

# Classroom Discourse in a Multilingual Context: The Case of Selected Primary Schools in Chuka Division, Tharaka- Nithi County, Kenya.

Nancy Wangui Mbaka

[nmbaka@chuka.ac.ke](mailto:nmbaka@chuka.ac.ke)

Chuka University P.O. Box, 109-60400, Chuka

## Abstract

The sociolinguistic situation in Kenya is triglossic in nature (Schmied, 2012) English is at the top of the rank as the official language. Kiswahili has been in the middle as the co-official and national language. It is also used as the country's lingua franca. The indigenous languages are at the base of the hierarchy. This paper sought to evaluate whether the language-in-education policy is implemented in the classroom. The study was a case study carried out in Chuka Division, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya. The paper establishes that teachers mainly use code-mixing in the classroom and also in official domains. The findings in this paper contribute to scholarly literature in Sociolinguistics and are of great benefit to curriculum developers in the ministry of education in Kenya.

**Keywords:** Language of Instruction (LOI), mother tongue (MT), Policy Implementation, Language –in – Education Policy

## 1. Introduction

English has been Kenya's official language since independence. In the language in education policy (LiEP) English is not only one of the most important subjects in the curriculum but it is the medium of instruction from upper primary to university level. In some urban schools, it is used as a medium of instruction from lower primary. English has received positive status and good corpus planning in Kenya. Its place in the education system has always been clear. It is highly regarded by a large portion of the Kenyan populace. Kenyans see a lot of advantages in knowing English. Its advantages include access to the large body of knowledge found in English and the opportunities for employment that it presents. Other advantages include communication with a wider population, its significant role in higher education, its national appeal and its richness as a modern language and as a motivating force in education (Muthwii, 2002).

As Kenya's national language, Kiswahili plays an integrative and unifying role among Kenyans. In urban areas it is spoken as a first language in some families. It is taught as a compulsory and examinable subject at both primary and secondary levels. It is taught as a subject in all local Universities It is used as a lingua franca in the country, facilitating communication among the different ethnic groups (Chimera, 1998). When the new constitution was promulgated on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2010, Kiswahili was given a new status as an official language in the national language policy statement. It shares this function with English and still remains the country's national language.

Whiteley (1974) writes that there are over 30 distinct languages and dialect clusters spoken in Kenya. They can be roughly divided into four groups: Bantu, Nilotic and Para-Nilotic, Cushitic and languages from the Indian sub-continent. This abstract is based on the 1989 census. This is a fact that has significantly affected policies regarding the use of MTs as media of instruction. According to Paul (2009) there are about 69 indigenous languages in Kenya. Apart from Kiswahili, about 16 of these languages are used as languages of instruction in lower primary (Musau, 2004). According to the LiEP, they are supposed to be used as LOI in lower primary school in areas that are not urban. It is expected that people in a catchment area where a common language is spoken can use it as an LOI.

Kenya's language policy has been documented in various education commissions and reports and in the KANU statement issued in 1974 (Gorman, 1974). The current language policy is based on the recommendations by the Gachathi Report (1976) as they were adopted by the Mackay Commission (1981). The report recommends that in lower primary English or Kiswahili should be used as Language of Instruction (LOI) in urban schools and MT in rural schools. English is recommended as LOI in all schools in upper primary. Given the sociolinguistic situation mentioned above, this study sought to investigate whether teachers implement the policy in actual classroom teaching.

This study was guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To identify features of teacher- pupil discourse in a multilingual classroom context
2. To evaluate the implementation of the Language -in- Education Policy in lower primary schools in Chuka division

## 2. Literature review

Due to the complexities surrounding the demarcation between a language and a dialect (Wardhaugh, 2010), it has not been possible to come up with the exact number of languages in Kenya. Paul (2009) places the total number of living languages in Kenya at 69. Mbaabu (1996) puts the number at approximately 40 and Ogola (2003) puts the figure at 61. The varying figures are also as a result of political, ethnic and national interest, failure to notice languages that are used by small populations as well as the methodologies that have been employed to carry out the categorizations (Mazrui & Mazrui, 1998).

Local languages are used especially in the villages and at home for oral communication and are an important way of preserving and conveying the cultural heritage of the community. At the village level, records are kept in English and Kiswahili but oral communication is done in the local language. The reason for this, according to the villagers, is that it is easy to speak in mother tongue but difficult to write in it (Nabea, 2009).

Kiswahili is the lingua franca among people of various communities and the language of inter ethnic communication among the masses in Kenya. According to Mazrui and Mazrui (1995), Kiswahili is the language that is capable of bringing social integration in Kenya. This is the process by which gaps between the elite and the masses, the town and countryside, the privileged and the underprivileged is bridged.

The hegemonic strength of English in Kenya is evident in the education system. The education policy favors English at the expense of local languages and Kiswahili. It is taught as a subject in lower primary to university. It is the language of the civil service, government publications, reports and notices. It is also the language of the law courts except at the local law courts. Parents are eager to have their children learn the language and some children even speak it as their first language (Mazrui 1975). Private schools use English as LOI from P1 (Muthwii, 2002).

In the Kenyan society, there is plenty of mobility within the three language varieties described above. In the metropolitan areas Kenyans use all three languages at once. Kenya is multilingual both at the society and individual levels. An average Kenyan speaks at least three Kenyan languages. The use of three languages in close interaction in Kenyan societies has led to the development of sheng. Sheng is derived from the acronym 'sh' for Swahili and 'eng' for English. Its grammatical base is Kiswahili but its lexicon is drawn from English, Kiswahili and other Kenyan local languages. (Mbaabu, 1996) argues that the development of sheng was occasioned by lack of focused language policy in Kenya. Osinde & Abdulaziz (1997) describe sheng as a variety that grew out of the less affluent neighborhoods of Nairobi. It was the highly stigmatized and viewed as a language of thugs and young 'matatu' touts. Sheng is a hybrid variety spoken mostly in urban areas by youths (Ogechi 2005; King'ei & Kobia, 2007).

Sheng has now transcended socio-economic boundaries and is widely used by many youths irrespective of social class or gender. Of late, it has been extending beyond Kenyan major cities into rural areas. Sheng has spread widely through radio. According to Ogechi (2005) and King'ei and Kobia (2007), it has also spread through travel between urban and rural areas. Politicians and business people use it to sell their policies and products. The Kenyan youths have adapted it as an identity maker although it is not a legitimate code in formal institutions.

### 2.1 The Role of Language Planning in Education in Kenya

Language planning like any other planning takes place in a particular socio-cultural and political environment. In the Kenyan education system, English is learnt as a second language. Some of the pupils learn MT as first language. Others learn Kiswahili and others know both MT and Kiswahili from their home backgrounds. Many models where the learning of a second language is involved such as those expounded in McLaughlin (1987) and Larsen-Freeman & Long (1991) do not include a planning component. Despite this omission, many of the variables in all the categories may be directly affected by planning efforts (Tollefson, 1989). Such variables as the nature of input, approach to curriculum, attitudes, motivation and age of learners, content of curriculum (and

what is learned and the nature of the learning process) may be determined by a conscious, deliberate language planning process.

The language planning process constitutes a set of intermediate variables which in turn affect the input, the learner, learning and learned variables. The nature of the impact of language planning on the learning process may be represented by a sequence of influences depicted in Figure I.

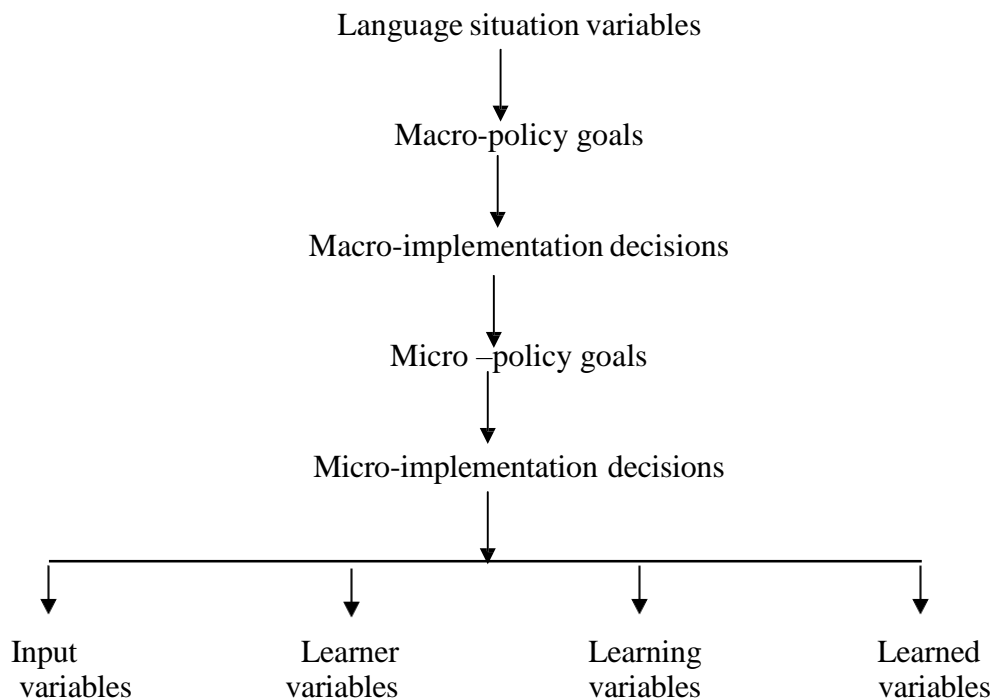


Figure I: Representation of the role of language planning in education  
Source: Tollefson (1989: 26)

The language situation refers to a set of several factors that include who speaks what language varieties to whom and for what purposes. Most Kenyans learn MT at home and use it as the main language in the village. Kiswahili is an inter-ethnic language and is Kenya's national language while English is the official language.

Macro-policy goals refer to the aims and plans formulated by authorities with responsibility for the national community. In Kenya, these are spelt out in government publications in form of reports from commissions and development plans for the Ministry of Education. Macro-implementation decisions may commit funds to different projects. These projects may include, at the national level: teacher-training programmes, publication of textbooks and other materials, establishment of curriculum standards and requirements, scholarships and exchange programmes. These decisions could also be made in the areas of official language use and statutory rights and responsibilities. Such decisions may have a major impact on who learns which languages for which purposes.

Micro-policy goals are more specific. They are meant for local communities and individuals. They involve the nature of evaluation instruments and curriculum. They also involve specific implementation actions taken by school administrators, language teachers and others with direct contact with students. The specific actions taken are the micro-implementation decisions. They include methodology and testing. They have long been recognized as having an impact on the learning process where a learning a second language is involved (Fishman, 1983; Ellis, 1985). Figure 2 shows how macro-policy goals made at high levels permeate to the lower levels.



Figure 2: A representation of Macro and Micro goals  
Source: Adapted from Kennedy (1985: 23)

Input and learner variables are subject to planning. The decision to teach in, or not to teach in a particular language, may be a major planning decision. Motivation can be manipulated. For example, governments can decide to reward language proficiency by using language criteria in job requirements, giving language learning scholarships and opportunities for overseas study.

Learning variables are manipulated indirectly by planning to the extent that various curriculum and other educational planning decisions affect the acquisition process. Acquisition is more likely to be enhanced by availability of textbooks and high quality instruction. Learned variables are affected by macro-implementation decisions in a situation like Kenya where the curriculum is designed to proceed through a fixed order of structures. What is learned is a result of the planning process (Ellis, 1988).

## 2.2 Mother Tongue in Education in Kenya

According to Gorman (1970), during the period when Kenya was a British protectorate (1895-1920), the obligation to provide educational facilities was assumed almost entirely by missionary orders. The United Missionary Conference (1909), the Phelps –Strokes Commission (1924) and “The Memorandum on the place of the vernacular in Native Education” (1927), all recommended the use of MT as the first medium of instruction for the first four years of school life.

The support for the use of MT continued under colonial rule. The inter-territorial language committee (1930) and the Beecher Report (1949) all recommended the use of MT in early education. This changed in the 1950’s and 60’s when according to Sifuna (1980), there was a growing dissatisfaction in Kenya about the poor performance of African and Asian children in national examinations. This led to the educational revolution referred to as the New Primary Approach (NPA) which led to the introduction of English as LOI from standard one (P1).

After Kenya became independent, the Minister for Education appointed a commission under the chairmanship of S.H. Ominde (1964). The recommendations of this commission entrenched the use of English as LOI from PI. The commission assigned MT no role. This changed when Gachathi Report (1976) recommended the use of MT in the first three years of education. These recommendations of 1976 were reinforced by the Koech Report (1999).

The goodwill towards the use of MT in education in Kenya is in line with UNESCO’s declaration whose report was published in 1953 (Bamgbose, 1976). The UNESCO report recommended that pupils should begin their schooling through the medium of mother tongue and that the use of mother tongue should be extended to as late a stage in education as possible. This was re-echoed in 1972 in a UNESCO conference which went further to state that teaching at least initial literacy in mother tongue is advisable even in situations where the scanty number of speakers appears not to warrant the large scale production of educational materials.

There is worldwide support for the use of mother tongue in the early years of education. There are psychological and pedagogical reasons for this support. Brown (1976) notes that mother tongue acquisition begins early in life. Its importance in the development of the child's intellect and other aspects of his personality in early education must be profound. The slightest disturbance of this vital role by a second language may produce lasting and unhappy effects. This can hamper a child's intellectual development. Sudden exposure to a second language can cause blockage in the Study development of concept formation. This can produce emotional and psychological insecurity.

The use of MT ensures that an all-round education is provided to pupils whereby language, culture and education are intertwined. The indigenous languages of a people should be an important major source of material for educating their children if children are to identify with their roots and respect their heritage. Mother tongue is also important because it is the language used in early childhood for informal education (Bambgose, 1976). As children observe the techniques and skills as well as the habits of their elders and parents, systematic instruction in the local language is given. Stories, songs, myths, legends and dancing spread instruction. All are combined to stimulate children's emotions, quicken their perception and guide them as they explore, exploit and interpret their natural environment.

The use of MT has been hampered by a myriad of problems. These include lack of materials, and trained teachers (Gorman, 1974). The other problem in using mother tongue is that there is also a contradiction between the policy of encouraging MT as LOI and the reality as the child progresses through the education system where English completely dominates over other languages (Muthwii, 2002). Many of them lack standardized orthographies and adequate literacy materials for use in the language classroom (Muthwii & Kioko, 2004). A negative attitude towards these languages is another major hindrance to the implementation of linguistic justice (Musau, 2004). The genesis of this negative attitude was during the colonial period and it has been perpetuated through the language in education policies adopted after independence that did not recognize and promote all languages. In many schools, there is a school rule that forbids students to speak their mother tongues. Even after school people believe that complex academic issues cannot be transmitted using indigenous languages (Muthwii & Kioko, 2004).

MT fulfils certain basic referential functions which no foreign language can effectively approximate. These are communicative, expressive, unifying and participatory functions (Okonkwo, 1978). Despite these advantages, Bogonko (1992) and Mbaabu (1992) state the impracticability of using MT beyond elementary education. They note that there would be obvious difficulties of co-ordination, it would jeopardize national unity, it would promote tribalism and there would be difficulties of communication amongst heterogeneous groups.

The use of MT in education has been hampered by poor corpus planning so that it is difficult to use it even in the elementary level of education. The macro-implementation decisions mentioned in 2.1 have been lacking as far as MT is concerned thus hindering full implementation of the language policy. Lately, MT has received positive support from the theatre (Mutunga, Daily Nation, 30). There has also been an increase in radio broadcasts in vernacular languages – an indication that Kenyans value these languages.

### **2.3 Kiswahili in Education in Kenya**

According to Palome (1967), Kiswahili is a language of Bantu origin:

Swahili is a Bantu language, that is, it belongs to the vast family of languages spoken south of a line stretching from the slopes of Mount Cameroon to the Northern shores of Lake Victoria, and thence towards the coast, with a wedge southward into Masai territory and a bulge northward to include the Meru on the Eastern slopes of Mount Kenya. (Palome, 1967: 13).

Kiswahili sources place the origin of the language earlier than 500 A.D. (Mazrui, 1995; Chimerah, 1998). The bulk of evidence would seem to suggest that the language remained overwhelmingly a coastal phenomenon until two hundred years ago. It was not until Seyyid Said Bin Sultan established full residence in Zanzibar in 1832 and consolidated the Al Busaidy Sultanate on the Islands that trade with the interior of the continent developed more substantially. The momentum of this trade was also a momentum of Kiswahili spread.

Mbaabu (1992), notes that Kiswahili is now an international language. It is the national language of Kenya. It is also the national and official language of Tanzania and the second official language in Uganda. It is spoken in other African countries such as Zaire, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, Mozambique, Somalia and Seychelles. As Kenya's national language, Kiswahili is the language of inter-ethnic communication used by Kenyans irrespective of their educational background. The entry of Kiswahili into the mainstream of formal education in

East Africa (E.A.), on any significant scale, did not come until European countries colonized this region, and missionaries infiltrated African societies.

According to Gorman (1974), some of the larger missionary orders established stations along the coast. Among their members were a number of noted scholars of Kiswahili. Such missionaries as Bishop Steere, the Reverend Krapf and Father Sacleux made a systematic Study of the language and enthusiastically advocated its use for purposes of missionary activity.

The colonial language policy in East Africa was in favour of Kiswahili. The directors of Education in East and Central Africa met in Dar-es-salaam in 1929 and recommended the establishment of an inter-territorial language committee whose concern was to be Kiswahili language research and standardization of orthographies. The committee was formed in 1930. Soon after, government officials, educationists and missionaries accorded Kiswahili total support (Mbaabu, 1992). The formation of the committee gave Kiswahili a firm base which enabled it to survive the change of policy after the Second World War.

In the period between 1945 and 1963, there was less support for Kiswahili (Mbaabu, 1992). The colonial government noted the unifying role that Kiswahili played among East African Soldiers. As a result, the Beecher Report (1942) recommended that emphasis be placed on the teaching of vernacular and English takes the place of Kiswahili as the colony's lingua franca (Gorman, 1974). This was supported by the Departmental Reports of 1950 and 1951 (Sifuna, 1975). The result was that Kiswahili was used less widely as the medium of instruction in lower classes except in areas where it was a vernacular. Kiswahili continued as a second language in secondary school but it was non-examinable (Mbaabu, 1992).

The various education commissions set up after independence have shaped the language policy. The Ominde Commission (1964), recommended that Kiswahili be taught as a compulsory subject, the training of Kiswahili teachers during school holidays and the establishment of the Department of Kiswahili at University of Nairobi. Since Kiswahili was not examinable, time allocated to it was used to teach other subjects. The other two recommendations were not implemented.

The Gachathi Report (1976) recommended that Kiswahili be introduced as an examinable subject and be made compulsory in standard three or when English starts being used as a medium of instruction. These recommendations were implemented together with the 8-4-4 system of education recommended by the Mackay Report (1981). The Mackay Report also recommended that Kiswahili be made a compulsory subject in the second university. Following the implementation of the Mackay report, Kiswahili became a compulsory subject in both primary and secondary levels. It was also examinable at both levels. This gave Kiswahili a big boost. In Kenyatta University, the number of students studying Kiswahili increased from 6 in 1976, to 420 in 1988 (Mbaabu, 1992). In the university and tertiary institutions intake, Kiswahili can substitute English in cases where a student has done better in Kiswahili than in English. It was accorded the extra function of co-official language in addition to its earlier function as a national language in the new constitution.

Welime (1970) mentions some of the problems that teachers of Kiswahili faced soon after independence. These were lack of teachers, lack of motivation among students, lack of a well thought out syllabus and shortage of suitable textbooks especially at the secondary level of education. Lack of full implementation of the language policy at various times has negatively affected the use of Kiswahili in Education in Kenya.

Mbaabu (1992) and Bogonko (1992) recommend the use of Kiswahili other than MT in education in Kenya. The worry about whether Kiswahili has the vocabulary to be used as a medium of instruction especially in higher levels of education should not bother educationists. Kiswahili can develop vocabulary in all areas as has already been done in mathematics and science in Tanzania. This view is also shared by Mazrui and Mazrui (1995) who quotes Piere Alexandre in stating that:

It is wrong to say that African languages are a barrier to the teaching of science and technical subjects. The syntactical structure of the languages known to me would not provide any major obstacle to the pursuit of logical reasoning. The absence of technical terminology in the vocabulary is all the easier to remedy since, in fact, the international technical terminology is based on artificial assembly of Greek and Latin roots (Quoted by Mazrui, 1995:25).

## **2.4 English in Education in Kenya**

According to Gorman (1974), on the whole, the missionaries supported the use of the vernacular medium in the early stages of education and then the introduction of the English medium from upper primary. Although some

of the missionaries supported the use of Kiswahili and recognized it as an East African Lingua Franca, there are those who saw the spirit of Islamization in it and avoided it all together.

During the colonial era, the government was run on the basis of racial segregation. This was reflected even in the education system. Only English was used in schools meant for Whites. Asian schools used an appropriate Indian language in lower primary and MT or Kiswahili was used in African schools in elementary schooling. According to Sifuna (1975), there was poor performance by African and Asian children in examinations in 1957. The Ministry of Education created a special centre as an offshoot of the Inspectorate to investigate and experiment on the matter. This led to the introduction of the English medium in Asian schools in 1957 and was later extended to African schools in 1961. This was done under the NPA programme.

After independence, the NPA was given impetus by the Ominde Commission (1964) which recommended the use of English medium right from P1 citing various reasons for doing so. For close to two decades, English remained the privileged medium of instruction throughout the education system. The inclusion of Kiswahili as a compulsory and examinable subject took place as a result of the implementation of recommendations by the Mackay Report (1981). The Koech Report (1999) did not bring in anything new as far as the language policy is concerned.

In the implementation of the language policy, English has received positive status and good corpus planning. Its place in the education system has always been clear. It is highly regarded by a large portion of the Kenyan populace.

Muthwii (2002) notes that the advantages of learning and using English, according to those interviewed in the study, include access to the large body of knowledge found in written English and the opportunities for employment that it presents. Other advantages are communication with a wider population, its significant role in higher education, its national appeal and its richness as a modern language and as a motivating force in education.

Apart from its advantages, English also has disadvantages as a LOI. Bogonko (1992) notes that it denies parents the chance of helping their children in education. Outside the classroom, English has continued to serve as one of the mechanisms of integration, collaboration and dependence on the west. There is also a discrepancy between the theoretical norm (British Standard Variety) and the language behaviour with regard to pronunciation, grammar, semantics and pragmatics of Kenyan English (Kachru, 1983, Muthwii and Kioko, 2001).

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework that guided this study was the Game Theory as proposed by Laitin (1992). He relies on comparative analysis and the techniques of the game theory to speculate on Africa's future and also makes recommendations to language planners. His speculation is that most countries in Africa will not undergo language rationalization but will end up with a 3+<sub>1</sub> one language outcome. This outcome 'will be realized in African countries that are linguistically heterogeneous yet have a basis for an indigenous lingua franca, promotes some African vernaculars, accepts societal multilingualism, relies selectively on colonial languages and legitimizes the inventiveness and communicative value of pidgins and creoles, all in the framework of a coherent program' (Laitin, 1992 :164). The language situation in Kenya fits into the 3+<sub>1</sub> one language outcome because as noted above, Kenyans are multilingual and use three languages at once especially in urban areas and among the educated. There is also the use of sheng among the youth. Laitin's predictions are shown in the matrix

The Education Game in Kenya  
 Government Policy

Kenyan people seek for their children	Kiswahili English	and English Vernaculars	and English only	Kiswahili only
English immersion	4.4(A)	4.4(A)	4.7(A)	4.0(A)
Kiswahili immersion	2.5.5(C)	0.0	0.0	2.95(C)
Vernaculars with English as LWC	4.4(A)	7.5(A,B)	4.4(A)	4.0(A)

Laitin postulated three goals in descending order for Kenyan parents:

A (4 points) Social mobility for their children into elite domains is made possible. (This was a short-term assessment based on what was then the value of English.)

B (3 points) their own culture is promoted by government, and fellow citizens take advantage of it.

C (2 points) if national values are promoted, and fellow citizens take advantage of it.

In the game, the people's second choice, Kiswahili immersion is dominated by both the first and third choices, so it is eliminated from consideration. If that is eliminated, the government's fourth choice, Kiswahili only is dominated by the first three choices. The people have a dominant strategy: to choose 'vernaculars, with English as a language of wider communication (LWC).

#### 4. Population and Sample

The total population was all primary schools in Chuka Division. According data obtained from the DEO's office, there were sixty four primary schools in the Division. Out of these, eleven were private schools. Out of the fifty three public schools, two were boarding schools and therefore did not have a lower primary section. The researcher used two sampling procedures. These were stratified random sampling and purposive sampling. According to Orodho (2004), stratified random sampling is appropriate if the population, from which the sample is drawn, does not constitute a homogenous group. Because a sample need not be representative in a case study according to Kothari (2004), three schools were selected on the basis of the LOI they used .Purposive sampling was also used. The researcher picked the schools that were easier to access. The schools were:-

1. Njeru Junior Academy Private Mixed Day School (English medium)
2. Chuka Township – Public Town School (Kiswahili medium)
3. Kirege Primary School – Public Rural School (MT medium)
- 4.

#### 5. Methods of Data Collection

An observation schedule was used to collect data. The schedule specified situations that would be observed. These were the language used by the teacher to instruct pupils in the classroom and outside the classroom in formal domains such as P.E. lessons and assemblies. Also to be observed was the language used by students outside the classroom. After seeking permission from the office of the president through the Ministry of Education, the researcher visited the schools to familiarize herself with the school management. The researcher spent a day in each school observing the language behavior as specified in the observation schedule. The data presented in this paper is the one collected through observation.

#### 6. Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected using the observation schedule was summarized and a report written. This is the report that will be presented in this paper. Results showed that teachers mainly use code mixing in classroom discourse.

## 7. Results

It was observed that in Njeru Junior Academy, both the Teacher on duty (TOD) and the head teacher used a mixture of Kiswahili and English during the morning assembly. Sometimes what was said in Kiswahili was a translation of what had been said in English.

TOD's (Teacher on Duty) address : "*Wacha tuwapigie makofi... Let us have a Bible reading... Semeni vifungo vya Bibilia*"

While addressing the students during the morning assembly, the TOD used English and Kiswahili alternately. First he asked the pupils to clap for the others using Kiswahili, then he called those who the students who did the Bible reading to so in English and then translated this into Kiswahili. The communication strategies that the TOD used are code-mixing (Kiswahili and English) and translation (from English to Kiswahili).

The headteacher's address was as follows: "This is the fourth week of the term.<sup>1</sup> *Ukifika mapema ufanye kazi.*<sup>2</sup> And now tomorrow *nataka tushindane tuone ni nani atafika akiwa wa kwanza.*<sup>3</sup> We will find out who will get here first.<sup>4</sup> *Tutaona ni nani atafanya makelele.*<sup>5</sup> Those are the two things that I will emphasize this morning<sup>6</sup>."

In his morning assembly address, the headteacher used a mixture of English and Kiswahili in the sentence units. There is also use of translation in sentence 2 and 3.

During the mathematics lesson in Std 1, the teacher used a mixture of Kiswahili and English. This mixing would be in one phrase such as "addition of *nini*" and "*utachora mayai* three." Sometimes the teacher used translation to communicate to the students. This is through such statements as "What am I going to do with my six? *Nitafanya nini na six yangu.*" At times the teacher asked a question in English and the pupils gave the answer in a mixture of Kiswahili and English, for example:

Teacher (T): What am I going to do?

Pupils (Ps): *Utachora mayai* three- *alafu ukate moja.*

There were also instances where the teacher asked a question in Kiswahili and the pupils answered in Kiswahili mixed with English, for example:

T: *Tufanye namna gani?*

Ps: *Utachora mayai* eight *ukate mayai* five

In other instances, the teacher communicated using English and the pupils answered in English. For example:

T: You count for me

Ps: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight.

During the Kiswahili lesson in Std 2, the teacher used Kiswahili to communicate to the students. She insisted that the students speak correct Kiswahili. However the pupils would mix Kiswahili and English as in the expression: "Teacher we write *mia moja arubaini na tatu?*" The pupils used English expressions such as "Excuse me."

In Chuka Township Primary School, the language used by the TOD and the headteacher to address students during the morning assembly was a mixture of Kiswahili and English. An example to illustrate this is: "Let me remind all of you *wiki ijayo itakuwa tarehe ngapi?* Eleventh on Monday, you must all be in this attire. *Kila mtu awe na yake.* We shall clean our classes today at four. I am expecting each and everyone to have water ready. Clear? *Ujitayarisha.* When cleaning starts. Be in your place." Sometimes the mixing of Kiswahili and English was a result of translation. An example used by the TOD is: "*Wanaskauti wakiendelea na kujitayarisha, nitasoma neno la Bwana.* I am going to read the word of the Lord from the Bible."

The teachers mixed English and Kiswahili to communicate to students in class. This mixing varied from using two different languages in the same sentence to using two languages in different sentences. For example, the Std 1 teacher used the following expressions to address the pupils before commencing the lesson. "*Ebu sema* today is Friday... *sema* yesterday was Thursday... *sema* tomorrow will be Saturday." This was also observed in the Std 2 class. An example from this observation is "*Hatuendelei na English.* Keep those books away. *Alafu nataka utoe* maths exercise book. *Mugambi nasema uweke hiyo kitabu.* *Utamaliza* break." This mixing occurred even in words such as "tunacarry".

Another observation was that the teachers used English even during the Kiswahili lesson for certain words. An example of this can be illustrated using speech from the Std 1 teacher. "*Nataka uandike date zikiwa kwa*

*mistari...Kitabu yako iko na ile mwalimu anaita margin...Blackboard yangu haina mistari lakini kitabu yako iko na mistari. Sasa andika kwa mistari. Umeandika date?...Acha space...Unaenda kutafuta pencil...Endeni break...Wewe hauna uniform leo...Kazi yote mtu aanze na date na subject.”* The pupils too used similar language. For example, “*Ndiyo teacher...Apana, hakuwa assembly.*”

The researcher also observed that in Std 2 during the mathematics lesson, the teacher mixed Kiswahili with English. This was also the case in Std 4 mathematics lesson. An example of this is “*Hatutaandika thirteen...Tutaandika three tubebe moja tulete hiyo ingine the other side of tens.*”

It was observed that the teachers used English and Kiswahili interchangeably. For example:

- T: *Alafu itakuwa* five plus two.  
What is the answer?  
Ps: Seven  
T: *Kuna kitu tutabeba hapo*  
Ps: No  
T: What is the answer?  
Ps: Seventy three.

In Kirege Primary School, during the morning assembly the students were addressed using a mixture of Kiswahili, English and MT (Gichuka). This is a language that is spoken by the Chuka People and is listed as one of the Kenya’s indigenous languages as language No. 12 in Ethnologue (2009).

The Headteacher’s speech is a good example of this: “Teachers should be happy but they are not. *Waalimu hawafurahishwi na vitu zote mnaifanya.* Some of you are trading. We are not very happy with you. *Wengine wenu wanatoka darasani wanaenda chooni.* Some of you. They know themselves. *Tukienda darasani hawataingia. Wibingire kioroni wakarage kuu. Tutigukuringiriria uthome ringi. Wale wanafunzi tulienda nao Kiereni walinihaibisha. Walikuja bila viatu. Kaguru”*

The researcher was able to observe language use in Std 1, 2, 3 and 4 classes. In this school it was common for the teachers to use English mixed with Kiswahili while the students used MT mixed with English. An example of this from the Fine Art lesson went on as follows:

- T: I am going to model mine and then you are going to make a model of a human being.  
P: **Tauma bo mone** model  
T: *Nini mbaya- songea, songea*  
P: **Tiganani namau. Haya kamundu!**  
T: *Hii ni mfano wa mtu.* Group yourselves into groups of five *watano*.  
(The teacher distributed “soil” to the students).  
T: *Hiyo tosha*  
P: **Baba bari na antu** six.

This was also observed in the Std 4 and Std 2 Social Studies lessons. In the Std 4 lesson, the pupils used MT to communicate to one another while they communicated to the teacher in English and the teacher communicated to them in English. The teacher in Std 2 social science class mixed English and Kiswahili. For example, “leaves *ina* include *gani*...leaves *unasiita nini*..., *mtaendelea* afterwards...” The pupils also mixed Kiswahili and English as in the phrases. “...*ya avocado... ya beans... ya maize*...”

Translation was also used often. For example “Group yourselves into groups of five.... *Watano*.” There was also mixing of languages which occurred as a continuation of communication where one part is said in English and the other part in Kiswahili for example, “as for today *tutafika hapo*... *huendi* out *ngoja* until break time.” The pupils too used a similar communication technique for example “**Mwalimu uyu niachora na pencil...Mwalimu ino ni ya** green...” where they mixed MT and English.

During the P.E. lesson, the teacher used Kiswahili to communicate to the pupils but certain words remained in English such as “Dismiss... jog on the spot... frog walk.” In the social studies lesson in Std 2, similar trend was observed where the teacher used Kiswahili but referred to “leaves” in English throughout. The researcher observed that the pupils in this school were at home using MT. The school rule prohibiting them from using MT was not adhered to by both teachers and students.

The code mixing strategies identified from the classroom discourse were English and Kiswahili, Kiswahili and Gichuka, English and Gichuka. The English and Kiswahili strategy was the commonest and dominated classroom interactions in the two urban schools in the study sample. The strategies involving use of MT and either Kiswahili or English was common in the rural school. This shows that MT is still the language in which pupils from rural areas carry out their conversations. This should be supported and encouraged.

The analysis of the data above shows that the main mode of communication in the classroom is mixing languages. Code mixing takes various forms. In Njeru Junior Academy, teachers mixed Kiswahili and English. In Chuka Township teachers teach in Kiswahili and English and once in a while used MT. In Kirege Primary School, teachers mixed Kiswahili with English and MT but pupils were using a lot of MT mixed with a little Kiswahili and English.

## 9. Discussion

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the implementation status of the language policy. It was found out that teachers mainly use code mixing in classroom instruction. Code mixing is the deliberate mixing of two languages without an associated topic change. Conversants use two languages together to an extent that they can change from one language to another in the course of a single utterance (Wardhaugh, 2010). It is a common phenomenon in multilingual societies. Wardhaugh notes that conversational code mixing is not just a haphazard mixing of two languages brought about by laziness or ignorance or some combination of these. Rather, it requires conversants to have sophisticated knowledge of both languages and to be accurately aware of community norms. It is a source of pride in bilingual and multilingual communities.

Code mixing is not as distinct a phenomenon as code switching. The two, however, are different. Code switching is a conversational strategy used to establish, cross or destroy group boundaries. It is also used to create, evoke or change interpersonal relations with their rights and obligations. It is a shift from one language to another and this shift lasts for a longer period than in a code mixing. Code mixing may also give way to situational code-switching at any one time. Both code mixing and code switching involve a kind of language shifting and code mixing can be looked at as a type of code-switching.

Crystal 1997 gives three reasons why speakers switch from one language to another. If speakers cannot express themselves adequately in one language, they switch to the other to make good the deficiency. Switching to a minority language is very common as a means of expressing solidarity with a social group. A switch between languages can also signal the speaker's attitude towards the listener.

Mc Arthur (1988) mentions four major types of switching and code mixing. These are tag switching, intra-sentential switching, intersentential and intraword switching. Examples of these are found in the classroom discourse in the data that was collected.. Tag switching is where tags and certain set phrases in one language are inserted into an utterance otherwise in another. For example 'Ebu sema Today is Friday ,sema yesterday was Thursday'. Intra-sentential switching refers to switches that occur within a clause or sentence boundary. 'Tulikuwa tunaangalia addition' (we were looking at addition) Intersentential switching is where a change occurs at a clause or sentence boundary, for example 'kuna jina ingine tuliipatia, who can remember' (there is another name we gave it, who can remember?). In intra word switching, a change occurs within a word boundary, for example tunacarry (we are carrying). In this study, respondents said they switched languages in order to make the students understand what was being taught. However, the possibility that the respondents cannot adequately express themselves in one language thus switching languages cannot be ruled out. This phenomenon is designated as code-mixing other than code switching. Code switching is a prolonged shift from one language to another while code-mixing is the use of two languages in words, phrases and sentences in correct grammatical constructions inspite of the mixing. Code -mixing requires high proficiency in the two languages while code-switching does not (Wardhaugh , 2010).

The question is whether code mixing and code switching should be allowed as a form of classroom interaction. Kembo-Sure (2004) advocates the one of code switching in schools. This is because it is being used by educated and celebrated writers. He sees no reason why it should not be treated as normal in official communication of all descriptions, including examinations.

## 10. Summary

From the data, it was clear that teachers mainly communicated to pupils using code-mixing. Teachers did not implement the policy but utilized the languages that were in their multilingual context to communicate to the students in the classroom.

## 11. Conclusion

The results of this research indicate that at the classroom level. Teachers do not implement the policy. They use a mixture of the three languages available from their repertoire of languages. Laitin's (1992) predictions That African countries will not become monolingual but are likely to continue to use three or more languages is true in the Kenyan situation. However, his predictions that Kiswahili is likely to lose out in the Game was wrong. Kiswahili has received acceptance among Kenyans since it made a compulsory and examinable school subject (McKay Report, 1981) and it is now a co-official language in the new constitution.

## 12. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, there is need to restructure Kenya's language policy. In the restructuring, the objectives should be made very clear. However, this should not be done without first doing nationwide consultations and extensive research in the areas mentioned below.

The theoretical framework that informed this research predicted that rationalization is unlikely to occur in Kenyan language situation. The use of two or three languages depending on the repertoire that the conversant has at their disposal is an indicator that all the three languages will continue to be used in the classroom. Further research should also be carried out in other parts of the country to verify the findings of this research.

The use of mother tongues in education has been hampered by lack of materials in most languages since the pre-independence period. This can be attributed to lack of funds but also lack of will -power on the part of the government to enforce the policy. There is need for the materials to be provided if MTs will be used as LOIs in lower primary in the future. According to the findings of this research, teachers suggested that they preferred a policy which recommended the use of Kiswahili as LOI in all primary schools. This is also one of the issues that further research can help verify.

The use of code mixing in the classroom needs to be addressed in the formulation of the language policy. Being a common phenomenon in a multilingual society, code mixing is here to stay. Kenyans of all walks of life use it in their communication at home, in the media, the work places. So far, the MOE has no policy on code mixing and code switching.

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