2. What is the attitude of pupils in Lambwe division primary school towards Kiswahili Language?

3. What barriers are there in the first language (Luo) which makes it difficult to learn Kiswahili?

4.1 Usage of Mother-Tongue (L1) in Lambwe Division Community

4.1.1 The use of M.T outside school

Data collected from various respondents such as parents and head teachers shows that the local language majorly spoken by most people in Lambwe Division is Luo. An interview conducted to head teachers and questionnaires administered to parents about the language largely used in the community yielded the following data;

	English	Kiswahili	Luo	Others	Total
Frequency	02	03	14	01	20
Percentage (%)	10%	15%	70%	05%	100%

Table1: Language largely used by people in Lambwe community.

From the data provided in table 1, it is evident that 70% of the community language is Luo. The remaining 30%, which comprise of English, Kiswahili and other languages was found to be used by secondary and university students and other members who do not share the same native language. It therefore implies that the lager part of the language community is composed of MT speakers. This can be presented in a pie chart as follows;

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Fig.4.1 Language distribution in Lambwe Division

30 %   70 %
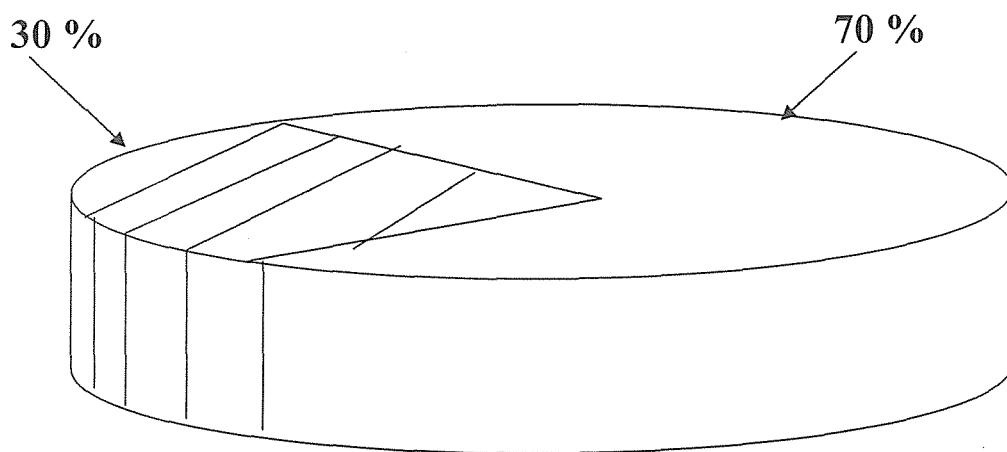
Key
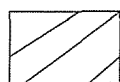
 English, Kiswahili, and other languages
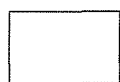
 Mother Tongue (Luo)

The data presented above can give a clue on the environment that most pupils in Lambwe Division are exposed to.

4.1.2 The Use of MT in schools

The following were some of the responses provided by pupils on a question which sought to investigate the language used by teachers while addressing them. The responses were divided into two sections, basing on their level.

Table 2a: Language used by teachers while addressing pupils in lower primary (class 1-3)

	English	Kiswahili	Luo	Others	Total
Frequency	11	08	30	01	50
Percentage (%)	22%	16%	60%	02%	100%

Table 2b: Language used by teachers to address pupils in upper primary (class 4-8)

	English	Kiswahili	Luo	Others	Total
Frequency	25	14	10	01	50
Percentage (%)	50%	28%	20%	02%	100%

As can be seen from tables 2a and 2b, teachers tend to use MT while addressing lower primary pupils more than they do to their counterparts in upper primary. However, the data presented still shows that Kiswahili and other languages are not often used. Besides Mother-Tongue, English is given more priority than Kiswahili.

Further investigations showed that MT is mostly used in Government Primary Schools as contrasted to their Private counterparts who have strict language policy. For example, an interview conducted to a respondent from Hillgates Junior School proved that the use of MT at school is only 02%. This percentage is comprised of teachers who use MT during their usual conversations and the new pupils who have not adapted to the school programmes.

4.2 Usage of Foreign Language (Kiswahili) in Lambwe Division.

4.2.1 The use of Kiswahili outside school

The data presented under this sub-topic was mostly obtained from questionnaires and direct observations; though a small percentage was also obtained from interviews. For example, a questionnaire administered to parents sought to find out if their children speak Kiswahili when they are out of school and the following responses were obtained;

Fig.4.2 The use of Kiswahili in Lambwe community
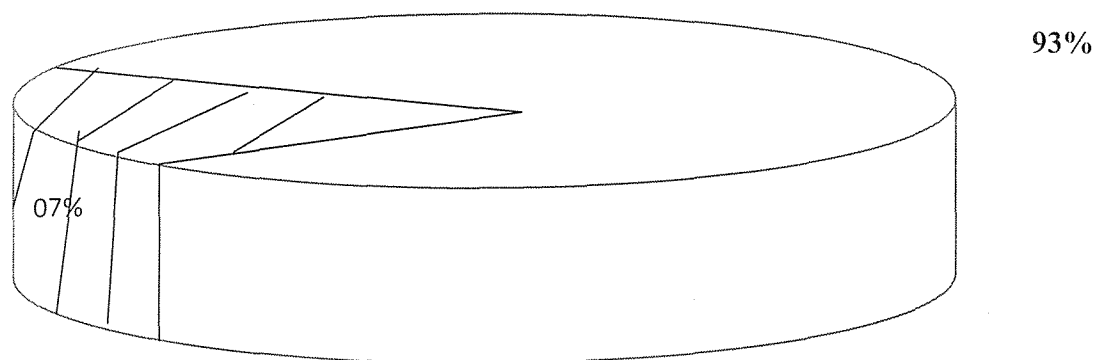
Key
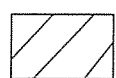
 Kiswahili

 Mother Tongue (Luo) and other languages.

The above figure shows that the use Kiswahili in Lambwe community is quite infinitesimal. Kiswahili is almost avoided by people and investigations proved that even the 07% is only used on conditional occasions like official gatherings, by competent students and the non-native speakers of Luo language.

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4.2.2 The use of Kiswahili in Schools

An interview conducted to pupils sought to find out the task they find difficult to perform in Kiswahili and the following responses were obtained;

Table 4: Difficult task in Kiswahili

Task	Frequency	Percentage
Writing	15	30%
Reading	10	20%
Speaking	20	40%
Listening	05	10%
Total	50	100%

Basing on the responses given above, it can be deduced that speaking and writing are some of the difficult tasks pupils find hard to perform in Kiswahili. This reflects the pronunciation problems and the weary demands of the second language as discussed in chapter two of this study.

Data obtained from direct observation also yielded significant information that responds to the questions about difficulties and differences in both Luo and Kiswahili. It was observed that most pupils use Kiswahili when they see authorities around. For instance, the researcher noticed some three pupils reading a Kiswahili text book with the title *Kiswahili Mufti, Darasa la Tatu.*

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The content they were reading had words like '*Zulia*', '*Sauti*', '*Shuleni*', '*Shambani*' and '*Zamani*'. Both the three pupils, one reading after another, read those words as follows;

Shuleni – Suleni

Shambani – Sambani

Zulia – Sulia

Zamani – Samani

Sauti – Sauti

From the above observation, it was noticed that sounds '*sh*' and /z/ were always replaced by /*s*/. This spurred further investigations as to why almost everybody who communicated in Kiswahili had that problem. It was later revealed that only sound /s/ among the three existed in Luo language and so it has extended its effect to Kiswahili. This was therefore regarded as a difference between Luo and Kiswahili and thus acting as a barrier to pronunciation of most Kiswahili words. This observation responds to the questions about differences and difficulties in the first language that makes it difficult to learn the second language.

The following figure summarises the distribution of different languages in Lambwe Division, both in and outside school.

Fig.4.3: Distribution of Different languages in Lambwe Division
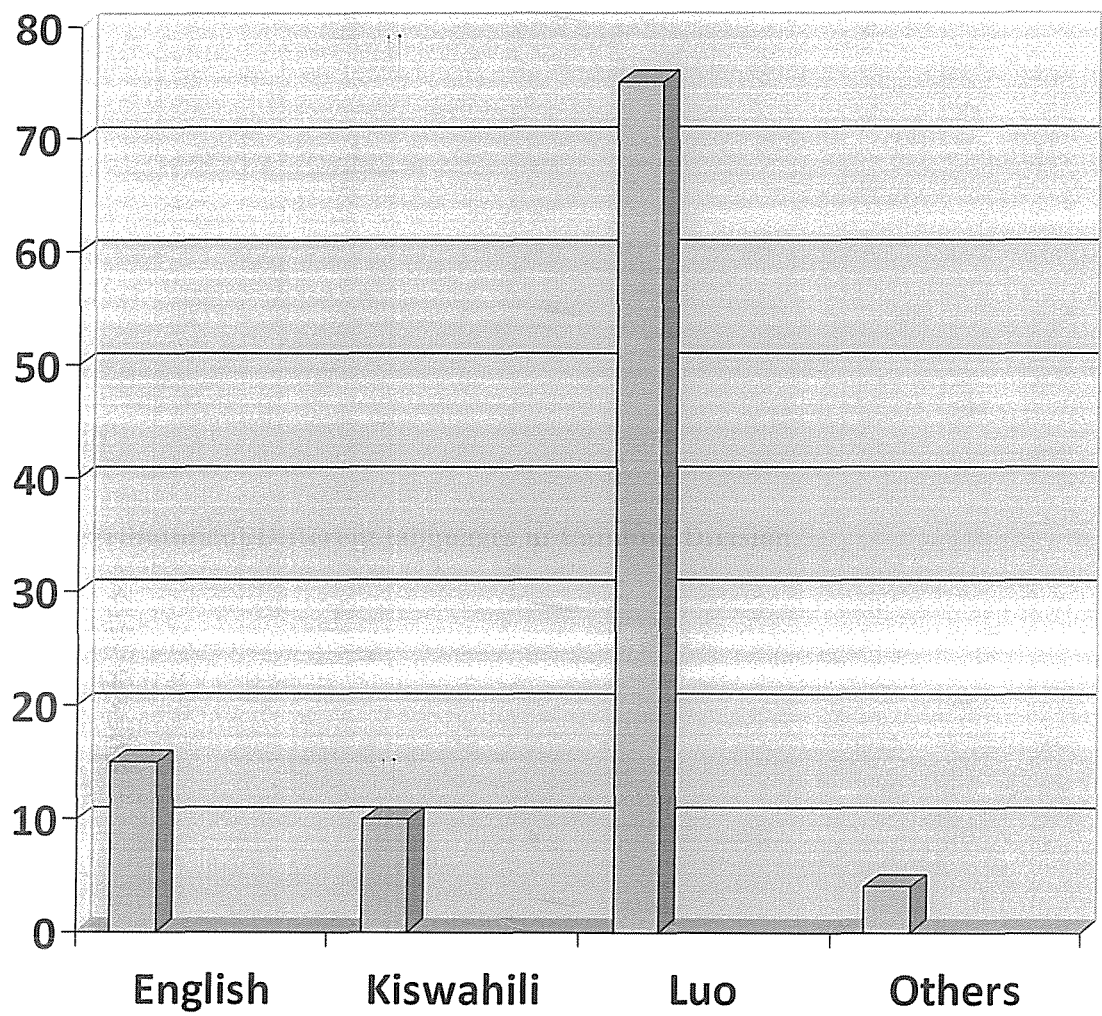
4.3 Language and Academic Performance

4.3.1 General performance of pupils in Kiswahili.

The following responses were provided by the head teachers on the question about the performance of pupils in Kiswahili in 2009 KCPE.

Table5: General performance of pupils in Kiswahili language.

	Above average	average	Fair	Poor	Total
FREQUENCY	00	01	03	06	10
PERCENTAGE (%)	00%	10%	30%	60%	100%

The above information implies that most pupils in Lambwe Division are to a larger extent, performing poorly in Kiswahili language. This can be supported by the fact that most pupils not only fail to attain the average mark, that is 50%, but also perform poorly in communication as far as Kiswahili language is concerned. Parents were asked if they like these performance and they gave the following responses:

Table6: Response of parents on to whether they like the performance of their children in Kiswahili.

	YES	NO	TOTAL
FREQUENCY	01	09	10
PERCENTAGE (%)	10%	90%	100%

The data is a clear indication that most parents (as representatives of the community) are not happy with these performances.

4.3.2 The teaching and learning of Kiswahili Language

The use of extra- linguistic features such as real-objects, pictures, drawings and models by the teachers and learners create certain interests in regard to how they are used.

A question administered to language teachers sought to find out whether teachers of Kiswahili use the mentioned teaching and learning aids. The findings indicate that 11 respondents use real objects, pictures, drawings and models, 6 use the real objects, pictures and drawings while the remaining 3 only used real objects.

Table7: Teaching/Learning Aids during Kiswahili Lessons.

TEACHING AIDS USED	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Real objects, pictures, drawings and models	11	55%
Real objects, pictures and drawings	06	30%
Real objects only	03	15%
TOTAL	20	100%

Four respondents felt that teaching aids makes teaching 'real'. Nine respondents are of the view that teaching aids makes the leaning of Kiswahili 'interesting'. Yet the remaining seven respondents felt that the teaching and learning aids only become interesting and real when they are applied appropriately.

Table 8: choice of topics during Kiswahili lessons

SOURCE OF TOPIC	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Contents of text books	01	5%
Contents of text books and syllabus	03	15%
Pupils interest and syllabus	02	10%
Syllabus and teachers' choice	02	10%
Contents of text books, teachers' choice and syllabus	07	35%
Syllabus only	05	25%
TOTAL	20	100%

The table above shows the source of content used by teachers' during Kiswahili lessons. The larger percentage tends to involve syllabus in the choice of topics. However when the language teachers were asked whether they find any difficulty in applying the new syllabus, the following data was obtained.

Table9: Teachers who find difficulty in applying new Kiswahili syllabus.

	YES	NO	TOTAL
FREQUENCY	18	02	20
PERCENTAGE (%)	90%	10%	100%

The respondents who said yes were further interrogated to establish the specific weaknesses of the new syllabus. Six respondents identified introduction of new things as one of the major weakness. Two respondents said the new Kiswahili syllabus is complicated. Three of them view

the new inventories in the syllabus as substandard. Four respondents reported that illustrations used in the text books are irrelevant while the remaining respondents left the question unanswered.

4.4 Attitude of Pupils towards Kiswahili.

In an interview conducted to the pupils, they were asked if they like Kiswahili as a subject and these were their responses:

Table10: Pupils' attitude towards Kiswahili.

VIEW	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
I don't like because it is a difficult subject	25	50%
I like it but it is difficult	08	16%
Kiswahili is my favourite subject	03	06%
I like it but not as much as other subjects	02	04%
I don't like Kiswahili because I have never passed it	12	24%
TOTAL	**50**	**100%**

From thee data given in the table, it is evident that Kiswahili is just like a plague to most pupils in the region. Most of the pupils tend to put more effort in studying other subjects and ignore Kiswahili because of the ongoing rumours that 'Kiswahili is hard'. One respondent in the interview remarked that *'Mwalimu Kiswahili na Hesabu ni kama sumu'*. The statement implies that Kiswahili and Mathematics are as deadly as poison.

Since almost 80% of the pupils are having negative attitudes towards Kiswahili it becomes very difficult for them to communicate effectively in the language. This is probably one of the core reasons why the pupils cannot perform averagely in the subject. However, the pupils proposed some things which if avoided to them. They are likely to improve on the subject. Some of these suggestions include;

a) The school should provide enough reading materials which are written in Kiswahili.

b) Teachers should try to adjust language policy such that all the specified languages are used equally.

c) Pupils should be given rewards for being eloquent in any foreign language (English or Kiswahili)

4.5 Summary of Findings

The findings reported in this chapter and the subsequent discussions of the data collected in the present study have revealed useful information concerning the use of mother-tongue to enhance the learning of Kiswahili and it has been noticed that:

- Mother Tongue form the larger part of language community in Lambwe Division. It occupies about 80% of the languages used both in and outside school.

- The use of Kiswahili language outside school is very minimal. The people who use Kiswahili outside school are mostly secondary and university students and the non-native speakers of Luo.

- Kiswahili and English used in schools in mostly found in private schools where there is strict language policy.

- Some sound in the local language affect the pronunciation of some Kiswahili words.

- Most teachers tend to use mother-tongue to address lower primary pupils and try to adjust the system in upper primary.

- About 85% of primary school pupils in Lambwe division have negative attitude towards Kiswahili and this has significantly led to poor performance in the subject

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the data obtained and recorded in the previous chapter is discussed into details in relation to the specific objectives of the study. Thereafter, a precise conclusion is made, alongside some possible recommendations which are considered profitable to this problem. The major aim of this is to make the study practical rather than just a mere presentation of abstract data.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

The study identified a number of important factors concerning the language used in Lambwe community and performance of certain language subjects in schools which partially or even fully responds to the research objectives. The first objective was to:

5.1.1 Determine the major differences that exists between the first language (Luo) and Kiswahili.

From the findings, it was established that seventy percent of people living in Lambwe division are using the first language (Luo) as the major mode of communication. This is largely experienced outside the school setting and sometimes even in schools. Kiswahili on the other hand is used in limited situations. It is either taught in schools as a second language or it is used by non-native speakers of Luo language.

The major difference achieved from this is 'environmental'. It occurs when one language is constantly used in the society than another. In this case Luo occupies the larger portion as Kiswahili and other languages are given least attention.

Since schooled language is increasingly written, it is therefore clear that Kiswahili majorly exist in written form than Luo, which almost exist in spoken form. This poses a considerable difference in their usage.

Another difference which was conceived through direct observation was phonological in nature. It was established that there are certain sounds which are present in Kiswahili but are absent in Luo language. The two major sounds identified were *"sh"* and *"z"*. It was noticed that the absence two sounds have made most pupils to substitute them with ''c'' and ''s'' which are present in Luo language.

All these differences are either directly or indirectly affecting the usage of Kiswahili language. It therefore leads to another objective of the study which was set to;

5.1.2 Investigate how the first language has been a barrier to learning and usage of Kiswahili.

The study with regard to this objective has established that all the sampled differences have led to poor performance in Kiswahili. For instance, the imbalanced language community, (with Kiswahili taking only 07%) has made other languages to enjoy more privileges over it, especially mother tongue. This has only resulted into disparity among the pupils.

It was also achieved from this study most pupils find difficulty in writing and speaking Kiswahili. Speaking emerged to be the hardest task among them. Since speaking usually occur before writing in any language, failure to cope to its demands is likely to double the problem when it comes to writing

Some of the factors contributing to this are the constraints which have already been mentioned. The absence of some sounds in MT will spur most children to have different phonological inventories if the absent sounds are present in the target second language. This is a *negative transfer* since it does not only stop at the pronunciation level but also extend its effects to the listening, writing and reading process. These effects can only be reinforced by teachers and any other person who is competent in the target language.

Other than these linguistic factors, there are other factors (non-linguistic) which may act as a barrier to learning and the general performance in Kiswahili. Some of these problems arise from the general school programmes while others are from children's personalities and attitude.

From the study, it was established that most teachers tend to include syllabus in their choice of topic. About 25% depend on syllabus only while 65% depend on syllabus and other sources like pupils interests. However, 90% of these teachers admit that they have difficulties in interpreting the new Kiswahili syllabus. The teachers spotted some sections of the syllabus which they consider difficult. Some of these were;

- Complication of explanations in the syllabus.
- New inventors which have not been internalised fully by Kiswahili teachers.
- Illustrations which to some extent do not meet the demands of the pupils.
- Putting emphasis on some skills more than the others. For example, there is no oral examination in Kiswahili.

Apart from the syllabus, reinforcement and teaching of Kiswahili is also a great deal behind the target. It was observed from the data presented that language policy varies according to the type of school and the school administration. For example, MT usage in Private Primary schools is only 3% while it increases to 40% in government primary schools.

Teachers also use mother tongue while addressing school children though they do it sparingly. The data obtained shows that they largely use mother tongue (60%) while addressing pupils in lower primary and adjust the system to 20%.when addressing those in upper primary. However, this data still reflects to us that Kiswahili is given the lowest percentages at both levels. Most teachers would rather use English or Luo while addressing the pupils than to use Kiswahili. This has even instilled some feelings in the children that Kiswahili is to be avoided. It therefore leads to the last objective of the study which sought to:

5.1.3 Determine the attitude of children towards Kiswahili language

It was established that about 80% of pupils in the region have negative attitude towards Kiswahili. Most of them had different views of doing so which included:

- It appears difficult to learn
- Pupils always fail to perform averagely in it
- It is not easy as compared to other language subjects

These are some of the stigma associated with Kiswahili as a subject, thus leading to a negative performance. The attitude, either make the pupils to abandon Kiswahili and concentrate on other subjects or influence the others to share the same opinion.

5.2 Conclusion

The conclusion drawn from this study clearly reflects what first language and other non-linguistic factors have done to performance in Kiswahili at a stake both as a mode of communication and at the subject level. Language policy in schools, teaching methods/techniques, reinforcement and other factors responsible for performance in a language subject have not been adequately handled.

Although language environment emerges to be the most underlying factor, the first language should not be viewed negatively because it is far more important in the child's linguistic development than any other. Even if a child had to be exposed to the second language and learn it as a first language, he is likely to shift to the language largely spoken around him.

The community should therefore realize that each and every person is responsible for the problem and not the deeds of language teachers only as earlier established. In fact, it is teachers who are playing their roles while the rest of the community is relaxing. It is the responsibility of each and every individual to work hard with the school to achieve better results.

5.3 Recommendations

Basing on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are viewed as some of the possible solutions to the problems;

- School administration should revise their language policy and ensure that each language is given a fair chance. Both mother-tongue, Kiswahili and English should be treated equally. However, since mother-tongue is not usually examinable and it is widely used outside school, Kiswahili and English should be given more emphasis.

- Children who use mother-tongue in school not be punished. This will make them view mother-tongue as "illegal" yet it is one of the most important languages in child's linguistic development. Instead the two foreign languages should be thoroughly reinforced so that children can use them freely without being compelled to dos so. Some

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of the ways of reinforcement include; rewarding those who perform better, using target language while communicating with the children, involving many teaching and learning aids and engaging the children in activities conducted in the target language.

- Teachers should be given more clarification on the new syllabus. The possible way of doing so is to conduct civic education during academic forums like Education Days. This should be done by language experts and recognized educational officers.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE HEAD TEACHERS

(Q1) How did your school perform in Kiswahili during 2009 KCPE?

(Q2) Is this performance a decrease or an increase from the previous year's performance?

(Q3) Which language(s) is largely used in and out of your school?

(Q4) Which ways have you used to reinforce Kiswahili as a language?

(Q5) Does your school organize programs such as debate where the official language is Kiswahili?

(Q6) Does your school posses enough reading materials that are written in Kiswahili?

(Q7) Why do you think some pupils have difficulties in communicating in Kiswahili language?

(Q8) How do you compare Kiswahili of the new syllabus and that of the old syllabus?

(9) In your own opinion, how do you think we can improve performance in language subjects?

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW GUIDE TO PUPILS

(This interview can be translated into local language for better understanding. It should only be administered to children from 10years and above)

(1) What language do you speak mainly at home?

(2) Do you like Kiswahili as a subject?

(3) Which task do you find difficult to perform in Kiswahili: writing, reading, speaking, listening or all of them?

(4) Do people around here speak in Kiswahili?

(5) Which language is mainly used by your teachers in official gathering like assembly and Education Days?

(6) Do you have Kiswahili days in your school?

(7) What do you think if given to you can make you perform better in Kiswahili?

APPENDIX C
QUESTIONNARE GUIDE TO PARENTS

Dear sir/ madam

My name **is Ngare S.M. Robert** of **Reg.No BAE/14441/71/ DF** pursuing a Bachelor of Arts with Education degree at Kampala International University. I am currently carrying out a research on the topic- Influence of first language on learners' performance at primary level in Lambwe division primary schools.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the mother tongue has influenced the learners performance in Kiswahili language. Precisely, your response will be treated with confidentiality and the information obtained will strictly be for educational purposes.

Tick or write relevant information on the space provided

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Age:

20-25 ☐   26-30 ☐   31-39 ☐   40-49 ☐   50 and above ☐

Sex: Male ☐   female ☐

Marital status

Not married ☐   married ☐   separated ☐   divorced ☐

Other (specify)..............

Educational level:

Primary level ☐   Not Educated ☐   certificate ☐   Secondary level ☐   degree ☐

Diploma ☐   PhD ☐   Masters ☐   other (specify)...........................

Occupation (I.E. Teacher, Doctor Etc)..

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SECTION B: LANGUAGE COMMUNITY

(1) Which language do you often speak with your children.................................

(20a. Do your neighbours speak different language?

YES [   ]   NO [   ]

b. If yes, which one...

(3) Do your children sometimes speak Kiswahili language at home?

YES [   ]   NO [   ]

If yes, when?

Everyday after school [   ]   when I speak to them in the same language [   ]

When I tell them to do so [   ]

(4) Rate the following languages from the largely used to the least during official gatherings in your village

Language	Largely used	Moderately used	Least used
English			
Kiswahili			
Mother-tongue			
Others			

SECTION C: LANGUAGE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

(1)How many children do you have in primary school?...

(2)a. How are they performing in Kiswahili language at school?

Children	Level of performance		
	Above average	Average	Below Average
Most of them			
Few of them			

(3) Do you like these performances?...

(4) What do you think can be done to improve such

performance?...

....

....

....

....

....

APPENDIX D
QUESTIONNARE GUIDE TO LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Dear sir/ madam

My name **is Ngare S.M. Robert** of **Reg.No BAE/14441/71/ DF** pursuing a Bachelor of Arts with Education degree at Kampala International University. I am currently carrying out a research on the topic- Influence of first language on learners' performance at primary level in Lambwe division primary schools.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the mother tongue has influenced the learner's performance in Kiswahili language. Precisely, your response will be treated with confidentiality and the information obtained will strictly be for educational purposes.

Tick or write relevant information on the space provided

SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS

1. Professional Qualification of the teacher

    Untrained ☐ P3 ☐ P2 ☐ P1 ☐ Diploma ☐ ECD certificate ☐

2. Marital status

    Not married ☐   married ☐   separated ☐   divorced ☐

SECTION B: LANGUAGE COMMUNITY

1. a) What language subject do you teach?

English ☐   Kiswahili ☐   French ☐   mother tongue ☐

    b) In which class do you handle the subject mentioned? ....

2. Rate the following languages from the frequently used to the least used while addressing your pupils

Language	Largely used	Moderately used	Least used
English			
Kiswahili			
Mother tongue			
Others			

3. a) Which of the following learning aids do you use in your lessons?

Realia ☐ pictures ☐ drawings ☐ models ☐ radios ☐ television ☐

Others (specify) ....

b.) Briefly explain how you use these items

....

....

....

....

SECTION C: LANGUAGE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

1. Most of your lessons are usually based on ....

Content of text books ☐ Pupils' interest ☐ teachers' choice ☐

Syllabus ☐

2. Most of your pupils use Kiswahili while engaged in:

Reciting poems ☐ singing games ☐ role playing ☐ drama ☐

Debating clubs ☐ none of the above ☐

3. a) Do you find any difficulty in applying the new syllabus?

Yes ☐ No ☐

b) If yes, specify

Introduction of new things ☐

Complication of things ☐

Inadequate coverage of the content ☐

Substandard inventions ☐

Poor illustrations ☐

Others (specify) ....

4. In your own opinion, how do you think we can improve the performance in Kiswahili and other language subjects?

....
....
....
....
....