ACQUISITION OF LEXICON BY KENYAN PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN
IN A MULTILINGUAL ENVIRONMENT: A CASE OF KYENI LOCATION,
EMBU COUNTY

BY
JAYNE R. F. NDUMA
C50/CE/11456/07

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Signature

Jayne Nduma R.F

C50/CE/11456/07

Date: 10th July, 2016

This dissertation has been submitted with our approval as university supervisors.

Signature

Dr. Eunice Nyamasyo

Department of English and Linguistics

Kenyatta University

Date: 26th July, 2016

Signature

Dr. Fridah Kanana Erastus

Department of English and Linguistics

Kenyatta University

Date: 16th July, 2016
DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late parents Laura and Albino Nduma who made great sacrifices to see me educated.

To my children Shadrack and Patricia, Rita, Beth and Eric for their great encouragement, support and patience without which I would not have come this far.
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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Acquisition: The process by which a child develops proficiency in a language by merely being exposed to the language and without any formal instruction.

Input: The linguistic data that a child is exposed to from his/her parents or from linguistic environment like a school.

Learning: Conscious process of acquiring language e.g. in a classroom set up.

Lexicon: All words of a given language.

Linguistic environment: The sum total of linguistic cognitive, physical and psychological circumstances under which language acquisition takes places.

Mother tongue: Any indigenous language spoken in Kenya, for example, Kiembu.

Multilingual environment: A place where different languages are spoken.
<table>
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<tr>
<td>Asp:</td>
<td>Aspect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ben:</td>
<td>Benefactive</td>
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<td>BFL:</td>
<td>Bilingual First Language</td>
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<td>BFLA:</td>
<td>Bilingual First Language Acquisition</td>
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<td>C:</td>
<td>Class (noun class system)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dem:</td>
<td>Demonstrative</td>
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<td>Dim:</td>
<td>Diminutive</td>
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<td>Ext:</td>
<td>Existential</td>
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<td>Foc:</td>
<td>Focus</td>
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<td>Fv:</td>
<td>Final Vowel</td>
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<td>Hab:</td>
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<td>Imp:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inf:</td>
<td>Infinitive</td>
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<tr>
<td>KICD:</td>
<td>Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development</td>
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<td>LI:</td>
<td>First Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAD:</td>
<td>Language Acquisition Device</td>
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<td>MT:</td>
<td>Mother Tongue</td>
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<td>Om:</td>
<td>Object marker</td>
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<td>Pass:</td>
<td>Passive</td>
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<td>Pl:</td>
<td>Plural</td>
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<tr>
<td>R:</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sing:</td>
<td>Singular</td>
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<td>SLA:</td>
<td>Second Language Acquisition</td>
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<td>Sm:</td>
<td>Subject Marker</td>
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T: Tense

UG: Universal Grammar

1st Pl Pron: First Person Plural pronoun

2nd Pl Pron: Second Person Plural pronoun

1st sing Pron: First Person Singular pronoun

2nd Sing Pron: Second Person Singular pronoun
ABSTRACT

For a long time, schools in rural Embu have been using instructional materials written in Gikuyu. This is due to lack of instructional materials written in the language of the catchment area which is Kiembu. Various Education Commissions recommended the use of mother-tongue as a language of instruction in the first three years of schooling. In line with this, the schools in Embu teach using mother tongue but they use instructional materials written in Gikuyu. This study sought to determine the process of acquisition of noun and verb lexical items of school going children in a multilingual environment. The study was an attempt to investigate some of the factors that may influence language acquisition at a critical stage of age 6-7 years. It is hoped that the findings of the study will inform policy makers on the need to have instructional materials written in Kiembu for use in primary schools in Embu County. Data was collected from six children aged between six and seven years. Three of them were pupils at Kiamboa Primary school in Kyeni location, Embu County, an environment where they are exposed to Kiembu, Gikuyu, Kiswahili and English. The other three children were from Kiamboa village, also in Kyeni location, Embu County, an environment where the language of interaction is mostly Kiembu. The study used two theories namely: Nativist Theory and The Krashens Monitor Model to analyze data. The Stories were by tape-recorded and oral interviews were used during interactions with respondents. The Gikuyu and Kiembu nouns and verbs used by respondents were identified. The researcher sought to assess the influence that teaching using resource materials written in Gikuyu has had on the acquisition of Kiembu noun and verb words. The noun classes of all nouns were indicated. The verbs were interlinearized. The researcher identified the Gikuyu and Kiembu nouns and verbs used by the respondents. The study found out that the 6-7 year olds use only Kiembu before joining class one. This was attributed to the fact that these children are only exposed to Kiembu hence the competence in the use of Kiembu. The study further found out that the 6-7 year olds use Kiembu and Gikuyu in their conversations after they have joined class one. This was attributed to the fact that they are taught using books and other instructional materials written in Gikuyu. The study further showed that the exposure to a multilingual linguistic environment has little effect on the acquisition of Kiembu by the 6-7 year olds.
CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this section, we give a background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives and questions. We also present the research assumptions, rationale for the study and scope and limitations.

1.1 Background to the Study

In most rural primary schools in Kenya, the language of instruction is the language of the catchment area. This is usually the mother tongue (MT) spoken by people living in the particular region where the school is located. This practice is a recommendation made by several Education Commissions that underscored the need to use mother tongue as a medium of instruction for the first three years of schooling. A lot of interaction takes place between the teacher and the children as most of the teaching is orally done.

Ireri (1996) notes that the issue of language policy has been an area of interest in the country since 1919. For example, the commission on Education in the East African Protectorate raised questions relating to the use of Kiswahili, English and vernacular languages as media of instruction. He further notes that in an advisory committee meeting on language policy in 1927 and later on in 1943, members of this committee quoted with approval an extract from the report of the Calcutta University Mission (1919) on the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in schools. These members noted that it was through their vernacular, through their folk speech that most members attained the characteristic expression of their nature and of what their nature allows them to be or to discern. This underscores the need of teaching using mother tongue in the early years of schooling as is the case of the Kenyan lower primary. As
cited by Ireri (1996), practice and research analyzed by Pattanayak (1986) has shown that mother tongue is essential for concept formation and sense of identity.

The Beecher report of 1949 recommended the use of twenty indigenous languages in primary school which included Gikuyu, Kisii, Giriama, Kimeru, and Luo. The report noted that use of too many languages at the initial stage would have been too expensive due to the cost of publishing books in the indigenous languages. It suggested a curriculum which would concentrate on literacy in the vernacular in the first three or four years of Primary schooling. Following this recommendation, the East African Literature Bureau published 64 books, 21 of which were in Kenyan languages. Examples of such books include Tiko gi Rosa (Tiko and Rosa) in Dholuo, and Wirute Guthoma (teach yourself how to read) series in Gikuyu.

The Gachathi report of 1976 also recommended that the language of instruction in standard one to three should be the language of the catchment area, a policy which is still in use in primary schools. According to the policy, the language of the catchment area is usually the indigenous language spoken in the locality of the school. In central Kenya for example, the language of the catchment area is Gikuyu. The commission argued that most of the children in rural areas can only speak their vernacular language at the time of starting school. The committee further argued that the education system should make much better use of the local languages for instruction at the beginning of school. They also recommended that English should be introduced as a subject from primary one and that it should also be the medium of instruction at primary four.
Many primary schools in the rural areas still use the language of the catchment area as the medium of instruction in line with the language policy. This is usually the children’s first language or mother tongue. However at Kiamboa Primary School, which is the focus of our study, this is not the case. This is because the instructional materials that are used are written in Gikuyu, a Bantu language used by people of Central Kenya. The language of the catchment area is Kiembu, also a Bantu language. The reason for using these materials is that there are no approved instructional materials written in Kiembu. These materials include: wall charts, books, and pictures.

Before the implementation of the 8-4-4 system of education in 1985, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), which is an autonomous body, charged with the responsibility of approving books for use in schools, had published instructional materials in only a few languages. According to Ireri (1996), these are Teso, Luo, Kisii, Kikuyu, Kuria, Taita, Giriama, Kiswahili, Kamba, luhya, Maasai, and Kalenjin. These languages were fewer than the twenty languages recommended by the Beecher Report of 1949. It is evident from this that certain languages such as Kiembu have been left out and this continues to be so to date. With the change of the syllabus occasioned by the change from the 7-4-2-3 to the 8-4-4 system of education, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development is preparing instructional materials in additional languages like the Pokot, Turkana, and Kiembu (Ireri, 1996). However, the pace of development of such materials has been very slow and to-date there are no approved instructional materials written in Kiembu in Kiambo where this is the predominant language.

According to Ireri (1996), the use of about twenty two languages in Kenya, a country with more than forty languages means that many Kenyan children continue to use a
language other than their own mother tongue for literacy. The children in Embu for example continue to learn and interact in Gikuyu as there are hardly any approved learning instructional materials in Kiembu.

Most school going children in class 1 in rural Embu County acquire Kiembu as their first language. In school, they find themselves in a multilingual context where the resource materials used in the classroom are written in Gikuyu. They are also taught Kiswahili and English both as subjects and as language of classroom interaction. The classroom provides a conducive environment for language acquisition and learning.

According to Ellis (1985), acquisition is used to refer to picking up a language through exposure, whereas the term learning is used to refer to the conscious study of a language. The children acquire the languages used in the classroom as well as that used in informal linguistic settings like the home. Some studies conducted that have been guided by the Nativist Theory have shown that language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules. Chomsky (1968) postulates that acquisition requires meaningful interaction with the target language. The best method to ensure acquisition according to studies is to ensure comprehensible input is supplied.

Some studies that have been guided by Krashens Monitor Model have also shown that comprehensible input is the crucial and necessary ingredient for acquisition. Conscious learning is available to the performer only as a monitor. Krashen (1987) claims that utterances are initiated by the acquired system and that fluency in production is based on what we have picked through active communication. The respondents are in the critical period of language acquisition.
In a research carried out in both Kenya and Uganda on language policy and practices in education, it was noted that some teachers prefer the use of mother tongue in the first three years of primary education as it facilitates quick understanding and clear explanations of concepts (Muthwii, 2002). The teachers however observed that using mother tongue in teaching had several draw backs which include severe lack of books written in mother tongue and the fact that most teachers are not trained adequately to teach mother tongue. Kiamboa Primary school in Embu, the focus of our study, is affected by lack of books written in Kiembu. Mother tongue is taught using books written in Gikuyu.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The classroom provides a favorable environment for language acquisition as well as learning of an additional language. Most children in rural parts of Embu have acquired Kiembu before joining class one. In the classroom environment, most children are taught Gikuyu, English and Kiswahili. In the rural parts of Embu, Gikuyu is used as the language of the catchment area due to lack of materials written in Kiembu. The instructional materials used in the teaching of mother tongue are written in Gikuyu which is the language of instruction. This exposes learners to a language other than their first language which is Kiembu. This study seeks to find out the influence of Gikuyu instructional materials on the acquisition of Kiembu noun and verb lexical items on the children.
1.3 Research Objectives

1. To evaluate how effectively the 6-7 year olds use Kiembu noun and verb words before joining class one.

2. To analyse the influence of Gikuyu instructional materials on the acquisition of Kiembu noun and verb lexical items on the 6-7 year olds.

3. To determine the effect of the multilingual environment in the acquisition of Kiembu nouns and verbs by the 6-7 year olds.

1.4 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How effectively are the 6-7 year olds able to use Kiembu nouns and verbs before joining class one?

2. How does the use of Gikuyu instructional materials influence the acquisition of Kiembu nouns and verbs of the 6-7 year olds?

3. What is the effect of the multilingual environment in the acquisition of Kiembu nouns and verbs by the 6-7 year olds?

1.5 Research Assumptions

The study was based on the following assumptions:

1. Children aged 6-7 years are able to use Kiembu noun and verb words effectively.

2. Learning of mother tongue by 6-7 year olds using instructional materials written in Gikuyu influences the acquisition of Kiembu nouns and verbs.

3. The multilingual school environment affects the acquisition of Kiembu nouns and verbs.
1.6 Rationale for the Study

The study provides information on acquisition of lexicon by 6-7 year olds in a multilingual environment. It focuses on Kiembu, a Bantu language spoken in Kenya. It also contributes to the study of child language.

Orwenjo (2009) has noted that few studies have been conducted on lexical acquisition despite the central nature of the lexicon in the overall acquisition process. The rationale for this study rests on the observation that children in rural Embu continue to be taught using instructional materials written in Gikuyu. The study was expected to determine if the use of these materials influences the acquisition of Kiembu nouns and verbs. The findings could inform the need of using materials written in the children's mother tongue which is Kiembu. This could show the curriculum developers the need to fast track the writing of Kiembu instructional materials for use in classes 1-3.

The findings could inspire potential researchers to do more research on language acquisition in a multilingual set up to find out if this kind of linguistic environment influences acquisition of other levels of language like phonology and syntax.

1.7 Scope and Limitations

This study was limited to the acquisition of Kiembu noun and verb words by 6-7 year olds in a multilingual classroom setting. It was not possible to focus on the entire lexicon due to limited time and resources. The study mainly focused on common nouns like body parts, names of games and tools. The children were asked questions that centered on everyday topics that children encounter such as food, clothes, or their friends.
The focus was on activities that learners engage in during play time and storytelling sessions to identify the verbs. They were also asked questions about what they usually do while in school and at home.

The study was limited to the analysis of lexical items acquired by three children aged 6-7 years in class one and three others of the same age who had not gone to school. These children had already acquired Kiembu as their first language. The age bracket was suitable because according to Bradenburg (1979), the critical period for language acquisition is normally between 2 years and puberty. Again the study was limited to children in rural Embu which is an example of places where there is a discrepancy between language in education policy and practice.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature and also presents the theoretical framework on which the study is based. Literature on language acquisition was reviewed in the current study. The study was guided by the Nativist Theory, and The Krashens Monitor Model.

2.1 Literature Review

The focus of this section is a brief review of literature on relevant language acquisition studies. We shall examine the history of child language acquisition, role of linguistic environment, local studies conducted on child language acquisition and studies on lexical acquisition.

2.1.1 History of Child Language Acquisition.

The earliest approach to the study of child language was to keep a written diary of observations about one’s own child. Several small-scale studies were carried out especially towards the end of the 19th century, using data recorded in parental diaries (Crystal, 1998). Fasold (2006) observes that an inherent problem in this type of research is the fact that a diary consists of one observer who is taking notes on just one child, raising the question of whether this one child is representative of all others. But detailed, systematic investigation did not begin until the middle of the 20th century, when the tape recorder came into routine use. Crystal (1998) notes that this made it possible to keep a permanent record of samples of child speech, so that analysts could listen repeatedly to obscure extracts, and thus produce a detailed and accurate description.
Some of the early linguists who engaged in child language acquisition study are Preyer (1882) and Pelsma (1910).

Fasold (2006) notes that researchers began to audio record and transcribe everyday speech of children in the early 1960’s, in order to comprehend and produce basic language structures. Such studies focus on a small number of children interacting in natural contexts regularly over an extended period. These recordings are then transcribed and analyzed. The present study focused on a small number of children whose utterances were recorded, transcribed and then analyzed.

Whereas diary studies tend to be longitudinal, that is, studies of single children changing over time, the large sample studies tend to be cross sectional. These studies record the language behaviour of participants from at least two different groups. Fasold (2006) observes that because of the time-intensive nature of collecting, transcribing, and analyzing hours of language data in such close detail, often these observational studies include only small numbers of child participants. The current study focused on only six children.

One of the early explanations of language acquisition was rooted in Behaviorism, a theory that posited that language is essentially a habit, a behaviour like any other, which is mastered through general learning principles. These principles include imitation, reinforcement and punishment (Fasold 2006). The Behaviorists wanted to develop a theory of learning where the child’s changes and behaviour were traced back to observable conditions of the child’s environment. Within this view, the linguistic environment is seen as a crucial determining factor in the acquisition of language. The
child is thus seen as being passively controlled by her/his environment. The current study tested this hypothesis by seeking to find out the effect of the multilingual linguistic environment on the children under study.

In sharp contrast with Behaviorism which sees language acquisition as an external process, Chomsky (1986) views all human beings as having a language faculty or mental property with which all human beings are endowed. This faculty is innate and no amount of stimulus–response training will bring it into being, even among animals that have articulator organs similar to the human being like the chimpanzees (Chomsky 1986). According to the hypothesis, a baby is born with some inherited grammar searching device to acquire any language. This informed the current study which sort to establish if the respondents had acquired Gikuyu in the school environment.

2.1.2 Role of Linguistic Environment

Chomsky (1965) posits that exposure to language alone cannot account satisfactorily for acquisition. Input is seen merely as a trigger which activates the internal mechanisms. Chomsky (1965) further argues that the imperfect nature of the mothers’ speech input in first language acquisition makes it unlikely that any child could successfully internalize the rule system of a language. He argues that the Language Acquisition Device which every human being is endowed with contains principles of Universal Grammar which specifies the grammatical rules common to all natural languages. Furrow et al. (1979) found a large number of strong relationships between measures of mother’s input and formal measures of children’s speech. They concluded that the linguistic environment must be considered a significant contributor to all aspects of the language learning process. Gleitman et al. (1963) argue that although there are some environmental effects
in acquisition, these are regulated by the learners own dispositions. They note that in
general, the available evidence suggests that the route of L1 acquisition does not change
in any significant way as a result of differences in the linguistic environment.

Our study sought to test this hypothesis by observing if the children’s L1 is affected by
the multilingual environment.

Yule (1985) observes that the language a child learns is not genetically inherited, but is
acquired in a particular language-using environment. All normal children, regardless of
culture develop language at roughly the same time (Yule, 1985).

2.1.3 Studies on Acquisition of African Languages.

Studies on the acquisition of African languages have been done by different scholars
over time. Some of the studies include those of Blount (1969), Nyamasyo (1985),

Blount (1969) focused on the acquisition of language by Luo children. He based his
investigations on the grammatical relations of the constructions of children at early stage
of development. He observed the order of development of grammatical morphemes in
Dholuo. He noted that emergence of inflection in Luo children occurs at very early
stages of development. He also noted that the inflection of the verb for pronominal
subject and object occurs at 20-21 months. Ndung’u (1991) points out that Blount’s
study was hampered by language barrier because his research subjects spoke a different
language from his. From his research, we learn that a researcher has an advantage if he or she shares the target language with the participant. In this study we have this advantage.

Nyamasyo (1985) focused on the syntactic structures in the grammar of a four year old. The respondent had a multilingual background (Luo, Kikamba, and Kiswahili). The aim was to establish the syntactic structures the child had acquired. Nyamasyo also tested the assumption that by the age of five, children have mastered the syntax of their first language. She also investigated the complexity of the syntax acquired, aspects of code mixing and the occurrence of grammatical sentences. Nyamasyo’s findings indicated that a four year old who is acquiring language in a multilingual environment will acquire the language he/she is sufficiently exposed to most. The level of acquisition by the child will be determined by the length of time of exposure, the intensity of use of the language, and his immediate contacts. The research findings indicated that despite being multilingual, the participant mastered the syntax of Kiswahili over the other languages. The findings also showed that Kiswahili was the predominant language acquired; only lexical items in Kikamba and Dholuo were realized. The observation was attributed to the fact that Kiswahili was the language the child was exposed to most of the time.

The current study sought to establish if children learning language in a multilingual setting will acquire the noun and verb lexical items of all the languages they are exposed to. Nyamasyo’s study focused on acquisition of syntactic structures in an informal setting while our study focused on acquisition of noun and verb lexical items in a formal classroom setting.

Ndung’u (1981) focused on the acquisition of Gikuyu syntactic structures. She set out to find out the level of mastery of the syntax of children from a monolingual
environment. She also sought to find out if it was just an assumption or a fact that children master syntax by age 5. The study found out that the children mastered the syntax. They used the rules in both experimental and spontaneous situations. The study went beyond Nyamasyo’s by looking at the syntax acquired by children of different ages. Our study is different from Ndung’u’s as it focuses on acquisition of noun and verb lexical items in a multilingual context.

Ogol (2005) focused on the acquisition of tense by two Dholuo speaking children in two different linguistic backgrounds, one monolingual and the other multilingual. Her study found that the children from the monolingual environment had an edge over their multilingual counterparts when it came to marking tense tonally; those from the multilingual environment constructed utterances in the past tense incorrectly. There was also a remarkable use of variety of morphological and lexical tense markers by children from the monolingual environment. Ogol noted that all infants will have the same initial ability and linguistic experience will play a role in subsequent development (Ingram, 1989). These findings informed the current study in the evaluation of whether the multilingual environment had an influence on the acquisition of Kiembu.

The acquisition of Lukhayo concordial morphemes by Lukhayo speaking pre-school children aged 3 and 5 years was the focus of a study by Makeni (2006). The main objective of Makeni’s study was to find out whether the social variable of age and sex has an effect on acquisition of concordial morphemes in Lukhayo. He also investigated whether some concordial morphemes are acquired before others. The study revealed that some concordial morphemes in Lukhayo are acquired before others.
Orwenjo (2009) investigated how Dholuo speaking children, acquiring their native language engaged in the production of lexical innovations in an effort to bridge the lexical gaps in their mental lexicons, resulting from the failure to retrieve or learn the conventional forms.

The current study just like those discussed above focuses on language acquisition. It however paid attention to acquisition of lexical items in a formal multilingual setting. Bohannon and Leubecker (1988) explain the importance of exposure to a language in their claim that acquisition does not occur in a void. It does so within children’s conversations with more mature language users. Such conversations are a primary source of linguistic data, which children incorporate into their own speech. This is relevant to the kind of data which we collected in settings that allowed the children to interact with Kiembu and Gikuyu languages, for example, by telling stories or reporting events observed as they played games that demanded the use of verbal communication. They could also perform tasks and use language to respond or ask questions. Krashen (1987) raises the same view that acquisition is only achieved through meaningful interaction in the target language.

Burling (1959) observed the natural development in his young son’s acquisition of two languages: English and Garo in Pakistan. In a monolingual English environment, the three year old was observed to acquire and speak the new language - Garo. The innate disposition attributed to Chomsky’s postulation of a language Acquisition Device (LAD) is displayed in this observation. Burling’s observation is relevant to our study as it sought to investigate the process of lexical acquisition in a multilingual environment. He found
that the child acquires language that it is exposed to for as long as it is suitable to the
developmental stage of the child.

Fasold (2006) observes that one aspect of bilingual language acquisition is that all
bilingual children go through a period of code mixing. Bilingual children are able to
speak and understand two languages. He explains that code mixing is different from
code switching which is the intentional use of more than one language. Code mixing
refers to mixing of two or more languages or language varieties in speech (Fasold, 2006).
Some studies have shown that code mixing reflects children’s developing grammar and
lexical system and the lack of differentiation between the two languages.

The classroom provides a formal environment for language acquisition. In the schools
under study, children have already acquired Kiembu and this is the language they use in
their interactions. In school however, they are taught mother tongue using materials
written in Gikuyu which could influence their acquisition of the target language. The
current study assessed the influence that use of materials written in Gikuyu has had on
the acquisition of Kiembu.

2.1.4 Studies of Lexical Acquisition

Clark (1993) defines the lexicon of a language as the stock of words that the speakers of
that particular language can draw on in order to communicate. From the age of 12
months, children acquire roughly ten new words a day (Bloom, 2000). In the absence of
any formal training, very young children fast map words to meanings with hardly any
errors after only one or two exposures. Bloom (2001) observes that word learning is the
result of simple associate learning mechanism. He also rejects the notion that children
possess constraints either innate or learned that are specifically earmarked for word meaning. Bloom (2001), however agrees with the view that innate dispositions play a part in formation of certain kinds of concepts. In some cultures, parents and care givers do not overtly name objects for children at all yet word learning proceeds at the same rate as in cultures where they do.

Crystal (1998) observes that the learning of vocabulary is the most noticeable feature of the early months of language acquisition. From the point when a child’s first word is identified, there is a steady lexical growth in both comprehension and production. By 18 months, it is thought that most children can speak about five times as many words compared to when they started speaking. Our study focused on 6-7 year olds and it sought to establish their level of competence in the use of Kiembu lexicon. Crystal (1998) notes that young children talk about what is going on around them - the here and now - and rapidly build a vocabulary in several semantic fields.

Several stages in the acquisition process have been identified (Yule, 1985). The cooing stage occurs in the first 3 months. Babbling follows by 6 months and it is characterized by production of different vowels and consonants such as fricatives and nasals. By 9-12 months, recognizable intonation patterns of the consonant and vowel sounds are produced. One word or holophrastic stage occurs by age 2-18 months. By this time, there is production of single unit utterances. Two word stage is realized at age 18-20 months and the telegraphic speech-multi-word stage at 2 and 3 years. At around 18-20 months of age, many children show a rapid increase of their vocabulary size; the dramatic acceleration in learning is often referred to as vocabulary spurt or naming explosion (Dromi, 1987, Goldfield, 1990).
For English speaking children, by the age of six years, when they enter elementary school, evidence shows that they have frequently already grasped around 14000 words (Carey, 1978). This indicates that children are learning, on average, approximately nine or ten new words per day during this period. This rapid rate of early language development has made many scholars believe that there must be a "language instinct" that is innately coded in the human genome (Chomsky, 1968, Pinker, 1994). However some researchers believe that the child's linguistic environment including language input, that is, the speech a child hears during daily life also plays a critical role in language development (Cohen, 1999).

The child's lexicon includes a considerable number of words that belong to various grammatical categories (Hart et al. 1995). In addition, children often experience a wide variety of differences in the language input that they receive from their environment. Despite the wide variation of input they receive, children often show similar patterns in their early acquired vocabularies (Goldfield, 1992).

Research has found that the early vocabularies of English-speaking children display proportionally more nouns than words in other lexical categories (Gentner, 1982). Gentner proposed two interrelated hypotheses concerning learnability: the natural partitions hypothesis and the relational relativity hypothesis. The natural partitions hypothesis states that concrete objects and entities are easier to individuate in the world (and therefore easier to label) than are the relational constellations that form the referents of verbs or prepositions (Gentner, 1982). According to Gentner, relations require the presence of the entities they link; thus it appears that entities are psychologically represented before the relations between them. For example, young children given a
similarity task often respond according to object similarity, even when they are given repeated feedback that the correct response should be based on relational similarity. The relational relativity hypothesis states that verb meanings are more variably composed across languages than are noun meanings. Relational terms such as verbs and prepositions vary crosslinguistically in their meanings to a greater degree than do concrete nouns. Because objects are readily individuated in the world, the denotations of concrete nouns can be derived by linking a word with an existing concept. But the meanings of verbs and prepositions (even in concrete perceptual arenas) are not “out there” in the same sense. This means that children cannot learn verbs from the word-to-world mapping alone; they must discover how their particular language chooses to combine the elements of experience into verb meanings (Gentner, 1982). Children are said to develop lexical competence at different rates. This variance may reflect the differences in children’s external linguistic inputs (Cohen, 1999).

The major question in studies of bilingual first language acquisition (BFLA) is whether the developmental path and time course of language development in bilingual first language learners is the same as that of children learning only one language. Underlying this question is the theoretical issue of whether children’s ability to learn a language is challenged in anyway by the acquisition of two languages.

Studies that have examined age of first word production report that children in a bilingual linguistic context produce their first words at about the same age as monolingual children of 12 to 13 months. However the relative amount of time spent in each language can affect the relative vocabulary size in each language of a bilingual
(Pearson 1997). This observation gives insight to our study which looks at language acquisition in a multilingual context.

2.1.5 Studies on Grammar of Kiembu and Gikuyu Languages

Gikuyu is a language spoken by a Kenyan community located in the Central part of Kenya. The language is lexically similar to Kiembu and Kimbere. Kiembu and Kimbere are languages spoken by a Kenyan community located in the Eastern part of Kenya. Kimbeere is a dialect of Embu. Both Gikuyu and Kiembu are inflectional languages. They are Bantu languages that are closely related.

Studies have been done on Kiembu and Gikuyu languages by different scholars. Some of the studies include those of Nyaga (2014), Maringah (1987), and Mugane (1997). Nyaga (2014) studied reduplication in Kiembu. She sought to find out how reduplication interacts with morphological and phonological processes. She found out that reduplication affects the semantic value of words in Kiembu. She also found out that reduplication in Kiembu is a case of morphological doubling and that reduplication targets the root and stem of a word. The study was relevant to the current study as it gave insight into the noun and verb structures of Kiembu.

Maringah (1987) analysed the structure of verbs in Kimbeere. She also analysed inflectional morphemes which when affixed to the verb root extend its meaning. Kimbeere is a dialect of Kiembu and the two languages are closely related. The study informed this current study on the nature of Kiembu verbs.

Mugane (1997) indicates in his work that the most important elements in Gikuyu are nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. He notes that most Gikuyu nouns consist of a
prefix and a stem. For example, the noun “muthuri” (a man) consists of the prefix “mu” and the root “thuri”. Most other nouns can be inflected in a similar manner. Mugane (1997) also indicates that in every noun, it is the stem that carries the real meaning of the noun while the prefix gives extra information about the noun, for example, whether it is singular or plural.

In both Gikuyu and Kiembu, it is the prefix that shows the sort of concordial agreement that the noun should enter with other grammatical elements in a sentence (Mugane, 1997).

Wamberia (1993) looks at the effect that nouns have on syntactic constructions. In Bantu, nouns that take identical concordial agreement patterns are grouped together, since they are perceived by the speaker to be members of the same group. He further notes that the classes group themselves into singular-plural pairs. For example:

Class 1-mundu (person) singular
Class 2 andu (people) plural

Gikuyu and Kiembu according to studies are Bantu languages which are closely related in terms of their lexicon. However there are some phonological differences in the two languages. For example, Kanana (2010) notes that Embu have a voiced labial-dental fricative /v/ whereas the Northern and Southern dialects of Gikuyu have a voiceless glottal fricative /h/. Kiembu language does not have the phoneme /h/ but it has /v/ instead. These phonological differences and others are what mark the difference between Kikuyu and Kiembu.
2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study focuses on the process of language acquisition and acquisition of lexical items in a multilingual context. The study is guided by the Nativist Theory and Krashen’s Monitor Model. The Nativist Theory gives insight into the process of Language acquisition. The Krashen’s Monitor Model helps in explaining how the children acquire the language they are exposed to. The two theories will complement each other in informing our study on the process of language acquisition.

2.2.1 Nativist Theory

The Nativist Theory was propounded by Chomsky (1959). The Theory posits that every human being is biologically endowed with the capacity to acquire language through a device called Language Acquisition Device (LAD). The Language Acquisition Device contains principles of Universal Grammar (UG) which specifies the grammatical rules common to all natural languages. It is from this Universal Grammar that a child’s knowledge of language is derived. The Universal Grammar also contains a set of procedures for the universal principles to the particular language the child is exposed to (Chomsky, 1986). Chomsky notes that input does not shape the acquisition process. It is the Language Acquisition Device that manipulates the input to produce language. The input should be suitable to the development stage of the child. The Language Acquisition Device aides the child in learning the language being heard. Chomsky also states that the learning mechanism operates through its capacity to formulate rules about the language once the individual has been exposed to it. The essential condition is exposure to the language and as long as this exposure continues the learning mechanism will operate. The greater the exposure to meaningful language the more effectively the learner can formulate and revise his hypotheses about the structure of the language. Despite the fact
that nativists attribute the language acquisition to the Language Acquisition Device, the role of the linguistic environment cannot be ignored.

One of the tenets of this theory is that children reach near mastery of their native tongue in just a few short years without instruction or any apparent effort. Nativists further argue that all children, regardless of the language they are learning or the quantity or quality of input they receive from their caregivers acquire their mother-tongue at the same rate and by progressing through the same developmental stages.

Another argument of nativists is that the adult speech that young children hear is filled with incomplete sentences, false starts and slips of the tongue. Nevertheless, children take this fragmentary and degenerate input and are able to construct a complex grammar. This is relevant to our study as it seeks to find out how effectively the non school going children are able to use verbs and nouns in their utterances.

The Language Acquisition Device is what allows children to attend to language and develop an appropriate grammar quickly without any specialized input. According to some researchers, there is a time limit known as the critical period for this process to take place. The critical period hypothesis as proposed by Lenneberg (1967) holds that primary language acquisition must occur during a critical period which ends at about the age of puberty. The nativist perspective that views language acquisition as a function of complex mental processes explains the rapidity and uniformity with which children acquire language structures within a limited time. The children under study are in the critical period of language acquisition and are therefore expected to acquire the language that they are exposed to. These children acquire language provided the learning
environment is linguistically rich enough. The study sought to establish whether the children acquire the Gikuyu Language they are exposed to in the classroom.

Some studies on vocabulary development have documented the language input that children receive and shown a clear relationship between the language which children hear and the language which they produce (Crystal (1998). The children at home are exposed to Kiembu while those in school are exposed to Kiembu, Gikuyu, Kiswahili and English. The study sought to find out therefore if the students in the school set up had acquired Gikuyu nouns and verbs. The respondents had already acquired Kiembu before joining school. The Theory helped the researcher to establish if exposure to Gikuyu had led to acquisition of the Gikuyu nouns and verbs by the respondents.

2.2.2 Krashens Monitor Model

Krashen’s Monitor Model is a Theory of second language acquisition. It was propounded by Krashen in 1982. According to the Monitor Model, the following five hypothesis account for the acquisition of a second language:

- Acquisition-Learning Distinction Hypothesis
- Natural Order Hypothesis
- Monitor Hypothesis
- Affective Filter Hypothesis.
- Input Hypothesis.

The Acquisition-Learning Distinction Hypothesis posits that there are two ways of developing language ability. This is by acquisition and learning. According to Krashen, acquisition is a sub conscious process, as in the case of a child learning its own first language. Learning according to the hypothesis is a conscious process of developing a
language. This hypothesis is relevant to our study as it gives insight into the acquisition and learning process that children go through in the school environment. The children acquire the language that is spoken by those that they interact with both in the home and school environment. They also learn the language that they are taught in the class sessions.

The Natural Order Hypothesis posits that language is acquired in a predictable order by all learners. This order according to Krashen does not depend on the apparent simplicity or complexity of the grammatical features involved. Krashen notes that the acquirers of a given language tend to acquire certain grammatical structures early, and others later. For example, the progressive marker "ing" and the plural marker /s/ in English were among the first morphemes acquired by the learners, while the third person singular /s/ were typically acquired much later. This hypothesis is not relevant to our study as the order of acquisition was not the subject of our study.

The Monitor Hypothesis posits that acquisition and learning are used in very specific ways. According to Krashen, acquisition "initiates" our utterances in a second language and is responsible for our fluency. Learning has only one function, and that is as a Monitor, or editor. Learning makes changes in the form of our utterance after it has been produced by the acquired system. This according to Krashen implies that formal rules, or conscious learning, play only a limited role in second language performance. This hypothesis is relevant to the current study which seeks to find out the influence of Gikuyu instructional materials on the acquisition of Kiembu noun and lexical items on the 6-7 year olds. The children mostly used Kiembu nouns and verbs despite being taught using materials written in Gikuyu.
The Affective Filter Hypothesis claims that affective filter is a mental screen that filters input from reaching the language acquisition center in the brain. It postulates that acquisition takes place faster when learners are motivated, and also when they have self confidence and low anxiety. The Hypothesis maintains that input is the primary causative variable in second language acquisition, and that affective variables act to impede or facilitate the delivery of input to the language acquisition device. This Hypothesis was not relevant to the current study as the objective of the study was to find out the effect of the multilingual environment on the acquisition of Kiembu and not to find out the influence of the affective variables.

The Input Hypothesis posits that we acquire language when we are exposed to either spoken or written language. The Input Hypothesis focuses on how we move from one stage to another in the acquisition of language. Krashen (1982) uses the symbol $i$ to represent current competence and $I$ to represent the next level of competence. The hypothesis claims that a necessary condition to move from stage $i$ to $I$ is that the acquirer understands input that contains $i + I$. We acquire only when we understand language that contains structure that is a little beyond where we are now (Krashen, 1982). This Hypothesis guided our study in the analysis of the language used by the children.

The Hypothesis was relevant to the current study which sought to find out the influence of using materials written in Gikuyu on the acquisition of Kiembu nouns and verbs. Krashen claims that the learners acquire input that is easy to understand. The language used in class must be comprehensible to the learners and once it is, the learners automatically acquire it. The $i$ was the competence of the children before joining school and $I$ their competence after joining school. According to Krashen, the Input Hypothesis
answers the question of how a language acquirer develops competency over time. Krashen argues that to understand language that contains structures that one has not yet acquired, one uses context, knowledge of the world, and extra-linguistic information to help one understand language directed at us. According to the hypothesis, we acquire language by “going for meaning” first and as a result we acquire structures. To acquire language in a classroom situation, the teacher has to provide comprehensible input. This study sought to establish if the children acquired the Gikuyu nouns and verbs used in the classroom during the learning sessions. The competence of 6-7 year olds in the use of Kiembu was assessed to determine if exposure to Gikuyu had affected their ability to speak in Kiembu. The researcher asked the children questions related to objects in their environment to assess their knowledge in the use of nouns and verbs. The theory was helpful as it guided the study in the analysis of the nouns and verbs used by the respondents.
3.0 Introduction

This section deals with methodology under the following headings: research design, area of study, sample size and sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

The research adopted a case study design. A case study is an in-depth study of a particular situation. It is used to narrow down a broad field of research into one easily researchable topic. In collection of data, one method is to use direct observation where the required behavior is observed in a particular setting. Another method is participant observation where data is collected by an observer who is a regular participant in the activities being observed. One can also interview the respondents.

Qualitative method provides in-depth explanations. It uses simple descriptive statistics to analyse data. The nouns and verbs used by the respondents were recorded to determine which Gikuyu were and which Kiembu were.

3.2 Area of Study

The study was carried out in Kiamboa primary school and Kiamboa village in Kyeni, Runyenjes division of Embu County. In this school, the learners in class 1-3 use instructional materials written in Gikuyu despite the fact that the mother tongue of the pupils is Kiembu. This is because, as earlier stated, there are no approved materials written in Kiembu available in the school. Kiamboa village was also purposively selected
because the dominant language of the inhabitants is Kiembu. The place is far from any urban setting and the inhabitants are mostly subsistence farmers who speak Kiembu. The researcher is quite familiar with the area and therefore it was easy to establish networks that effectively facilitated data collection during research.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure
The sample in this study constituted three school going children and three non-school going children. They were selected using purposive sampling. This is where the researcher purposively or with a lot of bias selects the sample by looking for certain characteristics in the population (Bernard, 2000). The researcher collected information about their home environments to ascertain that they had not interacted with Gikuyu speakers. The researcher also ensured that the respondents picked were those who had not travelled outside their home environments. In the current study, 3 children who were between 6-7 years old and had not joined school and another three who were of the same age and had joined school were selected. This age bracket was suitable for the study because the critical period for language acquisition is normally between two years and puberty (Bradenburg, 1979). The age bracket was also suitable in this study because children join class one when they are 6-7 years old. At this time, they have already mastered their native tongue and their Language Acquisition Device is active. In addition, Krashen (1985) observes that children have already acquired the first language by age five. According to Orwenjo (2009), a lot of activities characterize the child's linguistic development during these ages.

Three children were purposively selected from Kiamboa primary school and three non-school going children from Kiamboa village. A small number of respondents was
preferred because it would not be possible within the short duration of research to carry out an intensive study of too many respondents.

The non-school going children were identified as A1, A2 and A3. The school going children were identified as B1, B2 and B3.

3.4 Data Collection

The study took an Ethnographic approach to data collection. Ethnography is the in depth description and interpretation of cultural patterns or language phenomena within a given social group. It involves observation of the language used, interaction with the group under observation and also interviewing members of the social group. Tape recording is also used as a method of data collection. This method as Orwenjo (2009) notes can have disadvantages as it leaves the researcher with little option but to take just what the situation offers. In reference to Forster (1990), Orwenjo (2009) notes that because researchers have specific goals in mind, they may break out the ethnographic paradigm and manipulate naturally occurring situations to some extent. Orwenjo (2009) further notes that the researcher may deliberately engage children in activities designed to elicit certain language form; or he/she may set parents and children tasks that encourage the communication of certain ideas.

3.4.1 Data Collection Instruments

Tape recording of utterances was the main tool of data collection and was complemented by field notes. Different tapes were used to record the stories told by the different children. Each tape was then marked with the details of the respondents to facilitate
identification of the stories and utterances for each one of them. Oral interviews were also used to elicit responses from the respondents.

3.4.2 Data Collection Procedure

Three school going children in class one at Kiambo primary school were recorded as they played in the field with their classmates during break time and also during class sessions. The researcher was able to identify the different voices of the children as she had had many sessions with them before the recording started. Some of the activities the learners engaged in during class sessions included art activities where the teacher would draw different pictures on the black board and then ask the learners to name them. Afterwards, the learners would be asked to draw the pictures in their exercise books.

During mathematics lessons, the teacher would bring objects which would be used to teach the concept of numbers. The various objects would be described mentioning their colours, sizes and shapes. This integrated approach of teaching would help the learners acquire not only the mathematical concepts but also vocabulary.

Another activity that the learners engaged in was storytelling and singing. The teacher would read the learners a story in Gikuyu. The learners could also read aloud short stories from books which were written in Gikuyu. The teacher would ask the learners to either retell the same stories in their own words or tell their original ones. It was noted that the books used were all written in Gikuyu.

Other activities included “ordering”, where the learners would be asked to order objects from the smallest to the biggest and vice versa. A lot of verbal interaction between the learners and teacher would take place during these activities.
All the utterances collected were recorded and transcribed. The researcher did not have problems placing the utterances in the Gikuyu and Kiembu noun and verb categories as she is conversant with both Gikuyu and Kiembu languages. The Gikuyu and the Kiembu words used were listed in tables. Samples of the utterances were then analyzed.

Utterances of the other three children were recorded in their home which was their naturalistic environment. Parents would be present during the interactions with the children at home. This was helpful as the children would not have been at ease interacting with a stranger in the absence of their parents. The sessions were supposed to be as natural as possible. The researcher recorded all the conversations in the home environment.

During the question sessions at home in which collection of data was done, the children were asked in Kiembu to perform tasks that require language use. In order to get familiarized with the children; the researcher asked them questions on their background such as their parent’s names, home, playmates, their friends and the games they like most. Each participant was interviewed three times, each session lasting about 30 minutes to enable collection of adequate data. Half hour samples are a popular measure though other people use a sample consisting of a fixed number of utterances, between 50-100 utterances (Bloom and Lahey (1978). The children cannot concentrate for a long period and this partly explains the reason for having relatively short sessions. The researcher selected only those questions which solicited desired responses. Informal interviews were used during the sessions. During story telling, the learners were asked to tell a story of their choice. These were also recorded.
According to Carnie (2001) children are not as conscious of their languages as adults. Makeni (2006) also notes that as much as people are conscious of their language when being asked questions or tape-recorded, this consciousness eventually disappears and language is used normally. The children in our study used language normally after getting used to the researcher.

3.5 Data Analysis

The utterances recorded and the stories were all transcribed. Particular attention was paid to the structure of the words. Translation of Kiembu utterances was done and the equivalent meaning in English recorded. An analysis of the children’s responses was made. The nouns in the responses were identified and classes indicated. The verbs were interlinearized. All the nouns and verbs that the children had learnt were put in different categories. One category comprised all Gikuyu words uttered in the classroom situation and the other all Gikuyu words uttered by the children while playing and while at home. This helped in assessing how much Gikuyu the children had acquired. It also helped in establishing how learning using instructional materials written in Gikuyu influences the acquisition of Kiembu lexical items. A percentage representation of Gikuyu verbs and nouns was calculated and the results depicted in form of charts. This was done by calculating the ratio of Gikuyu verbs and nouns used by the school going children against the Kiembu nouns and verbs that they used.

Data collected from the non-school going children was also analyzed to establish if this cohort used any other language apart from Kiembu. The nouns they used were put in one category and the verbs in another. The researcher then compared these utterances with those recorded from the school going children. The verbs uttered by the respondents
were interlinealized by the researcher. This was done by identifying the different constituents of the verbs. All the nouns used had their noun classes identified.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

The researcher obtained authorization from the County Director of Education in Embu before going to the field. The researcher also had sort a permit to allow her to conduct research from The National Council for Science and Technology. The teachers and parents were briefed on the nature of the research and were requested to allow participation of the children who were minors. The parents were asked to sign consent forms indicating that they had allowed their children to be respondents. The research findings were handled with ethical considerations to avoid embarrassing any participant.
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents analyses and discusses the data collected. It is divided into four sections. Section 4.0 provides the introduction to the chapter. Section 4.1 presents the data collected. This includes analysis of the stories and conversations recorded from the respondents. Section 4.2 analyses the nouns and verbs identified from both the pre-school children and the school going children. It also gives a descriptive analysis of data while section 4.3 analyses the nouns and verbs used by the school going children in the home environment.

The aim of this study was to determine how effectively the 6-7 year olds are able to use Kiembu noun and verb words before joining class one. It also sought to establish the influence of Gikuyu instructional materials on the acquisition of Kiembu noun and verb lexical items in children and lastly, the study further sought to establish the influence of the multilingual environment in the acquisition of the first language by Kiembu speaking children.

Three children aged between 6-7 years who had not joined class one were engaged in storytelling, oral interviews, and informal conversations to determine how effectively they could use Kiembu nouns and verbs. The researcher also interacted with three standard one children aged 6-7 years to determine the influence that learning using instructional materials written in Gikuyu has had on their acquisition of Kiembu. The interaction with this cohort of school going children was also extended to their home environment to determine if they used the Gikuyu words acquired while there.
In line with our objectives, this study utilizes both qualitative data analysis methods. Our study is guided by two theories namely; Nativist Theory by Chomsky (1959) and Krashens Monitor Model (Krashen 1982). Our focus in the data collected is on the noun and verb words. The nouns are presented in bold while the verbs are in italics.

4.1 Nouns and Verbs used in Stories by Non-School Going Children in their Home Environment

The stories by non-school going children are in Kiembu language. Kiembu is a Bantu language which is agglutinative. Dependent morphemes are affixed to the independent morpheme to derive a certain meaning to the surface verb. All nouns also have prefixes which designate the class membership.

Table 1 summarizes the seventeen identifiable classes of Kiembu nouns with their noun class prefixes based on concordial agreement patterns. The table has been adapted from Nyaga (2014).
### Table 1: Noun Classes with Singular and Plural Morphemes in Kiembu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>mu</td>
<td>mundu</td>
<td>person</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>andu</td>
<td>people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>mu</td>
<td>muti</td>
<td>tree</td>
<td>mi</td>
<td>miti</td>
<td>trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>egembe</td>
<td>mango</td>
<td>ma</td>
<td>magembe</td>
<td>mangoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>ki</td>
<td>kithima</td>
<td>well</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>ithima</td>
<td>wells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>n-</td>
<td>mbia</td>
<td>rat</td>
<td>n-</td>
<td>mbia</td>
<td>rats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/10</td>
<td>Ru</td>
<td>ru-tambi</td>
<td>thread</td>
<td>n-</td>
<td>n-ndambi</td>
<td>many small chicken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/13</td>
<td>ka</td>
<td>ka-guku</td>
<td>small chicken</td>
<td>tu</td>
<td>tu-guku</td>
<td>many small chicken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/6</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o-viki</td>
<td>wedding</td>
<td>ma-</td>
<td>maviki</td>
<td>weddings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/6</td>
<td>gu</td>
<td>gutara</td>
<td>advice</td>
<td>ma</td>
<td>mataro</td>
<td>advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/17</td>
<td>va</td>
<td>vandu</td>
<td>a definite place</td>
<td>ku</td>
<td>kundu</td>
<td>indefinite place</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adopted from Nyaga (2014)

Below are stories told by the non school going children labeled as A1, A2 and A3. The nouns are in bold while the verbs are in italics. The verbs have been interlinearized. The nouns classes of the various nouns have been indicated.

**Story by A1.**

1. Tene ni *kwari* na *arata* athatu metagwa *Nyaga, Njeru* na *Njiru.*

Tene ni *ku* a *ri* na a *arata* athatu ma *itagw a*

Long ago Foc *be* T Asp with C2 friend C2 three C2 called *Fv*

Nyaga, Njeru and Njiru.

C 1 C 1 C 1

Long ago there *were* three *friends.* They *were called* Nyaga, Njeru and Njiru.
2. Mathiicaga kurithi a ngombe ciao mutituri

Ma thii cag a ku rithi a ngombe ciao mutituri
C 2 go asp Fv inf graze Fv C 10 cows theirs C 3 forest
They would go to graze their cows in the forest
magacoka utuku kumama mucii.
Ma ga cok a utuku ku mam a mucii
C 1 asp return Fv C 14 night inf sleep Fv C 3 home.
They would return at night to sleep at home.

3. Muthenya umwe ng’ombe ciacokire ikiriwa ni cimba.

Muthenya u mwe ngombe ci a cokire i ki ri w a ni cimba
C 3 Day C 3 one C 10 cow C 9 then Fv Sm inf eat pass Fv by C 10 lion
One day the cows were all eaten by a lion


Ni ma riv ire ni vava u ao
Foc C 2 beat asp pass Fv by C 1 father C 2 theirs
They were beaten by their father.

In the above example, the subject used nouns and verbs. She also used the nouns appropriately. The respondent was quite eloquent while narrating the story. It is evident from the story that the child was competent in the use of Kiembu nouns and verbs.

Story by A2

5. Tene ni kwari mviti. Mviti ni nyamu ngoroku muno.

Tene ni ku ar i mviti. Mviti ni nyamu ngoroku muno
Long ago Foc T was Fv C 10 hyena. Hyena foc C 10 animal greedy very
Long time ago there was a hyena. Hyena is a very greedy animal.
6. **Muthenya umwe igitii niyeguire mucingu wa nyama.**

Muthenya umwe i gi thi i ni i a igu ir e mucingu wa nyama.

C3 Day C3 one C9 T go Fv Foc C 9 T hear asp Fv C3 aroma of C10 meat.

One day as it *went* it *smelt* the *aroma* of *meat*.

7. **Ni yarigirwe nakuria mucingu waumaga.**

Ni i a rig 'ir w e nakuria mucingu u a um ag a

Foc Sm C9 not *know* asp *pass* Fv where C3 *aroma* C3 T *come* asp Fv

It *did not know* where the *aroma* was *coming* from.

8. **Igikira ikiyuria uria ingivota kuria nyama iyo.**

I gi kir a i ki i uri a uri a i ngi vot a ku ri a nyama

C9 T be quiet fv Sub T Ob ask Fv how Fv C 9 able Fv T eat Fv C10 meat

i yo

C9 that

It *kept quiet* *asked* itself how it would be *able* to *eat* that *meat*.

9. **Yacokire gwiciria itaganyuke niguo ikinyire nyama.**

i a cok ir e ku iciri a i taganyuk e niguo i kiny ir e

C9 Sm returned asp Fv Inf *think* Fv C9 *astride* Fv so that C9 *reach* asp Fv *nyama*

C10

It decided to *walk astride* so as to *reach* the *meat*. 

Ni i a-taganyuk ir e i ki thi i cag a
Foc C9 T astride asp Fv C9 T go Fv asp Fv
It walked with its legs apart

11. Yacokire ikiunika kuguru.

i a cok ir e i ki unik a kuguru
C9 Sm return asp Fv C9 T break Fv leg
It broke its leg.


Nikio mviti i thi i cag a i ki thu ag a
That’s why C10 hyena C9 go Fv hab Fv C9 T limp hab Fv
That’s why hyena walks with a limp.

The above narrative has both nouns and verbs. A2 used both verbs and nouns correctly during narration. This may be an indication that the subject is competent in the use of Kiembu language.

Story by A3

13. Muthenya umwe kaana ga gaconi nikauragirwe ni tumwanake twiri.

Muthenya umwe kaana ka kaconi ni ka urag ir w e ni
C 3 Day one C 12 child C 12 bird Foc C12 kill asp pass Fv by
tumuanake tu iri
C13 boy C 13 two.

One day the young one of a bird was killed by two young boys.
14. Twathiite kurithia ng'ombe.

Tu a thi it e ku rithi a cow

Ist Pl Pron Sm go asp Fv inf graze Fv C10 cow

They had gone to graze cows.

15. Wauraga gaconi niki?

U a urag a gaconi ni ki?

2nd Sing Pron T kill Fv C12 bird Foc why?

Why did you kill the birds?

16. Twana tutu nitwaurirue ni mundu wavitukaga.

Tuana tu tu ni tu a uri ir we ni mundu u a vituk C13 child C13 these Foc C13 T ask asp pass Fv by person C1 T pass ag a asp Fv

The children were asked by a passerby.

17. Twana tuu tukin 'garia tondu tutiendaga kurivua.

Tuana tu u tu ki ngari a tondu tu ti endag a ku riv C13 child C13 those Sm T run Fv because C13 Neg want Fv Inf beat w a pass Fv

The young children ran away because they did not want to be beaten.

18. Rugano ni rwa thira.

Story ni ru a thir a

Story C11 Foc Sm T end Fv

The story has ended.

The above story has both noun and verb words which are correctly used. This again attests to the fact that the 6-7 year olds who have not joined school use Kiembu nouns and verbs competently in their interactions.
4.2 Nouns and Verbs noted during interactions in Home Environment.

Below are utterances of A1 recorded during a conversation with researcher in home environment.

19. Ngwataga mwana riria mami araruga
   
   Ni guat ag a muana riria mami a ra rug a
   
   1st Sing Pron hold hab Fv Cl child when Cl mother Cl T cook Fv
   
   I hold the baby while my mother is cooking.


   Ni thi ag a kanitha
   
   1st Sing Pron go hab Fv C 12 church
   
   I go to church.

21. Ihii ndithiicaga.

   Ihii ni ndi thi i cag a
   
   No 1st Sing Pron neg go asp hab Fv
   
   No, I don’t go.

22. Ni uma

   Foc grandfather

   It is Cl grandfather

23. Mendete muthako wa gucarania.

   Ni m endete e muthako ua kucarania
   
   1st Pl Pron C1 like Fv C3 game of C 15 look for
   
   I like playing hide and seek.
24. Iricaga gitima.

I ric ag a gitima

C 10 eat hab Fv C7 grass

They eat grass.

The above utterances by the subject contain both nouns and verbs. The subject was at ease with the use of Kiembu, the reason being that she has not interacted with any other language.

Below are utterances of A1 as she conversed with her mother.

25. Guthakania na wawira.

ku thak an i a na Wawira

Inf play Rec ben Fv with C1 Wawira

To play with Wawira.

26. Reke nyambe mboce vurana.

Reke ni amb e m boc e vurana

Let Ist Sing Pron first Fv Sm take Fv C 10 sweater

Let me first pick my sweater.

27. Ninguthii gucaria Ngithi.

Ni ni ku thi i ku cari a mwana.

Foc Ist sing Pron inf go Fv Inf look Fv C 1 mwana

I will go to look for Mwana

Ni ruthario

Foc C11 holy rosary

It is a holy rosary

29. Naverwe ni cucu.

Ni na ve irwe ni cucu

Foc 1st Sing Pr give asp pass Fv by C1 grandmother.

I was given by grandmother.

The utterances by the respondent have both verbs and nouns. This could suggest that she is quite competent in the use of the Kiembu language.

The researcher asked A2 what she likes doing while she is at home and the following were the responses.

30. Nithiicaga guthaka na arata akwa.

Ni ni thi cag a ku thak a na arata a kwa

1st Sing Pr go hab Fv inf play Fv with C2 friends C2 my

I usually go to play with my friends.

31. Rimwe tuthiicaga kuroia andu makirima.

Rimwe tu thi cag a ku roria andu ma kirima a

At times Fv 1st Pl Pr go hab Fv Inf look C2 people C2 dig Fv

At times we go to look at people as they dig.
32. Twanoga tugacoka mucii.

Tu a nog a tu k a cok a mucii
Ist Pl Pron T tire Fv Ist Pl Pr T return Fv C 3 home

When we are tired we return home.

33. Tuthii tukathake.

Tu thi i tu ka thake
Ist Pl Pron go Fv Ist Pl Pron T play Fv

Let us go and play.

34. Tung'arie.

Tu ng'arie
Ist Pl Pron run Fv

Let us run.

35. Wina muvira.

U ri na muvira
2nd Sing Pron have with C3 ball

Do you have a ball?

36. Tuthii vi.

Tu thi i vi
2nd Pl Pron go Fv then

Let's go then.
The above example no. 36 shows that A2 is eloquent in the use of Kiembu language. This could imply that the 6-7 year olds are quite competent in the use of Kiembu nouns and verbs.

Below are utterances of A3 recorded in her home as she played with her siblings.

37. Maveni
   Ma veni
   C 14 lies

   Lies

38. Mbikiria muvira
   Ni bik ir i e muvira
   Is Sing Pron throw asp ben Fv C3 ball

   Throw me the ball

39. Tucoke nyomba.
   Tu cok e nyomba
   1st Pl Pron return Fv C9 house

   Let’s return to the house.

40. Numia ndigu.
   Ni rum i a ndigu
   1st Sing Pron give ben Fv C6 banana

   Give me a banana.
41. Ninanoga.
Ni na nog a
Ist sing Pron am tire Fv
Am tired.

42. Ke muvira
Take C3 ball
Take the ball

43. Mami niarambita.
C1 Mami ni a ra ni bit a
Mother Foc C1 T Ist Sing Pron call Fv
Mother is calling me.

44. Mwana ni wamama.
Muana ni wa mam a
C1 child Foc C1 slept Fv
Baby has slept.

45. Kiria ni kivati.
Ki ria ni kivati
C7 that is C7 broom
That is a broom.

46. Mami niarambita.
Mami ni a ra ni bit a
Mother foc Sm T Ist Sing Pron call Fv
Mother is calling me.
47. Nwanthii kuthaka?

No ni thi i ku thak a
Can 1st Sing Pron go Fv Inf play Fv

Can I go and play?

The above utterances have some nouns and verbs as shown which were well used. The subject was eloquent in the use of the language. This addresses our first objective which seeks to find out if 6-7 year olds are able to effectively use Kiembu verbs and nouns.

4.3 Nouns and Verbs recorded from Stories told by School-Going Children while in School

The school going children are labeled B1, B2, and B3.

Story by B1

48. Tene andu matiakuaga.

Tene andu ma ti a ku ag a
Long ago C1 people C2 Neg T die hab Fv

Long ago people were not dying.

49. Ngai niatumire kimbu githii gikere andu marikuaga makiriukaga.

Ngai ni a tum ir e kimbu gi thi i gi ka ir e
C1 God Foc C1 send asp Fv C7 chameleon C7 go Fv C7 T tell Fv

God sent chameleon to go and tell

Andu marikuaga makiriukaga.

Andu ma ri ku ag a ma ki riuk ag a
C2 People C2 T die asp Fv C2 T resurrect hab Fv

People that when they die they will be resurrecting.
50. Kimbu kiagereire njira ndaca

C 7 Kimbu ki a ger ir e njira ndaca

Chameleon C 7 T travelled asp Fv C 9 route long

Chameleon: travelled using a long route.

51. na kia thiire kahora muno

na ki a thi ir e kahora muno

and C 7 T go asp Fv slowly very

and it went very slowly.

52. Kanyoni gakimuma thutha na ihenya.

Kanyoni ga ki mo um a thutha na ihenya

C 12 bird C 12 T C 7 follow Fv behind with quick

A small bird followed it fast from a distance.

53. gakithi na gakira andu merwo.

ga kithi i na ga ki ir a andu ma ir wa

C 12 T go Fv and C 12 T tell C 2 people C 2 tell pass

It went and told people they were told.

54. makua matikariukaga

ma ka a ma ti ka riuk ag a

C 2 die Fv C 2 Neg T resurrect hab Fv

When they die they will not be resurrecting.
55. Nikio andu matariukaga makua.

Nikio andu mata riuk ag a ma ku a

That's why C 2 people C 2 Neg resurrect hab Fv C 2 die Fv

That’s why when people die they don’t resurrect

56. Rugano rwakwa ni rwathira.

Rugano ru akwa ru a thir a

C11 Story C11 mine C11 T end Fv

The story has ended.

In the story above a number of noun and verb words can be identified. Most of the nouns uttered are used by both Kiembu and Gikuyu speakers. The only Gikuyu noun used by the subject was:

Gikuyu Kiembu Equivalent Gloss
kimbu muriu chameleon

The respondent used the Gikuyu noun kimbu instead of the Kiembu word Muriu. Whereas some Gikuyu speakers use muriu and kimbu as synonyms to refer to a chameleon, Kiembu speakers only use the name muriu. The researcher consulted both Gikuyu and Kiembu speakers to confirm on whether the words used were Gikuyu or Kiembu. The researcher is also conversant with both languages.

The observation also shows that despite being exposed to Gikuyu in the school environment, children continue to use words in Kiembu which they had already acquired before joining class one. The respondent only used one Gikuyu noun.
The respondent used several verbs in the story, most of which were in Kiembu. The following verbs used were etymologically the same but have different surface realizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gikuyu</th>
<th>Kiembu</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>merwo</td>
<td>merwa</td>
<td>were told</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hituka</td>
<td>vituka</td>
<td>pass</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the case of the Gikuyu word *merwo* and Kiembu word *merwa*, the distinction is only in the final vowel. /o/ is a close-mid back vowel and /a/ an open front vowel. Kiembu speakers say *vituka* (pass) whereas the Gikuyu speakers use *hituka* or *gera* (pass).

Kanana (2010) notes that Embu have a voiced labial-dental fricative /v/ whereas the Northern and Southern dialects of Gikuyu have a voiceless glottal fricative /h/. Kanana (2010) further notes that Proto Bantu had the phoneme /p/ which over time has weakened to become /v/ in Embu and /h/ in Gikuyu.

Kiembu language does not have the phoneme /h/. It has the phoneme /v/ instead. It was also noted that B1 used *gera* (pass) instead of the Kiembu word *vituka* (pass). This could indicate that although the children have mastered Kiembu before joining class one, they pick a few Gikuyu words due to the use of instructional materials written in Gikuyu.

Story by B3

57. **Mutumia umwe ai na twana tutano.**

   **Mutumia umwe ai na tuana tutano**

   C1 woman C1 one *had* with C12 child C12 five

   A woman *had* five **children**.
58. Kaana kamwe kari karemi muno

Kaana  ka  mwe  ka  a  ri  ka  remi  muno
C 12  child  C 12  one  C 12  be  asp  C 12  naughty  very
One  child  was  very  naughty.

59. Mutumia ucio agituma twana tuu tugatahe mai.

Mutumia  u  cio  a  gi  tum  a  tuana  tu  u  tu  ga  tah  e
C1  woman  C 1  that  Sm  T  send  Fv  C 13  child  C 13  those  C 13  T  fetch  Fv
Mai
C 6  water
That  woman  sent  the  children  to  fetch  water.

60. Twana tuothe tukiinuka  tiga kau karemi.

Tuana  tu  othe  tu  ki  inuk  a  tiga  ka  u  ka  remi
C 13  child  C 13  all  C 13  T  go  back  Fv  except  C 12  that  C 12  naughty
All  the  children  went  back  apart  from  the  naughty  one.

61. Gacokire gakiunjuga mai.

Ga  cok  ir  e  ga  ki  unjug  a  mai
C 12  then  asp  Fv  C 12  T  stir  Fv  C 6  water
She  then  stirred  the  water.

62. Mundu umwe okire na agikariva muno.

Mundu  u  mwe  a  uk  ir  e  na  a  ki  ka  riv  a  muno.
C1  person  C 1  one  C1  come  asp  Fv  and  Sm  T  C 12  beat  Fv  very
Somebody  came  and  beat  her  very  much.
63. **Rugano ni rwathira.**

Rugano ri ru a thir a

**Story Foc C11 T end Fv.**

The story has ended.

In the story above, most of the verbs and nouns used were Kiembu. The only Gikuyu noun the subject used was the word **Mutumia (woman).** The Kiembu equivalent of the word is **mundu muka (woman).** This observation shows that despite being exposed to Gikuyu, the children use the Kiembu words they had acquired before joining school. This could confirm the Nativists assertion that by age 6, the children have reached near mastery of their native tongue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expressions in Gikuyu</th>
<th>Infinitive form of verbs in Gikuyu</th>
<th>Kiembu equivalent</th>
<th>Infinitive in Kiembu</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o-kire</td>
<td>guka</td>
<td>au-kire</td>
<td>guka</td>
<td>he/she <em>came.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-gi-ka-hura</td>
<td>kuhura</td>
<td>agi-ka-vura</td>
<td>kuvura</td>
<td>he/she <em>beat her</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu-ga-tahe</td>
<td>gutaha</td>
<td>tu-ga-tave</td>
<td>gutava</td>
<td>we go <em>fetch</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The verbs in table 2 have the same morphological form in both Gikuyu and Kiembu. There is however some slight phonological difference in the words.

For example, the expression **okire** in Gikuyu is similar to the Kiembu equivalent but for the sound /o/ in the word **okire** and a sequence of two vowels /au/ in **aukire.** The difference is a morphophonological process known as coalescence. Coalescence is a type of assimilation in which two segments affect one another. Sometimes when the vowels
combine, they yield a third vowel which is different from the two input vowels. In the example above, there is a kind of fusion whereby /a/ and /u/ combine to yield a long vowel sound. In the Gikuyu word the sound is assimilated and this distinction marks the difference between Gikuyu and Kiembu in the two words. In the words hura and vura the difference is also morphophonological. Kiembu uses the sound /v/ and Gikuyu /h/ though some Gikuyu dialects have the /v/ sound. As mentioned by Kanana (2010) on page 51, in Embu, there is a shift from the bilabial position to the labial dental position, that is, /p/ to /v/ whereas in Gikuyu the shift is further back at the glottal region.

Utterances of B1 as she interacted with her classmates while playing in the field.

64. Tukavure mbia.

Tu ka vure mbia

1st Pl Pr T beat Fv C 10 rat.

Let's go and play a game of rats.

65. Tiga kuthii kuu kwina tiiri.

Tiga ku thi i kuu kuri na tiiri

Don't Inf go Fv there there is C10 tiiri

Don't go there, it is dusty over there.

66. Rehe muvira.

Rehe muvira

Bring C2 ball

Bring the ball
67. Teng'era ndukavurwe.

Teng'era a ndu ka vur w e

Run Fv neg T hit pass Fv

Run so that you are not hit.

68. Athii gutwara muvara.

A thi i gu twar a muvara

C 1 go Fv to ride Fv C 3 wheel

He has gone to ride a wheel.

69. Tuthii thaa ni ciathira.

Tu thi i thaa ni ci a thir a

1st Pl Pron go Fv time is C 3 T finish Fv

Let us go time is up

The above utterances by B1 have both noun and verb words. Some of the words were in Gikuyu and others in Kiembu.

The following are the Gikuyu nouns the subject used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gikuyu</th>
<th>Word class</th>
<th>Kiembu Equivalent</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mbia</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>ikindu</td>
<td>rat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tiiri</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>rukungu</td>
<td>soil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muvara</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>nthugu</td>
<td>wheel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teng’era</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>ng’aria</td>
<td>ran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rehe</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>rete</td>
<td>bring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B1 used the verb *rehe* instead of the Kiembu equivalent *rete*. The form of the word is the same and the distinction is in the use of /h/ instead of /t/. Kiembu does not use the phoneme /h/. Some phonemes are specific to particular languages.

The above data shows that the subjects in the school environment have acquired some Gikuyu words due to exposure to the language.

This may indicate that the school going children acquire Gikuyu words that they interact with in the classroom. As mentioned earlier, the instructional materials like charts and some books are written in Gikuyu.

Utterances of B2 as she interacted with her peers.

70. Tutengere tutikaimwe irio

> Tu *tenger* e tu ti kaim w e irio

Ist Pl Pr ran Fv Ist Pl Pr neg T deny pass Fv C 9 food

Let’s *ran* so that we are not denied *food*.

71. Nitugukorwo ni mwarimu

> Ni tu gu *kor w o ni* muarimu

Foc 1st pl Pron inf find pass Fv by C1 *teacher*.

We will be *found* by the *teacher*.

72. Niukuwinga murango.

> Ni u ku hing a murango

Foc 3rd Sing Pron inf close FV C3 *door*

You will *close* the *door*.
73. Tuthi tukome.

Tu thî i tu kom e

1st Pl Pron go Fv 1st Pl Pron sleep Fv

Let’s go and sleep.

74. U yu ni guka

U yu ni guka

C I this is C I grandfather

This is grandfather.

75. Ng’ombe iricaga nyeki.

Ng’ombe i ri cag a nyeki

C9 Ngombe Sm eat hab Fv C9 grass

A cow eats grass

Table 4: Gikuyu Verbs and Nouns used in the School Environment by B2 and their Kiembu equivalents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gikuyu</th>
<th>Kiembu equivalent</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Word class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>teng’er-a</td>
<td>ng’ari-a</td>
<td>run</td>
<td>verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guka</td>
<td>umau</td>
<td>grandfather</td>
<td>noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nyeki</td>
<td>gitima</td>
<td>grass</td>
<td>noun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above data shows that the respondent has picked some Gikuyu words. Some speakers of Gikuyu, at times use the word witima for grass but in Kiembu it is gitima. Although the two words have the same form, there is a difference in the initial consonant. In some of the words used by the subject, the distinction is only in the final
vowel sound and the rest of the word is the same. For example, the respondent says *nitugukorwo* (Gikuyu) instead of *nitugukorwa* (Kiembu). Gikuyu uses the final vowel /o/ and Kiembu /a/.

The respondents in the school set up are exposed to both Gikuyu and Kiembu and they end up acquiring words from both languages. This is in line with the Nativist Theory that postulates that if the child is exposed to meaningful language, acquisition of the same will take place. The Language Acquisition Device (LAD) is very active during the early years and once it is triggered it facilitates acquisition of language that the child is exposed to. This language device is endowed in every human being. Exposure to Gikuyu leads to the acquisition of some words in Gikuyu by the children. However, the subjects mostly communicate using Kiembu words which they have already mastered before being exposed to Gikuyu.

The Nativist Theory helped the researcher to establish if exposure to Gikuyu had led to acquisition of the Gikuyu nouns and verbs by the respondents. One of Krashens Monitor Model, The Acquisition–Learning Hypothesis helped the researcher to find out the influence of Gikuyu instructional materials on the acquisition of Kiembu noun and verb lexical items. The Monitor Hypothesis also gave insight into the language acquisition process of the 6-7 year old. The Input Hypothesis, another of Krashens Monitor Model helped the researcher to establish the competence of the respondents in the use of Gikuyu nouns and verbs. The Input hypothesis, one of Krashens Monitor Model, posits that the children will acquire language exposed to them for as long as it is comprehensible input.

The utterances below were made by B3 as she interacted with her classmates while playing in the field.
76. Nitukuvura mbia?

Ni tu ku vur a mbia?


Shall we play a game of rats?

77. Na ningorwa wambere.

Na ni ni kor wa mbere

and T Foc will be first

I will be the first one.

78. Teng’era

Tenger a

Run Fv

Run

79. Maveni

C14 lies

Lies

80. Tuteng’ere tukanyue

Tu tenger e tu ka nyu e mai.

Ist Pl Pron run Fv Ist Pl Pron T drink Fv C6 water

Let’s run and drink some water

In the above conversation, the respondents used both Gikuyu and Kiembu nouns and verbs.
Tuteng'ere (let’s run) is Gikuyu while the Kiembu equivalent of the same expression is tung’arie.

Mbia (rat) is also used by B3 instead of the Kiembu equivalent of the same word ikindu. This further confirms that the subject has acquired some Gikuyu words as a result of being exposed to it in the school environment.

Utterances of B3 and B2 during a classroom session.

The respondents were shown some objects by the teacher which they were supposed to describe.

The following were the responses that they gave.

81. Ni gikombe
   Foc C7 cup
   It’s a cup

82. Kimwe ni kieru na kiu kingi ni gitune.
   Ki mwe ni ki eru na ki u ki ngi ni gitune.
   C7 one is C7 white and C7 Foc C7 other is red.
   One is white and the other is red

83. Giki ni kinene na Giki ni kinini. Kiria ni kinini muno
   Ki ki ni ki nene na gi ki ni ki nini. Ki ria ni ki
   This one is C7 big and C7 this is C7 small. That one C7
   nini muno
   the smallest
   This one is big and this one is small. That is the smallest
84. Ni ruhuhu
   Ni ruhuhu.
   Foc C 11 bat
   It's a bat.

85. Ni ruru.
   Foc this
   It is this one.

Utterances recorded from B1 in home environment

86. Twi imwe tu.
   Tu i imwe tu
   We have one only.

87. Nyeki
    Grass
    C 9

88. Nwariria ni muruaru ndathiicaga.
    Ni o riri a ni mu ruar u ni ta thii a
    1st sing Pron Sm be Fv 1st Sing Pron C 1 sick Fv 1st sing Pron Neg go Fv
    Its only when I am sick that I don't go

89. mbia nguun
    C10 rat dead
    A dead rat.
90. Na ma-ni na guka.
   With C1 mother and C1 grandfather.

91. Nitwakinya.
   Ni tu a kinya
   Foc 1st Pl Pron T arrive Fv
   We have arrived

92. Niamamite. One ngigoca
   Ni a mam it e. one ni ki ka oc a
   Foc C1 sleep asp Fv look 1st Sing Pron T C12 take Fv
   She is sleeping. Look as I pick her.

93. Ni kanyau.
   Ni kanyau
   Foc C12 cat
   It’s a cat

The following are utterances of B3 in the home environment.

94. Nituvuraga mbia.
   Ni tu vur ag a mbia
   Foc 1st Pl Pron beat hab Fv C10 rat
   We play a game of rats.

95. Niathakaga na mubara.
   Ni a thak ag a na mubara.
   Foc C1 play hab Fv with C3 wheel.
   He plays with his wheel.
96. Mathiire kuthaka na arata ao.

Ma thi ir e ku thak a na arata ao.

Foc go asp Fv T play Fv with C2 friends theirs.

They went to play with their friends

97. mucere na mboco.

C10 C10

Rice and beans.

The above utterances contain some nouns and verbs. Some words are in Gikuyu and others Kiembu. The use of nouns that belong to different noun classes and verbs show that they are competent in the target language. From the data collected, it was observed that the nouns and verbs used by the respondents were Kiembu. However, a few of the nouns used are normally used by Gikuyu speakers and not Kiembu speakers. These are words like Kimbu, guka among others.

Table 5: Gikuyu Nouns used by In-School Respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gikuyu</th>
<th>Kiembu equivalent</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mbia</td>
<td>ikindu</td>
<td>rat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nyeki</td>
<td>gitima</td>
<td>grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guka</td>
<td>umau</td>
<td>grandfather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mutumia</td>
<td>mundumuka</td>
<td>woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kimbu</td>
<td>muriu</td>
<td>chameleon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tiiri</td>
<td>rukungu</td>
<td>dust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muvara</td>
<td>nthugu</td>
<td>wheel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moko</td>
<td>njara</td>
<td>hands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 8 nouns
The data in table 5 shows that the respondents used eight Gikuyu nouns as compared to twenty two nouns that cut across Gikuyu and Kiembu. These nouns were identified from the sampled data that was analysed.

The following figure shows the percentage representation of Kiembu nouns and nouns that cut across the Kiembu and Gikuyu respondents. These were derived from the recorded data of the in-school respondents. Out of the 30 nouns used in the recorded stories of the school going cohort, only eight were Gikuyu.

**Figure 1: Percentage Representation of Gikuyu Nouns and other Nouns that cut across Kiembu and Gikuyu as used by Respondents**

![Pie chart showing 73% Gikuyu nouns and 27% other nouns.]

The chart shows that the Gikuyu nouns used by the respondents were not very many. Others in the chart represent the nouns that cut across Kiembu and Gikuyu identified from the interactions used by respondents. This could suggest that despite being exposed to the school multilingual context, the children continue to interact mostly in Kiembu which they have already mastered. They however used the words interchangeably. The respondents also used Gikuyu nouns ruhuhu (bat) and kanyoni (bird). The Kiembu
equivalent of the two words is ruvuvu (bat) and gaconi (bird). These two words are the same but for the difference in the sound. This as mentioned earlier is as a result of changes that have taken place in the two languages over time.

The in-school respondents used verbs in their interactions. It was noted that most of the verbs recorded are used by both Gikuyu and Kiembu speakers. However, a small percentage of the verbs are only used by Gikuyu speakers.

Below is a table showing verbs used by the in-school respondent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gikuyu verbs</th>
<th>Kiembu equivalent</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ten'gera</td>
<td>ng'aria</td>
<td>run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>koma</td>
<td>mama</td>
<td>sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gere</td>
<td>vituka</td>
<td>pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Gikuyu verbs used by respondents are 3 as compared to 21 other verbs which cut across Kiembu and Gikuyu. The 21 verbs were identified from the recorded data.

Figure 2 shows the percentage representation of the Gikuyu verbs used and the other verbs common to both Gikuyu and Kiembu as used by the respondents in their interactions.
The above presentation shows that despite exposure to Gikuyu, the in-school respondents use more Kiembu verbs than Gikuyu ones. This could suggest that despite being exposed to Gikuyu in the school environment, there is minimal effect on the acquisition of the target language which is Kiembu.

4.4 Nouns used by Non-School Going Children in the Home Environment

Nouns are a grammatically distinct category of words which include those denoting all kinds of physical objects such as persons, animals and inanimate objects or entities such as peace, love and ideas. English has two main classes of nouns, namely, common and proper nouns. The common nouns comprise of concrete and abstract nouns while proper nouns comprise of persons, places and entities. Nyaga (2014) indicates that Kiembu has 17 noun classes as indicated in table 1. She further notes that Bantu languages have nouns that morphologically consist of a noun affix and a stem. The affixes and noun stem constitute a criterion for dividing nouns into a number of noun classes that differ from
each other in a variety of grammatical categories. According to Maho (1999), Bantu noun classes indicate more than just set membership. They also convey information about grammatical number; that is, singular and plural forms of a noun are classified in different noun classes. For example, the noun prefix for class one in Kiembu is **mu** or **mwa**, while the noun prefix for class two is **a**.

Our first objective was to assess the competence of 6-7 year olds in the use of Kiembu noun and verb words before joining class one. The non-school going children have acquired Kiembu as their first language. Our study found out that the respondents communicated accurately in the target language which is Kiembu. The Nativist Theory posits that children reach near mastery of their native tongue in just a few short years after birth without instruction or any apparent effort. It was observed that most of the nouns used by the respondents were names of objects, places and people. Studies have shown that these are the nouns that children first acquire before acquiring more complex nouns like the abstract nouns. A few abstract nouns like **maveni** were however used. It was also evident that the respondents were able to use the singular and plural forms of nouns. This attests to the fact that before joining school, children have acquired Kiembu nouns. Exposure to Gikuyu through use of instructional materials written in the language however leads to acquisition of Gikuyu nouns by the respondents. Our study found that the non-school going children used noun and verb forms in Kiembu quite competently.

According to the theory, the greater the exposure to meaningful language the more effectively the learner can formulate and revise his hypotheses about the structure of the language.
The noun words used by the non-school going respondents were analyzed to help in determining how competent the children are before joining school. From the data collected, it was clear that the respondents were able to use a variety of nouns effectively. They used nouns that fall into different noun classes as indicated in the interlinealized data.

The above findings no doubt show that the non-school going children are competent in the use of nouns. This is in line with our first objective which sought to assess the competence of this cohort.

4.5 Verbs used by Non-School Going Children in the Home Environment

Verbs are words that convey an action. Kiembu verbs just like verbs in other Bantu languages are characterized by adding prefixes and suffixes to the root of a verb. According to Khamis (1972), verbs in Bantu languages change morphologically as they receive affixes. The suffixes change both the morphosyntactic and semantic patterning of the resulting verbal forms. When an affix is acquired by the root, it changes the meaning, for example, in Kiembu; the word “rugá” (cook) is the base verb form. When a prefix “ku” is added, it changes to the infinitive “to cook”. The root acquires affixes to give it different verb forms. Most of the verbs uttered by the children had affixes which marked different grammatical functions. This depicts that the respondents were quite competent in the use of the language. Examples of these are as follows:

98. ng’aria (run)  
tuking’aria (they ran)  
ng’aria  
tu ki ng’aria a  
run Fv  
C 12 T run Fv  
run  
they (small children) ran
The verb root is the base form on which affixes are added to modify meaning. Maringah (1987) observes that when other morphemes are added to the verb root they modify the meaning, but do not change the basic meaning of the verb. The following drawn from data collected illustrates this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kiembu</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ng’aria</td>
<td>run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ku ng’ari a</td>
<td>to run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ku ng’arithi a</td>
<td>to run after</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The children were able to use the above forms of the verb which shows they were competent in the use of the language. When “ku” is added to “ngaria”. The meaning changes to “to run after” when the word is “kung’arithia”. The competence in the use of verbs was further confirmed by the subject’s ability to inflect the words to reflect the various grammatical functions, for example, the tenses and subject verb agreement.

101. i  ri  cag  a
    C9  eat  hab  Fv
    It *eats*

102. I  ki  ri  wa
    C9  T  eat  pass
    It *was eaten*
In the example numbered 101, the word "i ri cag a" reflects an habitual activity. In the example numbered 102, "ikiriwa" is in the passive voice and indicates a past event. The correct use of these grammatical functions shows that the respondent was competent in the use of the language.

The respondent correctly inflected the word “thi” by adding the affixes “i” and “gi” to denote past tense.

Thii is a verb which means to go. Through addition of affixes, the subject was able to correctly denote the inherent tenses.

4.6 Analysis of Nouns and Verbs used by School Going Children

We have looked at the competence of the 6-7 year olds in the use of Kiembu nouns and verbs before going to school. We now consider the competence of six year olds in using
Kiembu nouns and verbs after joining and learning in class one. From the data presented in table 5 and 7, it is evident that the learners have acquired Gikuyu words. The learners end up using both Gikuyu and Kiembu words. It was also noted that the respondents used the Gikuyu and Kiembu words interchangeably.

Unlike when the learners were exposed to only Kiembu at home, they now have more than one language at their disposal and this has led to acquisition of Gikuyu nouns and verbs.

Both the Nativisist Theory and Input Hypothesis, an hypothesis of Krashens Monitor Model acknowledge the role of linguistic environment in the acquisition process. They see the child’s active interaction with his environment as an important factor in language development. The respondents in this study are exposed to both Kiembu and Gikuyu in the classroom environment. The resource materials for teaching mother tongue are written in Gikuyu. Most of the teachers speak Kiembu but teach using resource materials written in Gikuyu.

The Input hypothesis, argues that the child will acquire the language it is exposed to for as long as it is comprehensible input. According to the hypothesis, people acquire language best by understanding input that is a little beyond their present level of competence. When the children join class one, they acquire the new words they hear from the teachers and other pupils as well as those that they read from the instructional materials. They also learn the new words that they are taught by their teachers. As mentioned earlier, acquisition is an unconscious process as opposed to learning and a child can acquire language without putting any effort. This confirms our assumption that
this cohort of school going children was likely to acquire Gikuyu words due to exposure to the same in the school environment. The Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, also gives insight into the acquisition process. It posits that the child will acquire the language that it is exposed to. The child can also consciously learn a language in a classroom environment.

The resource materials used in the teaching of mother tongue were written in Kiembu. Some charts pinned on the walls which serve as resource materials are also written in Gikuyu. Books for teaching number work were written in English. The teacher would read out the Gikuyu words and the children would read after him. This means that the children interacted with Kiembu, Gikuyu and English. The use of resource materials written in Gikuyu may have led to the use of Gikuyu words by the subjects.

The Nativist accounts as propounded by Chomsky (1959) however maintain that exposure to language alone cannot account satisfactorily for acquisition. Input is a trigger which activates the internal mechanism. From the data collected, it was evident that the subjects used more Kiembu nouns than Gikuyu nouns. This is supported by Nyamasyo (1985) findings that the level of acquisition by the child will be determined by the length of time of exposure, the intensity of use of the language, and his/her immediate contacts. Other than in the classroom environment, the subjects are largely exposed to Kiembu. This explains why they mostly use Kiembu nouns since this is the language they are mostly exposed to in their home environment where they spend most of their time when not in school.
The nouns used by the school going children belong to various noun classes just like those of the non-school going children. For example the respondents used the following nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kiembu</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mundu C 1</td>
<td>person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rugano C 11</td>
<td>story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mbia C 10</td>
<td>rat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twaana C 13</td>
<td>children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As mentioned earlier, most of the nouns used were in Kiembu, which is the first language of the subjects.

The in-school respondents competently used various verbs. It was noted that most verbs used were in Kiembu. Bantu languages have common words that cut across the different languages and the difference noted by an observer is phonological as earlier noted, for example, in the words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gikuyu</th>
<th>Kiembu</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hura</td>
<td>vura</td>
<td>beat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hinga</td>
<td>vinga</td>
<td>close</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the difference is in the initial consonant sound. However, some words have a different form like in the following example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gikuyu</th>
<th>Kiembu</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>teng’era</td>
<td>ng’aria</td>
<td>run</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only a few verbs in Gikuyu were used by the subjects as illustrated in Table 6.
4.7 Language used by In-School Respondents while in their Home Environment

The researcher interacted with the respondents who had been exposed to the multilingual school environment to find out if they used the acquired Gikuyu words while in their home environment. The Nativist Theory posits that all children, regardless of the language they are learning or the quantity or quality of input they receive from their caregivers acquire their mother-tongue at the same rate by progressing through the same developmental stages. This could explain the apparent competence of the school going children in speaking Kiembu despite the fact that they are exposed to other languages. Some studies on language acquisition in a bilingual environment have shown that code mixing reflects children’s developing grammar and lexical system and the lack of differentiation between the two languages being acquired (Fasold, 2006). Our study established that the in-school children used both Gikuyu and Kiembu nouns and verbs. The respondents used the Kiembu and Gikuyu words interchangeably.

Most of the nouns used are common to both Kiembu and Gikuyu speakers, for example, “mami, mwana, nyomba, and mucere”. However, the words “guka, nyeki, mbia, and moko,” which the subjects used are normally used by Gikuyu speakers. Gikuyu nouns used are fewer than the ones that cut across the two languages. This could be attributed to the fact that by the time children join class one, they have reached near mastery of their first language which is Kiembu. This could suggest that despite exposure to the multilingual environment, the children interact in the home environment mostly in Kiembu which they have already mastered before joining school.

This could lead to the conclusion that the use of instructional materials written in Gikuyu has little influence on the acquisition of Kiembu nouns.
The findings above could suggest that the multilingual environment affects acquisition of the first language in quite an insignificant way. This provides an answer to our third objective which seeks to determine the influence of the multilingual environment on the acquisition of Kiembu noun and verb words. As earlier mentioned, the question in studies of bilingual first language acquirers is whether the development path of language is the same as that of children learning only one language. In this relation, Pearson et al. (1997) say that the relative amount of time spent in each language can affect the relative vocabulary size in each language of a bilingual. This could suggest that the children in the monolingual environment are likely to acquire more Kiembu vocabulary since they are not exposed to any other language. Those exposed to Gikuyu acquire words in the language but they continue to acquire Kiembu words since it is the language they are mostly exposed to.

4.8 Findings

It was evident that use of learning resources written in Gikuyu has little effect on the acquisition of Kiembu nouns and verbs. This confirms that by the time children join school, they have reached near mastery of their first language. This means that they have already acquired Kiembu nouns and verbs. The multilingual environment in the school exposes the learners to other languages like Gikuyu. Despite this exposure, the children still interact using mostly Kiembu nouns and verbs. They however acquire a few Gikuyu words which they use in their interactions.

These findings are similar to others that have used The Nativist and Krashens Monitor Model to analyse data. Chomsky (1968) indicates that studies have shown that children reach near mastery of their first language by age six. This means by the time children
join school they have already mastered Kiembu which explains the fact that being taught other languages like Kiswahili and English has very little effect in the acquisition of the first language. Once comprehensible input is provided as claimed by Krashen, then acquisition takes place.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of findings of the study in view of our objectives, and the conclusion drawn from the same. It is followed by recommendations and a suggestion for further research.

5.1 Summary

This study sought to analyse the influence teaching using instructional materials written in Gikuyu has had on the acquisition of Kiembu noun and verb lexical items on the children. It attempted to investigate if the pupils acquire Gikuyu words when they are exposed to the multilingual environment. The study had the following objectives: to evaluate how effectively the 6-7 year olds use Kiembu noun and verb words before joining class one.

to analyze the influence of Gikuyu instructional materials on the acquisition of Kiembu noun and verb lexical items on the 6-7 year olds and to determine the influence of the multilingual linguistic environment on the acquisition of Kiembu nouns and verbs.

The researcher purposively sampled three school going children aged 6 years and three non school going children of the same age. The school going children were tape recorded while in the school and also in the home environment. The non-school going children were tape recorded in their home environment. Two theories were used to analyze data, thus: the Nativist Theory by Chomsky (1959) and Krashens Monitor Model (Krashen 1982). The Acquisition-Learning Disticction hypothesis, the Monitor Hypothesis and the
Input Hypothesis, all hypotheses of Krashens Monitor Model gave insights into the language acquisition process.

It was evident from the language used by the non-school going 6 year olds that they were competent in the use of Kiembu noun and verb words. The respondents used various forms of nouns though most of those recorded were proper nouns. They were able to also use abstract nouns and diminutive forms of nouns. The respondents were also able to use Kiembu verbs effectively in sentences. This confirms that the 6-7 year olds can effectively use Kiembu nouns and verbs before joining class one. The respondents only used Kiembu words since it was the only language that they had been exposed to.

The study also found out that learning mother tongue using text books and instructional materials written in Gikuyu has very little effect on the acquisition of Kiembu nouns and verbs. The school going children used both Kiembu and Gikuyu noun and verb words. The subjects would at times use the Gikuyu and Kiembu equivalent of the same word interchangeably. However, the Gikuyu words used by the school going children were very few as compared to the Kiembu words used by the same cohort.

The school going respondents who had been exposed to the school multilingual environment used few Gikuyu words. Most of the verbs and nouns used are common to both Gikuyu and Kiembu. The use of the Gikuyu nouns and verbs was not just confined to the school environment. In the home environment, a few Gikuyu words were used but the number was quite insignificant. As earlier mentioned, exposure to more than one language could affect the relative number of acquired words in the target language. The
children in the monolingual environment only used Kiembu noun and verb words unlike the ones in the multilingual school environment who had acquired some Gikuyu words.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has shown that when children are exposed to a language other than their mother tongue during the early years, the influence on the acquisition of the target language may not be greatly influenced. However, the children use words in the languages acquired. In our study, the children used a few Gikuyu words despite the fact that Kiembu is their first language.

The study has demonstrated that the use of text books and other learning resources that are written in Gikuyu instead of Kiembu has little effect on the acquisition of the first language. The respondents in the monolingual environment as well as those in the school environment were able to use Kiembu nouns and verbs effectively.

The study further showed that the multilingual environment in the school set up has little effect in the acquisition of Kiembu nouns and verbs by the 6-7 year olds. The respondents in the school set up used Kiembu effectively despite the fact that they had acquired a few Gikuyu words.

5.3 Recommendation

There is need to ensure that the children have mastered their first language before joining class one. This will ensure that they remain competent in their first language even after being exposed to other languages in the school multilingual environment.
5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

This study tried to establish how learning using resource materials written in Gikuyu influences the acquisition of nouns and verbs. A similar study can be made to establish whether the exposure to Gikuyu at this early age also influences the language of the learners at the level of phonology. This is because our study found out that there is little difference between the lexicon of Gikuyu and Kiembu which made the influence of using Gikuyu materials quite insignificant. There is however a slight difference in the sound system of Kiembu and Gikuyu. The difference was found to be in the way the words are pronounced because there are phonemes that are not common to both languages. Research in this area could help establish if the influence of Gikuyu instructional materials on the pronunciation of Kiembu nouns and verbs is significant.
REFERENCES


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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Map
Appendix 2: Sample of an Interview Schedule

Name of Interviewee: 

Gender: 

Age: 

Date of Interview: 

1. Mami waku etagwa atia?
   (What is the name of your mother?)

2. Kwenyu niku?
   (Where is your home?)

3. Mwi mucii mwaragia Kiembu?
   (Do you speak Kiembu while at home?)

4. Muthakaga muthako uriku mwi mucii?
   (Which game do you play at home?)

5. Ithe wa vava waku etagwa atia?
   (What is the name of your grandfather?)

6. Ino ni ndui?
   (What is this?)

7. Kiria ni ndui
   (What is that?)

8. Uyu niu?
   (Who is this?)

9. Uthicaga ku wauma cukuru?
   (Where do you go after school?)
10. Urugagirwa nu wenuka mucii?

(Who cooks for you when you go home?)

11. Ngombe iricaga ndui riria i nja?

(What do cows eat when they are in the field?)

12. Mwanake uria areka atia?

(What is that boy doing?)

13. Wikaga atia warikia kuria na kuruta wira wa cukuru?

(What do you do after you have eaten and done your homework?)

14. Uyu etagwa atia?

(What is this person called?)

15. Ciana inò ni itumagira ciugo cia Kiembu nja ya kirathi?

(Do these pupils use Kiembu outside the classroom situation?)
Appendix 3: Teaching Resources
Appendix 4: Informal Interactions

A1 during informal interactions with researcher and family members:

Mother: Wauma ku (Where are you coming from?)

A1: Guthakania na wawira (To play with wawira)

Mother: Nirenda uke urorie mwana (I want you to come and take care of the baby)

A1: Reke nyambe mboce vurana (Let me pick a sweater first)

Mother: Ikanga na ivenya (Do it quickly)

R: niuvotaga kugwata mwana? (Are you able to hold the baby?)

A1: iii (yes)

R: Mwana amama niwika atia?

A1: Ninguthii gucaria ngithi. (I will go and look for ngithi)

R: Mwike atia? (What for)

A1: Tukathake na varia vuva wa nyomba (We go and play behind the house)

Mother: niukunyua cai?

A1 STORY TELLING SESSION

Tene nikwari na arata athatu. Metagwa Nyaga, Njeru na Njiru.

Mathiicaga kurithia ngombe ciao mutituri magacoka utuku kumama mucii;

Ngombe ciaokire muthenya umwe ikiriwa ni cimba cionthe. Arata acio ni marakarirue ni cimba magiciria maciurage. Mathiere magicieterera ikinyua mai makiimunda na matimu.

Rugano nirwathira.

(Long time ago there were three friends. They were called Nyaga, Njeru and Njiru.

They would go to graze their cows in the forest and then they would go back home to sleep. One day the cows were eaten by lions. The friends got very annoyed and they
ploted to kill the animals. They waited for them as they went to drink water and killed all of them. That is the end of my story.

A1 during informal interactions with researcher and family members:

**Mother:** Wauma ku? (Where are you coming from?)

A1: Guthakania na wawira (To play with wawira)

**Mother:** Niren'ca uke urorie mwana (I want you to come and take care of the baby)

A1: Reke nyambe mboce vurana (Let me pick a sweater first)

**Mother:** Ikangana na ivenya (Do it quickly)

R: niuvotaga kugwata mwana? (Are you able to hold the baby?)

A1: iii (Yes)

R: Mwana amama niwika atia?

A1: Ninguthii gucaria ngithi. (I will go and look for ngithi)

R: Mwike atia? (What for)

A1: Tukathake na varia vuva wa nyomba (We go and play behind the house)

**Mother:** niukunyua cai? (Will you drink tea)

Interactions with A2.

R: Nwa umbire karugano karia wendete (Can you tell me a short story that you love?)

A2: Gucia rugano (Take a story).


(Long time ago there lived a hyena. Hyenas are very greedy animals. One day it smelt the aroma of meat. It asked itself how it would reach the meat. It decided to walk feet apart
so that whichever way it went it would reach the meat. After walking feet astride, it broke its leg and that’s why the hyena limps.)

A2 interacting with her brother.

A2: Tuthii tukathake. (Let us go and play)

Brother: Tung’arie.(Let us run)

A2: wina muvira? (Do you have a ball?)

Brother: iii. (Yes.)

A2: tuthii (Okay-let us go.)

A2: Twite mukami. (Let’s call mukami)

Brother: Niatiiire gutava mai. (She went to fetch water)

A2: Tuthii tu. (Okay –let’s go)

STORY TELLING SESSION IN CLASS DURING A LANGUAGE LESSON (B1)

Tene andu matiakucaga. Ngai niatumire kimbu githii gikere andu marikuaga makiriukaga.

Kimbu kiathiire kahora muno.

Gasoni gakimunga thutha gakithii na gakira andu makua matikariukaga.Nikio andu matariukaga makua.

Rugano rwakwa nirwathira.

(A long time ago people were not dying. God sent chameleon to go and tell people that when they die they will be resurrecting. The chameleon travelled very slowly. A bird followed it from a distance, by passed it and it went and told people when they die they will not be resurrecting. Thats why people do not come back to life after dying. That’s the end of my story.)

B1 recorded during play period – at break time

B1: Tuthii tukavure mbia (Lets go and play a game of rats)
Tiga kuthii nakuu kwina tiri. (Don’t go there there is a lot of soil)
Rehe muvira (Bring the ball)
Tengera ndukavurwe (Ran so that you are not hit)
Reasearcher: Njeru athii ku? (Where has Njeru gone?)
B1: Athii gutwara muvara (He has gone to ride a ‘wheel’)
Thaa niciathira
B1 recorded at home. Researcher engages B1 as they walk to B1's home.
R: Kwenyu kwi ngombe? (Do you have cows at home?)
B1: Twi imwe tu (We only have one)
R: mumivecaga ndui? (What do you feed it on?)
B1: Nyeki (Grass)
R: Uthiicaga cukuru mitheny a yonthe?
B1: Nwanga riria ni muruaru ndathiicaga (Only when am sick don’t I go)
R: Kiria ni ndi? (What is that?-pointing at a dead rat on the side of road)
B1: Mbia nugo (A dead rat)
R: (Mwikaraga nau mucii?)
B1: Na mami na guka (With mother and grandfather)
B1. Nitwakinya (We have arrived)
Mother: Wimwega? How are you?
R: Nimwega (Am fine)
Mother: Tonyai nyomba (Welcome to the house)
B1. Mwana aiku? (Where is the Baby?)
Mother: Niamamite (She is sleeping)
R: Karia ni gatui? (What is that)
B1: Ni kanyau (It’s a cat)
Utterances made by B2 during different sessions as she played with her friends

Mva cuva ya mai (Give me a bottle of water)

Tuteng’ere tutikaimwe irio (Let’s run so that we don’t miss food)

Nitugukorwo ni mwalimu (We shall be found by the teacher)

Niukuhinga murango (Will you close the door)

Tuthii tukome vanini (Let’s go and sleep a little)

Utterances of B2 in the school environment.

B2 was asked by the teacher to tell the class a short story


(A woman had five children. One child was very naughty. That woman sent the children to fetch water. All of them went home apart from the naughty one. She stirred the water till it was dirty.

Somebody came and gave her a thorough beating. That is the end of my story.)

Utterances during class time

Teacher asks children to make a circle. B2 is asked to lead the game. She is to call out names of both animals that are eaten and those which are not eaten. The children are supposed to jump when names of animals that are eaten are called out.

B2: Ya ng’ondu, ya mbia, ya simba, ya hiti, ya kanyau, ya Nthia, Ya Nyoka, Ya Nguku.

(Of sheep, of rat, of lion, of hyena, of cat, of antelope, of hen.)

Utterances during a language lesson (mother tongue)

Teacher: Beth- Uga maritwa ma indo ino icoretwe iratathiri (Name the objects on the chart)
(teacher points at each item at a time)

**B2:** Gikombe (cup), muti (tree), nyumba (house), irigu (banana), ibuku (book)

Nyoka (snake), ruhuhu (bat), tucui (chicks), moko (hands)

**Teacher:** muvurire ruvi (clap for her.) Teacher calls B3 to read out names of other objects

**B3.** Mbembe (maize), baba (father) Nugu (monkey, Cuba (bottle), Ruhiu (panga), Mahiga (mathiga), Kabuku (hare).

**Teacher:** muvurire ruvi (clap for him)

(Teacher asks B3 to read out words and phrases written on chart)

**B1:** Moko (hands), Uka haha (come here), he (give me), Rehe (give), Ucuru wi riko reke uhie

(the porridge is on the fire let it be ready), ihaato ici ni cia maitu, (these brooms belong to mother.)

B2’S interaction with researcher at home

**MOTHER:** Nirenda munyue cai na ngwaci (I want you to have some tea and sweet potatoes)

**B2:** Reke nithambe moko (Let me wash my hands)

R: Wikaga atia kivuai? (What do you do in the evening?)

**B2:** Nindutagwa kuthoma ni karaki (Am taught how to read by Karaki)

R: Warikia guthoma wikaga atia? (After you are through with reading what do you do?)

**B2.** Nithambaga maguru ngacoka ngakoma (I wash my legs then I sleep)

R: Nyomba iria ni yan? (Whose house is that?)

**B2.** Ni ya guka (Its grandfather’s.)

Interactions with B3

**(DURING TEA BREAK AT SCHOOL)**
PUPIL 1: Tutengere kivaro tugathake (Let's run to the field and play)
B3 : Nitukuvura mbia? (Shall we play a game of rats?)
Pupil 1: iii (Yes)
B3: Na ningorwa wambere (I will be the first one)
Pupil 1: Tuthii vi (Okay lets go)
As Researcher observed the children playing
B3: (to P1) Teng'era Run
Pupil 2: Niwavurwa (You have been eliminated)
B3: Maveni (Lies)
Pupil2: Thaa niciathira (Time is up))
B3: Tutengere tukanyue mai (Let's run and drink some water)
Pupil 3: Tuthii
In-school during a class session
(ORDERING ACTIVITY)
Teacher: Mwonthe roriai ava (All of you look here)
Teacher: (to B3) Giki nindui? (What is this?)
B3: Ni Gikombe (It's a cup)
Teacher: Good. Nagiki? (And this?)
Pupil: wanakio ni gikombe (Even that one is a cup)
Teacher: Ngurani yacio ni iriku? (What is the difference between the two?)
B3: kimwe ni kieru na kiu kingi ni gitune (One is white and the other one is red )
Teacher: Giki ni kinene na giki ni kinini. Kiria ni kinini makiria. Ugai uguo (This is big and this is small. This one is smaller. Say after me. (To B2)
B2. Giki ni kinene na Giki ni kinini. Kiria ni kinini muno (This one is big and this one small.
This is the smallest)

Teacher: Good.

Teacher: Giki nindui? (What is this? - points at B3)

B3: Ni ruhuhu (it’s a bat)

Teacher: Ni ruriku runene (Which one is bigger?)

B1: Ni ruru. (It’s this one)

Teacher: Twandike ciugo ino (Let us write these words)

In-school children during a language lesson

Teacher: Nirarnwirire igoro wa mundu auke na karugano. Karaki nirenda utugaaire gaku.

(Yesterday I asked all of tou to come with short stories. Karaki tell us your story.


(One day Njeru was told to go and graze cows.by his father in the bush. While there cows went to eat the neighbour’s maize. His father came and beat him very hard.That is the end of my story.

In School children during an interaction at home

R: Niuthakaga na arata aku riria utai cukuru? Do you play with your friends when you are not

in school?

B3: Nituvuraga mbia (we play a game of rats)
R: Nake Ndèri niathiicaga kuthaka? (And Nderi-does he also go to play?)

B3: Niathakaga na mubara. (He plays with his wheel.)

R: Ciana cienyu ciiku? (Where are your children?)

B3: Mathiire kuthaka na arata ao. (They went to play with their friends)

R: Wendete kuria ndui? (What do you like eating?)

B3: Mucere na mboco (Rice and Beans)
Appendix 5: Exerpts from Standard One Book-Wirute Guthoma

Nyaga niaratwarithia.
Aratwarithia m¯ubara.
Ni m¯ubara wa Njoroge.
Nioi g¯utwarithia m¯ubara.
One nioi.

Nyaga nioi g¯utwarithia m¯ubara.
One ¯uria ateng’erete.
One m¯ubara niuteng’erete.
Njoroge nake niateng’erete.
Othe nimateng’erete.
Ng’ombe i ha?
Appendix 6: Excerpt from Wirute Guthoma 2nd series

Tūūhoro Twa Mbica

Tawa

Tawa wa Kahara.

Itete

Cege rehe itete.

Igi

Igi na ngi itihanaine

Miti

Miti iringa ni mīnene.
Ti wega gūtema mīti.
Appendix 7: Excerpt from Wirute Guthoma 2nd series

Moko Moko mahoro.

Huhu Huhu ciumagirra ùtûkú

Rûkû Rûkû rûria nî rûrûmûû.
Appendix 8: Excerpt from Wirute Guthoma 2\textsuperscript{nd} series

Ndemwa U, u

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Ta tūratūra marima haha.
Tuma cuka na moko.
Ruta tuba hau.

Uu    | Hh   | Rr  |
Huria |      |     |
Ratiri|      |     |
Appendix 9: Research Permit

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Jayne RF Nduma
Kenyatta University
P.O Box 43844-00100
Nairobi.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority dated 13
January, 2013 to carry out research on “Acquisition of Lexicon by Kenyan Primary School Children in a multilingual environment,“ I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Embu County for a period ending 30th September 2013.

You are advised to report to the Principal, Kiamboa Primary School before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf of the research report/thesis to our office.

DR M.K. RUGUTT, PhD, HSc.
DEPUTY COUNCIL SECRETARY

Copy to:

The Principal,
Kiamboa Primary School,
P.O Box 64,
Runyenjes
Appendix 10: Consent Form

This is to certify that I have allowed the researcher to interview me and interact with my child for the purpose of research.

Dated this _______________ of __________ 2012.

Parents name______________________________

I.D No______________________________

Signature______________________________