HOW LEARNERS FROM MULTILINGUAL BACKGROUNDS COPE IN LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF LANGUAGE USE IN KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP.

BY

NABEA JANE KAGENDO

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AUGUST 2009
DECLARATION

This dissertation is my original work and has not been previously presented for any degree award in any other University.

Signed: __________________________ Date: __________

Nabea Jane Kagendo

This dissertation has been submitted for examination with our approvals as the University supervisors.

Signed __________________________ Date: __________

Dr. Caleb Shivachi
Department of English and Linguistics, Kenyatta University.

Signed __________________________ Date: __________

Dr. Lilian Vikiru
Department of English and Linguistics
Kenyatta University
DEDICATION

This work is a special dedication to my son Glen Njue.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is by God’s grace that I have been able to accomplish this study. I am greatly indebted to Kenyatta university community especially the department of English and linguistics. My special gratitude goes to my supervisors Dr. Shivachi and Dr Vikiru for their scholarly attention and guidance throughout the course.

I too wish to acknowledge the cooperation from respondents from Kakuma refugee camp. To Mr Obwoge, Mr Collins and Mr Niguse, thank you.

My gratitude also goes to my husband Timothy Nyaga; you remained patient and supported me through this course, my relatives and friends who assisted me in one way or another, thank you.

My appreciation too goes to my colleagues students. The encouragement and hope we gave each other was not in vain. To Morris, Elsie and Kirui, I thank each of you for always being there when I needed your support.

May God bless each one of you in a special way.
ABBREVIATIONS

UNHCR - United Nation High commission for Refugees

LWF - Lutheran World Federation
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ABSTRACT

Kakuma refugee camp is located in the arid Turkana district on the North Western border with Sudan, Uganda and Ethiopia. It was started in 1992 and has about 82000 refugees from nine different countries. Sudan, Somali, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea and Angola. The camp is subject to the host country’s language policy in education because they follow the Kenyan syllabus. However, its unique linguistic composition necessitates a study to establish whether this policy is suitable or not.

This study will seek to find out how children from multilingual backgrounds cope in lower primary school in a refugee camp. This will be a case study of the language use in Kakuma refugee camp. The objectives of the study included: to investigate which languages are spoken at the camp, to find out which language is used for instruction in school, to identify the language the children use when interacting outside the classroom and to identify the challenges related to language use experienced by both learners and teachers.

The target population was the lower primary school learners and their teachers. This is because they come from different linguistic backgrounds. Random sampling will be used to draw a sample of ten schools. 10 teachers will be chosen from each of the ten schools and 10 learners will also be chosen from each of the ten schools.

Three research instruments were used namely: questionnaires for the teacher, oral interview for the learners and the researcher will also employ scheduled observation.

A pilot study was carried out to pre-test all research instruments and to check the adequacy of statistical procedures. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used for data analysis. The expected results included: awareness of the languages spoken at the camp, the language that is used for instruction, the language(s) that learners use when interacting outside classroom and finally, knowledge of the challenges related to language use that are experienced by both learners and teachers at the camp.

The major findings from this study were: there were twenty seven languages spoken at the camp, the languages used for classroom instruction include Kiswahili and various mother tongue, when interacting outside classroom, learners mainly used their various mother tongues, the greatest challenge is language barrier.

Based on this, the study recommends that the decision that was made in 1992, requiring Kenyan curriculum to be implemented in schools that are in the refugee camp should be reconsidered.
CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Kakuma refugee camp is located on the North Western Kenya border with Sudan, Uganda and Ethiopia. It is about 100 kilometers from Kenya’s border with Sudan and Uganda and almost 1000 kilometers from Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya. It is one of the 17 administrative divisions in the district. The area is extremely hot and vegetation, mainly shrubs and acacia trees are sparse. The district’s geographical position, low productivity of the land and the low population (less political significance) has led to its marginalization. This is manifested in the absence and/or poor status of social and economic services and infrastructure.

The harsh climatic conditions and remoteness of the district have made the local Turkana host community among the poorest in Kenya. Recurrent droughts have exposed the local population to vicious cycles of famine, destitution and vulnerability. Those around Kakuma flock into the refugee camp in search of menial jobs in exchange for food. The UNHCR and other international NGOs provide services to the refugees in the camp.

Established twelve years ago, Kakuma Refugee camp sprawls over the desert of Northern Kenya. Its 82,000 inhabitants come from nine different countries and
dozens of different ethnic groups. Below is a demographic data of the Kakuma refugee camp by nationality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>56,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>22,216</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>2,321</td>
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<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>224</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>138</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>316</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Rep. Congo</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>82,197</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Kenyan Education curriculum being implemented in schools at the camp may not be addressing the unique language needs of the multinational refugees. The Kenya language policy for the lower primary school is very clear. Kiswahili is to be used in urban schools while a local language (Language of the catchment area is to be used in the school situated in rural areas). The reason being, to provide the
learner with a smooth transition from home life to school life. This serves to avoid the possible cultural shock a learner would suffer on finding him or herself in a completely new linguistic environment.

The unique language needs of the multinational refugees living in this camp are brought about by the fact that; the children have different languages, teachers may not share languages with the learners and the learners may not share languages amongst themselves.

The teacher may not use Kiswahili because the learners do not understand it. She may not use a local language because it is not common to all learners. The teacher does not understand each of the learner’s different languages. Therefore, requiring the Kenyan language policy to be applied in the refugee camp schools may pose a number of challenges considering that this policy was put in place with the Kenyan language situation in mind.

The political economic instability in Africa is bound to remain around for a long time. This is because no viable solution has been advanced to stop the instability once and for all. Therefore, the possibility of African people from various communities with various languages and customs suddenly coming together will always be there.

Awareness of what to expect in order to alleviate the trauma is well founded.
1.2 Statement of the problem

Due to the complexity of the multilingual situation at the Kakuma refugee camp, the lower primary school learners experience challenges in their learning process. The linguistic setting at the camp is unique in that, the learners are expected to have different languages; teachers may not share languages with learners and the learners may not share languages with one another.

The Kenya language policy for the lower primary schools requires that Kiswahili should be used as the language of instruction in urban areas and that a local language (language of the catchment area) should be used as the language of instruction in the rural areas. This policy aims at smoothly transiting learners from their home lives to school lives.

Since the refugees have adopted the curriculum of the host country, they are automatically expected to adopt the Kenya language policy in schools. However considering the linguistic situation on the ground at the camp, the Kenya language policy may not be serving the refugee lower primary school learners effectively. It may therefore not be suitable.

This policy was formulated with the Kenyan language situation in mind and this situation is very different from the one at the camp. Kiswahili cannot be used
because the learners do not understand it. A local language cannot be used because
the learners have their different local languages.

1.3 Objectives of the study

This study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1) To investigate what languages are spoken at the camp,

2) To find out which language is used for instruction in lower primary school
   at the camp,

3) To identify the language that the learners use when interacting outside the
   classroom and

4) To highlight the challenges related to language use experienced by both
   learners and teachers.

1.4 Research questions

This study sought to answer the following questions;

1) What languages are spoken at the camp?

2) Which language is used for instruction at the lower primary schools?

3) Which language do the learners use when interacting outside the
   classroom?
4) What challenges related to language use do both the learners and the teachers' experience?

1.5 Rationale

The purpose of this research was to improve standards of education in refugee camps. The empirical research has explained the complex language situation at the camp. It has given information to policy makers and service providers by aiding communication. It has given information to learning material developers for example, which language is to be used for class readers. It has added information on matters of language use in special multilingual settings. It has also given an insight on the use of learner's language in settling learners in schools. It has boosted understanding of concepts and other issues like the host country taking care of refugees.

1.6 Assumptions of the study

The study was undertaken with the assumptions that:

1) there are several languages spoken at the camp,

2) There is a specific language used for instruction in the lower primary schools.

3) There is a language(s) that the children use when interacting outside the classroom.

4) There are challenges related to language use that are experienced by both learners and teachers.
1.7 Scope and Limitation to the study

This study was limited to the Kakuma refugee camp. It only dealt with issues related to language situation and use within the camp, not the environs. It was restricted to language use in lower, not upper primary schools. This is because although the policy is clear, the situation is special. The policy for lower primary requires a special interpretation in such a special case as Kakuma.

The study did not cover non-formal schools or other activities that are done outside the main stream educational system. It targeted only those areas in the camp that still have inhabitants. The situation was considered in the light of the policy of the host country Kenya and not language policies of the home countries of refugees.
CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0.1 Multilingualism

The term multilingualism can refer to an occurrence regarding an individual speaker who uses two or more languages, a community of speakers where two or more languages are used, or between speakers of different languages (Nabrings, 1981). Kakuma refugee camp is composed of people who are speakers of different languages. The 82,000 inhabitants come from nine different countries with dozens of different ethnic groups.

2.0.1.1 Multilingualism in Kenya

One of the results of colonialism in Kenya is that it led to the emergency of multilingual societies. A multilingual society according to Appel and Mysken (1987) is one in which two or more languages are spoken. This is because Kenyans were able to acquire the colonial language, English. A Bantu language Kiswahili is generally used, also serving as a national language. A Kenyan therefore in most cases will have at least three languages; Kiswahili, English and a native language. These native languages differ among the various ethnic groups that there are in Kenya. English is used in institutions of learning in government institutions and also in some households. Kiswahili is commonly used as a language of communication between people of different linguistic communities,
both at home and in public institutions. Various ethnic languages correspond to the geographical location of the ethnic group. Kenya can therefore be said to have a natural multilingual situation. Kakuma refugee camp has what can be referred to as an artificial multilingual situation. This is because unlike Kenya, in the camp, people from different ethnic groups and countries have come together, with no common language that they learnt from colonizers (they had different colonizers) and with no common language like the Kiswahili in Kenya, which is used for communication between people of different ethnic groups. This study will seek to find out how communication and language use is possible in such a unique multilingual society like the Kakuma refugee camp.

2.0.1.2 Multilingualism and language functions in Kenya

The multilingual situation in Kenya involves the use of English (official language), Kiswahili (the national language) and mother tongue (an indigenous Kenyan language). English and Kiswahili are understood by a broad cross-section of people and are therefore used as unifying media of communication in the country. English is used as a medium of instruction in schools; Kiswahili is generally used by all, irrespective of education or regional background. Besides these two, several native indigenous languages are acquired as mother tongues. An average Kenya, therefore, automatically ends up being a multilingual with at least the
knowledge of three languages. Some even have more than three depending on their demographic and economic requirements.

According to Weireich (1953), the status or strength of an individual’s two or more languages may be affected by many factors e.g. usefulness, age, order of acquisition and cultural values. In most rural areas children in classes 1-3 are taught how to read and write in their indigenous language. i.e., in several of these schools, indigenous languages serve as the main language of instruction. (Ruane 1987)

In towns, the use of indigenous languages is restricted because mostly, even next door neighbors do not share common ethnic backgrounds. Children therefore end up learning Kiswahili as their mother tongue. The lower classes in most urban areas therefore use Kiswahili as the language of instruction.

The Kakuma refugee camp uses the curriculum of its host country, Kenya. This automatically requires them to use the Kenya language policy for schools. Being a unique multilingual society: (Cannot be classified as either rural or urban in the Kenyan way), a local language or Kiswahili cannot therefore be suitable as a language of instruction in the lower primary schools. A workable language planning policy should be designed to take care of the unique language situation at the camp.
2.0.2. Language planning

Language planning refers to deliberate efforts to influence the behaviour of others with respect to the acquisition, structure or functional allocation of language, (Robinson, 1988). It is the official government-level activity concerning the selection and promotion of a unified administrative language or languages. It represents a coherent effort by individuals, groups or organization to influence language use or development. Language planning does not take place in a vacuum but considers language facts, social context being one of them. The social situation in Kakuma refugee camp is special in that people from diverse ethnic groups have come together and do not have a common language. This study will work at the relationship between the unique social circumstances and the language issues at the camp.

According to Rubin and Jernnud 1971, those charged with developing language plans consult widely and consider all aspects of language situations before a plan is developed. Rubin (1983-338) says that effective planning implies continued evaluation and revision of the plan. The language situation at the Kakuma refugee camp is very unique and must therefore be well studied before a language plan can be put for use in the camp. The Kenya language policy for schools being used in the camp may not be suitable and should therefore be evaluated and revised.
Language planning for those countries that host refugees from different other countries is likely to be experiencing the same situation.

2.0.3 Language and education

Kennedy (1983) notes that nowhere is language planning more critical than in education. This is because the language chosen for instruction for example should be one that the learners are already familiar with. This will ensure that the learners would not be learning both the language and the concepts being taught at the same time. There is a strong link between national language planning and classroom practice according to Lewis and Massad (1975). This is because language planning on education is just a fraction of the larger national language planning. The languages that are taught in school at various levels impacts directly on the overall language planning at the national level. The Kenya national language plan being used for the classroom practice at the Kakuma refugee camp may not be serving effectively. This is because the linguistic situation on the ground at the camp is very different from the one in the Kenyan society. An effective plan should be put in place to serve the unique language needs of the refugees at the camp.

One of the sociolinguistic theory principles is that language planning should not only deal with the technical but also the social aspects. It emphasizes on the social
use of a language and makes decisions that reflect the social reality. The social reality at the Kakuma refugee camp is that it has a complex and unique linguistic situation, which must be considered if a plan is to be made for use at the camp.

According to Anderson (1970), mother tongue seemed best suited for education pursuits because learning had to in one way or another interact with the home life of a child. I.e. Mother tongue would provide a smooth link between home life and school life. In Kenya 1976, mother tongue was considered best suited for initial years of primary schools. In urban areas, Kiswahili was to be used. This has been upheld up to the moment. The situation at the Kakuma refugee camp cannot be classified as either urban or rural with the Kenyan understanding. Kiswahili cannot be used as a language of instruction for primary 1-3 because these children have no knowledge of the language. Mother tongue cannot also be used because they do not share a mother tongue. The situation becomes more complex when the Kenyan teacher who knows Kiswahili but does not know any of the mother tongues spoken by the different children at the camp has to teach these children.

For the lower primary school level of education, the language of instruction has to be carefully chosen to serve the following main functions:

- It has to adequately provide a smooth link between home life and school life
- It has to adequately serve across the curriculum
• It should not let the child suddenly find himself or herself in a new linguistic situation
• It has to be one that the users can comfortably relate to, (Edwards 1983)

In the Kakuma camp situation, the language of instruction in line with the Kenya language policy for the lower primary (either Kiswahili or a local language) does not serve any of the above functions. This is because of the unique nature of the language situation at the camp. This situation leads to a mismatch between the home and the school languages. The major negative consequences of this situation are that it leads to poor academic achievement because the child struggles to learn the new language at the same time. These refugee learners are also bound to suffer culture shock when they suddenly find themselves in a new linguistic environment.

2.0.4 Sociology of Language

The central field of the sociology of language is its concern with the social, political and educational aspects of the relationship between language and society (Edwards, 1979). It touches on the concerns of school and education at every point. The sociology of language moves in two different and complementary directions according to Toilefson, (1981). That is, the descriptive approach and the evaluative.
Those who follow the ‘descriptive’ approach try to understand the social organization of language use and principles governing changes in language use. They are interested in how language behavior reflects social structure. They are also interested in how social structure determines speech or language behaviors itself and in how that behavior defines social structures thereby affecting social interaction. (Grimshaw, 1987a). Sociolinguists of language are interested in the way language is used and can be used by children and adults from different social, ethnic, age and gender backgrounds.

Ethnographers have shown that major mismatches occur between minority students and their teachers. Languages policy in education matters have flowed from their findings.

Many children entering our schools come with a language different from that of their teachers. It is the language of their parents and peers... I have found a large number of teachers who do not appreciate the situation confronting them... when their efforts seem fruitless they come to regard any work in language with their pupils as nigh on hopeless... they frequently promote antipathy between the school and the child to the detriment of education of the child. (Eagleson, 1976:25)
While making the transition from home to school, there are bound to be anomalies. For all children in the relationships that they perceive in the daily rounds of their several speaking environments. Language and context interact in unique ways. For many, there are major discontinuities between the daily rounds that they experience outside schools and the new ones that are imposed on them by the school. 

Romaine (1984) suggests that teachers need to adopt a much more cautious approach in their interaction styles, in their pedagogies and in their assessment of pupil’s performance in language. 

In the Kakuma refugee camp, learners come with different ethnic languages, which are also different form the 'teachers'. The camp should be seen and understood as a special and complex social organization of language use and relevant principles governing changes in language use should be put in place. This will help reduce the possible mismatches the children are likely to suffer as they translate form home to school. These mismatches may make a child dislike school, therefore leading to low academic performance.
2.1 Theoretical framework

The theory of instrumentation is attributed to Haugen (1971) and Tauri (1968). It looks at language as an instrument that can be evaluated, changed, regulated, improved and possibly even created. According to Tauri, looking at language as an instrument, it is possible to evaluate its efficiency with regard to serving the communicative needs of a speech community. Such an evaluation then would be the basis for choosing national and official languages. This theory is not applicable in this study because it (the study) is not about a national or an official language. It is about what can be referred to as a search for a suitable language of instruction for schools in a special multilingual setting, such as a refugee camp.

The sociolinguistic theory is based on two principles:

a) All languages are symbolic systems of equal native value. No language is superior to the other. This principle is not suitable for this study because it deals with the technical aspect of language, such as prepositions, pronouns and vocabulary. The study on the other hand is dealing with the social aspect of language. That is, decisions made on language use should reflect the social reality on the ground.
b) Language planning should not only deal with the technical but also the social aspect. The process of language planning involves the following four major stages: Initial fact finding, actual planning (procedure), implementation and evaluation. The social aspect of the fact finding stage involves gathering information on the number of local languages, foreign languages and other languages spoken in the area. It also involves gathering information on the number of speakers of each language and their social and geographical distribution.

The second principle is what is relevant for this study. It emphasizes the social context of use and makes decisions that reflect the social reality. According to this theory, language planning should involve taking into account the technical aspect of the language and carrying out language development where necessary, basing decisions on the social aspects in that speech community.

The language situation at the Kakuma refugee camp is complex. The refugees come from nine different countries and from numerous language groups. The social reality in terms of linguistic diversity must be keenly considered in order to decide on a language of instruction that will be effective.

As it were now, the language policy being used in the schools at the camp may not be very effective because it was formulated with a different social reality in mind. The social context used was the Kenya language situation, which is very different
from the language situation at the camp. The language situation at the camp is such that learners are from a very diverse linguistic background and this factor does not seem to have been considered when the Kenyan language policy was recommended for use at the schools in the camp. This theory is therefore going to be used to explain lack of suitability in the current practice.
CHAPTER THREE

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section explains the sampling procedures adopted, the research design, methods of data collection, data analysis.

3.2 Research design

This study adopted a case study design. This design involves describing a unit in detail, in context and holistically. It is best suited for this research because it is mainly a descriptive study, to know what is really on the ground. Kakuma refugee camp being a special case, it can only be looked at as a case study. The findings were used to generalize the situations in other refugee camps in Kenya.

3.3 Target population

The target population is the lower primary school learners and their teachers at Kakuma Refugee Camp. This target group has been chosen because it presents a unique and complex situation. Here, children have different languages, teachers don’t share language with learners and learners don’t share languages. Since a language policy is made in relation to the language situation on the ground, this situation is best manifested in this population.
3.4 Area of study

The area of study is the Kakuma Refugee Camp. It is situated at the Northwest Kenya, close to the Sudan boarder. It is located in the arid Turkana district on the North Western Kenya boarder with Uganda, Sudan and Ethiopia. It was established in 1992 and has a population of about 82,000 refugees. These refugees are mainly from Southern Sudan, Somali, Ethiopia, Burundi, Eritrea and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

3.5 Sampling and sample size

There are twenty one primary schools at the camp, with about two hundred and fifty teachers against about one thousand pupils.

A random sampling was used to get a sample of ten schools. A sample of ten teachers from the ten sample lower primary schools was chosen. Ten learners from each of the ten schools were also chosen.

For ease of sampling, learners from class three were used. Although lower primary consist of classes one to three, the class three pupils have already settled in school and were to respond to questions. They were also assumed to have learned some English already.
An equal number of each gender was chosen for both teachers and learners. This is because the males and the females tend to react differently to issues of language. (Raban, 1988)

3.6 Research instruments

A questionnaire was used for the teachers. It was used to get information on the linguistic background of the teacher, the language situation in the school, language of the learning materials and finally the challenges faced by the teachers. Each of the ten teachers, five males and five females filled an individual questionnaire.

An oral group interview was used to get information from learners. Ten learners from each school, five boys and five girls in groups were used. Class three was used because they are already settled in school and they were also assumed to have learned some English. The oral interview was used to get information on the general language situation at the camp, and the language used for instruction. The researcher took notes.

An observation schedule was used. The researcher used this to obtain information about actual behavior. The researcher moved around the compound as the learners
played and also sat in class as the learners took their lessons. This enabled the researcher to know the real situation on the ground. The researcher took notes.

3.7 Validity and reliability of research instruments

Validity of the research instruments is demonstrated when an instrument is seen to be asking the right question framed in the least ambiguous way. The instruments used in this study were tested for validity through availing them to the experts in the field of research for evaluation and amendments that were necessary. A pilot study was carried out to pre-test all research instruments and check the adequacy of statistical procedures. One school, one teacher and a group of five students were used for the pilot study. This school was excluded from the final sample.

3.8 Data collection

To collect data for the first objective information was gotten from the questionnaire given to teachers and supplemented by the interview given to the learners in groups of five.

An observation schedule helped to obtain data on what languages are used at the camp, what language is used for instruction and what languages are used in interactions outside the classroom. This was useful in collaborating the questionnaire and the interview because first hand information on what really happens was obtained. The researcher collected written information from
questionnaires and took notes both from the oral interviews and the outside classroom activities.

3.9 Data analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used. A description on what languages are used and for what purposes was made based on the statistics obtained from the research. The analysis was done by summarizing the key findings. For example, the researcher noted down the frequent responses of the participants on various issues like the challenges. An explanation was done, after which an interpretation and a conclusion was done. A narrative report was then written.
CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION.

4.1.1 Teachers' level of education.

The very high percentage (80%) of untrained teachers poses a professional barrier. This has a negative impact because the teachers lack training and the relevant skills to enable them teach effectively. This places the learners at the camp at a disadvantage when compared with other learners in other schools because in most cases all their teachers are trained.

In a school, not much can be done with untrained teachers. Some have no knowledge of the Kenyan school system since they are untrained. They are also lowly paid. This makes them leave the schools soon or later, either going for training or for other better paying jobs. This creates a lot of discontinuity in the learning process.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Academic Level</th>
<th>Professional Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tr 1</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Trained (P1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tr 2</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Untrained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tr 3</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Untrained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tr 4</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Untrained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tr 5</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Untrained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tr 6</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Untrained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tr 7</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Untrained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tr 8</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Untrained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tr 9</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Trained (B.ed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tr 10</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Untrained</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1.2 Teachers level of education
Out of the ten interviewed teachers, only two are trained. That translates to 20% of the teachers. One of them has obtained college training (a certificate course) while the other has a university degree (Bachelor of education). Eight out of the ten teachers have only gone up to secondary school (form four). They have not attained any professional training. This translates to 80% of the teachers. It is evident that all the teachers, even the trained ones have no exposure to the circumstances such as the ones they have met. That is, where there is no common language. The two trained teachers are trained to teach in schools where conditions are normal. The university graduate is trained to teach in secondary, not primary schools.

4.1.3 Comparison with Kenyan Situation

The situation in a typical Kenyan class three is that majority of the teachers are trained. This is unlike the case in the camp where the majority of the teachers (80%) are untrained. Being a rich organization, the UNHCR should employ teachers and pay them well. From the table, it is evident that only 10% of the teachers have any relevance as far as training is concerned.
Pie chart 4.1.4 Teachers' level of education

90% of the teachers ought not to be at the camp, particularly in such a class where the situation is not very normal.

In the surrounding North Turkana district which is housing the camp, the level of training and relevance of teachers is 90%.

Pie chart 4.1.5 Teachers' level of education
4.1.6 Conclusion

The teachers at the camp primary schools have very little relevance if any. The UNCHR should hire teachers who have been trained to teach in primary schools. The UNCHR should also lay a system to in-service the already trained teachers, to familiarize them with the unique linguistic situation found at the camp schools.

4.2.1 Languages spoken by teachers.

The highest number of teachers speaks English and Kiswahili. Considering that most learners do not understand those two languages, the situation creates a real communication breakdown. Language barrier therefore is the major challenge being faced by teachers and learners in the schools at the camp.

Since the teachers speak some of the first languages of the learners, it is possible to explain issues in the languages some of them understand. English and Kiswahili can slowly be built up from this.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHERS</th>
<th>NO. OF LANGUAGES</th>
<th>LANGUAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Arabic, Acholi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>English, French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>English, Kiswahili, Ekegusii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>English, Kiswahili, Ng’aturkana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>English, Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>French, Kiswahili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>English, Dinka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Amharic, Kiswahili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ng’aturkana, Kiswahili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>English, Kiswahili, Sudanese Arabic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.2 languages spoken by teachers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acholi</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ng’aturkana</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinka</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amharic</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.3.1 a percentage representation of teachers’ languages.

This makes more than 100%!
4.2.3 Implications of teachers' language.

Since some of them share the first language with some of the learners, the situation is made a bit easier. However, no one teacher shares a common language with all learners, a situation very different from a normal Kenyan class three. Many of the learners will feel excluded should the teacher decide to use his or her first language.

4.2.4 Conclusion.

Language is a barrier to efficient learning in refuge camps. There is no common language through which the teacher can instruct the learners. The level of English and Kiswahili for the learners is still very low.

4.3.1 Learners Languages.

The class three learners do not have the recommended languages of learning. Instead, they speak various languages: Bantu, Indo-European, Afro-asiatic, Nilotic and Cushitic.

Yet according to the Kenyan curriculum, the learners should have achieved a reasonable level of English and Kiswahili so that they can communicate.
Teaching is done through interpretation. Interpretation is done by assistant teachers. As the teacher teaches in English, the assistant teacher translates into lingala, Dinka, Oromifa, Tigrinea, Nuer and Kihutu.

On occasion, there may be no translator to serve certain groups and therefore the lesson done in English will be meaningless to some of the learners. Translators may also serve as destruction to the flow of the English lesson.

The translation slows down the teaching process so that the teaching time is reduced by more than half depending on the number of translators.

Naturally, in translation, information is either lost or changed. Learners are therefore capable of forming misconceptions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY LEARNERS</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bantu</strong></td>
<td><strong>Indo European</strong></td>
<td><strong>Afro-Asiatic</strong></td>
<td><strong>Nilotic</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cushitic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kitutsi</td>
<td>Kihutu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tigrinea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lingala</td>
<td>French</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Amharic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Somali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dinka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lingala</td>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ng’aturkana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nuer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dinka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3.2 Learners’ languages.
The languages available have no direct relationship with the languages expected at that level. Most of the languages spoken are unknown to the teacher. That is why it is necessary to have the translators. Languages accepted in class three according to Gachathi (74) are English and Kiswahili. There is therefore a conflict that will involve learners not to understand what is being taught in either English or Kiswahili.

4.3.3 Conclusion.

It is a good thing to have interpreters working as assistant teachers but it is necessary to group learners according to their first languages and give them a relevant teacher at least for learners to master English and Kiswahili.

4.4.1 Challenges

The table below shows teachers’ reaction to the challenges facing them as they teach the schools at the camp. These challenges are real. They affect the learners and I feel that they can be addressed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Tr 1     | 1. Use of mother tongue by learners in school.  
          | 2. High tempered learners.  
          | 3. Inadequate teaching resources. |
| Tr 2     | 1. Learners don’t understand either English or Kiswahili  
          | 2. Learners use their mother tongues while in classrooms. |
| Tr 3     | 1. Some deaf learners are mixed up with other learners in classrooms.  
          | 2. Language barrier. |
| Tr 4     | 1. Translation tends to waste time.  
          | 2. There aren’t translators to all languages spoken by the learners  
          | 3. Absenteeism on the part of the learners. |
| Tr 5     | 1. Learners use mother tongues.  
          | 2. Lack of class readers.  
          | 3. Classes are overpopulated. |
| Tr 6     | 1. Use of mother tongues by learners.  
          | 2. Language barrier. |
| Tr 7     | 1. Language barrier - Some learners don’t understand either English or Kiswahili.  
          | 2. Most of the teachers are untrained. |
| Tr 8     | 1. Some learners are deaf.  
          | 2. Inadequate teaching resources e.g. class readers. |
| Tr 9     | 1. Language barrier.  
          | 2. No class readers.  
          | 3. High teacher turn over. |
| Tr 10    | 1. Some learners are deaf.  
          | 2. Some learners are mentally handicapped.  
          | 3. Language barrier. |

4.3.4 Table of challenges
4.4.1.1 Use of mother tongue.

Teachers feel that use of mother tongue is lowering there expectations. This is because they want them to use Kiswahili and English as in the other Kenyan Primary schools.

Use of mother tongue should not be a barrier to learning because the young ones are trying to come to terms with the environment in class three and they do it through mother tongue. Teachers should encourage this.

4.4.1.2 Absenteeism

Absenteeism is a direct consequence of the language barrier being experienced by learners in class three. Lack of understanding of English and Kiswahili makes them stay away from school. Compared to a normal class three in the district (North Turkana), absenteeism is not a problem because learners have a common language to bond, learn and play.

4.4.1.3 High teacher migration.

This has an indirect effect on the language learning. Learners need time to get used to their teachers in the camp. Teachers come and go to greener pastures much more frequently when compared to the schools in North Turkana District Schools.
4.4.1.4 Deaf and mentally handicapped learners.

Provisions should be made for the deaf, blind and the mentally handicapped. They are worse off if the normal ones are already suffering. Specialized teachers should be employed to teach them since they need a different approach to language and communication teaching.

4.4.2 Conclusion.

4.4.2.1 Lack of understanding of Kiswahili and English.

Their background cannot be compared to what is in the Kenyan children who have already received early childhood education (ECD).

Learners in Northern Turkana spend one year in the early childhood education and those in urban areas spent three years. By the time they join class one, they already know some English and Kiswahili. They are therefore far improved by the time they are in class three. An ECD Program should be initiated in the camp.

4.4.2.2 Translation.

Assistant teachers should be used sparingly. The best approach would be to split cases on the basis of language groups and employ teachers who share the same language with learners.
4.4.2.3 Untrained teachers.

From the tables, the teachers themselves acknowledge the fact that they do not have the required training to teach. To improve standards, the UNHCR should employ teachers who are trained with the relevant skills to handle the learners in the camp.
CHAPTER 5

5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The first objective was to investigate what languages are spoken at the camp. Attempts to capture findings to this objective were made through the following three ways:

a  By asking the learners which languages they speak through oral interviews.

b  By asking teachers to name different languages that the learners in their classes speak.

c  By the researcher observing what languages the learners were using as they played outside the classrooms.

The findings were that there are twenty seven languages spoken at the camp. The languages were distributed among the nine nations represented at the camp as follows:

Sudan

- Dinka
- Acholi
- Nuer
- Bahari
- Suluka
- Toposa

**Somali**
- Somali
- Maimai
- Mashungui
- Kiswahili

**Ethiopia**
- Amharic
- Oromo
- Nguraa
- Sidamo

**DRC**
- French
- Lingala

**Rwanda**
- Tutsi
- Hutu
Eritrea

- Tigrine

Kenya

- Ng’aturkana,
- English
- Kiswahili

English and Kiswahili are the languages that are spoken by most teachers. English is spoken by 70% and Kiswahili 60% of the teachers. Very few learners understand these two languages however. Most of the learners understand well their local languages, which most of their teachers do not understand. To a large extent, this complex linguistic situation complicates the learning process in the schools at the camp.

In order to establish which languages are used for classroom instruction, the researcher found out that some were using Kiswahili. Some were using the mother tongue of the majority members in the classroom where it was applicable. In some of the above cases, there were sometimes translators in class who would translate to the learners what the teacher was talking about. Three or four translators would
be in class and each of them would talk to his or her target group at the same time. Still, some learners seemed to learn very little because they would not understand the language of the teacher and they also did not have people translating into their languages. These translators are referred to as assistant teachers.

For the language(s) that the learners used when interacting outside the classroom, data was collected by the researcher observing the learners as they played outside the classroom and asking the learners what languages they spoke at home with parents and siblings.

It was found that when learners were interacting outside the classroom, they mainly used their mother tongues. These languages include: Bor, Nuer, Acholi, Bahari, Suluka, Toposa, Somali, Maimai, Mashungui, Amharic, Oromo, Nguraa, Sidamo, Lingala, Tutsi, Tigrinea and Ng’aturkana.

It was not unusual therefore, to realize that during play time, learners would group up themselves according to their language groups.

The fourth and the last objective were to highlight the challenges related to language that are experienced by both learners and teachers during the learning process.
This objective was achieved by asking teachers to list the challenges (related to language use and communication) they were facing while teaching.

It was found out that the greatest challenge faced by the teachers was the language barrier. There does not exist any one common language among the learners. Teachers therefore find it difficult when teaching them. That is because effective communication is hindered.

Lack of trained teachers is another challenge. Most of the teachers teaching in the camp do not have any relevant training as far as teaching in a refugee camp is concerned. This automatically disadvantages the learners in the camp when compared to learners in other public schools in Kenya, where almost all the teachers have the relevant training.

Other challenges include learners with special needs being mixed up with other learners in class. These learners with special needs include the deaf, the blind, numb and the mentally handicapped. If the other learners are already finding it difficult because of language issues, these special ones are finding it even more difficult.

Smooth teaching and learning is also hindered by the frequent absenteeism of learners from school. Since the learners cannot effectively communicate to either
the teachers or the other learners due to language barrier, they choose to stay away from school.

Lack of instructional materials was another challenge that was observed. This negatively affects effective teaching and learning.

5.2 Conclusion

The results to this study reaffirm that the lower Primary learners at the Kakuma refugee Camp experience challenges in their learning process due to the complexity of the multilingual situation on the ground. The Kenyan language policy in education requires Kiswahili to be used as the language of instruction for lower classes in urban areas. For the schools situated in the rural areas, the policy requires that the language of the catchment area be used for instruction in the lower classes.

It is impossible to effectively implement this policy in the schools at the camp considering the complex linguistic situation therein. There is no one language that is commonly shared by all the learners in the camp. The learners are expected to learn two things at the same time: The language being used for instruction and the content being delivered. This puts the learners in the camp at an obvious disadvantage when compared to learners in other public schools.
Other challenges include: Lack of trained teachers, lack of instructional materials and having to mix in one class learners with special needs together with other learners while teaching.

5.3 Recommendations

There is real need to reconsider the decision that was made in 1992, requiring the Kenyan Curriculum to be implemented in the schools that are in the camp. This is because for all practical purposes, the language policy in education adopted by the curriculum does not seem to be working in the camp schools, given the multilingual situation there in. The LWF which is the major stakeholder in the education at the camp should discuss and implement a way forward with the Kenyan government.

The UNHCR should employ teachers with relevant training to teach at the schools in the camp. Adequate instructional materials should also be provided for effective teaching and learning. Specialized units with trained teachers should be put up to handle learners with special needs like the deaf, the blind and the mentally handicapped.
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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

QUALIFICATION (Academic) Primary □ Secondary □ College □ University □

(Professional) Trained □ Untrained □

1a) How many languages do you speak? ____________________________

b) Name them ________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

2a) How many different languages are spoken by the learners in your class?

b) Name them ________________________________________________

3. What language(s) do you use for instruction?

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

4. What language(s) do the children use when interacting outside the classroom?

____________________________________________________________

5a) Is there a language(s) that is commonly shared by all the learners in the class?

b) If yes, which language is it?

____________________________________________________________

6a) Do you use any textbooks as a teaching resource?

b) If yes, in which language(s) are these books written?

7a) Do you have class readers? □ Yes □ No
b) If yes, in what language are they written?

8 a) Do the learners listen to radio programmes? Yes ☐ No ☐

b) If yes, in what language are they?

9 a) When teaching, do you face any challenge(s) related to language use and communication?

☐ Yes ☐ No

b) If you do, what are some of these challenges with regard to language?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

 c) What suggestions do you give to reduce these challenges?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________


APPENDIX 2

ORAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LEARNERS (TO BE GIVEN IN GROUPS)

1) What language(s) do you speak?

__________________________________________________________________________

2) What language(s) do you speak with your parents and siblings at home?

__________________________________________________________________________

3) What languages do you use when playing with friends outside the classroom?

__________________________________________________________________________

4) What language(s) does your teacher use to teach you?

__________________________________________________________________________

5a) Do you read any books in school? Yes ☐ No ☐

__________________________________________________________________________

b) If yes, in which language are these books written?

__________________________________________________________________________

6a) Do you read any books at home? ☐ Yes ☐ No

b) If yes, in what language are they written? ____________________________

_____________
7a) do you watch TV or listen to radio at home? □ Yes □ No

b) If yes, to what language do you tune them?

--------------------------------------
APPENDIX 3

TIME FRAME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
APPENDIX 4

BUDGET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEMS</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>COST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Stationery</td>
<td>Proposal and thesis writing.</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Typing</td>
<td>Draft thesis</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Traveling</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Consultation</td>
<td>Consultation session with supervisors</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Two research assistants</td>
<td>@ 5,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Fair copies of thesis.</td>
<td>6 copies @ 2,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>